

“A Dog Returns to His Own Vomit”

2 Pet. 2:20-22

Introduction:

- A. A fallen Christian is not a pretty picture. (Text)
 - 1. All know brethren in this condition.
 - 2. Has turned from only thing that can make him free (John 8:32)
 - 3. Need to be restored, if possible — some impossible (v. 14; cf. Heb. 6:4-6; 1 Tim. 4:2)
- B. A fallen Christian places responsibilities upon two parties: The Faithful and the Fallen.

Discussion:

I. The Responsibilities of The *Faithful* Christian.

- A. To try to bring fallen to repentance. (cf. Heb. 6:6; Rev. 2:5,6,16,21,22; Jas. 5:19,20).
- B. To deal with each one according to the circumstances. (cf. Jude 21,23).
 - 1. Gently with some.
 - a. Those who are fainthearted and/or weak. (1 Thess. 5:14).
 - b. Those who are “overtaken in a fault”¹ (Gal. 6:1-5).
 - (1) Not premeditated, persistent sinner.
 - (2) Needs gentle support of spiritual to overcome the sin and its effect upon him.
 - 2. Sharply with some. (2 Cor. 13:10).
 - a. With sharp *words* of warning for unruly. (1 Thess. 5:14; Tit. 1:13).
 - b. Followed by sharp *acts* of discipline for impenitent. (1 Cor. 5:5-13).
 - (1) Should give time for fallen to heed words. (Rev. 2:21; cf. Warn Unruly in 1 Thess. 5:14 then Withdraw from Unruly in 2 Thess. 3:6ff).
 - (2) Should admonish factious then reject. (Tit. 3:10; Rom. 16:17)
 - 3. Privately with some. (Matt. 18:15-18).
 - 4. Publicly with some. (Gal. 2:14; 1 Tim. 5:20).
 - C. To forgive all who repent. (Luke 17:3; 2 Cor. 2:7).

II. The Responsibilities of the *Fallen* Christian.

- A. He must repent. (Acts 8:22-23; 2 Cor. 7:9)
 - 1. It is not enough just to be sorry.
 - 2. It is not enough just to just quit practicing the sin.
- B. He must confess sin and reveal his repentance. (1 John 1:9; James 5:16; Lk. 17:4).
 - 1. To “confess” is not to reveal but literally to speak the same thing - plead guilty as charged.
 - 2. To confess to the offended parties.
 - a. It may be just God. (1 John 1:9,10).
 - b. It may be another person or two. (Luke 17:4)
 - c. It may be many people - the church, public knowledge.
 - 3. To not confess leaves problem - offend party cannot know if repented.
 - a. Just quitting not evidence of repentance. (cf. Slipping back in).
 - b. Need to say to offended party, “I repent”. (Luke 17:4).
 - c. Passing of time nor reformation is no substitute for confession.
- C. He must ask God's forgiveness. (Acts 8:22).
- D. He may ask others to pray for him also. (Acts 8:24; Jas. 5:16)

Conclusion:

- A. Indeed, the picture of one who goes on in sin is not pretty. (Heb. 10:29ff).
- B. How beautiful it is when one repents, confesses and asks forgiveness.

¹ Overtake: To take one before he can flee .i.e., surprise. (See Thayer).