

# PHILEMON

## Lesson 24: Falling Out/Falling Away

10 June, 2016

How do we treat our brethren who have done wrong or gone astray? Observe how the apostle Paul dealt with **Marcus** and **Demas** (vs. 24) when they each strayed from the right path.

**Retaliate:** to return *like for like*: to get revenge; to return evil for evil.

Retaliation is not a scriptural practice for the believer. Therefore, it is not an option for us. God will not bless our acts of retaliation. God's will and desire is that we pray for each other during times of disagreement so that the furtherance of the Gospel is not hindered.

**Atheist:** one who denies the existence of God. (See Psalm 14:1, 53:1)

**Temporary atheist:** when a Christian *chooses* to forget God for the *moment* so that they can do what they feel like doing.

The acts committed during those times of "temporary atheism" will result in long lasting consequences (results, affects, outcome, aftermath). You may think you got away with something, but the Bible teaches us that we will reap what we sow (Numbers 32:23, Job 4:8). God may forgive you if you seek His forgiveness, but it will not undo the consequences of our bad actions.

### MARCUS (JOHN MARK)

**ACTS 12:12** Marcus goes by the name John, Mark, or John Mark. His mother's name is Mary. He was at the prayer meeting praying when Peter was in prison. He is a believer.

**COLOSSIANS 4:10** Marcus is Barnabas' sister's son. He is the nephew of Barnabas. Paul commends (speaks well of) Marcus in this letter.

**1 PETER 5:13** Peter calls Marcus "my son." This term is used in the New Testament to refer to a person whom you've led to Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 1:2). Your convert is your "son" in a spiritual sense. John Mark had some good spiritual roots with Peter as his spiritual father and Paul as his instructor.

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**ACTS 13:1-3, 13** John Mark had surrendered to missionary work. He was travelling with Barnabas and Saul (Paul) on the first missionary journey, but when they reached Perga, he went home to Jerusalem.

People like to magnify Mark's failure here, but they don't consider the fact that Mark did start the missionary journey, which is more than most believers ever do.

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We are not told why Mark quit. People may have gossiped about it, but neither Peter, Paul, nor Luke ever wrote about Mark's reasons for leaving. They never criticized his actions or promoted gossip about him.

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**Lesson:** a failure or mistake in a Christian's life does not mean that they are no longer a Christian or that they will not continue to serve the Lord in other ways or in future days. We must never "write them off" or count them as an enemy or an infidel. It's also important not to entertain ANY gossip about that person. Just continue serving the Lord.

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#### **ACTS 15:36-40**

Barnabas wanted to take Mark with them on next missionary journey. Paul didn't think that was a good idea because of Mark's previous failure to go "**to the work**" (vs. 38). Paul didn't use insults or hate speech about Mark. He just said He's not the man for the job. He's not the man with the best qualifications. Paul was right and the church backed him up, recommending (vs. 40) the team of Paul and Silas, but not the team of Barnabas and Mark.

**Lesson:** we can't let our feelings interfere with the success of the work of the church. Paul didn't let his love for Mark or Barnabas influence his resolve to make the right decision.

**Lesson:** We may have a "sharp contention" (argument, vs. 39) with the brethren, but notice that it did not result in any ugly behavior by any party involved. This leaves the door open for reconciliation (the return of friendship and harmony) and doesn't endanger the work of the Gospel and the cause of Jesus Christ.

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#### **2 TIMOTHY 4:11**

In 2 Timothy, written 18 years after Acts chapter 15, we see that two things happened during that time. 1) Mark got himself straightened out and became strong in the faith. 2) Paul commended Mark and counted him as "profitable...for the ministry." Their proper conduct during the contention allowed for this future reconciliation and restoration.

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#### **DEMAS**

#### **2 TIMOTHY 4:10**

Demas was a "**fellowlabourer**" in Philemon verse 24. Two years later Paul said, "**Demas hath forsaken me.**" Demas loved the world and chose to leave the ministry. Paul didn't have any ugly words to say about Demas; only the simple fact that he left.

It is heartbreaking to see a Christian go back to the world and forsake the Christian path. It is very important to pray earnestly for those Christians because they are ruining their lives and their family's lives. PRAY!

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Don't let the failures of others turn your heart against them. God wants to see that person turn around and get back in fellowship so He can continue blessing them. We ought to desire the same for them. The Holy Spirit does not delight in punishing people. He wants to give us the fullness of His blessing.

If you ever find yourself wishing evil against a brother or sister in Christ for any reason, you have turned away from the control of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 1:29 "malignity")

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