

Following Afar Off

by Heath Rogers

In Luke chapter 22 we have the record of Peter denying the Lord. Verse 61 tells us that after the rooster crowed “the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter.” What a look that must have been. The result was that Peter “went out and wept bitterly,” (vs. 62). I doubt Peter ever felt worse in his entire life. His denial of the Lord was contrary to the conviction and support that he had shown in the past. Just hours before he denied the Lord he had boldly said “I am ready to go with Thee, both into prison, and to death,” (Luke 22:33). And when Judas and the officers came to arrest Jesus, Peter began to fight to defend Him (John 18:10). Peter loved the Lord and was willing to die for Him. So why does he deny Him? What led him to this?

This really is no mystery. Luke 22:54 tell us that when they brought Jesus to the house of the high priest “Peter followed afar off.” This is where the trouble started. As long as Peter was close to the Lord he was all right. It was when he followed afar off that he got into trouble and found himself doing the unthinkable -- denying the Lord!

The same thing goes for us. We are to deny ourselves, pick up our cross and follow after Jesus (Matt. 16:24). As long as we stay close to the Lord through prayer, worship, Bible study and application we will do fine. It is when we get away from the Lord, like Peter did, that we get ourselves into trouble. And the further we get from the Lord, the easier it is to leave Him altogether. Have you ever noticed that very few people who leave the Lord do so all at once? It is usually the result of a gradual decline in Bible study, prayer and church attendance.

Are you following the Lord or just wandering in His general direction? You need to stick as close to Jesus as possible. He is your only way out of this place! “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh to the Father, but by Me,” (John 14:6).

EDITOR’S NOTE: You can read in the Old Testament the word “backsliding” over seventeen times. It is no accident that the term is so named. Those nearer the back of the church building are easily out the back door! The exception being those with health issues or difficult children. But those who are zealous, interested and enthused sit toward the front of the building and are much involved. Those toward the back are those far from the Lord.

In the Old Testament, God said that such people had a heart filled with their own ways (Prov. 14:14). God said to Israel that their own backsliding ways would rebuke them (Jer. 2:19). The fear of God was not in their hearts!

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