

What Will Make You Quit?

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Introduction: Every man has his breaking point.

A. Every Christian has an all-knowing God that will not allow him to reach that point!

(1 Cor 10:12-13)

1. One writer said: “when God permits his children to go through the furnace, he keeps his eye on the clock and his hand on the thermostat.”
2. Rest assured that our God will test us, but it is always for our good.

B. Why then do Christians quit?

1. In contrast to a living faith that looks to God for escape and help, a Christian may choose to cast off his faith. **(Heb 10:35-39)**
2. I believe that this happens because of neglect in the building of one’s faith. **(2 Pt 1:10-11)**
3. I have seen “knowledgeable” Christians who were commonly bored to death with the assemblies of Christians. Over time most of these fell away.
4. Over time our faith will be tested! How will your faith come out? **(1 Pt 1:6-7)**

I. There are many snares that can cause you to stumble.

A. One must build a faith that has “roots.” **(Mt 13:21)**

1. Notice the time element between the challenge and the fall: “immediately.”
2. One must build a faith on reason, reason that can look back and know!
3. Far too many people become Christians because of “relationships” and not because of the power of the gospel. That “faith” cannot stand. **(Rom 1:16)**

B. One must build a faith that can overcome alleged contradictions. **(Jn 1:45-46)**

1. How could Jesus be from Nazareth and still be the Messiah? **(Micah 5:2)**
2. Did Jesus fulfill the prophecy? How would one come to know this?
3. Those who are quick to turn away will never find God’s truth!

C. One must build a faith that can overcome ones own prejudices. **(Rom 9:30-33)**

1. The Jews had as a people accepted many wrong concepts, among which was an attempt to be justified by law keeping.
2. A genuine faith is teachable! A tender heart can fight though one’s prejudices and erase them from their heart.
3. Why were the Gentiles more ready to believe? Their prejudices and pride did not stand in the way.

D. One must build a faith that can see the difference between what men do and what God does. **(Rom 3:1-4)**

1. The Gentiles were wrong to reject God because of the hypocrisy of the Jews. **(Rom 2:24)**
2. Jesus wanted His disciples to know this in advance so that the rejection of men would not destroy their faith. **(Jn 16:1)**
3. Jesus willing tested these men in His ministry so that they could reason correctly! **(Jn 6:61, 66-69)**
4. What do you really know? Will your faith stand upon it?

II. One example in the ministry of Christ

A. Jesus faced a woman that had “great faith.” He knew this in advance, but he wanted to demonstrate this to His disciples. Consider 4 tests Jesus gave her.

1. **Jesus refused to answer her in a time of great need. (Matt 15:21-23a)**

- a. Do you realize what it meant to be “severely demon possessed”?
- b. Consider the anguish of the parent who had to witness this!
- c. She only asked for mercy, how does He answer? **Jesus ignored her!**

2. **Jesus’ disciples asked that Jesus send her away. (Matt 15:23)**

- a. Jesus disciples were saying “Get rid of her.”
- b. Did the actions of Jesus disciples reflect upon Jesus?
- c. Satan can block us from the truth when we are hot-headed and sensitive.

3. **Jesus said that He was sent only to the Jews. (Matt 15:24)**

- a. Would she think that Jesus was a racist? These tests are getting harder.
- b. The woman’s response: “Help me.” Did she understand why all of this was happening? I doubt it.
- c. Did she know who Jesus was? **Yes!** She did not quit.

4. **Jesus said that it was not good to take the “children’s” bread and feed it to the “dogs”. (Matt 15:26)**

- a. A dog at this time would be like a rat or a buzzard in our times. If the daughter were a dog, what did that make the mother?
- b. Most would be angry if you said something about their sick child.
- c. How would the average person respond? “I thought you were the Lord, I guess I was wrong.” How would you have responded?
- d. Listen to her reply: “Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.”

B. This woman knew something about God.

1. This woman had humility. “Do not give me a dish, just the crumbs.”
2. Those Jews who got the dish by in large rejected it! **(1 Pt 2:8)**
3. Aren’t you glad this daughter had this kind of mother?
4. Jesus blessed this woman and proclaimed that she had a great faith. **(Mt 15:28)**

III. Lessons for us

A. When we quit, we cheat ourselves. **(Heb 10:38-39)**

1. What if this woman had become angry and quit? Her daughter would have been cursed for a lifetime.
2. Some parents today are teaching their children how to quit.

B. Let every test draw you closer to God. **(Lk 18:1-8)**

1. How does God view quitters? **(Lk 14:28-30, 33)**
2. Why did Jesus never quit? **(Heb 12:2-3)**

C. Let us not be the source of stumbling to another. **(Mk 9:42; 1 Cor 8:9, 13)**

Conclusion: Our God will provide for us if we would let Him. **(Jude 24)**

A. Hell will be full of sensitive people. **(Matt 11:6)**

B. Heaven will be full of hurt people who never quit following the Lord. **(Rev 21:3-4)**

Starting Over

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Introduction: The opportunity to start over is both a great blessing and a frightening challenge

- A. It is rare when you get a chance to start over in something that matters.
 - 1. In my golf game I often award myself “mulligans.”
 - 2. There were teachers who gave a test over when the class did poorly.
 - 3. I had ball games that were rained out and had to be replayed.
- B. There are things that cannot be changed.
 - 1. Esau learned this through bitter experience. (**Heb 12:16-17**)
 - 2. Starting over will only involve things that can be changed and things that are under the control of your will!
 - 3. Sadly, there are Christian parents who look back with great regret. (Ex. “The twig has been bent.”)
 - 4. Time can make a huge difference. Will you carefully consider these things today?

I. The forgiveness of God is an opportunity to start over

- A. What God offers us in forgiveness is beyond description!
 - 1. We are blind men given sight and prisoners freed from darkness. (**Isa 42:7**)
 - 2. We are given a new life as a child of God. (**Rom 6:3-4; 2 Cor 5:17**)
- B. We can “start over” at any time. (**Rev 22:17**)
 - 1. Many find this hard to believe. (**Mt 20:3-16**)
 - 2. Remember that our God has emphasized this aspect of His nature. (**Ex 34:6-7**)
- B. The example of Zacchaeus and Jesus. (**Luke 19:1-4**)
 - 1. Zacchaeus never expected that this day was to be one in which he would “start over”.
 - 2. It probably shocked Zacchaeus that Jesus was even interested in him. (**Luke 19:5-6**)
 - 3. The world’s thinking about God and sinners was expressed by the critics of Jesus. Maybe Zacchaeus had accepted this falsehood. (**Luke 19:7**)
 - 4. God’s way to start over always involves repentance. (**Luke 19:8**)
 - a. When God offers you a chance to start over, you can do it!
 - b. Still, the call of repentance causes most to turn away.
 - c. Do you really trust God?
 - 5. Jesus wants you to know that He is seeing you as well! (**Luke 19:9-10**)
 - 6. Some possible excuses Satan would offer Zacchaeus.
 - a. “I am too evil.” b. “I just can not live the Christian life.”
 - c. “I have gone too far into sin.”

II. Christians have opportunities to start over

- A. We can start well but drift to a point where we must “start over.”
 - 1. The church at Ephesus had a great start but they lost something essential.

(Rev 2:2-5)

2. In many ways this kind of “starting over” can be more difficult than becoming a Christian. (Ex. How many fallen Christians in this area?)
 3. You must renew your conscience, overcome pride, and have the courage to change if you are to start over. (Ex. Eldership that cannot admit mistakes)
- B. It takes a great faith to leave the familiar!
1. Israel left Egypt, but most of them had no faith. **(Heb 4:1-2)**
 2. Look at the trivial things they complained about! **(Num 11:4-6)**
 3. Most Christians who will be lost will let things like this defeat them.
- C. Where are you right now? What is holding you back from fully serving the Lord?
1. Just as He did with the rich young ruler, Jesus right now sees your heart and knows the things you must let go of. Will You? **(Mk 10:21-22)**
 2. Ultimately you must be converted again. This happened to Peter: “when once you have turned again” (NASV) **(Lk 22:31-32)**
 3. This change is so great that Jesus describes Himself as being on the outside looking in. **(Rev 3:20)**

III. The difference between starting over and duplicating sin

- A. Some people start over with some regret, temporary change but no change of heart. **(2 Cor 7:9)**
1. When you are locked in worldly sorrow, you are not ready to really change!
 2. You may have some pain, but you repeat the same plans! (Ex. Woman who found her husband had cheated and was an alcoholic)
- B. A change brought by faith will take enormous “risks.”
1. Those at Ephesus who wished to repent of belief in Magic did not sell their books at a yard sale. **(Acts 19:18-20)**
 2. We have those in churches that give advice that do not understand the nature of a real faith. (Ex. “You do not have to give.”)
- C. Others will be affected by your decision.
1. What if Zacchaeus decided that following the Lord would be too much of a financial sacrifice?
 2. His friends and especially his family would likely never know the Lord.
 3. “All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.” - Edmund Burke
- D. These principles can be applied to other Christian duties as well.
1. Our relationship with our mate. **(Ephesians 5:25-30)**
 2. Our efforts to grow as a Christian. **(Philippians 1:9)**
 3. Our work in reaching the lost. **(Luke 19:10; Matthew 28:19-20)**
 4. Our attitude towards other Christians. **(Ephesians 4:31-32)**

Conclusion: You will never regret beginning again.

- A. After meeting with Jesus he lived a victorious life. **(Jn 21:15-19)**
- B. Do you hear the knock?