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Why They Left and Why They Stayed

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John 6:66 says, "From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more" (NKJV).

In some ways, it is comforting to know people even walked away from Jesus just as they walk away from Him today. Yet, in other ways, it is shocking to think if not even Jesus could keep disciples committed then how can imperfect people like us keep disciples committed? In the context of John 6, there are three key reasons we might identify that led people to walk away from Jesus. Yet, there is one key reason why some of His disciples stayed. Let's take a look at three of the causes...because, people really are not that different today.

They left because they were not interested in Jesus, but the bread. Jesus Himself knew it when He said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life..." (John 6:26-27). Some people come to Christians and to churches just seeking physical blessing. This is why the "Prosperity Gospel" is so popular. It caters to people's desires. Yet, Christians and churches are not ATM machines anymore than Jesus was a bread bakery. We have something greater to offer as followers of Christ, the eternal life found in Jesus Christ Himself, who is "the bread of life" (6:35).

They left because they were discouraged by skepticism. In John 6:42 some of the critics of Jesus say, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, 'I have come down from heaven.'" Some people misunderstand and twist the statements of Jesus and the statements of Scripture "to their own destruction" (see 2 Peter 3:16). For some, all it takes is a quick one-liner or a jab of skepticism and they think they have the "evidence" they need to disbelieve. Yet, a deeper look at the statements of these critics could have quickly dismantled their mic drop moment.

They left because they were offended by some of the "hard sayings" of Jesus (see John 6:60-61). Maybe it was "hard" because they did not understand what Jesus meant when He was explaining His "flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed" (6:55). Maybe it was "hard" because they just did not want to commit to this new lifestyle. Yet, either way, some people walk away from Jesus because they do not want to work to "rightly divide the word of truth" or to make application of it in their lives (2 Timothy 2:15).

So, why did they stay? Simply, Peter knew what the "signs" meant about Jesus. So, He says, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68, NKJV). Who else can authoritatively claim to have power in your eternal destiny? Helton Drive

On a Daily Basis

Bill Hall

A man, asked recently to describe memories of his college days twenty-five years ago, replied, "A few big moments; many goofs, but, overall, pleasant memories."

Would these words not describe our memories of life generally? As we recall our years, there are always the "big" moments, the emotional "highs," that we love to relish. Then there are the "goofs," the embarrassing occasions that just keep coming back to haunt us. But, through it all, the pleasant memories sufficiently prevail to enable us to feel generally good about life.

But, in reality, success or failure in life is not determined by the “big moments” or “the goofs.” We will not be eternally saved on the basis of a few great spiritual achievements or eternally lost on the basis of a few gross mistakes (assuming they have been repented of). Life consists of everyday actions and decisions, and it is these that bring ultimate success or failure, eternal happiness or eternal damnation. “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me” (Luke 9:23).

It is one thing to express concern for our children as we talk of their future spirituality and faithfulness. It is quite another to provide on a daily basis a spiritual atmosphere in the home, a good example of godliness and faithfulness, consistent and loving discipline and a love for God and respect for our fellowman that are so essential to the training of our children. It’s the little impressions that are made day by day that prove to be so decisive.

It is one thing to dream of some day being appointed an elder in the church. It is quite another thing to put forth the effort on a daily basis to learn the Scriptures, to develop leadership ability, to grow spiritually, and to live as to gain the confidence of a discerning congregation. One does not qualify for the eldership in one big leap. It comes through daily development.

It is one thing to talk a “good line” on priorities. It is quite another thing to put God first on a daily basis. The devil knows so many ways to test our resolve in these realms. Our intentions are good, but, through his subtlety, he has us selling our souls for a mess of pottage or thirty pieces of silver.

It is one thing to think that we would die for the Lord if our faith were so tested. It is quite another thing truly to live for Him on a daily basis. Egos may be fed on the “big moments,” but true spirituality develops through daily prayer, study and meditation.

Our lesson is this. Set your goals for the future, and set them high. But recognize that it’s the little, day-by-day moments, the often forgotten moments, accumulated through the years, that truly shape our destiny. Tomorrow’s success depends upon the choices and decisions that are made today. Make them with care. Greenwood, IN Bulletin 2/25/24

When I Consider...

“When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him?” Psalms 8:3-4

This is a question that many men have asked. David again wondered: *LORD, what is man, that You take knowledge of him? Or the son of man, that You are mindful of him? Psalms 144:3*

Job also: *“What is man, that You should exalt him, That You should set Your heart on him, That You should visit him every morning, ...” Job 7:17-18*

Across centuries and circumstances, these men were awestruck by the same truth—God’s attention toward man is as astonishing as His creation is vast.

The moon, planets, and constellations of stars are so vast and far away—yet God has fixed each one in its place with precision. This reminds us that nothing in creation is beyond His control. Yet, in this vast universe, we cannot help but wonder why humanity means so much to the Creator. Why in all of His creation God is so willing to look after him and care for him? It is hard to comprehend isn’t it. That God loves man that He daily cares for Him, blesses Him and ultimately sent His only Son to die for his sins. In our humility we also contemplate why indeed.

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