

**Schedule of Meeting Times:**

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM  
*Speaker, Robert Emerson*  
 Study Sunday 10:00 AM  
 Worship Sunday Morn 11:00 AM  
 Worship Sunday Eve 5:00 PM  
*Singing every 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday evening*  
 Study Wednesday 7:00 PM

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“...Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica...”

—2 Timothy 4:10

**Servants during August:**

**Songleader:** Peter (5), Stanley (12), Larry (19), David (26)

**Reading:** David

**Announcements:** Larry

**Table:** Mike Beckman, Robert, Marty, Stanley

**Wednesday Lesson:** Stanley (1), Kris (8), Larry (15), Stanley (22), Kris (29)

**Lawn Mowing (week starting):** Larry (5), Kris (12), Marty (19), Stanley (26)

**Area Meetings:** Mt. Zion, 9/19-22, Lowell Sallee; Hillsboro Heights, 9/19-22, Ed Brand; East Albertville, 9/19-22, Billy Randolph; South Cullman, 9/30-10/3, J.R. Bronger

**Hays Mill church of Christ**

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# The Bible . Examiner

“Examine everything carefully...” —1 Thessalonians 5:21 NASB

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# How to Avoid a Spiritual Failure

*By Paul Earnhart*

In his final hours in Rome, awaiting an inevitable execution, a very lonely apostle Paul suffered some additional heartbreak. “Demas,” he wrote, “hath forsaken me, having loved this present world,” 2 Tim 4:10. We are left to speculate as to the particulars—what dread fears or powerful allurements led this faithful friend and co-worker to abandon the kingdom of God and to forsake his burdened brother. It was not as though he had fled the field at the first approach of trouble. During Paul’s first imprisonment in Rome Demas had evidently been a steadfast companion, Phile 24; Col 4:14. Now, unexpectedly, this heart-mauling betrayal and desertion.

Paul said that Demas “loved this present world.” The “world” is many

things. John describes it as a way of thinking where lust, materialism and pride abound, 1 Jn 2:15,16. What was it that got to the faithful Demas? Was it fear of death or imprisonment? Or was it something more subtle like a nostalgic longing for the old easy ways free of constant warfare? We are not told which one of these undid Demas but one of them found its mark.

Breaking points can come to us too if we are not very careful. A deep hurt we cannot find it in ourselves to forgive. A disappointing marriage. Failures with our children. Lost health or prosperity. Anything we had never imagined happening to us. And often it’s just plain prideful stubbornness. At any rate, don’t ever say you’d never do what others have done. You’ve never been all the places you could


be. Peter learned a valuable lesson about that, Mt 26:31-35. It is far better that we know our own weaknesses and watch and pray that we enter not into temptation, Mt 26:41. Satan loves an arrogant and self-confident man.

Another lesson to be learned from the failure of others is that those who at last go back, at first look back. Departures of apparent suddenness are really the end of a process. Our Lord warned that those who put their hand to the kingdom plow and look back longingly at the world are not fit for the kingdom of God, Lk 9:62. The disciples who go back are those who first begin to cultivate again the values of the world and like the Israelites in the wilderness grow nostalgic amidst their trials for the fleshpots of Egypt. They forget, of course, the galling bondage that accompanies the life of sin. These are the ones who gradually cease to meditate upon God's word, Psa 1:1,2, then become prayerless, Jas 4:1,2, as God and Christ seem far away. First men cease to study, then to pray, and, finally, to care.

Sometimes this all begins as a casual flirtation, a few little compromises dismissed as harmless. Too much time with worldly companions, 1 Cor 15:33, too much interest in a job, 1 Tim 6:9,10, too much concern with being accepted and making our mark in the world, 1 Pet 5:5. Finally, it becomes a

passionate love affair that makes us heedless of the injury we do to our Savior, ourselves and others.

Satan is the master of the "short step" method. Slow change is more effective in producing spiritual collapse than sudden departure. The danger of alerting the victim to what is happening is eliminated. We can be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, Heb 3:12,13. Warning flags need to start flying the moment we feel the slightest ebb in commitment. Beware the spiritual slow leak.

The unfailing answer to this kind of spiritual failure is the daily discipline of an uncompromising dedication which admits of no exceptions and makes quick and humble redress for every transgression. Burn all your bridges and press on to the heavenly mark, Phil 3:7-14. And if, in spite of everything, you happen to stumble badly, don't let despair destroy you. Remember that everyone who has faltered has not ultimately fallen. We can all thank God for that. John Mark's disgraceful desertion in Pamphylia, Acts 13:13, was not the end of him because he didn't allow it to be. Paul sent for him during his last hours, 2 Tim 4:11, and the Holy Spirit chose him to record the gospel story. We don't have to be like Demas. In the mercy of God we have the privilege of being like John Mark or Peter, and, yes, even Paul. 

# What Will I Leave Behind?

*By Frank Himmel*

Acts chapter 9 tells about a Christian named Dorcas who lived in Joppa. "This woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity which she continually did," v36. Dorcas fell sick and died. The disciples washed her body and laid it in an upper room. They then sent for Peter, who was at nearby Lydda. "So Peter arose and went with them. When he arrived, they brought him into the upper room; and all the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing all the tunics and garments that Dorcas used to make while she was with them," v39. Peter had plenty of material to preach an impressive funeral sermon, but he did something even greater: he raised her from the dead! The Bible doesn't reveal any other information about Dorcas. How old was she? What did she look like? Was she married? Did she have children or grandchildren? Was she a woman of considerable means or did she have little? We could guess, but that's all it would be—a guess. What we do know about this woman is enough to raise a question worth considering. The Bible emphasizes the good she left behind. Now the question is: What will I leave behind? I will leave behind whatever material thing I have. "For we

have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either," 1 Tim 6:7. What will those rummaging through my stuff find? Will they find any evidence of a God-centered life, or will everything point to a life focused on self?

What will I leave to others? Will there be anyone who can produce a gift I gave to them? Will anyone have a memory of how I provided for them in a time of need, the way Dorcas did for these widows?

What example will I leave? Will it be one of faithful service to God? Would it be the kind that might encourage a struggling Christian to remain faithful? Would it strengthen others to stand firm for truth?

What words of mine will people remember? Will it be words of encouragement or mostly complaining? Words of kindness or words of bitterness and anger? Will anyone remember me having taught them God's word?

What difference will it make? Will my brethren even miss me? Will it leave any appreciable void in the local congregation?

What will I leave behind? 

## Remember in Prayer

Pray for brethren suffering very real **persecution** in places like **Afghanistan and China**; as well as those suffering **deprivation** in places like **Zimbabwe**, and those suffering due to **natural disaster** in

the **United States**; and pray fervently for **our leaders**, as well, 1 Tim 2:1,2. Please continue to pray for brethren here as well: **Madelene Britnell, Carolyn Dennis, and Tim and Dot Hice, and Joyce Smith.** 