

# Symptoms of a Shifting Faith

From the Lord to a Person



Disciples are called to keep their faith in Jesus alone and not let it shift to faith in a person, group, event, or possession.

## 1. We need to know sin hinders the abundant life Jesus desires us to experience while walking through this sinful world:

- A. We know from scripture that **sin is our greatest danger** (Genesis 3; Romans 5:12; 6:20-21, 23a; 1 Peter 2:11; 2 Peter 1:4b; James 4:7; 1 John 3:8; Ephesians 4:26, 27; James 1:13-15, 20).
  
- B. We know from scripture that **we have a sin problem** (Luke 7:29-30; Romans 3:23; 7:7, 13).
  
- C. We know from scripture **Jesus is the only one who can save us from our sins** - eternally and temporally (John 14:6; Mark 1:15; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Romans 10:9; Romans 5:10; Romans 6:1-4, 6-7; 2 Corinthians 12:9; Galatians 2:20; 2 Peter 1:3-4; Titus 2:11-14).

2. **We need to know what abundant life looks like as we walk through this sinful world if we are to properly diagnosis our faith has shifted from Jesus alone.**

Our lives will be characterized by the following scriptures as we walk through this sinful world looking to Jesus each step of the way.

A. **Ephesians 1:3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,**

B. **Galatians 5:14** For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: **"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."**

C. **1 Corinthians 13:4-8a** Love is **patient** and **kind**; love **does not envy or boast**; it is **not arrogant** or **rude**. It **does not insist on its own way**; it is **not irritable** or **resentful**; it **does not rejoice at wrongdoing**, but **rejoices with the truth**. Love **bears** all things, **believes** all things, **hopes** all things, **endures** all things. Love **never ends**.

- D. **1 John 5:2-3** By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. (*We express God's love He has given us by obeying His commands.*)
- E. **1 Peter 1:22-23** Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;
- F. **Galatians 5:22-23** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
- G. **Ephesians 4:17-6:20; Colossians 3:1-4:6** (Characteristics of a person living by faith the Lord alone. (Remember, saving faith obeys the Lord - **Romans 1:5 "obedience that comes from faith"** is proper translation of **"obedience of faith"**.)

We live the above scriptures by faith in the Son of God. **Galatians 2:20** is how the Apostle lived out the above scriptures (Pages 59-64 in Life Plan).

**Repentance from sin** and **faith in God**, (The first two milk doctrines on pages 98-103 of the Life Plan) are how we get back on the path of godly living, the paths of righteousness, when we realize we have strayed from them.

**FACT: We live the abundant life we have received from Jesus by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9) by grace through faith (2 Corinthians 12:9; Galatians 2:20).**

### **3. Symptoms that we have shifted our faith from the Lord Jesus to a person, group, event or possession:**

- A. When a person is not living by faith in the Son of God, he is living by faith in a person, group, event, or possession and is unable to access the resources of God to live a life of expressing love, a life lived in obedience to God's Word (1 John 5:2-3). If a person's object of faith can't provide the result needed to have a sense of well-being, he experiences a lack of abundant life, a lack of the fruit of the Spirit, a lack of building other people up according to their need, a lack

of being a godly mate and parent, and does not make Jesus look good (glorify Jesus).

- B. People are often unaware when they shift the object of their faith to a person, group, event, or possession and wonder what happened. If we could quickly diagnose that we have shifted our faith away from the Lord and to a person, group, event, or possession, then we could take restorative action. The restorative action is **repent, confess our sin** and **ask the Lord to help us get our faith back in Him** alone.
- C. The following are symptoms of shifted faith. *Ask yourself if you have experienced any of these. Note them, and think about why you experienced them. Would you have experienced them if you had your faith in God alone? Did you place your faith in a person, group, event, or possession expecting your need to be fulfilled? What was the need? Ask, "How would I have handled the situation if I had my faith in God alone?"*
- Irritation.
  - Unrighteous anger (angry and sinning in your anger).

- Anger at God because things didn't happen as you expected (not trusting God to always be your help - Romans 8:32 - and not attributing evil to sin and Satan where it belongs).
- Pain and defensiveness when you thought someone insulted you.
- Pain and defensiveness when someone rebukes or corrects you.
- Sinning to meet a need that is begging to be met instead of waiting on God to meet your need in a righteous way.
- Responding to correction by shutting down or lashing out.
- Despondent when a sporting event goes wrong way.
- Hurt at loss of fellowship with grandkids or family member that hinders your joy, peace, production.
- Fearful, heavy, feeling because you think what you or someone else said will cause financial, friendship or some other type of harm and hurt your personal well-being.

- Fear of lack of daily provision indicates faith in people, health, economy, past decisions.
- Being faced with the impossibility of a need being met and complaining about it.
- Security in material wealth.
- If relations are not right with people and your sense of well-being leaves, your faith was in the relationship, not in the Lord.
- If a person important to you is living or thinking in ways you think are harmful and your sense of well-being is compromised, then your faith is in that person to meet your need by thinking or living in a particular way.
- The need to defend yourself to maintain a sense of well-being is trusting in your reputation and self. See 2 Corinthians 11:1-12:31. (Defending yourself to help those you serve is sometimes necessary, but is not done to maintain a sense of well-being.)
- Appreciation is sought from people to maintain sense of well-being.

- Desiring the praise of people to have a sense of well-being.
- Revenge thinking when someone has done something you consider wrong and it ruins your well-being.
- Lack of confidence in being and doing what is God's will.
- Arrogance is trusting in yourself.
- The hurt felt when you are told by a person, "I wouldn't have been in relationship with you if I had known you better."
- Anger when you see people not doing what you think is right and responding in an ungodly way to them.
- Particular possessions are needed for you to have a sense of peace, joy, sense of well-being.

#### **4. Conclusion**

If we make ourselves aware of what it's like to live by faith in God, then we can know when we are spiritually healthy.

Spiritually healthy people:



- experience the fruit of the Spirit (**Galatians 5:22-23**).
- experience contentment (**Philippians 4:10-13**).
- are able to gently restore people (**Galatians 6:1**).
- are able to gently teach those who oppose them (**2 Timothy 2:24-26**).

When these are absent from our life, we are not living by faith in the Son of God. We may have affliction in carrying out God's will, yet we can rejoice (2 Corinthians 7:4 "...In all our affliction, I am overflowing with joy." See also Acts 16:19-26). We can be afflicted in every way, yet not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed (2 Corinthians 4:8-9). If we are looking to Jesus as we walk through this sinful world, we will not get run over by sin (Psalm 25:15; Hebrews 12:1-2).

If we know what abundant life looks like; if we make ourselves aware of the symptoms of trusting in someone or something other than God, then we can quickly take the cure for sin made available to us by Jesus.

**The steps are:**

- Repent and forsake our sin of shifting our faith to someone or something other than the Lord.
- Confess our sin to God.
- Ask God to get our faith back in Him alone.