

Small group optional guide: Turning away from the faith

UP; we grow in our love for Jesus through the word & worship

WORD: key scriptures: Heb 10: v26,27,35,36 // False Teaching: Matt 24:4, 1Tim 4:1 // Deception: 2Cor11:13-15, 2 John 1:7 // Persecution: 2Tim 3:12, 1 Pet 4:13 // Challenge: Heb 6:4-7, 10:26-27 // Assurance: John 6:37-39, Mat 24:13, 1John 4:13, Eph 1:13-14, Rom 8:14

Apostasy, the act of turning away from faith, is a real danger when people allow unresolved spiritual issues to harden their hearts and open doors to the enemy's influence. The Bible warns that believers must guard against false teaching, deception, and persecution. False teaching distorts the gospel by focusing on minor issues and neglecting the core truths of who God is and what He has done. Knowing Scripture well enough to recognise God's nature and character helps believers detect error and stay anchored in truth. Deception often appears as a subtle twist of truth rather than an outright lie. It spreads quietly and must be confronted quickly before it takes root.

Persecution, whether emotional or physical, can challenge faith. Hardship and suffering often lead to doubts, but doubts do not have to push believers away from God. They can be brought honestly to Jesus, who welcomes questions and points His followers back to the evidence of who He is and what He has done.

Some people wonder if salvation can be lost. The clear teaching is that true salvation, given by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, cannot be lost. A person may attend church or appear religious yet never fully trust in Jesus for forgiveness. Real faith is shown through true repentance and a heart surrendered to Christ's finished work. Confidence in salvation comes both from God's faithful promises and from the fruit the Holy Spirit produces in a believer's life. Spiritual growth, trust in God, and a life that remains connected to Jesus all point to genuine saving faith.

Endurance is possible because the Holy Spirit lives within every believer, guarding faith and producing maturity through trials. Hardships develop perseverance, shape character, and build hope. Each Christian has a personal responsibility to stand firm in daily spiritual battles by holding

fast to truth, rejecting lies, and remembering God's promises. By keeping their eyes on Jesus, believers can endure with hope, knowing He will complete what He began and reward those who remain faithful.

Reflection Questions: 1.Which component of falling away (false teachers, deception and persecution), do you believe you're most susceptible to? 2.How could you be accountable about this? I.e. awareness of influence on social media that you're exposed to, vulnerability in challenging times of life 3.Share with one another the fruit you see in your own life and the lives of those you're with. This could be indicative of the fruits of the Spirit, indication of present trust in Jesus and/or observations of growth in character.

IN; we connect and learn to love one another

As we end this series on Spiritual warfare, please use this prayer, break down into 2s/3s and pray this out in turn, then pray the truth into one another:

Dear Heavenly Father, I praise You and honour You as my Lord and Saviour. You are in control of all things. I thank You that You are always with me and will never leave me nor forsake me...Thank You for the life I now have in Christ. I ask You to fill me with the Holy Spirit so I can be guided by You and not carry out the desires of the flesh. I declare my total dependence upon You and I take my stand against Satan and all his lying ways...I choose to believe the truth of God's Word despite what my feelings may say. I refuse to be discouraged; You are the God of all hope. Nothing is too difficult for You. I am confident that You will supply all my needs as I seek to live according to Your Word.....I now take my stand against Satan and command him and all his evil spirits to depart from me. I choose to put on the full armour of God so I may be able to stand firm against all the devil's schemes. I submit my body as a living and holy sacrifice to You, and I choose to renew my mind by Your living Word. By so doing I will be able to prove that Your will is good, acceptable, and perfect for me. In the name of my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, I pray.