
Words of Truth

When Someone Is Unstable

By: Brian A. Yeager

The inspired Apostle Peter wrote about false teachers among the people as they had been in times past (II Peter 2:1-3). He wrote about God's past judgment and continued plans to judge the erring while saving the just (II Peter 2:4-11). In addressing the mentality of these false teachers, and how they preyed upon certain people, Peter penned these words: *"But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; **beguiling unstable souls**: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet. These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage"* (II Peter 2:12-19).

As you read the above, among many things to consider, you can see that unstable souls are targets of false teachers. The fact is, unstable souls are easily persuaded towards false conclusions. They even do it to themselves. As Peter continued to write his second inspired epistle, he addressed those whom did not believe in the return of Christ (II Peter 3:1-14). In that context, he wrote this: *"And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; **in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.** Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen"* (II Peter 3:15-18). So, whether moved by false teachers or wounded by themselves, unstable individuals are prone to falling away. Let's consider some things about this.

A Few Thoughts About Being Unstable

As you study through the Scriptures, you learn that the people of God are supposed to be steadfast, ready to stand firm, etc. (Psalms 112:5-6, Psalms 125:1, I Corinthians 15:58, I Corinthians 16:13, Galatians 5:1, Philippians 1:27, Philippians 4:1, Colossians 1:23, II Thessalonians 2:15, Hebrews 3:14, Hebrews 10:23, and I Peter 5:8-9). Saints expect to go through difficult times (Acts 14:22). Saints expect to go through various trials that being faithful in this ungodly world brings about (I Peter 4:12-19). Saints expect to have to stand against false brethren (Jude 1:3-4). We get through all of this because of the hope we have in Christ as our anchor (Hebrews 6:10-20). Therefore, we ought to be the most stable people on the planet.

The fact is, saints haven't always been stable even when they should have been. The disciples of our Lord in Ephesus had the Spirit of God working through them, granting them spiritual gifts (Acts 19:1-7, Ephesians 1:7-14, and Ephesians 4:7-12). Those gifts were temporary, until the faith was fully revealed (Ephesians 4:13; cf. I Corinthians 13:8-13). Since they had not come to a point wherein they could have been fully guided in the truth, because the whole truth was not yet revealed, they were not able to be completely stable. This was written to them: *"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive"* (Ephesians 4:14). The fact that all they could know was not yet revealed made them targets. We have all things revealed. Therefore, we are without excuse. If we reach a point wherein we fail, it is because of our unwillingness to be fully anchored.

As I think of these things I think about all the people I have worked with over the years. In over twenty years of teaching, I can only think of three times wherein I had to stop teaching someone because of that person's instability. It was with the same three men I mentioned in the article last week. Those men were so unstable that there was no chance I could have continued to try to teach them. Now, I have been part of Scripturally withdrawing from many individuals (Matthew 18:15-20, Romans 16:17-18, II Thessalonians 3:6-15, etc.). Yet, in all the cases I can remember there would be a chance for me to teach those people if they wanted to come back to the Lord. With unstable souls though, what can be done? When you watch someone blow back and forth, they end up going so far from the Lord that restoration is seemingly impossible (Hebrews 10:26-39).

Conclusion

My dear brethren, do not become so unstable that you never stop moving away from the Lord. There are those that can become unstable in all their ways (James 1:8). If you are facing instability, right the ship before it sinks (James 4:6-10). Please do not become unstable to the point wherein the faithful will have no idea how to stop you from moving too far away!