

From the Atheist to the Adulterer: It's Not Too Late

"As a bird that wanders from her nest, so is a man who wanders from his place" (Prov. 27:8).

It's no secret that our generation has wandered severely off course: schools resemble battlegrounds, the family is in chaos, sexual perversion is an epidemic, and truth is mocked. We should be mourning for our Nation and the future of our children. Are we too numb or indifferent to comprehend?

"Wander" means to depart, stray or retreat from what we know to be right. Proverbs 13:15 reminds us that "the way of the transgressor" is hard. For many, this is an understatement if we are fighting against God—fighting against what we know to be right. As the old hymn so brilliantly declares, "Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love."

Conviction is a gift. It's very healthy to mourn and repent (as long as we don't stay in that state). God's mercy and grace finds a way to open the ears of our understanding, sometimes through painful circumstances. When we feel the pain of burning asphalt, we retreat for cooler ground. In the same way, pain often helps us return to God. But many mistakenly believe that they've done too much damage; that God can't use them now. But that's not true. God will often use pain to lead us back to Him.

God is always pursuing: "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Even when I was living like hell, heaven was beckoning. Even when I was denying My Savior, He never denied me: "Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your lovingkindness remember me, on account of your goodness, O Lord" (Ps. 25:7).

You'd be amazed at what God can do with humility, brokenness and repentance—like clay in the hands of a potter He molds and shapes as we submit to His work. Religion tries to reach up to God: do, do, do. But Christianity can be defined as God reaching down to man. He pursues sinners; sinners do not pursue Him. Charles Spurgeon said, "Men do not seek God first; God seeks them first; and if any of you are seeking Him today it is because He has first sought you."

There are no excuses for rejecting God. He uses conviction, the Word, books, articles, blogs, friends, pastors, teachers and preachers to spread His message of love, grace, repentance and salvation. It is not easy to enter hell. A person has to fight God their entire life, ignore His love, suppress conviction and reject His pursuit.

Evolution, for example, is simply a by-product of angry men who do not want to submit to God. They have rejected His call and have suppressed conviction—they worship the creature rather than the Creator (cf. Romans 1). To say that we evolved from primordial ooze is the height of arrogance. Psalm 14:1 says, "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.'"

Some may argue, "How can a loving God send anyone to hell?" He doesn't send anyone—they reject Him and separate themselves from His love. With this comes questions that I cannot fully answer, but I will not judge God based on my limited understanding. In practical turns, I still drive my vehicle even though I have no clue how it all works.

Romans 1:18-20 tells us that "we are without excuse" because God's attributes are clearly seen; they bear witness to a Creator. In the act of salvation, God receives all the glory and all the credit. We are never outside of His sovereignty and control. But we must receive His offer of salvation.

Let me leave you with this question: If the enemy goes to and fro like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet.

5:8), and the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him (2 Chr. 16:9), who finds you—the adversary or God? Are you loyal to God by obeying His Word, or do you often stray from the Shepherd and become easy prey?

Don't let this discourage you. After all, "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). Fall forward into God's arms of restoration and forgiveness. Jesus said, in Mark 10:15, "Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall not enter it." Receive it today and be and experience tremendous peace and hope—from the atheist to the adulterer, and from the addict to the arrogant. It's not too late. Turn to Him today.

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