

What to Do When Your Loved One Stops Believing in God

In late 2018, a close friend of mine tragically lost her cousin to gun violence. The unexpected, brutal death of her 16-year-old family member turned her world upside down, and as she grieved the loss of one of her favorite people, she started to feel as though God stopped answering her prayers.

She felt abandoned, and in her difficult time, she stopped believing. The biblical teachings she once turned to for wisdom and comfort became passages she no longer trusted. I witnessed a drastic change in my friend's faith, and although I could not order her how to feel or think, I wanted to gently remind her of the power, wisdom, grace and love God provides us, especially in our darkest hour.

When faith and fleshly feelings intersect, there are two directions a person can go—their feelings may intensify so they exhibit more love, faith and mercy, thus leading them closer to God, or they completely back away from their faith due to disappointment and sadness, thus abandoning the Father they once loved and trusted. No matter which path a person chooses, He made us to love others. God loves us no matter what, and since we are made in His image, we must love anyway, too.

Love is a powerful tool and so is prayer: "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us" (1 John 5:14). When your loved one stops believing and you'd like to help them find their way back to their faith, keep that person in your prayers. No matter what you say to change someone's mind, and no matter how convincing you may think you are, God is the only one who can shift someone's mind and heart.

So, add your loved one to your prayer list and pray diligently over their life.

Although your loved one's thought process and feelings are out of your control, there is something you can do within your power, and that's show your love for God through your lifestyle. As you live God's truth in your everyday life and demonstrate faithfulness, your loved one will see and experience faith in action. While you may not be outwardly stating why they should believe in God, your actions will do the work for you! When you live for God, your life becomes a living example of His Word.

Let us remember to respond to an unbeliever's feelings with love and intentionality. Pray for their heart, that they may realize the enemy is tugging at their heartstrings in hopes of permanently removing God from their heart. Address their feelings with care and respect. "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts. Always be ready to give an answer to every man who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you, with gentleness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15). Find opportunities to draw them back to a faith-filled lifestyle and mindset. When all else fails, never lose hope. After all, God never gives up on you, so let us treat the people in our lives in the same loving and merciful manner.

"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities nor powers, neither things present nor things to come, neither height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39). {eoa}

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