

7 Ways Believers Neglect Their Salvation

Read Time: 5 Minutes 3 Seconds

The writer of Hebrews says, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation” (2:3, NKJV).

The Greek word for neglect, (“having neglected” in its original tense in Greek), is “amelēsantes.” This means to pay no attention to, to make light of or to be negligent of. See Matthew 22:5 (ESV) for another instance when this word is used, i.e., “they paid no attention.”

Many Christians, including evangelicals, have made it a habit to neglect the basics of the faith, thus operating in a dangerous assumption that their salvation is always a settled fact despite how they live. However, this is not the teaching of the original apostles who wrote the sacred text. Even St. Peter admonished believers to ensure their calling and election (2 Peter 1:10).

The following are seven ways in which we can neglect our salvation:

1. Sporadic church attendance: When I first came to Christ in the late 1970s, committed Christians rarely missed Sunday services. Then about two decades ago, committed Christians came to church about three times per month. Then, around 14-15 years ago, so-called committed Christians started coming to church one to two times per month or less. Around 2008, our church attendance dropped by about 25%. I thought many people were leaving our church, but when I checked into it, I was shocked to find out that we were not losing members but that they were coming to church less frequently.

The writer to the Hebrew Christians warned us not to neglect

church assemblies but to exhort one another daily lest our hearts get hardened (Hebrews 3:12-13; Hebrews 10:25). The lack of frequent fellowship and mutual admonition is connected to the hardening of one's heart resulting in the neglect of one's salvation (Hebrews 10:26).

2. No accountability in our life: Hebrews admonishes us to exhort one another daily which means believers cannot merely attend church on Sundays and think that is enough (Hebrews 3:13). The early church met daily in the temple as well as house to house (Acts 2:46).

Hence, we all need close relationships with mature Christians who will hold us accountable to biblical standards and encourage us to seek God and pursue our divine assignment. We neglect our salvation when we refuse to allow ourselves to be accountable to mature believers.

3. Allowing ourselves to be led by every new trend: In the past several years, many sincere Christians have been distracted by conspiracy theories such as QAnon, novel teachings, numerous failed prophetic declarations and more. St. Peter instructed the church to crave pure spiritual milk so that they can grow (1 Peter 2:2). Satan tempts the saints by leading them astray from their sincere devotion to Christ (2 Corinthians 11:3).

When we stop feeding on God's word, we hinder our spiritual growth. This is why St. Paul admonished Timothy to keep his faith sincere with a pure heart and to avoid speculations, conspiracy theories, myths and anything that promotes questions rather than faith (2 Timothy 1:6). Unfortunately, many have wandered away from the truth because their focus was not on the gospel (1 Timothy 1:6).

I once spoke to a Christian who was obsessed with COVID-related conspiracy theories, and he wanted me to spend hours discussing this with him. After several minutes on the phone,

I asked him, "how many people are you winning to Christ, and are you discipling anybody?" He was silent on the phone for a moment, then answered, "no." I told him to focus on that and forget the conspiracy theories.

We could be neglecting our salvation by continually chasing every conspiracy theory and the latest novel teachings. (By novel teaching, I am referring to that which has not been taught previously in the historic church or has been cited as heretical in one of the major ecumenical councils.)

4. Not participating in church-based corporate exposition of Scripture: The Bible teaches us the importance of consistently sitting under the preaching and teaching of the word of God. St. Paul said, "faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God," meaning that our posture of continual learning under anointed teachers should never stop (Romans 10:17).

When a believer stops getting fed by mature, reliable shepherds called to feed the flock of God, they neglect their salvation. Also, Peter said that we should be fed by our shepherd (1 Peter 5:2). Hence, he is not referring to listening to random preachers, but sitting under those called to disciple and speak into our life so we can align with our divine assignment. We neglect our salvation when we infrequently sit under our local church's corporate teaching and preaching.

5. Not pursuing biblical discipleship: Every person is called to be a disciple and to make disciples. St. Paul admonished Timothy to focus on pouring into faithful men who can teach others. (2 Timothy 2:2). Jesus laid out a process of discipleship that included initiation into the body of Christ through water baptism followed by learning the teachings of the faith (catechism) (see Matthew 28:19-20). Every person who converted in the early church was instructed in the apostles doctrine (Acts 2:42; Hebrews 5:12-6:3). By refusing biblical discipleship, we are neglecting our salvation.

6. Not pursuing the Lord and seeking His kingdom first: Saint Paul instructed Timothy to flee youthful lusts and to pursue faith, love and peace with those who called upon the Lord with a pure heart (2 Timothy 2:22). As a shepherd since the early 1980s, I have seen that not everybody who is a church member seeks first His kingdom with a pure heart. Jesus said the great commandment includes loving God with all the heart and loving our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-40). When we refuse to seek His kingdom first, we neglect our salvation (Matthew 6:33).

7. Hardening our hearts because of trials and tribulations: Scripture makes it clear that God allows trials to test our faith so it can come forth as pure gold (1 Peter 1:7). Trials and tests can either make us better or make us bitter. According to the teachings of Jesus, those who harden their hearts because of worldly difficulties and distractions didn't receive the word with the right heart (Mark 4:13-20).

When we harden our hearts instead of seeking the Lord during challenging seasons of our life, we are neglecting our salvation.

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