

## Understanding and Avoiding Apostasy

Tragically several high-profile Christian leaders have fallen from the faith in the last year. This workshop will consider three crucial theological and pastoral questions about apostasy: (1) Why do leaders fall away? (2) How can we guard against falling away? (3) How should we treat those who fall away?

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### 1. Leaders who fall away

- a. Judas
- b. Peter
- c. Demas – 2 Timothy 4v10
- d. Alexander – 2 Timothy 4v14
- e. Hebrews

### 2. Why do leaders fall away?

- a. Mark 4v1-20
- b. Hebrews 3v7-19; 5v11-6v12

- c. Unbelief because of...
  - i. False teaching
  - ii. Suffering
  - iii. Distraction
  - iv. Disappointment

### **3. How can we guard against apostasy?**

- a. Have Biblical expectations of the Christian life – John 15v18-25; Acts 14v22
- b. Listen to God’s word and trust his promises – Hebrews 3v7-18
- c. Pray for Jesus’ help – Hebrews 5v14-16
- d. Encourage one another – Hebrews 3v13; 10v23-25
- e. Be honest about doubts and disappointments
- f. Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus/heaven – Hebrews 12v1-3; Romans 8v18; 2 Corinthians 4v16-18

### **4. How should we treat those who fall away?**

- a. Intervene to save those who are falling away – Jude 22-23
- b. Seek after those who have fallen away – Matthew 18v10-14
- c. Accept that those who do not repent and return were never true believers – Hebrews 6v4-8; 1 John 2v9

***Suggested Readings:***

Peter Brain, *Going the Distance – How to Stay Fit for a Lifetime of Ministry*

Paul Tripp, *Dangerous Calling*

John Piper, *Brothers we are not Professionals*

John Stevens, *How can I be sure?*

Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*

Julian Hardyman, *The Joy of Service*