

## Deviation From Sanctification

1 Peter 3:15, 1 Peter 1:16, Romans 3:10-12, Jeremiah 17:9-10, Revelation 2:3-4, Deuteronomy 7:1-4, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 1 Corinthians 6:20, 1 Peter 1:18-19, 1 Peter 2:12

### **Slide 1**

Deviation is the tendency to turn or swerve from a specified course. It may be only a small angle from the median line, but it's a deviation, nevertheless.

If you were looking down a 10 foot fence line and it had a deviation of half a degree, you probably wouldn't notice that it wasn't true.

But in a building 300 feet in length, a deviation of half a degree would make it to be off center by 34 inches causing all kinds of issues for the contractor since it couldn't be squared.

If I were to plot a course to our nearest star, Proxima Centauri, 4.3 light years away, and was just one-half degree off in my calculation, I'd miss my mark by 7,172,644,846 miles.

I'd be lost in space! Tiny deviations are as severe as big deviations when accuracy counts.

In fact, the term, deviant, refers to a person who has swerved from the norm of acceptable behavior into the unacceptable and forbidden.

Deviation in life is more visible when a person is considered to be in an important position, as was illustrated several years ago.

In fact, every person born is a deviant in the sense that he or she has swerved away from the righteousness and holiness of God. We have all deviated from the straight measuring line of God.

That's what makes us sinners, as God said through Paul in Romans 3:10-12, *"As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."*

It might be easy to understand deviation in the worldly sense of the word, but it's more difficult to recognize as it relates to Christians.

Remember, even though we may be saved, we still have our old sin nature, the natural man, and the heart is *"deceitful above all things."*

Jeremiah 17:9-10, *"The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? "I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward each person according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve."*

Only God can really detect the deviation, since we try to fool ourselves, or we just don't care. So Peter tries to help us straighten up our lives.

## **Slide 2**

1 Peter 3:15, *"But in your hearts revere [sanctify] Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."*

It may be difficult to see how deviation applies in this passage, but it does.

Peter said we're to sanctify God in our hearts, but when a Christian doesn't do that, even a tiny bit, then he or she has deviated from the God's standard.

That's what Christian deviation is. It means to wander off course. You may only wander a small bit, but it does have consequences: The consequences of lost blessings and a path of sinfulness.

Ephesus was a thriving church of believers who walked strongly for God, and Paul wrote beautiful things to them in his letter. They loved the Lord and didn't deviate from that love all the time Paul knew them.

However, a few decades further on, John had to write to them with this sad conclusion:

*Revelation 2:3-4, "You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first."*

They had wonderful perseverance and endurance, but they had left their first love and they weren't even conscience of it.

Slowly, step by step, that first love crept away only by the smallest fraction, but it was a deviation.

Once you slip, even the tiniest amount, it becomes easier to add a little more to that slip, then a little more, and a little more.

Sin is cunning and devious. It'll catch us out, and that's why Peter stressed that we must sanctify God in our hearts.

We must continually check for any known sin; keep short accounts; walk hand in hand with the Lord, and don't be attracted by the rubbish along the side of the Christian pathway.

In fact, I believe the wrong word was used in Revelation 2:4. The Ephesians didn't LOSE their first love; they LEFT it.

Think about Solomon. He began well and sought the Lord for wisdom but somewhere along the line he began to deviate in spite of being considered the wisest man who ever lived.

What caused that? Who knows? The reason for Satan's fall was pride in his own character and heart. He was filled with pride with his position and beauty.

I think possibly Solomon was the same. He broke God's fundamental instruction for the Jews concerning involvement with non-Jews.

*Deuteronomy 7:3-4, "Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, for they will turn your children away from following me to serve other gods, and the LORD's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you."*

Solomon not only married one heathen woman but 300 and kept another 700 as his own prostitutes.

They turned his heart away from God, therefore Solomon not only filled Jerusalem with idols for his pagan women, but he himself became an idol worshipper, an idolater.

It's sad that all his wisdom was utterly corrupted just because he began to deviate from God and failed to sanctify Him in his heart.

*God laid down the rules in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, "Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God."*

### Slide 3

We are to sanctify Christ as Lord in our hearts. That's a command, and so, as Christians, it's imperative that we do that. We either mean business with God or we don't.

So, what does it mean to sanctify the Lord in our hearts? This isn't an easy thing to do but it's all connected with perspective and ownership.

Who actually owns our hearts, our lives, once we become Christians? Surely the one who owns my heart is the one who has control.

Before we were converted, we owned our own hearts, that is, we owned and controlled our own lives. However, once we became Christians all that should've changed.

Consider it this way. You go and purchase a new computer, take it home, install it, and begin using use it.

A little later there's a knock at the door. It's the man from the electronics store where you bought your computer.

He says to you, *"I want to use your computer for a bit, the one you just bought. It came from my shop, so I'd like to use it."*

You respond, *"But it's my computer, I bought it. Use your own computer."*

The salesman says, *"Originally this computer was mine and so I have the right to use it when I want."* "No you can't," I said to him. *"It's mine. I paid for it in full. I own it now."*

What this illustration is trying to show is that ownership and possession are important.

If we purchase something with our own money, then legally it belongs to us. No one else has ownership of it unless I allow that to happen.

When we look at the spiritual application, there's an important lesson here. Jesus died for us on the cross. His death paid the ransom price for our redemption; paid it in full.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 6:20, *"You were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies."*

Peter himself said in 1 Peter 1:18-19, *"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect."*

We've been sanctified by Jesus. When we gave our lives to Him, it meant that we transferred ownership of our life to Jesus.

He purchased us with His own blood on the cross. He legally owns us and therefore we have no right to keep taking our lives back. Our lives belong to Him. They're His and His alone.

Therefore, to sanctify Christ as Lord in our hearts we must recognize the ownership that Jesus has over our life, so we must stop trying to take back our lives because we no longer own them!

Sanctification is linked with ownership and if we don't recognize that, then we're really going nowhere.

If you want part ownership of your life, you're like the computer salesman who didn't understand what a sales transaction and new ownership meant.

Let me ask you a question, *“Is Jesus Christ worth anything to you?”* If you’re a Christian, then He needs to have you in His hand. You can’t be part in the Lord’s hand and part in yours.

Why, in the light of eternal issues, would you tarnish His Lordship over your life?

Surely, it’s only a selfish person who lives for himself and lets Jesus stand at the door while you enjoy fleshly things, thinking you can turn to Him whenever it’s convenient.

Peter was clear when he said, *“revere (sanctify) the Lord in your heart.”* There’s no option or allowance not to do that if you don’t feel like it. Remember, the word “sanctify” means to make holy.

We can’t make our own sinful lives holy. There’s only One who can sanctify us, and who’s that? It’s the Holy Spirit because He’s the Spirit of holiness.

That means we must allow the Holy Spirit to control our life. He’ll direct us, make Jesus real to us, bring about cleansing and holiness, and convict us of sin in our life.

He does all this because He strives to make us holy people. Holiness is so vital in the life of a Christian because without holiness, no one will see God.

#### **Slide 4**

The media is fast to jump on any scandal, but it’s extra quick in pouncing on an issue that involves anyone associated with the name “Christian.”

Think about the failings that received worldwide exposure with Jim Bakker many years ago. If he had not been popular, none of that would have seen the light of day.

Believers are vulnerable and fair game for the opposition, both by the media and other anti-Christian forces.

It can further be argued that Christians are continually under attack. The enemy of souls relentlessly assaults them to bring about their ruin and dishonor, and to disgrace the name of Jesus.

Each Christian, when honest enough to admit it, must confess that he has at times not been worthy of that wonderful Name, Jesus.

This is why Peter encourages his readers to take positive action regarding this problem: we're to continually sanctify Christ as Lord!

### **Slide 5**

Deviation can be so subtle, so imperceptive at first, and yet it reaps havoc in a believer's life.

The first sentence of 1 Peter 3:15 contains three things that will hold a life on the correct and straight path: a command, the anchor, and the location, "*But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts.*" (NASB)

The command is to sanctify/revere, that is, to set your life apart as honorable and holy.

Just being separated to Christ, in and of itself, is not enough to stop attacks by the evil one from taking hold, Christ must have first priority and first place in all things.

The anchor is Christ, and yet, it's more than that. Peter states simply that sanctification relates to Lordship. Sanctify Christ AS Lord. Therein lies the secret.

Jesus must be Lord of all in order to be Lord at all. Complete Lordship of Christ in our life is required, nothing less.



Finally, there's the location – *“in your hearts.”* Not in our heads, for head knowledge is purely academic; not in our feet, for our feet often run us into trouble; not in our hands, for we often touch things we ought not, but our hearts.

Our heart is the place of devotion, love, tenderness, and control. It's there the whole Lordship of Christ needs to be centered.

Having this sanctification fully centered in our hearts will automatically lead to the next step. 1 Peter 1:15, *“But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do.”*

That sanctified position of 1 Peter 3:15 will result in 1 Peter 1:15. The outward working of holiness in all our behavior comes from the inner working of sanctification in our hearts.

In fact it's demanded of us for this reason: We must be holy BECAUSE God is holy. It's the very nature of God that graces our lives – or should!

## **Slide 6**

### Conclusion

1 Peter 2:12, *“Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.”*

Sometimes it's difficult to share our faith and speak to others. Just the other day I was talking with a stranger, casually speaking about some of the ills of the world.

Part of me thought, *“Tell him about the state of the world according to 2 Timothy 2,”* but I didn't. Was that a lost chance in witnessing?

1 Peter 3:15b says, *“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.”*

Did you catch that? We’re suppose to witness *“to everyone who asks,”* which is good when people ask and want to know.

But these days, there’s so much delusion and arrogance that rarely will anyone ask. Yet, we have a glorious hope, and it should be thrilling to share our hope in Christ with others.

But how can we speak of something if we know little about it? How can we explain our faith when we know it imperfectly? How can we make a defense of our faith when we neglect to study it?

We must study the scriptures and know Jesus. We must sanctify Christ in our heart as Peter requests.

We must use divine wisdom especially in this hostile environment in which we live today. Jesus said, *“I send you as sheep among wolves therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.”*

A committee of ministers in a certain city was discussing the possibility of having D.L. Moody to serve as the evangelist during a city-wide evangelistic campaign.

Finally, one young minister, who didn’t want to invite Moody stood up and said: *“Why Moody? Does he have a monopoly of the Holy Spirit?”*

There was silence. Then an old godly minister spoke up; *“No. He doesn’t have a monopoly of the Holy Spirit; but the Holy Spirit has a monopoly on D.L. Moody.”*

Does the Spirit possess you wholly? Not until He does will you contribute your maximum.