

# BACKSLIDING

## Hello Demas!

Hello Demas! Man, it's good to see you again. I've sure been thinking a lot about you lately.

Yeah! I can understand the way you feel. It's kinda tough to say good-bye to friends and family and spend your whole life like some sort of weird mis-fit in society. It isn't easy to work 12-14 hours a day while your neighbors play ball at the beach or lounge at the lake. It's pretty tough to burn the mid-night oil for a bunch of professional complainers who snarl and bite at a helping hand. I know what it is to feel lonely and forsaken . . . cheated and misunderstood. It almost seems unfair, doesn't it Demas, for one man to have a dozen jobs to do when most people don't even have one. It's hard to understand!

Let me tell you what I've seen, Demas. I've seen a good friend fired from a scrawny little church just because he stood up for the scriptures. He loved those people . . . and even volunteered to preach without pay. They rewarded that love with a campaign of criticism and demanded his resignation. I know of great men trapped in small pulpits. Some who have said "no" to

high salaried executive positions to referee the little play pen skirmishes which characterize the childish church of our generation. One friend came out of the big war with an opportunity to fly for the airlines. He chose instead a thankless \$35 a week and the eternal struggle of trying to pump spiritual life into the collapsed veins of a shriveled little congregation in the Midwest. I know of one preacher's wife who suffered a nervous breakdown because the brethren were too tight fisted to rent a parsonage. Her makeshift home was the back of the church buildings where the Sunday school classes met.

I've seen great shepherds die with broken hearts - overwhelmed by their compassion and concern for the wayward sheep. I've seen the shiney suits and slick tires . . . the borrowed tools and the threadbare couch.

But Demas . . . I'm still asking you to come back. Beneath the hay and stubble are many vessels of pure gold in the church of our blessed Lord. People who would lay down their lives and fortunes without a whine or a whimper . . . thousands who have never bowed the knee to Baal . . . regiments of redeemed souls whose lovely lives are beautiful benedictions to the prayers of any preacher.

Demas . . . even as bad as the church might be it is nothing to compare with the hellish world in which we live. Beneath the smiles and the veneer of self confidence the world is a snarling jungle of contradiction and confusion. Thousands plunge from sex to suicide . . . from pre-occupation with business and scholarship to infatuation with mind expanding drugs and Oriental mysticism . . . like the troubled sea, their lives are a turmoil of blind plunges and restless agitation. The frustrations of youth are multiplied by passing years and culminate in the bewildered screams of the dying.

Demas! A man is not foolish to give up what he cannot keep to gain something which he cannot lose. The paltry pleasures and tinsel trinkets of earth are nothing to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to the sons of God. The pathway from

## HELLO DEMAS!

Bethlehem to Calvary was meant to provide us with an example that we might follow in His steps.

And so, Demas, with all that I am or ever hope to be I ask that you return.

**HISTORICAL NOTE:** The name Demas means "popular." He is mentioned but three times in the Bible. He is first mentioned as a fellow laborer of Paul (Col. 4:14, Phile. 24) but then forsook the apostle because he loved this present world (II Tim. 4:10).

