

**4. Provide them with an example of faithfulness.** Timothy was taught “...Be an example to believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (I Timothy 4:12). A good example of faithfulness can go a long way toward restoring an erring brother or sister. It is a quiet but steady beacon of truth which reminds the fallen child of God of what they should and could be if they choose to renew their commitment to the faith they once abandoned.

As the sole remaining column left standing where the temple of Diana once stood, so the child of God who has abandoned their faith upholds emptiness. They are spiritually alone. Their glory is fleeting. Their destiny is eternal corruption. Repentance, however, is a wonderfully transforming thing. Just as it can



an alien sinner and shape them into a building block in God's spiritual temple, so it can take the erring Christian and make them a shining, majestic pillar in the temple of God. All it takes is deciding to return. **“He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out on more...”** (Revelation 3:12).

By Kyle Pope

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# Faithful Sayings

## Olsen Park Church of Christ

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(806) 352—2809

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### Services

Sunday: 9:30 a.m.  
10:20 a.m.  
6:00 p.m.  
Wednesday: 7:00 p.m.

#### Elders:

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Charles Kelley  
Pat Ledbetter

#### Deacons:

Dean Bowers  
Eddie Cook  
Bill Davis  
Pat Goguen  
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## Faith Abandoned

Near the ruins of the ancient city of Ephesus there is a marble column which stands alone and desolate in a grassy field. Aside from providing a perch for birds and a photo opportunity for curious tourists it serves no useful purpose. Once, this column was one of one hundred and six other strong and majestic columns. In pairs they surrounded a shrine of pagan worship and formed the famous temple of Artemis (or Diana). This monument to idolatrous faith was once renowned and hailed one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. To the

Demetrius the silversmith adhered. With him, scores of others who gathered in the theater of ancient Ephesus chanted for two long hours **“Great is Diana of the Ephesians”** (Acts 19:23-41). Now this lonely column no longer symbolizes greatness, but instead the empty shadow of faith abandoned.

The Bible pictures the child of God as a stone in the spiritual temple of God. I Peter 2:5 speaks of Christians as **“...living stones...being built up a spiritual house”** (NKJV). To the faithful saints in Sardis the Lord promised **“He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar**

**in the temple of God...**" (Revelation 3:12). Using the figure of a pillar with a slightly different emphasis the Apostle Paul, through the Holy Spirit described the church as **"...The pillar and ground of the truth"** (I Timothy 3:15). The idea is that by clinging to faith in Christ a person becomes a part of something stable and majestic. They are a part of something eternal. They uphold that which is true. They enjoy the hope of eternal communion with God.

Sadly, many reject this honor. Rather than accepting the privilege of participating in something incorruptible they abandon their faith and grow weary of bearing the weight of truth. The Christian, like the pillar of an ancient building must uphold God's word. Though Jesus declares to us **"...My yoke is easy and My burden is light"** (Matthew 11:30); and His apostles echo this proclaiming **"...His commandments are not burdensome"** (I John 5:3) some imagine if they turn from Christ they can find a life with no yoke and no burden. Without Christ to rescue us, we are all bending and buckling under the load of sin! Not to mention the fact that **"...By whom a person is overcome,**

**by him also he is brought into bondage"** (II Peter 2:19). You see the ungodly bear Satan's yoke, they are not free from burdens altogether.

Others don't reject their role of upholding and supporting something, they just begin to support the wrong things. In Paul's day his struggles were less with those having no religion than with those upholding false religion. He battled the Jews who rejected Christ (Acts 13:46), the pagans who viewed him as an atheist (Acts 19:27), and unsound brethren who sought to pervert the truth (II Timothy 2:17,18). Many who claim no formal religion support the gods of materialism and sensuality. They flock to their temples and pay the wages of their priests. By all appearances the fortresses of false religion and carnality look more enduring than truth. Many a good brother or sister has fallen out of place in God's temple and become a building block in a pagan temple because they lost confidence in the truth. If only these brethren could see that modern paganism is no more enduring than ancient paganism! *What can be done for these stones out of place?*

**1. Remember them in prayer.** Paul told the Corinthians **"Now I pray to God that you do no evil...but that you should do what is honorable..."** (II Corinthians 13:7). While we understand that God has granted to us all freewill, it is perfectly fitting for us to pray to God that others may do what they ought to do. We pray that in God's providence circumstances or associations may bring them to their senses. We pray that God's word will work in their hearts. We can't pray that God will forgive them in unrepentance (I John 5:16). Yet we should pray for their repentance.

**2. Follow God's word with regard to rebuke, restoration and if necessary withdrawal.** Luke 17:3 teaches **"...If your brother sins against you, rebuke him;..."** Galatians 6:1 says **"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness..."** Finally, II Thessalonians 3:6 charges **"But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition**

**which he received from us."** We must remember that these things are part of God's plan of salvation to restore the erring.

**3. Don't allow their absence to set things off balance.**

If a pillar were suddenly removed from a material building it would undoubtedly result in other parts of the building being thrown off balance. This sometimes occurs in the Lord's spiritual house. Too much is at stake to allow one member's unfaithfulness to shake up the whole structure. We may need to move and adjust in order to shift the weight, but too much disturbance over the lost member may cause others to fall.

