

# Great Danger to a Christian

by A Van Eeden

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*The great danger to a Christian is sliding into a lukewarm state, where they lose their love for God and become complacent in their faith.*

**Duration:** 58:01

**Scripture:** Exodus 32:21, Deuteronomy 9:20, 2 Chronicles 28:19, Isaiah 14:9, Matthew 22:37, John 15:4, Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 12:12, James 4:8

**Topics:** "Spiritual Danger", "Repentance"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the danger of sliding into a lukewarm state as a Christian, using the example of the Israelites worshipping the golden calf in Exodus 32. It emphasizes the importance of recognizing warning signs in our lives, the need to love God wholeheartedly, and the impact of sin on our relationship with God and others. The sermon also highlights the significance of intercession, repentance, and unity within the body of Christ to avoid spiritual desolation and maintain a close walk with God.

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## Transcript

I wanted to speak this morning about a great danger in a Christian's life, where a Christian can slide into a terrible, terrible state, and how we can recognize the danger signs in our lives, and take a warning to prevent us from sliding into that lukewarm state. God's Word says that everything that was written was written up in order for us to learn from the mistakes of others. Let's turn in God's Word to Exodus chapter 32 verse 21.

Now, before we start reading, let me just paint the picture of where this took place. Moses led the children of Israel out of the land of slavery, out of Egypt. On the way to the promised land.

And he led them a long distance through desert and dry places. And then came the time when God wanted to communicate the Ten Commandments and show Israel more of His heart towards them. It was a wonderful opportunity.

They'd been waiting to get to know this God better who took them out of Egypt. So God called Moses up the mountain. Where he spoke to Moses for approximately 40 days.

And amongst other things, he gave Moses the Ten Commandments to give to the Israelites. And Moses' face was shining in the presence of God. He was blessed.

He was encouraged. He was strengthened. And it must have been with great joy that he thought, well, God has given us this law to guide us now.

Until God spoke to Moses. He said, Moses, you've got to go back quickly down the mountain to the Israelites. Things have gone terribly wrong.

They have forsaken me. And Moses rushed down the mountain. Just think of how his joy was just squashed.

And as he came down to the camp, he saw the Israelites dancing around the gold golden calf, drinking and partying and worshipping an idol. And he was so disappointed that he took the Ten Commandments, the two stone tables with the Ten Commandments, and threw them down the mountain and bashed them into pieces. And he walked into the camp.

Sittistat said, a man of God on fire. Sittistat said, one man against three million dancing devils, he said. He didn't blink an eye.

He was fearless. The fear of God was in his heart. And when he got down, he heard that actually, his brother Aaron had made the golden calf for them.

And he spoke to Aaron. And we read there that in Exodus 32 verse 21. And Moses said to Aaron, what did this people do to you that you have brought such a big, such a great sin upon them? Moses said, what did these people do to you so that you brought this evil upon them again? You can look at this in two ways.

Why did Aaron do this? He saw all God's miracles in Egypt. He heard God speaking to them, to him and Moses. How could he have changed so radically and made an idol for them? Maybe he wanted to be popular with the people.

Maybe he feared that they were going to stone and kill him because they were so worked up. People, the fear of people and the fear of the world is a terrible thing in a Christian's life. The desire to please people and to live before people is a terrible danger in a Christian's life.

As that, do not we see that happening daily with our politicians? Men and women who were full of integrity before they got voted into government. They lose their desire to be righteous. They lose their integrity and righteousness.

They become corrupt and evil just to please Satan and the people. Are you, allow me to ask you friend, are you aware as you try to follow God, are you constantly aware of what the world wants and of the idols and the golden calves of the world? Are you full, is your life one continuous struggle against temptations against the world? All you can do day and night is just resist temptations to make a golden calf. You lack two things.

Firstly, I say you've never really loved the Lord your God. And then remember the Lord says, he who has been forgiven a lot, a lot of sins forgiven, he will love a lot. If you don't have the love of God in your heart and you've been following people, not God, you will be like Aaron.

He wasn't called by God. Moses was called by God. Friend, have you ever been called by God? Or are you just here because that's a good thing to do and people want you to do that? Moses called him to come and translate for him.

He was called by Moses and not by God. He was called by men and he didn't have the love for God in his heart. If a man doesn't love his wife and he hears all the laws of marriage, now that you're married, you're supposed to love only your wife.

You're not supposed to sleep with any other woman. You're not supposed to flirt with other women. You're not supposed to kiss another woman.

You're not allowed and supposed to seductively touch another woman. If he does not love his wife, he's going to say so many laws. My goodness, it's so many laws.

This is just one legal contract. I'm not going to get married to this woman. You watch out people who cry all the time that there's too many laws in Christianity.

They don't have a true love for God and the Son of God who purchased them with his blood. That's why you come to a service and you just hear law, law, law and another person comes to a service and he just hears blessed advice to encourage him to follow the law. And because Aaron didn't have the love of God in his heart, he didn't love for the Son of God.

He didn't love for the day when he will leave this world and he could put a smile on the face of his master, our Lord Jesus Christ. All for the grace to put a smile on his face. That if you see him on that great day, he will embrace you and you will hear those blessed words.

Well done, good and faithful servant. You've been faithful over very little, I'll put you in charge of much. Do you have that love burning in your heart? If you have that love, you will have the right love to the people around you.

Not a worldly love where you will help them to worship idols, but a love for the souls of man and that they should be saved and not go lost. Jesus had that love when he saw the five thousand. The Bible says he looked at them and he felt pity for them and he said they were to him like sheep without a shepherd.

They had nobody to show them God's way. They had nobody to bring them to salvation. They had nobody to bring them to repentance and that's the godly divine love that he had for people.

Not a love where he would please the people and just do whatever they want in a worldly way and give them an idol. The second way to look at this verse, Moses said to him, Aaron, what did this people do to you? That you have brought such a big sin upon them. That is often how temptation comes in life.

Another person does something to you first and if you don't act in the love of God, and you don't answer back and respond in the love of God, you are then going to do something back to them. Moses said, what did they do to you? That you have brought such a big sin upon them. Maybe a person makes you cross and you get upset.

He does something to you. Maybe he's unfair. Maybe he's attacking you without reason and because of what he's doing to you, then you react back in a carnal, fleshly way with hatred and you answer in a carnal way and you hurt him.

God is not going to call you one day and say, well, you know, why did you allow the people to force you to do this? You say, what did the people do to you? But the main point, that you brought such a big evil upon them. The worldly person is busy with what did the people do to me? The child of God, whose heart is

broken about his sin, is looking at how, what a great evil that I bring upon the other people. I hope we're not sitting here thinking about all the evil your drunk father and your immoral mother has been doing to you.

That you are aware of the evil that you have done to them and to the church of God and the kingdom of God. Christ never, Christ's love never made him dance along around a golden calf. Actually, he went against the whole nation up to the point of his final death because he had a godly divine love for them.

Tell me, friend, do you have the love of God for other people? Do you love them with the love of God? Or do you see them as a threat and a danger and you're just aware of their mistakes? Maybe that was Aaron's problem. If you look at verse, if we move on to verse 25 and I'm going to read the King James Version here about what Moses saw when he came down the mountain. And when Moses saw the people were naked, for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies.

This is how God saw it. They were naked. Not necessarily that they were physically without clothes, but that they were naked in the sense that their shame was exposed.

God says that in another place in his word, you don't have to turn there. In the book of Chronicles, he speaks and he says, for the Lord brought Judah low because of Ahaz, the king of Israel. For Ahaz had made Judah naked against the Lord.

If you lose your temper, if you start swearing, you are naked before God. If you go and sin in front of people, you are naked because you're exposing your own shame to them. If you look at a woman, man, and she sees the lust in your eyes, you are naked, not naked in an attractive sense, but in a despiseful way.

What did Moses do further? Let's go to verse 26. Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, Who's on the Lord's side? Come to me. And all the sons of Levi gathered around him.

And he said to them, Thus says the Lord God of Israel, Put your sword on your side, each of you, and go to and fro from gate to gate throughout the camp. And each of you kill his brother and his companion and his neighbor. And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses.

And that day, about three thousand men of the people fled. fell. It came to me, why did God punish those who sinned amongst the Israelites so severely? But he didn't kill Aaron who was the leader.

Did Aaron not also deserve to be cut off? But I think we find part of the answer in Deuteronomy 9 verse 20. And the Lord was so angry with Aaron that he was ready to destroy him. And I prayed for Aaron also at the same time.

This is what Moses did. He interceded for God to not destroy Aaron. In the first place, this shows us Moses as a type of Christ.

Christ is the big intercessor that intercedes for us in heaven before the Father. But in the second place, it shows you what a blessing it is to have a child of God that can intercede with you and call out with you to the Father for his grace and his mercy. And the Lord was so angry with Aaron that he was ready to destroy him.

And I prayed for Aaron also at the same time. Blessed is the person who has someone he can go to who is reliable and trustworthy who can intercede for him and pray with you about the burdens that you carry. Now I want to go back again to the explanation Aaron gave.

So let's move back to verse 23. Exodus 32 verse 23. This is what Aaron said to Moses.

For they said to me, make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him. They had waited, they'd been waiting for Moses, just think of it, for only 40 days and they lost their faith.

Only 40 days after all the miracles God performed for them. It took only 40 days without Moses and they fell back. Friends, to be able to wait upon the Lord and keep your faith is not a small thing.

Saul missed the Lord's blessing because he was not willing to wait upon the Lord for Samuel to come and sacrifice. He saw his men starting to disappear and run away and be discouraged against the Philistines. There was a big Philistine army against them and while they were waiting for Samuel to come, Saul saw the men starting to run away and desert and he couldn't wait anymore.

He lost his faith and he took it into his own hands to sacrifice. How many young people have not made that mistake with marriage? Instead of waiting upon the Lord, making sure that the Lord is showing me who to get married to. They simply cannot continue to wait because they are losing their faith in the Lord.

Just think, they were on the borders of the promised land, virtually on the borders. If they had a little bit more faith, a little bit more patience, faith and patience goes together. A man who doesn't have patience to wait upon the Lord does not have faith.

Just think of it, they were almost there. Just a little bit more faith, a little bit more patience, a little bit more perseverance in this harsh, hot desert. They would have been safely brought to the promised land.

A little bit more dependence on God. We hate to depend on God. There is no security for us.

I want worldly security. Everything in place. My retirement annuity is in place.

All the comforts arranged for the day I am retiring. Because to grow old independence on the Lord is too difficult for me. They just had to be a little bit longer dependent on God.

And something that started with an excellent, wonderful beginning ended with an unhappy end, a tragic end. They ended all up dying in the desert. This is the fate of the lukewarm Christian.

He ends up dying in a spiritual desert. Just those 40 days, they should have just held out for 40 days. But because they could not do that, they were turned back to go and wander in the desert.

For many dreary years. The word that came to my mind was dreary. That was the time, the rest of the time they spent in the desert.

So I looked up in the dictionary, what does the word dreary mean? It says, the dictionary says it means depressing. Has the Christian life become depressing to you? The dictionary says it means dull and bleak. There's no excitement.

It's dull. There's no colour in life. It's all pale.

The dictionary says it means repetitive. The same thing every day, repeating the same thing 40 years in the desert. The same thing, eating the same manna over and over.

And the word dreary means uneventful. Nothing really happens. And gruelling.

It's like gruelling on just carrying forward. I don't know what to do. I just carry on.

It's gruelling in the desert for me. Has your life become like that? Then don't become depressed, even more depressed. And go and want and take your life.

No, go to God and repent from your sin. God is a merciful God. Just look how he forgave Aaron.

And this is the kind of thing that can make Christianity unbearable to many, many people. They simply cannot bear the Christian life anymore. I'm moving to my last few points.

Let's jump to the next chapter, chapter 33, and we read verse 3. So now Moses, after he had done this, he goes back up the mountain to speak to God. And the Lord speaks to Moses. And he says, Moses, don't read.

I'm not reading yet. He says, Moses, I've had enough of this people. And then he says in verse 3, go up to a land flowing with milk and honey, but I will not go up among you, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff necked people.

Go up, Moses, he says. The land, I'll keep it for you. When you get there, the land will still be there.

It will still be flowing with milk and honey. And you will get the grace even to go in. But I will not be among you.

I'm not with you, among you. I'll keep my promise because I promised you the land flowing with milk and honey. So go there, I'll keep my promise, but I will not be among you.

Why? Because of the things that had happened? Because of the golden calf and everything? Things that happened in the past? No. I cannot go with you because of what I see will happen in the future. I, if I go with you, God says, then I will be consuming you.

I will be eating you up as you go. I will end up being your big enemy to you. So Moses, allow me to stand back and you go on your own.

Why? Because you are a stiff necked people. God cannot work with stiff necked people. And to a certain extent, the Jewish nation still have that trait.

Even I've heard a Jew saying in a joke, there's a proverb that says one Jew, five opinions. Each one goes his own way and fight for his own way. That's why God says, I cannot go with you.

I cannot go amongst you. And friends, that is why as we continue with the Christian life, we have to continue to deal with sin in our lives. To change as God wants us to change.

There should not be any persistent sin in your life that keeps staying there and you don't get rid of it. If I want to follow God and I want Him to be with me and to be a blessing for me, I must be willing to change on the way and to change according to what God wants. Charles Spurgeon spoke about the importance of confessing your sin after your conversion.

And he quoted a song. One verse from a song of a person that had repented already. My sins, my sins, my savior.

How sad they fall on thee. You see, he's developed a love for God. Now he doesn't just see what his sins are doing to himself.

But he saw how it nailed Christ to the cross. Seeing through thy gentle patience, I tenfold feel them all. I feel I'm getting even more hurt when I sin.

And it's grieving me even more if I sin against you. I know they are forgiven. But still their pain to me is all the grief and anguish they laid, my Lord, on thee.

Do you love the Lord like that? Because He's forgiven you. And you see, it hurts you to think how your sins nailed Him to the cross. It will make you eager to change as you walk on the way and to get rid of everything in your life and everything in your character that doesn't please God.

God must be able to change our attitudes, friends. Otherwise, He's going to become our enemy. He must be able to change our selfishness.

We must allow Him to change our haughtiness and our pride. We must allow Him to change our stubbornness. Otherwise, He will not be a blessing to us as we go through the Christian life.

And on the highway of God, you will find yourself stumbling when others are actually walking full of the glory of the Lord, singing and joyful. I want to read and don't turn there a verse from Isaiah 14 verse 9. Whoever is wise, let him understand these things. Whoever has discernment, let him know them.

For the ways of the Lord are right, and the upright will walk in them. But transgressors will stumble in them. The same way of God that is a highway to a person with a soft and a broken heart becomes a way where another person stumbles all the time.

But if we're willing to change, we'll experience us being one with Him. The unity with God will grow stronger. He will be in us and we will be in Him, as He says.

There's a story of a very well-educated American man who spoke to an old African man who was a believer. And this man said to the African old man, how can you believe the Bible? For example, how can you be in Christ and at the same time He is in you? It doesn't make sense. And the old man looked at him and smiled.

He said, sir, it's quite simple. Can't you understand it? If I put an iron into burning coals, you will see the iron heating up and glowing. The iron is in the coals, but the coals are in the iron.

This is how it is if we walk humbly with God and allow Him to change us. Allow me to close with one example. In the olden days, before they had steel and plastic buckets, they made buckets from wood.

They would put planks in a round circle, like a bucket, cut them off at the bottom, and put more planks at the bottom. But they had to fit perfectly tight. Otherwise, the water would leak out.

And one day, an old man who used to make these buckets spoke. And he said, you know, the church of Christ is like a wooden bucket. It's not made from one piece of wood, but from many pieces of wood.

But they must be tight without a gap between them. You see, friends, if we are one with God, we will be one with each other. It happens automatically.

If we are one with God, we are one with each other. And the old man says, there must be no gaps between us in the church, even though some are big planks and some are thin planks. And he says, the most important planks are the ones right at the bottom of the bucket.

They should not leak. It's even more important for them not to leak in any way. Interesting, don't you think so? That's how the Christian life is.

When you are at the bottom, or it feels to you as if you are at the bottom, it's more important for you to stay one with the other children of God than when you are at the top. Because if there is one hole between the planks, the water will run out and the whole purpose of the bucket is lost. I don't know whether you've ever felt I'm at the bottom.

I'm just nothing here. I'm just nobody. It's more important for you to stay in the Lord and to stay one with the children of God than for anybody else in the church of God.

He says, if there's a little stone between the planks or a little stick, the water will leak out there. He says, what is a little plank and a little stick and a little stone? He says, it's the little quarrels amongst us. The hard words we speak to another brother.

Just a little bit of dirty money in your life, money that you know is not a blessing but you're keeping it. It won't just hurt you. The whole church will be hurt through it and the water will run out and many people will stumble and fall because there's this thing between you and a brother.

He says, it's a proud or an unforgiving spirit. This old man lived many years ago. I can tell you his name, Samuel Hebich.

It was many years ago but this principle suits today. He says, a proud or an unforgiving spirit is going to make a gap between you and the other children of God. So friends, do we find ourselves in that position? Then this message today is not to condemn you and say you can never meet the Lord.

It's supposed to lead to godly remorse. Remember, godly remorse leads to repentance. It makes me think of what Oliver Oswald Chambers said.

He said to us, very often our destination, where we go into is the most important thing. But he says, in God's kingdom, how we get there is sometimes more important than the place we are going to. It was more important for God that Israel get to the promised land in submission and being one with Him and keeping the faith in Him than to get to the promised land.

Remember that. How you get to heaven one day is more important to God than just getting to heaven.

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