

# The Sin of Drifting

by J.R. Miller

---

*The sermon emphasizes the importance of taking responsibility for one's life and choices, rather than drifting with the tide of circumstances.*

**Scripture:** Nehemiah 5:15, Proverbs 1:10, Isaiah 40:31, Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Ephesians 6:10-11, Philippians 4:13, 2 Timothy 1:7, Hebrews 12:1-2, James 4:7

**Topics:** "Overcoming Temptation", "Living with Purpose"

---

## Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes the danger of drifting through life without purpose or direction, contrasting the passive nature of a piece of wood with the responsibility of man to choose his own path. He warns against yielding to temptation and discouragement, urging individuals to actively resist negative influences and strive for personal growth. Miller highlights that true resignation to God's will should not lead to complacency or indolence, but rather to a courageous pursuit of one's goals. He encourages young people to live victoriously, creating their circumstances and adhering to a Christlike life despite challenges. The sermon concludes with the example of Nehemiah, who chose to act righteously out of reverence for God, rather than conforming to the actions of others.

---

## Transcript

It is entirely proper for a piece of wood to drift on the water. It cannot do anything else. It has no wisdom to choose a better way, and no power to resist the force of the current in which it finds itself. It has no responsibility for its own movements, and is not to blame if it floats idly about in an eddy, or is carried into a whirlpool, or swept away in a wild torrent. It is right enough for a piece of wood, to drift.

But it is altogether different with a man. Drifting is very unworthy in him. It is intended that he should choose his own direction, and forge his own course, whatever way the tides may be running, or the winds be blowing. Man was made to be master, not a mere creature, of circumstances. Yet there are many men who merely drift aimlessly through life. They fall unresistingly into whatever current seizes them for the moment, and are borne upon it, wherever it may carry them. When temptation assails them, they make no struggle to master it -- but let it have its way with them. When something happens which discourages them, they yield to the depressing influence, without an effort to overcome it. When they are confronted by an unfavorable condition in their business affairs, instead of gathering up all their resources and reserves of courage and energy to meet the emergency and successfully grapple with it -- they simply give up and drift to failure. The habit of thus dropping into the tide, whatever it is, and drifting with it without resistance

-- soon becomes permanently fixed in the life, until a man seems at last to have lost all his power to help himself against any antagonism or opposition.

Resignation is sometimes a virtue -- a most worthy quality indeed of the devout and reverent life. We should always be ready to resign our will to the divine will, to resign, or sign back to him whose right it is to rule over us -- the control of our life. Nothing is worse than to struggle against God. It is a sin, and we are always hurt in the struggle; while if we succeed, we have only got our own way in place of God's, which is the greatest possible disaster to one's life. We should always gladly yield to the will of the Lord, whatever the cost of yielding may be. What seems loss in such yielding, is really gain.

But there are times when resignation is not a virtue -- when indeed it is sin. It never is the will of the Lord, that we should yield to any evil influence, that we should drift in the current of temptation into anything wrong. "When sinners entice you -- do not consent." Nor should we allow ourselves to give up to indolence. There are some people who suppose they are trusting God and are practicing the grace of contentment -- who really ought to be ashamed of their feeble, chronic resignation. They are too indolent to struggle. It is not God's will, that their life should be so weak that they shall never try to conquer or overcome difficulty. God wants them to be strong like men, to be faithful in all duty, never to yield to discouragement.

The best prizes in life do not come easily -- and cannot be won without struggle. The worthiest attainments in character and in possession -- can be reached only through toil and tears. Resignation means too often the missing of God's own plan for the life. Obstacles are put in the way, not to hinder us or check our progress -- but are set as practical lessons to prove the earnestness and sincerity of our purpose and to discover what kind of spirit we are of. The paths have hindrances in them, not to turn us back -- but to call out our courage and strength in overcoming them and in making a way for our feet through them. It is pitiable to see a man standing feebly resigned before hard tasks, or in the face of difficulties which God meant him to conquer and triumph over.

It should be the purpose of all young people, to live victoriously. They should never consent to be creatures of circumstances -- rather, they should create their circumstances, or certainly master them, and make all things in their life minister to their growth and their progress. They should decide for themselves, the kind of life they are going to live -- a Christlike life; and then live it, in spite of temptation, opposition, and hindrance. Instead of drifting in the ways of the least resistance, going where others go and doing what others do -- they should find out what is right, and should do that whatever it may cost.

There is a heroic saying of Nehemiah's recorded in the Scriptures. He was governor of the returned captives in Jerusalem, and he refers to certain questionable things which other governors had done. He then said, "But I did not do so -- because of the fear of God." It would have been easy for him to go on doing just as other governors had done -- but he did not do this; he did his duty before God, independently.

---

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jr-miller/the-sin-of-drifting/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**