

Why did Paul Turn People Over to Satan?

Question: Why did the apostle Paul turn some people over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh?

Answer: When a person keeps rebelling against God and won't listen to anyone's advice, sometimes another method must be used to get that person's attention. Paul would turn them over to the devil so they would experience the full misery of their folly.

He turned an unrepentant man in the Corinthian church over to the devil: "I have decided to **deliver such a one to Satan** for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Corinthians 5:5). Paul wasn't praying for him to die, but for his selfish attitude to be destroyed. *Destruction* means "ruin" and *flesh* means "sinful desires." Since the man wouldn't listen to correction, Satan was permitted to intensify his attacks on him, which caused him to repent of his sin (2 Corinthians 2:6-8).

He used the same tactic for these two troublemakers: "Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have **handed over to Satan**, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme" (1 Timothy 1:20). This doesn't mean he wanted them to go to hell, but that the Lord would remove His blessing and hedge of protection (see Job 1:9-12). By doing this, they would suffer such anguish they would stop blaspheming.

Some people only learn the hard way. They have hit bottom like the prodigal son before they will come to their senses, which explains why we need to pray they will become miserable. As you continue to pray, the rebellious person comes to the point he cannot stand what he is doing. He becomes so miserable that it's easier for him to surrender to the Lord than to continue in rebellion. God won't take away his free will, but your prayers of intercession can strongly influence the person to repent.

(From Kent Crockett's upcoming book, *If God Knows My Needs, Why Should I Pray?* to be published May 2016 by Hendrickson Publishers)

Making Life Count Ministries
P.O. Box 680174
Prattville, Alabama 36068
www.makinglifecount.net