

Dear Covenant Life family,

This week our former Lead Pastor, Josh Harris, shared some significant news. First, [he and his wife Shannon announced](#) that they're separated. Then in a [follow up post](#), he said "by all the measurements that I have for defining a Christian, I am not a Christian."

These updates are hard to hear. We love Josh and Shannon. For most of us, Josh isn't just some distant public figure. He's a beloved former pastor and friend. So this news isn't just a lot to process theoretically. It hits home personally.

How do we process the news that someone who was a spiritual leader in our community, who taught us God's Word, who ministered to us, no longer considers himself a follower of Christ?

Today, after I got the news, I read through Paul's first letter to Timothy and found it very grounding. Several times Paul mentions former Christian leaders "swerving from," "wandering from," or "making shipwreck" of their faith. So while this is sad and confusing, it isn't new. Christian leaders occasionally veered from faith at the very beginning. Paul says some had gone off course theologically. Others behaved in ways that violated Christian conscience. For others, it was greed. In every case, Paul's hope was for redemption and restoration. That these leaders would develop "love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith." (1 Tim 1:5) That should be our hope and prayer for Josh as well.

Paul's primary instruction for *us* when leaders swerve from faith is that we make it an opportunity for greater resolve in our own faith, not less. Seeing leaders who taught us the gospel veer from it should deepen our commitment to "guard the good deposit" entrusted to us. And "pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness." (1 Tim 6:11)

So, Covenant Life, pray for our friend Josh. Pray with sincere hope for a redemptive end. And ask the God of all grace and power for fresh resolve in your own fight of faith. “*Fight* the good fight of the faith. *Take hold* of the eternal life to which you were called.” (1 Tim 6:12)

In Love,  
Kevin

P.S. - If you're having particular trouble processing this, any of the [pastors](#) would be glad to talk with you. If you're specifically wrestling with how to process teaching you heard from Josh, you may find this [video from John Piper](#) helpful.