**Valentina**

When Valentina was a young Christian, she had to walk a few miles and then take a two hour bus ride to church, for she lived in Romania back in the 1990’s. She was the encouragement of the church on a regular basis. As a nurse, she would sometimes take a double shift (12 + 12 = 24hours in all). But she wouldn’t miss church because of it. She arrived sleepy at the congregation in Bucharest. Another Christian told me the story about her bus tickets. She wasn’t able to pay for the bus tickets, so she rode the bus illegally for a week.

On Friday when she got paid, she bought a week’s worth of tickets, and proceeded to rip them up and throw them into the trash can. A fellow worker tried to stop her by saying you should give those tickets away. “No”, Valentina replied, “if I want to buy someone tickets, I will. But I owe these tickets to the bus station.” Valentina was so careful not to go against her conscience. After returning to Romania many years later, I found out how far Valentina had fallen. She had married a man who began preaching in another town. And together, her and her husband had taken thousands of dollars from the church and would not return it. She would no longer even worship where her reputation used to be the image of honesty.

Will God remember her for all the devotion she showed during her faithful days? Will God remember her bus tickets she tore up?

God says, “*When I say to the righteous he will surely live, and he so trusts in his righteousness that he commits iniquity, none of his righteous deeds will be remembered; but in that same iniquity of his which he has committed he will die. “But when I say to the wicked, ‘You will surely die,’ and he turns from his sin and practices justice and righteousness, if a wicked man restores a pledge, pays back what he has taken by robbery, walks by the statutes which ensure life without committing iniquity, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of his sins that he has committed will be remembered against him. He has practiced justice and righteousness; he shall surely live.* (Ezekiel 33:13-16).

After reading this passage, I guess it all depends upon Valentina, doesn’t it. Will she repent & pay back? God has no pleasure in the one who falls away (Heb. 10:37-38). How about you? Have you fallen away? Will all your righteous acts, all your good deeds, all the hours of worship and Bible classes, all your honesty be forgotten? (Heb. 10:32-38). Please repent and restore anything you have stolen (Luke 19:1-10). And may God restore to you the joy of salvation! Dan Peters