

Restoring the Backslider

By Christian Equippers International

Backsliding is a serious condition which undermines the spiritual welfare and jeopardizes the eternal destiny of the individual seized in its deadly grip.

Some have had to wrestle with a temporary bout of backsliding, while others have found themselves the victims of a perpetual pattern of backsliding from which there appears to be no lasting escape.

The issue of backsliding is a controversial and confusing subject to many. But it is not a problem which can't be solved by the power of God. Backsliding need not be an irreversible condition. It is a problem which can be corrected if a person is willing to sincerely respond to the scriptural solutions offered by God.

This teaching is designed to assist the backslider in achieving a permanent victory over this problem by directing him to the road to recovery and restoration in the Lord.

WHAT IS A BACKSLIDER?

There are no gentle ways to define the word backslider. Simply stated, the word backslider means "someone who has turned away or drawn back from his faith in Christ". It is a blunt, biblical expression which characterizes a person who has turned his back on Christ and has willfully reversed the direction of his or her spiritual walk. The word depicts an individual who has abandoned his loyalty, dedication, and enthusiasm for Christianity. It is a sobering term which describes someone who has turned away in heart and deed from faithfully serving God, and has retreated to the beggarly affections and pursuits of this world.

Another biblical term applied to backsliding is the word apostasy. It also characterizes someone who has deviated from the faith and is no longer abiding in a vital relationship with Christ and His Word.

THE DANGER OF BACKSLIDING

No one should take backsliding lightly, minimize the consequences, or doctrinally dismiss its seriousness. We should each have a godly fear concerning the awesome results of unrepented backsliding. The Bible clearly warns us not to be misled or deceived about the consequences of unrighteousness and unresolved backsliding:

"Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived" (1 Cor. 6:9).

"But if a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits sin and does the same detestable things the wicked man does, will he live? None of the righteous things he has done will be remembered. Because of the unfaithfulness he is guilty of and because of the sins he has committed, he will die... If a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits sin, he will die for it; because of the sin he has committed he will die" (Eze. 18:24, 26, N.I.V.).

GOD'S WARNINGS AGAINST BACKSLIDING

The Bible contains strong cautions about the seriousness of backsliding:

- "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called Today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:12, 13).
- "This charge I commit to you ... having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck" (1 Tim. 1:18, 19).
- "You therefore, beloved, since you know these things beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked" (2 Pet. 3:17).
- "Looking diligently lest anyone fall short of the grace of God" (Heb. 12:15).

THE SYMPTOMS OF BACKSLIDING

Backsliding is not a problem which develops overnight. It is generally a gradually worsening condition which progressively weakens our spiritual health like the deadly effects of an accumulative poisoning. Though backsliding is usually a subtle condition of the heart which does not immediately manifest itself in outright acts of defection from the faith, it does produce some common telltale symptoms.

These can include such typical telltale tendencies as a growing attitude of spiritual apathy, an increasing disinterest in spiritual disciplines such as prayer, worship, and the reading of God's Word, and a lack of commitment to church activities and ministerial responsibilities. Backsliding is often accompanied by a deepening spirit of distrust, rebellion, suspicion, fault-finding, and murmuring. It also manifests itself in an increasing pattern of worldly involvements and carnal flirtations.

This is an excerpt from the Booklet; Restoring the Backslider. To purchase this booklet visit our website www.equipper.com