

Backsliding

This lesson will focus on backsliding. What I am referring to by backsliding is someone that at one time was a faithful Christian, but has fallen away. It can happen to anyone once things start to become more important than being a Christian and serving God. It can simply happen just by believing one has done all they need to as a Christian and they can now just kick back the rest of their lives and not worry about prioritizing God as number one. Probably it will happen slowly and build. One might wonder, do I really have to come to every worship service, or is it really that bad to watch the Super Bowl and miss services? Or maybe it will be thinking, I am leading a pretty good life but I sure would like to do that one sinful thing every now and then. Hopefully, you catch yourself before it gets too far or have good Christian brethren that will help you get back on track to serving God.

Scriptures

Jeremiah 3:12 “Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever” God loves us and wants us to be faithful to Him. He has given us the Bible so we can know how He expects us to live. Even though He loves us He has warned us He will not accept those that do not obey Him. How many times did God punish Israel’s sinful behavior? Do I truly believe that today I can just choose to reject Him and not face the consequences?

Jeremiah 3:22 “Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the LORD our God” Just as God forgave Israel many times, once they repented of sin, God will forgive us today as well, if we fall away but repent and make things right with Him. God wants us to be saved and is waiting for us to make the corrections we need to make to get our lives on track as a Christian.

Jeremiah 8:5 “Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return” God will not be fooled, He knows if we have forsaken Him. However, God is ready and willing to take back those that return to Him.

Jeremiah 14:7 “O LORD, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou it for thy name's sake: for our backslidings are many; we have sinned against thee” and **Jeremiah 24:7** “And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart” When a Christian turns away from God, He knows. When we choose to disobey God, we sin against Him. However, He is loving and patient and will take back a penitent obedient heart.

Hosea 14:1 “O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity” and **Hosea 14:4** “I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him” God loves us all and desires that any Christian that has fallen away will return to Him. If we repent, He will accept a fallen Christian back and not hold that backsliding against them.

Luke 9:62 “And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” Jesus warns us that we can all backslide. Any Christian that

lets other things slip into being more important than living as God would have them live will not be acceptable to Him.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” Inspired by God, Paul warns us that to obtain a home in Heaven, a Christian must be steadfast to the end. A Christian can not simply go on vacation from being a Christian and please God. Paul knows if he was not vigilant, he too could fall away and become a backslider. Friends, we have to remind ourselves being a Christian starts at baptism and ends when we die or the Lord returns. Sure, we can make mistakes, but then we must repent and get back into the race. We cannot let our mistakes become habitual, because then it is a wrong way of life and not simply a mistake.

2 Corinthians 13:5 “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” All Christians need to reflect from time to time on their lives. Christians must ask themselves am I growing in Christ and becoming more knowledgeable? Am I trying to teach others? Am I trying to do more in service to Christ now than I used to? Have I stopped studying the Bible? Have I stopped going to worship services? Am I doing what I know a Christian should do, and not doing what I know a child of God should not? Repent now if you have been backsliding before it is too late.

Hebrews 2:1-3 “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him” As Christians, are we making sure we are leading our lives as God has taught us through His word? We must be diligent, for if we backslide and never repent, we will be lost. Remember, we can repent of our backsliding and get ourselves back on track living as an obedient Christian, but we must be willing to change what we need to in order to stop our backsliding.

2 Peter 2:20-22 “For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire” Peter paints a pretty ugly picture of a backslider. One that has become a Christian and then gone back into sin is no longer washed clean in God’s eyes. However, if we are willing to get ourselves out of the dirty sinful world we can repent and be in good standing with God like nothing ever happened.

1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” Let us never forget that God is always willing to forgive those that want to be forgiven. We can repent and strive to live as God would have us to live and He will take us back.

Conclusion

None of us are perfect and we all make mistakes. As a Christian, sins can be repented of and turned away from. It is very important that a Christian is striving very hard not to give into sin, to make it easier to stay away from it, and become a stronger servant of God. A Christian should not be living as close to sin as possible and trying not to step too far over the line. That can lead more quickly and easily into backsliding. Would it not be easier for a Christian to avoid backsliding in the first place? We, like Paul, need to guard ourselves against backsliding.