

## Backsliding - Pt.1 "The Problem"

### Int.

1. Aim: To draw attention to this ever present problem and how we must do something to cure this sin.
2. Texts
  - a. Hosea 4:16 "For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer: now the Lord will feed them as a lamb in a large place."
  - b. Isa. 1:2-4 "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. 3. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. 4. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward."
  - c. Jer. 7:24 "But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward."
  - d. Jer. 8:5 "Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return."
3. A Backslider is a person who was once obedient to the Lord but has now forsaken him and gone backward into the ways of the world.
  - a. He is one who was once obedient to the Lord, but has now forsaken Him.
  - b. He is one who has gone back into the ways of the world - Col. 1:13, 14
  - c. He has lost the zeal and interest that he had after his conversion

4. We have not given a great deal of attention to backsliding
  - a. New converts should be warned of this sin of backsliding
  - b. We need more classes and sermons on Christian living and how to prevent backsliding
  - c. Greater efforts are needed to attempt to restore the backsliders to the Lord.
5. Lessons on this subject:
  - a. # 1 The Problem # 2 Who is a Backslider?
  - b. # 3 Why do People Backslide? # 4 The Way Home for a backslider
6. This is a heartbreaking problem.

## Discussion

### **I. THE POSSIBILITY OF BACKSLIDING MAKES IT A HEARTBREAKING PROBLEM**

- A. Some argue that a genuine Christian could never backslide
  1. If one appears to be a backslider then they say he was never actually converted.
  2. This is based on a misinterpretation of some verses in I John
    - a. I Jn.3:6 "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him."
    - b. 1 Jn. 3:9 "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."
    - c. I Jn.5:18 "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not."
    - d. These verses mean that we cannot continue to live a life of sin for he has the word in him which prohibits all sin.
    - e. III. -- "You cannot make a left turn at a certain street. That does not mean it is impossible to do so, but that it is illegal to do so."

B. The Bible teaches that a Christian can backslide

1. The children of Israel fell into the sins of idolatry, fornication and murmuring against God.
2. Paul wrote to the Corinthian brethren and told them of how God punished Israel for these sins.
3. Then we warn them. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." 1 Cor. 10:12
4. Jas. 5:19-20 "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; 20. Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."
  - a. Brethren - err from the truth
  - b. Convert - change, return
  - c. Save a soul from death
  - d. Gal. 6:1 "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."
5. Heb. 3:12-13 "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. 13. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

C. As long as it is possible to develop cancer, cancer will always be a problem in the medical world.

D. As long as it is possible for Christians to backslide, backsliding is a grave problem. It is a heartbreaking problem.

## **II. THE PROBABILITY OF BACKSLIDING MAKES IT A HEARTBREAKING PROBLEM**

- A. It is not only possible to backslide, but there is actually a strong tendency to backslide
1. Acts 8:13-24 Simon is an example of backsliding
  2. A garden that is neglected becomes infested with weeds and does not produce
  3. Lives that are neglected and are not given careful attention tend to backslide
  4. Congregations that are neglected become infested with sin and bear no fruit for God
  5. Many people obey the gospel in all sincerity, but if they are not given spiritual attention, most of them will turn out to be backsliders!
- B. None of us are so strong that we could not backslide
1. I Cor. 9:27 NKJV "But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified."
  2. Those who are dedicated today may be negligent in the days ahead
  3. Those busily engaged in soul-winning right now may be weak in another year.
  4. Those who are strong now may be weak in another year.
- C. The devil gets his job done so fast.
1. I Pet. 5:8 "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:"
  2. The Devil tries to keep the sinner lost, but then he doesn't give up when one obeys the gospel. He does all he can to cause him to backslide.

3. The devil enjoys getting a backslider, because he knows he will probably never loose him again.
4. Also this backslider will help keep others out of the church.
5. Bulletin Article for this week. "Will any hypocrites be in heaven?"

D. The Bible says that backsliding is a tendency

1. The O.T. & N.T. both show the tendency of human beings to backslide
2. Israel had a strong tendency to backslide
  - a. They had hardly got out of Egyptian bondage until they went back to worshiping the golden calf
  - b. Before they reached the promised land they murmured against God, and became guilty of disbelieving God
  - c. When the new generation entered Canaan they soon forgot God because of material prosperity and started worshiping idols.
  - d. Hos 11:7 "And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt him." backsliding =apostasy
3. Gal. 6:1 "brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault,..."
  - a. Those who today are spiritual and restore others to Christ - may be tempted and need someone to restore them to Christ in the future.
  - b. The people today have a tendency to backslide
  - c. When a preacher returns to a congregation after a few years he is heartbroken to discover the number of backsliders

d. Examples:

- (1) Some converts have become backsliders
- (2) One man who was an elder at a congregation where I preached
- (3) Man who was treasurer
- (4) Even some preachers I have known are backsliders

E. Yes the tendency is to backslide

1. We must watch our own lives
2. We must watch the lives of new Converts
3. We must not neglect the congregation

### **III. THE PREVALENCE OF BACKSLIDING MAKES IT A HEARTBREAKING PROBLEM**

- A. Prevalence = widespread, being in ascendancy, dominant - generally or widely accepted, practiced or favored.
- B. Check the membership rolls and you will find many have backslidden
  1. Check the roll for now and 5 years ago, 10 years ago
  2. You will find many who are missing that have not moved nor died.
- C. When people move into a new community often they become backsliders.
  1. They will change their mailing address, get a job, find the school and grocery store, but will neglect their spiritual life.
  2. Many try to excuse themselves by saying they are new in the community and do not know where the church building is located and what time they meet.
  3. I have talked to people who have lived in a community for years and have not attended.

D. It is hard to understand why any Christian would ever want to turn his back on God and the Christian life.

1. Why would we want to leave the ark of safety and return to the ways of the Devil?
2. Why would we want to leave the army of Christ and join the army of the devil?
3. But we cannot deny that many are doing that very thing!!

## **CONCLUSION**

1. God has always been gravely concerned over backsliding
  - a. When Israel backslid, He sent the prophets to plead with them to return - Isa. 1:16-20
 

“Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; 17. Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. 18. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. 19. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: 20. But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”
  - b. Simon of Samaria had no sooner sinned than Peter dealt with him immediately - Acts 8:20-23
 

“But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. 21. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. 22. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. 23. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.”
  - c. God's concern is shown in the parable of the prodigal son. - Lk. 15

2. God and Christ are gravely concerned about this matter of backsliding. If we think as they do then we will be gravely concerned about this great problem.
3. Backsliding is a heartbreaking problem
  - a. Possibility
  - b. Probability
  - c. Prevalence
4. Show your concern by praying for an erring brother, visiting him and helping him to find his way back to the Lord.
5. Lessons on this subject:
  - a. # 1 The Problem # 2 Who is a Backslider?
  - b. # 3 Why do People Backslide? # 4 The Way Home for a backslider

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Sermon by Arthur Pigman - Sunday Morning - Nov. 18, 2007  
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