

BACKSLIDING - Pt.2 "WHO IS A BACKSLIDER?"

Int.

1. Aim: To show what the Bible teaches about who really is a backslider.
2. Text - II Pet.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. 21. 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. 22. 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."
3. Backsliding
 - a. The problem is heartbreaking.
 - i. It is possible to backslide
 - ii. There is a probability of backsliding
 - iii. The prevalence is to backslide
 - b. There is a heartbreaking problem within the church
4. Today's lesson is about "Who is a Backslider?" Backsliding includes more than...
 - i. Those who do not attend
 - ii. People who have fallen into a deep sin
 - iii. It begins in such a subtle way that many are not aware that they are beginning to backslide.
5. Who is a backslider? (1) One who returns to sin (2) One who has left his first love (3) One who has become occupied with things.

Discussion**I. A BACKSLIDER IS ONE WHO HAS RETURNED TO SIN**

- A. No one can be described as a backslider unless he has first become a Christian
 - 1. Jn. 3:3-5 born again
 - 2. Gal. 3:26-27 - put on Christ in baptism
- B. A Christian gives up evil and starts doing good
 - 1. Rom. 12:1-2 -- a living sacrifice
 - 2. I Cor. 15:58 - abounding in the work of the lord
- C. When one becomes a Christian he quits sin!
 - 1. He quits cursing - Mt. 12:34-37
 - 2. He quits drinking - I Cor. 6:10 "Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."
 - 3. He stops all forms of worldliness -
 - a. I Ths. 5:22 "Abstain from all appearance of evil."
 - b. Jas. 4:4 "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."
- D. He starts doing those things which are spiritual and uplifting
 - 1. He reads the Bible -- II Tim. 2:15
 - 2. He prays - I Thes. 5:17 Jas. 5:16
 - 3. He attends all services - Heb. 10:25
 - 4. He tries to win others for Christ - Pro. 11:30 "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise."

E. A BACKSLIDER STARTS BACK INTO SIN!!

F. Now if one who has been born again returns to cursing, drinking, and worldliness and he stops reading the Bible, praying, attending and showing concern for the lost, then he has become a backslider.

1. Are you guilty of these things?
2. Are you as interested in heaven as you once were?
3. Are you as zealous as you once were.
4. Gal. 6:7-8 You can't be a worldly Christian!! You become a backslider !!!
 - a. Some may try to live as a Christian and a sinner at the same time
 - b. We Cannot deceive God !!
 - c. Gal. 6:7-8 "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."
 - d. Gal. 5:16-25 flesh & spirit are in conflict v. 17 "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."
5. Who is a Backslider? It is one who has returned to Sin!!

G. Another way of describing a backslider is that he is one ...

II. A BACKSLIDER IS ONE WHO HAS LEFT HIS FIRST LOVE

- A. Rev. 2:4 NKJV **“Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.”**
1. They had not “lost” but “LEFT” their first love
 2. Left = abandoned, to leave, go away from one - implies that they could regain their first love
 - a. Left - He has abandoned - They had heart trouble
 - b. This condition robs one of the joy of believing and serving God
 - c. They had departed from the right motive for serving
 3. First love
 - a. When they first obeyed there was excitement and a thrill to serving
 - b. But now it was quite different
- B. How great is your love for Christ?
1. If you are devoted to the Lord and really love him then you will pray often - I Ths. 5:17
 2. If you really love the Lord you will read and study your Bible often - I Tim. 4:13 **“Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.”**
 3. If Christ is first in your love when the doors of the church building are opened for worship, you will be there unless you are sick or out of town.
 - a. If Christ is first in your life, attendance at the services is more important than company
 - b. If Christ is first in your life, attendance is more important than a family reunion

- c. If Christ is first in your life, attendance is more important than a trip to the lake, or anything
 4. If Christ is first in your life then you will be zealous to convert others !!
 5. If Christ is first in your love then you will read and obey His word! - John 14:15
 6. A BACKSLIDER IS INDIFFERENT
- C. A backslider is one who has left his first love and therefore no longer cares as much about spiritual matters.
1. He is lukewarm and indifferent
 2. There is no excitement in his heart about serving Christ.
 3. Attendance at the services is not important to the backslider
 4. Reading the Bible is neglected by a backslider. He never brings his Bible to the services any more.
 5. The person who is lukewarm and beginning to backslide may come to the worship services but he does not worship.
 - a. He does not sing. During the prayers his mind is on other matters.
 - b. During the Lord's Supper he is not thinking of Christ and His death.
 - c. He does not give, or if he does it is not as he has prospered and is given grudgingly.
 - d. He has become a clock watcher during the sermon and can't wait to get out of the building.
 6. Living for Christ is not important for a backslider. Ten symptoms of Backsliding.
- D. A backslider is a person who has left his first love for Christ and now Christ is second or third or way down the line and going farther down.

III. A BACKSLIDER IS ONE WHO BECOMES OCCUPIED WITH THINGS

- A. Many Christians have become backsliders because they have taken up with so many worldly "Things".
1. They would not think of committing some of the sins which others are committing.
 2. But they are occupied with material things.
 3. **BACKSLIDER LOVES WORLDLY "THINGS"**
- B. Here are some of the things which have caused them to backslide
1. A job
 2. Sports
 3. Entertainment
 4. House and yard work / hobbies
- C. Jesus said:
1. Lk. 12:15 "And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."
 2. Lk. 14:33 "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."
 3. Mt. 6:24 - Mammon
- D. Illustration: "How much land does a man need?"
- E. Some become backsliders because of material things ! Stuff!!!

CONCLUSION

1. It is impossible to know all the backsliders in a Congregation
 - a. As long as men are hypocritical there will always be more backsliders than we can count.
 - b. Mt. 23:28 "Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."
 - c. There are more backsliders in the eyes of the Lord than we are aware of.
 - d. GOD KNOWS ALL WHO ARE BACKSLIDERS
2. There may be some who are here now that are righteous outwardly, as far as men are concerned, but who may be backsliders in their hearts, before the all seeing and never deceived eye of God
3. The trouble with backsliders is their hearts!
 - a. Their hearts are not right with God
 - b. Pro. 14:14 "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself."
 - c. Mt. 15:19 "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:"
 - d. Acts 8:21,22 "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."
4. Is your heart right with God?

5. Why did you obey the gospel in the beginning?
 - a. Return now for that same reason
 - b. You are worse now than before according to 2 Pet. 2:20-22
6. Come back now, for heaven is too wonderful to miss, and hell is too terrible to endure.

Sermon by Arthur Pigman - Sunday Morning Nov. 25, 2007
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