

"RETURN, THOU BACKSLIDER"

Jeremiah 3:12-14

Introduction: The term "backsliding" is used in several ways in the Old Testament. There is the referral to being disobedient, then to being unfaithful, and failure to measure up to an ideal.

One of the main teachings of the bible and one that we Baptists are noted for is that of the security of those who have fully trusted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. However what about "backsliding?"

I. WHAT ABOUT THE PERSON WHO CLAIMS TO BE SAVED, YET LIVES A SINFUL LIFE?

1. That person may have never been saved in the first place.
 - *1 John 2:19*
 - *1 John 3:8-10*
2. That person could be saved, but in a backslidden condition.
 - After being saved, the Old Sin Nature is still there and will continue to want to run things.
 - The devil begins to fight more and must be dealt with.
 - The world's temptations seem to become stronger.
3. God's Word shows people who backslid.
 - David committed adultery, even murder and was a very poor parent.
 - Peter, a faithful disciple of Jesus, denied that he ever knew the Lord Jesus.
 - Jonah, called to do something for the Lord, refused and tried to run away.
 - Six of the seven Churches mentioned in the Book of Revelation were not faithful all the time.

II. WHEN IS A BELIEVER A BACKSLIDDER?

1. Often the believer/Christian is not even aware of what is happening. His/her mind has been blinded by Satan. *2 Corinthians 4:4*
2. False definitions, ideas about just WHO is a backslider mislead.
 - Not only drunks, immoral people, drug addicts, criminals and murderers are backsliders, but SPIRITUAL leaders sin as well because fleshly sins cause/create backsliding and everyone is guilty of sin at some time or other in their Christian life. *2 Corinthians 7:11*

III. HOW CAN A PERSON KNOW IF HE/SHE IS A BACKSLIDER?

1. If a believer/Christian willingly tolerates, allows even "small" sins in his/her life, he/she is a backslider.
2. If a believer's life is not characterized by an intense hunger and thirst after righteousness, doing things God's way, he/she is a backslider.
 - *Matthew 5:3-6*
 - *Psalms 42:1-2*
3. If a believer's heart is not filled with love for others, then he/she is a backslider. *John 13:35*

4. If a believer puts material, worldly things before the spiritual things of God, he/she is backslidden.
- *Matthew 6:24*
5. If a believer is not giving DEFINITE service to the Lord Jesus, he/she is backslidden.
- *John 15:16*
- *Ephesians 2:10*
6. If a believer does not recognize his/her life as being that of a steward of God, then he/she is a backslider.
- *1 Corinthians 6:20*

IV. THE SOLUTION FOR BACKSLIDING

1. Recognize one's sin.
2. Acknowledge the sin and guilt before God.
3. Confess and forsake one's sinful ways.
4. Return to the Cross of Jesus.
5. Return to one's Church.
6. Return to reading the Bible regularly.
7. Return to one's duty and opportunities of serving the Lord Jesus.

CONCLUSION:

1. *Proverbs 14:14*
2. Backsliding is dangerous as it puts the believer out of fellowship with God, but the joys of forgiveness are wonderful.
3. Look at yourself, what condition are you in right now. Saved, Yes, but what about your fellowship with the Lord? Is it what it should be? Have you "slipped a bit?" Are you really backslidden?
4. Make things right with the Lord, now, not later.