

Don't Forget! The "issue" of Backsliding

1Co 10:1-11(NLT) I don't want you to forget... dear brothers and sisters, about our ancestors in the wilderness long ago. **All** of them were guided by a cloud that moved ahead of them, and **all** of them walked through the sea on dry ground. In the cloud and in the sea, **all** of them were baptized as followers of Moses. **All** of them ate the same spiritual food, and **all** of them drank the same spiritual water. For they drank from the spiritual rock that traveled with them, and that rock was Christ.

Yet God was **not pleased** with most of them, and their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. These things happened as a warning to us, **so that we would not crave evil things as they did, or worship idols as some of them did.** As the Scriptures say, "The people celebrated with feasting and drinking, and they indulged in pagan revelry." And we must not engage in sexual immorality as some of **them did**, causing 23,000 of them to die in one day. Nor should we put Christ to the test, as some of **them did** and then died from snakebites. And don't grumble as some of **them did**, and then were destroyed by the angel of death.

1Co 10:11 These things happened to **them** as examples for us. They were written down to warn us who live at the end of the age.

What was **the re-occurring incidents & example** happening to **them** that could also happen to "us"?

Hos 11:7 My people **are bent** on backsliding from Me. Though they call to the Most High, None at all exalt Him.

GNB - **Insist** on turning away

GW - Are **determined** to turn away

NCV- Have **made up their minds**

H8511- tala = "are **hung** to it" (as a whole man's being "hangs" on something)

Apparently "backsliding" is as **normal** a part of our human experience as breathing is!?!

Israel is our example ... and our **own** lives are our "proof"!

This afternoon we will define & explore this concept of backsliding & answer some questions about it.



Definition: Backsliding is... a term used within Christianity to describe a process by which an individual who has converted to Christianity reverts to pre-conversion habits and/or lapses or falls into sin, when a person turns from God to pursue their own desire.

A **backslider** is someone who is going the wrong way, spiritually. He or she is regressing rather than progressing. The Old Testament uses the term “backsliding” to speak of those who have been near to God but have allowed sin to take them away from Him. In God's rebuke of the nation of Israel, he equates backsliding with worshipping idols (a serious offense).

Backsliding Is A Serious Matter

- *The church is losing a member!*
- *The Lord is losing a servant!*
- *Christians are losing a brother!*
- *The community is losing the good influence of a faithful Christian!*
- *The backslider is losing his soul!*
- *The devil is rejoicing!*



Backsliding has to do with ...

- going into sin,
- getting lukewarm,
- leaving your first love,
- living in compromise and worldliness, and such things.

Apostasy or “**falling away**” is the act or state of **rejecting** the Christian Faith and belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. Some hold ...backsliding is “not as

serious” ... others hold backsliding is a process that **will lead to apostasy** (losing your salvation) if you don't change course & repent.

The word **Apostasy** has one **advantage** in portraying this sin which is condemned so strongly by the Lord. The very word backsliding may carry the idea of unintentional error. It may convey the idea that one is guilty, but not grossly so. The word may imply a casual slip-up. The word Apostasy holds to intentional rebellion against God. Israel knew what the Lord expected of them, but with their eyes “wide open” chose to disobey Him. They refused to follow Him.

Jeremiah 14:7 O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, do it for Your name's sake; for our **backslidings** are many, **we have sinned** against You”.

Backsliding means turning away or turning back from the Lord. It is falling from a level of spiritual attainment. Backsliding is reverting to **sin**.

“Temporary” Backsliding Vs “Permanent”?!?

Rev 2:4-5 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Heb 6:4-6 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

Does Peter have an understanding & sympathetic ear for the backslider?



2Pe 2:20-22 For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A DOG RETURNS TO HIS OWN VOMIT," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire."

Pro 26:11 As a dog returns to his own vomit, So a fool repeats his folly.

WHY PEOPLE BACKSLIDE (Types of Backsliding ... Motivations)

1. Lack of Sufficient grounding in the faith. (Col 2:7, 1:23)

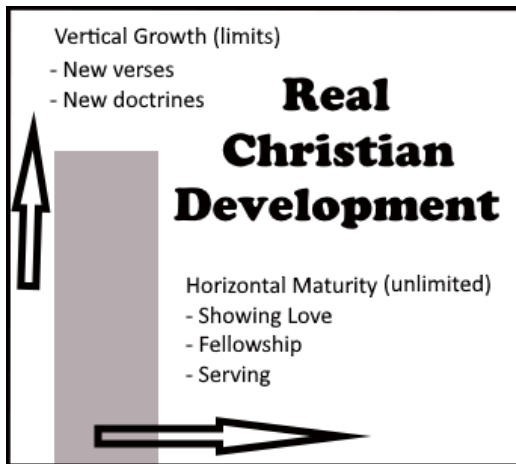
- **Colossians 2:8** Beware lest anyone cheat you through **philosophy and empty deceit**, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.
- **Galatians 5:4** You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.
- **1 Corinthians 10:12** Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.
- **Galatians 1:6-8** I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.
- **Intellectual Challenges:** Facing intellectual doubts or philosophical questions that undermine one's faith.
- **Theological Confusion:** Struggling with complex theological concepts or feeling uncertain about doctrinal beliefs.

2. Love of the World (present world system) (Mk. 4:19, II Tim. 4:10)

- **2 Peter 2:20-22** For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning."
- **Worldly Pursuits:** Prioritizing materialism, wealth, or worldly success over spiritual
1 John 2:15-16 "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world."
- **Conforming to Culture:** Adopting behaviors, attitudes, or values contrary to one's faith due to societal pressures. **Romans 12:2** And do not be **conformed** to this world, but be **transformed** by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

3. Temptations

- **1 Timothy 6:10** "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, & pierced themselves through with many sorrows."
- **Hebrews 10:26-27** For if we **sin willfully** after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries."
- **Luke 8:13** But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; & these have no root, who believe for a while & in time of **temptation** fall away



4. Satanic Deception (I Thess. 3:5)

- **2 Timothy 4:3-4** For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have **itching ears**, they will heap up for themselves **teachers**; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to **fables**.
- Understanding **Vertical Growth** - AND - **Horizontal Maturity**
- **1 Timothy 4:1** "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith,

giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons."

- **2 Thessalonians 2:3** Let no one **deceive** you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition.

5. Persecution and afflictions

- **Matthew 13:20-21** "But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when **tribulation or persecution** arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles."
- **Substance Abuse:** Turning to substances as a means of escape or coping, leading to a compromised spiritual life.
- **Behavioral Addictions:** Engaging in compulsive behaviors that detract from spiritual focus and commitment.

6. Offenses (Matt 18:7)

- **1 Corinthians 8:9** But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak."
- **Strained Family Relationships:** Allowing familial conflicts to impact one's spiritual life.
- **Church Disunity:** Contributing to or being affected by discord within the community of believers. **Matthew 18:21-22** "Then Peter came to Him and said, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.'"

7. A Breakdown in Spiritual Disciplines

- **Neglect of Prayer:** Reduced or abandoned prayer life, failing to communicate with God regularly. **Matthew 26:40-41** Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation
- **Neglect of Scripture:** Failing to read, study, or meditate on religious texts regularly. **Psalm 119:11** Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You."
- **Neglect of Fellowship:** Avoiding or withdrawing from the company of fellow believers. **Hebrews 10:25** not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching."
- **Self-Righteousness:** Developing an attitude of superiority or self-righteousness.
- **Self-Sufficiency:** Relying on one's own strength & wisdom rather than trusting in God
- **Ethical Compromises:** Engaging in dishonest or unethical behavior that conflicts with one's spiritual values.
- **Lack of Integrity:** Failing to uphold moral and ethical standards in various aspects of life.
- **Isolation:** Choosing to live in isolation without the support and accountability of a community. **Proverbs 18:1** "A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; He rages against all wise judgment."
- **Avoidance of Correction:** Resisting correction or guidance from others in the faith. **Proverbs 3:11-12** My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor detest His correction; for whom the Lord loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights.
- **Neglect of Sabbath:** Ignoring the importance of weekly rest and worship



8. False conversion.

- **Relying on Religious Acts:** Focusing on religious rituals or practices without a genuine heart transformation.
- **External Compliance:** Emphasizing outward observance of religious rules while lacking true inner commitment.

9. Hebrews 3:12 "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you **an evil heart of unbelief** in departing from the living God."

- **Superficial Worship:** Going through the motions of worship without genuine connection or reverence.

10. Loss of Spiritual Passion:

- **Apathy or Indifference:** Losing enthusiasm, zeal, or passion for worship, service, and spiritual growth.
- **Spiritual Weariness:** Feeling tired or discouraged in one's faith journey. **Galatians 6:9** "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."

- **Complacency:** Being content with a superficial or lukewarm relationship with God
Revelation 3:15-16 "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth."
- **Lack of Spiritual Growth:** Failing to mature or grow spiritually over time.
- **Overcommitment:** Taking on too many religious responsibilities without allowing time for rest and rejuvenation.
- **Ministry Fatigue:** Feeling exhausted or burned out from active involvement in religious activities.

11. Impatience with God's Timing

- **Isaiah 40:31** But those who **wait on the Lord** shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run & not be weary, they shall walk & not faint.

RESTORING THE BACKSLIDER (Is there hope? ... David repented ... Saul didn't)

Here are the positive steps any backslider can take toward restoration to fellowship with God and fruitfulness in life:

1. Godly repentance (I John 1:9)
2. Forsake sin. (Prov. 28:13)
3. Accept God's Forgiveness. (I John 1:9)
4. End worldly entanglements (Eph. 5:11, II Cor. 6:14, I Cor. 15:33)
5. Establish Godly relationships (Acts 2:42, I Cor. 12:12-27, Eph. 4:1-3)
6. Establish Godly disciplines (Bible Study, Prayer, Worship)
7. Walk free of internal condemnation. (Romans 8:1, 33-34)
8. Don't give up! (Prov. 24:16, Phil. 4:13)

CONCLUSION: GOD'S 4 PROMISES TO THOSE WHO REPENT OF BACKSLIDING

1. He is pleased (Ezekiel 18:23)
2. Love, healing, and forgiveness (Hosea 14:4)
3. Care, instruction, and guidance (Jer. 3:14-15)
4. Salvation (James 5:19-20)



Opposite of Backsliding =

Devout
Holy



How does it end?? (7 Backsliding references in one passage!)

Jer 3:6-22 The LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which **backsliding** Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot.

Jer 3:7 And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it.

Jer 3:8 And I saw, when for all the causes whereby **backsliding** Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.

Jer 3:9 And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks.

Jer 3:10 And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but **feignedly**, saith the LORD.

Jer 3:11 And the LORD said unto me, The **backsliding** Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah.

Jer 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.

Jer 3:13 Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the LORD.

Jer 3:14 Turn, O **backsliding** children, saith the LORD; for I am **married** unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:

Jer 3:15 And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with **knowledge & understanding**.

Jer 3:16 And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the LORD, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more.

Jer 3:17 At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: **neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.**

Jer 3:18 In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers.

Jer 3:19 But I said, How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations? and I said, Thou shalt call me, My father; and shalt not turn away from me.

Jer 3:20 Surely as a wife **treacherously** departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the LORD.

Jer 3:21 A voice was heard upon the high places, **weeping and supplications** of the children of Israel: for they have perverted their way, and they have forgotten the LORD their God.

Jer 3:22 Return, ye **backsliding** children, and I will heal your **backslidings**. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the LORD our God.