

“Backsliding”

⇒ **Text:** Revelation 2:7

⇒ **Intro:**

- o Often we find someone that is a strong Christian today but is backslidden later.
- o Sometimes we ask the question: Who will be the next to leave the Lord?
 - And the inevitable answer is “not me”.
- o Remember the solemn warning of 1 Corinthians 10:12, **“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”**
- o Proverbs 16:18, **“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.”**
- o We are all kept by the grace and strength of the Lord.
 - He is able to keep us.
 - The Apostle Paul wrote Timothy and told him, **“...I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”** (2 Timothy 1:12
 - He surely is! – Amen

⇒ **I. DEFINITION OF BACKSLIDING**

- o Backsliding is really an Old Testament term even though we often use it in New Testament times to describe someone who has broken fellowship with the Lord.

- o Backsliding is turning away from God.
 - 1 Kings 11:9, “**And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel,...**”
 - o Backsliding is growing cold and leaving the first love.
 - Revelation 2:4, “**Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.**”
 - o Some define backsliding as ones sins that separate a believer from the Lord.
 - Isaiah 59:2, “**But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.**”
 - o Speaking generally, backsliding is growing cold and losing interest in the Lord, the Holy Bible, prayer, church attendance and witnessing and turning toward the world.
- ⇒ **II. BACKSLIDING IS A GRADUAL PROCESS**
- o I do not believe that anyone backslides suddenly.
 - It is true that we may be shocked by the sudden outward manifestation of terrible sin.
 - o But the truth is that many little things have entered in and undermined the life.
 - o The story of Lot’s backsliding illustrates this point of seven downward steps.

- o **1. Covetousness.**
 - Genesis 13:10, “**And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where,...**”
 - Often the eyes are the first to leave the Saviour.
 - They see something attractive.
 - Many a man has made the mistake of fixing his eyes on the wrong object.

- o **2. Choosing to low.**
 - Lot chose the plain instead of the mountains.
 - Genesis 13:11, “**Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan;...**”
 - Genesis 19:17, “**And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.**”
 - Friends, lift up your sights.
 - Aim high.
 - Keep looking to the Saviour.
 - Hebrews 12:2, “**Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith;...**”

- o **3. Compromise.**
 - Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom.

- Genesis 13:12,13, “**Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.**”
- Lot compromised and lived near the place of sin.
- Abraham prospered up there on the mountain with God.
- The Bible says, “**Flee also youthful lusts:...**” – 2 Tim. 2:2.
 - Don’t live near Sodom (sin).
- **4. Captured by the enemy.**
 - Genesis 14:11-12, “**And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way. And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.**”
 - If one lives near sin one will be captured.
 - Let the converted drunkard leave the barroom.
 - Let the thief be removed from the place of temptation.
 - If you flirt with the world you will get burned.
 - If you give sin your finger it will soon take your hand, arm, body and then soul.
- **5. Carnal.**
 - “Lot sat in the gate of Sodom:...” – Gen. 19:1
 - Lot was probably a member of the town council.
 - The city gate was a place of prominence.

- A place where business was conducted and legal matters resolved.
- Lot has gained worldly influence but lost his spiritual influence.
 - **“And while he lingered,...”** – Gen. 19:16.
 - Lot loved Sodom.
 - Lot loved the thing that God hated and was about to destroy.
 - Do you love sin?
- o **6. Criminal weakness.**
 - Gen. 19:8, **“Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof.”**
 - Lot was willing to give his two daughters into sin.
 - When a man goes down he takes others with him.
 - Roman 14:7 is very true. – **“For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.”**
 - Lot was as one that mocked (an old joker) to his sons-in-law,
 - Gen. 19:14, **“And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.”**

o **7. Carousing.**

• **See Genesis 19:33-38.**

▪ Here we find Lot drinking alcoholic wine and engaged in immorality.

• Lot loved sin.

▪ Lot lingered in sin.

▪ Wine always leads to immorality.

• Let us not condemn Lot.

▪ **See 2 Peter 2:6-8** is still true.

▪ Let us observe and beware.

⇒ **III. OUTWARD CAUSES OF BACKSLIDING**

o 1. Covetousness, - Gen. 13:10, **“And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where,...”**

• Lot lusting for something that was not God’s will for him.

o 2. Society, Gen. 19:26, **“But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.”**

• Lot’s wife looked to the things that she loved and became salt.

o 3. Fear, **Matt. 26:70-74**, Peter denied the Saviour because he feared man.

o 4. Haughty spirit, Proverbs 16:18, **“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.”**

- o 5. Selfishness.
 - Proverbs 14:14, **“The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways:...”**
 - He ought to be concerned with the Lord’s will and ways.
- o 6. Idolatry.
 - Exodus 32:8, God said to Moses concerning Israel, **“They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.”**
 - Israel constantly went away from the Lord after false gods.
- o 7. Disobedience.
 - 1 Samuel 15:11, God spoke to Samuel concerning king Saul, **“...Saul...is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments....”**
- o 8. Love of gold, silver, and garments.
 - Achan in Joshua 7:1-24.
 - Caused Israel to lose a battle and lives.
- o 9. Love of money.
 - Judas Iscariot in Mt. 26:14-15, **“Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.”**

- o 10. Outlandish women.
 - Solomon in Nehemiah 13:26, **“Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin.”**
- o 11. Ambition for power, Simon Magus in Acts 8:19, tried to buy the gift of the Holy Ghost with money.
- o 12. Love of the world.
 - 2 Timothy 4:10, The Apostle Paul said of his one time friend and brother in Christ, Demas –
 - **“For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world,...”**

⇒ **IV. THE TRUE CAUSE OF BACKSLIDING**

- o 1. Failure to maintain the Quiet Time.
 - Many a person has come back to the Lord and sometimes through bitter tears said, “I lost out with God in my Quiet Time.”
- o 2. Failure to pray.
 - We need prayers to intercede to God for strength.
 - To fail to pray is a form of pride, and Proverbs 16:18 goes into effect.
 - **“Pride goeth before destruction,...”**

- Often the thing that crowds out prayer time will eventually cause the fall.
- o 3. Failure to read the Bible.
- The Christian is commanded in 2 Timothy 2:15, **“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”**
 - It is disobedience to God and will surely bring repercussions
 - We need to pray and read God’s Word to be informed about His will and plan for us.
- o 4. Failure to attend church when the doors are open.
- Hebrews 10:25, **“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”**
- o 5. Failure to obey the Holy Spirit.
- Ephesians 4:30, **“And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”**
- o 6. Failure to confess Christ.
- Matthew 10:33, **“But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.”**
 - Romans 10:11 **“For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.”**

- o Failure to walk in the light.
 - 1 John 1:7, **“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light...”**
 - We ought to obey the light He gives us and follow quickly.

⇒ **V. THE RESULTS OF BACKSLIDING**

- o There will be a loss
 - of power
 - of peace
 - of joy and happiness.
- o Murmuring and darkness will begin to cloud your daily pathway.
- o Backsliding will lead to the loss of reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ.
 - 1 Cor. 3:15, **“If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”**

⇒ **VI. GOD’S INVITATION TO RETURN**

- o 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.”**

⇒ **VII. GOD’S PROMISE OF PARDON FOR BACKSLIDING**

- o Hosea 14:4, **“I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.”**

- o 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.”**

⇒ **CONCLUSION:**

- o May I exhort you in the name of the Lord and by His strength never to backslide.
- o Revelation 2:10, **“...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”**
- o The true Christian hates backsliding.
 - Psalm 101:3, **“I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.”**
- o **“before mine eyes”** – be very, careful what is set before thine eyes.
 - This is the true Object to set your gaze on: Hebrews 12:2, **“Looking unto Jesus...”**
- o The Apostle Paul’s goal was Christ and that should be the goal of every Christian.
 - Paul said in Phil. 3:14, **“I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”**