



He Can Heal Your Backsliding

Why has this people slidden back? ...They refuse to return. —Jeremiah 8:5

Are you sliding backwards spiritually or are you advancing in Christ?

What comes to your mind when you think about the word “backsliding”? The picture that comes to my mind is of a child going down a slide at the park on their back with hands and feet extended up in the air, with nothing to slow or inhibit their downward motion. Spiritual backsliding is not something to desire and it could happen to any of us Christians; even to the strongest among us if they become self-confident. We all must cautiously remain dependant upon the Lord for His victory and do what we must to avoid all small and larger spiritual compromises. The small ones of course will lead to larger compromising ..or even to the “great compromise” where the once growing Christian is totally backsliding away and often not knowing how they’ll ever return.

Real Christians must make fellowship in a blazing red-hot fellowship (I mean spiritually hot—a healthy church or smaller Bible study group) **a top priority** after our personal worship time with Christ! We know one of Satan's favorite ploys to take a Christian down is to distract them or help them find some reason to pull out of harmony at a solid Christ-exalting local church.

Are you living with one foot in the Church and the other one in the world? Are you looking for a way to "have it all, because you deserve a break today"—wanting to have your cake and eat it too—regardless of the cost or pain it causes others?

Backsliding will negatively affect every area of a Christians public and family life in serious ways. We believers want to make our lives count and live effectively as witnesses for Jesus Christ! Yet the seemingly exciting lure of life on the edge is still there all up in our faces too often. What can we do to safeguard our spiritual walk against temptation, idolatry, immorality, evil peer pressure, adultery, taking wrong shortcuts here and there due to greed? Our brains are being assaulted with mind pollution daily and what are we doing to close the door to it? We each have hundreds of options of ways to take a little off here, a little off there ..presented to us weekly until biblical truth and values will be completely eroded in us if we merely give in. With each small step back towards Egypt if you will; with each subtle compromise made, we're drawn further from Christ and closer to the ugly abyss of backsliding. Then there's that last little push; that last great compromise—the one we can't pull out of. Your spiritual condition matters to God!

Did you know that...

- The *Higher Education Research Institute* at UCLA found that 52% of college students reported frequent church attendance the year before they entered college but only 29% continued frequent church attendance by their junior year.
- The *Fuller Youth Institute's* current data seems "to suggest that about 40-50% of students in youth groups struggle in their faith after graduation."
- 88 percent of the children raised in evangelical homes leave church at the age of 18, never to return.
- The divorce ratio among members of evangelical churches is virtually the same as among non-church members.
- In the United States, 1 million children see their parents "fall out of love" if you will and then divorce.
- Approximately two-thirds of the members of Southern Baptist churches attend church only sporadically.
- The majority of children in America have less than 10 minutes of significant and meaningful conversation with their parents each week. Of course the parent's poor spiritual condition influences such neglect. If you remove the mother, you can measure this statistic in seconds.
- Media powerfully affects us, especially young people! American kids see an average of 44,000 commercials every year (and most of these audio/visual exposures are not pulling them upwards spiritually, because they clearly portray a non-Christian worldview). And 12-18 year olds spend an average of six and a half hours in front of a screen (TV, computer, video games, etc.) every single day. This is playing such a HUGE role in shaping them.
- A 2002 *Gallup Poll* study found that church attendance "drops during the teen and young adult years."¹

You know, we Christians must never become too satisfied. There needs to be a continued burning desire inside to grow, to become spiritually mature.. to simply please the Lord.. to reach our family members and others who are outside of God's Kingdom! That's our mandate.

I recently told my third son that growth in Christianity is kind of like being on a fairly greased slide. As a child, you were probably on a lot of slides at different parks huh.

I still enjoy visiting the park with my family and we on occasion like to stop by the playground to watch the other families, dogs and little children as they play around on the slides. Have you ever done that? The kids often get real creative and use different things to make the slide more slippery too. But after a few rounds of sliding down the slide, one of them usually decides.. it will be more challenging to climb up the slide (and sometimes while their friends are sliding down—sure I used to do that). Gripping the side-rails, one will start hiking on up the smooth surface. It's a slippery slope indeed, as they earnestly work their way towards the summit platform.

Often times they lose their foothold, fall on their back and end up sliding all the way back down again to the bottom ..head first. After some laughter, they spring to their feet again totally undaunted and then attempt the climb back up again. You know it would be simpler to exit around the back of the slide and just use the steps to reach the top. But kids usually like the challenge of it all. They desire the challenge of reaching the top the difficult way.

Once in a while, by applying some pressure from our shoes to the sidewalls of the slide, my two brothers and I would on occasion reach the very top by climbing and would be thrilled with the accomplishment. It's wonderful reaching the goal!

In our Christian walk toward maturity, sometimes we reach the top of God's Big Slide, and rejoice. Unfortunately, God's Big Slide doesn't have a ladder to reach the top the easy way. Sometimes, like children on the playground, we don't reach the top of the slide before losing our footing and sliding back down to the bottom again.

In our hearts as we wait on the Lord—waiting for Him to answer prayer, waiting to hear His voice, waiting for the soon coming Rapture of the Church—we've got to keep climbing upwards! We've got to keep on maturing, growing, developing fruit and godly character in our relationship with Christ. Christians are either climbing up, or sliding back down. When we reach the place in our walk where we feel smug or kind of proud we're in trouble. When we feel that we've kind of arrived, like we've somehow learned enough regarding truth, that's when we must press on and press in to continue learning the Word, to continue praying and witnessing.

Christian, please never become fully satisfied spiritually! A backslider is a miserable person. People think that "B"-word is so harsh to use, but it is necessary to hear about this! Backsliders have too much Christianity in them to be happy in the world, and too much of the world in them to be happy in God's Kingdom.

May I ask you... Are your best friends today *carnal, worldly, lukewarm or religious Christians* ...or are they simply *unbelievers*? If you want to grow in the Lord, you will want to choose growing on-fire Christians as your best friends and limit your time with the half-committed or lost. Why spend so much time with other backsliders, apostates or wicked people to the point where they start pulling you down. Sure we should have unbelievers and carnal Christians as friends so we can pray for them and help them if they are open to that, but not have them as best friends. That ought not to be. Your very best Friend Jesus is not for you going backwards. As long as I can be a positive influence on them towards knowing and serving Christ, do I want to spend time with them, but when they start to negatively influence on me to the point of me wanting to join in with their sinful activities and attitudes, that's when I get away from them. My relationship with Christ means so much more to me.

“Your own wickedness will correct you, and your backslidings will rebuke you. Know therefore and see that it is an evil and bitter thing that you have forsaken the Lord your God, And the fear of Me is not in you,” Says the Lord God of hosts” —Jeremiah 2:19, nkjv

***I've sadly taken a stride from my Master's side. Don't know why I've strayed and disobeyed, but taking heed to His voice has not always been my first choice.
Lord, apart from all hype I want to get it right and then live contrite.
Father, forgive me for running away from You. Lead me back to You today.*** —KvS

“Return, you backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.’ ‘Indeed we do come to You, For You are the Lord our God’” —Jeremiah 3:22

We have no time to become self-confident or presumptuous inside—remember Peter who was like that and denied the Lord after saying he never would. The Bible says, **“Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall”** (Prov. 16:18). It warns us, **“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able”** (1 Cor. 10:12-13, nkjv). A sign at the end of a road near an airport runway reads like this: *“Keep moving. If you stop, you are in danger and a danger to those who are flying.”* Believer, we must keep moving on with Christ as Lord, because if we stop, we will be in danger and we could also unintentionally end up influencing others to go in the wrong direction.

The most unhappy people, it seems to me, are not the unsaved but half-hearted Christians who are disobedient to Christ. When they continue to sin, they are inviting God's firm but loving chastening and they are asking for much sorrow and loss. Why live as a defeated saint when God has territory for you to conquer by faith? Because backsliders have the benefit of the indwelling Holy Spirit and a knowledge of God's will through the Scriptures, they feel more wretched in their backslidden state than those who have not accepted the Savior. Every Christian who has lived for a time with unconfessed sin knows what I'm talking about.

To be a happy Christian, we must seek to know God's will through Bible study and prayer. No matter how far you've traveled in the wrong direction, it's not too late to turn around. God is ready to forgive and restore (Ps. 32:5).

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all”. —Isaiah 53:6

If you're headed down the wrong road, please make a U-turn. — Cindy Hess Kasper

“Attend to my cry, for I am brought very low.” —Psalm 142:6

Savior, lead me, lest I stray, gently lead me all the way;
I am safe when by Thy side, I would in Thy love abide. —Davis

“My spirit was overwhelmed within me.... No one cares for my soul.” —Psalm 142:3-4

[Check yourself](#) to see if you are really in the faith. It doesn't matter how far you have wandered away from the Shepherd of your soul; the important thing is that you return to Christ and let Him heal your backsliding² today. No matter how far you've run from God, no matter the reason why, He's only a prayer away. He is still there for you. What do you need to do? [Admit it and quit it!](#) Remember, repent and repeat your first works.

Have Kurt's fishing devos built you up any? Click [here](#) to let him know how God is helping you to conquer worry and doubt!

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¹ While researching family life in America, the Southern Baptist Council on Family Life uncovered these factual statistics (Jun 12, 2002). I got the media stats from Brett Kunkl (on Nov. 19 '08) who works with str.org. I also got the above stats

online at: <http://www.str.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=5759> and at <http://www.sbcannualmeeting.net/sbc02/newsroom/newspage.asp?ID=261>

² You want to persevere to the end in close relationship with Jesus. There have been some people who actually changed their mind about going to Heaven. God won't force anyone to obey Him—He will have no one there who doesn't want to be there. Charles Templeton was one such "minister." In 1936, Templeton had a religious experience and so called conversion. He became an evangelist, eventually becoming a close friend of Billy Graham. The two in fact co-founded Youth for Christ International and often toured together to reach people. At his peak Templeton hosted a weekly religious television show on CBS, *Look Up and Live* in the early 1950s. In 1957, after a long struggle with doubt, Templeton declared himself an agnostic and then he spent years working to destroy the faith of Christians. The Bible is clear that all Christians have eternal security "in Christ." But God doesn't want Christians like me to try to give assurance of salvation to those who are living in habitual adultery, drunkenness, fornication etc.. because then they would have a false assurance. Four times the Bible talks about being blotted out of the book of life, **"And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book"** (Rev. 22:19). Can someone's name be taken out/blotted out? I don't know, but why would God warn us against it... if it was not a possibility? What about those who don't **"preserve to the end"** or he who refuses to **"overcometh?"** There is no promise in God's Word to those who don't persevere to the end. And the hermeneutical rule is this: where the Bible is silent we must remain silent. The Bible says, **"they that preserve to the end shall be saved."** (Rev. 3:5 kjv) **"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life."** Can a Christian lose their salvation? I honestly don't know for sure, but I will not dogmatically teach that they can lose it. Did you know that the famous media mogul, Ted Turner allegedly accepted Jesus at a Billy Graham crusade, but later on God didn't physically heal his sick sister. She died, so Ted left Jesus Christ. Who knows if this person was backslidden or whether he was never saved in the first place—we can't judge the internal state of man or their final destiny. Only God can.

There is a difference between backsliding and apostasy. Apostasy means an abandonment of one's faith or religious convictions. It is a willful, deliberate departure from God, and is never accidental. Backsliders often become distracted and drift away from fellowship with Christ slowly. Apostates are hardened to the point of not wanting to repent—anyone could decide to return, but they don't (Heb. 6:6; 10:26). If anyone repents God will of course forgive them, but apostates cannot repent because repentance is not sought or given to them (Acts 11:18). Apostasy is deliberately siding with the enemies of Christ (Phil 3:18) despite the knowledge of the Gospel. An apostate becomes an enemy of Jesus – someone who seeks to undermine the Gospel. Most of the apostates mentioned in the bible were false teachers, not just casual backsliders. Heb. 10:27 refers to them as adversaries. The Hebrews (that are spoken of from the book of Hebrews) were not just backsliding and "not coming to church anymore". They were completely reneging on their faith and denying Christ. They were also siding with those who persecuted their saved colleagues for abandoning Judaism and embracing Christ. According to 2 Peter 2:15 apostates have forsaken the right way, but you can come to God's Way—Jesus—today!