

MAY 28, 2017

# Sunday Word

## WORD FOR THE WORLD



Hosea 11:7 My people are determined to turn from me. Even though they call me God Most High I will by no means exalt them.-NIV)(1 Cor 10:12<sup>12</sup> So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!

### **The definition of Backsliding & its Effect**

Backsliding is turning away from God in one's heart and loving forbidden things.(1 Kings 11:9)<sup>9</sup>The LORD became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice-NIV)

Backsliding is leaving one's first love for Christ (Rev. 2:4<sup>4</sup> Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first.-NIV)

Backsliding is failing to walk in the light in fellowship with God (1 John 1:5-6<sup>5</sup>This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup>If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth.

The term backsliding is used frequently in the Old Testament to describe Israel's wayward spiritual condition.(Lot in Sodom, Israelites in the Wilderness-Deut. 9:11-12) Though not used in the New Testament, it is a term commonly applied to the Christian who moves away from a close fellowship with Christ.

Hosea 4:16<sup>16</sup>The Israelites are stubborn, like a stubborn heifer. How then can the LORD pasture them like lambs in a meadow?

### **THE CAUSES**

It is very important to know what causes Christians to backslide so that if we happen to be in this situation right now, there is still time to get out or the best thing to do is to avoid these causes because prevention is always better than cure.

#### **1. Spending Time with the Wrong People**

The keyword here is influence. "Tell me who your friends are and I will tell you who you are" Of course friends here refer to people whom you always hang around with. It is sad to note that many Christians today can not resist the temptation of going out with the B.I. or bad influence. Sometimes, they even brag that they will be the ones to influence the group...but wait bro...we are outnumbered. **1 Cor 15:33 Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character."**-NIV

**Proverbs 22:24-25 Don't befriend angry people or associate with hot-tempered people, 25 or you will learn to be like them and endanger your soul-NLT**

#### **2. Spending Time in the Wrong Places**

"Because it does matter what you see & what you hear." Many people think they can go watch an adult movie or go to a beach full of half naked people and not be affected by it. (I'm a Christian, I'm strong enough). Now let me tell you that it is at the least, spiritually unhealthy. At worst, it will cause you to lust. Church, if we don't want to sin, we should avoid those places that will make us stumble again. The places we go, the people we meet, the things we see and hear, all affect our inward man-which is directly linked to backsliding.

#### **3. Developing the Wrong Passions**

This is really the main cause for backsliding. Misplaced priorities concerning people and places that lead to declining passion for the Savior that bought us with His life and save us from sin. Misplaced affections can be dangerous thing. People will place their loyalty where their love is.

**Mat. 6:21 "For where your treasure is there your heart will also be."**

### **THE MANIFESTATIONS OF BACKSLIDING (Early Warning Signs)**

#### **A. Unhappy in Service**

A man loses his appetite for the things of God. The things of God become boring to a backslider. Nothing proves a Christian has a backslidden heart more than when he loses his joy of serving the Lord.

#### **B. Unembarrassed about Sin**

There is a passive indifference towards sin. Satan attempts to intimidate us with sin in 3 ways:

**Disguises its Appearance**-He never wants us to see sin the way God sees it. Sin never reveals the harm of indulgence, Sin robs you of good senses and Sin makes promises it can not keep.

**Debate its Acceptability**- What is there to debate about immorality? What is there to debate about drunkenness? What is there to debate about lying. But God's laws never change. A sin is always a sin regardless of its gravity.

**Diverts its Accountability**- Satan will cause you to think that you can go on with the way you live. Satan will make you think everything is alright with you. Backsliders will minimize, justify and transfer the blame to others. They never feel like they are guilty of anything. They always put the blame on others.

#### **C. Unforgiving & Obstinate (Spiritual Obstnacy)**

The word obstinate means, unyielding in course or purpose. These people rely too much on their own opinion and wisdom that makes them arrogant and never listen to an advice.

They are mean and fault finders. They are miserable and they try to make others so. They tend to magnify little faults committed against them and always want to get even. They don't rejoice over others' achievements because they are miserable so they apply the Crab Mentality, dragging others down.

#### **D. Unfaithful in Relationship & Stewardship**

Christians are supposed to be engaged with Christ but if we continue to be flirting with the world, its philosophies and practices, we are backslidden. We are flirting with money, possessions, material things and vices. These things cause us to lose our focus and our first love. 1 Cor. 7:23 God paid a high price for you, so don't be enslaved by the world-NLT . 1 Cor 7:31 Those who use the things of the world should not become attached to them. For this world as we know it will soon pass away-NLT.

### **THE CURE**

It's not too late yet. If we can relate with those manifestations, there is still a way out. 1 Cor 10:13 The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.-NLT

Just recognize your backsliding because until a person recognizes that they are backslidden, they will continue on their wretched course. Always remember that the first step to repentance is to acknowledge that we are sinners.

Return to the Lord and remember Jeremiah 3:22 You have not been faithful, "says the LORD." Return to me. I will heal you. Then you will not turn away from me anymore. "'Yes," the people say. "We will come to you. You are the LORD our God.-NIV

The Lord is merciful and he will abundantly pardon. Repudiate your Idols. Repudiate is to reject, disown or refuse to pay or honor. Jeremiah 4:1

"If you, Israel, will return, then return to me," declares the LORD. "If you put your detestable idols out of my sight and no longer go astray-NIV. Church what is your idol today? Vices? Pornography?, get rid of them. Burn them down if necessary. So you won't have the chance to go back to your old ways.

Renew your life. Jeremiah 4:3-4"Plow up the hard ground of your hearts! Do not waste your good seed amongthorns.<sup>4</sup>O people of Judah and Jerusalem, surrender your pride and power. Change your hearts before the LORD or my anger will burn like an unquenchable fire because of all your sins-NLT 1 John 1:9 But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness-NLT

Say to the Lord "I have wandered far away from you Lord. The paths of sin long I have trod. I have wasted my precious years. I now repent with bitter tears. I'm tired of sin and straying Lord. I'll trust your love, believe your word. My soul is sick, my heart is sore, my strength renew, My hope restore".