Backsliding

Intro: Backsliding is a Biblical expression. It used about 15 times in the Bible, 12 times by Jeremiah to describe the condition of Israel. It means, “to slide back,” “to fall away from a condition of grace, honesty, uprightness” “Relapse into sin, error.”

I. THE POSSIBILITY OF BACKSLIDING; APOSTASY.
   A. We are warned against it.
      1. Mat. 26:41 “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”
      2. Heb. 3:12 “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.”
      3. 1 Cor. 10:12 “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”
      4. 2 Pet. 1:9-10 “But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:”
   B. Some examples of it.
      1. Gal. 5:4 “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.”
      2. Acts 8:18-22 “And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.”
      3. 2 Tim. 4:10 “For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.”
      4. Ephesians; 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.”

II. RESULTS OF BACKSLIDING
   A. It makes one fit only to be trodden under feet of men; Mat. 5:13 “Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.”
   B. It renders one unfit for the kingdom Luke 9:62 “And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”
   C. 2 Pet. 2:20-22 “For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”
   D. Everybody loses.
      1. Local church loses a member.
2. God loses a worker
   a. 2 Cor. 6:1 “We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.”
   b. 1 Cor. 3:9 “For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.”

3. The brethren lose a brother or sister; 2 Tim. 4:10 “For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.”

4. The community loses a Christians influence; Mat. 13:33 “Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.”

5. The backslider loses his soul; John 15:1-6 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”

III. OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE BACKSLIDER.
   A. Restore him in the spirit of meekness considering self; Gal. 6:1 “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”
   B. Convert him; Jam. 5:19-20 “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”

IV. BACKSLIDING PREVENTIVES
   A. Add the Christian graces.
      1. 2 Pet. 1:5-7 “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.”
      2. 2 Pet. 1:4, 8-11 “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.... For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”
   B. 1 Pet. 2:2 “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:”
   C. Watch and Pray; Mat. 26:41 “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”
   D. Take heed:
      1. 1 Cor. 10:12 “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”
2. **Heb. 3:12** “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.”

**Conclusion:** If you have slidden back into this world and the things of this world, why not repent at this time.