

Lessons from a Backslider

Text: 1 Peter 2:20-22

Introduction:

1. The Bible teaches the reality and danger of backsliding.
2. Peter described backsliding in terms that illustrate both is disgust and danger.
3. He was a man who knew well the subject he discussed – for Peter had been a backslider.
4. Important lessons can be learned by studying his example and teaching in this matter.

I. The Anatomy of a Backslider

- A. When he denied the Lord, Peter realized his spiritual condition and wept bitterly (Luke 22:61-62).
 1. However, this sin was the final result of his backsliding.
 2. His problem began in the heart.
- B. Pride (Luke 22:31-34; Mark 14:27-31)
 1. Peter's pride is seen in his thinking that he knew better than the Lord did.
 2. Peter had struggled with this before (Matt. 16:21-24).
 3. Man cannot stand without the Lord (1 Cor. 10:12).
- C. Weakness (Mark 14:32-42)
 1. Peter had been warned; now, he was told to watch.
 2. His spirit was willing (his heart was in the right place), but the flesh was weak.
 3. Peter had not taken the Lord's words seriously and prepared himself for the tests he was to face (cf. Heb. 2:1-3).
- D. Fear (Mark 14:50, 54)
 1. The Lord, who had been first priority to Peter, has now fallen to second place behind Peter's fear for his own safety.
 2. He no longer wanted to be identified with Jesus for fear of ridicule or persecution.
 3. Fear robs one of faith and brings condemnation (Mark 8:38; Rev. 21:8).
- E. Compromise (Mark 14:54b; Luke 22:54-55)
 1. When one is ashamed of Jesus, it is easy to mingle with the worldly crowd.
 2. Yet, compromise with the world affects one's soul (1 Cor. 15:33; Prov. 6:27-29).
- F. Denial (Mark 14:66-72)

II. The Advice of a Backslider

- A. Instead of pride – **humility** (1 Peter 5:5-6)
- B. Instead of weakness – **diligence** (1 Peter 5:8-9)
- C. Instead of fear – **faith** (1 Peter 4:16)
- D. Instead of compromise – **abstinence** (1 Peter 2:11-12)
- E. Instead of denial – **defense** (1 Peter 3:15)

Conclusion:

1. Ultimately, Peter shows that the Christian is protected from backsliding when he continues growing in grace and knowledge (2 Peter 3:17-18).
2. Peter learned this lesson the hard way.
3. Let us learn from his inspired teaching and never backslide from the Lord.