

♥ And, "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner? 1 Peter 4:18

So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! 1 Corinthians 10:12

♥ Hebrews contains many warnings against the dangers of backsliding.  
Hebrews .3v7-18, 5v11-6v12,10v26-39,12v14-29.

### **What is the difference between backsliding and becoming apostate?**

Backsliding is often a gradual process. Long after a person has removed all behaviour from their life that is associated with being a Christian, they may think of themselves as a Christian and even claim to be one. An apostate makes a deliberate choice to turn their back on Christ. This may be because they stop believing God exists, because they are rebelling against Him or because they choose to indulge a life of sin.

### **? What are the dangers of backsliding being a gradual process? Do you think people make a conscious decision to backslide?**

Backsliding is a decision, it comes as a result of choices we make, but it is not always a conscious decision. Very few people decide, "I think I'll backslide this week".

\* In reality a person starts to backslide long before they do so or evidence of backsliding can be seen. Spurgeon spoke about those who 'backslide in heart'.  
**What does this mean?**

### **At what point does a backslider cease to be a Christian?**

Clearly there is a line over which you step. If you can choose to follow Christ, it stands to reason that you can also choose not to follow Him. Fortunately, exactly when a person stops being a Christian is not a call we need to make, such judgments are in God's hands alone. The dividing line will be in a different place for each person.

### **What was Jesus attitude to the backslider? Matthew 12v20**

Return, faithless people; I will cure you of backsliding. Jeremiah 3:22

? **Do backsliders ever return to God?**  
**What is God attitude to the returning backslider? Luke 15v20**  
If truth is told most of the people in churches today have backslid to some degree.

? **What tell tale signs are there that a person is likely to backslide?**  
**How should we treat backsliders?**  
**What should we do to try to draw them back?**

Go back to the original list. What could be done for each instance?

? **What can you do to protect yourself from backsliding?**  
**What should you do if you sense yourself starting to backslide?**

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# FREEDOM

## Christian Church

### Why do people backslide?

? **What is a backslider?**  
A backslider is someone who accepted Jesus into their life and started to follow Him, but for a variety of reasons, stopped following Christ and started to live as an unbeliever. To turn your back of Christ and move away from Him. Those in the process of giving up.

\* **Read Matthew 13v1-9**  
The parable of the sower is well known, it describes four scenarios but three kinds of people. There are those in whom the word finds no place, it never germinates, Satan steals it before it can start to grow. In another group the gospel takes hold and becomes fruitful. It is the two other groups that interest us for the sake of this study. Those where the seed germinated but never reached fruitfulness.

? **What happened to these two seeds?**  
**What caused the seed on the rocky ground to fail? v20-21**

**What was the reason the person backslid?**

**What caused the seed among the weeds to fail? v22**

**What was the reason the person backslid?**

**What proportion would you assign to each group?**



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### Why do people backslide?

- Their love for Jesus grows cold*
- They find following Jesus too hardship*
- False unrealistic wrong expectations*
- The behaviour of other Christians*
- Not a real commitment in the first place*
- Lack of friends in church's*
- Failure to change lifestyle*
- Temptation of the world too stronger*
- Failure to grow in Christian*
- Pressure for friends and family*
- Failure to deal with underlying problems or sins*
- Price is too high, too may things to give up*
- Failure to do the basics, church, Bible, prayer etc*
- Doubts and questions*
- Disappointments - God did not behave - do what they wanted.*
- Caught in wrong belief*
- Persecution*
- Lazy with spiritual things*
- Relationship breakups*
- Fear of peer pressure*
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### What part will the enemy play in a person backsliding?



The enemy is active in them all. Perhaps each one of us has a tendency to backslide at a given one of these points. If so the Enemy will do all he can to exacerbate the problem and exaggerate the issues involved.



### Can you think of any famous backsliders in the Bible?

Probably the most famous backslider was Judas.



### Why do you think Judas backslid?

At this point we have to admit that we rarely know why anyone backslides, often the reasons are hidden, even by those who backslide. The reasons that are given are often a smokescreen and the real reasons are never admitted to. Maybe we do not ask often enough.

In Judas case, it seems to be a mixture of greed (temptation/undealt with underlying sin) disillusion and disappointment. Jesus had not turned out to be what Judas had hoped and the position of power he wanted, had not materialized.



### In what way was it a good thing that Judas backslid?

Judas was left with a choice, change or leave. In such situations it is always our desire to see someone change, but if they will not, think of the damage an unchanged Judas would have done in the early church.



Hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord. 1 Corinthians 5:5, 1 Timothy 1v20  
(hand over to Satan means no more than treat as an unbeliever. Matthew 18v17

This is a hard thing and it is for the end of the matter, not the beginning, God is working in all of us to root out our faults from within the church.



### If Judas could backslide after 3 years under Jesus ministry what does that say for the rest of us?



### Why did Achan backslide? Joshua 7v1

### What caused Hymenaeus and Alexander to backslide? 1 Timothy 1v19-20



Hebrews was written to a group of priest on the point of backsliding because of doubt. John talks about those who went out from us and were never part of us. 1 John 2v19  
Large crowds stopped following Jesus because His teaching was too hard. John 6v60-69  
Peter came within a hairs breadth of backsliding. Mark 14v29-30  
Israel as a people, backslide frequently .  
Jesus predicted that in the last days the love of many would grow cold. Matthew 24v12  
Backsliding is a whole Biblical phenomenon.



Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me." Matthew 11:6

Following Christ is a narrow and difficult road. No one ever said it would be easy and an easy road would not achieve in us the things God is looking for.