

GOD'S 11-FOLD RECIPE TO PREVENT BACKSLIDING

Psalms 26

According to one study, we lose through backsliding about 6 out of every 7 we baptize. In other words, we must baptize about 700 to increase the size of the congregation by 100.

There are many warnings in the New Testament with reference to backsliding, though the word *backsliding* is not found in the New Testament. It is found some 12 times in the Old Testament.

First Corinthians 10:12 says, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Galatians 5:4 says, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." Second Peter 2:20-22 says, "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."

Will talk about a chapter in the Bible which alludes to 11 things that will help prevent backsliding. We might say it is God's 11-fold recipe for preventing backsliding.

Psalms 26: {1} Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; therefore I shall not slide. {2} Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart. {3} For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth. {4} I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. {5} I have hated the congregation of evildoers; and will not sit with the wicked. {6} I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O LORD: {7} That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works. {8} LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth. {9} Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men: {10} In whose hands is mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes. {11} But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me, and be merciful unto me. {12} My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregations will I bless the LORD.

What are the 11 things in this psalm that will help us prevent backsliding?

DISCUSSION

I.BE TRUE TO YOURSELF

A.Verse 1: "I have walked in mine integrity."

B.William Shakespeare had one of his characters say: "This above all: to thine own self be true." He then added: "And it must follow as the night the day,/Thou canst not then be false to any man" (Hamlet I, iii, 75).

C.The word translated "integrity" is a word which means unblemished, and was sometimes used of the animal to be sacrificed.

D.Same idea as the word *blameless* in First Timothy 3:2: "A bishop then must be blameless...."

- E.Note: Verse 1 says, "I have walked in mine integrity," and verse 11 says, "I will walk in mine integrity."
F.The world in which we live is short on integrity.

II.FULLY TRUST IN THE LORD

- A.Verse 1: "I have trusted also in the Lord; therefore I shall not slide."
B.Trust in God is the fountain of integrity. If I trust in God, why would I be tempted not to walk in integrity?
C.The expression "Trust in the Lord" occurs 13 times in Psalms and Proverbs.
D.Note Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. {6} In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."
E.Psalms 118:8-9: "It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. {9} It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes."

III.INVITE DIVINE SCRUTINY

- A.Verse 1: "Judge me, O Lord." Verse 2: "Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart."
B.Notice: "Judge . . . examine . . . prove . . . try" The psalmist invites thorough investigation. He had nothing to hide.
C.Was not boasting. Was simply declaring that his life was not lived in concealment. He was not afraid of the most thorough examination, even by the Lord.
D.We should live in such a way.

IV.UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE TIMES OF TESTING

- A.The psalmist said, "try me."
B.Some become bitter when the trials of life come upon them.
C.James 1:12: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."
D.James 3:2-4: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

V.KEEP THE GOODNESS OF GOD EVER BEFORE YOUR FACE

- A.Verse 3: "For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth."
B.Instead of complaining about our lot in life, we should spend more time praising God for his goodness.
C.Psalms 117: "O Praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people. For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD."
D. The last verse of the 100th Psalm: "For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations."
E.Remembering God's goodness will help us remain faithful.

VI.LET THE BIBLE BE YOUR GUIDE

- A.Verse 3: "I have walked in thy truth." The Bible is the only source for divine truth.
B.John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
C.Psalms 119:105: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."
D.Psalms 119:130: "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple."
E.Psalms 119:104: "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way."
F.Psalms 119:128: "Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way."
G.Second John 9-11: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He

that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

VII.WATCH YOUR ASSOCIATIONS

- A.Verse 4: "I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers."
- B.Many a young man or woman has said, "You don't have to worry that I will do things just because those I am associating with do them." Then later, the same one explains his misdeeds by saying, "I just got into the wrong crowd."
- C.First Corinthians 15:33: "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners."
- D.If you constantly run with those who curse, you will curse. If you run with those who steal, you will steal. If you...drink...commit fornication...use drugs...don't worship God...etc.

VIII. MAINTAIN CHILDLIKENESS

- A."I will wash mine hands in innocency" (Verse 6).
- B.Matthew 18:1-4: "At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

IX.BE GRATEFUL AND EXPRESSIVE OF GRATITUDE

- A.Verse 7: "That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works."
- B.Ingratitude is a root sin,i.e., other sins grow out of it.

X.LEARN TO LOVE THE CHURCH AND ITS ASSEMBLIES

- A.Verse 8: "LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth."
- B.Psalms 122:1: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD."
- C.Hebrews 10:24-25: "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

XI.AVOID SHAKY GROUND

- A.Verse 12: "My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregations will I bless the LORD."
- B.Some seem to want to live just as close to the devil as they can. We should stay as far away as we can.
- C.Psalms 1:1 shows the progressive nature of sin: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."
- D.Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "lead us not into temptation" (Matthew 6:13).
- E.Can I drink just one drink? Tell just one lie? Steal just one apple? Miss just one service? If these things are wrong, then it is wrong to do them just one time.
- F.We should keep our feet planted on solid and even ground. Take no chances.

CONCLUSION

Second Peter 1:5-10 says:

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. 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.

I would add that if you will do these things outlined in Psalms 26 you also will never fall.

Perhaps there is one present who has already fallen and needs to be restored. Or perhaps one is present who has never obeyed the gospel. Now is the time.