



## SPECIAL LESSON: “JESUS SAVED ME – NOW I HAVE SOME QUESTIONS,” PART 5

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SUNDAY, April 19, 2026, 11AM  
Taught at: Ridgeview Classical Schools  
1800 S. Lemay Ave., Fort Collins, CO  
[www.solidbreadcommunity.com](http://www.solidbreadcommunity.com)

### Review:

- This is our final lesson in a special short series I’ve called, **“Jesus Saved Me – Now I Have Some Questions.”**
- This special series was prompted by our larger study in **1 and 2 Thessalonians**. We’ve worked our way through the first chapter of **1 Thessalonians** so far.
- As we’ve done that, various questions have come up, and we’ve addressed five of them in this special series.
- They are:

1. How should we properly define the Gospel?
2. Does God choose us, or do we choose Him?
3. Do we have eternal security as Christians?
4. Why do we struggle with doubts about our salvation?
5. What can we know about the issue of ‘backsliding?’

**NOTE:** These are important questions, and I would even call them ‘foundational’ in terms of our faith. In **Parts 1 through 4**, we’ve addressed the first four of them - one lesson for each question. Those videos and lesson notes are on our website and our YouTube channel now.

Today, I want to deal with the last question on that list, **“What can we know about the issue of backsliding?”** I think this will be a lesson that is just as hard-hitting as the few before it.

I’m guessing this question is the most personal of these five. **Some** people struggle with doubts about their salvation, and **some** folks wonder from time to time about the issue of ‘eternal security’ - - but I’m pretty sure **most** of us can relate to this issue of ‘backsliding.’

### A. Definition of ‘backsliding’

**NOTE:** We need to be very cautious here to define this issue the right way. Several points concerning this definition:

1. **First**, I am referring to the term ‘backslide’ in a Christian faith context. My focus here concerns our ‘walk in Christ.’ (I’m not talking about other matters of life).
  - I am focused on issues and things we believe that originate from our salvation, and **how** we live or show those things – to ourselves and to others.
  - In other words, the term ‘backsliding’ directly suggests a movement or trend **away** from Jesus Christ rather than **towards** Him.
  - Someone who is a backslider is going the wrong way spiritually. They are not progressing in their faith - they are not growing and moving forward.
  - Instead, they are regressing. They are fading. They are moving from hot to cold. They are not showing a phase of strength; they are showing a period of weakness.
  - They are SLIDING backwards. That’s the intent of the term itself.
  
2. **Second**, this implies that one who is backsliding had previously shown a commitment to Christ.
  - At least, they had demonstrated a certain standard of behavior - but since that point, they have reverted to old / sinful / natural ways and habits.
  - Backsliding may manifest in various ways, and I think these ways are ultimately personal CHOICES we make.
  - (EX: **dropping** out of regular fellowship with other believers; **losing** love for Jesus Christ; improperly **leaving** one’s family; **embracing** doctrinal error; **retreating** back into sinful habits; **choosing** anger over self-control; etc.). **This is not an exhaustive list.**
  - As I look back on my own life since coming to faith at age 5 – and as I have watched the lives of others – I think ‘backsliding’ comes down to personal decisions we make to move away from our commitment to Jesus Christ.
  
3. **Third**, by this point, I think you realize I’m not referring to the idea of backsliding to mean that a person has **lost** their salvation.
  - In our previous lessons in this special series, we addressed that matter on its own. We learned that the Bible teaches a TRULY saved person is secure in Christ.
  - So, again – that’s not an issue I’m considering here with this separate topic.
  - A backsliding person MAY be showing they were never saved to begin with — which simply means that person’s true colors are coming to the surface.
  - But....**but**, it’s also possible for God’s followers to backslide - temporarily. That’s a very key word here: **‘temporarily.’** ‘Backsliding’ is never a state of permanence. It is transient. It is a phase. It is TEMPORARY.
  - The Bible – to the best of my knowledge – never uses the word ‘backslide.’ It never uses the word ‘trinity’ either. But the concept of ‘backsliding’ – just as with the triune nature of God – are both presented in Scripture.

- In God’s Word, we find instead the phrase ‘*fall away*,’ and the idea is the same. In the Bible to “fall away” can mean two different things.
  - #1, it can mean one is TRULY saved but – for various reasons - they are going through a difficult passing phase.
  - In this passing phase, they are experiencing various doubts, fears, struggles, and questions. It can be a time of ‘sliding back.’
  - #2, the phrase ‘fall away’ in Scripture can **also** mean that person was never TRULY saved at all.
  - As we learned before, this is a person that is merely ACTING as a saved person would. This doesn’t last, because it’s an ACT.
  - That’s the point. As one commentator says, this kind of person is just taking faith for a “test drive.” They are not really serious at all.

**NOTE:** With those things defined and clarified, I want to divide the remainder of this lesson into **three** main points: (a.) a “crisis of faith,” (b.) a “crisis of sin,” and (c.) a “crisis of show.”

I’ve alluded to all three of these issues in my remarks to this point. These are three ‘folders’ (if you will) in which we can learn more about the reasons and issues of ‘backsliding.’

## **B. A crisis of faith**

**NOTE: This may be the most personal position of these three to be in. I believe it is not an uncommon position to find oneself.**

1. In **Mark 14:27** Jesus tells His disciples, “*You will all fall away.*”

- He predicts the desertion of His disciples. He knew that when He was arrested, they would abandon Him.
- They would temporarily ‘*fall away*’ and they would experience a crisis of faith.
- It would be an event – a trial so shocking to them - that they would run from Jesus, deny Him, and question the very core of their beliefs (NOTE: Recall when Peter denied Christ three times).
- Jesus’ arrest was an occasion of offense and confusion for them. It was a night of stumbling for them. But – again - this was a *temporary condition*.
- Three days later, Jesus would rise from the dead and appear to His disciples.
- They would rebound from their crisis, and their faith and hope would be restored - stronger and more intact than ever before.
- They had backslidden, but they would be restored and they’d return to the full expression of their faith again.

2. The apostle Paul instructs us in how to handle a fellow believer who is backsliding. He says in **Galatians 6:1** “*Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you*

*who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.”*

- James concurs in **James 5:19**: “My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth . . . someone should bring that person back.”
- The point is the backslider has had a crisis of faith; they’ve wandered from where they should be.
- In such case, believers should work to restore that person and set them back on the path of righteousness.
- There are many different events in life which can result in a crisis of faith, such as the death of a loved one, a loss of health, a difficult marriage, a prodigal child, financial stress, etc. These things may cause a crisis of faith; they may cause us to question God.
- I believe the Bible teaches that this is okay, as long as we go to God with those questions rather than using them as excuses to live in rebellion.
- The result of a crisis of faith SHOULD BE that we come to know God more intimately than we did before.
- It is trials and tests that PROVE our faith according to the first few verses of **James Ch. 1**. It is the challenges of our life that show whether or not our faith is the ‘real deal.’ **James 1:2-4** says:

*“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters **whenever** you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”*

- As we grow in our faith, we ought to be able to deal with greater and more diverse trials and challenges.
- Each one of these things is sovereignly designed to PRODUCE something, and to PROVE something. And that is the integrity and reality of our faith.
- If our faith is the most important thing to us – if our relationship with Jesus Christ is indeed our greatest treasure – then we should be joyful knowing we have this opportunity to validate that.
- In times of trial and testing, we should delve more deeply into God’s Word, pray with persistence, and consciously surround ourselves with others whose faith is strong.

### **C. A crisis of sin**

**NOTE: This may be the most typical position of these three to be in.**

1. Let me be clear: Christians DO sin. **1 John 1:8** tells us very clearly:

*“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.”*

- This verse shows us that all humans – saved and unsaved - possess a sinful nature. Denying this reality amounts to nothing less than self-deception.
  - We see in this verse that we need to acknowledge our sin, rather than pretending to be perfect, or pretending to be something / someone we aren't.
2. The key issue here is this: the Christian life is not to be identified or characterized by a life or pattern of sin.
- Believers are described as being new creations in **2 Corinthians 5:17**.
  - Because we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, we need to be producing good fruit according to **Galatians 5:22-23**.
  - That is not a natural pattern to show. It's a pattern which shows that the TRUE Christian should be a changed person.
  - Let me be clear: A TRUE believer is forgiven no matter how many times they sin. But it's very important that we not show a persistent pattern of sinning – of willfully STAYING in our sin.
  - We should never justify our sin or seek to paint it as anything other than what the Bible calls it. This posture is INCONSISTENT with true faith.
  - The calling of being a Christian is to show and live a progressively more holy life as we grow closer to Christ. This is a struggle – yes! – but it's all part of *'faithfully enduring in one direction.'*
  - If we are TRUE believers, our sins should distress us. They should gnaw at us and cause us to grieve. We should repent of those things. We should WANT to get back on to the narrow path, and we should WANT to pursue a life of righteousness.
  - The Bible makes the clear case that we should have serious doubts about anyone who claims to be a believer yet consistently makes choices and lives a life that says otherwise.
  - Yes, a true Christian who **falls back** into sin is still saved. But, a person who lives a life that is **controlled** by willful sin – who shows no personal distress over their sin – is very likely someone who is NOT a true follower of Christ.
3. **This raises a troubling question: "What about that person who denies Christ?"**
- The Bible tells us very clearly that if a person REJECTS Jesus Christ, that person never truly knew Christ to begin with.

**1 John 2:19** says, *"They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us."*

- I've known people like this. I've seen them be – apparently! – in the faith at one point. It seemed that way on the outside for a period of time.

- But then, they turned away. Today, they are clearly living lives and making choices that show they were never truly IN the faith. That's very evident.
- A person who rejects Christ, who turns their back on true faith, who walks away from the truth and embraces sin and deception – demonstrates by this that they never belonged to Christ in the first place.
- The reason is very simple. Those who genuinely belong to Christ are those who will remain with Christ – no matter what.
- Those who renounce their faith never had it to begin with. There is no wiggle room on this matter. It's black and white. **(Cf. 2 Timothy 2:11-13).**
- As we saw earlier, this is why **James Ch. 1** exhorts us to view our trials and challenges with a Godly perspective.
- These things enter our lives to test and prove our faith. If our faith holds the most value to us (as it ought to), our faith will indeed be proven to be sincere.
- Many people do not pass this test. They fall away instead. They reject Jesus Christ. They willfully abandon a walk of TRUE faith. It's because they never had it in the first place.

#### **A crisis of show**

**NOTE: This may be the most dangerous position of these three to be in. This one is not about 'backsliding' as a TRUE believer, but I think I need to deal with this related issue seriously as it contrasts with my two previous points.**

1. There are two passages which unpack this matter of putting on a 'show' or an 'act.' We will see in each one how this larger issue of 'backsliding' surfaces:

**(Cf. Hebrews 6:4-6)** *"It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age **and who have fallen away**, to be brought back to repentance. To their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace."*

- Let's unpack this passage. This text is about **unbelievers** who have some sort of association with **believers**. They 'rub elbows' with the church.
- This kind of person may generally nod at, and basically understand, the truth of the Gospel, but they have not truly repented and placed their faith in Jesus Christ.
- They 'intellectually' appreciate what it means to be a Christian, but they've chosen to remain uncommitted. They 'flirt' with the truth, but they 'waffle' in their responsibility to it.
- For example, in the early church, there was a lot of persecution of Christians. So the people that were 'putting on a show' didn't want to really commit to true faith – they didn't want the challenges and trials of doing that.

- As I said, these were ‘wafflers.’ They were good at keeping a ‘wet thumb in the air’ to test the breezes. They kept a foot on each side, and when it was personally convenient, they returned to the cultural safeties of Judaism.
- We have the same sort of folks today. In fact, we have lots of them! We need to be very discerning here.
- This bunch is not really serious about their faith – and so they’ve not fully immersed themselves into it.
- They’ve been exposed to the truth; they’ve been exposed to the essentials of Christian faith – but they don’t REALLY want to commit.
- Their hearts have stopped shy of genuinely repenting. They have not taken the ramifications of their sinful condition seriously. And so, they’ve not fully believed in – trusted in - Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.
- They’ve ONLY been ‘enlightened’ (as **Hebrews 6:4** says). And so, they know something about God’s Word, about truth, about the Gospel, about Jesus Christ, etc., but they do not have the indwelling and regeneration of the Holy Spirit.
- **John 1:9** tells us that Jesus has ‘given light to everyone,’ and that essentially means that everyone is now held responsible or accountable to the truth about Jesus Christ. They are ‘without excuse’ as **Romans 1:20** says.
- But it doesn’t mean everyone that sees this ‘light’ is truly saved. It means they have perceived enough light – or been ‘enlightened’ enough – to properly receive (or reject) that eternal truth.
- That phrase in **Hebrews 6:4** says that these folks have “...tasted the heavenly gift or tasted the goodness of the Word of God,” but this is like ‘dipping one’s toes in the pool.’
- It’s nothing more than a momentary experience. These people only “tasted” it – they “licked” it. They did not “consume” that gift and that opportunity.
- They got ‘vaccinated’ against receiving the ‘full condition.’ They got the tiniest bit of truth, and that kept them from receiving all of it (this is a common dilemma in the modern church today).
- As for the phrase they ‘shared in the Holy Spirit,’ this means – again – that they ‘rubbed elbows’ with other believers.
- They had a degree of familiarity with the Holy Spirit’s work, but this did not have any personal impact on them. **The intent of the context here is very clear.**
- This phrase, ‘sharing in the Holy Spirit’ is not the same Biblical concept as ‘sealed with the Holy Spirit,’ or being ‘indwelt by the Holy Spirit.’ These latter two Scriptural phrases always indicate TRUE salvation when they’re used.
- The bottom line is people can be exposed to other believers. They can be part of study and fellowship. They can weave faith-based rituals into their lives.
- They can be exposed to a salvation experience - - they may even ‘taste’ it, yet they STILL may not know Jesus Christ in a personal saving sense.

- This whole concept of “*falling away*” as it is presented here in **Hebrews Ch. 6** comes down to a personal choice to turn one’s back on divine truth – to reject any revelation that is given.
- It’s not sufficient to merely “*taste*” truth. That is not enough to keep a person from ‘*falling away*’ from that truth that can TRULY save them.
- As you can see, the point of this passage in **Hebrew Ch. 6** is a grave matter. It’s a very dangerous situation.
- To see the light, to hear the message, and to sense the benefits of righteousness - - but then to reject the truth is to treat Jesus Christ with contempt according to **Hebrews 6:6**.
- These kinds of folks have put themselves into a very dangerous position. This passage in **Hebrews** paints the situation as ‘*impossible*.’
- The larger point is it is much harder for these kinds of folks to come to true salvation if they have already willfully rejected the truth and have not repented.

2. Now, let’s look at the second passage related to these issues. I’ll just make a couple of comments about it as it relates to these same things, and it is found in **Luke 8:13** –

*“And the ones on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing they fall away.”*

- (I briefly mentioned this in a prior lesson quite recently). Here, Jesus is explaining the meaning of the parable of the sower.
- Some of the seed that is dispersed about lands on rocky ground—there is a thin layer of soil covering stony ground and bedrock.
- It’s not a good situation. The seed germinates quickly, but when the hot sun comes out, the young plant doesn't have deep enough roots to find sufficient water, and so the plant dies.
- The point is folks can appear to respond positively to the truth of the Gospel. It may seem like they’ve come to faith.
- There is an initial enthusiasm for things of God, BUT.....time and circumstances prove there’s been no true change of heart.
- This is because they have no real root system. Such a person may appear *outwardly* to be a Christian - at least for a period of time - but they’ve not FULLY committed to God.
- They might be attending a regular fellowship, they might be reading their Bible - - and they may even be listening to Christian music and online devotionals, saying ‘Christian-sounding’ things, and hanging out with Christian friends.
- But the problem is this sort of person’s heart has not REALLY changed. It’s an act, a ‘show.’ They’ve never TRULY been born again.

- Eventually, problems mount, trials and challenges happen, and apathy and resentment takes over. These people are exposed at that point for not having the ‘real deal.’ Their faith cannot survive a trial.
- As I said earlier, they “took Christianity for a test drive,” and they decided they didn’t want to ‘buy it.’ And so, they reject the truth and they set themselves up in a VERY dangerous position. It is much harder for them to gain true salvation from that point on.

**CONCLUSION:** If a person who has been TRULY saved ends up backsliding - - that is, they slip back into spiritually damaging attitudes and actions - - then that slide will be a temporary situation. Jesus Christ, our Good Shephard, will seek out and restore that wandering lamb according to **Luke 15:3-7**.

Meantime, it’s well worth our time to look inside ourselves, and to pray that God reveal the true condition of our hearts to us. ‘Backsliding’ is not unusual. It can happen – for a while. But at the same time, this is not an issue to trifle with. We need to take it seriously.



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The rules are simple. First, teach what IS there. Don’t pretend the Bible is not saying what it is saying.

Second, don’t teach what is NOT there. Don’t force a passage to mean something it really doesn’t.

And – number three, if the Bible states it plainly, we should too.

**Solid Bread Community, PO Box 431, Windsor, CO 80550**

Website: [www.solidbreadcommunity.com](http://www.solidbreadcommunity.com)

Email: [connect@solidbreadcommunity.com](mailto:connect@solidbreadcommunity.com) Please follow Solid Bread Community on Facebook and subscribe to our YouTube channel.