

Compassionate Recovery

Lesson #22



PROTECTING FROM “BACKWARD LIVING”:
Listen Attentively, Think Carefully, Obey Consistently

4 KEY TRUTHS ABOUT COMPASSIONATE RECOVERY

1. Compassionate Recovery is not about expecting ourselves to be perfect or never falling short of what we would like to be or do.
2. Compassionate Recovery is not so much about worrying about the outcome, as it is to be most focused on the process, believing that growing in godly patterns will supernaturally move us closer to the desired outcome - Christlikeness.
3. Compassionate Recovery is about understanding the spiritual, emotional, mental, relational and environmental components that contribute both to my successes and failures and developing tools to assess and address each part.
4. We are not so much striving for perfection as walking together in our fallen condition, knowing to grow in maturing and following God’s ways we will supernaturally progress from where are closer to where God would have us to be.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 8

INSTITUTE the discipline of “forward living”, accepting that what we have learned are lifelong principles *not simply present fixes* that when consistently practiced assure us of continued growth.

DEFINITIONS OF BACKSLIDER:

1. To lapse back into a former state or condition.
2. To fall back into a former mood, state, or way of life, especially a bad or undesirable one, after coming out of it for a while.

*The backslider in heart
will be filled with the fruit of his ways,
and a good man
will be filled with the fruit of his ways.
Proverbs 14:14*

THE HEBREW MEANING OF BACKSLIDE

1. Literally: To retreat
2. By Implication: To go back

3. Figuratively: To abandon one’s faith

Backsliding is more than just returning to old patterns. It is the progressive process of becoming so distorted in thinking that returning to our old ways seems like a reasonable choice.

INDICATORS A PERSON IS RISKING A FALL

1. The person lacks self-awareness either from an unwillingness or an inability to monitor themselves.
2. The person is over-confident that they have whatever they are involved with under their control.
3. The person attempts to minimize, explain or justify their behavior with logical sounding reasoning.
4. Warning signs are ignored, including the feedback from others, resulting in becoming “truth starved”.
5. The person falls, not only hurting self but impacting others we are connected to.

SPIRITUAL WARNING SIGNS OF BACKSLIDING DANGER

1. Spiritual over-confidence.
2. Lack of hunger for the Word of God.
3. A sick or non-existent prayer life.
4. Seemingly harmless worldly pleasures taking precedent over spiritual activities.
5. Justification of sin and loss of a sense of guilt.
6. Minimizing and/or toleration of sin in fellow believers.
7. The acts of the sinful nature increasingly obvious.
8. Living a hypocritical life.
9. Withdrawal from fellowship with saints.

⁵ Now, therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways.

Literally “consider, consider” =
set your inner man, mind, will, heart on it
NIV: “Give careful thought to your ways.”

⁶ You have sown much and harvested little. You eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages does so to put them into a bag with holes. Haggai 1:5-6

²¹ But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.

²² But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:21-23

REASONS WE SHOULD LISTEN ATTENTIVELY TO JESUS

^{2b} [Jesus]whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. ³ The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

⁴ So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs. ⁵ For to which of the angels did God ever say,

“You are my Son; today I have become your Father”

Or again,

“I will be his Father, and he will be my Son”?

Hebrews 2:2b-5

1. **God appointed Jesus heir of all things.**
2. **Through Him God made the universe.**
3. **He is the radiance of God's glory.**
4. **He is the exact representation of God's being.**
5. **He sustains all things by His powerful word.**
6. **He provided purification for sins, then sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.**
7. **His inherited name, “My Son” shows His superiority to angels that never were called this.**

¹ In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son...

Hebrews 1:1-2a

GOD SPOKE IN THE PAST THROUGH

HUMAN PROPHETS AND THEN HE WENT SILENT FOR 400 YEARS.

THEN MOST RECENTLY, AND MOST SIGNIFICANTLY, GOD SPOKE DIRECTLY TO US BY HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST.

² For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, ³ how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. ⁴ God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will. Hebrews 2:2-4

If the Old Testament message spoken through lowly angels was authoritative, binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how much more the New Testament message of salvation that is far superior to the old since:

1. **It was announced by the Lord Himself who is far superior to the angels?**
2. **It was confirmed to us by witnesses who heard Jesus?**

3. **God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to His will?**

WHAT ARE WE TO DO IN RESPONSE TO WHAT WE HAVE HEARD

¹ We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.

DRIFT

(Transcript from lifetonemedia.com video)

Following Jesus isn't easy. I guess Jesus never promises it will be. The journey seems long. There is a lot of distractions along the way. It's hard to keep pushing against the current all the time.

(IT'S UNCOMFORTABLE BEING DIFFERENT.)

Fact is, I'm getting tired.

(I DIDN'T THINK IT WOULD BE THIS HARD.)

I'm just not enjoying things at the moment.

(I'M LOSING FOCUS.)

So I'm just going to go with the flow for a while.

(I'M LOOKING FOR SATISFACTION EVERYWHERE ELSE.)

Not take things so seriously.

It's okay you don't need to worry about me.

(YOU PROBABLY SHOULD BE WORRIED ABOUT ME - ACTUALLY YOU SHOULD PRAY FOR ME.)

My Christian friends are worried about me. They think I am going to drift away.

(I'VE STARTED PULLING AWAY FROM THE PEOPLE WHO CARE THE MOST.)

They are so uptight. I'm not going to turn my back on Jesus. I know what I believe.

(I'VE STOPPED LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD.)

I'm not going anyway fast.

But you know I'm starting to enjoy life again.

(IT'S EASY TO GO WITH THE FLOW. EVEN DEAD FISH CAN GO WITH THE FLOW.)

There's a lot of good things to see out here. And it's nice to see how other people live.

(I'M SWALLOWING THE LIE THAT "THIS IS THE GOOD LIFE".)

I'm not going to be here for long. Just a chance to refresh for a while. Okay maybe test the water for a little bit. But there's nowhere out of God's reach.

(I'M LOSING ANY SENSE OF DIRECTION.)

I can go back anytime.

(SOON I'LL BE LOOKING FOR WAYS TO JUSTIFY WHERE I AM.)

What am I saying? I don't need to go back.

I haven't gone anywhere (so here I am) and I don't plan to go anywhere either.

(DRIFTING FURTHER AND FURTHER AWAY.)

If we do not want to drift away, we cannot ignore, and we must pay the most careful attention to what God has said through Jesus.

BEYOND MERE LISTENING TO DOING

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. ²⁴ For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. ²⁵ But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. James 1:22-25

THE PROBLEM OF JUST LISTENING

- **Being satisfied with merely listening to the word is to deceive ourselves.**
- **Listening without quickly doing something with what God's word shows us often means we will just stay the same.**

WHAT WE ARE CALLED TO DO WITH WHAT WE HEAR

- **Look intently into the perfect law that gives freedom.**
- **Continue in it.**
- **Don't forget what we have heard, but put it into practice.**
- **Expect to be blessed by being doers not just hearers.**

ARMING FOR WARFARE WITH THE WHOLE ARMOR

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

¹⁴ Stand therefore having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, ¹⁹ and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

Ephesians 6:10-18

Arm yourself with:

**TRUTH
RIGHTEOUSNESS
THE GOSPEL OF PEACE
FAITH
SALVATION
WORD OF GOD
PRAYER**

THE NEED FOR CONNECTIVENESS

**CONCEPT FROM "THE POWER OF THE OTHER"
BY HENRY CLOUD**

1. **NO CONNECTIONS:** Self-protected, reliant on self, absence of trust, attachment issues, no one gets close.
2. **UNHEALTHY CONNECTIONS:** Rather have a bad connection than no connection at all. Little or no boundaries.
3. **MOMENTARY "FEEL-GOOD" CONNECTIONS:** Whatever will make a person feel better or good temporarily. No limits.
4. **GODLY CONNECTION:** Growing as a disciple of Jesus Christ within a community of godly relationships.

THE HEART OF BACKSLIDING PROTECTION

1. **Give careful thought to your ways.**
2. **Pay careful attention to what God's word says.**
3. **Persistently obey Him in all dimensions of your life.**
4. **Maintain accountability with healthy, godly connectiveness!**

Weekly Going Deeper Study Guide

For Protecting from Backward Living

CONTINUE TO WORK ON YOUR LIFE ASSESSMENTS.

- Before beginning each day simply ask God to help you see things that He would have you to see.
- When finished, pray again asking for the faith and the courage to follow His lead in areas He speaks to you about.

1ST DAY: I spent at least 15 minutes reviewing this week's lesson. Here are some things that stood out to me:

2ND DAY: I spent at least 15 minutes today in my Life Assessment Workbook. Some things that stood out to me:

3RD DAY: I spent at least 15 minutes today in my Life Assessment Workbook. Some things that stood out to me:

4TH DAY: I spent at least 15 minutes today in my Life Assessment Workbook. Some things that stood out to me:

5TH DAY: I spent at least 15 minutes today in my Life Assessment Workbook. Some things that stood out to me:

DAY 6-7: Here are some things I would like to share with my group: