

Message Ministries

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RADICAL CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP GROUP

SESSION 2

The Radical Christian is always going forward

In this session we are going to look at what Backsliding actually is.
Sometimes we stop going forward because we are spiritually content where we are.
Backsliding is like someone climbing up a slippery slope and they stop trying to go forward.
They begin to go backwards losing grip on their position and sliding/falling backward.
It's hard to stop that kind of motion so it's better to keep going forward!!
As followers of Jesus we want to always have a thirst for more of God.
and see our desires for the things of the world get less.

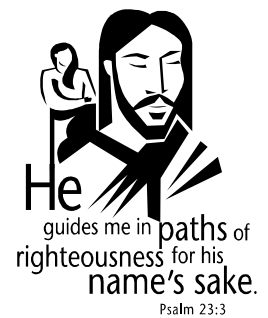


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Bible Study notes:



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Please write your scripture memory verses here:

Verse # 1

Verse # 2

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WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT BACKSLIDING

Jeremiah 14:7 "Although our sins testify against us, O LORD, do something for the sake of your name. For **our backsliding is great**; we have sinned against you."

Jeremiah 3:21-22 A cry is heard on the barren heights, the weeping and pleading of the people of Israel, because they have perverted their ways and have forgotten the LORD their God. "Return, faithless people; **I will cure you of backsliding.**" "Yes, we will come to you, for you are the LORD our God. (25) Let us lie down in our shame, and let our disgrace cover us. We have sinned against the LORD our God, both we and our fathers; from our youth till this day we have not obeyed the LORD our God."

4:1-3 "If you will return, O Israel, return to me," declares the LORD. "If you put your detestable idols out of my sight and no longer go astray, and if in a truthful, just and righteous way you swear, 'As surely as the LORD lives,' then the nations will be blessed by him and in him they will glory." This is what the LORD says to the men of Judah and to Jerusalem: "Break up your unplowed ground and do not sow among thorns."

Jeremiah 2:19 "Your wickedness will punish you; **your backsliding will rebuke you.** Consider then and realize how evil and bitter it is for you when you forsake the LORD your God and have no awe of me," declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty".

Ezekiel 3:23 They will no longer defile themselves with their idols and vile images or with any of their offenses, for I will save them from all their sinful backsliding, and I will cleanse them. They will be my people, and I will be their God.

1 Corinthians 10:24 - 10:15

24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.

25 Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever."

26 Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air.

27 No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, **I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.**

10:1 For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea.

2 They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

3 They all ate the same spiritual food

4 and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.

5 Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert.

6 Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.

7 Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry."

8 We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did--and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died.

9 We should not test the Lord, as some of them did--and were killed by snakes.

10 And do not grumble, as some of them did--and were killed by the destroying angel.

11 These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.

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

13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

14 Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry.

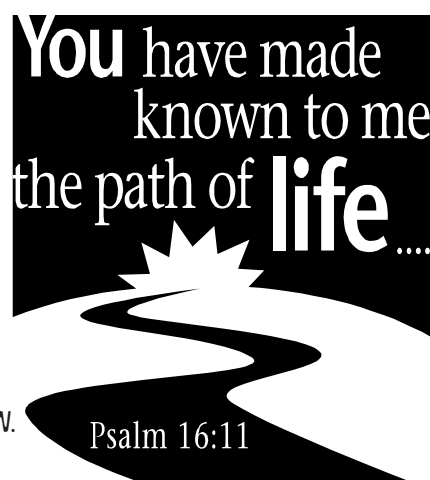
15 I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say.

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WHAT ARE THE EVIDENCES OF A BACKSLIDDEN HEART

- 1) NOT ENJOYING SPIRITUAL THINGS (such as worship, prayer the Word and fellowship) IS EVIDENCE OF A BACKSLIDDEN HEART
- 2) YOU'VE BECOME TOO FORMAL OR DISINTERESTED IN WORSHIP SERVICES..
- 3) YOUR TEMPER GETS OUT OF CONTROL
- 4) THE LOSS OF INTEREST IN TRULY SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION.
- 5) SEARCHING FOR WORLDLY AMUSEMENTS.
- 6) YOU HAVE LITTLE OR NO INTEREST IN FOREIGN MISSIONS.
- 7) THE LOSS OF INTEREST IN OUTREACHES TO THE POOR AND NEEDY.
- 8) THE LOSS OF INTEREST IN THE NEWLY CONVERTED AND HELPING THEM GROW.
- 9) YOU HAVE A FAULT-FINDING CRITICAL SPIRIT ABOUT PEOPLE IN GENERAL..
- 10) A SELF-INDULGENT SPIRIT. You try to fulfill your own desires first even before God's desires for you.
- 11) YOU HAVE VERY LITTLE DESIRE TO PRAY.
- 12) ABSENCE FROM SCHEDULED WORSHIP MEETINGS FOR SLIGHT REASONS IS A SURE INDICATION OF A BACKSLIDDEN HEART.
- 13) PRIVATE PRAYER IS REGARDED MORE AS A DUTY THAN AS A PRIVILEGE.
- 14) YOU'VE LOST INTEREST IN LIVING A HOLY LIFE.
- 16) YOU'VE LOST INTEREST IN GOD'S WORD



(Adapted from the writings of Charles Finney)

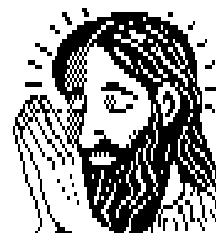
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THE CONSEQUENCES OF BACKSLIDING IN HEART

- 1) THE BACKSLIDER IN HEART WILL BE FILLED WITH HIS/HER OWN MISTAKES.
- 2) THE BACKSLIDER IN HEART WILL BE FILLED WITH HIS/HER OWN FEELINGS.
- 3) THE BACKSLIDER IN HEART WILL BE FILLED WITH HIS/HER OWN WORDS.
- 4) THE BACKSLIDER IN HEART WILL BE FULL OF HIS/HER OWN CARES.
- 5) THE BACKSLIDER IN HEART WILL BE FILLED WITH HIS/HER OWN LUSTINGS.
- 6) THE BACKSLIDER IN HEART WILL BE FILLED WITH HIS/HER OWN TROUBLES.
- 7) THE BACKSLIDER IN HEART WILL BE FILLED WITH HIS/HER OWN ANXIETIES.
- 8) THE BACKSLIDER IN HEART WILL BE FILLED WITH HIS/HER OWN PREJUDICES.
- 9) THE BACKSLIDER IN HEART WILL BE FILLED WITH HIS/HER OWN DELUSIONS.
- 10) THE BACKSLIDER IN HEART WILL BE FILLED WITH HIS/HER OWN LOSSES.
- 11) THE BACKSLIDER IN HEART WILL BE FILLED WITH HIS/HER OWN CONDEMNATION.

Talking about backsliding can be a depressing subject but it is something we have to look at and examine. The beauty of recognizing our sin is that we are then able to confess it, repent from it and receive forgiveness for it and restoration from God. We are then on the road to personal revival!!



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STUDY ASSIGNMENT - session #2

Read the materials provided on the book of Colossians, including:

1) *The Introduction and Background of the Book*

2) *The Outline of the Book*

3) *Now read the Book of Colossians*

* note: as you read the book make notes on what the Lord is showing you as you read through. I'm not looking for a mental synopsis of the book or a "book report" but more of what the Lord is showing you. You may read some parts and nothing may "stick out" to you. You might want to underline verses that really "stick out". Generally when this happens it is because the Holy Spirit is trying to teach us something.

4) *Pick out the verse that you feel the Lord wants you to hide in your heart from 1 Thessalonians.* Write that verse on an index card and carry it around with you until you have it memorized and "hidden in your heart". You will use this verse over and over in your life.

5) *Answer the questions provided with the study materials of 1 Thessalonians.*

NOTE: You may want to work with your Fire Check partner on this.

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF COLOSSIANS

OVERVIEW

Although Paul wrote to the church at Colosse from house arrest in Rome, the power of Christ was not chained. Throughout his refutation of heresy, Paul points out that Christ is the image of God, the sustainer, the source. Even if some new, attractive teaching seems substantial, it is hollow and deceptive next to the fullness of Christ. By demonstrating the supremacy of Christ, Paul hopes to refocus the attention of the Colossians "on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God" (3:1).

SAUL THE PHARISEE

Some knowledge of Paul's background helps us understand his views on the issues being debated in Colosse. He was born in the first decade AD in Tarsus, a prosperous harbor city on the trade route from Syria to Asia Minor. Tarsus was known for its schools of philosophy and liberal arts, and some scholars believe that Paul must have had some contact with these. Like most cities in the Roman Empire, Tarsus probably contained synagogues of Greek-speaking Jews who were often as devout as their Hebrew-speaking brethren.[1]

However, Paul called himself "a Hebrew of Hebrews" (Philippians 3:5), which probably means that his parents spoke Hebrew and raised him in a strict Jewish home, isolated as much as possible from the pagan city around them.[2] They named their boy "Saul" after Israel's first king, the most glorious member of the tribe of Benjamin, to which Saul's parents traced their ancestry (Philippians 3:5). It was a rare Jew outside Palestine who could trace a pure lineage back to the ancient days of Israel, and fellow Jews would have envied the pedigree. Furthermore, Saul's family must have owned property and had some importance in the Gentile community as well, for Saul was born not only a citizen of Tarsus (Acts 21:39) but also of Rome (Acts 22:27-28).[3]

Saul's parents had such aspirations that they sent their son to study Jewish law in Jerusalem under the foremost rabbi of the day, the Pharisee Gamaliel (Acts 22:3, Galatians 1:14). The Pharisees (the Hebrew word means "the separated ones") felt that God had set them apart to live by the Torah (the Law, or teaching, of Moses). For them, this meant following the interpretations of the Torah laid down by generations of teachers. Some Pharisees held that a man was righteous if he had done more good than bad, but Saul apparently followed the stricter group who insisted that even the least implications of the Law must be kept.[4]

The Pharisees expected a Messiah (Hebrew for "Anointed One"; Greek meaning "Christ") who would deliver them from oppression and rule with justice. However, Jesus of Nazareth had infuriated many Pharisees by interpreting the Torah differently and claiming a special relationship with God. Thus, when some Jews began to proclaim Jesus as Messiah and Lord (a term usually reserved for God), strict Pharisees opposed them vehemently.

Saul helped lead the fight against the proclaimers of Christ in Jerusalem (Acts 7:58-8:3, Galatians 1:13). When some were driven out, Saul obtained permission to pursue them to Damascus. But on the way there, Jesus confronted Saul in a blinding encounter (Acts 9:1-19), revealing to Saul that he was persecuting the very God he professed to worship. From then on, Saul's understanding of God and the Torah began to change dramatically. He joined those Jews who were urging other Jews to believe in Jesus, and after some years God called him to proclaim Jesus as Savior to the Gentiles also. Saul took the Greek name "Paul" when he turned to work among Gentiles.

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THE TOWN AND CHURCH OF COLOSSE

Once spoken of as "a great city of Phrygia,"[6] Colosse was, by Paul's time, a small cosmopolitan city in the province of Asia. Originally known for its wool industry, the town had declined considerably in importance and had been surpassed by Laodicea, ten miles to the west, and Hierapolis, twelve miles to the northwest (Colossians 2:1; 4:13,15-16).[7]

The church at Colosse, composed mostly of Gentiles, was not planted by Paul himself, but most likely by Epaphras, one of his converts at Ephesus. Although Paul says that he had not been to the church, he had heard of their faith (Colossians 1:4). Epaphras seems to have regarded the church as falling under Paul's missionary jurisdiction, which would have provided ample reason for him to personally seek out Paul's advice.[8]

Epaphras brought the gospel to Colosse, where it flourished until false teachers arrived. These men confused young believers by trying to mix ideas from pagan cults with the gospel. Unable to drive out these wolves alone, Epaphras appealed to Paul for help. Paul could not go to Colosse personally because he was in prison, but he could write a letter with all the authority and wisdom of an apostle to help the Colossian believers see the truth.

The occasion of this letter may have provided an excuse--though an important one--for Epaphras to visit Paul and to encourage him. Even as he sought assistance to deal with the convincing arguments and assumed humility of the leaders of the false teachers, Epaphras brought good news of the progress of the gospel in the Lycus valley.[9]

THE HERESY

Since Paul only alludes to their doctrines, we may have a hard time figuring out precisely what the false teachers were saying.[10] However, we can make some educated guesses from what Paul criticizes and encourages. Some of the false doctrines were:[11]

[1] Ceremonialism. There were "strict rules about the kinds of permissible food and drink, religious festivals (2:16-17) and circumcision (2:11, 3:11)."

[2] Asceticism. Rules that Paul summarizes as, "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch" (2:21) and "harsh treatment of the body" (2:23) were supposed to achieve purity.

[3] Angel worship. See 2:18.

[4] Deprecation of Christ. Paul stressed Christ's supremacy (1:15-20; 2:2-3,9) against those who taught that Christ was on the level of a created angel.

[5] Secret knowledge. Salvation required not just faith in Christ but knowledge of certain mysteries (2:3,18).

[6] Reliance on human wisdom and tradition. See 2:4,8. These elements seem to be drawn from "an extreme form of Judaism"[12] and from pagan ideas that later became a system called "Gnosticism" (from the Greek word gnosis, "knowledge").

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OUTLINE OF COLOSSIANS

I. Introduction (1:1-14)

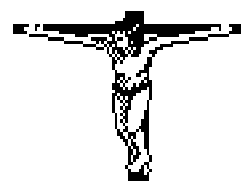
II. The superiority of Christ (1:15-23)

III. Paul's labor for the Church (1:24-2:7)

IV. Freedom from human rules through Christ (2:8-23)

V. Rules for holy living (3:1-4:6)

VI. Final greetings (4:7-18)



Colossians 1:1-14 - Thanksgiving and Prayer

TOPICS: Church, Faith, Forgiveness, Fruit, God, Gospel, Grace, Heaven, Holy Spirit, Hope, Jesus Christ, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Knowledge, Love, Partnerships, Peace, Praise, Prayer, Sin, Strength, Thankfulness

Colossians 1:15-23 - The Supremacy of Christ

TOPICS: Believers, Church, Creation, Death, Doctrine, Enemies, Image, Reconciliation

Colossians 1:24-2:5 - Paul's Labor for the Church

TOPICS: Body, Church, Encouragement, Glory, God, Hope, Jesus Christ, Joy, Serving, Suffering, Teaching, Unity, Wisdom

Colossians 2:6-23 - Freedom From Human Regulations Through Life With Christ

TOPICS: Angels, Authority, Body, Church, Death, Doctrine, Faith, Freedom, God, Jesus Christ, Judging Others, Legalism, Rules, Worship

Colossians 3:1-17 - Rules for Holy Living

TOPICS: Actions, Believers, Death, Equality, Glory, God, Heart, Heaven, Holiness, Image, Jesus Christ, Knowledge, Love, Peace, Renewal, Security, Sin, Thankfulness

Colossians 3:18-4:1 - Rules for Christian Households

TOPICS: Believers, Children, Discouragement, Fairness, Family, Favoritism, Heaven, Husbands, Jesus Christ, Justice, Love, Obedience, Pleasure, Rewards, Right, Sincerity, Slavery, Submission, Wives, Work

Colossians 4:2-18 - Further Instructions

TOPICS: Believers, Church, Circumstances, Conversation, Encouragement, Grace, Jesus Christ, Kingdom of God/Heaven, Maturity, Partnerships, Prayer, Serving, Thankfulness, Wisdom

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TIMELINE OF PAUL'S MINISTRY

Public ministry of Jesus	28-30 AD
Conversion of Paul (Acts 9:1-19)	33
Paul visits Jerusalem to see Peter (Gal 1:18)	35
Paul in Cilicia and Syria (Acts 9:30, Gal 1:21)	35-46
Paul visits Jerusalem to clarify the mission to the Gentiles (Gal 2:1-10)	46
Paul and Barnabas in Cyprus and Galatia (Acts 13-14)	47-48
Letter to the Galatians	48?
Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15)	49
Paul and Silas travel from Antioch to Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Achaia (Acts 16-17)	49-50
Letters to the Thessalonians	50
Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:1-18)	50-52
Paul visits Jerusalem	52
Paul in Ephesus (Acts 19)	52-55
Letters to the Corinthians	55-56
Paul travels to Macedonia, Dalmatia, and Achaia (Acts 20)	55-57
Letter to the Romans	early 57
Paul to Jerusalem (Acts 21:1-23:22)	May 57
Paul imprisoned in Caesarea (Acts 23:23-26:32)	57-59
Paul sent to house arrest in Rome (Acts 27:1-28:31)	59-62
Letters to Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon	60?-62
Letters to Timothy and Titus	?
Paul executed in Rome	65?

All dates are approximate

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QUESTIONS for the Book of Colossians

- 1) What results did Paul want for the Colossians? (1:10)
- 2) How could the church at Colosse have spiritual strength? (1:11-12)
- 3) What can we learn about praying for others from Paul's prayers for the Colossians?
- 4) What is one way you can improve your prayer this week?
- 5) What kind of faith did the Colossians have? (1:23)
- 6) How did Paul help believers become spiritually mature? (1:28-29)
- 7) What is hidden in Christ? (2:3)
- 8) How did Paul tell the Colossians to continue in Christ? (2:6-7)
- 9) What were the characteristics of the false teachers? (2:18-19)
- 10) This week, how can you best exercise the freedom you have in Christ?
- 11) What virtues does God seek to plant in us? (3:12, 14)
- 12) How were the Colossian believers called to clothe themselves? (3:12-17)
- 13) If you consistently set your sights on Christ and heaven, how would your life be different?
- 14) What old, "earthly" clothing do you need to get rid of?
- 15) How should children respond to parents? (3:20)
- 16) What is one way you can improve the way you treat each member of your family?
- 17) What did Paul prescribe for all believers? (4:2)
- 18) What did Paul say about the Christian's public life? (4:5-6)
- 19) Who was Onesimus? (4:9)
- 20) How did Paul conclude his letter? (4:18)

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BIBLE MEMORY VERSE session #2

**"WHATEVER HAPPENS,
CONDUCT YOURSELVES
IN A MANNER
WORTHY
OF THE GOSPEL
OF CHRIST"**

PHILIPPIANS 1:27