

# Soul Winning: The Christian's Business

by

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## Chapter Nine Baffled Backslider

"I tried once to be a Christian, but failed," is the cry of a despairing heart. It is disheartening to try and fail. Yet there are many reasons for failure in the Christian life; and as the Christian way is the only way to peace of mind in this world and happiness in the next, the one who failed must be encouraged to try again. The person who has wandered away from GOD is often called a backslider. To "**backslide**" means "*to lapse in the practice of religion*" (*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*).

Of these, there are two kinds. Some are really not Christians at all but have joined a church out of pressure, either from their parents, or acquaintances. Discuss with your friend this possibility. If he agrees that he merely went to church because it was "the thing to do," then deal with him as a seeking soul. On the other hand, he may have true faith in CHRIST, but be hindered by "**the care of this world**" (Matthew 13:22).

Perhaps he has neglected to take time to go to church, to pray and read the Bible, and so has grown cold in his heart toward GOD. And having grown cold, when temptation came along, it was easy to drift into it. If this is the case, remind your friend that the Lord still truly loves him, that the Lord says, "**I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely**" (Hosea 14:4).

Remind him of the joy he is missing, because "**the joy of the Lord is your strength**" (Nehemiah 8:10). Help him to realize that he will have peace of heart if he will pray, "**Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation and uphold me with thy free spirit**" (Psalms 51:12).

Help him to search back in his heart and life and ferret out that which caused him to drift from the Lord. What sin was it? Was it neglect of church attendance? Was it neglect of daily prayer and Bible reading? Unkindness to a neighbor? Bitterness toward a relative? Dishonesty in business or tax transactions? Whatever it was, he must confess his sin, not to you but to GOD.

You can encourage him to confess his sin because of the assurance given him that "**The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not**

**despise**" (Psalm 51:17).

Having confessed his sin, he must make restitution as far as possible. He should begin attending church . . . having his quiet time . . . asking the neighbor to forgive him . . . admitting his bitterness to whomever he may have made backbiting remarks . . . returning any money wrongly withheld. In other words he should "**Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance**" (Matthew 3:8).

It is, indeed, difficult to deal with this type of person. However, the more difficult the case, the greater the challenge to the one who desires the eternal good of others. There is but one recourse - make a greater effort than you would normally. Remind yourself of the words of the Lord, "**this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting**" (Matthew 17:21). You may or may not actually fast, but you certainly will give yourself to more earnest prayer.

When Marilyn became completely discouraged about her friend, she decided that she would pray only for Laurie. She would not pray for her own needs, or for anyone else's salvation, but plead upon the Lord's promise, "**Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full**" (John 16:24). Her prayer was so fervent that it was truly as if she had asked nothing prior to this request. Now, she was asking, asking, asking, faithfully, vigilantly. Within six months Laurie changed her "Not to-day" to "To-day, Lord, I do receive Thee as Saviour."

Christendom in the United States today is divided into three general classes.

- the evangelical believes the Bible is the inspired Word of GOD containing the way of salvation.
- the liberals believe that the Bible contains the Word of GOD, and that inherently good, man is on his way to some kind of an eternity. Then there are the believers in metaphysical religions.
- Metaphysical is defined as "*abstract or abstruse*" or "*having or pertaining to real being or essential nature of reality*" (*Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*).

In other words these religions, including Christian Science, Unity, Religious Science and such, teach, with variations, that matter is unreality and that spirit is reality. This premise sounds harmless enough; but it leads to the thinking that sin is not real and therefore men do not need a Saviour; that if they think that, they can perform all the miracles which the Lord did, and ascend into Heaven. It is important to win these deluded ones to the Lord because even though they may appear to lead morally righteous lives, they are lost. They speak of the Lord who taught them, "**denying the Lord that bought them**" (II Peter 2:1).

Understanding, to some extent what metaphysical religions teach will most certainly give you sympathy for these blind followers.

~ end of chapter 9 ~

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