

# The Way of the Backslider

by Steve Gallagher

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*This sermon delves into the concept of backsliding, emphasizing the importance of staying connected to God to avoid spiritual sickness and the way of death. It highlights the momentum of spiritual direction and the ability to change course by focusing on God. The message encourages repentance, seeking God's commandments, and reviving one's spiritual life.*

**Scripture:** Jeremiah 17:5, Proverbs 23:26, Proverbs 4:13, Ezekiel 18:32, Psalm 80:18

**Topics:** "Backsliding", "Spiritual Revival"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Open your Bibles to Proverbs 14, and the title of my message is The Way of the Backslider. So you see how appropriate that song was, that we need to have that kind of consecration in our life. Now, earlier, Bradley shared one of the great truths of Christianity that the Lord said himself, that no man can pluck you out of his hands if you belong to him.

The other side to that is that we still have a free will, and we still have the right to make choices about what we're going to do with our lives. So it's not a 50-50 thing. Please understand that, that what Bradley shared is absolute 100% truth, but also it is 100% truth that if we want to turn our back on the Lord, we have the right to do that.

And I want to talk about the way of the backslider, a good portion of you men came to the Lord at one time, and you backslid. Many of you have really never even come to the Lord. You may not even realize that yet, but hopefully you will before long.

But many of you had already come to the Lord, and something happened, and you turned away. And this message is not to drag you through your past mistakes, that's not the point. The point is for all of us to be aware of the way of the backslider so that we can watch out for the signs, you know, that things are not going the way they should go, something's going awry.

And we want to be aware of what to look for, don't we? Everyone say, yes, Pastor Steve, thank you. You know, I'm very sensitive. TJ's getting a big laugh out of that.

All right, let me read these verses, starting with verse 12. There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death. Even in laughter the heart may sorrow, and the end of mirth may be grief.

The backslider in heart will be filled with his own ways. And I'm going to stop there. Now much of the book of Proverbs is a collection of disjointed statements, statements of truth, okay? And most of the time, you know, they don't really have a relation with each other.

But I believe that these three verses are a capsule there, referring to one particular sort of guy. And I want to just talk about this guy for a couple of minutes before we talk about the way of the backslider. Let's look at him and what we can just pull out of this little passage here.

The first thing that stood out to me when I started looking at this is this man is not called a fool. And the reason that stands out to me is almost all the time in the book of Proverbs when Solomon was referring to the ungodly, he called them a fool. But in this case, he didn't.

And the reason is is because this man once had a life in God. He's not a pagan. He's not someone that's outside of religion, outside of the Lord, outside of Christianity.

He's someone who walked with the Lord at one time and backslid. He veered off course and got himself in trouble. So that was the first thing that stood out to me is this isn't just your typical ungodly guy that's being referred to here, someone who doesn't know the things of the Lord, someone who's clueless about the ways of God and so on.

This is someone who once was there. And another thing that stood out to me is he's a backslider in heart. Now an outright backslider just throws off all pretenses.

You don't see him at the temple anymore. He is out partying, living it up with the prostitutes, et cetera. That's the way the backslider goes.

He is completely walking out on this religious thing. It doesn't work for me, I'm out of here. And he just goes and lives for the things of the world.

And I'll tell you what, there's a lot of people that I wish they would do that instead of continuing the pretense of walking with the Lord. This man is a backslider, not outwardly, but in his heart. Big difference.

He is continuing to maintain the image of someone who walks with the Lord. But the reality inside is something different. You know, when Jesus spoke to the church of Sardis, he said, you have a name for being alive.

You know, the reputation is out there. The church of Sardis, oh yeah, man, the Lord's there. Those people are on fire for the Lord.

But he was looking in their hearts, and he said, but you are dead. Big difference. And, you know, Jesus said about the Pharisees, he said, you know, you Pharisees are clean on the outside of the cup and the platter, but inside you're full of covetousness and wickedness.

Another time he said that they were like whitewashed tombs, all beautiful on the outward, but full of corruption inside. That's the backslider in the heart, a hypocrite. Another thing that stood out to me is that this man's convinced that he's doing OK.

And there's some pretty good reasons for him to be able to convince himself of that. For one thing, his outward life of religion is a great lie. It's not just a lie to those around him.

It's a lie to him himself. You know, because when you practice to deceive others, you are also deceiving yourself. You can't deceive others without deceiving yourself, in fact.

His life of pursuing mirth is also a lie. Now, mirth is different than Christian joy. Mirth is circumstantial happiness.

You know, it's what you see at the bar when everyone's laughing and carrying on, having a great time drinking, smoking, all of that. That's mirth. And this guy, you know, not necessarily down at the bar, but he is in that spirit of pursuing circumstantial happiness.

And that circumstantial happiness is lying to him. He also has given himself over to the mindset of the world. And you know, the world has a corporate consciousness that is going away from God, away from the things of God.

It's going in a completely different direction. It is the current of life outside of God. And when you're not walking with the Lord, you connect right in with that mindset.

And it's a lie. And it's lying to you if you're connected into it. Sin is also lying to him, because I guarantee you, there is sin in this man's life somewhere, because you don't get away from God without being given over to some kind of sin.

You know, it may just be some inward sin or whatever, but there's something there. And the Lord said, your sin has separated you from me, has caused a gulf between you and me. And I think it's in one of John's epistles.

It's called the deceitfulness of sin. Sin is a liar. Every time you give over to it, you are deceiving yourself again, more and more.

So this man has convinced himself that he's doing pretty good with the Lord. Believe it or not, he thinks he's walking with the Lord, but he has terribly deceived himself. All right, so what went wrong? How did this man, who was once walking with the Lord, enter into the way of the backslider? I want to start looking at this subject by taking a look at what his life was probably like before he made this fatal turn.

You all with me? Okay. Y'all get so quiet and serious when I speak. So my first point is that he was spiritually healthy at one time.

He was maturing and growing in the graces of God. There was life inside him. Spiritual vitality.

Now, in the New Testament, there's a different... Let me put it this way. I don't know how much difference there really was from a righteous man in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. In some ways, I wonder if there's that much difference, but definitely one thing's for sure.

In the New Testament, we came into a greater revelation of what is going on spiritually. That much I know. And in the New Testament, it's called the process of sanctification.

You know, if you're walking with the Lord, you are in the process of sanctification if you're on the narrow way. And the word in the Greek is hagiosmos, and it's a derivative of the word hagios. Hagios is holy.

That is the word for holy. Okay? Hagios. And the noun form is saint.

So it's... Hagios can mean you are holy. I think that's an adverb. Is that an adverb, Brad? Come on, Brad.

So he's back there sleeping, you know? Outwardly... Outwardly, he looks like he's really tuned in. He's over there thinking about what he's gonna be doing today. If you are on the narrow way, you know, the Lord has got you in a process where he is turning you into a saint, a holy one.

Someone who belongs in heaven. The book of Hebrews says that no one will see the Lord without sanctification. No one.

That's what the Bible says. Not me. That's what the Bible says.

And Jesus said the pure in heart are the ones who will see the Lord. It's saying the same thing. It's just two different ways of saying, making the same truth known.

Heaven is the goal and the end. You know, where these people go who are in the process of sanctification. All right, now let me use a different metaphor here for a minute.

Because Jesus says you must be born again. And he used that whole description talking to Nicodemus about the rebirth and so on. And so the picture is someone has a new birth and becomes a baby spiritually.

And then there's a growth process that is very similar to what happens when a woman has a baby, you know. When they're born, they're, what is it, about eight pounds or something like that? I'm clueless about this stuff. I know nothing.

Is that right or is it ounces? Pounds, right? Man. That's big. Wow, I'm glad I'm not a woman.

Yeah, anyway. Anyway, so it starts off as eight pounds or whatever. And a year later, it's what, double or something? And anyway, you know, it goes through a process.

Pretty soon, that little thing's walking around. And then it starts spouting off its opinions and everything. Usually starting with the word no.

Anyway, you know, if it's a natural process of growth, when the little guy gets to be eight years old, he's about four feet high. And when he gets to be 12 years old, he's about five feet high, et cetera, and so on. You know, that's just the natural way things tend to go.

And it's the same sort of deal with a believer. When you get born again, if you're in the natural life process of being a Christian, there is a growth process going on. Now, you know, it's not all the same rate of growth, but there is definitely a forward motion.

So what the writer of Hebrews is saying here, and I don't think I'm too far out of whack when I put it this way. I'm gonna change it a little bit. And I think this is right.

I think you could say it this way. If you stop growing, you're not going to survive to adulthood. I think that sounds right.

I think that is right. If you stop growing, you're gonna die, and you're not gonna survive to adulthood. You see, in the spiritual realm, in the spiritual life, there is no such thing as dwarfism.

You know, a disease that certain people get, or I don't know if it's a disease, whatever it is, and they stop at three feet. It doesn't happen like that in the spiritual realm. You are going one way or the other.

You are definitely moving in a direction. There is no such thing as becoming stagnant. No, stagnant means you are flowing with the world away from God.

You're just floating down the river like debris. That's what it means to be stagnant. So there is no such thing as, well, I think I'll just go this far and kind of level off.

No, that means you're backsliding. You're going the other way now. Jesus made the same point, and let me just read this out of John 15.

He said, abide in me. In other words, live in me. Remain in me, dwell in me, and I in you.

As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me and I in him bears much fruit.

For without me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered, and they gather them and they throw them into the fire and they are burned. All right, this is just describing the natural Christian process here, the process of sanctification.

In other words, what Jesus is saying is if you are connected to him in a real way, not just in name, not just going to church, if you are connected to the Lord, then there is a natural process where you're gonna be growing, maturing, and eventually bearing fruit. But if you are disconnected from the Lord, then you're gonna wither up straight away. Spiritually.

And this is why we emphasize so much in this ministry the need to maintain a solid devotional life. Men, it is your hope is to be connected to God. It's not that you just do these practices and somehow that means that you're gonna be free of your habitual sin like it's some mechanical thing.

No, it's a person. As Pastor Jeff said before, it's a person we're talking about here. You are either moving towards that person or you are moving away from that person.

And to move towards that person means you have to have a relationship. You have to be in relationship with them. You have to be talking, conversing, listening, speaking, you know? A relationship.

Now let me change the metaphor again. Let's say you have a garden. Now, if you have a garden and you've fertilized the soil and you plant good seed in it and you water it regularly and you keep the weeds at a minimum, you're gonna end up with a lot of vegetables.

It's just the way it is. You know, if you do those things, I guarantee you, it is an absolute fact of life, you're gonna end up with vegetables. The spiritual life is just as predictable.

The seed is the word of God, Jesus tells us. You can't get better seed than that. The water is the Holy Spirit.

The weeds we must keep out are the things of the world. And if you take care of your spiritual garden like that, you're gonna have a healthy garden and you're gonna have fruit come forth out of it. That's just the way it is.

You almost can't help it. But this guy that we're talking about here, there was a time when his garden was healthy, but for whatever reason, he began to neglect the word of God. He began to neglect his prayer life.

He began to increasingly indulge in the things of the world. And now his garden has become toxic and vulnerable to anything that comes along. And that brings me to my second point, is that this man developed a spiritual sickness.

All right, now, let's get back to our backslider metaphor. The man is walking, I always get mixed up on which way I'm supposed to be pointed. Let's say this is the right way, this way.

He's walking on the narrow path. He's moving forward, advancing in the things of God. But something happens and he starts getting out of whack.

And what happens is you start getting out of whack and you don't realize it. Imagine just a vast open plain with no road that you can see and everything's exactly the same. You can just veer off and before you know it, you don't even realize that you're heading back the other way, clueless.

And that's the way it usually happens for backsliders. It's not usually an abrupt turnaround and go the wrong way sort of deal. All right, now I wanna look at a couple of Greek terms here that discuss this.

The first is drifting. Hebrews 2.1 says this, therefore we must give them more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. And then verse three, he says, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? Now, the picture that I get here is a boat is sitting on a river tied to a dock, but it's just kind of whoever tied it up, tied it up sort of sloppily, didn't really tie it very well.

And there's a strong current with this river and little by little that rope just kind of unraveled and down the river the boat went. So making a spiritual analogy here, it's the world is in a flow and it's a strong, powerful current. And Jesus is that dock and you have got to be anchored in to the dock, right? You've gotta be anchored in because I'm telling you the current of the world will take you away and you won't even realize it probably for a while.

Maybe never. If it's just backsliding in heart, let me give you another way of seeing it. You're out on Santa Monica Beach, which you shouldn't be out there anyway.

What do you think's gonna happen to you? I used to be out there a lot, remember those days? But let's say you're on one of those air mattresses and you're about 50 yards out, just kind of laying there half asleep, just enjoying the warmth of the sun. But unbeknownst to you, the tide is taking you out to sea. And maybe the analogy there or the meaning of it, whatever, is that you're not paying attention to the things of, you're not, how does it say here? Giving the more earnest heed to the things you have heard.

You're getting sloppy. In fact, if you notice the writer of Hebrews doesn't say the person rejects his salvation or runs the other way or something like that from his salvation, he just simply neglects it. He's not

being earnest about his salvation.

It's not the pearl of great price to him. He's treating it as a common thing. It's not that important.

Not important enough to really fight for. And a person with that attitude is very susceptible to drifting away. All right, another term Greek uses is shrinking.

Hebrews 10 39, but we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul. All right, and I like the Phillips translation here. I think it really kind of captures it.

Surely we are not going to be men who cower back. I looked up this word shrink in the Saris. Here's some synonyms.

Draw back, shy away, recoil, back away, retreat, balk, or hesitate. And the picture that came into my mind is there is an army of God heading towards a battle. There's a great battle taking place and they're marching along, all these soldiers of Christ.

And you're in that, whatever it is, what is it, a company or whatever, brigade. Anyway, you know what I'm saying. I have no idea what's the difference between a company and a brigade.

But anyway, you're marching along and pretty soon you start seeing guys coming back from the battle all bloodied and you start realizing, hey man, there's a cost involved in this. There's a price to pay here. You didn't count the cost before you joined the army, is what happened.

And you start seeing, getting your eyes focused on the cost involved, rather than the reason you're going to battle. You know, when you go to battle, if you've got a reason that is compelling you, you don't mind risking your life and limb because there is a cause greater than you that you are gonna be a part of trying to accomplish. And when you have your eyes on that, you can go to battle and you'll be brave, you'll be courageous, you'll do exploits.

But if you start looking at the cost and that becomes the monumental thing in your mind, forget it, you've already lost. And you'll start shrinking back, you know. While everyone else is marching forward, you start kind of pulling back in your heart anyway, and you're really going this way, while everyone else is headed that way.

All right, one more term I'll touch on is straying. James 5.19, my brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins. Now, the picture here is you're walking along, you know, down the narrow way, trying to do the right thing and so on.

And one of these fast talking con men come up alongside you and start whispering in your ear and start, you know, hey man, you know, look over here, there's some stuff over here, you know, why don't you come on over here and start getting involved in this or that or whatever, you know, just start talking their stuff. You know how the enemy does that, he's a seducer. He is a seducer and a deceiver.

And that's what happens, the enemy gets in our ear and tries to lead us astray, right? And that's how the word is usually used, especially in regards to the end times. You know, you see the same warning over and over again in passages regarding the end times. For instance, Jesus, well, a number of times in Matthew 24 in the Olivet Discourse, Jesus mentions being led astray.

And Paul in 2 Timothy 4, you know, referring to the end times saying that people wanting to have their ears tickled will turn away from the truth. And in 1 Timothy 4, he says that in the last days, some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of devils. That's it, it's all saying the same thing.

A lying devil in your ear, trying to get you off the narrow path that the Lord has called you to. All right, now, whether this guy drifted off course or shrank back from the battle or went astray because he started listening to a lying devil, whatever the case may be, the end result is the same. He became spiritually sick.

You know, he started off healthy and then he started going astray. And before you know it, he's developing a real sickness in his spiritual life. He's becoming diseased spiritually.

All right, so that brings us to the third point. He has entered the way of death. There is a way of death, right? And then what the scripture said, it's end.

When you start getting towards the end, I was talking to Pastor Norm in the bathroom a few minutes before service. We meet there every Sunday. And I can't remember how we got on the subject of our age.

But I said something like, man, I'm glad this thing's coming to an end. And he said, what did you say? I know it was profound, I can't remember. He's nearly there.

Well, this is the end of the way of death. Now, this is spiritually speaking, of course. He's not near the end of, you know, he's okay, I think.

Jan knows the real story. She's just smiling. All right, so the third point I wanna make, we're talking about this guy, what went wrong? Where did he go wrong, et cetera? He ended up in the way of death.

Now, listen, there is a great question that we all must keep before us in life. Where am I going? Where is this path that I am on currently taking me? You know, if you don't know where you're going, you probably ain't gonna get there. You know what I mean? If you just walk off the property and just start wandering somewhere, you're not headed anywhere.

You've got to know where you're going and you've got to set out to go there. You know, if I need to get to Boston, let's say in a car, well, I've got to go and drive in that direction. I've got to get on the highways that are gonna take me there.

And I have to have a purpose in mind, a goal in mind and do what I need to do to get from here to there. And that's the way it is. And you have to be purposeful about having eternal life as your life's destination.

You can't just drift along and think you're gonna end up there. It's not gonna happen. And you're only kidding yourself or deceiving yourself.

If you think you're just gonna drift along, go to church and just kind of hope that you end up in the right place, I can almost guarantee you, you're gonna end up where you don't want to be. And what we keep hearing in these verses is death as the end or destruction, as Hebrews calls it. And when I saw that shrinking back to destruction, I'm getting backwards here again.

This is the right way. Shrinking back to destruction. And when I saw that, what came in my mind was John the Baptist flee from the wrath to come.

It's like a burning city there. And you need to flee from that city and run towards the city of God. So death is the end of this direction.

Well, what is death? You know, it's kind of like darkness. Darkness in and of itself is, well, I don't know if this is exactly right, but it's nothing. It's just absence of light, right? And I think death is kind of like the same thing.

It's just an absence of life. Well, what does that mean? You have been moving away from the source of life. As Pastor Jeff mentioned earlier, we're not talking about religion here and getting off course from religion.

We are talking about a person. Jesus Christ said, I am the way. And you have been going away from the way.

He said, I am the truth. And you have been going astray from the truth. And he said, I am the life.

And you have been going towards death. It's a person, but it's a mighty person. A person mighty to save, who has all the life in his being for you for all eternity.

So what we're talking about is in your heart, moving away from that source of life and light and heaven, moving away from that and going in a different direction. You know, as soon as you become disconnected from Jesus Christ, the process of death begins to set in to you, into your inner being. It's just the way it is.

What happens is because you don't have life flowing in, your life, your spiritual life starts ebbing out, leaking out. I mean, it's just the way it is. You know, we're like these containers.

And because we live in such a wicked world, we have leakage that we can hardly help. I mean, you can, the more you give over to the world, the greater your leakage is gonna be. But even if you don't, I mean, even if you're really trying to do the right thing, there's gonna be some degree of leakage.

And we need that constant flow of the Holy Spirit in our inner being. That's what we need to, that's what keeps us alive. You know, the answer to habitual sin isn't some 12-step thing or some here do these certain things sort of deal.

It's a person. And being connected to that person means that life and power and victory is gonna flow into your inner being and fill you. You wanna get away from that? Are you sure? Well, anyway, this guy entered the way of death.

He never planned it. He just neglected. He just drifted.

He just got off track. And you know, sickness begets more sickness. It's like when it rains, it pours sort of thing.

When you're healthy, your body has natural defenses against germs and so on. You have an immune system that God has developed that works when you're healthy. But when you start getting sickly, that immune system starts breaking down and you become vulnerable and susceptible to all kinds of stuff that comes along.

And the way this happens in the spiritual realm, you're supposed to be going this way, but you start going this way. Every step you take that way is taking you into a different mindset. It's not just, it's not like you

just stay right here.

And you know, oh yeah, I lost some ground. I could have been further down the road, but I just got stuck here. And so I didn't grow like I should have.

Man, that's too bad. No, no, it's not like that. What happens is you start moving away and every step down is taking you into a different atmosphere, a different value system, a different way of seeing things.

And when you start moving away from this source of life, you know what happens? One of the first things that happens is this becomes increasingly less interesting to you. And trying to pray is wearisome. Wearisome.

When you have gotten away from the source of life, the person that you're, when you go into your prayer closet, there should be a person there who you are connecting with and you are feeling that life coming into you. But when you have gotten away from him and you try to get, you know, have a prayer time or something, it's hard. And you know what else? You start feeling increasingly more at home in the things of the world.

It feels like home. You know, worldly things feel very normal to you when you're getting away from Jesus. Spiritual darkness no longer seems so dark.

You know, wickedness no longer seems so horrible. It's not that you're necessarily going after wickedness, but it's just, you don't have that inward repulsion towards it that you had before when you were in your right mind. And sin begins to look increasingly more attractive.

Spiritual death is creeping into your inner being. That's what happens. One man, well, I was gonna say eventually, the end comes.

You know, you can't just stay in the way of death forever. The way of death is leading you to death, cessation of life, you know, a finality to it. It's not just a process that just goes on forever.

You cross a line that you cannot recross. And it's physical death. And once physical death happens, then you're into eternity.

And now it's a whole nother thing. I'm gonna read this quote from one of the old time writers. He said, the Bible presents two sets of glimpses of the future state of the sinner.

On the one hand, we are told that it will be a time of incessant suffering and of miserable torment. It is set before us under the most appalling images as a fire that is never quenched and a worm that never dies. But in other passages, the Bible tells us that the sinful soul will be destroyed, that it will be lost, that it will die.

It speaks of everlasting destruction. It means that the act of destruction will go on always, that the sinner will always be being destroyed. At death, the unrepentant sinner is separated from God, banished from his presence, cast away from his gracious sustaining power and left alone in the vast wilderness of eternity.

I better be real to you guys, because you guys have dabbled in the way of death. You better fight your way back with everything in you. All right, I'm gonna start wrapping it up here, and I wanna reread our passage here.

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death. Even in laughter, the heart may sorrow, and the end of mirth may be grief. The backslider in heart will be filled with his own ways.

In other words, the more you go in that direction, the more the self-life begins to fill you inside, the more sin, the more of the things of the world, all that just filling you, filling you, filling you, and it's taking you somewhere. Now, I've said it before, it's worth repeating, that when you're talking about falling away or backsliding, there's an idea of motion. And if you look in these three verses, you see that motion is inferred in all three of these verses.

The way of death. Well, way means you're going somewhere. And the end of mirth.

In other words, it's something that's going on, and it's gonna eventually take you somewhere. And the backslider, sliding away. In his heart.

And what I've talked about before is that there is momentum involved with falling. And what happens is you are going this way, and you're going towards the kingdom of God. You are in a flow with God carrying you, not you carrying yourself, God carrying you through his grace, by his power, only because you are believing in him, you're putting your faith, your trust in him, and you're staying connected to him.

And he is carrying you somewhere. But when you start to get away from that and you disconnect from him, then there's another kind of motion and momentum. And you are starting to go off in this direction.

Let me put it in the context of football. Let's say team A scores a couple of touchdowns in the first quarter. And you see, you look over on their sidelines, and they're all happy faces, and they're full of confidence, and they're just like, man, this thing's going our way.

And you look over at team B, and they're kind of downcast, and they've kind of lost their fight or something. And it's just, they look like losers. Well, so they go back out, and team A's got the ball again, and the quarterback throws it.

And all of a sudden, he just makes a bad throw, and it goes right to one of the cornerbacks of team B. He makes an interception and runs it for a touchdown. All of a sudden, the momentum in the game has completely changed, right? You football fans know what I'm saying. The rest of you are just staring at me like, how about boxers? Muhammad Ali, George Foreman.

This happened 300 years ago, I think. And you know, I can't even remember how this fight went. But let's say George Foreman is just landing blow after blow on Muhammad Ali.

And it seems all the momentum's going his way. And then all of a sudden, I always want to call him Cassius Clay. Muhammad Ali just all of a sudden lands a lucky punch, and all of a sudden staggers George Foreman, and now everything has shifted and gone the other direction.

Momentum. If you are going off in this direction, the great thing about Christianity is God has given you the weapons, the tools. You can make the choice to change your momentum.

You're not just victim to it. And you don't have to hope for a lucky punch or an interception or something. All you've got to do is do what God tells you to do, and the momentum will change.

That's wonderful. That is so hopeful, you know, that we can turn this thing around at any time. Once we make up our mind that we are going to go that direction, like we just sang.

And you know, one of the things I have taught in the past is a good way to do that, and you guys aren't in the situation here to do it, but maybe for later you can keep this in mind if you start getting out of whack, is to set aside one day that you are going to be all in on the things of God. You're gonna spend six hours, prayer, Bible study, worship, maybe watch, you know, if you have like a really powerful Christian movie, something like that. Spend all day doing nothing but spiritual things, and what you'll see is the momentum will start taking you back in the right direction.

And then prayer will be easier, and you'll get back on track, and you'll start going back that way. Isn't that what happened for you, Pastor Norm? Yeah, all right. Now, I'm gonna close in an interesting way today.

Aren't you grateful Pastor Steve keeps things interesting here? I don't know anything about liturgical services, okay? I don't think I've ever been in a liturgical service, but somehow I know these things happen. They have what's called liturgical prayer, and if I understand it correctly, the pastor reads something, and then the congregation reads something back to him, right? Is anyone? Okay, so I have some, everything that we are going to do, every single word comes from the Bible, okay? Just so you know that. And I have verses where it's the Lord speaking, and I'm gonna read those, and Nate is going to lead you in the response, okay? And we are gonna make this a declaration, and then I'm gonna sit down, and one of these guys are gonna come up and close this meeting in prayer, all right? So let's put that up, Robert.

Okay, so let's start here. Cursed is the man whose heart turns away from the Lord. I will stretch out my hand against him.

Our heart has not turned back, and our steps have not deviated from your way. Let your heart hold fast my words, keep my commandments and live. With all my heart I have sought thee.

Do not let me wander from thy commandments. Forsake your folly and live and proceed in the way of understanding. I will set no worthless thing before my eyes.

I hate the work of those who fall away. It shall not fasten its grip on me. For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies.

Therefore, repent and live. Revive us and we will call upon thy name. Then we shall not turn back from thee.

Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently so that you do not forget the things which your eyes have seen, and they do not depart from your heart all the days of your life. Lord, by these things men live, and in all these is the life of my spirit. Oh, restore me to health and let me live.

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Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/gPWanOBVEvc.mp4>  
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