

## **PRONE TO WANDER    Jeremiah 3:6-13**

Int. Many Baptists treat backsliding as a big joke. In my years I have heard lots of men across the nation slap a leg and chuckle, “Well, I guess you could say I’m just an old backslidden Baptist.” In truth, Baptists are among the few who can afford the humor. Most Baptists confess that those once saved are always saved. No one loses salvation through backsliding. However, a backslider can lose fellowship with God! It is serious and not at all a joke.

It does not take drastic sin to backslide. If a believer is not right now, this very this moment, as close to God as ever before, he is backslidden!

Jeremiah wrote these verses about the divided kingdoms, Israel in the north and Judah in the south. But in them he laid out some important truths about backsliding that every child of God needs to know. He identified its

### **CAUSE 3:6**

Any number of things can lead to backsliding.

A lack of strong spiritual leadership. Wishy-washy Aaron gave in to the people’s demand for an image at the foot of Sinai (Ex 32).

Bad company. It “corrupts good morals” (1 Cor 15:33). Solomon’s pagan wives “turned away his heart after other gods” (1 Ki 11:4). This is why believers must choose their bosom buddies (Ps 1:1-2) and marriage mates (2 Cor 6:14) very carefully.

Love for God grows cold (Jer 3:6). No woman who truly loves her husband would share her bed with multiple lovers. And no Christian whose heart burns with love for his Lord would prove unfaithful!

### **CURSE 3:7-11**

Backsliding always brings terrible personal consequences. These include the loss of assurance of salvation (1 Jhn 2:3), of power in prayer (Ps 66:18), of rewards in heaven (2 Jhn 8), and perhaps even of life itself (1 Jhn 5:16).

But the most solemn tragedy is that a backslider always drags others along with him! Backslidden Israel influenced Judah! She should have seen Israel’s sad end and avoided the same fate. Instead Judah followed in her sister’s steps (3:7-8).

No one can keep all the consequences of his backsliding to himself.

### **CURE 3:12-14**

Backsliders can count on God to accept and restore them if they will only repent (“Return”) and confess.

Con. Any backslider can “stand once more in the smile of God!” Life can be wonderful again. God will forgive you and restore you. Go to him right now with this prayer: “I’ve wandered far away from God, now I’m coming home!”