

The Gospel of Mark

Home Group Discussion Guide

How to Avoid Backsliding — Part 1 of 3

Mark 4:1-20

ICEBREAKER: What's your most and least preferred forms of exercise?

OVERVIEW: To backslide is to lapse morally or spiritually; to reverse to a worse condition. Countless people drop out of church every year. The majority students become spiritually disengaged after high school. This is nothing new. Jesus knew this would be a big problem for Christians in every generation, and He gave us some valuable instruction in Mark 4, *The Parable of the Farmer Scattering Seed*. Over the next three weeks we will go deeper with this topic and learn how to avoid backsliding for ourselves, and for the next generation.

1. Read Mark 4:1-20. What insight, principle, or observation from this weekend's message did you find to be the most helpful, eye-opening, or troubling? Explain. (Or what was your key takeaway from Sunday's message?)
2. Why do you think people backslide?
3. Was there ever a time in your life when you backslid? What was the cause?
4. To avoid backsliding, our hearts must not be like the footpath — hard and compact. Our hearts must be soft and receptive to God's word. To start, this means we must believe the Bible. How does believing that the Bible is inspired by God help us to avoid backsliding?

5. Do you believe the Bible is the inspired word of God? Why?
6. The second thing we need to do to be receptive to God's word is to study the Bible. Describe your personal Bible study habits. In other words, how often do you read the Bible, and what is your system?
7. Why is Bible study essential for avoiding backsliding? How has it helped you in your relationship with God?
8. How do you need to improve your Bible study habits?
9. The third thing we need to do to be receptive to God's word is to obey the Bible? Why is obedience essential to avoid backsliding?
10. Are you living in disobedience to the Bible in any area of your life — in your attitudes or actions; your words or thoughts? What is stopping you from living in total obedience?

The Last Word: "Visit many good books, but live in the Bible." Charles Spurgeon