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Theme: Backsliding....small steps at a time.

Scripture: Mark 14:72 (NASB) *Before a rooster crows today you will deny me three times. And he went out and wept bitterly:*

A Thought:

Peter walked the streets with Jesus for three years and a rooster did him in. What about the rest of us? We live in a world filled with “stuff” that can make it easy to walk away from His presence. Ironically, there is an abundance of Christian media ministries, bibles, churches on every corner, Christian bookstores and Bible classes. So how is it that a growing number of believers slowly walk away from God? Diane Dew, author of the 1991 book, *Essentials of Revival* gives us a peek on how Satan can mug us without fanfare. She states...*“Spiritual decay is a gradual process. If it came as a splash of cold water in the face on a sweltering day, we’d recognize it for what it is. Satan is sly, and his tactics are subtle.”* We have to understand that Satan doesn’t give a hoot about our place in life....especially if at one time we lived with one foot in his world. Jeremiah 2:17,19 (NIV) *“Have you not brought this on yourselves by forsaking the Lord? Your wickedness will punish you; your backsliding will rebuke you.”* It can start with a David-Bathsheba moment, drunkenness, drugs, lust, deceitfulness, and ultimately no fear of the Lord. Excuses become a mainstay in our verbal exchanges with Christian brothers and sisters, the bible collects dust, less prayers, and we stop attending weekly Men’s Bible studies...you get the point. The Lord will never forsake us. Someone one said, *“the road to God is not long”* a lesson we’ve learned in Mark 15...when the prodigal son returned home.

Now....what are your thoughts? Write them down.

Talk to yourself: 10 Steps to Avoid Backsliding (About.com Guide-Mary Fairchild)
Examine your faith-life regularly; If you find yourself drifting away, turn back immediately; Come to God daily for forgiveness and cleansing; Continue daily seeking the Lord with your whole heart; Stay in the word of God; Stay in fellowship often with other believers; Stand firm in your faith; Persevere; Run the Race to win; Remind yourself of what God has done for you in the past.

Scriptures to read:

- Luke 15:11-32; Hosea 14:4; Proverbs 9:10; 1Tim 4:8; Romans 2:1-4; 2 Kings 11:9; Rev. 2:4; Galatians 1:6, 7; 3:1-5; 1 Tim 5:15; 2 Tim. 5:15;
- Psalm 125:5; Matthew 5:13; Jeremiah 3: 21-22, 4:1-4, 15-22; Mark 4:7, 14:72; Jeremiah 14:7; 12:17; Luke 9:62; Jonah 2:14; John 6:66; Gal.5:17

Quote:Diane Dew, author..."Essentials of Revival"

"Backsliding is, as the word implies, a sliding back - not a jump off a cliff, but a coasting downhill. We cannot ascend the mount of God in neutral. Spiritual growth requires a conscious effort, or it will be only natural that we succumb to the ways of the flesh."

Bottom Line: Remember men our straying away will not deter God's faithfulness. God does not want us to backslide. At the same time we cannot straddle the line between truth and Satan. God does not want us to fail. Listen to Hosea 14:4 (NKJ) *"I will heal their waywardness and love them freely; for my anger has turned away from them."* So what is the problem? Look in the mirror...it's our pride, our ignorance, our sinful desires and a phony pious facade...and eventually there is no fear of God. Proverbs 9:10 (HCSB) *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom..."* If the distance grows between you and God, Houston we have a problem - the demons are here! 1Timothy 4:8 (NKJ) *"The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons."* No shortcuts gents - obedience is not an option. Quit straddling between Truth and Satan. Matthew 19:17 (NKJ) *"Why do you ask me about what is good?"* Jesus replied, *"There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments."*

NOW.....THAT'S THE BOTTOM LINE.

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