

Are You Backsliding? (Part 2)

by Michael L. Brown

The sermon addresses the signs of backsliding, the importance of repentance, and the path to spiritual restoration.

Duration: 58:24

Scripture: Proverbs 15:1, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 22:37-39, Romans 12:10

Topics: "Backsliding"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the prevalence of easily accessible and explicit content in today's society. He shares personal experiences of encountering inappropriate material and emphasizes the need to treat it as an enemy. The speaker also discusses the consequences of indulging in sexual sin, whether through watching explicit movies or engaging in online activities. He highlights the importance of recognizing the aftereffects or 'acharit' of such actions and warns against the dangers of sexual sin, citing the book of Proverbs as a source of wisdom and guidance.

Transcript

Pray again, Lord we bless you and thank you. Father, you know how seriously I take these times together with your servants. And I pray, oh God, now that your Holy Spirit would create an environment where humbling ourselves and examining ourselves and repenting and being set free is easy.

Lord, we renounce the lies of the devil. We renounce his condemning lies. We renounce his deceiving lies that it's too late.

We denounce his lies that everything is fine when it's not. And we pray for truth. We know that your Son said the truth will set us free.

In Jesus' name, amen. God said about the children of Israel through the prophet Hosea, picture Israel as a man beginning to get gray but he doesn't realize it. One of the great tragedies with Samson, when you read his life, is he didn't know the Spirit had left him.

And when the Philistines came upon him and he said, just like always I'll break the yokes and he couldn't. He was blinded and humiliated and mocked in front of the people. That tragic line, he didn't know that the Spirit had left him.

That can be put over so many church doors. In our little Pentecostal church where I was saved, Italian Pentecostal church, 1971, there's a heroin shooting rock drummer that went into the church to pull my friends out. God did many wonderful things there.

We had written across the church, let go and let God. And we thought we were totally free for God to move however He wanted to move. Thank God for the good things He did there and the foundations that were laid.

But man, things happened the same week in, week out, year in, year out. There was a little box within which God could move. We looked down at the other denominational people, so-called, and thought they were stiff, they were religious, but not us.

Sardis had a reputation for being alive, didn't know it. Laodicea didn't realize its state. I want us to try on one of those old suits or one of those old dresses and see how they fit today.

A lot of us measure ourselves, but our measuring rod is adjustable. Some of us are really discouraged and down all the time, but others of us are pretty impressed with ourselves. My wife is a great blessing to me because she is ruthlessly honest.

We have unsaved neighbors that come and ask her for decorating opinions because they know if she says the furniture matches, it matches. It's a strange thing. People really want her approval.

They hardly know her because they just know she tells the truth. It's such a rare thing that people really are straightforward and honest. She always cuts through a lot of the hype and gets down to the real basics.

I remember one night we had this wild time of intercession at a conference praying for this crippled girl. The most bizarre and wild words of knowledge and confirmations and scriptures we were all hearing together. It seemed to be a totally supernatural night, an intense intercession travail, an unbelievable night.

I called my wife and I said, this was happening and this and this and this, words of knowledge. She said, did she get up? That's the only thing, did she get up? That's what the crippled girl needed. That's what we were praying for.

Did she get up? I want to cut through some of the other things and try and just look at things honestly. Here are danger signs, friends. Danger signs.

Signs that you're backsliding. Backsliding does not necessarily mean you are backslidden away from God and if you were to die hell bound. By God's grace I hope that doesn't apply to anyone in this room.

Maybe someone has straggled in that wasn't supposed to be here and it applies to them. But I'm sure there are plenty of backsliding ministers in this room. And there are others who are backslidden in certain areas of your life.

Backsliding is the result of sin and the remedy is repentance. First danger sign has to do with sin itself and its ugly fleshly forms. Your standards have dropped from what they used to be.

It's one of the first clear signs of a backsliding heart. Things that you wouldn't have done years ago you do. Movies you wouldn't have seen years ago you see.

I don't just mean that you had a stiff man made holiness teaching. Where if women's hair didn't go you know down to their waist and if men's hair wasn't over the ears then they weren't saved. I'm not talking about those types of things.

I'm talking about genuine sensitivities that you used to have that you have lost. Your standards have dropped. And you have committed sins that would have been unthinkable years ago.

Now if there's one problem that I can guarantee this room is filled with just because of the assault in America and because of the low standard of our Christianity it's all types of sexual sin. There are people right here that have been in affairs and then turned away from it and gone on a ministry. No one ever knew about it but you'll never be totally clean until you get that thing right.

In the midst of it the only healthy thing to have done was to have stepped down and submitted yourself for restoration even if it took five years. But on a much lower level all types of sexual sin whether it's R-rated movies or X-rated movies or probably most other movies that are rated better filled with something unclean and ungodly. And you watch it and you see it and not only do you watch it and you see it you've watched and seen things you never dreamed you would.

Or downloaded stuff over the internet once you got computer literate and you're shocked about the things that are now coming into your heart and your home. And the worst thing is you're finding yourself bound. You're finding, listen, someone can slip and fall.

I understand that. I understand someone can cast a wrong glance. I understand you can innocently put on a television.

I mean when I'm in a hotel room it's like that's the enemy, that TV. There's all kinds of junk and smut and everything just available with the flick of a switch. And I treat it like an enemy.

Sometimes I'm just going to relax and watch sport. And there's something you didn't expect and there it is. It's gross and disgusting.

That can happen. You immediately shut the thing and repent and then do what I've often done. Break the plug of the TV.

Say, brother, you're talking to lots of leadership. Why talk about breaking the plug of a TV in a hotel? Because I've done it. I'd rather break the plug and put a note, plug is broken, than defile myself.

You say you're making a lot out of nothing. Listen, three out of my four original pastors or the man I work closely with or fellow worker from the years of 1971 to 1987, there were four different people that were either my pastor or a clear fellow worker in leadership with me or that was over me in a position. Three out of the four destroyed their ministries through adultery.

I don't just mean mental adultery. I mean they destroyed their ministries through adultery with another woman. Three out of four? There is an all out assault, friends.

There is a battle. Listen, we got through staying over here. I was with my wife and our second oldest daughter, our 17-year-old.

We went over to visit some family in another part of Florida. The place that the travel agent booked us into was right in the middle. I couldn't believe the environment.

We were stunned by the environment. I've been in New York City many times. Born in the city, grew up on Long Island, preached many times in New York City and there's a certain atmosphere that can be there, especially in the summers that's just sin everywhere.

But this was maybe worse than anything I'd ever seen in my life. The whole family, we were just talking openly and honestly. I said, I've got the solution.

I had just come back from an international trip, so I had still in my computer bag, I had the eye patches that you put on, whatever they're called, so you can sleep on the plane better. I said, this is how I'm going to walk around here. Somebody's just going to lead me.

This is how I'm going to walk around. The environment was so incredibly defiant. You say, brother, are you weak? No, I try to be wise.

I try to be wise. I try to flee certain things and stay away from stuff that's polluting rather than watch and show off how strong I am. Some of you, your standards have fallen from what they used to be.

Things that used to bother you don't bother you anymore. It's not because you have grown. As I said to the folks two weeks ago, it's not because you are so holy.

It's because you're hard. It should bother us to be exposed to certain things. When you hear profanity, and here you're willfully sitting down and watching.

It's one thing working in the midst of sinners. Well, you work in the midst of those sinners and you reach out to them. No matter how sinful and ugly and gross their lives are, you try and reach out to them with the love of God and call them to repentance.

You don't run from the world. Of course not. But here we are willingly being entertained by stuff.

We're bringing in videos or going to a movie and watching stuff that is displeasing in God's sight. And years ago, we would have been shocked if we did it. And now it's no big deal.

That's a sign of a back-slidden heart, a hard heart, friends. Now look, some of you, today is going to be your day of freedom. Today you're going to get on your knees and confess to God or maybe to another man or woman of God that's here.

Depending on whether you're male or female. And you may confess some unthinkable things that you've done. Unthinkable things you've seen.

You never would have dreamed of it happening years ago. And it's happened once, now twice, now three times, now five times. And now you find you try and shake yourself free and you can't.

Now you find your mind is polluted. It's on the inside of you. Yeah, it's a battle out there, friends.

And the worst thing of all, it's not just that you try and shake yourself free and you can't. Like Samson Hodges, I'm going to shake myself free and you can't. The devil says, ha.

See, he knows what he's doing. Listen, he's a master strategist. You don't major on the devil.

You major on Jesus. I'm not demon conscious. I don't get out of bed looking for spirits.

Stub my toe and rebuke the devil. I don't do that. But I know there's a battle where to be sober and alert, the word says.

Correct? Be sober and alert. Why? Because you're an adversary of the devil. Goes about, roams about, prowling like a roaring lion.

Seeking who he may devour. The devil knows what he's doing. He hits hard and then he backs up.

I'm okay, praise God. I really messed up. I was a little worried.

I'm okay. Three months later, he hits hard again. Now you're a little bit more concerned.

Because it hadn't happened for ten years. Now it's happened over a three month period. Some of you folks, listen, I'm talking to you.

You used to be free in certain areas and you're slaves now. Some of the most embarrassing things, you're slaves. Again, I understand there's a battle.

I understand you can have a day where you're really struggling or a week where you feel heavy oppression. I understand that. I understand there's a constant process of renewing the mind.

I fully understand. I'm not sitting up here saying that, hey, if you're not perfect, if you've had a weak moment, if you slipped, if you fell, that you're out. No.

But there's some people that you used to be totally free in certain areas of your life and you've allowed the devil to enslave you. He hits and then he backs up. Then he hits again and he backs up.

Then a little closer, then a little closer, and now you're tied up. It says in Proverbs 5, a man is tied up by his own sins. But something even worse than that, some of you aren't even convicted anymore.

I mean, that's more than danger sign. That's emergency time. No problem.

I don't mean when the love of God comes and ministers to you and changes you and when you're ready for God to crush you, he says, I know your heart, I love you, and you're free, and you never go back to the thing again. But I mean, some of you, it's part of your life now. And you always used to think that it could never happen to you.

And you always used to think that God wouldn't bless you and anoint you and use you anymore. But you've learned to be professional. You learned to make it work anyway.

And surprise, surprise, sometimes there still seems to be some anointing. And people still seem to be blessed. So I guess I can just go on like this.

You're waiting for lightning to strike and it didn't. Something far worse happened. No lightning strike.

One of the most powerful truths in the word, one of the few messages I've preached, almost the identical message many times, is a message from the book of Proverbs based on one Hebrew word, acharit. I won't take much time on that now, but acharit, the Hebrew word comes from the word for back. The principle is it's that which comes after, the after effects, the end.

And you cannot see the acharit from this viewpoint. I just got this suit yesterday. \$99, J.C. Penney's.

Looks okay, looks clean from the front. What if the whole back was ripped up and torn? What if I had rubbed against some paint? You can't see it because you can't see what comes after. Proverbs 5 tells us, begins to talk about the smooth-tongued, seductive woman.

And there are more lengthy warnings in the book of Proverbs about sexual sin than any other sin. Nehemiah 13 tells us that even Solomon fell prey to sexual sin. Somehow when that thing's got you, it seems so real and powerful, and when you're free from it, it's like, what is that filth? But in the grip of it, it's a battle for people.

It says in Proverbs 5, boy, her tongue, lips just so smooth, boy. Lips just drip honey, boy. Looks like just what you want.

Look at the front cover of that magazine, man. That's just what you want. And it says, but her acharit is bitter as death, sharp as a two-edged sword.

You don't realize what's coming? I've wept with people that were men of God and their ministries are destroyed, and I've wept with them, and they're thinking, man, if they only could have seen their acharit. They could have seen the divorce that's now taking place in the family. If they could have seen the church fall apart, if they could have seen the ministry crumble, if they could have seen worse than all, the displeasure and the hurt in God's face and the reproach to the name of Jesus and the saints will be damaged for life because their trust was broken and the agonizing hours and weeks and months of darkness wondering how did I ever do it? You never would have touched that thing.

That's the principle of the acharit. It's throughout the book of Proverbs. Friends, this is your day to get free.

This is your day to get free. I've seen in my own life little things, little habits, whether it's discipline with food, just little daily things. You find, man, I just feel like I'm in a little bit of a rut here, a little bit of a battle, or you're too easily angered.

You know, just little things. And you say, man, how do I overcome that? You get into an atmosphere where God's moving, it just happens. You just keep drinking in His presence.

You stay in His presence. You continue to worship Him and seek His face and draw on who He is. You become like Him.

You become like the people you spend time with. You just keep going after God. Here's an environment.

The Holy Spirit's moving. It's time for liberty. Another danger sign.

Worldliness. Jesus no longer satisfies. Jesus tells the church of Ephesus to repent because they left, not lost, left their first love.

I left my first love because I've been burned out through the ministry and because I'm tired and because I've had problems and because it's everybody else's fault, is what I'm saying. I'm just a victim. Jesus said, no, repent, because you left your first love.

You remember the days when nothing really mattered because you had Jesus? Remember the days when it was just looking at His face was sufficient? In His presence was fullness of joy and that was more than enough for you? We have a relative of ours came to the Lord as a young woman and she was really fashion conscious and thin and into guys and everything. The whole lifestyle. And then she got saved.

I don't mean it was a good thing that she suddenly became what we call pleasantly plump. I don't mean that that was positive but the positive thing was she was just so excited about the Lord that all this emphasis on the other stuff just went by the wayside for her. I mean she got herself back in better physical shape after a while which is also important.

But look, there was a time when sports, who cares about sports? Who cares about a bouncing ball or a jumping ball? I mean who cares about a hockey puck bouncing? What's the big deal with sports? It didn't really matter because you were so hungry for God and seeing people saved was your life and meeting with Jesus was wonderful and it's like, oh yeah, I can relax and watch a game here or there. But who cares about it? Now, the sports page has your attention more than the word. If your team wins or loses, it plays more tricks on your emotions than when the people go to heaven or hell.

Or if you don't get that new car, or if you don't get that new carpeting in it, or if you don't get that new computer system, or if you can't get this vacation to this particular place, your life's a mess. It didn't used to be like that. Not that these things in themselves are evil, but it shows a divided heart.

You have to look. How do you become worldly? We have a lovely home. We've never had a bank account, savings account, extra money, anything like that.

Things have been somewhat tight through the years, but God blessed the home we bought and then it doubled in value. We got another home and that almost doubled in value. So we've got a lovely home.

Fine. Fine to have a lovely home. Nothing wrong with it.

I enjoy it a little bit, but I'm away a lot and then when I'm there I don't want to get worldly materialistic, so I only enjoy it a little. It's just my own problem, my own hang-up, I think. But it's a lovely home.

Fine. You may have four cars. Great.

That's not the issue. It really isn't the issue. But the word says don't love the world or the things that are in the world.

If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. It's an absolute either or. And the symptoms are when you start going one direction, you lose hold of the other.

For all that's in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is not of the Father, but it's of the world. And the world passes away in all its lust, but he who does the will of God will endure forever. Are you becoming worldly? Look at the interest you have now.

How many nights now do you just need to relax and chill out and just watch TV or just do that? Hey, why don't we have a prayer meeting tonight? Hey, we're just going to have a worship service and meet with the Lord. Hey, we're going to go out witnessing. And it's like, that becomes a burden.

You know something's wrong. Yes, there are seasons that just come away with me. But I don't think come away with me means let's go watch professional wrestling all night.

You know what I'm saying? There's a right dimension to rest and breaking out and there's a dimension where you're gripped by the world. What if your earthly surroundings were changed? What if the Lord said, okay, it's time to move. Time to give the rest of your life to missions in India.

That's one country I've been to four times and it's challenging. Even though they're trying to take good care of us there and we stay in some pretty tough places. It's challenging for Westerners.

But it's fine when you're there. It's just fine. I mean, you do come home and kiss the floor of your bathroom when you get back home.

What if the Lord said, okay, that's it. Go there. No problem, Lord, if that's what you're saying.

That should be our attitude, right? Okay, sell your house and do this and that. No problem, Lord, because our heart's not in these things. Jesus said, don't lay up for yourselves treasures on the earth.

Well, in America, we all have abundance. Most of us in America live better than kings and rulers did in past generations. They didn't have temperature-controlled homes.

They didn't have running hot water in their homes. They didn't have refrigerators to keep the food right. They didn't have any of this stuff that we have.

Luxury travel in David's day was a donkey. Jesus said, don't lay up treasures for yourselves on earth where moth and rust corrupt and thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.

You must make a heart change. You must make a heart change and break free. You say, okay, so I'm just going to feel really bad about all the things I have.

No, no, no. Get on fire for God again. Recognize that Jesus is no longer your portion.

The psalmist says, the Lord is my portion. That should be sufficient for us. The Lord says, your reward in serving me will not be much in this world, but you'll have me.

That's enough. Or, you could have everything in this world. All the favor of man, all the money in the world, all the possessions in the world and everything, but you won't have as much of me.

I'll take all of you, Jesus. Hands down. No contest.

Have you become worldly? I don't like that word, brother. Well, I don't like the lifestyle associated with that word. It should be unpleasant to you.

Another danger sign. Some of you may be sinking fast, two out of two. On the way down, four more to go.

Others might still be sitting there with a remnant of pride. Danger sign number three. No burden.

No burden. Just because you are in full-time ministry working 60 hours a week doesn't mean you have a burden. There are abortion doctors working 60 hours a week.

There are CEOs working 70 hours a week. There are computer programmers commonly working 60 hours a week. There are people driven with a vision.

There are people who are just workaholics. Some of you are addicted to the work of the ministry but not in the right sense. It's your whole life, your whole identity and if you took that superstructure away from you and left you with God you'd be struggling.

You'd have an identity crisis. Just working hard doesn't mean that you have a burden. The tears are gone.

Now, a few here will say I never had the tears. Well, you need God to break up your heart more deeply, period. And he wants to.

But some of you think here's how it starts. Man, you had this burden. Oh, God, I want to see my neighborhood impact.

I want to see the nation's touch. I want to see young people come to Lord. You cry and cry.

People say, son, young woman, you're called by God and see the call of God in your life. So we start to prepare. And we get to the point now where we're doing all the things that we saw ourselves doing to fulfill the vision except the burden is gone.

The brokenness is gone. One of the things that I've written about in Revival is that when Revival comes eternity becomes real again. One of the signs of Revival, great characteristics you see in Revival.

That's why we call it Revival. It has these characteristics that the presence of God permeating an area or a community or a group. Heavy conviction of sin.

Those are always the two first things you seem to see in Revival. That holy presence, conviction of sin. One of the other things you see is eternity becomes real.

Heaven and hell become real. As far as heaven and hell are concerned, we here in this generation are unbelieving believers. Plain and simple.

We say the words, we sign the doctrinal statement, but we are unbelieving believers. I would dare say that the average sister responsible for the upkeep of her home is more affected by someone spilling something on the carpet than by the thought of people dying without Jesus. I would dare say the average brother, and I mentioned this before, is more affected by the sports page.

Than by the state of the lost. One thing I've experienced being here, many times my heart's been torn out from my Jewish people or for the nations. But I know there's a deeper tearing.

I experienced so many of the meetings here, just those supernatural tears where you begin to weep at the altar call. And listen, I'm not weeping because I'm seeing people come forward to Jesus. I mean, some nights you're affected like that.

My wife was here and other friends, all they could do was just weep as they saw the people coming to get right with God. You know, the backsliders returning, the first time converts and Christians getting their lives right with God. But there's just this sense of eternity that hits me so many of these nights.

When Allison came up last night, just the moment the moment she got up there I just started to weep. It was just this awesome sense it's real, oh my God, it's real. Oh my God, it's real.

People dying without Jesus, it's real. Where's your burden, friends? It's a sign of a backslidden heart when you don't have a burden. D.L. Moody was preaching to an atheist in England and the friends of the atheist said, did you listen to Moody? He said, yeah, I heard him out.

They said, well, did Moody talk to you about hell? He said, yeah. And they said, well, did you hear him out on that too? He said, I listened to him. And they said, well, you don't listen to us.

And he said, Moody talked to me with tears. And that's one of the great questions to ask us in ministry, where are your tears? Just during the break talking to some folks that have known Leonard Ravenhill. What separated him from so many that I knew in this generation was his absolute brokenness for revival.

I'd often, he just adopted me as kind of a spiritual son in 89, just a supernatural thing the Lord spoke to me about he would do and it just happened without me initiating it and we were real close from 89 to 94 when he went to be with the Lord at the age of 87. But it'd be common we'd be on the phone and he'd break down crying. Mike, the church, the church, we're naked and wretched but we don't know it.

It'd be common I'd call him the last call before I'd go out of the country I'd call him from the airport and so many times he'd say, Mike, I've got to see revival I'm praying that God will send revival where you go. Just the passion, the brokenness, the tears. I don't mean he's the only one but it's something that's missing in our microwave ministry mentality, friends.

You think it's all going to happen because somebody lays hands on you at the end of the service? God will do something God will add something but man, he's going to call you deeper, deeper, deeper, deeper. It's the whole package you get from the whole meeting that by God's grace we're hoping will impact you and continue to impact us and for everybody involved to go deeper. You hear some heart-rending preaching to see the reality of lost sinners to meet with God and worship in freedom to be prayed for and receive a deeper impacting and anointing all of it together but nothing without a heart change.

Nothing without a heart change. The tears are gone. One of the great tests of someone with a burden is fasting.

Sometimes I hesitate to speak more on this because God challenges me more but let him challenge me more. Fasting is the one of those things that you wish didn't work so well. You know what I mean? You wish that you could say that fasting didn't produce radical results but it always does when you humble yourself and go after God and fasting and prayer.

When you really have to break through you get to that point of absolute desperation. I got so hungry it was in 1988 I was about to speak at a major thing in Israel that was maybe the most major thing in the restoration of the state of Israel in 1948 and the most major spiritual thing that was going to happen so I got chosen to be a keynote speaker I felt this terrible burden I need more of God I got to break through I need more of God in my own life. This began to fast God had me fast for about three weeks on water and then at the end of it I was expecting the glory to fall as we ministered and God moved the spirit fell in different ways and that night at three in the morning we still had 700 people there seeking God that we had to just dismiss because the morning meetings were coming in a few hours but the main thing that God did was send fire in my life.

The main thing that He did and listen I don't mean revival fire I mean refining fire. He put me through five months of agony. It was after the fasting after the prayer that He moved in Israel and there was some controversy associated with the meetings and all that that was all insignificant in terms of my own life the thing was man He began to show me and look I was moving forward I was hungry I was seeing God move I wasn't in some backslidden condition but I became ashamed of my life.

I said God I'm not hungry I'm starving. I looked at the lives of others that God had used and I was embarrassed just embarrassed I've been preaching since I was 18 you can wake me up in the middle of the night hand me a text and say preach and it would be no problem you say here are 100,000 people it would be fine I mean God's called me I love to obey Him you know what I'm saying? I've never been afraid I'd take a gathering if I was going to sit with three of you over lunch I'd probably take that with more holy trepidation Lord let it count let this time count than I would preaching to a stadium there's no fear in me about it I know God's called me I take it seriously you know but I'd go to in this five month purgatory I'd go to preach somewhere and I'd say oh no I've got to preach tonight what am I going to do this desperation God I don't have anything to give to anybody I'd show up at the meeting and the pastor says praise God we brought you in because we've got to hear a prophetic word from God we've got to know what God is saying to our church and I'd say oh no I mean I'd be covering on the inside I only said the first part so you'd understand the second ok I don't mean I'm self confident I mean that I was God confident because He had called me to do this you know it was agonizing I'd go to speak to a group of 50 people at a friend's congregation in a weekend of ministry we'd schedule it in and I'd be desperate I'd be on the plane I don't want to get on this plane I get on a plane to get on a 14 hour flight I'm excited man I can't wait to get on that plane my wife's always let's be the last ones on I have to persuade her that we need to get area for the luggage you know the carry on stuff that's my way to try and get her on earlier because man I'm the first one on that plane it's just I do it all with enthusiasm it's kind of a sick enthusiasm if you think of it 14 hour flight 14 hours shut in but that's just the way I get on the plane I don't want to be on this plane I don't want to minister I don't want to preach one night I was teaching and I started to raise my voice as I was making a point and the spirit says to me you trying to sound anointed? you want people to think you're anointed? is that why you're raising your voice? this is as I'm preaching God I said Lord I'm just trying to follow your spirit I felt this thing rising in me that's why I'm raising my voice I've never went to homiletic class I'm not a professional preacher so on trying to be this slick operator or something like that then at the end of another service we call up all the sick we're going to lay hands on the sick I'm just about to pray for people who need healing and the spirit says to me you trying to look like a big man of God?

I mean searching the motives of my heart it was intense five months and I got through it because I knew that it was a refining Smith Wigglesworth made the point only melted gold is minted he said if you really want to be reconstructed it's not going to come in a singing meeting he said it's going to be a hard time when you feel there's no hope that's when God's going to meet you I know though what made it all happen was that fast some of you fasted much longer than that some never that length it's not even the length that's the issue it's that hunger for God that motivates you to do it I can't live without the breakthrough we say Lord I won't let you go until you bless me he says right he just walks away because he knows we don't really mean it but when we really mean it we will get

through it's his desire to bless it's his desire to use you God's purpose is to be for you and to use you to make an impact bigger than you ever dreamed of the tears are gone the fasting is gone the vision is gone that's a sign of no burden dangerous sign you're going on with the program some of you are going on maybe you've been doing it 5 years, 10 years 20 years, 30 years you may be in traveling ministry you may be in street ministry you may be pastoring one of the most successful churches in your community but you're going on with the program is what you're doing and the vision now is a bigger building the vision is more people the vision is just kind of a very basic vision but the passion behind it and the drive the glory of God a community saturated with God revival of the nation is

gone that's signs of a backsliding heart number 4 no power some of you used to flow with an anointing of God now I know God gives certain gifts for periods of time or certain ways He uses us I don't mean a gift that He's just given those are just given and not just going to be taken back every 6 months but there's certain ways that God used you that weren't just a fleeting moment they weren't just a flash in the pan they were part of who you were in God and it doesn't happen anymore you used to be a faith man you'd pray for the sick boldly then you hit a few brick walls happened to me when we lost a friend we battled for for two and a half years lost him to a brain tumor my former secretary's husband then we agonized over two and a half years close to home their kids same age two girls

same age as our two girls it hurt it was a battle I looked after that the year or two after actually a few years I noticed my fasting had gone down I only made the connection when I just looked at my calendars and journals I said look at that since he died that took something out of me I didn't even realize I realized instead of hearing about a certain condition meeting someone that's what the doctor said man we're going after it I was a little hesitant fully convinced that it was God's will fully convinced that it was His ideal to bless His children with physical healing fully convinced of it no mental question something something happened some of you used to be zealous and devil chasers and you've just become now white collar ministers nice conservative I won't bother you you don't

bother me ministers what a shame some of you used to be fireballs man faith power anointing I had a nickname in the mid 80's I found out when I was going to teach one night that people were walking in the class they were making some reference to knock them down brown it was a nickname I had been given and it had to do with you know laying hands on people they'd be laid out all over in unusual manifestations and so on I didn't have a prominent healing ministry we saw people healed and touched and so on but in 89 God dealt with me just spoke to me I was in Kenya and He visited me very clearly it was a supernatural night where the Lord really spoke to me one of those times when you know that you know God's visiting and He showed me how even though I was preaching a strong message and

preaching repentance and seeking to wake up believers etc that I had been known also you know for faith power these different things you know on whatever level again I don't want you to get the wrong impression that the sick were knocking down my door for prayer but somehow that I'd preach and minister but then there would be a lot of laying out of hands and little time for response and in my own life the Lord dealt with me in 89 and had me cut way back from laying hands on people and when I did almost nobody would fall I didn't tell anybody anything but what would happen is we'd just have altar calls and people come up weeping and the moment I'd touch them they'd begin to sob or people just on their knees the moment I'd touch them they'd begin to weep and I saw very little of people

falling under the power and God wanted to make it clear to me when I ministered that the primary thing I was to do was to call people to get right with Him and there had just been a slight slight getting off course I mean the main thrust of my life was going in the right direction but something had to be fine tuned there and it was right after that that the release hit to start writing all these books on repentance, revival and so on you know a number of things fell into place right after that and it was right after that long fast that all these things one after the other but those things are deeply established in me and now as we have the ministry here and I go to lay hands on people a few Saturdays ago this flood really hit me and just I mean if we had a hundred ushers we could have

mowed down everybody in about two minutes and one of my former students was here and he says looks like you got your nickname back well I mean that's fine what I'm saying is that was an anointing that was

with me for a season and if it's back with me now and the falling is unimportant it's the touching of God that's important but that was there for a season so I understand those things can happen ok but if that hasn't if something left and it wasn't replaced with something better you ought to check to find out why it left if there was a certain anointing on you you used to fall in the spirit or healing or gifts or words of knowledge or power to set the captives free and you say well that phase of our ministry passed well what has it been replaced with that's better and deeper oh we're

more mature now we're more dead now we've grown though you've become stiffer what happened to the spiritual flow we used to hear God we used to move in God move in the spirit we lose those things because we backslide in a certain area number five no joy Paul wrote to the Galatians what happened to all your joy Peter says to the believers this is the normal life you haven't seen him yet you know him you haven't seen Jesus personally Peter's saying the way I did but you know him and you rejoice with an inexpressible and glorious joy and the words of the King James as we used to sing in our little church joy unspeakable and full of glory listen I got saved and I was a rock drummer you know with my long hair about half the weight I am just real thin from all the drug use and I was into you

know all the rock bands of those days Led Zeppelin and Jimi Hendrix and Cream and so on and now I got saved and I go from Led Zeppelin to Make Me a Blessing we didn't have the type of music and worship that we have here you understand it was just going from one to the other these little ditties we would sing these little ditties at the cross at the cross where I first saw the Lord man I was I was just overflowing it was the joy of the Lord experienced in a little Pentecostal service in December 17th of 1971 that was so awesome I said that's it I'll never put a needle in my arm again and I was free instantly from that moment on singing these little ditties you know one guy got saved he was in the high school and I led him to the Lord and see when you got the joy your witnessing comes back

because you're overflowing you just get something at the store and you leave you say God bless you they look at you and you just say I just want you to know how good God is it all comes out of the overflow some of you say I'm not witnessing because I don't have the burden that's part of it the other thing is there's no overflow it's just easy to serve God when you're full it is you wake up to a terrible battle you say wonderful another opportunity for Jesus to triumph awesome I don't mean some contrived thing but what the New Testament talks about is the norm would seem radical to us I said a couple weeks ago if we had a New Testament Christian in our churches we'd excommunicate them if we had a New Testament church next door we'd write it off as a cult we would God's restoring things

little by little by little because it's taken us a whole century to try and figure out things with the gifts of the Spirit taken us a whole generation to figure trying to figure things out trying to go with Israel and the church it's coming step by step because of the mercy of God and it's getting faster it's going to be intense the New Testament norm what does it say?

Ephesians 5 Colossians 3 speaking to yourselves with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs singing and making melody in your hearts that's just normal wow I remember the church in which I got saved my pastor really was a man of prayer and really full of joy maybe there's certain things in retrospect I see that could have been a little different help the flock a little bit more but there's certain things that were right on and I remember one night we had now here he was in his 40s to me as a teenager I look really old you know there's an old church people in their 40s 50s some in their 60s yet still breathing I mean that's how a teenager looked at it and we had a visit that was real heavy this couple that had to take care of their grandchildren and their children because the daughter had gone

crazy and it was a very hard difficult visit just painful to hear their pain and their situation and we finished and he prayed with them and he just brought me on visitation with him to get used to things a little bit and as we walked out I stood there amazed as I watched him skip to his car whistling in front of my eyes guy's in his 40s skip to his car whistling how many of you men have skipped lately? if we see people skipping all over the sanctuary then I'll have to explain it to Steve and the pastor the reason they're skipping is because of the expression of joy think back to the days when you wished all your friends knew the joy you had you tell me something you tell me I was impressed in prayer with this on my knees today so it's a fresh thought on my mind you tell me where it is

written that ministry is supposed to drain you dry you tell me where is it written that that is supposed to be the norm you think Paul writes rejoice in the Lord rejoice in the Lord I'm here dying in this prison man because ministry is hard but you you slobs you rejoice in the Lord you have it easy out there I'm in some rotten prison cell he says I continue to rejoice joy joy you read Philippians it's the most joy filled book in the New Testament joy joy joy I wrote a chapter in high voltage Christianity or Holy Fire I wrote that chapter about joy unspeakable man I got so full of joy writing it just looking I wrote it after the chapter on conviction so the conviction leads to the joy then you have lasting joy but looking what the word said about joy wow how can it be that our Savior is

risen from the dead that God reigns on the throne that He's with us and for us and lives in us that we have eternal life our sins forgiven and an opportunity to change the world and we're not joyful you say but I'm going to get myself really worked up and get joyful no have a fresh encounter with God repent of the sin and the junk that's led to the joylessness and rejoice in God one pastor friend that was here said something to me very telling last night he said you know in the group where I was sitting he said as the people responded we had that explosion at the beginning of the service that intense warfare victory shout and Dick Rubin blew the show for me and that went through me that was an intense moment I mean something was happening I'm not one to just say something oh a lot

happened in the spirit that's our standard charismatic cop out for nothing happened oh a lot happened in the realm of the spirit ooh but something I tell you something happened last night God was moving that led to the fruit at the end of the night through the service I'm sure but my section where there are ministers all around me he said they didn't respond and when the people were shouting and singing they were the quiet ones some of you I understand certain health problems you might not be able to fully express what's in your heart a few people here have some physical restrictions but some of you know what you need to do you need to just cut loose you need to just cut loose quit being so stiff see if you can read between the lines and figure out what I really mean you know I don't like

being direct you need to start to worship listen you keep your eyes on Jesus everything is going to be alright even if everything around you collapses you keep your eyes on Jesus everything is going to be alright we have reason to rejoice it's the most odd thing but in the midst of tragedy and calamity and a dying world all around us there's a time to weep but there's a time to dance and the joy of the Lord is our strength there was an outpouring that shook me and changed me in 1982 and I've been changed ever since I was on fire as a new believer I got cold after 7, 8, 9 years still active in ministry working for the Lord etc but got colder had a backsliding excuse me in my own life and then the fire fell in me and on me I was in the center of this outpouring that hit a church in 1982 and

I've been changed ever since I mean the fire has never gone out that revival fire that ignited the beginning that vision that passion it's never gone out since then but I was talking to some close friends I said you

know what's happened to me the last few months since I've been down in the meetings and look I've rejoiced in the Lord for years in meetings and worshipped God on my face shaking at home as I'm praying meeting with God experiencing Him etc my family will tell you that I don't have I'm not a down person you won't find an ounce of pessimism or fear of the future in me or anything like that but I said there's only one way I can describe it I told my wife we didn't have a stereo system in our house that was working for like years and my wife just went out one day and replaced it

and now we just got this music blaring through the house again and I said you know what just hit me I said you know what's happened to me these last few months I said God put the song back in my heart God put the song back in my heart that's what He wants to do for a lot of you here you have heavy responsibilities so do I we could compare notes and you could say man we got people in our church brother you don't understand the crisis heavy stuff we got a leadership split that's man it's right there it could destroy the church big things we got someone dying of cancer we don't want to lose that lady she's got four little kids a precious husband heavy duty stuff I could list all the pressures and things it's heavy it's heavy I believe God's saying just trust me just rejoice in me just begin

to worship me just give the weights over to me cast it on God the psalmist said cast your burdens on the Lord and He will sustain you you'll never suffer the righteous to be moved verse Peter 5-7 it's in the context of leadership struggles in the young submitting to the older and humble yourselves and so on it's in that context He says casting all your anxiety on the Lord for He cares for you one friend pointed out years ago it doesn't say He cares for the work it says He cares for you you're not just laborers and servants you're His kids I just did not because of writing deadlines and travel schedule and other things I looked at stuff and I said if I'm going to squeeze all these visits down to Pensacola in between everything as I'm pruning back from other commitments it's going to be

real heavy I'm just going to resign myself to not getting certain things done and it ain't my problem it's going to do what God says and I'm just not going to feel any stress and pressure about it one time I was telling my wife we've got to get the mailing out we mail to our monthly supporters and send out a tape every month but then to our general mailing list every second or third month we send out a printed message like that rhyme of the modern parishioner we sent out one time I said we've got to get the thing out she said why do you need me to look at this quick I said because we've got to get it out and she said well why I said because it's going to be late she said do you think the people are thinking I haven't gotten the mailing it's three days late Mike's mailing she said do you

think anybody is even thinking in other words get the pressure off yourself that's what God sent us worship me enjoy me you're here for another day enjoy you're here for a week go back home just enjoy the Lord well I've got to watch over this in the service let God watch over this in the service there's a problem you'll see it that demon possessed person runs for the pulp and starts preaching I think you'll be alert enough to notice ministry should be a source of life you tell me I mean you look at folks that have been in the thick of this here Steve Hill or John Kilpatrick or Lendl or some of the other people you look at some of the ushers here that worked one of the brothers you see on the platform all the time running back getting water helping out getting Steve's things like that he

gets home maybe has a chance to get a meal changes showers and gets here he's full of joy the ones in the thick of ministry should be the fullest shouldn't we? we should be the example well number 6 and then we're going to close this down no love man the early days people wronged you you blessed them people hurt you you were concerned about them you didn't know what it meant to be bitter you didn't know what it

meant to walk in unforgiveness now man you got a list people you won't trust I've been stabbed in the back numerous times one of my closest friends some years ago a fellow I led to the Lord actually a fellow leader I've been betrayed stabbed in the back and I'll tell you if I get stabbed it's going to be in the back because I'm not going to live my whole life defensive with all

these walls up hopefully with some wisdom and hopefully if there's something in me that's at fault that God can show me in these areas man I'm not going to have this whole thing now right the ministry now you got to just be a swift politician man cunning crafty God forbid wise as serpents harmless as doves is a far cry from that some of you folks here battle the greatest sin you battle with is hostility towards the flock that God has called you to shepherd how do you think God feels about that sin some of you are out of control I mean BOOM temper flare BANG angry words where's the love that's patient not rude when you read first Corinthians 13 and say where's that in me what happened when I was first saved I got really hungry for the word I had an easy high school schedule so I spent a

lot of time reading the word praying memorizing scripture hours every day I got to the point I used to memorize 20 verses a day my mind was a mess because of drugs and God just restored it I remember one time I was really mad at my friends we all got saved together in high school I was you could feel it you ever see when the rain falls on something hot like maybe on a car that's just been driven and the steam starts to come up I mean I felt that steam just I could cut people up with my tongue before I was saved I was vicious I would hurt people wound people cruel as they come never fought with my fists I was kind of a coward like that even though I was big but man I'd rip people up with my tongue and I was mad I remember that steam if it was coming out of my ears that's how I felt and as

I got on the bus to go home from school I just meditated by memory on first Corinthians 13 and just went through all the verses and just grace and you look around and you love everybody one of the great signs of what God is doing and people being refreshed and renewed and revived is he just loved people when I go to Shoney's and I just tell the waitress you're doing such a good job thank you you know the toll man when I get into the airport here you know what what a nice guy just thanking him God bless you sir you know just you love everybody one of the great testimonies I heard down here was someone said that the people are still doing the same things they've always done but now I just love them now they haven't changed I changed where are you at today I mean what's what's God dealing

with you about friends has sin enslaved you worldliness is the burden gone the power gone the joy gone the love gone what you do is real simple you recognize this as sin and you make no excuse it's nobody's fault it's not the flock's fault it's not your spouse's fault it's not the other leader's fault they may have all been contributing factors it's my fault guilty as charged recognize the root that's led to these things maybe God will take you through that over the months to come and bring a real overhaul in your life repent and do the first works get back to the simple things get back to spending all that time alone with God clear out a day a day a month if you have to just get alone with God from the beginning of the day to the end of the day spend the night somewhere just seeking the

face of God get to some place that's got a room and a bed and a light and that's it and just stay there I've stayed in rooms like that up to five days just alone and remember that God gives grace to the humble what you need is grace what you need is God reaching down and helping you grace is not just God saying I forgive it's a divine empowering where God lifts you up He lifts you up and He says now come on I'm with you I'm helping you the reason that sin is not our master we're not under the law we're under grace doesn't mean that we can do whatever we want because we're under grace it means that grace gives us the

power to do what the law tells us to do gives us the power to be holy and set apart to God do something radical don't become unaccountable please the common denominator and

most that fall seriously is unaccountability don't just go back and announce to all your other leadership I'm doing this, this, this and you're all out of here do something radical in your personal life there may be big problems in leadership that the Lord has to sort out do something radical and put first things first I encourage pastors on another level in this hot environment that we're beginning to enter into now spiritually speaking add one night a week just to pray for revival call the church to do it take the next step maximize the moment if you've got leadership team you gather once a week or you know daily whatever set aside time just to pray for revival call people to fast a day a week for revival go to the next step but in your personal life I'm talking about right now

determined to go back to the basics to go back to the basics and God will meet you there no secret formulas no new programs no new prayer manuals no special subliminal Bible tape to put on the background yes, those even sell in America have a vicious fight with your wife but grow in the spirit at the same time if you keep that subliminal Bible tape playing even the goldfish in your home will become spirit filled because it's all subliminal get real friends but do the radical thing you need to do God's saying to so many here come away come away with me you know probably Keith Green's most penetrating song is sleep in the light what made it to me when I heard it so prophetic I said man, that's the heart of God because after that ripping, challenging call you hear the heart of God saying

come away come away with me my love that's what God's saying some days some months I've just gone away to get alone with God just to shut myself in with Him for a period of time man, I've gotten there and it's like honeymoon time man, I just shut the door and begin to dance just me and Jesus oh, sometimes it gets a little boring in the midst of it you know, when you're battling through in prayer and you go through a valley before you get to the top of the mountain God's saying come away come away with me I want you to stand to your feet and if this is for you if the Lord's speaking to you and some of you may need to leave or go out of here because of other commitments some of you may determine you want to get online you can let God deal with you there that's fine but if the Lord is

dealing with you this is not a time for someone to pray for you if God's dealing with you if there's sin if He's convicted you clearly in certain areas in all areas that you're backsliding or that backsliding has set in in different parts of your life then we're going to invite you to come up in a minute and to pray and to seek the face of God and whatever it is that He's got to deal with you now make sure it's dealt with write it down friends your spouse talk honestly other leaders talk honestly don't let the thing escape there's grace here there's a spirit of repentance that's going to be poured out I tell you I began to feel impressed last night as God showed me to speak on these themes that this is the hour that so many have been waiting for for years things have happened that you

never dreamed would happen now God's saying it's time for the real dreams to come true pray with me Father in Jesus name restore restore the backsliders Father you said in your word God you said in your word repent turn back from your back turnings and I will heal your backsliders God grant true repentance that there would be restoration and radical change that these servants of yours would be leaders O God men and women of God that would impact countless thousands of lives that would impact the nations in this nation that their prayers would count that their worship would count that their witness would count that their preaching would count that their labors would count God do a radical work start it right here and now in Jesus name if you need to come up just come on right now

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/14/SID14232.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/michael-l-brown/are-you-backsliding-part-2/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net