

REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Church Members

Virginia Alexander: Meniere's Disease
Rhyan Beverly: chronic health problems
Julie Blades: cancer
Kerry Burton: cancer
Joanne Crawford: Wellington PARC
Glenn Doss: chronic health problems
William Drake: BHM - rm. #429
Bill Eaton: BHM - rm. #422
Mike Griffith: heart problems
Kevin Kline: LHON
Janice Lee: recovering from surgery
Charlotte McElvain: RTNH - rm. #612
Joyce Potts: Meniere's Disease
Scott Settle: heart problems
Louise Smith: chronic health problems
Terry Starks: recovering from surgery
Gail Turner: recovering from surgery
Kim Wiles: heart & kidney problems

Family & Friends

Cancer: Debbie Baker, Billy Banks, Lisa Brewer, Jim Combs, Danny Edmonds, April Ehrlich, Christine Estrada, Brandon Hall, Dave Hammer, Steve Higginbotham, Jady Hill, Missy Jones, Geoffrey Kline, June Morris, Shelly Patterson, Dean Stokes, Sandy Treadway, Lois VanWinkle, Dan Winkler
Heart Disease: Kay Clark, Regina Davis, Bruce Gower, Annette Miller, Archie Morris, Susan Scott, Rosemary Starks
Nursing Care: Rita Chappell, Patsy Davis, Anna Lee Hampton, Emerson & Mary Frances Hartford, Bonnie Wiles
Other Health Problems: Dennis Aubrey, Don Blackwell, Adam Boldon, Samuel Cox, Keith Elkins, Daniel Groves, Britney Harrison, Maria Johnson, Crystal Jones, Debra Key, Inez Loyola, Richard Metcalfe, Natasha Moore, Justin Nesselroad, Ray Nix, Kelly Oldham, Presley Pearce, Renee Perry, Brittney Payton, Sherry Phillips,

ATTENDANCE & CONTRIBUTION

For the week of January 31, 2021

Bible Study	N/A
Morning Worship	60
Evening Worship	N/A
Contribution	\$3468.00
Budget	\$3025.00
Wednesday Bible Study	N/S

TODAY'S SERMONS

AM: The Moral High Ground

Matthew 5:13-16

PM: Virtual Bible Study

Psalm 20

OUR ELDERS:

- **Dennis Brasher** (270) 825-1661 or (270) 871-2170
- **Terry Moore** (270) 871-7111

OUR DEACONS:

- **Steve Curtis** - *Visitation*
- **Mike Griffith** - *Benevolence*
- **Deyone Miller** - *Worship*
- **Dave Sprague** - *Building & Grounds*
- **Byron VanWinkle** - *Technology*

Madisonville Church of Christ

1035 North Main Street / Madisonville, Kentucky / 42431 / (270) 821-3544

www.madisonvillechurchofchrist.org

Russell M. Kline, preacher / (270) 836-2301 / msop1989@yahoo.com

Volume 86—Number 3

February 7, 2021

BACKSLIDING (A.K.A. FALLING AWAY)

By Russell M. Kline

Is it possible for a soul to tap into the grace of God, gain salvation from sin, and then fall away from the grace of God and lose his salvation? Many would answer this question with a resounding “NO!” arguing that once a soul is in God's grace, he will always be in God's grace, no matter what else he may choose to do. But, what does the Bible say about his issue? There is an answer in the Scriptures to this controversial question, and it may come as a surprise to you!

Can a soul fall from God's grace? According to Second Timothy 4:10, *Demas* forsook Paul, and fled to Thessalonica, because of his love for this present world. According to First Timothy 1:18 through 20, *Hymenaeus* and *Alexander* were “*delivered to Satan*,” to teach them not to blaspheme. According to Galatians 5:4 through 7, certain members of the churches of Galatia fell from grace, because they sought salvation through keeping the Law of Moses. Second Peter 2:4 and Jude 6 tell us about *angels* who fell from the grace of God. More examples could be cited, but if it was possible for these folks to fall from the grace of God, then it is certainly possible for us to do the same.

There are warnings against falling away. In First Corinthians 10:12, Christians are warned to “*take heed*,” lest any fall from God's grace. In First Timothy 4:1 through 3, we are warned that others have fallen, and so may we. In Matthew 13:41, Jesus warned that disobedient souls shall be gathered out of the kingdom of God. Second Peter 2:20 through 22 offers us a warning that all who fall away may expect to suffer even more than those who never were faithful in the first place. Hebrews 3:13 warns us not to be fooled by the deceitfulness of sin. Once again, more examples could be cited, but these warnings ought to be enough to prove the point.

Opportunities to Study and Worship:

Sunday Bible Study: 9:30 a.m. / **Sunday** Morning Worship: 10:30 a.m.

Sunday Evening Worship: 6:00 p.m. / **Wednesday** Bible Study: 7:00 p.m.

Listen to “What Does the Bible Say?” Sundays @ 8:30 a.m. on WFMW (AM 730)

Why do some Christians fall away?

Some love the world so much that they lose sight of the promise of eternal life (1 John 2:15-17). Some love only to fulfill the lusts of their flesh—ignoring the needs of their souls (Rom. 8:13). Some insist on doing things in their own way, and they will not allow even God to tell them how to live their lives (Heb. 3:18,19). Some become discouraged by the trials and tribulations they face (Mat. 13:21). Some are influenced by false teachers, who pervert the message of God's Word (Acts 20:29,30; 2 Tim. 4:3, 4). In the final analysis, it is the devil who is responsible for every Christian who is drawn back into a life of sin (Luke 22:31).

How can Christians keep from falling away? We must be steadfast in our resolution to abide in Christ; no matter what may happen to us (John 15:6). We must work diligently to secure our "calling" and "election" (2 Pet. 1:10). We must keep our bodies in subjection, lest we become lost through the lust of our flesh (1 Cor. 9:27). We must remain zealous of doing good works on our Master's behalf (Rev. 2:5,16,21). The Word of God supplies us with all that we need to make our salvation secure and to keep us from falling away from God's grace (Jude 24).

What protections has God given us to guard our souls? The Lord, Himself is our Protector (Psa. 121:1-4). The Word of God has the power to fortify us against temptation (Acts 20:32). God has supplied us with spiritual armor, which we must wear at all times (Eph. 6:10-18). The Christian graces keep us in fellowship with God (2 Pet. 1:5-10). Our fellowship with one another keeps us accountable to each other (Heb. 10:25). Weekly observance of the Lord's supper keeps us in touch with our Father (1 Cor. 10:16). These and other protections supply us with exactly what we all need to fight the good fight of faith, and win through to absolute victory (1 Tim. 6:12)!

What are the results of falling away from the grace of God? We become departed from our first love (Rev. 2:4). We lose out on the joy of serving God (2 Tim. 4:10). God loses a valuable worker in His church (Eph. 2:10). We lose a beloved brother or sister (Heb. 13:1). The world loses a guiding light (Mat. 5:16). We lose that which is most valuable to us (Mat. 16:26). As we have already noted earlier, the latter end is worse for backsliders than the beginning (2 Pet. 2:20-22). No Christian can afford to neglect his salvation and fall away from the grace of God!

What should a backslider do about his condition? He must come to terms with the fact that he has no other choice, but to change his own ways (Acts 17:30). He must repent of his sins and pray to God for the forgiveness of his sins (Acts 8:22). He must confess his sins, and accept personal responsibility for his sins (1 John 1:9). He must stand fast in the faith and strengthen his spirit (1 Cor. 16:13). One thing is certain: you cannot continue to do the same things again and again, and expect the outcome to be different. Your life will change when YOU take the necessary steps to change it!

Have you struggled with backsliding, in your own spiritual life? Are you afraid that you have fallen away from the grace of God? Backsliding is a real possibility for every Christian and it is a threat to our eternal salvation. It may be comforting to think that, once we are saved, nothing we do could ever remove us from the grace of God, but it is just not Scripturally realistic. Christians do not have the luxury of resting from the work of salvation, until our time on Earth is over (Rev. 14:13). While we yet live, we all must work hard at being faithful to God (Phil. 2:12). Christians cannot afford to falter in faithfulness. We must continually press toward the ultimate goal of faith, with all patience and perseverance!

YOUTH NEWS

- *BibleQuest 2021* is scheduled for Saturday, July 31. Questions will come from the New King James Version of Psalms 1 - 50. **Russell Kline** is going to begin a Youtube channel for BibleQuest, where he will post videos, which will also be available on the BibleQuest Facebook page later this month. Be on the lookout for more announcements.



GOOD WORKS IN PROGRESS

- ◆ The elders are asking everyone who attends worship services and Bible studies at the church building to wear a facemask and to observe social distancing protocols. Please do not come to church, if you have a fever, or are experiencing any other symptoms of illness. If we all will observe these simple rules, we can help to keep each other safe during this perilous time of pandemic.
- ◆ In a recent meeting, the elders decided that the 2021 edition of the *Madisonville Church of Christ Bible Lectureship* should be postponed until a later date. It is hoped that in the second half of the year, the severity of the pandemic will be lessened and we will be better able to host the event. Please pray for this and other efforts that we are planning in 2021.

FAMILY NEWS

- ◇ **William Drake** remains in room #429 at Baptist Health Madisonville, where he is being treated for pneumonia. Please remember him in your prayers.
- ◇ **Bill Eaton** is in room #422 at Baptist Health Madisonville, where he is being treated for COVID-19. Please remember him in your prayers.

NEWS OF THE BROTHERHOOD

- * The 54th Annual *Memphis School of Preaching Lectureship* has been rescheduled for May 23-27. The theme is "Magnify His Name." be sure to visit their website www.msop.org for more information.
- * Watch the *Gospel Broadcasting Network* 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, at their web site: www.gbntv.org.
- * Listen to Biblical podcasts on *The Light Network* 24 hours per day, 7 days per week at their web site: www.thelightnetwork.tv.
- * Try www.truth.fm for more Christian radio programming.



Visit 365.polishingthepulpit.com and click on "Sign Up." Then, choose the option that says "I am a member of a subscribing congregation" and enter the required information. When you are approved, you will receive an email with further instructions. Contact Russell Kline, if you have any questions about this service.