

Making sense of Hebrews 6 and 10 (part four of a five part series)

So perhaps you're ready to be that better brother, or sister. Yet you have no idea how to help a backsliding Christian. Of course you do! How many sins does it take to embark on a path of spiritual regression? Just one. If you have been successful in curtailing your own regressions so as to avoid **the backsliding danger zone** (Jeremiah 7:23-24); then you are eminently qualified to help someone who has been living in that realm, as described for us in Hebrews 10:26-27 –

“For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES.”

There are three stages involved in spiritual regression:

>> Stage One: Conviction of Sin – Ephesians 4:30; 2 Corinthians 7:8-9

>> Stage Two: Chastening for Sin – Hebrews 12:4-11; 1 Corinthians 11:27-32

>> Stage Three: Wilderness Wandering in Sin – Hebrews 3:7-19

These struggling Hebrew Christians appear to be in stage two. The desire of the author, in this epistle, is geared toward preventing them from entering stage three. Upon completing his apologetic for the disciplinary hand of God, he makes it clear to them how close they are to stage three, in Hebrews 12:12-13 –

“Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed.”

The “lame limb” caused by God’s chastening could be healed or put permanently out of joint. The choice was theirs. They could choose healing by making a straight path for their feet; a beautiful way of describing repentance (Matthew 3:2-3; Luke 1:17). This choice would end the regression and begin the restoration. Or they could continue in a hard hearted refusal to repent and have their lame limb put permanently out of joint; a rather ominous warning of being unalterably relegated to a life of wilderness wandering (Numbers 14:20-30).

Any Christian facing such a choice, must decide right now which it will be – a useful or worthless Christian life. One will be rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ, the other will not (1 Corinthians 3:10-15). The author of Hebrews earnestly pleads for it to be the former, by issuing this admonishment in Hebrew 10:35 –

“Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.”