**A BACKSLIDING HEIFER**

**Hosea 4:16**

**For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer: now the Lord will feed them as a lamb in a large place.**

**INTRO:**

**Illustration: A little boy asked his dad one day, "Dad, what’s a backslider?" "Well, Son, that’s a person who leaves our church and goes and joins another church."
The boy looked confused and then said, "Then what do you call a person who leaves his church and joins our church?"
The dad quickly replied, "He’s a convert, Son. He’s a convert!"**

**Explanation of the Text – First Half:**

**Hosea 4:16a For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer:**

**1. A heifer is a young female cow or calf that has not ever had a calf, and the Lord said that Israel was just like a backsliding heifer, or a backsliding young female cow.**

**2. The idea of backsliding is mentioned quite a few times throughout the Bible. Sometimes it is called turning aside, turning back, and even falling.**

**3. The backslider is like a young immature female cow that is in a double yoke. Both of the oxen are supposed to pull together to drag the cart or the plow by going forward.**

**4. Instead, the backsliding heifer decides to turn to the side or to stop in its tracks or even to go backward! Some heifers will even wiggle their way out of the yoke because they are small enough to do so and see more interesting pastures and paths around them.**

 **5. When a backsliding heifer does this, it hinders the work of the cart or of the plow!**

**Spiritual Application – First Half:**

**1. Notice it is the young immature heifer that is doing the backsliding! It is not those faithful oxen that put on the yoke everyday that try to wiggle out or backslide!**

**\*\*It’s good to get grounded in your spot and in your work for the Lord!**

**2. Jesus said for us to take His yoke upon us and learn of Him. We are supposed to be laboring together for the cause of Christ while getting to know Him more! When one of us backslides—stops doing our part in praying, devotions, giving, witnessing—the church suffers and ultimately the cause of Christ suffers!**

**3. Don’t set back in your seat and think the message is not for you today! We have all gone astray and wiggled, turned aside, backed up, and got out of the yoke at some point! We have not always prayed like we should have or gave, or witnessed like we should have. We have all backslidden!**

**4. In other words, the word *backslide* actually means exactly what it sounds like it means. To backslide is to go backwards in your spiritual life!**

**Explanation of the Text – Second Half**

**Hosea 4:16b now the Lord will feed them as a lamb in a large place.**

**1. The Lord allows those backsliding heifers to roam in a large place – a large place to roam wild.**

**2. Yet, He still sets out the feed for them hoping to tame them as Lambs.**

**Spiritual Application – Second Half**

**1. God will allow you to roam wild in large unsafe places!**

**2. God will still keep trying to feed you and tame you!**

**\*\*Today, here is the food for the backsliding heifer!**

**I. SEE THE CAUSE FOR BACKSLIDING**

**\*\*A heifer will backslide when it . . .**

 **A. Listens to the Wrong People**

**\*\*The only person a heifer should listen to is its owner!**

**I Kings 11:4 For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, *that* his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as *was* the heart of David his father.**

**\*\*If you stop listening to the Lord and start listening to Lucifer and his Lunatics, they will lead you down a road of Deception, Destruction, Departure, and Dishonor!**

 **B. Loafers to the Wrong Places**

 **1. Places that Influence you through your Eyes**

**Lamentations 3:51 Mine eye affecteth mine heart because of all the daughters of my city.**

**Psalms 101:3a I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes**

 **2. Places that Influence you through your Ears**

**Romans 10:17 So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**

**\*\*If hearing the word of God causes your faith to come, then hearing those wicked and corrupt things will cause your fall to come!**

 **3. Places that Influence you through your Emotions**

**\*\*The devil will use Music, Movies, and Movements to get you emotionally involved and to cause you to become a backsliding heifer!**

 **C. Leans toward the Wrong Passions**

**\*\*Backsliders start by having more passion for . . .**

 **1. The Social Scenes instead of the Scripture!**

 **2. The Sports Stadiums instead of the Spirit!**

 **3. The Sinful Schemes instead of the Savior!**

**II. SEE THE COURSE FOR BACKSLIDING**

**Proverbs 14:14a The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways:**

 **A. Backslider Heifers Show Indifference**

 **1. When it comes to Church, they become Unconcerned!**

 **2. When it comes to Christ, they become Uninterested!**

 **B. Backslider Heifers Show Interest**

 **1. Their Head Begins to Wonder, and soon their Preoccupation is to please the flesh with worldly pleasures!**

 **2. Their Heart Begins to Want, and soon their Pastime is to please the flesh with wicked pleasures!**

**\*\*What are you more interested in these days?**

 **C. Backslider Heifers Start Inviting**

 **1. They Start Inviting a Little of sinful pleasures into their life.**

 **2. They’re Soon Inviting a Lot of Sinful pleasures into their life.**

**\*\*You can send invitations out to whomever or whatever you want, but know that your life will be affected by whatever you invite into your house!**

 **D. Backslider Heifers Start Indulging**

**\*\*When backslider heifers start indulging in sin . . .**

 **1. They open their Hearts up to the Darkness of Sin.**

 **2. They open their Homes up to the Dirt of Sin.**

 **E. Backslider Heifers Shows Insensitivity**

 **1. The Shock of Sin is Gone!**

 **\*\*What they once Condemned they now Condone.**

 **2. The Shame of Sin is Gone!**

**\*\*What they once Covered and Camouflaged, they now Circulate and Communicate!**

**III. SEE THE CONSEQUENCES FOR BACKSLIDING**

**Hebrews 10:26, 28-31 [26](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Hebrews-10-26/%22%20%5Co%20%22View%20more%20info%20for%20Hebrews%2010%3A26) For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,** [**28**](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Hebrews-10-28/)**He that despised Moses' law died without mercy . . .** [**29**](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Hebrews-10-29/)**Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?** [**30**](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Hebrews-10-30/)**For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.** [**31**](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Hebrews-10-31/)***It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**

 **A. The Consequence is Separation**

**\*\*You’ll be in a large place and a large pasture . . .**

 **1. Separated from God**

 **2. Separated from Grace**

 **3. Separated from Glory**

**\*\*Luke 9:62 – Those who look back are unfit for heaven!**

 **B. The Consequence is Slavery**

**\*\*You will be in a large place and free to roam, but roaming around in sin is not freedom – it’s slavery!**

 **1. You have no Freedom in the Savior**

 **2. You have no Freedom in the Spirit**

 **3. You have no Freedom in the Soul**

 **C. The Consequence is Sorrow**

 **1. The Consequence is Suffering Punishment**

 **2. The Consequence is Spiritual Pain**

 **a. It’s painful to look at the Past**

 **b. It’s painful to look at the Present**

**IV. SEE THE CURE FOR BACKSLIDING**

 **A. Step 1: Recognition**

**Jeremiah 14:7 . . . for our backslidings are many; we have sinned against thee.**

 **1. My Soul is not Right**

 **2. My Spirit is not Right**

**\*\*David asked God to renew the right spirit in him.**

 **B. Step 2: Repent**

[**Revelation 2:5**](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Revelation-2-5/)**a - Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works;**

 **1. Turn Sin Away**

 **2. Turn Self Around**

 **C. Step 3: Return**

[**Hosea 14:1**](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Hosea-14-1/)**- O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.**

 **1. Return to your Father**

 **2. Return to your Faith**

 **D. Step 4: Remove**

**II Corinthians 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you,**

 **1. Remove the Wrong People**

 **2. Remove the Wrong Places**

 **3. Remove the Wrong Passions**

 **E. Step 5: Rededicate**

**Romans 12:1 . . . present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.**

**\*\*Draw near and rededicate yourself to being closer to**

**1. The Savior 2. The Spirit 3. The Scripture**

**4. The Sanctuary 5. The Saints**

**CLOSE**

**1. Are you the backsliding heifer?**

**2. Have you wiggled out of the yoke the Lord wanted you in?**

**3. Have you stopped in your tracks where the Lord is trying to guide you? Have you started backing up on the Lord?**

**4. Have you wiggled out of Sunday School? Have you wiggled out of Sunday Night services? Have you wiggled out of tithing as you should?**

**5. Have you been roaming and exploring greener pastures that you know are the places you should not be?**

**6. Have you been listening to the wrong people who are luring you away? Have you been leaning toward the wrong passions? Is your eyes and ears looking and listening to the ungodly things? Are your emotions being pulled toward the sinful things?**

**7. The Lord has set out some feed for you today. He is waiting patiently for you to come back home so you will eat the sweet feed that He has for you. He is making that call today. You can hear it, and he wants to feed you and pet you like a Lamb. Come back to your owner and submit to Him and His yoke.**