

Stop It!

Hebrews 2:1-4 - Warning to Pay Attention

2 We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. ² For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, ³ how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. ⁴ God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS - Most people tend to scoff at New Year's resolutions.

- Primarily because we find that *we have been in that condition* before.
- You know about the condition, the one that says, ***"I am going to change!"***
- ***By willpower*** and ***by modifying my behavior.***

On December 21, 2008, the New York Times had an article about our inability to keep New Year's resolutions.

Alan Deutschman who wrote the book, ***Change or Die***, discovered that even though *most people have the ability to change*, **most never do.**

He said, ***"It's exceptionally hard to make life changes and our efforts are usually doomed to failure when we try to do it on our own."***

- **Research shows** that most people who make New Year's resolutions on January 1 **have fallen off** the proverbial wagon *by February 14.*
- **That isn't very encouraging** for any of us to be hearing on this first day in January, this first Sunday in January.

The New York Times article went on to say *concerning health issues some disturbing facts:*

Dr. Edward D. Miller, *the dean of the medical faculty at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine*, ***said more than 70 percent of coronary artery bypass patients revert to unhealthy habits within two years of their operation.***

Dr. Dean Ornish, the cardiologist and diet author, frequently cites a conclusion by a panel of nutritional experts convened in 1992 by **the National Institutes of Health** that two-thirds of dieters gain back any lost weight within a year.

- All of this is pretty discouraging to most of us.....
- However, **there is an upside to all of this information.**

Psychologists and psychoanalysts discovered that there were people who did change but they were in a very small minority.

- But there were some ways that brought lasting change to their lives.
- **Dr. Deutschman gave some tips to changing.**

It fell primarily in four little steps that they gave themselves to:

First, start with big changes, not small ones. This strategy was likely to yield immediate and noticeable benefits that would inspire you to change.

Second, act like the kind of person you are trying to become. He said even if you hit the jogging trail with 30 pounds of flab, think of yourself as a runner that you want to be.

Third, instead of seeing the failure of the past, go to the point before that failure. Whatever it may be and look at the success of that former place in your life.

Fourth, with this being the most crucial, he said you can never do it alone. You must find someone who is a partner that will help you to accomplish the change.

There was one more piece of advice given by one of the doctors,

“Don’t believe your feelings! Feelings will lie to you every time!”

HEBREWS, AND BACKSLIDINGS - The sooner that you realize that your soul does not really have a neutral the better of you will be.

- You are either moving forward or you are moving backwards.
- We all are inclined to backsliding and when someone may suggest this to us; we get defensive and start making all sorts of excuses.

A. Quotes on Backsliding

Vance Havner—Most church members live so far below the standard; you would have to backslide to be in fellowship with them.

Woodrow Kroll—The best way to avoid going downhill is to stay off the slope.

Charles Spurgeon—The Christian life is very much like climbing a hill of ice. You cannot slide up. You must cut every step with an ice axe. Only with incessant labor in cutting and chipping can you make any progress. If you want to know how to backslide, leave off going forward. Cease going upward and you will go downward of necessity. You can never stand still.

B. Biblical Passages on Backsliding

Galatians 3:1-3 - Faith or Works of the Law - 3 You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. ² I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? ³ Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh?

1 Corinthians 10:12 - ¹² So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!

1 Peter 5:8-9 - ⁸ Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

1 Thessalonians 5:6-8 - ⁶ So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. ⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.

There are a host of others that we could also line up with these passages.

Our hearts are idol factories that we must vigilantly move forward to the eternal reward that awaits those who presses on.

C. The Hebrews Passage, A Manual on Backsliding - Hebrews 2:1-4 - Warning to Pay Attention - 2 We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift **(Slip)** away. ² For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, ³ how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. ⁴ God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

We have read a text that comes as a strong warning to all of us.

Whether you are willing to admit it or not, even if you have received the Holy Spirit, there will come a time in your life that you will tend to **put your soul in neutral**.

Yet all through the Scripture there are constant warnings to us **about this kind of action** that causes us **to list carelessly with the drift of the flesh**. (Slip)

Warning passages are prominent throughout **the book of Hebrews**.

- **Hebrews 2:1-4**—We are warned not to drift.
- **Hebrews 3:7-4:13**—We are told not to disbelieve.
- **Hebrews 5:11-6:20**—We are exhorted not to degenerate.
- **Hebrews 10:26-39**—We are urged not to despise.
- **Hebrews 12:15-29**—We are commanded not to depart.

The writer is keyed into telling us some things about being careful unless we let things slip from us.

He uses an incredible word by using the word, “**slip.**” In fact, there probably *isn't a better word* for meaning **something getting away**.

- He gave the law enforcement the slip.
- His foot slipped and he sustained a fatal fall.
- The hour slipped away from us.

We are aware of everyday instances where this sort of thing **can take place** in our lives, **this slipping away**.

Life around us is **full of examples** where men desperately guard things so that they will not “slip” away.

- The Wells Fargo and Loomis armored cars that carry money.
- The quality assurance inspector who carefully analyzes the drugs that are created by pharmaceutical companies.
- The vigilant law enforcement agencies.
- The heightened security devices that monitor our world for terrorist attacks.

Life steadily pours through the hourglass we have allotted to us.

We must stop the drifting! We may have drifted from the Lord in 2022 but this is a new day, a new opportunity to say, ***“I have had enough to drifting!”***

We can drift from the Lord from storms that break out in our lives:

- Storms of doubt.
- Storms of half-truths.
- Storms of worry and anxiety.
- Storms of trouble.
- Storms of failure.
- Storms of temptation.

This is what the writer is really working at when he is writing this. **He is saying,**

- **“Don’t dare give yourself the potential to drift!”**
- ***To drift from the Lord is the path to ruin.***

STOP IT!!! STOP DRIFTING!!!

Stop It! Quit drifting with your life! God has a far greater purpose for you than what you may have experienced in 2022. But on this day, put it behind you!

We are made up of impulses, desires, and dreams but over time *there is something in us* that tends to **just start drifting with life.**

To just go along to get along.

What do you need to stop in 2023?

- Some mental habit that is crippling you.
- A nagging sense of self-pity?
- The downward drift of impure thoughts?
- A conflicting sense of jealousy?
- A numbing sense of worry?
- The creeping paralysis of a fear of failure?

You can stop it! There are some things you can do to make sure you don't fall into the drift.

A. Decide What to Stop - *You need to decide to stop. That decision is entirely up to you.*

Decide to stop being critical. - We can get critical because we are jealous of someone else and what they have or what they do.

- That **jealousy** soon leads us to a sense of inferiority.
- As the inferiority grows, it creates laziness about all of life.

Fix the jealousy and you take care of the critical spirit.

- But **you must decide what to stop**.
- **No one else** will be able to do it for you!

B. Decide If You Want to Stop It

People can sometimes fall into the Linus Trap. That is the one that Charles Schultz put in his Charlie Brown cartoon about Linus wanting to give up his security blanket. **The only way that Linus is going to get rid of the blanket is if he wants to.**

Whatever you want to do, you probably can do it.

One of the reasons that people have difficulty stopping things that hurt them is because of a **divided mind. James was right when he said that **a double-minded man is unstable in all of his ways**.**

Mental division squanders the power of the mind.

To drift is to drift with the devil. Consider the great things you could do with your life if you would decide to stop drifting.

Marriage—We drift when we bicker and nag and fight about money, jobs, and kids. The devil can keep you so busy finding fault with your mate that over the course of time your marriage is something that is just drifting along. **Stop It!!!**

Job—We drift when we are doing nothing more than just making a living. As one man said it one time, “Just trying to make ends meet!” You can advance, you can be promoted, you can go to college. **Stop It!!!**

Money—Most people just drift when it comes to their personal finances. You can drift with the devil and never save and constantly live in fear of poverty. But one day, you will wake up and old man or old woman and discover that it could have been so different if you would have gotten free with a budget. **Stop It!!!**

Thoughts—We drift far too often in the arena of negative thoughts. Negative thoughts will lead to negative acts. Negatives acts will lead you into a terrible condition of the mind and soul. **Stop It!!!**

What does a drifter look like?

- They **never accomplish anything** requiring thought or effort.
- They **spend all they earn** and more too if they can get credit.
- They will be **sick and ailing** from some real or imaginary cause and complaining to the high heavens if they experience any kind of pain.
- They will have **little or no imagination**.
- They have **no enthusiasm and initiative** to begin anything they are not forced to undertake.
- They will always take **the path of least resistance**.
- They will be **ill-tempered and lacking in control** of their emotions.
- They will **shy away from people who have accomplished things**.
- They will have **opinions on everything**, have no accurate knowledge of anything.
- **Jack of all trades** and master of none.

- ***They won't cooperate with those around them*** even on those who depend on them for food and shelter.
 - They will be ***narrow-minded and intolerant on all subjects*** and is *never open to instruction* that might help them.
 - They will ***expect everything of others*** but be willing to *give little or nothing in return.*
 - They may ***begin many things*** but *never complete* anything.
 - They will be loud in his condemnation of those who do accomplish things.
 - They will ***take alot of things from life***, long as they *don't have to pay for it.*
 - They will ***criticize others*** who are succeeding in their chosen calling.
 - They will ***tell a lie rather than admit*** they might be wrong.
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CLOSE:

But you must decide if you want to stop it.

Make Up Your Mind to Stop It – *If you will quit drifting and stop it, it will be because you make up your mind to stop it!*

Quit whining and complaining about all the things going against you and start thinking of some of the things you have going for you!

1 Samuel 4:9 - ⁹ Be strong and conduct yourselves like men, you Philistines, that you do not become servants of the Hebrews, as they have been to you. Conduct yourselves like men, and fight!”

- **Put some faith into it!**
- The Gospel of Jesus Christ **is not** “try harder” but rather **“believe harder!”**
- ***If you are going to stop it - - -***
- **You must believe** that **God is for you** and that **God can help you.**

“It’s exceptionally hard to make life changes and our efforts are usually doomed to failure when we try to do it on our own.”

Encourage your faith by looking at the miracles. . . and in the Name of God. . . Stop It!!!!