How to Backslide in 9 Easy Steps

A few days ago I shared John Bunyan's wisdom on why some who profess faith in Christ eventually backslide. Today I want to follow him a little bit farther. Having covered the *why*, I've now drawn from *Pilgrim's Progress* instruction on the *how*. In each case I've given my short summary followed by Bunyan's own words. Here is how to backslide in nine easy steps:

1. Stop meditating on the gospel. "They draw off their thoughts, all that they may, from the remembrance of God, death, and judgment to come."

2. Neglect your devotions and stop battling sin. "Then they cast off by degrees private duties, as closet prayer, curbing their lusts, watching, sorrow for sin, and the like."

3. Isolate yourself from Christian fellowship. "Then they shun the company of lively and warm Christians."

4. Stop going to church. "After that, they grow cold to public duty, as hearing, reading, godly conference, and the like."

5. Determine that Christians are hypocrites because they continue to sin. "They then begin to pick holes, as we say, in the coats of some of the godly, and that devilishly, that they may have a seeming color to throw religion (for the sake of some infirmities they have espied in them) behind their backs."

6. Trade Christian community for distinctly unChristian company. "Then they begin to adhere to, and associate themselves with, carnal, loose, and wanton men."

7. Pursue rebellious conversation and fellowship. "Then they give way to carnal and wanton discourses in secret; and glad are they if they can see such things in any that are counted honest, that they may the more boldly do it through their example."

8. Allow yourself to enjoy some small, sinful pleasures. "After this they begin to play with little sins openly."

9. Admit what you are and prepare yourself for everlasting torment. "And then, being hardened, they show themselves as they are. Thus, being launched again into the gulf of misery, unless a miracle of grace prevent it, they everlastingly perish in their own deceivings."