



To backslide, you have to first slide forward.

Mark 4:3-6, 16-17

Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. ⁴ And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. ⁵ Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. ⁶ And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away... ¹⁶ And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. ¹⁷ And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away.

The Shallow Heart

- Quick and immediate “growth” – 4:5 *Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil.*
- Quick and immediate withering – 4:6 *And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away.*
 - Rocky, shallow ground.
 - Sun scorched it.
 - It withers away because it has no root.

The Shallow Heart explained

- Immediately respond to the Good News with joy, but without repentance – 4:16 *And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy.*
 - Eternal life! Heaven! Acceptance! Forgiveness! Peace! Purpose! Free childcare! Community! Friends! Great music! Deep thinking (Apologetics)!
- Immediately fall away when following Jesus starts to cost them something – 4:17 *And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away.*
 - Endure for a while: They follow Jesus in good times with clear skies.
 - But when their faith in Christ costs them something, they immediately fall away.
 - Tribulation or persecution: “pressure exerted upon the potential disciple from the social or religious environment.”¹

2 Timothy 4:10a *For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica.*

John 6:60-69 *When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?”⁶¹ But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, “Do you take offense at this?⁶² Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?⁶³ It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.⁶⁴ But there are some of you who do not believe.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.)⁶⁵ And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”⁶⁶ After this many of*

his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.

⁶⁷ So Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?” ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, ⁶⁹ and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”

- No root.

2 Corinthians 13:5a Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves.

2 Peter 1:10 Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.

- Without the roots of repentance, responses to Jesus will not last.
 - What is repentance? To change your mind.

“The chief human deficiency regarding God is not in our explanatory or intellectual abilities but is rather in our moral orientation regarding authority, or lordship, over our lives.” – Paul Moser²

Galatians 6:9 And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

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¹ R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W. B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 2002), 191.

² Paul K. Moser, “Cognitive Idolatry and Divine Hiding” in *Divine Hiddenness: New Essays*, ed. Daniel Howard-Snyder and Paul K. Moser (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 125.