

REBOUND
&
KEEP MOVING!

R. B. THIEME, JR.



R. B. THIEME, JR., BIBLE MINISTRIES
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Preface

Before you begin your Bible study, if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, be sure you have named your sins privately to God the Father.

If we confess our [known] sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our [known] sins and to cleanse us from all [unknown, or forgotten sins] unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

You will then be in fellowship with God, filled with the Holy Spirit, and ready to learn Bible doctrine from the Word of God.

“God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in [the filling of the] spirit and [biblical] truth.” (John 4:24)

If you have never personally believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, the issue is not naming your sins. The issue is faith alone in Christ alone.

“He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey [the command to believe in] the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” (John 3:36)

THE WORD OF GOD is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit, and of the joints and the marrow, and is a critic of thoughts and intents of the heart. (Heb. 4:12)

All Scripture is God-breathed, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God might be mature, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Tim. 3:16–17)

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (2 Tim. 2:15)

Rebound & Keep Moving

WINNING A BASKETBALL GAME requires players to shoot and to rebound the ball. When the ball leaves the hand of a shooter, arches gracefully toward the basket, drops inside the rim of the hoop, and rips through the net, he scores. But when his shot misses, the ball must be rebounded. Rebounding recovers the loose ball as it caroms off the rim or backboard. Rebounding restores the opportunity to shoot, to score, and ultimately, to win.

In the spiritual life every Christian misses shots or sins. But like basketball, the contest of the Christian life does not end when a believer sins. God graciously provides the way to *rebound* from sin, to *restore* the filling of the Holy Spirit, to *recover* fellowship with God, and to *keep moving* in the spiritual life. Rebound offers the believer an infinite number of chances to be a winner in the Christian life.

WHAT ABOUT SIN?

If every shot in basketball went through the hoop and scored, rebounding would not be necessary. But no player is perfect. If Christians never sinned the rebound technique would not be necessary. But no Christian is perfect. We all sin.

If we [believers] say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (1 John 1:8)¹

If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. (1 John 1:10)

Sin is disobedience to the will of God—any mental, verbal, or overt activity contrary to the perfect character and standards of God. Yet why do believers continue to sin after salvation?

The volition of Adam is the culprit. God created the first man perfect, without sin. But Adam's decision in the Garden to disobey God by eating the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:6–8) alienated the entire human race from God (Gen. 3:2–3; cf., Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:22). The resulting spiritual death of Adam was passed to all men. Sinful, imperfect mankind can have no relationship with perfect God.

The omniscience of God knew the free will of Adam would choose to sin.² Therefore, even before God created man, He conceived the plan for renewing our relationship with Him. He would send His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross. As our perfect substitute, Jesus paid the penalty for every human sin—past, present, and future (Rom. 5:8; 2 Cor. 5:14–15, 19; 1 Pet. 2:24; 1 John 2:2). This matchless plan or policy toward mankind is called grace.

WHAT ABOUT GRACE?

God's solution for sin is established by His grace. Grace is all that God is free to do for each of us on the basis of the saving work of

1. All Scriptures in this book are quoted from the New American Standard Bible (NASB). Bracketed commentary reflects amplification of the NASB translation taught in Bible class lectures (available on tape from R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, Houston, Texas).

2. Omniscience literally means "all-knowing" and describes God's attribute of complete knowledge of all things, including the actual and the possible past, present, and future events.

Jesus Christ on the cross. We do not earn or deserve grace; we can do nothing to merit the favor and blessing of God. He has done everything for us.

Grace for Believer and Unbeliever

Sin separates the unbeliever from God. Since Jesus Christ resolved the sin problem on the cross, just one issue confronts the unbeliever: What do you think about Christ? The issue is resolved by one simple act of faith.

“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved.”
(Acts 16:31b)

For by grace you have been saved through faith [believing in Christ]; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.
(Eph. 2:8–9)

When you believe in Jesus Christ, a nonmeritorious act, God the Holy Spirit instantly enters you into a personal and eternal relationship with God the Father. You are saved by grace. Even though you are still a flawed human being, you have been declared righteous at the moment of salvation when you are given the righteousness of God (Rom. 4:3–5; 2 Cor. 5:21). No matter how many sins you commit in your Christian life, your eternal relationship can never be broken because the immutable promise of God guarantees your transgressions will not be remembered.

“I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins.”
(Isa. 43:25)

Immediately after salvation, logistical grace extends from the justice of God to you who possess His righteousness. In military life, logistics, the supplying of troops and equipment, play a vital role. But in the Christian life logistics play an even more dramatic and pivotal role. You are alive today because of logistical grace.³ God supplies your every

3. Other categories of grace to the believer are found in R. B. Thieme, Jr., *Christian Suffering* (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 1997). For a listing of these blessings given at the moment of salvation see Thieme, *The Plan of God* (1992), 31–36.

need, and as a part of your logistical grace the rebound technique cleanses your life of personal sins, freeing you to advance spiritually.

Why Rebound?

If the sin problem was resolved at the cross, why is sin still an issue? If all sins are already paid for, why must you rebound? To be forgiven! Sins were *not* forgiven at the cross! Only the penalty for sin is removed once and for all at the cross. Christ's substitutionary death accomplished redemption,⁴ but not forgiveness.

All presalvation sins, postsalvation sins, and sins of the unbeliever were imputed by God the Father to Jesus Christ on the cross and *judged*. Because of this judgment sins are no longer a barrier to our salvation. Redemption from the slave market of sin made the way of salvation and forgiveness open to anyone who expresses faith alone in Christ alone. The expression of nonmeritorious faith is the moment of forgiveness for all *presalvation* sins of the believer.

What about forgiveness for the sins believers commit after salvation? Repercussions of *postsalvation*, personal sins in the life of a believer must be confronted. When a believer sins, he initially loses fellowship with God and the filling of the Holy Spirit, the empowerment for the Christian life. No member of the Trinity can fellowship with a believer having unconfessed sin in his life. Rebound, citing or naming our known sins to God the Father, is the only means compatible with grace for receiving divine forgiveness from postsalvation sins, for restoring fellowship with God, for recovering the filling of the Holy Spirit, and for resuming the spiritual life. There is no other option! Rebound is the biblical mandate, our access to intimacy with the Lord, the gateway to divine power in our life, our license to serve the Lord.

THE REBEL WITHIN

For that which I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. (Rom. 7:15)

See also *Christian Integrity* (1997), 49–53. Hereafter, cross-references to my books will cite only author, title, date of publication (in the first reference), and page(s).

4. Thieme, *The Barrier* (1993); *Slave Market of Sin* (1994).

So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin [nature] which indwells me. (Rom. 7:17)

During our lifetime as Christians we will always be plagued with the sin nature inherited from Adam.⁵ After we sin we may experience feelings of remorse or guilt; then, we may try to attain forgiveness from God by performing acts of penance or self-punishment. Why? We feel guilty because we make decisions to “do the very things we hate.” We punish ourselves to purge the guilt. We wrongly reason, “When *I feel* forgiven, then I am forgiven.”

Such human attempts to gain forgiveness can lead only to confusion, a guilt-ridden conscience, and spiritual impotence. No one can merit forgiveness from God. Understanding the relationship between the sin nature and sin is necessary to avoid a guilt complex once we become involved in sin.

When Adam chose to disobey God he died spiritually and was cursed with a sin nature. This sin nature, subsequently inherited by every human being, resulted in spiritual death—separation from God in time and eternity and the sovereignty of the sin nature over human life (Rom. 6:12). The sin nature itself is passed down genetically through procreation and resides in the cell structure of the human body (Rom. 6:6; 7:14, 18).

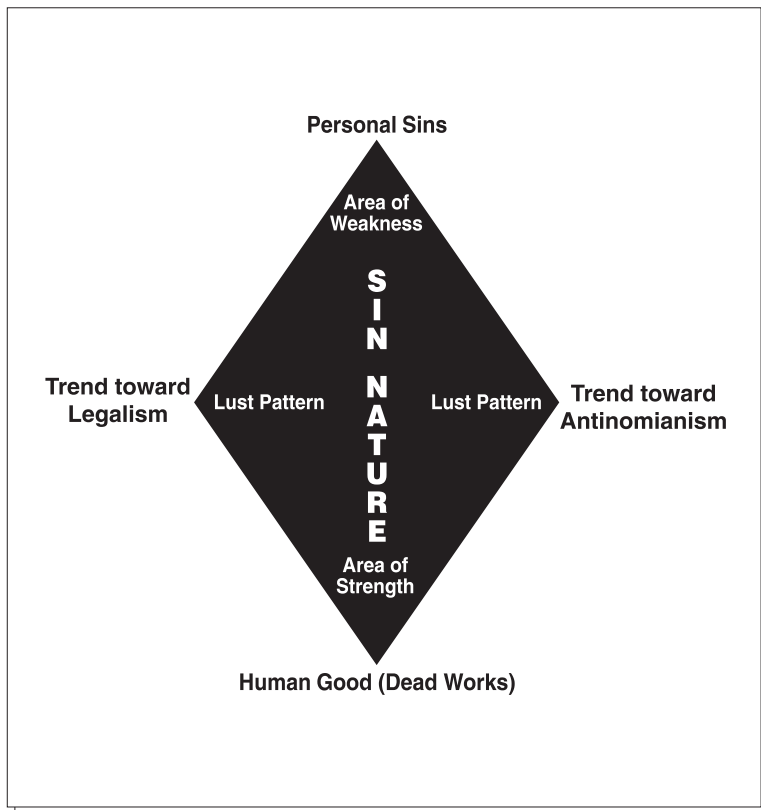
Invisibly lurking in our genetic makeup, the sin nature continually tempts the soul to rebel against God. But the sin nature cannot make us sin. Temptation is not sin. The *sin nature* is only the source of *temptation*; our *volition* is the source of *personal sin*. Only when we choose to succumb to this inner tempter do we sin. Our choice makes us responsible for all our sins.

With the exception of Jesus Christ, every person born into the human race possesses a sin nature (1 Pet. 2:22; cf., Rom. 3:23). Salvation does not eradicate this inherent corrupter of mankind, but does give us access to the only way to resolve the repercussions of sin in our lives. No believer will ever be sinless or perfect in this life.

The Apostle John concisely states the sin problem. The believer who denies he sins personally is guilty of self-deception, guilty of ignorance

5. The sin nature is the “old man” of Ephesians 4:22 (King James Version); the Adamic nature of “flesh” of Romans 8:3–4; the principle of “sin” of Romans 7:8–20. See also Thieme, *Old Sin Nature vs Holy Spirit* (2000).

of divine truth, or guilty of calling God a liar which is blasphemy (1 John 1:8, 10). During his lifetime the believer continually struggles with sin. But God has not left us defenseless against the incessant onslaught of the temptation of the sin nature and our propensity to sin.



SIN NATURE

Understanding the Sin Nature

To recognize sin in our lives we must understand how the sin nature seeks to influence and gain control of our souls. The sin nature is

composed of an area of weakness, an area of strength, trends toward legalism and antinomianism, and lust patterns. Within the sin nature the area of weakness is the source of temptation for personal sin; the area of strength is the source of human good.

THE AREA OF WEAKNESS

The area of weakness tempts to commit personal sins in three categories. The first is *mental attitude sins*, including pride, envy, jealousy, bitterness, hatred, vindictiveness, implacability, guilt feelings, fear, worry, anxiety, self-pity (Prov. 8:13; Isa. 41:10; Phil. 4:6; 1 John 2:11). Mental attitude sins are the most destructive to the spiritual life. They can quickly initiate a cluster of sins which develop into “chain-sinning.”⁶

Sins of the tongue form the second category of personal sins. These sins develop from mental attitude sins and include maligning, judging, bullying, gossiping, criticizing, lying. James warns us about the devastation wrought by this category of sin.

So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. Behold, how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell. (James 3:5–6)

The third category of personal sin is *overt sin*. Some overt sins declared in the Bible are murder, adultery, drunkenness, drug abuse, stealing.

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. (Gal. 5:19–21a)

Misinformed people insist certain taboos are also overt sins. A taboo is a prohibition arbitrarily imposed by a religious or social group. But taboos are not the basis for assessing sin. While some may not

6. Sin clusters are described in Thieme, *Christian Integrity*, 147–60. Chain-sinning is building one sin upon another. See *Isolation of Sin* (2000), 10–11.

condone certain taboos, the Bible does not condemn them as sin. Believers must stay with what the Bible teaches.

THE AREA OF STRENGTH

The area of strength becomes operational only after the believer chooses to sin and comes under the control of the sin nature. From the area of strength the sin nature produces deeds of human good or “dead works” (Heb. 6:1). These good deeds can be performed by believers or unbelievers. The results may be the same in human terms. Human good, including philanthropy, charity, and altruism, can be beneficial to mankind. But for the believer, unless the motivation is from the filling of the Holy Spirit, there is no spiritual value to deeds of human good. Scripture distinguishes between good works with spiritual and eternal value and good works with only temporal value.

Now if any man [believer] builds upon the foundation [Jesus Christ] with gold, silver, precious stones [divine good], wood, hay, straw [human good], each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it [the judgment seat of Christ],⁷ because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work. If any man’s work [divine good] which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work [human good] is burned up, he shall suffer loss [of rewards, not eternal salvation]; but he himself shall be saved [delivered to heaven], yet so as through fire. (1 Cor. 3:12–15)

In our limited perspective all good works may appear the same. But God differentiates those done by the power of the sin nature from those done by His power. Deeds of human good—wood, hay, and straw—have no spiritual value, are not rewardable in heaven, and do not glorify God. These good deeds are unacceptable to God.

All our righteous deeds [human good] are like a filthy garment. (Isa. 64:6*b*)

7. Only believers will be evaluated at the judgment seat of Christ. Believers are not judged for sins which were all judged on the cross, but are evaluated for their deeds of human good or divine good.

Good deeds do frequently fall short of their intended results and sometimes contribute to evil. The sinful nature of humanity corrupts good intentions. Acts of human good are never permanent solutions for our problems. In this imperfect world only acts of divine good, produced in the power of God the Holy Spirit, provide permanent solutions and affect spiritual momentum.

THE SIN NATURE HAS TWO TRENDS

One trend is toward legalism—a futile attempt to earn salvation, spirituality, or the approbation of God through morality or good works. The other is toward antinomianism—self-gratification leading to licentiousness.⁸ We all have a trend in one direction or the other. When we are under the control of the sin nature we generally move in the direction of our habitual trend. Less frequently we move in the opposite direction. For example, one person may develop an area of legalism, though his general trend might be toward lasciviousness. On the other hand, a person who trends toward self-righteousness might suddenly develop an area of licentiousness.

THE LUST PATTERN

The lust pattern is another characteristic of the sin nature. Lust is an illicit or perhaps insatiable desire, the motivation toward either trend. Lusts include approbation lust (the desire for recognition or approval), power lust, sexual lust, social lust, monetary lust, materialism lust, inordinate ambition resulting in inordinate competition, revenge lust, criminal lust, chemical lust, crusader lust, pleasure lust. Satisfying the desires of lust does not bring the lasting happiness which is bestowed only by God. When we are controlled by the lust pattern of the sin nature, we become slaves to our desires (Rom. 7:14), divorced from reality.

Never judge a person because their weaknesses are not your weaknesses (Matt. 7:1–5). Even mature Christians can be desperately sinful at times. You may be strong where they are weak. An indispensable principle for relationships with other believers is to allow them to live their own life as unto the Lord. Everyone must handle their own sins in privacy before the Lord.

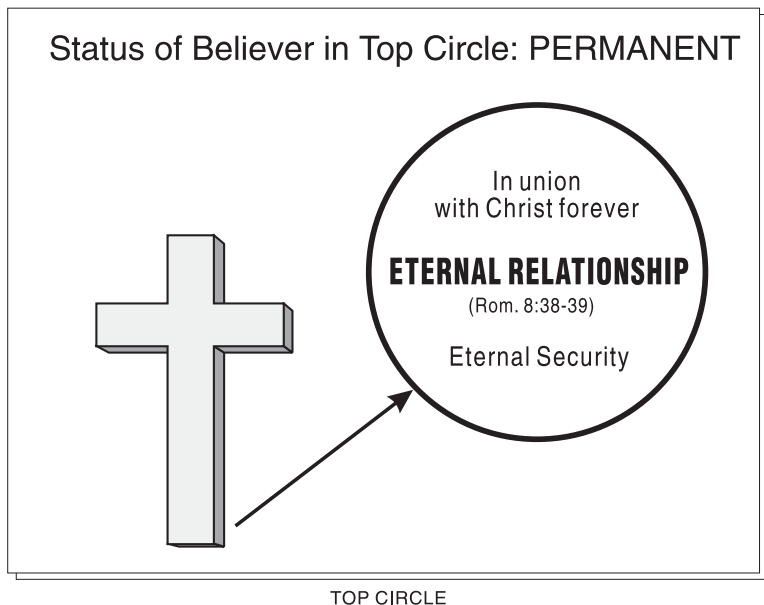
8. Antinomianism derives from two Greek words: *anti* meaning “against,” and *nomos* meaning “law.” Antinomian describes the trend toward lawlessness, lasciviousness, and unrestrained immorality.

THE STANDARD OF GOD IS ABSOLUTE

Eternal Relationship—the Top Circle

Once we believe in Jesus Christ, salvation can never be forfeited. Our eternal security is based on the payment by Christ for every sin committed before and after salvation. This complete payment guarantees our eternal destiny in heaven.⁹ Nothing in this universe—in heaven above, on the earth, or under the earth—can separate us from God. Once we have believed in Jesus Christ, *we cannot lose our salvation*.

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:38–39)



9. Thieme, *The Barrier*.

The moment we believe, the Holy Spirit places us into union with Christ, the irrevocable state of eternal relationship. The Scripture designates this union with Christ by the phrase “in Christ.”

For as in Adam all die, so also *in Christ* all shall be made alive. (1 Cor. 15:22, italics added).

Because God did everything to secure this union, we can do nothing to abrogate our position in Christ. We cannot be removed from the ‘top circle’ of eternal relationship.

“And I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of my hand.”
(John 10:28)

We are held by the hand of God who never lets go. We are not held by our own morality, obedience, good works, or religious observances. Our salvation never depends on us. Salvation is by grace, freely given by God, never earned or deserved.

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. (Eph. 2:8–9)

Since we can do nothing to earn our salvation, we can do nothing to lose our salvation. Just as salvation is given by the grace of God, our eternal life is also preserved by His grace. God always preserves what He has given.

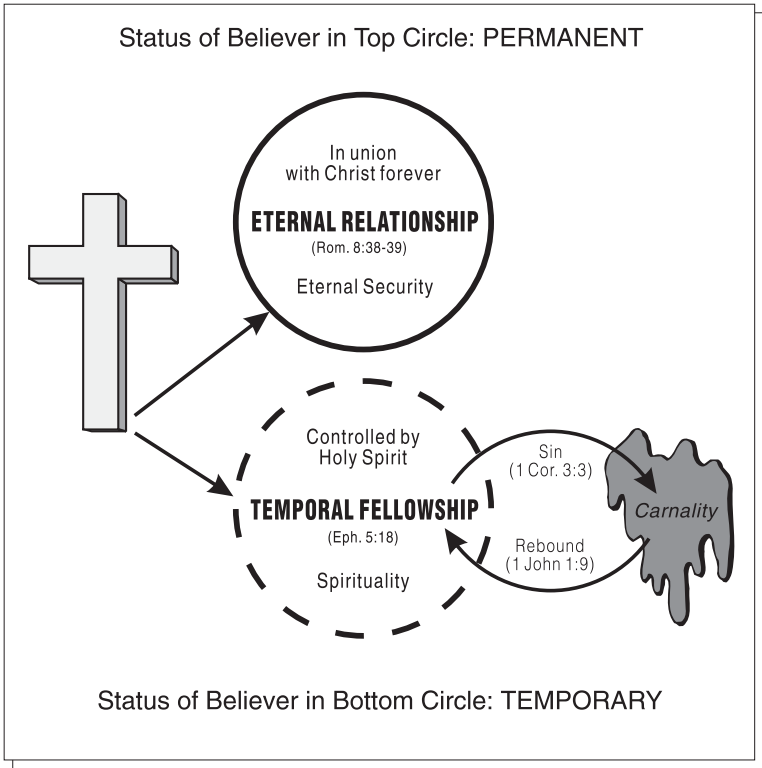
To obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God. (1 Pet. 1:4–5a)

No believer can be plucked from the omnipotent hand of the Lord Jesus Christ, even if he dies with unconfessed sin in his life.

Temporal Fellowship—the Bottom Circle

When we believe in Jesus Christ as Savior, we enter not only the top circle, an eternal relationship with God, but we also enter the bottom circle, fellowship with God in time. Fellowship with God provides the means to live the Christian life and grow spiritually. Unlike

the top circle, the believer by his own volition can remove himself from the bottom circle.



TOP AND BOTTOM CIRCLES

Inside the bottom circle represents spirituality, outside represents carnality. Spirituality is the absolute status of being in fellowship with God, under the control of the Holy Spirit. Carnality is the absolute status of being out of fellowship, under the control of the sin nature. We cannot be partially spiritual and partially carnal. They are mutually exclusive.

Every time we decide to sin we move out of the bottom circle losing temporal fellowship. We become carnal when we sin; we be-

come spiritual when we rebound. By acknowledging our sins to God the Father we return to the bottom circle. As in basketball we recover the ability to score and to win by rebounding. In the spiritual life we return to the bottom circle of temporal fellowship by rebounding.

DOES CARNALITY SHOCK YOU?

First Corinthians 3:1–3 confirms the existence of carnality among believers. Remember, the most wonderful people in the world are Christians, but some Christians can be despicable. How can this be? Carnality is the problem.

When a Christian consistently remains under the control of the Holy Spirit, growing to spiritual maturity, he exhibits the fruit of the Spirit.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Gal. 5:22–23)

However, the Christian who habitually remains under the control of the sin nature, in carnality, commits destructive mental, verbal, and overt sins. If you do not acknowledge the existence of carnality among Christians, you will never understand the necessity for confession of sin. You will resemble the Corinthian believers who were unable to make spiritual progress.

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men [filled with the Spirit], but as to men of flesh [carnal]; as to babes [*νήπιος*, *nepios*] in Christ. (1 Cor. 3:1)

These Corinthians are believers. “Brethren” refers to anyone who accepts Jesus Christ as Savior and is born into the family of God (John 1:12). Although Paul reprimands them for their carnality, he declares their position “in Christ.”

Since these believers are not spiritual, Paul is unable to speak to or teach them. If they had been filled with the Spirit they would have been able to learn and grow from the doctrine Paul taught. Unfortunately, they are not spiritual and consequently could not advance beyond the very basic doctrine they have learned. They are “men of flesh,” carnal Christians out of fellowship with God with a stagnant

spiritual life. Though these Corinthians are saved they are carnal and wreaking havoc in the church.

If you have ever observed a carnal believer and asked, "How can he be a Christian?" you have based your judgment on superficial appearances.

"For God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."
(1 Sam. 16:7b)

Overt behavior is not the issue in salvation. The only issue in salvation is faith alone in Christ alone (Eph. 2:8-9). As you mature, however, you will discover the Bible does make a distinction between carnality and spirituality.

Paul virtually insults the Corinthians by calling them "babes." The Greek noun *nepios* does not refer here to a newborn, but is used pejoratively as a sign of contempt for the ignorant or untrained believer. Paul reminds them they are ignorant of the Christian life because their growth is stunted by carnality.

Rebound is the first doctrine a new believer must learn to progress spiritually. Shortly after salvation a new believer will sin and lose fellowship with God. Unless the filling of the Holy Spirit is recovered he will not advance in the Christian life. Doctrine cannot be learned or applied in his life. Such was the situation in Corinth.

I gave you milk [basic doctrine] to drink, not solid food [advanced doctrine]; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able. (1 Cor. 3:2)

Like Paul the responsibility of the pastor-teacher is to provide spiritual nourishment. But Paul could only give them "milk," basic doctrine, instead of the solid food of advanced doctrine. Carnality impaired their ability to learn and apply even the most basic truths of the Word of God.

IS YOUR LIST COMPLETE?

For you are still fleshly [carnal]. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly and are you not walking like mere men [imitating unbelievers]? (1 Cor. 3:3)

Some Christians conveniently focus on a few overt sins and ignore myriads of mental and verbal sins. Their list of sins is superficial and incomplete. Any sin expels the believer from the bottom circle. Sin is sin and all sin results in carnality.

The carnality of the Corinthian believers began with the mental attitude sin of jealousy. Vicious, rampant jealousy among these believers spawned the sin of "strife." This strife was inordinate competition and ambition motivated by unconfessed jealousy.

For example, one person may aspire to approval and recognition in a local church. When he hears praise for others, mental attitude sins of envy and competitiveness are aroused. To satisfy his desire for approbation he must divert attention to himself. With a malicious innuendo he maligns the character of his rival. The rival reacts. The situation deteriorates as the two fall into sins of the tongue, maligning and gossiping about each other. Unless quelled through rebound and spiritual growth, strife becomes divisive in the church.

"Walking like mere men" refers to the motivation of unbelievers. Carnal believers are indistinguishable from unbelievers because both are controlled by the sin nature. Carnal Christians continue to degenerate because they fail to rebound. Believers are capable of committing any sin and can even remain in carnality for an indefinite period.

However, there is no excuse for any Christian to remain in a state of carnality. This is why we must understand rebound before we can maintain spirituality. No one can be spiritual unless they rebound.

You may be a miserable and contemptible sinner. But you can recover because of God's gracious provision of rebound. God forgives even the most extraordinarily wicked sinner. If you commit a heinous sin that shocks you, remember this: If you are still alive, God still has a purpose for your life!

GOD'S LIST OF SINS

There are six things which the Lord hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him. (Prov. 6:16)

God detests every sin, but seven are of particular magnitude. Are you ready for a surprise? Five of these seven sins are not overt! Of the seven sins named on God's list, two are mental attitude, three are

verbal, and only two are overt. Remember these verses when you are tempted to ignore mental and verbal sins and focus on only overt sins.

Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood. (Prov. 6:17)

“Haughty eyes” represent mental attitude arrogance, a presumption of superiority, self-absorption, self-centeredness, and inordinate pride. Arrogance is the root sin that leads to other sins. Christians who think of themselves as supremely spiritual are arrogant. They define their own moral standards and believe they live up to them. Because they avoid certain overt sins they become convinced they are spiritually superior. They are not. Arrogance destroys fellowship with God, damages the soul, and alienates people.

The next sin, “a lying tongue” is an arrogant attempt to reshape the truth to escape responsibility or distort reality by deceiving others. Like all sins of the tongue, lying is motivated by mental attitude sins such as arrogance, worry, or fear.

“Hands that shed innocent blood” is murder. Christians can and do commit homicide. The murderer weaves his way through a path of mental attitude sins, including anger, jealousy, hatred, bitterness, revenge culminating in murder.

A heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil. (Prov. 6:18)

Do you plot ways to retaliate against people who have hurt you? “A heart that devises wicked plans” is the mental attitude sin of revenge.

“Feet that run rapidly to evil” describes those who follow the lusts of their sin nature into all manner of evil. These carnal believers lack self-restraint or self-discipline, reveling in treachery, deceit, and wrongdoing.

A false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers. (Prov. 6:19)

“A false witness who utters lies” deliberately perjures himself, in contrast to the person with a lying tongue. The false witness with malicious intent engages in slander and defamation under oath.

Finally, “one who spreads strife among brothers” reminds us of the divisions in Corinth, a situation common to many local churches

today. One group vies for power over another group by resorting to innuendo, gossip, and lies to damage the reputations of their rivals.

These verses should dispel our shallow view of sin. Tragically we restrict our understanding of sin to a few blatant overt sins or taboos. No such restriction exists with God. Some of the worst repercussions accompany mental attitude and verbal sins. To avoid carnality, chain-sinning, and divine discipline we must learn God's provision for recovering the filling of the Holy Spirit.

TWO DISTINCT MINISTRIES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

At the moment of salvation every believer is both indwelt and filled with the Holy Spirit. These two ministries are not identical and should never be confused. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is a *permanent relationship*, regardless of our carnality or spirituality. The filling of the Holy Spirit is *temporary fellowship* determined by our carnality or spirituality.

Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God indwells [οἰκέω, *oikeo*] you? (1 Cor. 3:16)

In the indicative mood the Greek verb *oikeo*, to indwell, is a declaration of fact, the certainty of the status of indwelling. The Holy Spirit indwells the body of every believer to make a temple for the indwelling of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 6:19).¹⁰ This indwelling of the Holy Spirit can never be lost. The indwelling is permanent—dependent upon God's faithfulness; the filling is temporary—dependent upon our volition.

10. During the Age of Israel, the preincarnate Jesus Christ as the Shekinah Glory dwelled in the Tabernacle or Temple (Ex. 25:21–22; Lev. 26:11–12; Ps. 91:1; Heb. 9:5). The Shekinah Glory appeared as a cloud by day or a pillar of fire by night, as well as a bright light over the ark of the covenant. The presence of the Shekinah Glory guaranteed God's promise of temporal and eternal blessings to Israel.

In the present Church Age the Holy Spirit creates a temple in the body of the believer for the indwelling Christ as the Shekinah Glory. This is the guaranty of God's blessings to us in time and for eternity (John 14:19–20; 16:7; 17:22–23; Rom. 8:10; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor. 3:17–18).

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled [πληρώω, *pleroo*] with the Spirit. (Eph. 5:18)

In the imperative mood the Greek verb *pleroo* designates a divine mandate, a command that involves our choice. God would not mandate a status we already possess. We must choose to be or not to be filled with the Spirit.

Pleroo means “to fill up a deficiency, to fully influence, to fill with a certain quality.” No believer has the ability to obey God’s mandates through human power. The Holy Spirit fills up this deficiency by giving us the power to live the Christian way of life. But why, if we are filled with the Spirit at salvation, is this command necessary?

The reason is our old nemesis, the sin nature. The filling of the Spirit is lost when we sin. In carnality we are no longer controlled by the Holy Spirit, but by the sin nature. How can we escape this control?

REBOUND!

Rebound is for believers only. If you have not accepted Jesus Christ as Savior, confession is utterly useless. As an unbeliever, you can confess your sins, feel sorry for your sins, and even make restitution. But without believing in Christ, your confession is futile.

As a believer you have no excuse for permitting sin to destroy your spiritual life. Rebound and keep moving!

If we confess [ὁμολογέω, *homologeō*—name] our sins,
He is faithful and righteous to forgive us [cancel] our
sins and to cleanse [purify] us from all unrighteousness.
(1 John 1:9)

The word “if” translates a third-class conditional clause in the Greek.¹¹ Fulfillment of this condition depends on your volition:

11. The Greek language expresses conditional clauses four different ways:

(1) The first-class condition assumes the reality of the premise: “If, and it is assumed to be true;”

(2) The second-class condition assumes the premise is contrary to fact: “If you will, but you will not;”

Maybe you will rebound and maybe you will not. Each of us must decide to exercise that option.

The Greek word *homologeō*, translated confess, means “to name, cite, admit, acknowledge.” The verb was used primarily in a judicial context as “confess a crime in court, to make a legal statement.” First John 1:9 is no exception. The word means simply to acknowledge or name your sins to God.¹² *Homologeō* does not mean to feel sorry for sins, to publicly renounce sins, or to suffer a guilty conscience; there is no emotional connotation involved.

Before the Supreme Court of Heaven, how you feel about your sins is of no consequence. No human works or emotion can be added to Christ’s complete payment for sin on the cross. Though genuine feelings of remorse may accompany confession they have no bearing on God’s forgiveness. You need only name your sins to God.

Confession that compels self-reproach or penance is blasphemy and rejects the grace of God. Never insult God by adding an emotional plea for forgiveness. First John 1:9 does not say, “If we ask or beg for forgiveness.” It just says “acknowledge your sins.”

Confess to God Alone

There is no biblical requirement for ritual cleansing or repetitive liturgical phrases to be made to a priest, a pastor, or any other member of the clergy. At the moment of salvation you become a royal priest with the privilege of representing yourself directly to God both in prayer and confession (1 Pet. 2:5, 9). In confession your sins are your concern and not the business of anyone else and should be named privately to God the Father. He alone can forgive them.

(3) The third-class condition expresses an uncertain though more probable future condition and emphasizes the volition of the individual: “Maybe you will or maybe you will not;”

(4) The fourth-class condition expresses the less probable future condition: “I wish it were true, but it is not.”

See H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955), 289–90.

12. The reference to Jesus as our advocate or defense attorney (1 John 2:1) demonstrates the judicial context of 1 John 1:9.

Open declarations of sin, besides being superfluous to rebound, may induce mental attitude sins in others. Such harmful results occur in cases where public admission of wrongdoing reopens the wound of an injured party, embroils previously uninvolved parties, or reveals a sin particularly heinous and shocking to others.

David, King of Israel, committed monstrous sins with prolonged and devastating consequences. Though many people suffered, he confessed to God alone, "Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned" (Ps. 51:4a).

Apologizing to someone whom you have hurt is always appropriate and should be motivated by a genuine desire to restore harmony to the relationship, not to ease guilt feelings. When you apologize, do so privately *after* you have recovered fellowship with God through rebound.

Forgiveness by Grace Alone

Divine forgiveness depends solely on God's perfect character: "He is faithful and righteous." "Faithful" emphasizes God's consistency in forgiving every believer who admits his sins to Him. God cannot default on His promise. His grace never fails. He never wearies of our repetitious rebounding. He never says, this time you do not deserve it. We never deserve forgiveness, but He always forgives!

God's righteousness is the standard for forgiveness. God's justice is the executor of forgiveness. His perfect righteousness is the only standard His justice can accept. The righteousness and justice of God cannot be compromised. He cannot accept our penance, guilt feelings, emotional reactions, or other human works. Only the saving work of God the Son on the cross can satisfy or propitiate the integrity of God the Father.

The next two verbs, "to forgive" and "to cleanse," describe the results of rebound. The Greek verb ἀφίημι (*aphiemi*) means "to forgive, to cancel." The instant we acknowledge our known sins to God He cancels the sins and the initial repercussion of loss of fellowship. If any repercussions related to divine discipline remain, they are transformed from suffering for discipline to suffering for blessing. Now

filled with the Spirit, the believer can apply Bible doctrine to his suffering and advance toward spiritual maturity.¹³

What about sins we commit which we have forgotten or do not know are wrong? He cleanses “us from all unrighteousness.” The Greek verb καθαρίζω (*katharizo*) means “to cleanse, to remove for the purpose of purifying, hence, to purify” and applies to all sins. Known sins are usually accompanied by unknown sins. When we acknowledge the known sins to God, He forgives and purifies us from *all* unrighteousness, including unknown and forgotten sins.

The Prodigal Son

Jesus illustrates the extraordinary forgiveness of God in the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11–32).¹⁴ The narrative revolves around the actions of three characters: the father, the elder brother, and the younger son. The younger son represents the believer who continually sins and wallows in carnality. His sins remove him from fellowship with his father, who represents God the Father.

Taking his share of his inheritance, the prodigal leaves home and departs to a far country. His continued debauchery and extravagance wreck his life—the consequences of carnality. He becomes a beggar, living among pigs. Having come to the end of his own resources he realizes how wretched he has become and determines to return to his father.

“I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight.’” (Luke 15:18)

This is the younger son’s prayer of rebound, but his next statement reveals his confusion about forgiveness.

“I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.” (Luke 15:19)

13. Thieme, *Christian Suffering*, 28–53.

14. A parable is a short, fictitious narrative which illustrates a principle of doctrine. Prodigal describes a reckless and extravagantly wasteful person. See Thieme, *The Prodigal Son* (1974).

Because of his irresponsible degeneracy, the prodigal convinces himself his father no longer loves him or regards him as a son. He thinks his father would be more inclined to forgive him if he offered penance for his sins through self-sacrifice or guilt. He was wrong. Forgiveness is based on his father's character. Christians often make this same error about God's forgiveness.

When the son returned home he was astonished by the love, compassion, and forgiveness of his father.

“And he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him, and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him, and kissed him.” (Luke 15:20)

This verse vividly portrays how the essence of God acts to forgive us. The omniscience of God knew every sin we would ever commit. He also anticipates every confession. The righteousness and justice of God insure our forgiveness through Christ's payment for those sins. The love of God is free to flow to us because of that payment. His love guarantees compassion for us when we rebound.

When we name our sins to God it is as though the Father runs to us, throws His arms around us, and welcomes us back with a kiss. Our forgiven sins no longer affect our fellowship with God. That is the grace of God!

Often those with legalistic tendencies become upset because they think rebound is a license to sin. Some believers who fail may use rebound for exactly that purpose. But rebound restores the believer to a position where he can live his spiritual life and serve God, not excuse or rationalize sin. No believer can be in God's plan apart from the divine power which comes only through the filling of the Holy Spirit. Rebound is the only way to recover from sin and regain the filling of the Holy Spirit.¹⁵

15. The principle of rebound is found in Neh. 1:6; Ps. 32:5; 38:18; 51:3-4; Prov. 28:13; Dan. 9:4; 1 Cor. 11:31; 1 Pet. 4:17.

After Confession, What?

Having *named your sins* to God, three other steps must follow: *Isolate your sins*, *forget your sins*, and *keep moving*.¹⁶ These steps prevent continued carnality through chain-sinning.



THE FOUR STEPS OF REBOUND

ISOLATE YOUR SINS

See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled. (Heb. 12:15)

A root is the base or foundation of a plant that absorbs nutrients from the soil to supply nourishment to the plant. When your soul is rooted in “bitterness,” a devastating chain of sins—mental, verbal, and overt—springs up. Bitterness ripens into anger, hatred, or vindictiveness, the natural foundation for gossip, maligning, violence, or even murder. However, the memory of a past grievance or a forgiven sin must not be allowed to generate further sins. Past sins must be isolated from the present to break this chain reaction.

FORGET YOUR SINS AND KEEP MOVING

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: *forgetting* what lies behind and

16. Thieme, *Isolation of Sin*.

reaching forward [moving on] to what lies ahead. (Phil. 3:13, italics added)

Before his salvation on the Damascus road the Apostle Paul was infamous for his self-righteous crusade to exterminate Christians (Phil. 3:6). Although God had forgiven these heinous sins, the guilty memory could have crippled Paul's spiritual life, but he isolated and forgot past sins and focused on the present goal of spiritual maturity.

Once sin is confessed you must forget as God has forgotten (Ps. 103:12; Isa. 43:25). Someone may have offended you. You reacted with bitterness and anger which you then confessed. God forgave and forgot that sin. But your failure to forget the sin can lead to smoldering hatred and a thirst for revenge. These mental sins may quickly ignite into verbal and overt sins unless you rebound, isolate the sin, and put the sin in the past where it belongs. Only then are you free to keep moving toward maturity in the Christian life.

I press on [keep moving] toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 3:14, italics added)

SELF-JUDGMENT OR DIVINE DISCIPLINE

Whenever we sin we are liable for discipline.

“For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives.” (Heb. 12:6)

Our choice is between self-judgment and divine discipline. Neglecting rebound plunges the believer into divine discipline.

The Apostle Paul specifically warns the Corinthians of this principle in a passage about the communion table (1 Cor. 11:28–32). Before partaking of the communion elements, a believer should “examine” or “judge” himself, synonyms for rebound.

But let a man examine himself [rebound], and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. (1 Cor. 11:28)

Every believer has the right to partake of the communion elements, but each believer is warned never to eat or drink with unconfessed sin in the life.

For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself [divine discipline], if he does not judge the body rightly. (1 Cor. 11:29)

For this reason many among you are weak [warning discipline] and sick [intensive discipline], and a number sleep [dying discipline]. (1 Cor. 11:30)

But if we judged ourselves rightly [rebound], we should not be judged [divine discipline]. (1 Cor. 11:31)

But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord in order that we may not be condemned along with the world. (1 Cor. 11:32)

The “if” in verse 31, a second class condition, indicates the Corinthian believers should have been judging themselves, but were not. The resulting divine discipline devastated the congregation. Three categories of discipline caused by spiritual maladies afflicted the carnal Corinthians (1 Cor. 11:30):

1. “Weak”—illnesses which are basically not organic in nature. These may include loss of energy and strength, motivation, even depression. This is *warning discipline* to encourage the believer to rebound;

2. “Sick”—includes definite organic (physical) illnesses, even to the point of becoming an invalid. This *intensive discipline* is designed to shock the rebellious believer out of carnality;

3. “Sleep”—the Greek word κοιμάω (*koimao*), used figuratively for the physical death of believers only (1 Thess. 4:14). If a believer stubbornly remains carnal the Lord may prematurely terminate his life through *dying discipline* or the “sin unto death” (1 John 5:16a [KJV]).

The alternative to God’s discipline is self-judgment. After rebound and restoration to fellowship, God exercises one of three options on our behalf. First, He may remove all disciplinary suffering (1 Cor. 11:31). Second, disciplinary suffering may be diminished and transformed into blessing. Third, disciplinary suffering may continue at the same intensity, but is designed for greater blessing.¹⁷

17. Thieme, *Christian Suffering*.

The longer a believer remains out of fellowship, the more intense the discipline becomes. Prolonged carnality may result in discipline so severe that some become convinced they were never saved. This believer becomes useless in relation to God's plan for his life. The only solution is to exploit the grace of God through 1 John 1:9 and *keep moving*.

REBOUND FOR SPIRITUAL ADVANCE

What can be expected when a believer lives without using rebound for an extended period of time? The prodigal son! Just like the prodigal son in the New Testament, the pattern of sin, discipline, rebound, restoration, and blessing can be observed in the lives of Old Testament believers.

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. (Heb. 12:1)

The great "cloud of witnesses" are the outstanding spiritual heroes of the Old Testament, the hall of fame list of Hebrews, chapter 11. They were not perfect; they were not 'holier than thou'; they were not sinless. When they failed they used God's grace in rebound. We, too, must "lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us." The Old Testament heroes exemplify for us the necessity of rebound in order to advance spiritually.

DAVID: FAILURE AND RECOVERY

David, the Spiritual Giant

A vivid Old Testament illustration of sin, discipline, rebound, restoration, and blessing occurs in 2 Samuel 11. The hero is David, the King of Israel, one of the most highly respected believers in history. The Scripture lauds him as a man "after the Lord's own heart" (1 Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22). Yet, like every other believer, David miserably failed the Lord.

The episode begins with David in fellowship. This quickly changes. The results are tragic.

Then it happened in the spring, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him and all Israel, and they destroyed the sons of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David stayed at Jerusalem. (2 Sam. 11:1)

In the ancient Near East armies traditionally stood down in the fall and winter, then reassembled to conduct their campaigns in the good weather of spring and summer. The previous year Israel had defeated the Ammonites, but by summer's end failed to capture Rabbah, the Ammonite capital. With the arrival of spring the army of Israel mobilized and deployed to renew the siege of Rabbah.

David, the Carnal Giant

As monarch, David was responsible for leading his troops in the field. The Holy Spirit carefully makes this point: "At the time when *kings* go out to battle." God's will was for David to lead his troops at Rabbah. Instead, David sent Joab, his Chief of Staff, and his servants.

David had previously led every military campaign, but now he "stayed at Jerusalem." Failure to fulfill his responsibilities put David out of God's geographical will and in carnality. David was now a spiritually mature believer out of fellowship.

By being in the wrong place David encountered temptation where he was most vulnerable. David had many impressive strengths: He exhibited phenomenal courage in battle with Goliath, brilliant leadership of the nation, and true humility toward God. But his strengths were neutralized by carnality. His weakness for women became his downfall.

Now when evening came David arose from his bed and walked around on the roof of the king's house, and from the roof he saw a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful in appearance. (2 Sam. 11:2)

David had little to do around Jerusalem, since his responsibility was to be with his army at Rabbah. Apparently he was sleeping most of the day. When he awoke in the evening he was bored. So he took a

walk in the palace garden. In the ancient world, gardens were not on the ground level, but on the roof. During the course of David's stroll, he saw an extremely beautiful woman bathing. Suddenly David was no longer bored. He found this view more exciting than his garden.

If David had been in fellowship when he saw this gorgeous woman, he may have resisted the temptation. After all, he had three wives and at least ten concubines. Seeing such a breath-taking woman was not an unusual event in his life.

But David was out of fellowship. Any believer out of fellowship finds temptation overwhelming, especially in areas where he is weak.

If your weakness is jealousy, bitterness, envy, gossiping, or maligning others, it will be more difficult to resist the temptation to sin in these areas. This lovely woman appealed to David's weakness. Being tempted in your area of weakness when you are in fellowship is one thing; being tempted in your area of weakness when you are out of fellowship may be something else entirely.

So David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" (2 Sam. 11:3)

David ordered his aides to find out the identity of this woman. They discovered she was the wife of one of David's commanders. Uriah, unlike David, was where he should be—at Rabbah with the army of Israel.

And David sent messengers and took her, and when she came to him, he lay with her; and when she had purified herself from her uncleanness, she returned to her house. And the woman conceived; and she sent and told David, and said, "I am pregnant." (2 Sam. 11:4–5)

David found a way to cure his boredom—adultery. If David had been a Christian today, some of his friends might have said, David was never really a Christian. They would be wrong. David was saved and is in heaven today. He was another believer who willingly walked into the trap of carnality. His mental attitude sins turned overt.

A believer out of fellowship is capable of committing sins as despicable as an unbeliever. This does not imply that David was worse than unbelievers. The Scriptures do not classify adultery as more de-

praved than other sins. Sins of the tongue—character assassination—also destroy many people, just as adultery always damages more than the two individuals involved. All sin removes a believer from fellowship with God, and may initiate a disastrous series of sins. David was about to initiate a series of sins that would impact his entire kingdom.

David's Schemes

Then David sent to Joab, saying, “Send me Uriah the Hittite.” So Joab sent Uriah to David. When Uriah came to him, David asked concerning the welfare of Joab and the people and the state of the war. (2 Sam. 11:6–7)

When he questioned Uriah, David feigned concern for the battlefield situation. David was not at all interested in the siege of Rabbah. Instead, he schemed to conceal his seduction of Bathsheba. David concocted a clever ploy to lure Uriah home to be with his wife because he hoped to escape blame for her pregnancy. David’s appearance of virtue when he inquired about the army was nothing more than hypocrisy and subterfuge.

Hypocrisy is a common characteristic of carnality. A believer out of fellowship often attempts to conceal or deny his sin. With each progressive sin David was transformed from a spiritual giant into a carnal hypocrite.

Then David said to Uriah, “Go down to your house, and wash your feet.” And Uriah went out of the king’s house, and a present from the king was sent out after him. (2 Sam. 11:8)

“Wash your feet” is a Hebrew idiom for “enter the house.” In the time of David, the streets of Jerusalem were so dusty that every household had a footbath at the door. Before entering his house, a man would remove his sandals and wash his feet. When a guest knocked on the door, instead of saying, come in, the response was, wash your feet.

But Uriah slept at the door of the king’s house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. (2 Sam. 11:9)

Uriah failed to comply with David's wishes, frustrating his plan. Instead he "slept at the door of the king's house." The door of the king's house refers not to David's palace, but to the guardhouse near the king's gate. Located there were special barracks to billet the royal guards. Rather than going home to spend the night with his wife, Uriah moved into the barracks of the guardhouse with the palace guard. Uriah was a responsible soldier who would not enjoy the pleasures of home while the army was in the field.

Now when they told David, saying, "Uriah did not go down to his house," David said to Uriah, "Have you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?" And Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in temporary shelters, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field. Shall I then go to my house to eat and to drink and to lie with my wife? By your life and the life of your soul, I will not do this thing." (2 Sam. 11:10-11)

David must have winced as he heard this reply. All his life David had displayed a tremendous sense of responsibility, so Uriah's loyalty and concern for his troops should have awakened David's conscience. While the entire general staff was enduring hardships in the field, David was enjoying the pleasures in the palace. If David had been in fellowship he and Uriah would have left for Rabbah at once. But what did he do? David made another attempt to entice Uriah home.

Then David said to Uriah, "Stay here today also, and tomorrow I will let you go." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. Now David called him, and he ate and drank before him, and he made him drunk; and in the evening he went out to lie on his bed with his lord's servants, but he did not go down to his house. (2 Sam. 11:12-13)

David made Uriah drunk.¹⁸ David hopes that once Uriah's inhibitions break down, he will go to his wife's bed. David exhibited all the manipulative skills characteristic of the carnal hypocrite, frantic to

18. Thieme, *Daniel Chapters One through Six* (1996), 205-09.

escape the consequences of his own bad decisions. David's cruel cunning reached a new low. Some of the most conniving people are believers out of fellowship.

Did his manipulations succeed? Under David's insistence Uriah did get drunk, but in spite of the temptation, Uriah maintained his military standards of integrity.

Now it came about in the morning that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. (2 Sam. 11:14)

David was desperate. The only solution to his dilemma seemed to be the death of Uriah. To accomplish his wicked deed David wrote a letter to Joab. Not only would David be guilty of murder, but he would make Joab an accessory. David knew an officer of Uriah's integrity would never examine a letter he carried.

And he had written in the letter, saying, "Place Uriah in the front line of the fiercest battle and withdraw from him, so that he may be struck down and die." (2 Sam. 11:15)

Joab understood the wishes of his commander-in-chief. The order was clear: Advance on Rabbah with Uriah leading, then retreat, leaving Uriah isolated and unprotected from the enemy.

So it was as Joab kept watch on the city, that he put Uriah at the place where he knew there were valiant men. And the men of the city went out and fought against Joab, and some of the people among David's servants fell; and Uriah the Hittite also died. (2 Sam. 11:16-17)

Uriah's unit sortied just below the city walls. How tragic that such a valiant soldier was sacrificed for David's lust.

Then Joab sent and reported to David all the events of the war. And he charged the messenger, saying, "When you have finished telling all the events of the war to the king, and if it happens that the king's wrath rises and he says to you, 'Why did you go so near to the city to fight? Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall? Who struck down Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? Did not a woman throw an upper millstone on him from the wall

so that he died at Thebez? Why did you go so near the wall?’—then you shall say, ‘Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.’” (2 Sam. 11:18–21)

Why would Joab expect David to become angry? Because Joab made a tactical blunder which cost the lives of several men. He left a unit exposed and unprotected so its commander would be killed. When David heard this report he would probably become furious with Joab for committing such a deadly error. So Joab said if David becomes angry, just say to him, “Uriah the Hittite is dead also.” Joab was protecting himself by reminding David of his previous order.

So the messenger departed and came and reported to David all that Joab had sent him to tell. And the messenger said to David, “The men prevailed against us and came out against us in the field, but we pressed them as far as the entrance of the gate. Moreover, the archers shot at your servants from the wall; so some of the king’s servants are dead, and your servant Uriah the Hittite is also dead.” (2 Sam. 11:22–24)

Then David played the hypocrite.

Then David said to the messenger, “Thus you shall say to Joab, ‘Do not let this thing displease you, for the sword devours one as well as another; make your battle against the city stronger and overthrow it;’ and so encourage him.” (2 Sam. 11:25)

David’s encouragement of Joab was sheer pretense. Joab lost the battle because he obeyed David’s orders to have Uriah killed. David never before had treated the loss of his men so casually. This was not his normal practice. No great captain of history would be so philosophical in defeat as to say “the sword devours one as well as another.”

Now when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband. (2 Sam. 11:26)

David’s carnality brought sorrow and grief to Bathsheba who apparently loved her husband and mourned for him. The sins of one believer often involve and hurt others.

When the time of mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house and she became his wife; then she bore him a son. But the thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the Lord. (2 Sam. 11:27)

No believer can be a winner when out of fellowship or outside the plan of God. David was no exception. Not once during ‘Operation Bathsheba’ did David confess his sins. He deserved what he gave Uriah, but after the entire incident David was still alive. God still had a plan for his life. But only after undergoing the severe physical and emotional agony of divine discipline did he finally rebound. Then he could continue to mature as a believer.

Was it Worth It?

O Lord, rebuke me not in Thy wrath; and chasten me not in Thy burning anger. For Thine arrows have sunk deep into me, and Thy hand has pressed down on me. (Ps. 38:1-2)

Here is a picture of self-induced misery and piercing pain. David agonizes under the ordeal he experiences from divine discipline for his sins. These “arrows” were God’s arrows of discipline which penetrated to the depths of David’s soul. “Thy hand has pressed down on me” is a figure of speech dramatizing the gravity of David’s plight. He was being justly punished by the Lord.

There is no soundness in my flesh because of Thine indignation; there is no health in my bones because of my sin. For my iniquities are gone over my head; as a heavy burden they weigh too much for me. My wounds grow foul and fester. Because of my folly, I am bent over and greatly bowed down; I go mourning all day long. (Ps. 38:3-6)

Verses 3-6 describe the traumatic emotional and physical consequences of David’s sin. “No soundness in my flesh” is a Hebrew idiom for loss of health. David’s sins affected his physical and mental health. His festering guilt became an emotional burden that left him severely depressed which was reflected in his physical demeanor.

The severity of this discipline must be attributed to his failure to rebound (Ps. 32:3). When we fail to rebound and isolate our sin a chain reaction develops. The original sin becomes compounded by guilt reaction coupled with various mental attitude sins, including hypocrisy, fear, worry, anxiety, depression, envy, bitterness, hatred, anger. Together these sins produce stress and anguish in the soul, which in turn destroy physical health (Ps. 32:3-4).

For my loins are filled with burning; and there is no soundness in my flesh. I am benumbed and badly crushed; I groan because of the agitation of my heart. (Ps. 38:7-8)

The "loins" refer to the nervous system, which was affected by David's mental attitude sins. As a result of worry and anxiety his physical misery became so intense that he wandered about groaning.

Lord, all my desire is before Thee; and my sighing is not hidden from Thee. My heart throbs, my strength fails me; and the light of my eyes, even that has gone from me. (Ps. 38:9-10)

David's problem was overt sin driven by mental attitude sins, including guilt. The ever-increasing stress these sins placed on David's soul threatened his sanity. He lost motivation, energy, the capacity for enjoying life.

My loved ones and my friends stand aloof from my plague; and my kinsmen stand afar off. (Ps. 38:11)

Not only did David's sins destroy his temporal fellowship with God and his health, they devastated his human relationships. No one enjoys being around someone who is always miserable. No one desires to become embroiled in God's discipline of another believer. David's friends began to avoid him. Even his family gave him a wide berth.

Those who seek my life lay snares for me; and those who seek to injure me have threatened destruction, and they devise treachery all day long. But I, like a deaf man, do not hear; and I am like a dumb man who does not open

his mouth. Yes, I am like a man who does not hear, and in whose mouth are no arguments. (Ps. 38:12–14)

Divine discipline may also include attacks from your enemies. David's numerous enemies relished the opportunity these calamitous circumstances offered. Though they may not have understood the cause, they realized he had become weak and vulnerable. Taking advantage of David's weakness they devised cruel and devious attacks against him.

In this numbed condition David had little to say. Defenseless and brooding, he was unmotivated to fight back. All the issues that make life worthwhile became irrelevant to him.

Having lost hope and hit bottom, he finally realized his only hope was in the Lord. Only after intensive divine discipline does David consider rebound.

For I hope in Thee, O Lord; Thou wilt answer, O Lord my God. For I said, "May they not rejoice over me, who, when my foot slips, would magnify themselves against me." For I am ready to fall and my sorrow is continually before me. (Ps. 38:15–17)

David's Rebound

David's pain and misery became so unbearable that he longed to end his suffering.

For I confess my iniquity; I am full of anxiety because of my sin. (Ps. 38:18)

The first half of this verse, the confession, illustrates *how* to recover fellowship. "For I confess my iniquity" was David's prayer of rebound. Naming sins to God the Father is all that is required. The second half of the verse reveals David's emotions at the time. Emotions may be present and are perfectly normal, but are not the basis for divine forgiveness. Feeling sorry for his sins was a legitimate reaction, but it is dependence upon God's provision, not human emotion, that restores the believer to fellowship.

What a Price to Pay!

What finally brought David to his senses? God ordered Nathan the prophet to confront the king, a fearful prospect since the unstable king was the final authority in the land. Yet Nathan as a prophet had the responsibility to be critical of the political leadership of Israel.

Nathan chose to confront David by using a parable. In this narrative the events illustrate David's sins. But David had so rationalized and justified his sins that he was blind to the application of the parable. He never would have reacted with such indignation if he had understood its true meaning.

Then the Lord sent Nathan to David. And he came to him, and said, "There were two men in one city; the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a great many flocks and herds. But the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb which he bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and his children. It would eat of his bread and drink of his cup and lie in his bosom, and was like a daughter to him. Now a traveler came to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take from his own flock or his own herd, to prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him; rather he took the poor man's ewe lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him." (2 Sam. 12:1-4)

If David had not sunk so deeply into carnality he would have perceived the meaning of the parable: He was the rich man. The poor man was Uriah the Hittite, now dead. His only possession had been "one little ewe lamb"—Bathsheba.

In ancient Israel the custom was to kill the fatted calf or lamb to welcome a visitor. Rather than taking from his own abundant flocks, the rich man stole the one lamb of the poor man. By application, David had several beautiful wives, yet he took Bathsheba from Uriah.

Then David's anger burned greatly against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the Lord lives, surely the man who has done this deserves to die. And he must make restitution for the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and had no compassion." (2 Sam. 12:5-6)

Why was David so outraged? His sense of justice was offended, yet he failed to make the personal application. Unwittingly, he pronounced his own judgment. Only God's grace commuted the death sentence (Ex. 21:14; Lev. 20:10). Instead of the death penalty the Lord used a fourfold restitution as the basis for David's discipline. God chastened David beyond what has been recorded in Psalm 38. The longer you remain out of fellowship, the higher the price you pay.

Nathan then said to David, "You are the man!" (2 Sam. 12:7a)

The truth struck David like a thunderbolt. But before he could react Nathan continued:

"Thus says the Lord God of Israel, 'It is I who anointed you king over Israel and it is I who delivered you from the hand of Saul. I also gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your care, and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added to you many more things like these!'" (2 Sam. 12:7b-8)

David was appointed king over Israel by the grace of God, not because of his magnificent abilities. God brought it to pass, not David. Everything David had was courtesy of God's grace. The same is true for all of us. Everything we have, any blessing in life, is courtesy of the grace of God.

"Why have you despised the word of the Lord by doing evil in His sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the sons of Ammon. Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife." (2 Sam. 12:9-10)

By his sinful actions David "despised" the will of God. God pronounced David's discipline: Violence would plague his family for years to come.

“Thus says the Lord, ‘Behold, I will raise up evil against you from your own household; I will even take your wives before your eyes, and give them to your companion, and he shall lie with your wives in broad daylight. Indeed you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and under the sun.’” (2 Sam. 12:11–12)

David’s sins had been committed in private, but his discipline would be administered in public. All Israel would be witness. David himself proclaimed his discipline in verse 6. God would punish him fourfold from his “own household.”

Second Samuel 12:13 begins where David left off in Psalm 38:18. Did David say, I am sorry for what I have done and regret every sin; will You forgive me? Not at all! Notice how specific David’s rebound is.

Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.” And Nathan said to David, “The Lord also has taken away your sin; you shall not die.” (2 Sam. 12:13)

God instantly forgave and forgot David’s sins. Those past sins no longer kept David from fellowship with God. David need never again feel the oppressive guilt and overwhelming anxiety he expressed in Psalm 38. On the authority of God’s Word those sins were blotted out. To feel guilty for those sins again would have been another sin—the rejection of God’s wonderful grace provision of rebound.

Divine forgiveness never depends on our feelings, our degree of guilt, or even our faith. Forgiveness depends on God’s promise to cancel the sins when we name them to Him. To experience the blessing of renewed fellowship and to avoid the guilt trap, we must have confidence that God has forgiven and forgotten our sins and that we are cleansed “from all unrighteousness.” Then we, too, can share in David’s praise of God:

How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered! How blessed is the man to whom
the Lord does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit
there is no deceit! (Ps. 32:1–2)

David’s sins were completely forgiven. The remainder of David’s discipline was accomplished through members of his own family. David paid fourfold for his sins:

1. The child born of adultery died (2 Sam. 12:14–15);
2. Amnon, David's son, raped David's daughter Tamar (2 Sam. 13:1–14);
3. Absalom murdered Amnon to revenge Tamar (2 Sam. 13:22–29);
4. Absalom, the son David loved the most, led a national revolt against his father (2 Sam. 15–18).

His discipline finally terminated in 2 Samuel 18:33 when David heard of the death of Absalom.

And thus he said as he walked, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I have died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!" (2 Sam. 18:33)

When David heard the news of Absalom's death, he staggered under the pain of his loss. The discipline for his sins had come to an end. The four installments extended over a period of about fifteen years. If his discipline had been meted out at one time he may not have survived.

Though David's discipline was severe, because he had rebounded his suffering was for blessing. David advanced spiritually throughout these years. He learned to depend on the Lord in the most adverse circumstances. Many of the lessons David learned are preserved in the Psalms he authored during the Absalom revolution when he lost everything and became a fugitive. By staying in fellowship David was able to accelerate his spiritual advance exemplifying the principle of cursing turned to blessing.

THE DIVINE TRAINING PROGRAM

The tragic example of David in the Bathsheba incident illustrates the trauma of divine discipline. The twelfth chapter of Hebrews warns us not to forget the reality and repercussions of God's discipline.

And you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "My son, do not regard lightly the [corrective] discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reproved by Him; for those whom the Lord loves He

disciplines [warning discipline], and He scourges every son whom He receives [intensive discipline].” (Heb. 12:5–6)

To be a winner, the basketball player must perform within set boundaries. Just as the referee blows a whistle when the player steps out of bounds, God blows the whistle by administering discipline when the believer steps out of bounds through sin.

God begins with warning discipline to alert the believer to his carnality and motivate him to rebound. If the believer continues in carnality, “regards lightly the discipline of the Lord,” God intensifies the punishment. Unless rebound is used this intensive discipline becomes dying discipline, the sin unto death (1 John 5:16).

God’s punitive action is never arbitrary or abusive. God is always just and fair. Divine discipline is an integral part of God’s training program for the believer in the royal family. God’s discipline is both an evidence of our sonship (John 1:12) and a manifestation of God’s love for us even when we are carnal.

DO NOT FAIL THE GRACE OF GOD

It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness [integrity]. (Heb. 12:7–10)

Wise, loving parents discipline their children to train them for proper orientation to life as adults. Through discipline children learn humility, respect for authority, teachability, and objectivity—indispensable qualities for maturity. Just as parental discipline prepares children for human maturity, God’s discipline prepares believers for spiritual maturity. With spiritual maturity the believer can handle the vicissitudes of life.

“And live” means that when we rebound we can continue to advance in the Christian life. The more time we spend in fellowship, the more we can learn and apply Bible doctrine. As we grow spiritually our capacity for life and blessing increases and our life is enriched.

To “share His holiness” encompasses the entire spectrum of the advance to spiritual maturity in the Christian life. God disciplines us to get our attention and to bring us back to reality. Once focused we rebound, recover, and move on.

All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. (Heb. 12:11)

Punishment is painful, never pleasant. Discipline is designed for correction and training. The child that is never corrected grows up to be a rebellious, miserable, self-absorbed adult who is maladjusted to life. However, the child that has been well-trained has a greater opportunity to be stable and adjusted to life. Believers who respond to divine discipline by rebound are filled with the Spirit, have the potential for spiritual maturity and the ‘greater grace’ blessings of the spiritual life (James 4:6).

Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble [rebound], 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. Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. (Heb. 12:12–14)

Strengthening weak hands and feeble knees and making straight paths are synonyms for rebound resulting in the filling of the Holy Spirit, the source of spiritual strength. Rebound transforms you from the weakness of carnality to the strength of a restored spiritual life. The spiritual life is healed because the cursing has turned to blessing. The weakness of cursing under discipline becomes the strength of suffering for blessing.

One final warning concerning discipline is in verse 15.

See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled. (Heb. 12:15)

Some people respond to discipline from the Lord with bitterness and continue in bitterness. They become obstructionists, miserable people who are obstacles to their own spiritual growth and to the spiritual lives of others. They will never recover and become oriented to grace again, unless they understand the true purpose of discipline.

God has provided the believer with the perfect solution for sin. Since the moment we were saved God has always dealt with us in grace. He disciplines in grace; He forgives in grace; He blesses in grace. Rebound is the epitome of grace.

Rebound is the simplest yet most incredible concept in the spiritual life. The ease with which we name our sins and are forgiven by God memorialize His matchless grace. Rebound defeats sin and accesses the power of God. At our fingertips is the key that unlocks the Christian way of life. To grasp rebound is to open the door to the wonderful spiritual freedom that God's grace offers to every believer in Jesus Christ. Do not fail the grace of God; the grace of God never fails you. Rebound and keep moving!

Glossary

area of weakness The area of the sin nature which tempts the believer to personal sin. Temptation becomes sin only when the volition acquiesces to temptation.

area of strength The area of the sin nature which generates human good or dead works. (See **human good**)

carnality The absolute status of being out of fellowship with God because of unconfessed sin in the life. In carnality the believer loses the filling of the Holy Spirit and the sin nature controls the life. (Antonym: **spirituality**)

chain-sinning The result of allowing a past grievance or sin to generate further sins. As one or more sins build on previous sins a destructive sequence unfolds.

confess The mandate to every believer to simply name, cite, admit, or acknowledge sins in privacy to God the Father (1 John 1:9).

divine good Christian service or deeds performed by a believer who is filled with the Holy Spirit. (Antonym: **human good**)

filling of the Holy Spirit The absolute status of being in fellowship with God mandated to every Church Age believer; the opportunity to

use the power of God to execute the Christian life. This condition may be lost through sinning, but is recovered through privately naming or acknowledging sins to God the Father.

grace God's free gift of unmerited favor; all that God is free to do for mankind on the basis of the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Mankind through his own work can never accomplish or achieve the notice or favor of God.

human good Good deeds produced under the control of the sin nature. The believer with unconfessed sin in his life is not spiritual but carnal (controlled by the sin nature). The good deeds of a carnal Christian are indistinguishable from good deeds performed by an unbeliever and have no spiritual value. (Antonym: **divine good**)

indwelling of the Holy Spirit A permanent status acquired at the moment of salvation by every Church Age believer which transforms the body into a temple for the simultaneous indwelling of Jesus Christ.

integrity of God The combination of the divine attributes of righteousness and justice to form God's holiness; the totality of divine perfection.

logistical grace God's complete provision of every physical and spiritual need for every believer regardless of their spiritual status. Logistical grace keeps the believer alive, provides access to Bible doctrine, and enables him to grow spiritually in the devil's world.

omniscience Literally means "all-knowing" and describes God's attribute of complete knowledge of all things, including the actual and the possible past, present, and future events.

parable A short, fictitious narrative which illustrates a principle of Bible doctrine.

prodigal A reckless and extravagantly wasteful person.

sin Any mental, verbal, or overt activity that violates the character and standards of God.

sin nature An integral part of every human being which resides in the cell structure of the human body. The sin nature was acquired originally by Adam at his fall and is subsequently passed down genetically

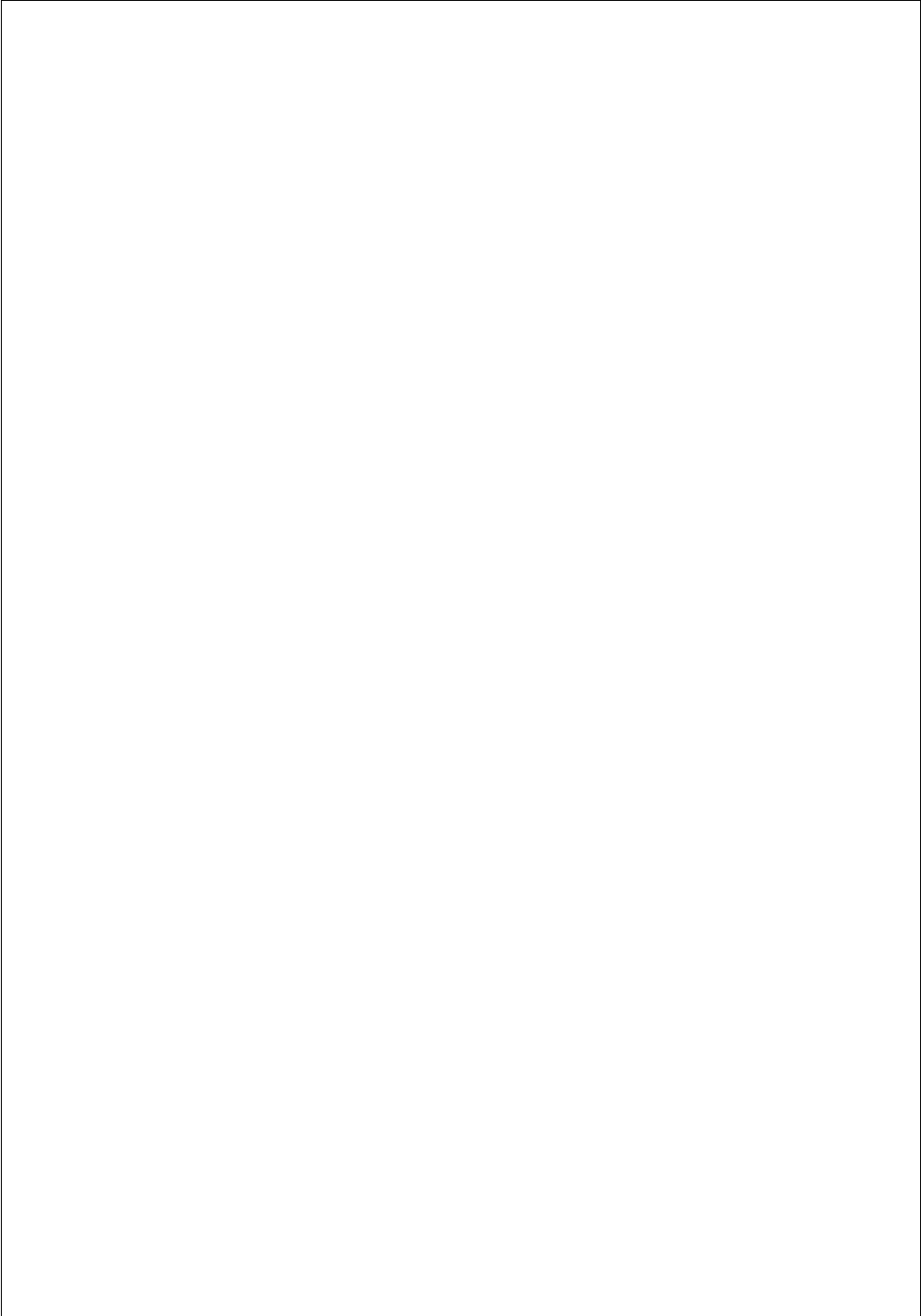
to all mankind through procreation. The result is both spiritual death and total depravity of all humanity, except Jesus Christ. The sin nature is composed of an area of strength, an area of weakness, trends toward legalism or antinomianism, and lust patterns.

spiritual death Separation from God at physical birth; imputation of the penalty of Adam's original sin to the genetically formed sin nature.

spirituality The absolute status of fellowship with God through the use of rebound and the resulting filling of the Holy Spirit. (Antonym: **carnality**)

taboo A prohibition arbitrarily imposed by a religious or social group. Taboos are not the basis for assessing sin.

Trinity A technical theological term designating God as one in essence but three coequal, coinfinite, and coeternal persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.



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