

“Assurance of Forgiveness”

Years ago, a friend of mine and his family were moving into a new home in Colorado Springs. One of the young sons was rolling a heavy snow tire through the front door to take down to the storage room in the basement. The father thought he better help, but the young boy insisted he was big enough to handle the task all by himself. On the way down the stairs, the huge tire and rim got away from him, rolled down the stairs, and crashed right through a wall. A brand-new house with a wheel sticking through a basement wall! Needless to say, the father was very upset, and the little boy cried.

That unfortunate incident affected their fellowship for a few minutes . . . but their father/son relationship was never affected. Nothing could break the blood relationship between the father and his son! Soon, the little boy apologized to his father, the father forgave him, their fellowship was restored, and they set about repairing the wall together.

In the same way, when you and I sin, our fellowship with God is hindered until we confess our sin, but our Father/son relationship is secure forever because of Jesus death, burial and resurrection and we are actually born into God's eternal family!

In our last lesson we learned the wonderful truth of Assurance of Salvation! We learned that our sins have been removed from us *“as far as the east is from the west.”* (Psalm 103:12) And we learned that ***“there is therefore, now, no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.”*** (Romans 8:1)

TAKE THE QUIZ:

#1 From the story we read about the little guy who bounced a heavy tire through a new basement wall, we learned that the unfortunate incident affected the FELLOWSHIP between the son and His Dad.

#2 The broken wall incident could never affect or break their father/son RELATIONSHIP.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A BELIEVER IN Jesus Christ fall into sin?

God has a wonderful answer to that problem: ***“If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*** 1 John 1:9

#3 What must we do to receive God's forgiveness according to 1 John 1:9?

ANSWER: CONFESS OUR SINS TO GOD

Note: To confess means that we agree with God that what we have done (or thought) is sinful. We need to be perfectly honest by confessing that we actually love the sin . . . it is important to be totally honest with God! He knows what is in our hearts.

#4 When we confess our sins to God, God is FAITHFUL to forgive us.

#5 God is also JUST to forgive us.

(Like a righteous judge, God can forgive us only because Jesus already paid the penalty for all our sins when He died upon the cross as we read in *1 John 1:7* – “. . . the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from ALL SIN.”

#6 God assures us in 1 John 1:9, that He is faithful and just to FORGIVE our sins, and to CLEANSE us from all unrighteousness.

(God not only forgives our iniquities, but when we honestly repent, He begins to remove the love we have for that sin . . . He cleanses us from the desires we have for the sins that constantly hound us.)

WHEN BELIEVERS SIN REAL MISERY SET IN!

“And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you are sealed unto the day of redemption.” Ephesians 4:30

When Christians fall into sin, the Spirit of God Who abides in our hearts, begins to **CONVICT** us in our hearts. He makes us aware that we have sinned and that our fellowship is now broken. God has placed a conscience in everyone, but new believers become even more aware of sinful thoughts and deeds because of the presence of God (the Holy Spirit) in their lives. My brother once told me that one of the ways he knew he had become a born-again believer was that his sins now made him miserable!

According to *Ephesians 4:30*, when we fail to confess a sin that we have committed, the Spirit of God is **GRIEVED**. This grieving of the Spirit of God is very similar to depression in the life of the sinning believer. When we sin and do not honestly confess that sin to God, we become very unhappy . . . the Spirit of God is grieved . . . that is why *Ephesians 4:30* warns us NOT to grieve the Spirit of God.

King David, whom the Bible describes as “*a man after God’s own heart*”, knew all about conviction of sin and the sorrow unconfessed sin brought into his life. David had committed adultery with Bathsheba and when she became pregnant, he tried to cover his sin and eventually had her husband put to death in battle. David sinned against

man and against God and this grieved the Spirit of God and made David absolutely miserable. That's what sin does to us . . . it destroys our walk with God and disrupts everything in our lives! David finally confessed his sin as we read in the Scriptures:

Psalm 51:1-4, 10, 12 – “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving-kindness; according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions . . . for I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, and Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight . . . create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me . . . restore to me the joy of Thy salvation”

Notice that David said that his sin was “*ever before him*” . . . he couldn't just shake it off and forget about it. He also asked the Lord to RESTORE THE JOY OF HIS SALVATION . . . unconfessed sin made a true born-again believer very unhappy and depressed.

In yet another passage David said that he was miserable when he kept silent and did not confess his sins before the Lord: ***“When I kept silence, my bones became old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me; my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.” Psalm 32:3-4***

David said that his unconfessed sin crippled him in every area of his life . . . it was like having broken bones. He knew that the hand of the Lord was heavy upon him . . . and his strength was zapped out of him like walking through a blazing desert with nothing to drink . . . like being weak from dehydration.

QUIZ (continued):

#7 Ephesians 4:30 warns us not to GRIEVE the Spirit of God.

#8 What does it mean to be “convicted” of our sins?

ANSWER: We are MADE AWARE OF THE SINFULNESS OF WHAT WE HAVE BEEN DOING and we are MADE AWARE THAT OUR FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD HAS BEEN BROKEN.

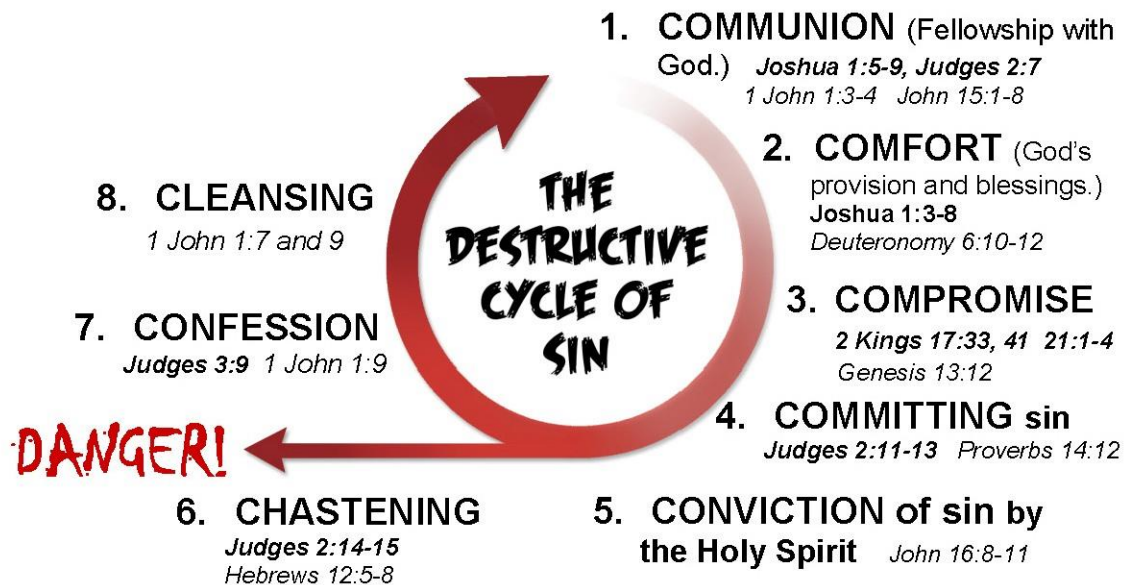
#9 When the Spirit of God is grieved because of our unconfessed sin and broken fellowship, we can feel DEPRESSED and MISERABLE.

#10 David's unconfessed sin made him miserable and he asked the Lord to restore the JOY of his salvation.

#11 What did David mean when he said that “*his sin was ever before him*?”

ANSWER: HE COULDN'T GET HIS SIN OUT OF HIS MIND and THE SIN WAS CONSTANTLY BOTHERING HIS CONSCIENCE.

THE DESTRUCTIVE CYCLES OF SIN:



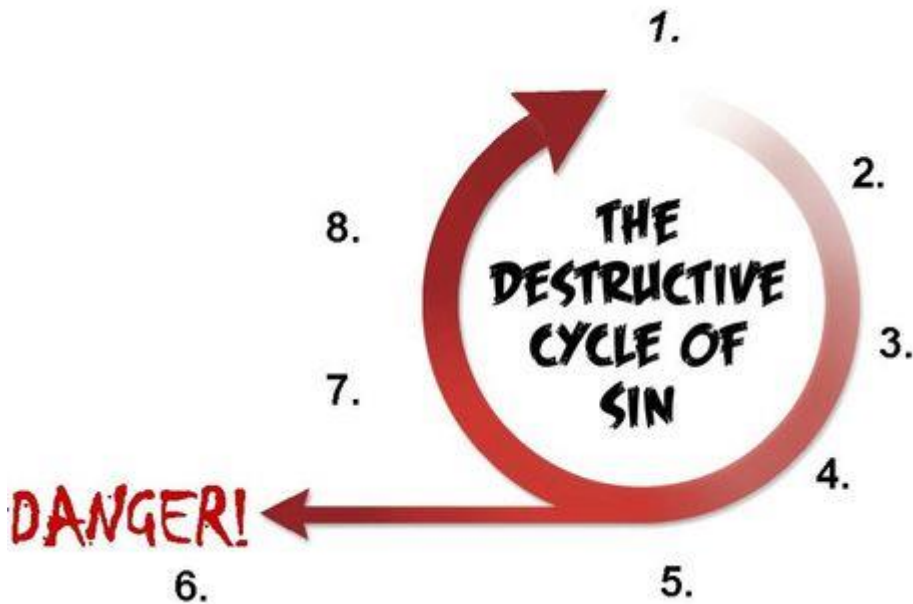
WHAT HAPPENS WHEN BELIEVERS REFUSE TO CONFESS AND CONTINUE TO LIVE IN SIN?

In the Old Testament book of Judges, we read about the people of Israel who walked with God for a while . . . and then they would compromise and slowly turn away from God. Soon they would be walking in total disobedience. Because God loved His chosen nation, He would chasten or discipline them and sometimes that discipline was pretty severe as enemy nations would attack their lands, burn their homes, and destroy their crops . . . and often carry the people off as slaves. Eventually, the Lord would send a judge into the nation to warn them to repent and turn back to God. When they repented, fellowship with God was restored and the people lived in security, prosperity, and the blessings of God . . . for a while . . . then they would go right back to their old sinful ways. They were continually experiencing the **DESTRUCTIVE CYCLES OF SIN** like we see in the illustration above. Here is what the destructive cycles looked like:

- 1. COMMUNION:** The people lived in obedience and enjoyed fellowship with God. These were days of great blessings for the people.
- 2. COMFORT:** During these days of obedience and fellowship with God, the people were comforted and experienced the blessings of peace, provision, and protection from God.

3. **COMPROMISE:** Slowly but surely the people would begin to compromise. They would ask- “What’s wrong with having a couple of pagan idols in the house . . . it can’t hurt anything and maybe it will make our fields produce better crops. Others might say – “My marriage is not going well, and I need someone else who cares for me and satisfies my sexual desires.”
4. **COMMITTING SIN:** Soon the people would openly commit sin and openly defy the laws of God. They would even stone the prophets that God sent to warn them.
5. **CONVICTION:** The Spirit of God convicts believers of their sins. If a person is never convicted of his sinful lifestyle, it might be an indication that he or she has never really been born-again or that his heart is so calloused that he no longer is aware of the presence of the Spirit of God in his life.
6. **CHASTENING:** Because God loved His people, He would chasten them in order to get their attention and bring them to repentance. By the way, real believers in Christ cannot sin and get away with it. I have seen Christian young people get caught stealing something from a store or cheating on a test and their unsaved friends never seem to get in trouble. That is because God loves His children and will not allow them to live in continual sin!
7. **CONFESSION:** The Lord chastens His children to bring them to the point of confession, repentance, and restored fellowship. If the believer refuses to continue in his sinful way, he now faces the **DANGER** of more severe chastening and even physical death. The Lord would rather take a defiant believer home to heaven than let him continue in his sinful ways!
8. **CLEANSING:** A genuine spirit of confession and repentance leads to cleansing of all our sins. In time, God’s people begin to despise sin . . . not just the sin that is in the world around them but especially the sin that lurks in their own hearts. This is the cleansing work of God’s Holy Spirit!

See if you can remember the 8-point outline without looking! (chastening, conviction, communion, confession, comfort, cleansing, compromise, committing)



BACK TO THE QUIZ:

#12 Walking in COMMUNION with God result in real COMFORT and the BLESSINGS, PROTECTION, PROVISION and PEACE of God.

#13 What do we call it when people begin to feel that sin isn't so bad and that God doesn't really mind if we sin.

ANSWER: COMPROMISE

#14 Can a real believer still sin?

ANSWER: YES, BUT HIS FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD IS BROKEN

#15 CONVICTION of sin comes from THE SPIRIT OF GOD and AN INBORN CONSCIENCE THAT HE PUTS IN EVERY PERSON.

#16 CHASTENING: When God's people sin, He disciplines them because HE LOVES THEM.

#17 When God chastens us what can happen in our lives?

ANSWER: EVERYTHING SEEMS TO GO BAD, WE MIGHT LOSE OUR JOBS, HEALTH AND EVEN OUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY, WE CAN EVEN LOSE OUR LIVES.

#18 Why does God chasten or discipline His Children?

**ANSWER: TO BRING US TO REPENTANCE, TO RESTORE US TO THE
PLACE OF FELLOWSHIP**

**#19 When we confess our sins, God also CLEANSSES and GIVES US A
HATRED FOR OUR SIN.**

**THIS WAS A LONG LESSON . . . but so important. We're glad you hung in there
and finished!**