

WHEN A CHRISTIAN FALLS

Understanding Sin, Transgression, Iniquity—
and the Mercy of Jesus



TURN TO JESUS MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

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and the Mercy of Jesus*

**Sin misses God's mark.
Transgression crosses God's line.
Iniquity bends what God made straight.**

*"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."
JOHN 6:37*

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For the Christian Who Is Afraid



Perhaps you love Jesus sincerely, yet there is one weakness that has followed you for years. You pray, resist, and sometimes experience victory—but then a moment of weakness comes and you fall again.

Afterward, guilt floods your heart. You wonder: “Am I a hypocrite? Am I one of those Jesus called workers of iniquity? Has God finally become tired of forgiving me?”

This booklet does not make peace with sin. Sin is deadly, and Christ came to deliver us from it. But neither will it make peace with despair. The same Bible that warns against lawlessness opens the door of mercy to every sinner who comes honestly to Jesus.

“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

— 1 John 2:1 (KJV)

The question is not only, “Did I fall?” The deeper question is, “After I fell, where did I run?”

Three Words to Remember



The Bible uses several words to reveal different dimensions of our rebellion against God. Their meanings overlap, but each gives us a picture we can remember.

SIN misses God's MARK.

TRANSGRESSION crosses God's LINE.

INIQUITY leaves the heart BENT.

Sin is the broad reality of falling short of God's will and violating His law. Transgression emphasizes crossing a boundary established by God. Iniquity emphasizes lawlessness, crookedness, guilt, and the inward distortion produced by turning from Him.

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."

— 1 John 3:4 (KJV)

These are not three unrelated problems. They are three ways of seeing the same terrible rupture: humanity chooses its own way over the will of its Creator. And the gospel is God's answer to the whole problem.

Sin Misses God's Mark



Imagine an archer aiming at a target. God's law and character are the mark. Sin is everything in us that fails to conform to that mark. Yet sin is not merely an innocent mistake. Scripture also calls it lawlessness, rebellion, unbelief, and choosing our way instead of God's.

Sin includes doing what God forbids and refusing to do what He commands. It reaches beyond outward acts to motives, desires, and the consent of the heart. Jesus showed that hatred lies behind murder and lust behind adultery.

"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

— James 4:17 (KJV)

At its center, sin says: "My will shall govern me." Salvation begins when the sinner stops defending self-rule and surrenders to the Lordship of Jesus.

God's standard is not merely a list of restrictions. His law expresses the love, truth, purity, and faithfulness of His character.

Transgression Crosses God's Line



To transgress is to pass beyond a boundary. God reveals His will and says, “This is the way, walk ye in it” (Isaiah 30:21).

Transgression recognizes the boundary and steps across it.

Adam received a direct command concerning the forbidden tree. When he knowingly crossed that boundary, Paul called it “Adam’s transgression” (Romans 5:14). Transgression therefore emphasizes rebellion against the Lawgiver—not merely the breaking of an impersonal regulation.

“Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me.”

— Psalm 19:13 (KJV)

Presumption knowingly uses God’s mercy as permission: “I will do this because God can forgive me afterward.” That is profoundly different from the believer who hates the sin, resists it, falls in weakness, and returns brokenhearted to Jesus.

Transgression says, “I know where God drew the line, but I will step across it.” Repentance turns around and comes back under His authority.

Iniquity Bends What God Made Straight



Iniquity reaches beneath the outward act. It points to moral crookedness—the inward distortion that produces sinful choices and leaves guilt behind.

- Love bends into selfishness.
- Authority bends into control.
- Sexuality bends into lust.
- Worship bends into idolatry.
- Truth bends into manipulation.
- Religious zeal bends into pride.

David understood that his adultery and murder were not isolated accidents. Something within required cleansing and renewal. Therefore, he did not ask merely for lighter consequences; he pleaded for a clean heart.

“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.”

— Psalm 51:10 (KJV)

We do not merely need God to restrain our hands. We need Him to straighten our hearts.

The Whole Problem—and the Whole Pardon



“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity.”

— Psalm 32:1–2 (KJV)

David deliberately brings all three ideas together. His rebellion could be forgiven. His sin could be covered. His guilt did not have to be charged against him.

Later he wrote: “I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin” (Psalm 32:5). The problem, confession, and forgiveness appear in one verse.

Lord, I missed Your mark. I crossed Your line. Something within me became crooked. Please forgive me, cleanse me, and make me new.

Biblical forgiveness never teaches that sin is unimportant. Calvary proves how terrible sin is—and how far divine love was willing to go to save the sinner.

“Depart From Me”



“And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

— Matthew 7:23 (KJV)

The Greek word translated “iniquity” is *anomia*—lawlessness or violation of law. It is the same word used in 1 John 3:4 where the KJV says that sin is “the transgression of the law.” Jesus is describing those who profess His name while practicing lawlessness.

These people are not atheists. They call Jesus “Lord, Lord” (Matthew 7:22). They claim prophecy, deliverance, and wonderful works performed in His name. Yet their defense is built upon their accomplishments, while their lives refuse His government.

**They wanted Christ’s name without Christ’s rule—
religious power without a surrendered relationship.**

Jesus did not say, “I once knew you and then rejected you.” He said, “I never knew you” (Matthew 7:23). Their impressive works had never been proof of a saving relationship.

Gifts Are Not Fruit



The immediate context of Matthew 7 begins with false prophets and Christ's warning: "Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Matthew 7:20). He did not say we would know them by spectacular gifts.

- A gift can attract attention; fruit reveals character.
- A position can provide influence; fruit reveals surrender.
- Religious language can impress people; fruit reveals who governs the heart.
- Wonderful works can be claimed; only Christ can testify, "I know you."

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

— **Matthew 7:21 (KJV)**

Obedience does not purchase salvation. We are saved by grace through faith, not by our works. But saving grace does not preserve rebellion; it creates a new life that desires God's will.

Obedience is not the root of salvation. It is the fruit of knowing Jesus.

When I Fall, I Shall Arise



“Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise.”
— Micah 7:8 (KJV)

Falling Is Not Making Peace



Jesus is not describing everyone who has ever committed a sin. If that were the meaning, no converted sinner could be saved. He is confronting a settled practice of lawlessness hidden beneath religious profession.

The worker of iniquity protects, excuses, and plans for sin while refusing Christ's authority. The struggling believer grieves over sin, confesses it, resists it, and seeks Christ's power—even when the struggle has been long and some battles have been lost.

One makes peace with sin. The other is at war with sin, even though he sometimes loses a battle.

A fall must never be treated lightly. But neither does a fall prove that no relationship with Jesus exists. What happens afterward reveals much about the direction of the heart.

"For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again."

— Proverbs 24:16 (KJV)

Peter Fell—and Jesus Restored Him



Peter's weakness was fear and self-preservation. He confidently promised that he would never deny Jesus. Within hours, he denied Him three times, even with cursing and swearing.

That was serious sin. Scripture does not soften it. Yet when Peter realized what he had done, "he went out, and wept bitterly" (Matthew 26:75). He did not defend the denial or redefine it. His heart broke because he loved the One he had denied.

"But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

— Luke 22:32 (KJV)

Peter's courage failed terribly, but his faith did not ultimately fail. He returned. Jesus restored him and later strengthened him at the very point where he had fallen.

Failure need not be the final chapter. In the hands of Jesus, the place of our deepest humiliation can become the place of deeper dependence.

David Wanted More Than Relief



David committed adultery and arranged the death of Uriah. When confronted, he finally stopped hiding and said, “I have sinned against the LORD” (2 Samuel 12:13). Psalm 51 records the depth of his confession.

“For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.... Create in me a clean heart, O God.”

— Psalm 51:3, 10 (KJV)

David was not merely asking God to remove punishment. He wanted the inward source cleansed. That is a vital evidence of repentance.

True repentance says, “Lord, do not merely get me out of trouble. Get this sin out of me.”

Remorse hates the pain, embarrassment, or consequences. Godly sorrow hates what sin has done to our relationship with God and to other people. It does not stop at feeling terrible; it turns toward confession, surrender, and change.

Temptation Is Not Automatically Sin



Many sensitive Christians condemn themselves because an unwanted thought, impulse, or temptation entered the mind. But Jesus “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). Therefore temptation itself cannot be identical with sin.

“Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin.”

— James 1:14–15 (KJV)

Temptation presents something to the mind. The will must decide whether to reject it or welcome, cherish, and obey it. An unwanted thought is not the same as choosing that thought.

Temptation knocking at the door is not the same as inviting it inside.

Do not linger to negotiate with temptation. Turn immediately to Christ, quote His Word, leave the setting if necessary, and choose the way of escape He provides.

The Presence of Conflict



Conversion does not eliminate the fallen human nature or end temptation. It changes the governing allegiance of the heart. A conflict begins because the Holy Spirit now works against the desires of the flesh.

“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other.”

— Galatians 5:17 (KJV)

The presence of conflict does not by itself prove the absence of conversion. The war may exist precisely because the Spirit is working. Before surrender, sin often ruled with little resistance; afterward, another power has entered the battlefield.

Yet conflict must never become an excuse. Paul commands, “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body” (Romans 6:12). Sin may attack, but it must not be willingly crowned as king.

The Christian life is not the absence of warfare. It is a new allegiance in the warfare—and access to a strength greater than our own.

The Accuser Does Not Have the Last Word



“They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony.”

— Revelation 12:11 (KJV)

Satan's Leverage



The devil does not merely want an isolated act. He wants to use that act as leverage to separate the believer from Jesus.

He first tempts you to sin. Then he accuses you for falling. Before the fall he whispers, “It is not serious.” Afterward he says, “It is too serious to be forgiven.”

His cycle is calculated:

- Temptation produces a fall.
- The fall produces accusation and shame.
- Shame produces hiding and secrecy.
- Secrecy produces isolation and spiritual weakness.
- Weakness makes the next temptation stronger.

“The accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.”

— **Revelation 12:10 (KJV)**

Satan minimizes sin before the fall and magnifies it afterward. He wants the sinner to believe the very Savior he avoided before the fall must now be avoided after it.

How Jesus Breaks the Leverage



Satan tries to turn something you did into who you are: “You did not merely fail; you are a failure. You did not merely commit sin; you are hopeless.” Jesus never excuses the act, but neither does He surrender the repentant sinner to the accuser.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

— 1 John 1:9 (KJV)

Confession brings the hidden thing into God’s light. It breaks the secrecy on which Satan’s leverage depends. Where another person has been harmed, repentance also seeks to make matters right as far as safely and rightly possible.

Satan exposes sin to produce despair. Jesus reveals sin to produce repentance, forgiveness, and restoration.

The answer to falling is not hiding from Jesus. It is running immediately to Jesus. The sin must not become a protected secret, a defended identity, or an excuse to abandon prayer.

Conviction or Condemnation?



The Holy Spirit's conviction and Satan's accusation may both bring sin to mind, but their character and purpose are different.

- Conviction identifies the wrong; condemnation attacks your identity.
- Conviction calls you into the light; condemnation tells you to hide.
- Conviction leads toward Jesus; condemnation drives you away.
- Conviction produces repentance; condemnation produces hopeless paralysis.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

— Romans 8:1 (KJV)

**The Holy Spirit shows me my sin so I will run to Jesus.
The accuser shows me my sin so I will run from Jesus.**

Do not confuse the pain of genuine conviction with a divine command to despair. Christ reveals the wound because He intends to cleanse and heal it.

What Sincere Confession Looks Like



Biblical confession is more than a vague request that God forgive everything. It means agreeing with God about the wrong and refusing to defend it.

- Name the sin honestly before God.
- Make no excuse and place no blame on another.
- Turn from whatever is feeding it.
- Make appropriate restitution where another was harmed.
- Receive God's promised forgiveness by faith.
- Walk forward in new obedience.

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

— Proverbs 28:13 (KJV)

Forsaking does not mean we must prove a lifetime of future perfection before God may forgive today. It means the heart has stopped protecting the sin and has turned toward God, willing to follow wherever He leads.

Repentance does not purchase mercy. It opens the clenched hand so mercy can be received.

What If It Is the Same Sin Again?



Repeated failure must be taken seriously, but it is not a reason to stop coming to Jesus. Instead, it calls for deeper surrender and wiser action.

- What usually happens immediately before the fall?
- What access, place, device, relationship, or routine feeds it?
- Am I tired, angry, lonely, discouraged, or spiritually neglected?
- Am I relying on willpower while preserving the opportunity?
- Whom can I trust for prayer and honest accountability?

“Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”

— Romans 13:14 (KJV)

Sometimes we pray for victory while keeping the door propped open. Sincere repentance is willing to remove access, change routines, accept help, and take practical steps that agree with the prayer.

God’s mercy is not permission to plan another fall. It is power and opportunity to begin walking differently.

A Battle Plan for the Weak Moment



Before temptation: begin the day surrendered to Christ. Fill the mind with Scripture. Identify predictable triggers. Remove unnecessary access. Do not isolate yourself.

During temptation: recognize it quickly. Call upon Jesus. Quote a promise. Leave the setting. Contact a trustworthy believer. Do not negotiate with the temptation.

After a fall: go immediately to Christ. Confess specifically. Make no excuse. Receive forgiveness by faith. Repair what can be repaired. Study what opened the door. Strengthen the weak point and rise again.

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

— Hebrews 4:16 (KJV)

At the throne we find mercy for the guilty and grace for the needy. We need mercy after falling—and grace before the next fall.

When You Do Not Feel Forgiven



A sincere believer may confess repeatedly because forgiveness does not feel real. But God's promise rests upon His faithfulness, not the intensity of our emotions.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins."

— 1 John 1:9 (KJV)

Faith says: "Lord, I do not feel clean, but You have promised to forgive and cleanse the one who sincerely confesses. I choose to believe Your Word above my feelings."

Presumption minimizes sin by saying it does not matter. Despair minimizes Christ by saying His blood cannot cover it. Faith agrees with God about both: the sin is terrible, and the Savior is sufficient.

Do not call God unfaithful by insisting that the sin you sincerely confessed is greater than the promise He gave.

Consequences may remain, relationships may require healing, and habits may require continued resistance. But forgiveness can be received now because Christ's worthiness—not ours—is its foundation.

Examine the Direction of Your Heart



Do not judge repentance merely by how terrible you feel. Ask honest questions in the presence of Jesus:

- Am I calling the sin what God calls it?
- Am I confessing it—or protecting and excusing it?
- Do I want freedom from the sin or only from its consequences?
- Am I willing to remove what feeds it?
- Will I seek trustworthy help rather than preserve secrecy?
- When I fall, do I run toward Jesus or away from Him?
- Am I trusting my performance—or Christ’s mercy and power?

Only God knows the heart perfectly. These questions do not provide permission to judge another person’s final condition. They help us distinguish honest surrender from cherished rebellion.

Do not ask only, “How many times have I fallen?” Ask, “Which direction is my heart facing, and what am I doing with the light God has given me?”

He Will Not Cast You Out



"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

— John 6:37 (KJV)

Jesus Answered the Whole Problem



“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities... and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

— Isaiah 53:5–6 (KJV)

At Calvary, Jesus bore the penalty for the mark we missed, the boundary we crossed, and the crookedness and guilt produced by our rebellion. He offers more than pardon: He offers cleansing, a new heart, the Holy Spirit, and strength for obedience.

The gospel is not God pretending rebellion does not matter. Grace is God bearing the cost of our rebellion in order to forgive, restore, and transform us.

The struggling Christian may fall, but he does not make peace with the sin. He confesses it, reaches again for Christ, rises, and continues seeking victory.

“Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

— John 6:37 (KJV)

A Prayer When You Have Fallen



Lord Jesus, I confess that I have sinned against You. I will not excuse, conceal, or rename my sin. I cannot cleanse or change my own heart, but I believe You are willing and able to forgive me.

Please create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me. Show me every door I must close and every step I must take. When temptation comes, remind me that I belong to You. When I am weak, teach me to reach for Your strength.

If I fall, keep me from despair and lead me immediately back to Your feet. I surrender my will, my weakness, and my entire life to You. Thank You for promising that the one who comes to You will never be cast out. In Jesus' name, amen.

**WHEN YOU FALL: CONFESS. COME INTO THE LIGHT.
TAKE CHRIST'S HAND. RISE AGAIN.**

Prepared for free distribution by Turn to Jesus Ministries International. Scripture quotations are from the King James Version. Word-study note: Matthew 7:23 and 1 John 3:4 both use the Greek anomia (Strong's G458). This booklet is intended for biblical encouragement and discipleship; it is not a substitute for qualified pastoral, medical, or mental-health care when such help is needed.
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