

THE FOUR STATES OF MAN

INTRODUCTION

- A. People tend to classify one another in a variety of ways;
 - 1. By wealth; whether rich, poor, or middle class.
 - 2. By nationality; whether American, Portugese, Australian, or Chinese.
- B. However, the only constructive means whereby one may be categorized is according to his or her spiritual condition.

I. INNOCENT

- A. Every soul that has ever tasted life has passed through this state.
 - 1. **Deuteronomy 1:39**
 - a. *“Little ones,”* that is *“children,”* *“have no knowledge of good and evil.”*
 - b. Because they have not known it, they are without sin.
 - 2. **Romans 7:9**
 - a. The apostle Paul, who grew up under the Law of Moses, *“was alive once without the law.”*
 - b. Since *“sin is not imputed when there is no law”* (**Romans 5:13**), we must understand Paul to mean that he was innocent once, as a child, before he committed sin and thus activated the Law.
- B. **Treatment**
 - 1. Since all children are innocent, they should be universally received.
 - 2. **Mark 10:13-16**
 - a. Jesus exemplified how we must treat the little ones.
 - i. He expressed displeasure in His disciples for forbidding them.
 - ii. The Lord said, *“Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them...”*

- b. He emphasized the innocence of children by saying that we must be like children in order to enter the kingdom of God.
 - i. Why would we be told to imitate children, unless they were without sin?
 - ii. **1st Corinthians 14:20**

C. Temporary Status

- 1. Unless life is cut short, no one remains innocent perpetually.
- 2. **1st Corinthians 13:11**
Children grow into adulthood.

II. SINFUL

- A. Departing the state of innocence, one arrives at the state of iniquity.
- B. None have ever circumvented this stage in life.

- 1. **Romans 3:23**
- 2. **1st John 1:8, 10**
- 3. **Ecclesiastes 7:20**
- 4. **Christ is the only exception.**
 - a. **Hebrews 4:14-15**
 - b. **Hebrews 2:17-18**

C. Consequences

- 1. **Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-4**
 - a. God said that violating just one of His commands would result in death.
 - b. Satan said, *“you will not surely die.”*
 - c. Some still contend that one sin won’t keep us from our salvation, but God’s word has not changed.
- 2. **Romans 6:23**
 - a. How many sins must one commit to face eternal damnation?
 - b. *“The wages of **sin** is death,”* period.

3. **Isaiah 59:2**

D. **Treatment**

1. It is impossible to refrain from contact with sinners, since the world is full of them.

a. **John 17:14-16**

While we must not let the world in us, we must remain in the world.

b. The boat may be in the water, but the water must not be in the boat!

c. **1st Corinthians 5:9-13**

Attempting to avoid all sinners would compel us to depart from the world.

d. Christians are not expected to be monks or nuns, living as recluses, apart from all worldly contact.

2. Nevertheless, our interaction with the sinful world should be limited.

a. **1st Corinthians 15:33**

If all of our friends are immoral, we will lose our own sense of godliness.

b. **2nd Corinthians 6:14-18**

c. So long as we can influence others, we should participate with them, but when the influence begins to work in the opposite direction, we should find new friends.

3. There must be a balance.

a. Since *“all have sinned,”* we should sympathize with those lost in sin, remembering that *“just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise”* (Luke 6:31).

b. **Matthew 11:19**

If Jesus was called the friend of sinners, we ought to befriend some sinners, too.

c. **Luke 5:27-32**

Of course, Christ's ultimate goal in such interaction was to **change** those people.

d. **1st Corinthians 9:19-22**

We need to learn how to "*become all things to all men,*" not to emulate them in their wickedness, but to save them.

F. Requirements

Considering the consequences of this status, all should desire to leave it behind.

1. **Romans 1:16**

To be saved, the gospel must be obeyed.

2. **Romans 10:1-17**

This involves being taught the gospel (14-17), believing it (9-11), and confessing it (9-10, 13).

3. **Acts 2:36-41**

Once convicted of sin, repentance and baptism are necessary to be saved.

III. FORGIVEN

A. Leaving the sinful condition, one may find forgiveness.

1. **1st Corinthians 6:9-11**

Even the worst sinners may be forgiven.

2. **Romans 4:7**

This is a truly blessed state!

3. **Luke 13:23-24**

However, it is a lonely station.

B. Requirements

1. **Acts 2:38-47; 1st Corinthians 12:13**

When one is saved, by being baptized, he is added by the Lord to His church.

a. Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 4:11-16

- i. The church is the body of Christ.
- ii. Having a place in the body of Christ, His church, we are responsible for building it up, doing our share.

b. 1st Peter 2:9-10

- i. The word “church” comes to us from the Greek “ekklesia,” meaning those who are “called out.”
- ii. Being God’s special “called out” people obligates us to proclaim His praises.

c. Hebrews 10:23-25

- i. The most fundamental aspect of edifying the church is to assemble regularly with the saints.
- ii. To do otherwise is inconsiderate (24).

2. Ephesians 5:1-5

- a. When we left sin, we “were sanctified” (1st Corinthians 6:9-11).
- b. That makes us saints.
- c. As saints, there is a certain conduct we must conform to.
- d. **Romans 12:2**

3. “Lest [we] fall,” we must continue to grow.

a. 2nd Peter 3:17-18

This involves constant learning.

b. Hebrews 5:12-14

It is expected that we learn enough to impart to others, rather than remain in a perpetual state of spiritual infancy.

IV. FALLEN

- A. The state of forgiveness is conditional.

1. **Colossians 1:21-23**

- a. Reconciliation in Christ's body is available "*if indeed you continue in the faith.*"
- b. Those who are "*moved away from the hope of the gospel*" have no reason to expect the reward of heaven.

2. **1st Corinthians 15:1-2**

"You are saved, if you hold fast that word."

3. **Galatians 5:4**

It is entirely possible to fall from grace and become "*estranged from Christ.*"

B. Consequences

1. **1st Timothy 5:8**

It is possible to be "*worse than an unbeliever.*"

2. **2nd Peter 2:20-22**

- a. Christians who return to "*the pollutions of the world*" are in a **worse** condition than if they had never become Christians (20).
- b. It is actually **better** to never become a Christian than to become one, then fall away (21).
- c. Spiritually speaking, there is no legitimacy to the adage "It is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all."

3. **Hebrews 10:23-31**

- a. Sinning deliberately after becoming a Christian invalidates Christ's sacrifice (26).
- b. In this most sorry of conditions, one should fearfully expect judgment from a wrathful God (27).
- c. Those who turn away from the gospel are subject to "*worse punishment*" than merciless execution (28-29).

4. **Hebrews 6:4-6**

In falling away, one is guilty of crucifying Christ again.

C. Treatment

1. The faithful are strongly encouraged to restore the fallen.
 - a. **Galatians 6:1**
 - b. **James 5:19-20**
 - c. **Luke 15:4-10**

Restoring the lost is so important that it is worth leaving the saved to do.
2. If attempts to restore another go unheeded, drastic action is necessary.
 - a. **Matthew 18:15-17**

The church must avoid him.
 - b. **2nd Thessalonians 3:6, 14**
 - i. The “*disorderly*” must be **withdrawn** from.
 - ii. Withdrawal means to “*not keep company with him.*”
 - c. **1st Corinthians 5:4-5, 11**
 - i. Those who were once “*named a brother,*” but who have returned to sin must **not** be interacted with.
 - ii. The faithful should “*not even eat with such a person*” because interaction expresses approval of their behavior and causes one to participate in their sin (**2nd John 9-11**).
 - d. **Matthew 19:29**

There is no exception when it comes to family, either.
 - e. Whereas those of the world, lost in their sins, should become our friends, eating with them and keeping company with them as Christ did, those who were once Christians, but have fallen away, must be avoided altogether, because their condition is **worse** than that of the lost soul who has never been saved.
3. However, when efforts to restore the fallen meet with success, the subjects should be readily welcomed back.
 - a. “*You have gained your brother*” (**Matthew 18:16**).

b. 2nd Corinthians 2:6-11

- i. The scripturally prescribed punishment is sufficient, and therefore must not continue (6).
- ii. He must be forgiven and comforted (7).
- iii. Love must be “reaffirmed” (8), meaning that he should have no occasion to doubt that he is loved.

c. Luke 15:1-32

D. Requirements

1. To return to the state of forgiveness, this sinner does not need to repeat the entire process he accomplished in order to first become a Christian.

2. Acts 8:13-24

A baptized believer (13) who commits sin should:

- a. Repent (22).
- b. Pray for forgiveness (22).
- c. Request prayer from the brethren (24).

3. 1st John 1:9

God will forgive when sins are confessed to Him.

4. James 5:16

Sins may also be confessed “to one another,” so that others can pray, too.

CONCLUSION

- A.** May children learn the scriptures now, so that they will be faithful to them as adults.

1. 2nd Timothy 3:14-15

2. Proverbs 22:6

- B.** Those who are now forgiven are encouraged to remain so, as they continue to mature as Christians.

1. 1st Corinthians 15:58

2. **2nd Peter 1:5-11**

C. Those now living in sin, having never tasted the forgiveness of God, we implore you: be saved now!

1. **2nd Corinthians 6:2**

2. **Acts 22:16**

D. Any who were forgiven at one time, but have returned to sin are desperately urged to repent!

1. **Revelation 2:4-5**