

## Reversionsim - The Eight Stages of Reversionism (or, backsliding)

### Ephesians 4:17-19:

“So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer **(1)** live as the Gentiles do, **(2)** in the futility of their thinking. They are **(3)** darkened in their understanding and **(6)** separated from the life of God <u>because of **(5)** the ignorance that is in them <u>due to **(4)** the hardening of their hearts. **(7)** Having lost all sensitivity, **(8)** they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.”

#### **(1) Reaction/Distraction Stage** ( “. . .live as the Gentiles do. . .”)

Gentiles unbelievers cannot focus on God during good or bad times.

The carnal believer faces impact in their life from circumstances that surface as a distraction (good or bad).

Impact- When something happens in life that causes you to spiritually flinch or look away from God. Like a bird hitting the windshield of a car, circumstances hit your view of God

Reaction- When you respond like a Gentile during circumstances and look away from the windshield.

Distraction- While you look away your focus is placed on some thing else. At this point you continue because you are either ignorant of doctrine or arrogant towards doctrine.

#### **(2) Frantic Search for Happiness** (“ . . .in the futility of their thinking. . .”)

“Futility” is the Greek word ματαιοτηι or “mataiotati” is the word for emptiness, futility, worthlessness.

New Testament uses it to refer to:

- Presumption of human thought
- Pagan Idolatry
- A deceitful way of life

The idea of emptiness in their thinking gives the impression of a vacuum in their soul that will implode and suck in the first thing they see after the impact of life in stage one.

This stage is very deceitful because everything seems peaceful and happy. All ideas and actions are quickly justified and engaged in.

It is a period of great freedom and unhindered burdens, similar to the experience of a person falling through the air after leaving the top of a ten story building. At least, a great sense of freedom and control for the first nine floors down. Hitting the ground is the beginning of stage three

#### **(3) Boomerang Stage** (“ . . .darkened in their understanding. . .”)

Frustration results from decisions made during stage two.

Adversity will increase forcing you to make a decision to return or continue into stage four.

This is the most common place for a believer to try to recover. But, they must have been taught how to recover and how to maintain or else they will never return to God’s perfect plan.

Attitudes of people in Boomerang Stage:

1. They want to try one more attempt at happiness without returning to God
2. They want to solve the problem without God due to their guilt.
3. They become angry at God and enter a more conscious rebellion.

..... (Stages 4, 5, 6 overlap but connect like a chain) .....

#### **(4) Black Out of the Heart** (“ . . .the hardening of their hearts. . .”)

The heart, or soul, is distorted, disengaged, or blacked out by the old sin nature.

When the heart is dysfunctional the emotions are left unrestrained and in control.

This leads quickly into stage five, Emotional Revolt

#### **(5) Emotional Revolt of the Soul** (“ . . .the ignorance that is in them. . .”)

Emotional revolt creates psychotic behavior

Emotions swing believer back and forth

Personality is fractured and the believer swings through a wide range of personalities during a daily routine: happy, cheerful, apathy, self pity, crabby, miserable.

Romans 7:24, "wretched man" is a psychological term

### **(6) Divine Detachment ("...separated from the life of God...")**

Failure to recover during stage five causes God to hand them over to themselves, their old sin nature.

Review:

- Believer in Fellowship. . . . . Controlled by Holy Spirit
- Believer in Stages 1 & 2. . . . . Controlled by Self
- Believer in Stages 3-5. . . . . Out of Control
- Believer in Stages 6-8. . . . . Controlled by a very distorted self

Example of Divine Detachment is Romans 1:24

Confession becomes a thing of the past

Life here is lived in Satan's Domain

False doctrine replaces truth

Norms and standards fall

Light in soul becomes darkness; answers can not be seen

Result is scar tissue on the soul or a callused conscience.

### **(7) Scar Tissue on the Soul ("...Having lost all sensitivity...")**

Just like scar tissue builds up on wounds and makes the skin ugly to the sight & insensitive to the touch, so the soul becomes ugly during human fellowship and insensitive to the Holy Spirit

The believer begins to hurt those around them and cannot fulfill Eph. 4:32, "Be kind & compassionate one to another."

With no sensitivity for right and wrong a whole new world opens up to them. They can allow themselves to do things they could not do before.

### **(8) Self Detachment ("...they have given themselves over to sensuality...")**

God detaches them at stage six. Here they detach themselves to their old sin nature

They live in greediness with no satisfaction

They become out cast

They rebel against everything listed below:

- Mankind-they use people
- Natural order
- Privacy
- Property
- Sexual boundaries
- Norms and standards
- The Lord Jesus Christ

This is the end of the line for them,

"They are brute beast, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught (put on exhibit as a source of testing to believers) and destroyed (die the sin unto death)." 2 Peter 2:12

One of two things happens with them:

1. They die the sin unto death (1 Corinthians 5:5; 1 John 5:16)
2. Live on earth as a source of testing for other believers, very similar to Satan's purpose

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** *If a person still has a desire to return to God they have not reached stage eight. They are at an earlier stage that does have a way out. Please see "Spiritual Recovery" from James 4:6-10.*