

THE FOUR STATES OF MAN

INTRODUCTION

A. **Galatians 3:28**

1. People tend to classify one another in a variety of ways:
 - a. By political affiliation: Republican, Libertarian, or Democrat
 - b. By age: young, middle aged, or old
 - c. By wealth: rich, poor, or middle class
2. However, the only constructive means whereby one may be categorized is according to his or her spiritual condition.

B. There are a total of four states men may occupy spiritually. We will consider them now.

I. INNOCENT

A. **Universality of condition**

Every soul that has ever tasted life has passed through this state.

1. **Deuteronomy 1:39**

“Little ones”, that is “children”, “have no knowledge of good and evil”.

Because they have not known it, they are without sin.

2. **Romans 7:9**

The apostle Paul, who grew up under the Law of Moses, *“was alive once without the law”*. 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**

Since all children are innocent, they should be universally received.

1. **Mark 10:13-16**

Jesus exemplified how we must treat the little ones, and He expressed displeasure in His disciples for forbidding them.

2. **1st Corinthians 14:20**

Not only should we accept them, but we should try to be like them, which is a fact that serves to underscore their innocence.

C. **Temporary Status**

Unless life is cut short, no one remains innocent perpetually.

1. **1st Corinthians 13:11**

Children grow into adulthood, leaving the elements of childhood behind.

II. **SINFUL**

Departing the state of innocence, one arrives at the state of iniquity.

A. **Universality of condition**

No one circumvents this stage in life.

1. **Romans 3:23**

"All have sinned".

2. **1st John 1:8, 10**

To say otherwise is to accuse God of lying.

3. **Hebrews 4:14-15**

Christ was the only exception.

B. **Consequences**

1. **Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-4**

God said that violating just one of His commands, a seemingly inconsequential one at that, would result in death. Satan said, *"you will not surely die"*. Some still contend that one sin won't keep us from our salvation, yet God's word has not changed.

2. **Romans 6:23**

How many sins must one commit to face eternal damnation? “*The wages of sin is death*”, period.

3. **Isaiah 59:1-2**

Prior to ultimate condemnation, the sinner is still cut off from God, such that his prayers are ignored.

C. **Treatment**

1. **Inevitability of interaction**

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

Attempting to avoid all sinners would compel us to depart from the world. Christians are not expected to be monks or nuns, living as recluses, apart from all worldly contact.

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

While we must not let the world in us, we must remain in the world, just as the boat may be in the water, but the water must not be in the boat!

2. **Limits of interaction**

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.

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**

Separation is warranted.

3. **Necessity of balance**

a. **Luke 6:31**

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”*.

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.

D. 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. Minority condition

1. Luke 13:23-24

There are few who will be saved.

B. Blessed condition

1. **1st Corinthians 6:9-11**
Even the worst sinners may be forgiven.

2. **Romans 4:7**
This is a truly blessed state!

C. Requirements

1. **1st Corinthians 12:13; Colossians 1:18**
Baptism puts one in His body. The body is the church.

a. **Ephesians 4:11-16**
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**
The word “church” comes to us from the Greek “ekklesia”, meaning those who are “called out”. Being God’s special “called out” people obligates us to proclaim His praises.

c. **Hebrews 10:23-25**
The most fundamental aspect of edifying the church is to assemble regularly with the saints. To do otherwise is inconsiderate (24).

2. **1st Corinthians 6:11**
When we left sin, we “were sanctified”, which makes us saints.

a. **Ephesians 5:1-5**
As saints, there is a certain conduct we must conform to.

b. **Romans 12:2**
We should not be conformed to the world, but transformed by the will of God.

3. **1st Peter 2:1-2**
Those who leave behind sinfulness should choose growth through God’s word.

a. **2nd Peter 3:17-18**

There is danger of drifting away if we aren't always 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. Reality of condition

The state of forgiveness is conditional.

1. 1st Corinthians 15:1-2

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

2. Colossians 1:21-23

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

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).

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 permanent apostasy, one is guilty of crucifying Christ again.

C. **Treatment**

1. **Restore the wayward**

a. **James 5:19-20**

The soul of the one who wanders from the truth must be turned back to save him from death.

b. **Galatians 6:1**

It is the responsibility of all “*who are spiritual*” to do this.

c. **Luke 15:4-10**

Restoring the lost is so important that it is worth leaving the saved to do.

2. **Withdraw from those who spurn restoration**

a. **Matthew 18:15-17**

The church must avoid those who refuse to be corrected.

b. **2nd Thessalonians 3:6, 14**

The “*disorderly*” must be **withdrawn** from. Withdrawal means to “*not keep company with him.*”

c. **1st Corinthians 5:4-5, 11**

Those who were once “*named a brother*”, but who have returned to sin must **not** be interacted with. The faithful should “*not even eat with such a person.*”

d. **2nd John 10-11**

Interaction expresses approval of their behavior and causes one to participate in their sin.

e. **Matthew 19:29**

There is no exception when it comes to family, either.

3. **Reaffirm those restored**

a. **Matthew 18:16**

The idea is to gain your brother.

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 15:11-32**

We should rejoice and must not be jealous.

D. **Requirements**

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.

1. **Acts 8:13-24**

A baptized believer (13) who commits sin should repent (22), pray for forgiveness (22), and request prayer from the brethren (24).

2. **1st John 1:9**

God will forgive when sins are confessed to Him.

3. **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**

One who is taught the scriptures young is much more likely to obey them in the future than one who is not.

2. **Proverbs 22:6**

One who is taught the scriptures young is much more likely to remain obedient to them in the future than one who is not.

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

1. **1st Corinthians 15:58**

Become immovable in Christ and continue in His work.

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

Add to your faith all those qualities He expects of you.

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

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

Let today be your salvation day!

2. **Acts 22:16**

"Why are you waiting?"

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

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

Jesus invites you back.