

3. When you Stumble

When you became a Christian

Were changed — died with Christ to old life — raised to new kind of life

New life of discipleship — submit your will to God's holy / perfect will

Your life started to show the "fruits of the Spirit"

This new life of fruitful discipleship is not automatic

God is at work — his desires and his ability to make those desires a reality

But, God will not force his desires upon you against his will

You must take the next step

You must agree that you want those desires - his love ...

You must be obedient to God's wishes

You must take the next step — Rom 12:1-2

Bad news — sometimes we fail to take that step

Act like we have not been changed in our conversion

Instead of love — anger that might develop into hate

Instead of joy — critical and bitter spirit

Instead of peace — anxiety and turmoil

(Don't mean to be a downer)

Excitement — need to know that the challenges are coming

May already have come

What will you do when you don't take the step of obedience?

When you stumble and fall in your Christian walk?

Define three terms

1. "Relativism"

Describes the culture out of which you have come

Denial of the existence of absolute truth

Philosophy that nothing necessarily right/wrong, true/false

That everything is relative

True for one person is not necessarily true for another

What is true for me this morning is not necessarily true this afternoon

World: "post-modern"

Bible: "rebellion" against God's authority

We believe that God is our Creator

He has the right/wisdom to determine truth

He is the standard of right/wrong

We also believe God is good

All-wise, all-good, Creator wants the best for his creation

Rules; guidelines — best for you; true (even if we disagree)

Ps 16:11

We are not relativists — there is truth, and it is determined by God

2. "Sin"

"Missing the mark"

Arrow aimed at middle of target — shoots/misses

Who establishes the mark?

E.g., we know God's "mark" for the tongue — Eph 4:29; 5:4

Despite the fact that God is all-wise and all-good, at times I know best

Miss the mark — Stumble in our walk — Sin

3. “Temptation” — being enticed to sin

Someone hurts you

Thought flits through your head to respond in anger — Temptation

Woman/Man walks by

Something inside you tells you to look her up and down — Temptation

A. Temptation is not sin

Temptation becomes sin when you yield to it

Sin when you yield and respond in anger

Sin when you let yours eyes dwell

Undress her in your mind

Fantasy relationship with him

B. Don’t have to give in to temptation

Flip Wilson

Mastery of sin has been broken

“In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33b)

God—“He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (1 Jn 4:4).

1 Cor 10:13

C. God is on your side

Basketball coach

Holy Spirit’s on-going role — Gal 5:16

What will you do when you stumble and sin — miss God's mark?

Defining moment in your spiritual life

Don't get it right, you will be miserable the rest of your life

Nothing more miserable than a child of God hanging on to sin

1. Confess your sin

Agreeing with God that you missed the mark — 1 John 1:8-9

Model of Psalm 51:1-4a,7,10-12

a. No excuses/victim — complete and total admission of sin

b. Agree with God that sin is *really* bad — no gray

c. Call to forgive not because you deserve it but because God is merciful

Your tendency will be to do the opposite

Sin is still present — it knows the power of confession

Whisper in your ear — make excuses — blame others

Confess just enough to avoid the consequences

None of this is true confession — never forgiveness/cleansing

Practical advice #1. Get it over with

Confess early — often — fully

If not, you will damage your relationship with God

You're not telling God anything he doesn't already know (1 a.m., whisper)

Practical advice #2. "Confess your sins to one another" (James 5:16)

Lie of sin is that it will only get worst if you tell someone

Power of sin is snapped when it is brought to the light!

2. Receive his forgiveness

1 John 1:9

How could God love a sinner like me?

How could God really love someone who keeps on sinning

He is God — faithful

3. Be cleansed

Ps 103:8-14

Conclusion: Confess

Tell God he is totally right and that you are totally wrong

Enjoy the freedom of being forgiven and cleansed

Ps 32:3-4; Ps 5, 1-2