

# GUIDE TO CHRISTIAN GROWTH

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*Developed as a study course by Emmaus Correspondence School, founded in 1942.*

*Guide to Christian Growth*

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# STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

Your new life in Christ should change the way you think and talk and live. This study will help you see how being a Christian has an effect on every decision you must make in life. It will help you to show that your faith works.

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## Course Components

This course has two parts: this study course and the exam booklet.

## **How To Study**

This study has twelve chapters, and each chapter has its own exam. Begin by asking God to help you understand the material. Read the chapter through at least twice, once to get a general idea of its contents and then again, slowly, looking up any Bible references given.

Begin studying immediately, or if you are in a group, as soon as the group begins. We suggest that you keep a regular schedule by trying to complete at least one chapter per week.

## **Exams**

In the exam booklet there is one exam for each chapter (exam 1 covers chapter 1 of the course). Do not answer the questions by what you think or have always believed. The questions are designed to find out if you understand the material given in the course.

After you have completed each chapter, review the related exam and see how well you know the answers. If you find that you are having difficulty answering the questions, review the material until you think you can answer the questions.

## **How Your Exams Are Graded**

Your instructor will mark any incorrectly answered questions. You will be referred back to the place in the course where the correct answer is found. After finishing this course with a passing average, you will be awarded a certificate.

If you enrolled in a class, submit your exam papers to the leader or secretary of the class who will send them for the entire group to the Correspondence School.

See the back of the exam booklet for more information on returning the exams for grading.

# I Fell, Now What?

## The Causes of Backsliding (falling back into old bad habits and sins)

A new believer does not *have* to become a backslider. God has given us “all things that pertain to life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3). If we sin, we lose the joy of our relationship with God, and it is our own fault.

However, we should know the cause and cure of backsliding. This will help us to avoid being backsliders, and will teach us how to help others who may have this problem.

How does backsliding begin? It is usually a slow process rather than a sudden happening. Simple pleasures may crowd out our Bible study and prayer times. Bad company may draw us away from interest in spiritual things. Secret sin may dull our sense of right and wrong. Bit by bit we give in to the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. We fail to speak openly of Christ. Soon we don’t seem to be at all different from the unsaved people around us. We can see this process working in the life of Samson (Judges 14–16); Elimelech (Ruth 1:1-5); and Peter (Luke 22:54-62).

## Picture of a Backslider

There are certain things that we usually see in the person who has wandered away from the Lord.

1. He has no taste for the Bible or for prayer. Like a sick man, his appetite is gone (1 Corinthians 3:1-2).
2. He does not care to spend time with those who love the Lord. He keeps out of their way. If he does attend church services, he does it to hide what he’s really like, and not because he enjoys it (2 Timothy 4:10).

3. He does not care about going ahead spiritually. Growing in grace does not seem to matter as much as it did before (Hebrews 5:12).
4. He feels he can get along well without God. He wants to make his own plans and live the way he pleases (James 4:13).
5. He is not happy. He may try to act as if he is happy, but a backslidden Christian is a poor, unhappy person. If a man can *go on happily* in a life that does not please the Lord, then surely he has never been really born again (Psalm 51:12).
6. He is always pointing out what is wrong in the lives of other people. He does not see that it is his own fault that he is unhappy, and he blames his friends. He makes us think of the story of the old man who was sleeping under a tree on a hot day. Some boys from the village rubbed strong-smelling cheese into his beard while he slept. When he woke up, he said the whole world smelled awful. The backslider acts just like that (Matthew 7:3).
7. He is always making excuses for himself. He says that people have not been fair with him, and that everything has been against him. He even says that he is more spiritual than other Christians (Malachi 2:17).

Sometimes we may think that a person is a true believer, when he has never really yielded his life to Christ. He has never been sorry for his sins nor trusted the Savior. He does not know that he is really not saved and that he is on his way to hell. The “Picture of a Backslider” that you have just read is also a picture of the unsaved person.

Is this a picture of *you*? If you answer, “Yes,” then test yourself to see if you are truly saved (2 Corinthians 13:5). Use these tests:

- (a) Have I really repented (turned away from) *all* my sins—those I know about and those I don’t know about (Luke 13:3)?
- (b) Have I believed on (committed myself to) the *Lord* Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31)?
- (c) Am I now trying to *obey* Christ and His Word (Luke 6:46; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; Hebrews 5:9)?
- (d) Do I keep away from all the sins that the New Testament warns me about (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:3-6; Revelation 21:8)?

If you cannot answer these questions with a ready “Yes,” you must make sure of your salvation at once. Receive Christ as your Savior now.

Now go on with the rest of this course. It will help you to make a good start with your new Christian life.

## The Results of Backsliding

Most backsliders do not realize the danger they are in.

1. First, a backslider can fall into every kind of sin, except the sin of renouncing (disowning, giving up) Christ. Believers who have brought shame on the Lord by their disobedience have brought tears and sorrow on themselves, their families and their churches. For example, read Acts 5:1-11.
2. Even a moment out of touch with God can bring ruin to a life. A wrong choice, a false step, a single sin may make a person forever not fit for the Lord to use in public. (See 1 Corinthians 5:1-13.)
3. Backsliding often brings into our lives unhappy results that we cannot get away from. The believer will never be punished for his sins in eternity (Christ has taken his punishment on the cross), but he often feels the painful effects of his sins in this life. For example, read 2 Samuel 12:9-14; 13:1-29 and 15:1-19 and see what happened in David’s family. Disease and weakness are sometimes reminders that “whatever a man sows, that he will also reap” (Galatians 6:7).
4. When a Christian goes on in a life of backsliding and disobedience, God sometimes cuts his life short (1 Corinthians 11:30; 1 John 5:16). This is His last word in the matter.

We should never forget the sad words of Naomi after she had come home from her stay in Moab: “Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara [Naomi means *pleasant*; Mara means *bitter*] for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full and the Lord has brought me home again empty” (Ruth 1:20-21).

Naomi lost her husband and two sons through death as a result of her backsliding. Like her, we can get away from God by choosing our own way. Only the Lord can bring us back. Like her, we can go out full, but the Lord will surely bring us back empty.

## The Cure of Backsliding

But the backslider can always be thankful that the way back to the Father's house is ever open (Luke 15:20). The happy, family spirit does not have to stay broken. The Father is waiting for us to come back. Here is the way:

### 1. Confessing to God.

- a. God promises that "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness [wrong doing]" (1 John 1:9). We must tell God all about our sins.
- b. We must be truly sorry for our sins. If we don't mean it in our hearts, it doesn't do any good to *say* we're sorry. Read Psalm 51 to see how badly David felt about his sins. When we truly feel this way about our sins, we will not blame anyone else or make excuses for ourselves. We will say, "I have sinned; I am guilty."
- c. We should tell the Lord about our sins one by one. As we name them before the Lord, we'll see how evil and wicked they really are. We will not want to do such things ever again (Proverbs 28:13).

### 2. Making things right with other people.

When we turn back to the Lord, we will want to make right the wrong things we have done to others. If we have stolen anything, we should give it back with interest. If we have said or done something to hurt someone, we should tell him we're sorry. The shame of having to do this will help to keep us from sinning again.

### 3. Beginning over again.

Now that we have confessed our sins to God, and made things right with other people, we must believe that God has forgiven us. We believed that we were saved when we trusted Christ. We must believe now that we are forgiven and brought back into happy fellowship and able to walk with God.

By this time, you should have learned to do these four things every day:

1. To read, and think about what you read, in the Bible.
2. To spend time alone with the Lord Jesus.
3. To spend time in the company of other Christians.
4. To tell people openly that Jesus is your Savior and Lord.

As you do these things, you will be a happy Christian.



# GUIDE TO CHRISTIAN GROWTH

## EXAM BOOKLET AK '04 (1 UNIT)

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STUDENT NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

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ADDRESS

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CITY, STATE, ZIP

COURSE GRADE: \_\_\_\_\_

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INSTRUCTOR



*Exam developed by Emmaus Correspondence School, founded in 1942.*

## A NOTE ON THE EXAMS

The exams are designed to check your knowledge of the course material and the Scriptures. After you have studied a chapter, review the exam questions for that lesson. If you have difficulty in answering the questions, re-read the material. If questions contain a Scripture reference, you may use your Bible to help you answer them. If your instructor has provided a single page Answer Sheet, record your answer on that sheet. This exam contains the following types of questions:

### MULTIPLE CHOICE

You will be asked to write in the letter of the correct answer at the space on the right. Here is an example:

The color of grass is

- A. blue                      C. yellow  
B. green                     D. orange

     **B**     

### WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Questions headed this way are designed to help you express your ideas and feelings. You may freely state your own opinions in answer to such questions.

### RETURNING THE EXAM

See the back of this exam booklet for instructions on returning your exam for grading.

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## CHAPTER 1 EXAM

### I FELL, NOW WHAT?

                      
EXAM GRADE

***Before starting this exam, write your name and address on the front of this Exam Booklet.***

*Directions: Read each question carefully and write the letter of the correct answer in the blank space on the right. Use the separate answer sheet if provided.*

1. The believer has been given all things that are needful for life and godliness. We are told this in  
 A. 1 Corinthians 3:1-2      C. Hebrews 5:12  
 B. 2 Timothy 4:10      D. 2 Peter 1:3      \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Backsliding  
 A. always begins with some sudden fall into sin  
 B. generally is a slow process  
 C. proves that a person has not been truly saved  
 D. usually has no real cause      \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Samson's backsliding was brought about by  
 A. giving in to desires of the flesh  
 B. the power of witchcraft  
 C. his denial of the Lord  
 D. his long hair and general "hippie" looks      \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. A person may be a backslider, yet still attend church services. There are several reasons why he does this. The lesson says that he  
 A. is looking for a way back to God  
 B. is hoping to find faults in other Christians so he can blame them for his poor spiritual condition  
 C. is trying to hide his real condition  
 D. does not really know he has lost heart interest in the things of God      \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. A Christian who is a backslider  
 A. may be very happy though he is in a cold spiritual condition  
 B. can never be given back his first love and joy in Christ  
 C. is always unhappy, no matter how he may try to hide it  
 D. enjoys the best things of both this world and the next      \_\_\_\_\_

6. The only sin that a backslider cannot fall into is that of  
A. murder                      C. suicide  
B. adultery                      D. completely giving up Christ \_\_\_\_\_
7. In which of the following ways did David have to pay for his backsliding?  
A. God made him die while he was still young  
B. He saw his sons fall into adultery, murder and rebellion  
C. God allowed the Philistines to defeat him  
D. There were no unhappy results because God forgave him \_\_\_\_\_
8. Can a backslider be forgiven and come back to God?  
A. No, he can look forward only to being lost forever  
B. Yes, if he does penance for his sin according to the rules of the church  
C. Yes, if he confesses his sins and tries to make things right if possible  
D. Yes, by just turning over a new leaf \_\_\_\_\_
9. A believer who has sinned against another person and who wants to be happy again in the Lord's presence  
A. needs to confess his sin to the Lord only  
B. should confess his sin both to the Lord and to the person he has hurt  
C. ought to confess his sin to the whole church  
D. doesn't need to confess to anyone \_\_\_\_\_
10. To keep ourselves from backsliding we should  
A. feed every day on the Word of God  
B. spend time each day alone with the Lord Jesus  
C. openly tell others about our Savior  
D. do all of the above \_\_\_\_\_

**WHAT DO YOU SAY?**

Can you see any signs of backsliding in your life? If so, what are you doing about it?

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