

Lesson 5 Part 2
The Cycle of Sin

Self-deception holds so many in their sin. James says, “Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does” (James 1:22-25).

Only when that individual is truly “broken” over their sin can the Holy Spirit show them the real problem, as well as the real solution (confession, repentance and obedience to the Lord). Have you heard the story of the emperor’s new clothes? This is the condition of the person who is self-deceived as God sees them—they are naked and think that they are covered. That is why the apostle Paul began with “Do not be deceived” in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.

7. **I commit the act of sin.** See James 1:15a and Genesis 3:6.
8. **I become “desensitized” to right and wrong.** It becomes easier to sin the next time I am tempted. See 1 Timothy 4:2.
9. **Habit begins.** It becomes a part of me or a “second nature.” We all have a “habit capacity.” This can be used for good or bad. See Romans 6:16, 19. This is the second level of involvement with sin. I am now “standing in a path” (see Psalm 1:1b).
10. **Desires are given ultimate priority, and they become an idol.** Whenever anything in my life is given ultimate priority, it becomes an idol of the heart (Ezekiel 14:7-8). Any desire can become more important in my life than pleasing God.
11. **My life becomes enslaved to serving these desires.** A pattern of allegiance (or ritual) to the idol sets in. Every worshipper has his ritual. For some, it is turning to the bottle when the going gets tough; for others, it is blowing up in anger when they do not get what they desire. See John 8:34.
12. **I am locked into a way of life.** I have entered the third level of involvement with sin. I am now “seated” in my sin. See Ephesians 4:17-19 and Psalm 1:1c.
13. **The life dominated by sin brings bondage,** leading to destruction. See Proverbs 13:15b and 14:12.
14. **The wages of sin is “DEATH”** (separation from God). This refers to both physical and spiritual death, leading to God’s judgment and spiritually remaining separated from Him for eternity. For the Christian, it brings spiritual deadness and corruption (Galatians 6:7-8). See also Romans 6:23 and James 1:15.

One Step to Freedom
Chapter 1: Planning for Victory

1. What does temptation appeal to?

2. When I entertain sinful thoughts, allowing them to remain in my mind, what am I actually doing?

3. According to Psalms 1:1, what are the three steps toward sin?

4. Is sin an accident, an involuntary action, or a choice?

5. What are the wages of sin?
