

Doctrine of Spiritual Retrogression

1. The Doctrine of Retrogression includes the unbeliever as well as the believer.
2. The unbeliever retrogresses from the divine ideal when the divine institutions are dishonored and the laws of divine establishment are violated.

Four Divine Institutions	Laws of Divine Establishments Violated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government • Marriage • Home • Church 	<p>Anarchy</p> <p>Divorce</p> <p>Lack of proper love</p> <p>Rejection of the gospel <i>Psalms 10:4 The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.</i></p>

3. Every person who professes to be a Christian either progresses in the sphere of saving faith or retrogresses.
4. While there is no specific term for retrogressive behavior in the *Bible* the concept is established by specific words and phrases.
 - Backward. *Isaiah 1:4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.*
 - Cannot cease from sin. *2 Peter 2:14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:*
 - Depart. *1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;*
 - Departed. *Psalms 18:21 For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God.*
 - Enemies of the cross. *Philippians 3:18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:*
 - Erred from the faith. *1 Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*
 - Fail of the grace of God. *Hebrews 12:15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.*

- Fallen. *Revelation 2:5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.*
- Fallen from grace. *Galatians 5:4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.*
- Forsake the Lord. *Joshua 24:16 And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods;*
- Left your first love. *Revelation 2:4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 2 Chronicles 24:18 And they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served groves and idols: and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass.*
- Lukewarm. *Revelation 3:16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*
- Offended. *Mark 4:17 And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.*
- Revolted. *Jeremiah 5:23 But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone.*
- Slidden Back. *Jeremiah 8:5 Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? They hold fast deceit, they refuse to return.*
- Turned aside. *1 Timothy 1:6 From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling;*
- Turned away. *1 Kings 11:9 And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice,*
- Turned back. *1 Samuel 15:11 It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night. Acts 7:39 To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,*
- Uncircumcised heart. *Jeremiah 9:25 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will punish all them which are circumcised with the uncircumcised; 26 Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, and all that are in the utmost corners, that dwell in the wilderness: for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart.*

- Vexed. *2 Peter 2:7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: 8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds ;)*
5. The only cure for retrogressive behavior is to repent and move in a new direction.
 6. Biblical repentance means to change one's mind and confess specific transgressions. If God is merciful He will give the grace to repent reflected in heart felt sorrow.
 - *1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*
 - *Acts 5:31 Him [Jesus Christ] hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.*
 7. It is impossible to progress in the Christian life without the sustaining power and prayer of Christ.
 - *John 15:5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*
 - *John 17:11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.*
 8. Every professing believer is responsible for progressing in grace and knowledge of the Lord and Savior.
 - *2 Peter 3:18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.*
 9. Self examination is essential in the process of determining progression or retrogression.
 - *2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*
 10. Progression in saving faith and holiness of life is not an option. To state the matter negatively, retrogression is not an option for the true believer.
 - *Hebrews 12:14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.*
 11. The Doctrine of Retrogression must be understood in association with the Doctrine of Salvation. Christ has come to save His people from their sins not in them.

- *Matthew 1:21 And she [Mary] shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

12. It is a fearful matter to fall into the hands of the living God in a state of unbelief or retrogression.

- *Hebrews 10:31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

13. The professing believer who is in retrogression of the soul will have no assurance of salvation, no clear conscience and no confidence in the hour of death of eternal life.

- *John 17:3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

14. The gospel of repentance which John the Baptist preached is the gospel which Jesus preached and it is the message that is needed in religious circles today.

- *John 1:23 He [John] said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.*
- *Matthew 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*
- *Acts 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:*