



### Going Deep Study Guide Part 3

## **“Looking Under the Hood”**

### ***“Discovering the hindrances to the Deeper Life”***

We need to confront any hindrance to the development of personal holiness or Christlikeness whether it is in our **heart**, our **head** (thinking) or our **hands** (behavior). We need to determine its cause and seek a cure.

***Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:  
And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting***  
***Psalm 139:23-24***

***“ . . . Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily ensnares us . . . ”***  
***Heb. 12:1***

***But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the surpassing power  
belongs to God and not to us . . . ”***  
***II Cor. 4:7-13***

***But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. “Get behind  
me, Satan!” he said. “You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely  
human concerns.”(NIV)***

I deal with people every day who are good citizens, hard workers, and nice neighbors and committed Christians -- but who need a deeper level of spiritual, mental and emotional healing.

When we talk about “taking a look inside” we must understand what that means and how it must happen. We are talking about self-examination . . .but

**Self-examination must be enabled by the Holy Spirit and carried out in the context of God's grace.**

If we do it on our own it leads to two extremes:

1. Self-condemnation
- or
2. Self-justification.

**The primary hindrance to the development of personal holiness is sin.**

**But it is imperative that we understand how sin works and how it hinders us. Because we are fallen creatures, sin has both defiled and damaged us.**

Both defilement and damage are consequences of the fall. We are born with the defilement of sin (a nature or predisposition to rebel against God) and it has created a rebel within that wants to have its own way – be its own god.

However, the damage wrought by the consequences of the fall can be inherited but is certainly acquired from life experiences that form and scar us. This damage affects us in multiple ways: physically, emotionally and spiritually

## I. We are Defiled.

The Bible teaches that sin is twofold. It is both a **nature** (disposition) we are born with and an **action** that we choose to do.

### **1. Sin as a Nature or Disposition**

The two basic kinds of sin are: **inherited depravity**, which is the corruption of our nature that inclines us toward sinning, and **acts of sin**.

**Inherited depravity**, then, must be defined as that moral condition with which all men are born. This depravity is spiritual death passed on to every child of Adam and includes a deep corruption of his nature. The nature of sin inclines people to commit individual acts of sin. In scripture it is commonly referred to in the singular. Every person comes into the world with this inclination to evil, inherited from Adam (Rom. 5:12-14, 18,19). It is a universal tendency to oppose God's will. It is often called "inherited sin", "the old man", "sinful nature", "carnal mind". Most theologians refer to it as "a sinful self" or "a Self-centeredness" (Isa. 53:6). Other Biblical imagery : stony heart Ezekiel 11:19, unfaithful Hosea 11:7, a double mind James 1:8, 4:8, a turning to one's own way – incurved Isa 53:6, a defilement II Cor. 7:1, a prolonged babyishness or immaturity I Cor. 3:1-4, Mind of Man vs. the Mind of God , Mark 8:3. 8.

Satan disguises submission to himself under the ruse of personal autonomy. He never asks us to become his servants. Never once did the serpent say to Eve, “I want to be your master.” ***The shift in commitment is never from Christ to evil; it is always from Christ to self.*** And instead of his will, self-interest now rules and what I want reigns. And that is the essence of sin. The devil always says, “This isn’t very serious. You can always say ‘I’m sorry.’” But the interesting thing is that the story ends with Eve on the outside and with something so lost that though she finds forgiveness, she never regains Paradise. (Dennis Kinlaw)

## **2. Sin as an Act:**

The Bible is filled with warnings against committing sinful acts as well as commands not to engage in sin. It devotes a huge amount of narrative to “Portraits of Failure.” Stories like King David with Bathsheba or Achan and the accursed things. Biblically sin is very real and very much a problem! It is the same in real life. Hence we must be understand what it is and how do avoid it.

The two prominent theological systems in Protestant America are: **Calvinism** and **Wesleyanism**. Their approach to the problem of sin is quite different. The Calvinists have never had a problem with the fact that believer’s sin, but Wesleyans do.

The Calvinist seems content to promote “miserable sinner Christianity” by quoting, “*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief*” (1 Tim. 1:15).

While the Wesleyans are happy to retort, “*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*” (Romans 6:1-2)

A Wesleyan thinks of sin in terms of a conscious willful act. A Calvinist sees sin as any “short coming” of God’s perfect righteousness including faults and human frailties.

Sadly, both theological systems view of sin, when discussed by the other, is generally over simplified and often misunderstood. A good Calvinist would never promote willful sin, nor would a good Wesleyan ever teach, or has ever taught, there is a state of sinless perfection. But neither view captures the full biblical expressions of sin. In practice, both views are often lived out in the extreme.

This of course creates a problem. To call **everything** sin is in practice to make **nothing** sin, and to **never** call **anything** a sin is to ultimately do that same thing!

Speaking for the Wesleyan side, Richard Taylor says, “It would be healthier to give the term “sin” some flexibility without going to the extreme of forgetting I John 3:9 which rules out habitual sinning. A righteous person does not sin “in thought, word, and deed every day.” Yet he may occasionally fall short and need repentance and forgiveness”.

The problem with strict theological definitions is that they can fail to cover the broad reach of real life and living.

Wesley said that sin “properly so-called” was primarily a moral event – one knows he is doing wrong and is accountable for his actions. This definition is philosophically sound and makes for a good working definition for the most part.

But his language of “properly so-called” makes a concession to a less than fully ethical concept of sin that he acknowledges and is certainly seen in scripture. Meaning that scripture speaks of sin where there is an absence of evil intent or willfulness – such as the sins of ignorance or the basic idea of missing the mark without any moral intent to do so.

Even acknowledging this makes some Wesleyans nervous as if you are opening a door to a sinning religion. But let me make something very clear. There are no rebels in God’s Kingdom. Following Jesus means obeying Him!

## **But to fail to ever acknowledge a failure or sin leads to glossing over sin.**

Eskimos have seven different words for snow. Arabs have at least as many for camels. Israel had a number of different words for sin.

1. One word was for behaving in a way God did not intend. To miss the mark (sin).
2. Another for wrong attitudes and inclinations (iniquity).
3. A third word for intentionally going past some limit (transgression).
4. Another word for “rebellion.”
5. Another translated “treachery”.

These five do not exhaust the list.

Our tradition has tended to narrowly define sin – trying to fit everything in the “willful” category.

Susanna Wesley (Letter, June 8, 1725) *"Take this rule: whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off your relish of spiritual things; in short, whatever increases the strength and authority of your body over your mind, that thing is sin to you, however innocent it may be in itself."*

## **Biblical Definitions of Sin:**

**1. Omission** - James 4:17 “So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin”.

**2. Commission** - 1 John 3:4 “Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness”. (a refusal to submit to the law of God. Blatant independence)

**3. Violation of Conscience** – Romans 12:22-23 “The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves. But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin”. The issue may or may not be sin but if you think it is wrong and do it anyway to you it becomes sin.

**4. Sins of ignorance or unintentional sin**– John 15:22 “If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin”. (Calls it sin even though he does not impute guilt-and that because of ignorance). Romans 5:13 “for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law”. Leviticus 4: 2, 22,27-28

Sins of ignorance or unintended sins carry no condemnation if they are truly unknown and undiscovered. But if the breach is discovered, action must be taken. In the Old Testament scheme, the Israelite was required immediately to make an offering of atonement. In the New Testament (according to our understanding of its implications), the believer must seek as far as possible to undo any unintended damage, correct his practice, and bring the offense by confession and prayer under the blood of Jesus. If totally unintended, why do such “fallings short” need the Atonement? Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that no matter how well-intentioned we may be, our deviations from perfect Christlikeness are damaging. People are hurt. The Christian cause is dealt a blow, and God is dishonored. In some cases, souls may be lost.

**5. A Single Sin** - I John 2:1-2 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

**6. The Practice of Sin** - I John 3:4-9 Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's[a] seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.

**7. Blind Spots based on “non-Christian formation”** Galatians 2:11-21 Story of Paul  
discrimination rebuking Peter

**8. Grieving the Spirit** - Ephesians 4:30 “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit”

**9. Sins of the Spirit** – I John 2:16 For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life[a]—is not from the Father but is from the world.

Bad or Wrongful Attitudes Numbers 11 - And when the people complained, it displeased the Lord: and the Lord heard it; and his anger was kindled;

**10. Sin of Surprise** – Galatians 6:1 “Brethren, if a man be *overtaken* in a fault . . .” The word overtaken carries the idea of surprise, seized upon, suddenly invaded. . .

## Describing our Experience.

1. Biblically speaking do we have to sin in word, thought or deed?

A. If you are a sinner – yes! (Romans 6:20-22 & Ephesians 2:1)

B. If you are a Christian – no! (Romans 6:6-10 & I Cor. 10:13)

2. Practically speaking does it ever happen?

Christians do not practice sin. However, there always remains the possibility of sin until we get to heaven. Furthermore, there is a clear probability that somewhere along the road you will sin and need forgiveness – that is why I John 2:1-2 was penned.

**Richard Taylor says, “it would be holier to call our breakdowns in Christlikeness sins, in good old honest humility, make amends, and learn from our failures. We never learn from failures denied. Only by seeing them, admitting them, and mending them in total meekness, will we follow Peter’s admonition to “grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). And only in this way will our profession of holiness recover some measure of credibility. (God’s Revivalist – October 2001)**

3. Practical and Pastoral advice:

A) Never minimize your sin – “Ah this doesn’t matter”!

B) Never maximize your sin – How? Conscientious believers can refuse to repent and move on – they can’t seem to forgive themselves and they let it haunt them.

C) Don’t deceive yourself into thinking that sin is ever justified by the circumstances.

## III. Determining what to do.

How a person deals with their sin tells a great deal about them and their state of Christ. A sincere, intentional, mature Christian will not play with words but will choose sides with God against themselves and quickly acknowledge their failure, repent of it, find grace, make restitution is necessary and move on. Christian that is immature or carnal will wrestle with God, justify themselves and maybe even deny the sin. This is the height of religious arrogance – pride. Remember “God stiff arms the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

1. **We can cover it.** Proverbs 28:13 - He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

2. **We can confess it.** James 5:16 tells us that confession brings healing. Confessors find a freedom that deniers do not have!

3. **We can conquer it.**

## Part II

### **“Looking Under the Hood”**

#### ***“Discovering the hindrances to the Deeper Life”***

### **II. We are Damaged**

Somewhere between our sins, on the one hand, and our sickness, on the other, lies a vast area we refer to as, “weaknesses, brokenness, fragility, quirks, baggage, scars – emotional damage that affects our spiritual development”.

A small amount of it was born with us but the vast majority was collected in the course of living. All of us, your family and mine, are marked by the consequences of the fall of our first parents (Gen. 3). Shame, secrets, relationship breakdowns, disappointments and unresolved longings for unconditional love lie beneath the veneer of all of us.

We tend to approach these issues with two extremes:

- 1) We make it a spiritual problem and advise – read your Bible, pray more. . .
- 2) We ignore the problem as if it isn’t there - “I don’t have a problem . . . My life is great, my marriage is perfect, no struggles. . .”

God is not pleased with either extreme. He wants us to face these issues in our lives sustained and supported by His grace and love. He wants to heal us at the deepest level of our emotional being.

**“It is impossible to be spiritually mature while remaining emotionally immature”**

### **What does healthy emotional maturity look like?**

In short, it’s the ability to identify and manage your damaged emotions through the healing power of the Holy Spirit, so that you may: love God well, love others well and love yourself well.

This will fulfill the greatest command to: *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind”; and, Love your neighbor as yourself.*” (Luke 10:27)

Emotional maturity seeks to do these things:

- Name and recognize feelings.
- Develop empathy (identifying with and having compassion for others).
- Initiate and maintain meaningful relationships.
- Break free from destructive thought patterns.
- Express thoughts clearly.

- Learn how the past impacts the present.

## **What are the symptoms of emotionally unhealthy spiritually?**

**1. Ignoring the emotions of anger, sadness, and fear**

**2. Denying the past's impact on the present** - It's so easy to assume that your past is simply dead and gone, having no impact on you or what you're looking to do in the future. Assuming this is harmful to your emotional and spiritual health.

**3. Doing for God instead of being with God** - When we get to a place of spiritual or emotional weakness, we have a tendency to perform in hopes of proving our worth to God or others. This is debilitating and ultimately ineffective.

**4. Spiritualizing away conflict** - Too many of us sweep conflict under the rug. We do it for different reasons. Some of us avoid conflict because we're people-pleasers and can't handle people being upset with us.

**5. Covering over brokenness, weakness, and failure** - The Bible does not spin the flaws and weaknesses of its heroes, and we shouldn't spin ours either.

**6 Judging other people's spiritual journey** - By failing to let others be themselves before God and move at their own pace, we inevitably project onto them our own discomfort with their choice to live differently than we do."

## **Steps for healing our inner damage**

God want to change what can be changed, improve what can be improved, and accept ourselves in the areas that will need glorification to fix!

**He wants us to develop in us a good sense of "self-awareness".** As you grow in self-awareness, you will better understand why you feel what you feel and why you behave as you behave. It gives you a better understanding of what is human - needing maturing and what is carnal - needing cleansing.

As important as self-awareness is we should keep in mind the text:

I John 3:20: *'If our heart condemns us God is greater than our heart.'*

I sometimes pray:

**"Lord give me no more and no less self-knowledge than I can at this moment make a good use of".**

**He also wants to teach us self-management.** Self-management refers to the ability of an individual to regulate their emotions and resulting behaviors in ways that are consistent with Christlike living.



## 1. Recognition – Honesty

Nothing keeps people away from Christ more than their inability to see their need of him or their unwillingness to admit it. The same is true with emotional maturity. *“Deny the problem, and nothing can be done about it; admit the problem, and at once there is the possibility of a solution”*.

Some typical issues or baggage:

- A. **Deep Insecurity** → anxiety, inadequacy, inferiority, easily offended,
- B. **Perfectionism** → “I can never measure up” striving, working, critical of others and self.
- C. **Super sensitive** →, wounded . . .”has been deeply hurt”
- D. **Fear** → “they feel they have failed so much that they can’t please anyone” or other have failed them and they can now no longer trust anyone.
- E. **Depression** → Physical Emotional – Unresolved anger
- F. **Anger** → Ill. Man someone brushed against him – Flew into a rage and hit the other man.

Why? Molested as a child.

Ill. Wounded leg – You bump into my good leg and I say “I’m fine” – You hit the wounded one and I scream from pain! You didn’t make the wound but you bumped into it. So you get the emotion and blowback that should have gone to someone else.

Roots of Anger: Always put down or belittled. Always put second. Married wrong person! Gender Identity confusion. Feel Robbed of something that you should have had.

G. **Passed down Baggage** – The way you treat women / see women for self-gratification only.

Your upbringing – you were spoiled / undisciplined

Your views of God and spiritual priorities.

F. **Unresolved issues** → Areas that haven’t been confronted, confessed, cleared.

G. **Controlling and manipulative pastors**

## **2. Repair – Healing**

- 1. Refuse to Excuse** - Face the problem squarely – acknowledging it is your problem, forgive, Find help.

*Either you will own it or you will clone it!*

- 2. Deal with it!** - When you don't deal with the emotions of the past the emotions of the past become the emotions of the present.

- 3. Stay tuned for Moments of Light.**

- 4. Exercise Forgiveness for you own sake** – Forgiving free you. It heals you. The refusal to forgive is to push the self-destruct button in your life.

- 5. Establish Scripture as a baseline for your behavior.**