

**REVISITING THE BELIEVER'S POSITIONAL RICHES IN CHRIST**  
**Part V: Applying The Truth That Believers Are Forgiven All Trespases**

**I. Introduction**

- A. The Bible teaches that Christ died to save us from sin, 2 Corinthians 5:21.
- B. However, we Christians still commit acts of sin after having trusted in Christ for salvation, 1 John 1:8, 10.
- C. Accordingly, a believer may wonder that if Christ died to save him from sin, but he still sins, how then can he enter heaven where God is holy and completely intolerant of sin and its effects.
- D. One of the truths of the believer's **position** in Christ is that he is *positionally forever forgiven all trespases*.
- E. We view this truth in light of the believer's sins with edifying application (as follows):

**II. Applying The Truth That Believers Are Forgiven All Trespases.**

- A. Positionally in Christ, the instant one believes in Christ as his personal Savior from sin, he is released from all charges of sin against him by God, a process known as forgiveness, Colossians 2:13; John F. Walvoord, Jesus Christ Our Lord, 1974, p. 154. We explain (as follows):
  1. When the Apostle Paul wrote the Epistle to the Colossians, he noted that Christ's work on the cross had resulted in his readers' being forgiven all of their trespases, Colossians 2:13.
  2. However, when Christ actually died in history, Paul's Colossian readers were still not saved, for they had not been evangelized until after the Acts 2 Day of Pentecost that followed Christ's resurrection, cf. Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1690. This forgiveness was thus a **positional** forgiveness true of all believers.
  3. Indeed, when Paul wrote Colossians 2:13, some of his readers were living in error and/or **trespases** as he noted in Colossians 2:18-23; *Ibid.*, Ryrie, ftns. to Colossians 2:16 and 2:18.
  4. Thus, even though all believers in Christ sin after salvation as 1 John 1:8, 10 reveals, when we believe in Christ for salvation, God *positionally and unconditionally forever forgives us all of our trespases!*
- B. Experientially in the Christian walk, sins that are committed with divine forgiveness for them are viewed and treated **differently** than the believer's **position IN CHRIST** as follows:
  1. If a believer commits a sin after he has put his faith in Christ, his fellowship with God is broken, a state that also involves a break of fellowship with other godly believers, 1 John 1:6 in light of 1 John 1:3.
  2. In this condition, the Lord relates to the believer by convicting him of sin and of his need to confess it, resulting in the believer being uncomfortable in his relationship with the Lord, cf. Psalm 32:3-4.
  3. If he continues in this state of broken fellowship, God will eventually take the believer to heaven by premature death in discipline, 1 John 5:16 with 1 Corinthians 11:29-30. Such a believer ends up in heaven even though he is **experientially** disciplined because of his **positional forgiveness** in Jesus Christ.
  4. However, if a believer confesses his sin(s) that he commits after salvation, God is faithful and just to forgive him his sin(s) and to cleanse him from all unrighteousness so that he is restored to fellowship with the Lord and with other godly believers, 1 John 1:9; Psalm 32:5.
  5. Thus, it is wise that the believer yield to the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit as soon as that ministry becomes apparent, a ministry that convicts in conjunction with the Spirit's use of Scripture to critique the believer of his sin, cf. John 14:16-17, 26; 1 Corinthians 2:11-13.

***Lesson:*** *There exist two distinct SPHERES of RELATIONSHIP between the believer and God on the issue of sin and forgiveness (Lewis S. Chafer, Systematic Theology, vol. III, "Soteriology," p. 238): (1) POSITIONALLY, the believer is fully and eternally forgiven all trespases so he can enter heaven at death or the rapture of the Church, cf. 2 Corinthians 5:1, 8-9. (2) EXPERIENTIALLY, though forgiven all pre-salvation sins, the believer must confess post-salvation sins to God through Christ for forgiveness, 1 John 1:8-10. Even if he fails to handle these sins and God disciplines him with the sin unto death, the believer's POSITIONAL forgiveness provides him immediate, full and eternal access to heaven.*

***Application:*** *(1) Though we believers commit acts of sin in our Christian walk, the solution is NOT to handle them by penance, but by confession that relies on God's cleansing provision in the cross of Christ, 1 John 2:2 with 1:9. (2) However, we bear no eternal condemnation now that we are IN CHRIST (Romans 8:1), for we are in Him POSITIONALLY in the full, eternal and unconditional sense, unconditionally forgiven all trespases, Colossians 2:13. (3) May we keep in mind that God's purpose is BOTH to KEEP us SAVED by POSITIONAL forgiveness, but ALSO that we gain PRACTICAL VICTORY over SINFUL ACTS in our EXPERIENCE, a key REASON for the CONTRAST between our POSITIONAL and our EXPERIENTIAL relationships with the Lord.*