

The Progression of Regression

“They...walked in the counsels...of their evil heart, and went backward”

CONVICTION *“It is written” (Matt. 4:4).* Conviction stands on the truth of God’s Word in its simple black and white meaning. Popularity, consensus or results can’t change it. One is willing to pay the price of rejection and negative consequences (like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace) for he believes the Lord’s Word is wisdom and absolute truth. In the end it glorifies the Lord Jesus and that’s all that really matters.

1. **CONSCIENCE** *“Their mind and conscience is defiled” (Titus 1:15).* Can conscience replace conviction? There are certain things in the realm of days, drink, food, etc. in which the Lord does respect one’s conscience of understanding, Rom. 14. However, when absolute truths on matters such as the gospel, morals, marriage, headship, church doctrine, etc. are demoted to matters of personal liberty, it makes man the test of something being the will of God. By cleverness we can liberate Scripture out of context and massage word nuances to bring peace to our conscience to justify our way.

2. **CHOICE** *“The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose” (Gen. 6:2).* Replacing absolutes with conscience gives birth to choice. The person now decides whether something is right or wrong. The nature of choice allows a person liberty to think differently without being judged as right or wrong. For liberty is fluid not frozen. God’s authority becomes subjective under choice. Liberty and sincerity, not Scripture alone, determines right. This makes for harmony but not holiness.

3. **CIRCUMSTANCE** *“He [Ahaz] said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me” (2 Chron. 28:23).* ‘Choice’ tends to reason circumstantially. If something works, helps or brings happiness, it is embraced. Results are emphasized, not righteousness. Satisfaction is sought, not submission.

4. **CONVENIENCE** *“It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem” (1 Kings 12:28).* Situational decisions based on what works best gives birth to what is the easiest for me. In a busy life we need serenity not a storm – solace not stress. So we reason that since God loves me and wants the best for me, then enjoying the more convenient way is really His grace.

5. **CHANCE** *“but time and chance happeneth to them all” (Ecc. 9:11).* Without the anchor of conviction, convenience drifts onto the river of chance. We take the chance that if God doesn’t stop or judge something immediately, He must have “okayed” it. We don’t stress about hard Bible facts (that’s now legalism!), we just chance it to fate in His hands.

6. **CROSSLESS** *“Let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matt. 16:24).* Some now reason that to experience suffering (pain, loneliness, smallness) is not the “abundant life”. So I don’t need to feel guilty for making decisions that bring me happiness. For

God loves me, and love would seek my success – right? But a cross is stressful, painful, and shameful. If that is foreign to our thinking, we have laid down our cross somewhere.

The Word is not different than Jesus: *“His name is called the Word of God”* (Rev.19:13).