



Daily Verse and Comment

Hebrews 6:4-8

(4) For *it is* impossible for those *who were* once enlightened, and who personally obtained the heavenly gift, and became partakers of *the* Holy Spirit, (5) And who have tasted *the* good Word of God, and *the* powers of *the* world to come, (6) If they have fallen away, to renew *them* again unto repentance; *seeing that* they are crucifying the Son of God for themselves, and are publicly holding *Him* in contempt. (7) For the ground that soaks up rain coming often upon it, and also produces useful plants for those for whom it is tilled, receives a blessing from God. (8) But *that* which brings forth thorns and thistles *is* rejected and near to being cursed, the end of which *is* for burning.

A Faithful Version

These attributes are all part of the same spiritual condition: being “in Christ.” [John 15:6](#) describes this same condition—and the results of falling from it: “If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.”

If such a person—who is abiding in Christ—falls away, J.B. Phillips' paraphrase reads, “. . . it proves impossible to make them repent as they did at first. For they are re-crucifying the Son of [God](#) . . . and by their conduct exposing [H]im to shame and contempt.”

What does it mean to “fall away”? The word in [Hebrews 6:6](#) is not the normal Greek word for “apostasy.” It is used only in this place, so it cannot be compared with other usages. Greek lexicons indicate it means “to become lost; to fall; to turn aside; to be at fault; to forsake; or to go astray.” One says it means “to abandon a former relationship or association.”

We can grasp what “falling away” means in general, but we do not have specifics, such as degree and duration. Each of us has “turned aside” or

“gone astray” at points, yet it has been possible for us to repent. The Bible provides the example of [King David](#) and others who, at times, seemed to give more evidence of spiritual death than spiritual life. Perhaps we know someone who took a long detour in their Christian lives that certainly appeared to be “falling away,” but God brought him or her to [repentance](#).

Clearly, some ambiguity exists here, a hopeful thing, as it indicates that God retains to Himself the judgment of where the line is. We do not need the specifics to understand the principle.

— David C. Grabbe

To learn more, see:

[What Is Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit?](#)