

Sin & the Child of God

1 John 3:4-9

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1 John 2:28-3:3 Summary: John explains that the Children of God will abide in Christ.

Applications from this passage...

- Children of God will abide in Christ.
- Abiding in Christ means adopting His biblical worldview and being motivated to please Him.
- Living in constant expectation of His imminent return for us makes us more like Him.

1 John 3:4-5 – The nature of sin

Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.

What is sin?

Sin is lawlessness: John defines sin at its most basic root. It is a disregard for the law of God, which is inherently a disregard for the law *Maker*, God Himself.

Why is having a correct (biblical) view of sin important?

We often fail in the battle against sin because we won't call it for what it is: lawlessness, an offense against the Great Law Maker, God.

- Instead, we say things like "If I've done anything wrong," or "Mistakes were made," and so forth.
- The first step towards holy living is to recognize the true nature and wickedness of sin.

What was the reason for the First Advent of Jesus?

You know that He was manifested to take away our sins: John here defined the mission of Jesus Christ at its most basic root — *to take away our sins*.

- The angel Gabriel promised Joseph regarding the ministry of Jesus: *you shall call His name JESUS, for He shall save His people from their sin* (Matthew 1:21).

How did Jesus take away our sins?

Jesus takes away our sin in the sense of taking the *penalty* of our sin. This is immediately accomplished when one comes by faith to Jesus.

- Jesus takes away our sin in the sense of taking the *power* of sin away. This is an ongoing work in the lives of those who walk after Jesus.
- Jesus takes away our sin in the sense of taking the *presence* of sin away. This is a work that will be completed when we pass into eternity and are glorified with Jesus.

What is our role in Jesus taking away our sins?

Taking away our sins is the work of Jesus in our life. It is a work we must respond to, but it is *His* work in us.

- We cannot *take away* the *penalty* of our own sin.
- We must instead receive the work of Jesus in taking away our sin.

Someone who comes to Jesus does not have to clean himself up first, but he must be willing to have Him *take away* his sin.

How was it possible for Jesus to take away our sins?

In Him there is no sin: Jesus had no sin to take away; therefore, He could take away our sin, taking it upon Himself.

1 John 3:6 – Abiding in sin or abiding in God.

Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.

How is it that *whoever abides in Him does not sin*?

Since *sin is lawlessness*, a disregard for God (1 John 3:4), and since Jesus came *to take away our sins* (1 John 3:5), and since in Jesus *there is no sin* (1 John 3:5), then to *abide in Him* means to *not sin*.

How can mortals with a sin nature *not sin*?

According to the verb tense John uses, *does not sin* means *does not live a life style of habitual sin*. John has already told us in 1 John 1:8 *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us*.

- In 1 John 1:8, the grammar indicates John is speaking about occasional acts of sin.
- The grammar of 1 John 3:6 indicates that John is speaking of a settled, continued lifestyle of sin.
- John is not teaching here the possibility of sinless perfection.

The present tense in the Greek verb implied habit, continuity, unbroken sequence; the NIV has the right idea when it translates these verbs with phrases such as *keeps on sinning*, *continues to sin*, and *he cannot go on sinning*.

What does it tell us that *whoever abides in Him does not sin*?

It tells us that a life style of habitual sin is inconsistent with a life of abiding in Jesus Christ. A true Christian can only be *temporarily* in a life style of sin.

- Romans 6 reflects this principle that when a person comes to Jesus, his sins are forgiven and God's grace is extended to him, he is radically changed — the old man is dead, and the new man lives.

So, it is utterly incompatible for a new creation in Christ to be comfortable in habitual sin; such a place can only be temporary for the Christian.

What can we conclude about someone who has a lifestyle of habitual sin?

Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him: This demonstrates that the person has not *seen Him* or *known Him*.

- There are some people so great and so wonderful that seeing them or knowing them will change your life forever. Jesus is that kind of person.

1 John 3:7 – Righteousness will show in one's life

Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.

What does it tell us that John is warning about deception?

There must have been a deception threatening the Christians of John's day.

What does it mean that *he who practices righteousness is righteous*?

John did not allow us to separate a *religious* righteousness from a life of righteousness.

- If we are made righteous by our faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 3:22), it will be seen by our righteous lives.

What does it mean to be righteous before God?

This simply means a person is held in *right standing* before God. It's more than saying, "not guilty." It is more like saying, "Not guilty and in right standing."

- It speaks of the presence of good, not just the absence of evil.

Are we made righteous before God by our own righteous acts?

No, the Bible clearly teaches that we are made righteous through faith in Jesus Christ — yet that righteousness in Jesus will be evident in our lives.

- Righteous acts are the result of a right standing before God, not the cause of that right standing.

What deception do you think might have been taught that John is warning against?

Apparently, there were those who taught that you could be righteous before God with no evidence of righteousness in your life — John is rebuking that idea.

- Charles Spurgeon said it well: "The grace that does not change my life will not save my soul."

What does it tell us that we may be righteous *just as He is righteous*?

We can live lives characterized by *righteousness*, not sin, because we have been given the righteousness of Jesus, and *He is righteous*. We have the resource we need to live righteously!

1 John 3:8-9 – Root of sin & root of righteousness

He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

What can we conclude about those whose lives are characterized by habitual sin?

People who are settled in habitual sin are not the children of God — they are *of the devil*.

- Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil and free us from our bondage to the devil.

Why was the Son of God manifested?

John gave us one reason why Jesus came in 1 John 3:5 (*He was manifested to take away our sins*). Now, John gives us another reason: *that He might destroy the works of the devil*.

What does it tell us that Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil?

The purpose of Jesus was not to just neutralize, alleviate, or limit the works of the devil. Jesus came to *destroy* the works of the devil!

How should we encourage those who have an unnecessary fear of the devil?

They need to know that as we walk in Jesus, the devil is afraid of us! As we walk in Jesus, we help in seeing Him *destroy the works of the devil!*

What does it mean to be born of God?

This is what Jesus was talking about when He met with Nicodemus:

John 3:3 – *Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*

This refers to our human spirit being resurrected to know God making it possible for the Holy Spirit to reside in us.

- The Lord breathes life into our human spirit when we come to recognize and accept God's provision in Jesus for our sins to be forgiven.

How does a person become born again?

You become born again the moment you hear the gospel and trust in Jesus Christ. Regeneration (being born again) is not a work of the flesh, a church membership, or moral effort — it is the miraculous impartation of divine life by the Holy Spirit.

- When a person hears the message that Jesus died for sins and then places personal faith in Him, the Holy Spirit comes to indwell that person, gives a new nature, and makes them a child of God.
- This is a one-time spiritual birth that results in true, saving faith and permanent spiritual life.
- Faith alone in Christ alone is what brings the new birth; once received it is fully saving and secures the believer.

What does it mean that those who've been born again do not sin?

We still have our sin nature but the eternal consequence of sin has been removed: we no longer face the second death.

- And the Holy Spirit will not allow us to continue a lifestyle of habitual sin.

As Paul preached... believers we are to *put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts*, and that we are to *put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness* (Ephesians 4:22, 24).

What applications do we see from this discussion?

- True Christians will not have a lifestyle of habitual sin.
- Those with habitual sin are of the devil.
- Christians are made in right standing before God when they trust in Christ alone for the salvation.
- True Christians are born again.