

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John**

Chapter 13- The First Line **1John 3:4-10**

112. Distinguishing Between Sin and Righteousness- Part 11

WAOY Wednesday 11/14/07

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today I want to continue to look at what John taught about "The Distinction between Sin and Righteousness. So let's read **1John 3:4-10** again together:

4 Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.

5 You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.

6 No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.

7 Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous;

8 the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.

9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

Now on the last broadcast, we finished our look at verses 7& 8 and today, I want to begin to examine verse 9- so let's read that verse together again:

No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

Now this verse is one of the most powerful statements in all the

Bible. But because of the proliferation of a lot of bad teaching in the modern Church- this verse is also one of the most misunderstood statements in the Bible.

In this verse- John is making a very clear proclamation about the relationship that genuine believers have with sin and *why* this relationship exists. John says very clearly here that genuinely born again, Blood bought saints of God do not commit sin.

Now if you were listening to earlier broadcasts- you will remember the discussion that we had about statements like this. On the surface- in whatever English translation you are using- it *appears* that John is saying here that saved people rise to the level of sinless perfection. John *appears* to be saying here that sin is no longer present at all in a believer's life. But even though it sure looks like John is saying that here- hear me when I tell you that that is *not* what John is saying here. This is an example of why we cannot simply scan over our English Bibles and then go out and develop Doctrines. But why we need to go back to the original languages to get the full meaning of what John was saying.

Anytime you run into a verse or a passage of Scripture which appears to be teaching something that is contradictory to other verses or passages- you need to remember a very important rule of Biblical interpretation- Always Let the Bible interpret the Bible. Interpret Scripture with Scripture. Never make the mistake of interpreting Scripture privately- that is based upon your own limited knowledge and experience and never make the mistake of interpreting Scripture using other your own logic and human reasoning or by using other books or outside tools. The best interpreter of Scripture is Scripture itself.

The Bible does not teach that saved people cease from sin. The Bible does not teach that saved people are sinless. It just doesn't teach that. There is not one human being on earth today or that has ever lived in any period of history that does not sin and that does not sin multiple times every day- except one- Jesus Christ. And anyone who believes or who thinks that sinless perfection is possible or that sinless perfection is the goal of Salvation is simply deceived.

There are those people today who honestly believe that they can reach a place of sinless perfection in this life and on this earth. And I know many of these people and I know that they are sincere and they

are earnest about loving Jesus and about serving Him. And I love these people dearly- but they are dead wrong about this issue.

Now I can teach about this all day long- but the quickest way that we can arrive at a true understanding of what John is teaching here is simply by going back to the language in which John originally wrote this Book- which is Greek.

You see, beloved, John didn't write this Epistle of **1John** in English. John never spoke or wrote one word of English and neither did Paul and neither did Moses and neither did Jesus. And whether you read from the King James; or the New King James; or the NASB; or the ESV; or the NIV; or whatever version you use- the fact of the matter is that the Bible that you hold in your hand is nothing more than an English *translation* of the Scriptures that were originally penned down in Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic.

The King James Version; the New King James; the NASB; the ESV; or the Holman Christian Standard Version are all reliable and dependable English translations of what the Holy Spirit inspired 40 men to pen down over a 1450 year time frame in Hebrew; Greek; and Aramaic. Now I would encourage you *not* to use the NIV or the Living Translation and some of the others because those versions are not true translations- they are paraphrases- and so I would not recommend them.

But whichever English translation you use- understand that there are tradeoffs that the translators made. You want to be as accurate as you can to the original manuscripts. But as you seek to be accurate- you run into a readability problem because if you were to translate the original manuscripts completely literally- you couldn't read them due to the way that the Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic languages work. So the other consideration is that you try to make the English translation *readable*. And the more readable you make it- the less literal it becomes and the more literal it is- the less readable it becomes. So translators try to spilt the difference and some side on being more readable while others side on being more literal.

So my choice is to get as literal a version as you can find which is the five that I mentioned- and then also get a Greek and Hebrew lexicon and Dictionary as well as a Strong's Concordance and a reliable Commentary set such as those put out by Matthew Henry or James Montgomery Boice or John MacArthur or John Calvin. And all of these

tools are available on software such as Bible Soft and Logos. And then add tools as you see the need for them so you may do you study properly and not simply wing it.

Now there are many people who want to appear to be “super-spiritual”- who say that they allow the indwelling Holy Spirit to interpret the Scriptures for them- which is just nonsense. As insulting as this may seem- everybody on earth right now is the student of somebody else. *Nobody* is self-taught and *nobody* is self-taught about the Bible. The very same Holy Spirit that inspired the Scriptures is the same Holy Spirit who set up Teachers in the Church. And Teachers are an intermediary that God ordained.

Those of us who are saved right now- today- are the recipient of 2,000 years of New Testament Teachers and so we need to listen to what God’s ordained Teachers teach- which is why I am trying so hard to get you to read some of them.

And so for anybody to try to by-pass the gift of Teachers and go directly to God to understand Divine Truth is to try to by-pass God’s Will. And so if you are teaching yourself- while *thinking* that God the Holy Spirit is teaching you directly- you aren’t really doing anything but elevating yourself in your own mind. But you are also cutting yourself off from all the *many* Teachers that God placed in the Church over the Centuries for your benefit.

And we also need to remember that it is impossible for anybody to rise above their Teachers and so you need to be very careful who is teaching you and you need to take heed what you are being taught. And once again- to teach yourself- while thinking that God the Holy Spirit is teaching you directly is to also assume that you possess all Wisdom and all Truth by yourself and that is a tragic mistake.

For example- when you examine verse 9 in the original Greek- you begin to see that the Apostle John was using what is called a present participle tense of the verb “to sin”. This fact of Greek grammar means that when John says here:

No one who is born of God practices sin...

... that what John actually meant was that whoever is born of God does not commit sin on an ongoing and continual basis as a normal way of life. John did not teach that saved people no longer sin at all. In fact,

John taught that to teach that would be contrary to the Gospel. Read with me **1John 1:8**:

If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

John teaches here very clearly that all men sin. Saved people sin and lost people sin. You see, Salvation does not mean that we cease from sin. Salvation comes by Grace through Faith- without any human works to unworthy sinners- not because we stopped sinning.

So for John to teach that saved people no longer sin at all in Chapter 3 would be for him to contradict what he taught in Chapter 1. And since God the Holy Spirit *cannot* err and since both Chapter 1 and Chapter 3 were inspired by God- there is no contradiction at all.

The only reason that what John taught here in **1John3:9** *appears* to contradict what he taught in **1John1:8** is because the English translation that we use does not adequately allow for those language nuances to be accurately displayed.

This apparent contradiction is easily overcome simply by going back to the original Greek and examining what John was actually saying in this verse.

By using the present participle of the verb, “to sin” in **1John 3:9**, John was teaching the very same thing that he taught earlier in his Epistle. That saved people now possess inside of them the new Divine nature which was created in righteousness and true holiness and which has both the will and the power to love and serve God and so as a result of the human being born from above- the new nature within this saved soul no longer craves after sin like he did when he was lost.

You see, the heart of a lost person was utterly and totally ruined by the Fall of Adam in the Garden. Turn with me to **Genesis 6:5** and see how God describes the normal heart of the normal person who is fallen:

Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Think of this. This describes the condition of every single human being born of woman after the Fall before they are saved. And what is the condition that God said our hearts were like?

... every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually

Now I realize that many in the modern Church don't believe that lost people are really that bad. But I suggest to you that God *does*. And I also suggest to you that the only reason why everybody doesn't agree with God about the condition of lost people is due to the infiltration of pagan humanistic teachings which deny the Faith and which teach things contrary to Sound Doctrine.

And that is why massive Bible Truths about Original Sin and The Fall and the Imputation of Adam's Guilt and all of these timeless Scriptural absolutes need to be taught and learned by the current generation of believers.

Lost people are so lost that they *cannot* save themselves. They cannot "do something" to improve their standing with God. Lost people do not possess anything in themselves that would make them attractive to God. Therefore- Salvation is not *difficult* for lost people to obtain- it is *impossible* by and through their own power or through an act of their own will. Salvation takes a Divine and supernatural miracle of Grace and Mercy to save all who are lost.

And John understood this. And John also understood that even though our souls are saved- our fleshly bodies are not saved and are still subjected to the fleshly lusts and sinful desires of an unconverted temple- even after our souls are saved.

And that is the only reason why saved people sin. Their saved souls dwell in an unconverted temple that lives in an unconverted world that is dominated by satan and a system that fights against God. And that is why we need a new body in order to go to Heaven- this sinful tabernacle can't make the trip. And that is also why we will not even be able to sin in Heaven- because our saved souls will dwell in a new sinless body that dwells in the Paradise of God where satan cannot come.

So yes, sadly- saved people still sin. But the difference is that because they are saved- they no longer *desire* to sin; they no longer *love* their sin; they no longer *pursue after* their sin; but they earnestly and fervently seek after the Truth and they seek the Face of God and they desire to know His ways so that they may bring to Him the Glory and Honor and Praise that God alone so richly deserves. And *that* is what John was teaching in this verse.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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