

# So That You May Know

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

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

#### 114. Distinguishing Between Sin and Righteousness- Part 13

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WAOY Tuesday/Monday 11/20-26/07

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 were looking at verse 9- and I want to continue to examine that verse- so let's read it 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 John is showing us here that the relationship that saved people have with sin is much different than the relationship that lost

people have with sin based upon the fact that saved people have the seed of Jesus Christ remaining inside them.

First John makes a bold statement about how that people who have been regenerated are no longer held hostage by sin. This is how John puts it:

**No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him ...**

Now it doesn't matter that the person who is born again has not been taught the fullness of God; neither does it matter that the person who is saved cannot read or write or that he is uneducated or that he lives in a pagan culture. None of those things matter in respect to how this man has escaped the tyranny of sin. John says that the reason that sin no longer controls this man is because he has been born of God and the seed of Jesus Christ abides in him continually. That's it.

Now don't get me wrong here- people who are blessed to sit under sound Biblical teaching have it better than those who attend a Church where the preacher is on an ego trip. That is true. But even if the person does not have that advantage- for no other reason other than the person has been supernaturally born from above and because the seed of Jesus Christ remains in him- that person- by virtue of his saved status- already has been set free forever from the dominion that sin has over all men who are lost.

That is what John is saying here. You see, the Bible teaches that every man born of woman is under the brutal dictatorial rule of sin in his life. His flesh cries out to sin. His nature is in rebellion to God. His mind and thoughts and imagination are all evil and they are evil continually. His heart is corrupt and he is a slave to sin.

What happens when Salvation is given- is that the old, Adamic nature of that individual is miraculously transformed from being after the similitude of Adam to being after the similitude of God Peter called it a divine nature.

Now that doesn't make the individual to be Deity- but it does alter his loves; his desires; his passion; and his choices- because at the root of all our choices- is our nature.

Now listen up- because this is real important. It is true that human beings can choose. So we have a will. But where people get off base is in assuming that because we can choose- that this means that

our wills are “free”. And that is not true. So, listen up and I’ll try to make sense of this.

First of all- we have to understand that every aspect of the human being was radically and negatively ruined by the Fall. Nothing was left intact. Nothing escaped the Fall. Everything was ruined by what Adam did. And that includes our bodies and our minds and our loves and our desires and it also includes our will. You see, before he fell- Adam had the capacity to choose right from wrong and to choose to love God or to choose to rebel against Him.

But that “free will” was radically and completely destroyed in the Fall- along with everything else about Man. You see, before the Fall- Man was immortal. If Adam had not sinned- Adam would still be alive today. But because Adam sinned- Adam died. Now Adam died *spiritually*- at the very instant that he ate of the forbidden fruit- but Adam also died *physically*- because he completely and utterly lost his immortality in the Fall.

And today every single human being dies. Old people die and young people die. Sick people die and healthy people die. Educated people die and uneducated people die. Saved people die and lost people die. And some people die easy- while others die real hard. Some die without much pain – while others die with great pain. Some die by accidents while others die by diseases. Children die- even babies die- even unborn babies die- but the harsh reality is that everybody dies- and the Bible declares very clearly and repeatedly that we die because of sin. We die because everybody has committed sins on their own- and that makes us to be sinners- true. But the Bible goes further than that and teaches that we are all guilty of sin because we all came forth from Adam and because Adam was the head of the human race- his sin and the guilt of his sin- along with his sinful nature- passed on to all of us.

So, when we are saved- our souls are saved- but not our bodies. Our bodies are *not* redeemed-yet. Now God can and God does heal sick bodies today- but it is wrong to believe that physical healing is part of the Atonement. Because when you say that- you are saying that your physical body has been redeemed to the same extent that your soul has – and that is simply not true. And we know it is not true- because 100% of every single person who is saved- dies. And we also know it is not true because the Bible says that when we do go to Heaven- we will have a new body. And the reason that we will all have a new body in Heaven

is because our old body couldn't make the trip- because it was not made righteous by the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

Now before the Fall- not only was Adam physically immortal- but Adam's emotions were all intact and in line with God. But after the Fall- Lust, Greed, Jealousy, Envy, Strife, Covetousness, Wrath, Hate, and Fear became the normal default setting for every single human being.

Now God also has Wrath- but His Wrath is a holy Wrath- while ours is a fallen and sinful wrath. God also is Jealous- but His Jealousy is Holy – while ours is sinful. All of our emotions- every one of them- were radically and completely ruined and destroyed by the Fall- to the point where the Bible says that there is no longer any redeemable quality about us. We no longer possess any good.

Now most people understand this- but I suggest to you that we cannot stop there. We have another aspect of human existence that we are very familiar with and yet for some strange reason many believe that it was left unaffected by the Fall. This other ingredient is our Will.

Now I'm going to get in a lot of trouble by saying this- but I must get into this if we are going to fully understand what John was teaching here. The Bible says that along with Man's immortality and emotions- Man's nature was radically, utterly totally and completely destroyed by the Fall. And because our nature was radically ruined- the *basis* on which we make our choices was also radically ruined.

You see, what people call, "Free Will" is really not free at all- and it really never has been. To be "free" in this sense means: autonomous. And so to say that we have free will means that we make our choices alone- without any other influence that shapes and guides and compels our choices- and that is simply not true.

Our ability to choose one thing above the other is inescapably linked to what we love and what we want and what we lust for. So, we choose what we love. We choose what we want. We choose what we lust after. And so mankind's problem is not just that we choose the wrong things- but it is *why* we choose the wrong things.

Why do people choose to do things that are hurtful and that will make them miserable? Because they want to. Because they love darkness rather than light. Because they lust after them. So why do people choose to sin? Because they want to. Because they love their sin; and because they list after it. So, in reality what is wrong with lost

people is their “want to”. Why don’t lost people believe the Bible? Because they don’t want to. Why don’t lost people love and serve God? Because they don’t want to.

Now as staggering as that is- we cannot stop there. We need to ask another question: Why do lost people want what we want? Why do lost people love darkness rather than light? Why do lost people look upon the Truth of God’s Word as being foolishness? Why do lost people see the Commands of God as being stifling upon their desire to party hardy? Look at what the Apostle Paul taught about this in **1Corinthians 2:14**:

**But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.**

Now notice several very important things in this verse. Paul talks here about a “natural man”. And this is referring to a lost person. Now look what the Apostle Paul taught about lost people. He says two things here: He says that a lost man “does not” and they “cannot”. Well, what do lost people not do? They do not accept the things of the Spirit of God. Why don’t they? Because they are lost and they love darkness rather than light and the devil has blinded their eyes and the result is that lost people see the things of the Spirit of God as being “foolishness”.

Now remember that this word means that lost people see the things of the Spirit of God as being so patently absurd that they reject them out of hand. So here the Fall has so warped their loves and their wants and their desires that they do not want to accept the things of the Spirit of God. And we have to know that this is not that *some* lost people who do this- but all lost people no longer desire to accept the things of the Spirit of God. Why? Because they are a child of satan by virtue of Original Sin.

And as bad as that is- the next one is even worse. Look further into what Paul taught here:

**... and he cannot understand them ...**

Now the phrase, “does not” has to do with volition; with desire; with love; and with choice. So, this side is the voluntary disposition of that lost individual. The Fall has so radically ruined him that he no longer desires; he no longer wants; he no longer chooses to accept the things of the Spirit of God. But then Paul goes even further and says that lost people can’t. They cannot understand them. And this word has to do with ability and power and not desire or volition or choice.

And the way that the Greek is worded here shows us that the one feeds the other. So what the Apostle Paul is teaching here in sacred Scripture is that lost people *cannot* accept the things of the Spirit of God because they do not *want to*. And this is what is called, “Moral Inability”. So being lost is far worse than simply lacking information- it is not being able to change precisely because you don’t want to change. And that makes Salvation to be far more magnificent than simply exercising a human choice. It is the Grace of God coming to that helpless lost soul and giving him what he does not have and what he does not want.

So left to themselves- in this sinful; helpless; hopeless condition- lost people would never suddenly “want” to accept the things of the Spirit of God and so they would forever remain lost- unless and until God would sovereignly intervene into their lives to sovereignly violate their sinful fallen wills and sovereignly override their evil hearts and sovereignly insert Himself into their lives and sovereignly interrupt their plans and sovereignly make Himself known to them. It is God sovereignly providing both the desire and the power to believe and to repent and to trust in Jesus Christ and in His finished Work. And I would suggest to you that this sovereign violation; this sovereign interruption; this sovereign insertion; this sovereign overriding; this sovereign empowerment is called, “Grace”.

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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