

PNEUMATOLOGY (147)

Evidently God knew of the doctrinal diversion some believers would take on this issue because I John 1:8, 10 gives specific warning to the believer, not the unbeliever, against saying that we do not have any sin nature. Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer said, "It is the testimony of the Spirit of God with reference to every born-again person. For any such to say that he has no sin nature means that the person is self-deceived and the truth not in him. This passage is evidently intended for correction of those Christians who are claiming to be free from the sin nature and who may have made themselves believe that they are free" (*Ibid.*, pp. 271-272). The source of any sin we commit as a believer **is not** our new nature or the Spirit of God, **it is** our old nature. One who has a new nature, who is begotten of God, will not practice sin at a lawless level as he did prior to receiving his new nature (I John 3:9). In other words, one with a new nature cannot pursue the same lawless, sinful life that he once did because of his new nature. This, however, does not mean that he will not have moments of struggle or sin; in fact, God has made provision for this (I John 1:9).

RELATED TOPIC #2 – The topic of sinless perfection .

There are those who misunderstand the meaning of the word "perfect" in the original, and take it to mean one reaches a point where he/she has an incapacity to sin and therefore lives life in a sinless, perfect way. No such theme is ever presented in Scripture and it is a great misunderstanding of what God actually did put in writing to believe or think any differently.

The word "perfection" or "perfect" **is not** the idea of sinlessness , but the idea of that which is complete, mature, grown and finished. **It is not** possible for a believer in this life to reach a point of sinlessness, but **it is** possible and expected and promoted by the Holy Spirit that a believer will grow and reach the desired finished end, which is to be a complete, mature, full-grown believer who reflects the glory of God.

In the Bible, the concept of perfection is used in several ways:

- 1) To refer to people who were godly . Gen. 6:9; Job 1:1, 8
- 2) To refer to positional perfection in Christ. Hebrews 10:14
- 3) To refer to spiritual maturity and understanding . I Cor. 2:6
- 4) To refer to progression of spiritual growth in one's spiritual life. Gal. 3:3
- 5) To refer to the perfect will of God. Col. 4:12
- 6) To refer to imitating the character of God in reaching out to sinners. Matt. 5:48
- 7) To refer to perfectly being equipped to accomplish God's work. Heb. 13:21

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8) To refer to developing a mature level of patience. James 1:4

9) To refer to ultimate perfection when we get to heaven. Col. 1:28; Eph. 4:13

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, in examining the two main Greek words translated in English “perfect,” observed: “...it is obvious that neither of these words etymologically considered, has any reference to sinlessness. There is a complete deliverance by the Spirit for every child of God, but this should not be confused with any use of the word perfect when the incapacity to sin is implied by that word” (Vol. 6, p. 284).

RELATED TOPIC #3 – The topic of sanctification.

The idea or concept behind the word “sanctify” is the idea of being **set apart** unto God. There are three aspects of this work of the Holy Spirit:

- 1) There is positional sanctification. I Cor. 1:30; Heb.10:10 - At the moment of salvation, the Holy Spirit positionally sets one apart as a child of God, forever.
- 2) There is progressive sanctification. John 17:17; Eph. 5:26 - As the believer yields to the Spirit of God and moves away from sinful things, he progressively matures in growth.
- 3) There is ultimate sanctification. I John 3:2; Rom. 8:29 - Believers are ultimately gathered into the Savior’s presence and are forever like Him and conformed to Him.

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is critical to this age and Satan desires we never study it.