



CAPITOL COMMISSION

WHOSE LEADERSHIP DO YOU EMULATE?

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Everyone is a leader, either in the life of the family or in the life of the political realm. Your character defines your leadership style. Keep in mind; one's character is never defined by one singular act, whether good or bad. However, one's reputation is ruined by a single act. Character is determined by the habits of one's life. The continual pattern of one's life gives credence to his true inner nature.

Let it be known that one's reputation is determined by every single act. These are your character qualities. The issue at hand is that of habitual practice. One's continual practices result from his inner being.

Righteousness or unrighteousness manifests itself by those things one does as a pattern of life. You may ask, how do you know this, or how do you come to this conclusion? What one practice gives proof positive of his character? What you habitually practice is the theme of 1 John 3:4-10. Verse 4—"everyone who practices;" verse 7—"the one who practices;" verse 8 "the one who practices;" verse 9 "no one born of God practices;" and verse 10 "anyone who does not practice."

ADMONITION FOR THE SAINTS

1 John 3:7-8 "Little children, let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning."

DO NOT BE DECEIVED!

Throughout Scripture we are admonished about two types of deception: self-deception and satanic deception. Both come with an imperatival command—"Do not be deceived!"

Deception is a craft designed by Satan. He is only true in one aspect, that is, when he is lying. He is true in his character, so his children operate in this arena also. To deceive means, "to lead astray." These are the ones, the false teachers, we have already addressed—they depart from the faithful (2:19); they deny the faith (2:22-23); they deceive the faithful (2:26). As Augustine puts it "let no man seduce you." Don't be duped and succumb to the trickery of the Devil. In this case Satan's children are the false teachers.

John admonishes his readers to be on the alert. Watch out for the schemes of the false teachers who reveal who their true father really is. He is Satan himself who is the father of lies. Satan also delights in deception (1 Tim. 3:6-7; 2 Tim. 2:26). His lying nature stands in bold contrast to the truth for which Christ stands (John 8:32, 44). The great falsehood he uses so frequently is that good can be attained by doing wrong. This lie is apparent in practically all his temptations (Gen. 3:4-5). As the great deceiver, Satan is an expert at falsifying truth (2 Cor. 11:13-15).¹

1 John 2:26 "These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you."

2 John 7 "For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh."

This is the deceiver and the antichrist." Since the devil is the arch-deceiver (Rev. 20:10) his children are described as 'full of deceit', e.g. Elymas (Acts 13:10). Conversely, in Christ's mouth there is no deceit (1 Pet. 2:22) and in the true Israelite Nathanael no guile (Jn. 1:47).²

1. HE WHO PRACTICES RIGHTEOUSNESS IS BORN OF GOD.

The present participle marks that the test is not performance of an occasional righteous deed, but rather the habitual practice of righteousness. The practice of righteousness does not make the person righteous but does reveal his inner nature—"even as He is righteous." This does not mean we (we as finite beings can never be) are righteous just as Christ is righteous but instead makes it clear that we are to conduct ourselves as true believers to the moral nature of Christ (Matthew 5:48).

1 Peter 1:14-16 "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, you shall be holy, for I am holy."

WHOSE LEADERSHIP DO YOU EMULATE?

2. HE WHO PRACTICES SIN IS BORN OF THE DEVIL

The Devil means “*accuser or slanderer*” — the main title for the fallen angelic being who is the supreme enemy of God and humankind. Satan is his most common name, and devil is what he is—the accuser or deceiver. The title “devil” appears 35 times in the New Testament of the NKJV. In every case the article “the” indicating a title rather than a name precedes it. The term comes from a Greek word that means “a false witness” or “malicious accuser.”

Several descriptive phrases applied to the devil in the New Testament point out the nature of his wicked personality and the extent of his evil deeds.

- **THAT SERPENT OF OLD** (Rev. 12:9; 20:2; Gen. 3:1–6)
- **THE WICKED OR EVIL ONE** (Matt. 6:13; 13:19, 38; 1 John 2:13)
- **ENEMY** (Matt. 13:25, 28, 39)
- **MURDERER** (John 8:40; 44)
- **DECEIVER** (Rev. 20:10; 2 Tim. 3:13)
- **BEELEZEBUB** “lord of Flies” **the Ruler of the Demons** (Matt. 9:34; 12:24)
- **BELIAL** (2 Cor. 6:15)
- **RULER OF THIS WORLD** (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11)

The one “Born [of] the Devil,” denotes the source, which gives credence that evil dominates one’s life and purpose—the one who practices evil. Augustine concluded this—

“THE DEVIL MADE NO MAN, BEGAT NO MAN, CREATED NO MAN: BUT WHOSO IMITATES THE DEVIL, THAT PERSON, AS IF BEGOTTEN OF HIM, BECOMES A CHILD OF THE DEVIL; BY IMITATING HIM, NOT LITERAL BEING BEGOTTEN OF HIM.”³

DIVINE DELIVERANCE—THE DESTRUCTION OF SATAN

1 John 3:8b “The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.”

This is the second reason why Christ came in our context. First, Christ came “to take away sins” (3:5) and second “that He might destroy the works of the devil.” The mission of Christ in His visible appearance was to destroy the activities and achievements of the devil in leading human beings into sin and rebellion against God.

Satan is destined to fail in his continuing rebellion against God. His final defeat is predicted in the New Testament (Luke 10:18; John 12:31; Rev. 12:9; 20:10). The death of Christ on the cross is the basis for Satan’s final defeat (Heb. 2:14–15; 1 Pet. 3:18, 22). This event was the grand climax to a sinless life during which Jesus triumphed over the enemy repeatedly (Matt. 4:1–11; Luke 4:1–13). The final victory will come when Jesus returns and Satan is cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:1–15).

The verb “might destroy” means to render powerless or inoperative. That is exactly what occurred. On the cross Christ in His victory rendered powerless the domination of the devil and broke his chains of sin, whereby he controlled mankind. That is why it is imperative to be in Christ! He alone is the **ONLY Deliverer!**

Strength for a Christian’s victory over sin has also been provided through the death of Christ. We have assurance that “the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet” (Rom. 16:20). But such personal victory depends on our will to offer resistance to Satan’s temptations (Eph. 4:25–27; 1 Pet. 5:8–9). To help Christians win this battle against Satan, God has provided the power of Christ’s blood (Rev. 12:11), the continuing prayer of Christ in heaven for believers (Heb. 7:25), the leading of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:16), and various weapons for spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:13–18).

TRANSFORMATION OF THE SAINTS (3:9)

1 John 3:9 “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.”

SOUTH CAROLINA

WHOSE LEADERSHIP DO YOU EMULATE?

With the “New Birth” came a new Master. The one who has been regenerated by God has been given a new life with another Master—Jesus Christ. He begins to think in a new transformed mind. The Apostle John asserts literally “sin not he is doing.” With the new birth came a new empowerment. The new seed motivates and empowers the believer’s moral conduct.

2 Peter 1:3-4 *“seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.”*

The Holy Spirit is the life-giving agent as He applies the Word of God to the believer’s life. It is the Word and the Spirit at work producing a habitual practice of righteousness—thus becoming like and giving outward manifestation of an inner transformation.

We know the believer sins, 1 John 1:6-2:2 provides ample truth to this theological dilemma. John’s categorical assertion here is grounded in the moral incongruity between the practice of sin and the nature of the divinely bestowed new birth.⁴

The habitual and continual practice of sin cannot be true of the new believer having been born of God. If no past broken pattern of sin has resulted in one’s life, there is great proof that they have never experienced the “New Birth.” Have you experienced the “New Birth in Christ? Has there been a radical change in your nature? If not, that practice constitutes a powerful refutation of any claim to possess the divine life!

³ Augustine, Homily 4, sect. 10, in *Ten Homilies on the First Epistle of John*, trans. H. Browne, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* (Reprinted ed., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 1st series, 7:486.

⁴ D. Edmond Hiebert, *The Epistle of John: An Expository Commentary* (South Carolina: Bob Jones Press, 1991), p.148.

¹ Youngblood, Ronald F., F. F. Bruce, R. K. Harrison, and Thomas Nelson Publishers. *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. Rev. ed. of: Nelson's illustrated Bible dictionary.; Includes index. Nashville: T. Nelson, 1995.

² Wood, D. R. W., and I. Howard Marshall. *New Bible Dictionary*. 3rd ed. /. Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1996.