



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## 1 JOHN 3:7-10 – PRACTICING RIGHTEOUSNESS- PART 2 COLORADO FEBRUARY 4, 2020

Dan File, P.O. Box 1088, Lake City, CO 81235-1088/303-345-8830 / [filefamily@centurytel.net](mailto:filefamily@centurytel.net)

*How you live reveals if you truly are a Christian, if you have genuine faith.<sup>1</sup> John confronts us again with the seriousness of sin in these verses. It is important to understand with these verses that all the verbs related to sin are in the present tense in the Greek, indicating a continuous, habitual action. John isn't referring just to occasional sin, but rather a continuous, established pattern of sinful behavior, which has become a way of life.<sup>2</sup> Contrast this with what happens when the Holy Spirit brings sinners to a holy God, regenerates them and gives them salvation with eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. They have been recreated (2 Corinthians 5:17) with a desire to obey God's Word and pursue holiness. Practicing righteousness becomes the pursuit of every genuine believer.*

### I. 1 JOHN 3:7-10- PRACTICING RIGHTEOUSNESS- PART 2

*"(4) Everyone who practices sin, also practices lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. (5) And we 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, let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness 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; that He might 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." 1 John 3:4-10*

John begins to give a series of contrasts between righteousness and sin (3:4-10), between love and hate (3:11-18), and then between truth and error (4:1-6). Here in these verses, John continues his contrast between practicing righteousness and practicing sin. John makes it clear that how we live reveals the genuineness of our faith in Jesus Christ.

#### A. DOING IS THE BEST TEST OF BEING- 1 JOHN 3:7

*"Little children, let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous;" 1 John 3:7*

John doesn't want any Christian to be deceived and therefore he cautions concerning having the correct understanding of sin and righteousness. The false teachers were seeking to lead them astray not just with the truth, but also morally. The only one who is righteous in God's eyes is the one that does right like Christ does. "Doing is the test of being" as John Stott has said.<sup>3</sup> We must never make light of sin.

Romans 6:4 says that believers have died to sin and no longer live in it. 1 Corinthians 1:2 says that in Christ we have been

sanctified. We have been delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of His beloved Son as Colossians 1:13 says. To continue as you lived before you professed faith in Jesus Christ reveals that you never truly believed. Yes, Christian believers sin, but sin is not the ruling pattern in their lives.<sup>4</sup>

We must be hating sin and sin fighting. And our new habits of holiness are our prevailing lifestyle. Real and radical change has happened inwardly and outwardly. We have made a decisive break. Our way of life is not characterized by a life of sin, but a life of loving obedience for we practice righteousness and not lawlessness. We are loved by God and saved by Christ's cross. And holiness matters to a holy God. God is our Father and we are a reflection of our Father. Therefore, we live as God's offspring now. Make a fresh effort to pursue holiness.<sup>5</sup>

#### B. PRACTICING SIN IS OF THE DEVIL - 1 JOHN 3:8

*"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; that He might destroy the works of the devil." 1 John 3:8*

John would say that it is inconceivable that a Christian should make a practice of sinning because as this verse states, the one who makes a practice of sinning is of the devil. The mark of the devil is sin, lawlessness, rebellion against God Himself and this rebellion has been from the beginning.<sup>6</sup>

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**"devil"** Greek **"diabolos"** means accuser, slanderer..

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John says "for the devil has sinned from the beginning." From the moment the devil rebelled against God, sin has characterized his existence. God originally created the devil as a perfect angel. (Isaiah 14:12-14, Ezekiel 28:12-17) Satan is a rebel against God and the ruler of this world. (Ephesians 2:2) He opposes God and His plan and initiated the first rebellion against God with Adam and Eve which continues until Christ's second return.<sup>7</sup>

And so John writes that, "The Son of God appeared for this purpose; that He might destroy the works of the devil." John previously said Jesus came to take away the sins of all who trust in Him. (1 John 3:5) Here we are given the second reason for Christ's mission, "that He might destroy the works of the devil." When you consider Christ's mission, it is inconceivable and unthinkable

### BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS, GOVERNOR & SPOUSES: TUESDAY AT 7:15AM, CAPITOL BASEMENT, ROOM 0109

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that any true believer would continue in sin, in the works of the devil.

Today, satan is still opposing the plans of God and His people. Even though he is a defeated foe, he still roars, seeking whom he may devour as 1 Peter 5:8 reminds us. But believers are no longer under his rule because of Christ and bound to do his work.<sup>8</sup>

John writes, *“that He might destroy the works of the devil.”*

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**“destroy”** Greek **“katargeo”** refers to a loosening, not to annihilation but to deprive of force, to render inoperative, to overthrow, conquer. .

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John refers to these diabolical works as if they were chains that bound us. Yes, the devil is still doing his wicked works, but he is defeated and in Christ as Christians, we can escape his tyranny.<sup>9</sup> God *“disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in Him.”* (Colossians 2:15) Satan will still trouble the child of God, but his power over the believer has been forever broken.<sup>10</sup>

### C. “BORN OF GOD” - 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.” 1 John 3:9*

John again makes his point clear. No true believer in Jesus Christ will continue to live habitually in sin. When a person has truly been born again, then something radical has happened. The Christian has received a new life and has been launched on a new course. This is a course of holiness and of pleasing God.<sup>11</sup> To continue living lawlessly in rebellion against God makes no sense. It is inconceivable, even impossible because Christ now lives inside us through the Holy Spirit and His ministry in us is to make us like Christ, pure and holy.

When God plants His “seed” of new life in our souls at the new birth, our salvation (John 3, 1 Peter 1:22-23), He gives us a new heart with new affections and new desires. The seed of new life, which is actually God’s own life, reveals itself in God like living, producing in our lives a harvest of righteousness.<sup>12</sup> John says when all this happens at the new birth, *“he cannot sin because he is born of God.”* John makes a statement of fact and is emphatic. John isn’t saying that Christians won’t sin but rather that sin is no longer the pattern that shapes their lives. Sin is unwelcome, an intruder and not a house guest.

Consider this question. Has your attitude towards sin changed? Is sin a welcome guest in your life? Your attitude toward sin will reveal whether your Christian profession is genuine or false.

### D. TWO GROUPS, TWO WAYS OF LIFE - 1 JOHN 3:10

*“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.” 1 John 3:10*

Everyone, everywhere belongs to these two groups of people, *“By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious...”*. John says it is obvious, evident as to what family you belong to, whether God’s family or the devil’s. If you do not practice righteousness, you are not in God’s family. The credibility of your profession is evidenced by your transformed life. And then John states that the transformed life is evidenced by two features; the practice of righteousness and a love for fellow believers. So not only will there be a practice of righteousness, but a selfless service that seeks the good of others. To claim to be a child of God Who is love, and yet not love your brother or sister, is to show that your true parent, your true family, is not God but of the devil.<sup>13</sup>

So what family do you belong to?

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<sup>1</sup> Hamilton, Ian, *Let’s Study the Letters of John*. The Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh, UK, 2008. Pg. 37-38.

<sup>2</sup> MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary Series on 1-3 John*. Moody Press: Chicago, IL, 2007. Pg. 123.

<sup>3</sup> Stott, John R., *The Epistles of John*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company: Grand Rapids, MI, 1964, Pg. 124.

<sup>4</sup> Hamilton, Ian, *Let’s Study the Letters of John*. The Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh, UK, 2008. Pg. 38.

<sup>5</sup> O’Donnell, Douglas Sean, *Reformed Expository Commentary: 1-3 John*. P&R Publishing Company: Phillipsburg, NJ, 2015. Pg. 99.

<sup>6</sup> Hamilton, Ian, *Let’s Study the Letters of John*. The Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh, UK, 2008. Pg. 39.

<sup>7</sup> MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary Series on 1-3 John*. Moody Press: Chicago, IL, 2007. Pg. 126.

<sup>8</sup> MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary Series on 1-3 John*. Moody Press: Chicago, IL, 2007. Pg. 126.

<sup>9</sup> Stott, John R., *The Epistles of John*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company: Grand Rapids, MI, 1964, Pg. 125.

<sup>10</sup> Hamilton, Ian, *Let’s Study the Letters of John*. The Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh, UK, 2008. Pg. 39.

<sup>11</sup> Boice, James Montgomery, *An Expository Commentary: The Epistles of John*. Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI, 1979. Pg. 89.

<sup>12</sup> Hamilton, Ian, *Let’s Study the Letters of John*. The Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh, UK, 2008. Pg. 40.

<sup>13</sup> Hamilton, Ian, *Let’s Study the Letters of John*. The Banner of Truth Trust: Edinburgh, UK, 2008. Pg. 41.