

STUDIES IN 1 JOHN

STUDY NUMBER SEVEN: Fellowship is Apparent by Fruit

1 John 3:4-10

Key Verse 3:9: "Everyone who has been born of God is not practicing sin, because His seed is remaining in him; and he is not able to keep on sinning because he has been born of God."

TEXT:

v. 4 Everyone who is doing sin also is doing lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.

v. 5 And you know that that one was made visible in order that He might take away sin; and sin is not in Him.

v. 6 Everyone who is abiding in Him is not continually sinning. Everyone who is continually sinning has not seen Him nor has he known Him.

v. 7 Little children, let no one keep on leading you astray; the one who is doing righteousness is righteous, even as that one is righteous.

v. 8 The one who is doing sin is of the devil; because the devil is sinning from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was made visible, in order that He might destroy the works of the devil.

v. 9 Everyone who has been born of God is not practicing sin, because His seed is remaining in him; and he is not able to keep on sinning because he has been born of God.

v.10 In this it is made visible: the children of God and the children of the devil. Everyone who is not practicing righteousness is not of God, and the one who is not loving his brother.

INTRODUCTION:

(At Wit's End by Erma Bombeck)

We call him "the baby."

He weighs forty pounds, stands stove-high and can kick a football higher than the house. Somehow, I have the feeling we will call him "the baby" when he is forty, has children of his own, and a hairline like the coast of Florida.

This day, in particular, is special. It's the day when "the baby" goes to school for the first time. I don't know why I feel so irritable. One minute I'm yelling at him, "You slam that door once more, fella, and I'll mail you to a school in Nebraska with no return address."

The next I'm scooping him to my bosom and saying, "Let's run away to Never-Never land, you and I, where little boys never grow up and I could get the job of Mother that Mary Martin gave up."

This should be a happy morning. I remember all those promises I made to myself while sloshing over diaper pails and shaking boiling hot milk over my wrists at 2 A.M. just six short years ago.

"Just wait," I told myself. "When this whole mess is behind me I'll go back to bed in the mornings, have lunch with someone who doesn't eat his meat with a spoon, shed fifteen pounds, do my nails, learn how to play bridge, and blow this firetrap called home that has held me a virtual prisoner."

I nurtured this dream through measles, fractures, tensions, traumas, Dr. Spock, and nursery school. And now that I am so close to realization, I feel guilty. What am I doing? Sending this "baby" off to learn calculus before the cord is healed. How can I possibly think of my own comforts when he is harboring all those insecurities? Indeed, how does the State of Ohio know my son is ready for the first grade? They look at him and what do they see? A birth certificate and a record of immunizations.

I look at him and I see a smile . . . like Halloween. I see two short legs that won't get him a drink of water without a stool under them. I see two pudgy hands that can't work together to hold a slippery bar of soap. I see a shock of red hair that doesn't come up to his father's belt buckle. I see a little boy who never went to the restroom all during nursery school because he didn't want to admit he couldn't spell the difference between B-O-Y-S from G-I-R-L-S on the door.

I should have prepared him more. I puffed away all that time on Santa Claus, Easter Bunny, Tooth Fairy, and Mary Poppins. I should've dealt with the basic realities like tolerance, forgiveness, compassion, and honesty. For from this day forward his world can only widen. An existence that began in a crib, grew to a house, and extends over a two-block bicycle ride will now go even beyond that. I will share him with another woman, other adults, other children, other opinions, other points of view. I am no longer leading. I am standing behind him ready to guide from a new position.

Who is this woman who will spend more daylight hours with him than I? Please, Miss Chalkdust or whatever, give him the patience and gentleness he needs. Please have a soft lap and a warm smile. Please don't be too pretty or too smart, lest I suffer from the comparison.

A note. Maybe I should pin a note on his sweater to make sure she understands

you. I could say, "Dear Miss Chalkdust or whatever: I submit to your tender, loving care my son who is a little shy and a lot stubborn. Who can't cope yet with zippers that stick or buttons on sweaters that don't come out even. One who makes his 5's sideways but works seriously and in earnest. I may sue you for alienation of affection, but for the moment, God Bless You!"

Note. There is no time for a note. The bus is here. It's such a big bus. Why would they send their largest bus for someone so small? He is gone. He didn't even look back to wave.

pp. 143-46

I mean, any mother with half a brain knows that children's apparel comes in three sizes: "A little large, but you'll grow," "Just right--so enjoy," and "A little small, so stoop a little."

p. 159

(Success, Motivation, and the Scriptures by William H. Cook)

For like life is meant to be, the Bible is

Negative on sin,
 Positive on the Savior.
 Negative on self-sufficiency
 Positive on Christ sufficiency.
 Negative on human strength,
 Positive on divine strength.
 Negative on harmful habits,
 Positive on helpful habits.
 Negative on a sin-filled life,
 Positive on a Christ-filled life.
 Negative on doubt,
 Positive on faith.
 Negative on short-sightedness,
 Positive on vision.

pp. 63-64

We are pursuing the subject FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER in our studies in 1 John. We have looked together at:

#1 - FELLOWSHIP IS RESTORED BY JESUS CHRIST

#2 - FELLOWSHIP IS BROKEN BY SIN

#3 - FELLOWSHIP IS NOURISHED BY OBEDIENCE

#4 - FELLOWSHIP IS ESCALATED BY GROWTH

#5 - FELLOWSHIP IS BEING EDUCATED BY HIS SPIRIT

And then in our last study together, we looked at:

#6 - FELLOWSHIP IS A REHEARSAL FOR THE FUTURE.

In this particular study we are going to be pursuing the subject:

"FELLOWSHIP IS APPARENT BY FRUIT."

Van Gorder says:

This portion of John's epistle is one of the most controversial passages in all of the New Testament. A right interpretation of this scripture brings great assurance to the heart of the child of God. A wrong interpretation leads to the acceptance of a system of doctrine which contradicts other New Testament teaching. It promotes a quavering, uncertainty and on again/off again/gone again salvation for those who endorse it.

Stott points out:

His argument for the indispensable necessity of holy living is drawn now, not from the expectation of the Lord's second coming when we shall see Him and become like Him, but from the purpose of His first coming which was to remove sins and to destroy the works of the devil.

To continue in sin is thus shown to be completely opposed to the whole purpose of Christ's first appearing which is twice mentioned (vv. 5, 8), just as His second appearing has been mentioned twice in the previous section (2:28, 3:2).

Mitchell says:

It may come as a surprise to some to learn that there is opposition to fellowship with God who is righteous. Before we became Christians, we did not have any opposition. The devil was not opposed to us, the world was not opposed to us and the flesh was enjoying sin too much. When we accepted the Savior we were translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's Son. We received the gift of eternal life and the indwelling of the Spirit of God. Immediately we had three enemies: the world, the flesh, and the devil.

(Principle-Centered Leadership by Stephen R. Covey)

The classic problem-solving process involves eight steps:

1. Gather data
 2. Diagnose data
 3. Select and prioritize your objectives
 4. Create and analyze alternatives
 5. Select one of them (make a decision)
 6. Plan the action steps to carry out that decision
 7. Implement the plan
 8. Study the results against the objectives
- p. 229

The Lord Jesus, in Matthew 13, speaks of the PARABLE OF THE SOWER AND THE SEEDS. He outlines a 4-FOLD RESPONSE to the seed:

- 1.the 1st is seen in that the birds of the air catch it away,
- 2.the 2nd receives it in stony places, and yet, it does not take root,
- 3.the 3rd fell among the thorns.
- 4.fell on good soil.

In these 3 types of soil unprepared for the word of God you can see the 3 GREAT ENEMIES of the Christian who is struggling toward maturity:

1. In the 1st you can see the DEVIL snatching away the word before it has time to take root.
2. In the 2nd you can see the FLESH--the OLD NATURE-- operative, because as the experiences of life begin to pile up and difficulties are encountered that produce growth, a man, when he is living in the flesh rather than the Spirit, becomes BITTER rather than BETTER.

And although the word began to sprout, it withers because of the hard, stony hearts of disobedience that are unwilling to be broken and submissive to the cultivating process of the Father.

3. The 3rd enemy is the WORLD SYSTEM which John has already warned us about back in:

chapter 2:15:

"Stop loving the world, neither the things which are in the world. If a man keeps on loving the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

Your response to the word will reveal the condition of your heart. If Satan can have his way, he will keep you childish and carnal by snatching away the seed of the word of God which is designed to bring forth a harvest in your life.

This is the whole thought in James 2 that faith will manifest itself in fruit.

Truth faith will bring new life, and new life will express itself. New life works; it moves from a struggling capacity to a mature ability. This is the Father's desire for me as His child.

It was Jesus who said:

"By their fruits, you shall know them."

v. 4 Everyone who is doing sin also is doing lawlessness;
and sin is lawlessness.

This 4th verse provides a CONTRAST to verse 3 of our last study:

3:3

And everyone who is having this hope on Him is purifying himself, even as that one is pure.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

John now wrote about sin which stands in opposition to the purity he had just referred to in verse 3.

The word we have translated "LAWLESSNESS" here is a general term like the English word "wickedness" which has some prominence in escatological context.

Evidently, the false teachers had a softened view of sin which John wished to refute. A person who sins does what is wicked and sin is wickedness. Sin must not be taken lightly.

Isaiah 5:20, 21

Woe to those who call evil good
and good evil,
who put darkness for light
and light for darkness,
who put bitter for sweet
and sweet for bitter.
Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes
and clever in their own sight.

Westcott says:

Sin and lawlessness are convertible terms. Sin is not an arbitrary conception. It is the assertion of the selfish will against a paramount authority. He who sins breaks not only by accident or in an isolated detail, but essentially the 'law' which he was created to fulfil.

This 'law' which expressed the divine ideal of man's constitution and growth has three chief applications. There is the 'law' of each man's personal being: there is the 'law' of his relation to things without him: there is the 'law' of his relation to God. To violate any part of this threefold law is to sin, for all parts are divine.

p. 102

Barclay says:

As A. E. Brooke puts it: "The test of progress is obedience." Progress does not confer the privilege to sin; the further on a man is the purer and the more disciplined a character he will be.

Sin is the deliberate breaking of a law which a man well knows. Sin is putting one's own desires in the place of the law of God; to sin is to obey oneself rather than to obey God.

Stott says:

It is not just that sin manifests itself in disregard for God's law, but that sin is in its very nature lawlessness. Lawlessness is the essence, not the result, of sin, thus exposed in its ugly reality the seriousness of sin emerges.

Just as today the truth about sin is concealed by euphemisms, and our sins become mere 'peccadilloes', 'temperamental weaknesses' or 'personality problems'. In contrast to such underestimates of sin, John declares that it is not just a negative failure, but essentially an act of rebellion against God's will and a violation of His whole law. It is important to acknowledge this, because the first step towards holy living is to recognize the true nature and wickedness of sin.

Dr. Mitchell points out:

Sin is lawlessness. Sin is self-will and rebellion against the person and law of God. It is not merely the transgression of the law of the ten commandments, or the law of the sermon on the mount, but rather, it is the spirit of lawlessness. It is a life which is lived without respect or consideration for the will and purpose of God.

Just as a new life in Christ is revealed by a quality of holiness, so the life of one who is not a Christian is revealed by continual practice of sin.

In this particular section, John begins his sentences with the word "EVERYONE."

It is:

"EVERYONE who is having this hope,"

"EVERYONE doing sin,"

"EVERYONE who is abiding,"

"EVERYONE who has been born of God,"

"EVERYONE not doing righteousness."

John equates sin with lawlessness. In other words, whenever a person commits an act of sin, it is a breaking of God's law.

Judges 21:25

In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.

Whenever a person is continually "DOING SIN," he becomes a law unto himself. He is disregarding his responsibility to God and to others.

John goes on to say that "SIN IS LAWLESSNESS."

Sin is:

- the missing of the mark,
- the doing of wrong,
- the breaking of God's law.

Romans 3:23

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Galatians 3:13

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us--for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"--

To continue in a practice of doing sin, reveals the fact that I am not in fellowship with the Father because I am living in disobedience.

QUICK-QUOTE: FREEDOM

"It is not freedom of choice people want so much as license to sin."

--Mary Ann Bell
(in World, Apr 25, 1992)

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO SIN?

"With few dissenting exceptions, 96 hours and 96 zillion column inches of sentiment washed over the falls about how all this proved the need for 'safe sex' before someone finally said that Magic Johnson's sex life was, simply, wrong."

Sin was the topic of an editorial published in the Wall Street Journal in December. Entitled "The Joy of What?" the essay condemned recent sex scandals involving public figures and rejected the moral relativism spawned by the sexual revolution. The writer, deputy editor Daniel Henninger, lamented that just about everybody--including the churches--has been afraid to speak out about the old-fashioned idea of sin. In the case of Magic Johnson, a lot was said about his experience proving the need for "safe sex" before hardly anyone ever suggested that his lifestyle was just plain wrong. Henninger, a Catholic, said that priests and ministers have less credibility than therapists these days, but it is time for people in positions of responsibility to let people know that some of the things they are doing are morally wrong. The editorial was later reprinted as a full-page ad in the business section of the New York Times.

"An editorial on sin." National & International Religion Report, Jan 27, 1992.
Page 2.

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

Sin violates the laws of nature. You can see it in these
5 ISSUES:

1. HOMOSEXUALITY
2. ABORTION
3. DIVORCE
4. MATERIALISM
5. SELF-WILL

Psalm 32:1-5

Blessed is he
 whose transgressions are forgiven,
 whose sins are covered.
 Blessed is the man
 whose sin the Lord does not count against him
 and in whose spirit is no deceit.
 When I kept silent,
 my bones wasted away
 through my groaning all day long.
 For day and night
 your hand was heavy upon me;
 my strength was sapped
 as in the heat of summer.
 Then I acknowledged my sin to you
 and did not cover up my iniquity.
 I said, "I will confess
 my transgressions to the Lord"--
 and you forgave
 the guilt of my sin.

Psalm 51:1-6

Have mercy on me, O God,
 according to your unfailing love;
 according to your great compassion
 blot out my transgressions.
 Wash away all my iniquity
 and cleanse me from my sin.
 For I know my transgressions,
 and my sin is always before me.
 Against you, you only, have I sinned
 and done what is evil in your sight,
 so that you are proved right when you speak
 and justified when you judge.
 Surely I was sinful at birth,
 sinful from the time my mother conceived me.
 Surely you desire truth in the inner parts;
 you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.

(The Existence and Attributes of God by Stephen Charnock)

What is man but a vile thing, that a God abounding with all riches should take care of so

abject a thing, much more to bear so many affronts from such a drop of matter, such a nothing creature! that he that hath anger at his command, as well as pity, should endure such a detestable, deformed creature by sin to fly in his face. 'What is man, that thou art mindful of him?'

p. 799

J. Vernon McGee says:

This is the way the hymn by Horatius Bonar puts it:

"I Was a Wandering Sheep"

I was a wandering sheep,
I did not love the fold,
I did not love my Shepherd's voice,
I would not be controlled:

I was a wayward child,
I did not love my home,
I did not love my Father's voice,
I loved afar to roam.

p. 789

v. 5 And you know that that one was made visible in order that He might take away sin; and sin is not in Him.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The seriousness of sin is further underscored by the consideration that Christ appeared "so that He might take away sin; and sin is not in Him."

The Incarnation was brought into the world, the One who was totally sinless, and who had as an objective the removal of sin from the lives of His own.

John 1:29

The next day he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

Hebrews 9:28

so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.

Now John reminds them of that which they know. That is, Jesus Christ was:

"MADE VISIBLE [OR CAME IN HUMAN FLESH WITH THE EXPRESS PURPOSE]
THAT HE MIGHT TAKE AWAY SIN; AND SIN IS NOT IN HIM."

"AND YOU KNOW THAT THAT ONE WAS MADE VISIBLE."

This takes us back to:

chapter 1:2

"and the life was made visible, and we have seen [it] and we are bearing witness and we are proclaiming to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made visible to us--"

This is Jesus Christ the invisible God being made visible by coming in human flesh and dwelling among us.

Westcott says:

Not only is sin a violation of the law of man's being: it sets at naught Christ's mission. His work was to take away sins: He Himself was sinless. Thus the most elementary knowledge shews that sin is utterly alien from the faith.
pp. 102-3

The dominant thought here is not that of the self-sacrifice of Christ, but of His utter hostility to sin in every shape. He came to remove all sins even as was He was Himself sinless.
p. 103

The purpose for His coming is seen in the next phrase:

"IN ORDER THAT HE MIGHT TAKE AWAY SIN."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

John's point is simple and straightforward. Sin is a product of ignorance and blindness toward God. Sin can never come out of seeing and knowing God. It can never be a part of the experience of abiding in Christ. For the believer, sin is abnormal and unnatural. His whole bent of life is away from sin.

(The Existence and Attributes of God by Stephen Charnock)

He was under no obligation to pity our misery and repair our ruins; he might have stood to the terms of the first covenant, and exacted our eternal death, since we had committed an infinite transgression. He was under no tie to put off the robes of a judge for the bowels of a father, and erect a mercy-seat above his tribunal of justice.
p. 576

"AND YOU KNOW THAT THAT ONE WAS MADE VISIBLE IN ORDER THAT HE MIGHT TAKE AWAY SIN."

This was the work that He came to do.

This is the significance of the word that He spoke on the cross: "Tetelestai; it is finished."

If I am living in fellowship with the Father, I would not be violating the purpose in the coming of Jesus Christ to earth to take away sin by continually practicing it.

A reflection of my fellowship will be a changing life pointed in the direction of holiness and righteousness.

"AND SIN IS NOT IN HIM."

Hebrews 4:15

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

2 Corinthians 5:21

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

In order for Jesus Christ to be my substitute and pay the penalty for my sins, it was absolutely necessary that His life be perfect and apart from sin, lest He, by His dying, would be dying for His own sin through His death upon the cross.

Because He is without sin, He is now in the position to pay the penalty for the sins of the whole world by His death. This is the good news of the gospel.

Guy King says:

His precious Blood is the Sovereign Eraser of all our guilty stain. The blood of the Old Testament sacrifices could not do that--"It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins", Hebrews x. 4): could not remove them, but only cover them.

p. 68

At the pivotal point of the world's redemption, God brought all the sin that ever was, and laid it upon Him; and God brought all the sin that ever shall be, and laid that also upon Him--"laid", made to meet on Him the iniquity of us all.

p. 69

Dr. Mitchell says:

His work, that which He has accomplished for us, is the basic, essential, blessed truth of the gospel. He had no sin in Himself, but He was manifested to take away our sins. The sinless One became sin. He was a fit sacrifice, and He put away our sin by the sacrifice of Himself. We should make no apology or allowance for sin when we realize that our Lord was manifested to take away our sins.

p. 95

v. 6 Everyone who is abiding in Him is not continually sinning. Everyone who is continually sinning has not seen Him nor has he known Him.

When you are abiding in Jesus Christ you are in living union with Him, and the life will not manifest itself in a conduct that is continually sinning.

John 15:10

If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The Christian still experiences a genuine struggle with the flesh and overcomes its impulses only by the help of the Holy Spirit.

If I were to ask you the question, "Are you abiding in Him today?", you would probably say I'm not sure; but if I were to ask you, "Are you obeying Him?", it might be a little bit easier to discern. It seems to me that those who are ABIDING are those who are OBEYING. If I am obedient to His word, I am abiding in Christ, and I am in fellowship with Him. Because I am obedient and abiding in Christ, I am not continually sinning. Sin no longer is the characteristic of my life. The power of sin has been broken and I am no longer in bondage to it as a slave. As a result of my fellowship with the Father, I am made sensitive to those things which are sin, and to those things which are an offense to Him. My life changes in accordance because of my obedient spirit.

Stott says:

The logical deduction follows. If the eternal nature of Jesus is sinless and if the purpose of His historical appearing was to remove sin, then whosoever abideth in him sinneth not, while, on the other hand, whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

Barclay says:

It simply means this--so long as we remember the continual presence of Jesus, so long as we deliberately walk with Him, we will not sin. It is when we forget Christ, that we do in fact sin. To remember the presence of Jesus Christ for ever with us is to make sin always difficult, and sometimes even impossible.

J. Vernon McGee quotes:

Dr. H. A. Ironside puts it this way: "[Christ], this absolutely sinless One, who in grace became sin for us that we might be reconciled to God, dwells by the Spirit in the believer, and our new nature is really His very life imparted to us."
p. 790

"EVERYONE WHO IS ABIDING IN HIM IS NOT CONTINUALLY SINNING.
EVERYONE WHO IS CONTINUALLY SINNING HAS NOT SEEN HIM NOR HAS HE KNOWN HIM."

Here John forms the CONTRAST between the ONE "WHO IS ABIDING IN HIM," and the ONE "WHO IS CONTINUALLY SINNING."

There are 2 THINGS that are said about one who is "CONTINUALLY SINNING":

- 1.HE "HAS NOT SEEN HIM,"
- 2.HE HAS NOT "KNOWN HIM."

TWO OF THE GLORIOUS EXPERIENCES of a person who is walking in fellowship with the Father are:

1. he catches a vision through the word of God of Christ and all of His glory, in perfect holiness;
2. he comes to know by personal experience this wonderful Savior.

It is said of ISAIAH and JOB when they saw the Lord, that they were also very much aware of their own sinfulness. So it is in our relationship to the Lord. The more we see Him in His holiness, the more we are aware of sin in our lives. With Isaiah we say, "Woe is me! For I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts."

We have already noted back in chapter 2 that the young children have come to know the Father, and the fathers have come to know Jesus Christ by personal experience. So John is saying that:

"EVERYONE WHO IS ABIDING IN HIM IS NOT CONTINUALLY SINNING.
EVERYONE WHO IS CONTINUALLY SINNING HAS NOT SEEN HIM NOR
HAS HE KNOWN HIM."

John points out in chapter 1 that those who are not in fellowship with the Father are walking around in darkness. This would explain their inability to see and to know.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

The Sunday School teacher had just concluded a review of the day's lesson. "And now, children," she inquired, "who can tell me what we must do before we can expect forgiveness of sin?"

There was a pause, but finally one little boy spoke up, "Well," he mused, "first we've got to sin."

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

ANY DAY

"Pastor, is it a sin to play golf on Sunday?"

"Son, I've seen you play, and it's a sin for you to play any day of the week."

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

TRAPPED!

The spindles of the magazine rack became prison bars to one-year-old Peter. He had put his hand between two of them and grasped a white ping pong ball that he wanted. But as he tried to withdraw it, his clenched fist was too big to pull back between the wooden bars. Peter had his ball, but as long as he held on to it, the ball had him. He was trapped.

That's a picture of our condition apart from Christ. By taking what God's revealed Word prohibits, we become trapped. Jesus said that "whoever commits sin is a slave of sin." And since we've all sinned, we're all trapped.

Release from this slavery is simple--but as difficult as letting go of the thing we want most. And that's our problem with sin. One part of us loves it, yet we hate its enslavement.

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

(Rediscovering Holiness by J. I. Packer)

It is not hard to see why this is so. We have spoken of the enlightenment of the conscience by the Holy Spirit. It is only the enlightened conscience that can take sin as seriously as it needs to be taken . . . with increasing knowledge, there is an ever deeper sensitiveness to our failure to make the best of the opportunities that God has given. Perhaps the actual and identifiable sins are few; but, given such opportunities as have been given us, what would Jesus have made of them? For here is the heart of it all. To move forward on the road of holiness means to know Jesus better. To him we always return. The better we come to know Him, the more plainly we shall see how little like him we are. . . .

p. 156

(Baby Boomer Blues by Dr. Gary R. Collins
& Dr. Timothy E. Clinton)

The following words are worth reading slowly.

Lord of the still small voice:

It is no wonder that so often I can't hear you
for the roar of the crowd that is in my world,
for the rush of the schedule,
for the sounds of a never-silent age
that is full up with music boxes blaring.
I'm weary of all the noise and the hustle,
yet I can't stop;
No--that isn't right; rather, I won't stop
to discover the renewal of being
quiet in your presence.
Yet how can I imagine
that if in your incarnation you had to get away
to be with your Father in peace,
that I shouldn't need to get apart with you
before I come apart without you. . . .

Lord of all. . . .

Protect the time you allot to me
that no intrusion would come to assassinate
the precious moments of stillness with you. . . .
Provide that retreat I so desperately need
in days of stillness,
in hours of quiet,
in minutes of rest and peace,
even in seconds when your presence is so real
that it transforms my soul.

So meet me; by your grace.

Amen

pp. 201-2

v. 7 Little children, let no one keep on leading you
astray; the one who is doing righteousness is righteous, even as that one is righteous.

1 John 1:8

If we say that we are not having sin, we are leading ourselves astray, and the truth is
not in us.

1 John 2:26

These things I am writing to you concerning those who are leading you astray.

Galatians 6:7

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

Ephesians 5:6

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

1 Corinthians 6:9, 10

Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

PASSING THE BUCKS

Several "Up-East" counterfeiters accidentally printed a batch of fifteen-dollar bills. Moe asked Joe, "Man, what we gonna do with all dese fifteen-dollar bills?" Joe came up with a bright idea, "I got it. We'll drive down to hillbilly country and pawn these bills off on the storekeepers back in the mountains."

Hours later they pulled up to this dilapidated store on the side of a mountain. Moe and Joe winked at each other. They found the old proprietor sitting by the pot-bellied stove.

Moe ambled over to the elderly gent and nonchalantly asked, "Hey, Mister, can you make change for a fifteen-dollar bill?"

Without batting an eyelash the proprietor inquired, "How do you want it, Sonny? Five threes or a seven and an eight?"

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

"LITTLE CHILDREN, LET NO ONE KEEP ON LEADING YOU ASTRAY; THE ONE WHO IS DOING RIGHTEOUSNESS IS RIGHTEOUS, EVEN AS THAT ONE IS RIGHTEOUS."

(Pack Up Your Gloomees in a Great Big Box, then Sit on the Lid and Laugh! by Barbara Johnson)

All of the above comments remind me of the old saying:

WHAT'S DOWN IN THE WELL
COMES UP IN THE BUCKET.

p. 83

John is saying:

the proof is in the pudding;

the cream always rises to the top.

Before I became a Christian these scriptures applied:

Isaiah 64:6

All of us have become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags;
we all shrivel up like a leaf,
and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

Romans 3:10

There is none righteous, no not one.

When we come to Christ, we are given a righteousness which is not our own:

Romans 1:17

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous man shall live by faith."

Romans 10:3

For not knowing about God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.

Matthew 6:1

Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.

How easy it is to be impressed and led astray by a righteousness which is nothing but a performance, a lot of righteous acts without any real relationship.

Genuine "RIGHTEOUSNESS" is the result of the Spirit's work in our lives, and as this fruit of righteousness is born in our lives, it will make impact upon people around us.

Romans 6:13

and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

1 Corinthians 15:34

Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.

Because we have been born into the family of God and our Father is righteous, so we will manifest in our lives this same righteousness which is a product of Him living His life in us.

What John is saying is that I will reveal my Father by the quality of my life. If it is righteous, it is of God the Father. And if it is sin, it is of the Devil, the god of this world.

This takes us back to chapter 2:29

"If you know that He is righteous, you are knowing also that everyone who is doing righteousness has been born of Him."

(When You Can't Come Back by Dave & Jan Dravecky
with Ken Gire)

As I was traveling across the country I had another person point me in a different direction. I was in Grand Rapids, Michigan, speaking at a chapel service when I was approached by a man in his twenties. He told me I had cancer because there was sin in my life. He told me that the Holy Spirit revealed to him that God had a special plan for me--to be a preacher--but first I had to get rid of the sin.

His line of reasoning wasn't very convincing, so I asked him about some biblical characters who had undergone suffering: "What about Joseph? Was there sin in his life that kept him imprisoned for so long? Was there sin in Paul's life when he prayed three times for the thorn in his flesh to be removed and it wasn't?"

To me the issue was not whether I had sin in my life. I don't think we need any great revelation to convince us that we're sinners. The issue is not our character but the character of God.

Is God the kind of God who gives people tumors when they sin? Does he dole out diseases when we fail him? Say, maybe, cataracts when we lust or hardening of the arteries when we hate. Does he punish us with leukemia and muscular dystrophy and blindness?

The Pharisees thought so. When they came across a blind man, they asked Jesus, "Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus responded by saying "neither," and then proceeded to heal the man.

In moments of compassion like that, Jesus mirrored the picture of God revealed in Psalm 103:10-14:

He does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.
For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his love for those who fear him;
as far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions from us.
As a father has compassion on his children,
so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him;
for he knows how we are formed,
he remembers that we are dust.

Is that the picture of a father who takes a belt to his children when they spill their milk or wet their pants? Is that the picture of a God who gives people cancer when they sin? I don't think so.

I didn't get angry with the man. I felt sad that he was carrying around such a distorted picture of God. And I wondered how that picture would get him through life when one day he would have to walk through his own valley of suffering.
pp. 72-73

(Temptations Men Face by Tom L. Eisenman)

This powerful and honest account of a broken marriage seen through the eyes of a young girl appeared in the Girl Scout magazine, American Girl. It was titled, "That's the Way Life Goes Sometimes."

When I was ten, my parents got a divorce. Naturally, my father told me about it, because he was my favorite.

"Honey, I know it's been kind of bad for you these past few days, and I don't want to make it worse. But there's something I have to tell you. Honey, your mother and I got a divorce."

"But, Daddy--"

"I know you don't want this, but it has to be done. Your mother and I just don't get along like we used to. I'm already packed and my plane is leaving in half an hour."

"But, Daddy, why do you have to leave?"

"Well, honey, your mother and I can't live together anymore."

"I know that, but I mean why do you have to leave town?"

"Oh. Well, I got someone waiting for me in New Jersey."

"But, Daddy, will I ever see you again?"

"Sure you will, honey. We'll work something out."

"But what? I mean, you'll be living in New Jersey, and I'll be living here in Washington."

"Maybe your mother will agree to you spending two weeks in the summer and two in the winter with me."

"Why not more often?"

"I don't think she'll agree to two weeks in the summer and two in the winter, much less more."

"Well, it can't hurt to try."

"I know, honey, but we'll have to work it out later."

My plane leaves in twenty minutes and I've got to get to the airport. Now I'm going to get my luggage, and I want you to go to your room so you don't have to watch me. And no long goodbyes either."

"Okay, Daddy. Goodbye. Don't forget to write."

"I won't. Goodbye. Now go to your room."

"Okay. Daddy, I don't want you to go!"

"I know, honey. But I have to."

"Why?"

"You wouldn't understand, honey."

"Yes, I would."

"No, you wouldn't."

"Oh well. Goodbye."

"Goodbye. Now go to your room. Hurry up."

"Okay. Well, I guess that's the way life goes sometimes."

"Yes honey. That's the way life goes sometimes."

After my father walked out that door, I never heard from him again.

pp. 81-82

John is saying that flowing from my life will be visible evidences of my fellowship with the Father, and that evidence will be a fruit of righteousness.

v. 8 The one who is doing sin is of the devil; because the devil is sinning from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was made visible, in order that He might destroy the works of the devil.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Only righteousness springs from a righteous nature. By contrast, all sin of whatever kind or degree is satanic in nature. Sin originated with Satan and is his constant practice. To take part in sin at all is to take part in his activity. It is also opposing the word of the Son of God.

"THE ONE WHO IS DOING SIN IS OF THE DEVIL; BECAUSE THE DEVIL IS SINNING FROM THE BEGINNING."

The sinner is identified with his father.

John 8:44

You are of your father, the devil.

Ephesians 2:2

in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

The reason is then stated by John:

"BECAUSE THE DEVIL IS SINNING FROM THE BEGINNING."

Isaiah 14:13, 14

You said in your heart,
 "I will ascend to heaven;
 I will raise my throne
 above the stars of God;
 I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly,
 on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain.
 I will ascend above the tops of the clouds;
 I will make myself like the Most High."

Here John contrasts the children of God and the children of the devil:

the children of God manifest themselves by doing righteousness,
 the children of the devil by doing sin.

"THE ONE WHO IS DOING SIN IS OF THE DEVIL; BECAUSE THE DEVIL IS SINNING FROM THE BEGINNING. FOR THIS PURPOSE THE SON OF GOD WAS MADE VISIBLE, IN ORDER THAT HE MIGHT DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL."

Satan is the author of sin, and Christ came to free us from the bondage of sin. To do this, He had to destroy the works of the devil.

Stott says:

If, then, the whole purpose of Christ's first appearing was to remove sins and to undo the works of the devil, Christians must not compromise with either sin or the devil, or they will find themselves fighting against Christ. If the first step to holiness is to recognize the sinfulness of sin, both in its essence as lawlessness and in its diabolical origin, the second step is to see its absolute incompatibility with Christ in His sinless Person and saving work. The more clearly we grasp these facts, the more incongruous will sin appear and the more determined we shall be to be rid of it.

Van Gorder observes:

Even as God is the wellspring from which righteousness comes, so the devil is the fountain from which sin comes. The verse continues, "For the devil sinneth from the beginning."

We can then be certain of two things, as stated in these verses. First, the person made righteous by Christ acts righteously; second, the person practicing sin has the devil as his instigator. Sin has a diabolical character.

John Gill has written: "He who makes sin his constant business, and the employment of his life, whose life is a continued series of sinning, he is of the devil. Being like him, their father doing his lusts, living continually in sin as he does, they resemble him, as children do their parents."

Blaiklock observes:

Christ came to pull the devil's work to pieces. The same verb is used in Matthew 5:19, and John 5:18 of loosening a bond, or relaxing an obligation. In John 2:19 it is used of pulling down the Temple. It is a vivid and colorful word. Christ disintegrates in life the vast edifice which Satan has built on this invaded planet.

Paul characterizes his ministry in a similar fashion in:

2 Corinthians 10:4, 5

for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

Barclay puts it this way:

Jesus Christ, by His victory, broke the power of the forces of evil, and by His help that same victory can be ours.

J. Vernon McGee says:

We need to recognize that the Devil is the source of all sin. He is the one who is responsible for sin being brought into the world. He is the one who led our first parents into sin. And the reason that you and I have a sinful nature today is because of the Devil.
p. 791

(The Existence and Attributes of God by Stephen Charnock)

The impotence of man enhanceth this goodness. Our own eye did scarce pity us, and it was impossible for our own hands to relieve us; we were insensible of our misery, in love with our death; we courted our chains, and the noise of our fettering lusts were our music, 'serving diverse lusts and pleasures,' Tit. iii. 3. Our lusts were our pleasures; Satan's yoke was as delightful to us to bear as to him to impose. Instead of being his opposers in his attempts against us, we were his voluntary seconds, and every whit as willing to embrace, as he was to propose, his ruining temptations. As no man can recover himself from death, so no man can recover himself from wrath; he is as unable to redeem as to create himself; he might as soon have stripped himself of his being, as put an end to his misery; his captivity would have been endless, and his chains remediless, for anything he could do to knock them off, and deliver himself; he was too much in love with the sink of sin to leave wallowing in it, and under too powerful a hand to cease frying in the flames of wrath.
p. 587

"THE ONE WHO IS DOING SIN IS OF THE DEVIL; BECAUSE THE DEVIL IS SINNING FROM THE BEGINNING. FOR THIS PURPOSE THE SON OF GOD WAS MADE VISIBLE, IN ORDER THAT HE MIGHT DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL."

Hebrews 2:14, 15

Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

Colossians 2:14, 15

having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

John 12:31

Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out.

Romans 6:6

knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin;

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Even the smallest sin runs counter to the work of Christ. Believers are to overcome the evil one.

1 John 2:13, 14

I am writing to you, fathers, because you have come to know the one who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have conquered the evil one. I write to you, young children, because you have known the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you have come to know the one who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong and the word of God is abiding in you, and you have conquered the evil one.

We have noted together in this study 2 REASONS why it was necessary for Jesus Christ to be "made flesh and to dwell among us":

1. back in verse 5:

"IN ORDER THAT HE MIGHT TAKE AWAY SIN."

2. here in verse 8:

"IN ORDER THAT HE MIGHT DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL."

By His death upon the cross, He has accomplished this 2-fold objective. Satan is a defeated foe. Christ's death upon the cross made it possible for a holy God to now deal with sin, which was Satan's stronghold; and now because the power of sin has been broken, Satan's power, too, has been broken. There is a way out of the bondage of sin and the domination of the god of this world by coming to faith in Jesus Christ.

(Better Homes and Jungles. Renamed Family Survival in the American Jungle by Steve Farrar)

After the Civil War, Robert E. Lee visited the beautiful home of a wealthy Kentucky widow. After a charming lunch, she invited him to join her on the porch. She then pointed to a once majestic magnolia tree that had been badly burned and charred by Northern artillery fire. The woman began to cry as she described the former magnificence of the stately tree that had shaded the family house for generations. From her tears, she looked to General Lee for a word condemning the North or at least to sympathize with her loss. After pausing for several seconds, Lee said, "My dear madam, cut it down and forget it."

p. 156

1 John 4:4

You are from God, little children, and you have conquered them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

v. 9 Everyone who has been born of God is not practicing sin, because His seed is remaining in him; and he is not able to keep on sinning because he has been born of God.

I have chosen this verse the KEY VERSE for Study #7:

"FELLOWSHIP IS APPARENT BY FRUIT."

Because of our fellowship with the Father, we become deeply sensitive about the matter of sin, of abiding in Christ, and about obedience to His word and submission to His Spirit.

When we are walking with the Lord in fellowship, sin does not become a way of life but an accident.

1 John 2:1, 2

My little children, these things I am writing to you in order that you may not commit an act of sin. And if anyone commits an act of sin, we are continually having one who pleads our case with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one. And He Himself is satisfaction for our sins; not for ours only but also for the whole world.

"EVERYONE WHO HAS BEEN BORN OF GOD [is not doing sin,] IS NOT PRACTICING SIN."

Blaiklock says:

A man becomes what lies at the core of his personality. To entertain evil at the center of the being is to be consumed by it. The host of hate, falsehood, pride, becomes the thing he cherishes. Evil cannot be contained. It seeps into thought, word, action. It consumes the personality until the true self is dead and the evil implant becomes the whole. So, too, with God. Set Christ at the heart's center and He cannot be contained. He permeates thought, word, action until He pervades and revives the personality. He becomes the person He fills. Unlike evil, He does not destroy or kill. His presence is life. The indwelling Christ remakes, renews. Paradoxically, the host becomes more truly himself and is transformed into what God intended him to be. This surely is what is meant by carrying within one's person the living, regenerative seed of God. If a person with life so implanted falls into sin, he cannot be happy in the unnatural state. Christ within constrains, challenges, rebukes and presses hard on the conscience.

Romans 6:1, 2

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

It would be well for us to note that the final phrase in verse 2 is:

"still live in it."

The statements of John earlier in this epistle in chapter 2:1, 2 and chapter 1:8-10 would be meaningless if he was teaching that the Christian has ceased from sin.

There would be no need for provision for these accidents if such were the case.

Our attitude toward sin is described adequately by Paul in:

Romans 6:11-14

Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace.

"EVERYONE WHO HAS BEEN BORN OF GOD IS NOT PRACTICING SIN, BECAUSE HIS SEED IS REMAINING IN HIM; AND HE IS NOT ABLE TO KEEP ON SINNING BECAUSE HE HAS BEEN BORN OF GOD."

Let us focus for a few moments in our study on this next phrase:

"BECAUSE HIS SEED IS REMAINING IN HIM."

The principle of life which the believer has been given continues to be the ruling principle of his growth.

God gives of Himself as it were to the Christian. He does not only work on him and then leave him. The germ of the new life is that out of which the mature man will be developed in due time. This is the seed of the new nature that has been placed within him.

In Matthew 13, the SEED is the word of God in the parable of the SOWER AND THE SEED.

1 Peter 1:23

for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

God's seed is His nature given to each believer at salvation. The point here is that the child partakes of the nature of his parent. The thought of a sinless parent who begets a child who only sins a little is far from the authors mind. Sin is not nor ever can be anything but satanic. It can never spring from what a Christian truly is at the lever of his regenerate being.

Guy King points out:

This new Seed, new Life, new Nature, abides in him, and therein lies his secret against sin. You have the same thought of the two natures remaining within the believer in Galatians v. 17, "the flesh . . . and the Spirit . . .", as we considered earlier. The "born of God" people are thus two-natured persons; and it is the new-nature, the new "I" of Galatians ii. 20, that "cannot sin". Do you recall that strange word of Paul's in Romans vii. 20, "Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me". When any sin eventuates, it is the old nature, the flesh that does it; the new nature, the now real new "I", "cannot sin". Of course, this is given to us only as an explanation, not as an excuse--there is no reason why it should happen.

p. 74

Barclay says:

The word of God is like the seed of God which produces new life. Peter has this idea even more clearly, when he speaks of the Christian, "being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1:23). There the word of God is definitely identified with the incorruptible seed of God. If we take it this way, John will mean that the man who is born of God cannot sin, because he has the strength and the power and the guidance of the word of God, which is the seed of God, within him. This third way is simplest, and, on the whole best. It will mean quite simply that the Christian is preserved from sin by the indwelling power of the word of God.

J. Vernon McGee says:

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." A child of God is given a new nature, and that new nature does not and will not commit sin. The reason that the Prodigal Son could not stay in the pigpen is that he was not a pig. He was a son of the Father, and he longed for the Father's house. If you are a child of God, you will want to be in the Father's house, and you will long for it.
p. 792

Mitchell says:

What a wonderful deliverance He has made for us! Not only has He delivered us from the power of sin and Satan, but He has made us His children. We cannot repeat too often what John is showing us in this Epistle. The great yearning of the heart of God is that His children will walk in fellowship with Him. The requirement for walking with God is that we must be righteous. He has made provision for this in Christ Jesus. So then, if I am a child of One who is righteous, righteousness should characterize my life. "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:24).

Practical righteousness is a mark of divine sonship. This does not mean that a Christian will never sin. It does mean that the child of God does not want to sin. The believer in Christ does not habitually sin, so sinning is not the rule of his life. He is not dominated by sin. It is true that the Christian may fail God, but the pattern of his life is not one of rebellion and sinfulness against God. Rather, his desire is to please God.

1 John 5:18

We are knowing that everyone who has been born of God is not continually sinning. But He who was born of God is keeping him, and the evil one is not laying hold of him.

Luke 22:31, 32

Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.

Hebrews 12:6-11

For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives." It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

Because we have been born of God and we are a part of His family, He is going to discipline us when there is sin manifested in our lives.

I noticed that my dad never whipped the neighbor kids.

How we deal with sin in our lives as believers is crucial.

Proverbs 28:13

He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

There really can be 1 of 2 choices for us:

1. Like so many, we can deny the sin and be unwilling to accept any blame, and we can cover it with what we think is a perfect performance.

(Temptations Men Face by Tom L. Eisenman)

One husband joked with me about his wife who he claimed was an incredible perfectionist and neat freak in the house. He said he would often get up during the night to go to the bathroom and come back to find his side of the bed made. He claimed she was the only woman he knew who was so compulsive about messes that she put newspapers under the cuckoo clock.

p. 167

2. We can confess our sin and renounce it and find mercy.

The choices in Proverbs 28:13 are very clear. We can either CONCEAL it or we can CONFESS and renounce it.

It is the Father's will that we follow John's prescription back in:

chapter 1:9

If we are confessing our sins, faithful is He and just that He should forgive us our sins, and should cleanse us from every unrighteousness.

Because we have been born again by the Spirit into God's family, we have a sinless Father, and therefore, sin must be dealt with.

John 1:13

who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Galatians 4:19

My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you--

It is certainly true that we have the seed of the word of God within us, and it is a power which keeps us from sinning and guides us in the way in which we should go. And as we are obedient to this word, the life of Christ begins to be formed within us.

There is, however, the thought that the seed refers to the new divine nature which is placed within us at the time of our new birth. As we allow this new nature to be activated by our obedience to the word and submission to His Spirit, the fruit of this new nature will begin to reveal itself. It is this fruit which is being revealed as a result of our fellowship with the Father.

"AND HE IS NOT ABLE TO KEEP ON SINNING BECAUSE HE HAS BEEN BORN OF GOD."

The Christian is not able to be continuing in a practice of sin because he is hurting this new divine nature that has been placed in him at the new birth.

The person who is abiding in Christ cannot continue to be a consistent and deliberate sinner because of what sin did to his Savior.

I prefer to think in terms of the seed as a reference to THE WRITTEN WORD, and THE LIVING WORD when it comes to experiencing victory over sin in our lives.

Psalm 119:9, 11

How can a young man keep his way pure?
By living according to your word,

I have hidden your word in my heart
that I might not sin against you.

John 15:5

I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

(The Grace Awakening by Charles R. Swindoll)

The late J. Vernon McGee told a memorable story when I was a student at Dallas Theological Seminary. He was bringing the Bible lectures on the letter to the Romans. His humorous illustrations were unforgettable, especially this one.

I remember sitting in Chafer Chapel as Dr. McGee was waxing eloquent on Romans 6. He told the story of a lady who lived in the Deep South and had a close relationship with her childhood sweetheart. She fell in love with him and ultimately married him. Their life together was not perfect, but it was rewarding. There was faithfulness and there were times of joy. This continued for years, until he was suddenly taken from her side by a heart attack. Not being able to part with him visibly, she decided to have him embalmed, put in a chair, sealed up in a glass case, and placed immediately inside the front door of their large plantation home. Every time she walked through the door, she smiled, "Hi, John, how are you?" Then she would walk right on up the stairs. Things rocked along as normally as possible month after month. There he sat day after day as she acknowledged his presence with a smile and friendly wave.

A year or so later she decided to take a lengthy trip to Europe. It was a delightful change of scenery. In fact, while in Europe she met a fine American gentleman who was also vacationing over there. He swept her off her feet. After a whirlwind romance, they got married and honeymooned all over Europe. She said nothing about ol' John back on the farm.

Finally, they traveled together back to the States. Driving up the winding road to her home, he decided, This is my moment to lift my bride over the threshold and to carry her back into her home . . . this wonderful place where we'll live together forever. He picked her up, bumped the door open with his hip, and walked right in. He almost dropped his bride on the floor!

"Who is this?"

"Well, that is John. He was my old man from--"

"He is history; he's dead!"

The new husband immediately dug a big hole and buried her former old man in it, case and all.

That's exactly what Christ has done! However, without realizing the effect, many Christians put the old man in a case and greet him every morning and cater to him every day of their lives. We live as though our "old man" is alive, even though we are dead to him. He has no right to be in our conscious thinking. We serve a new Master who has walked us across the threshold, who has awakened us to new life, new love, a new relationship, and an entirely different future.

pp. 114-15

Our main thought in this particular study is:

"FELLOWSHIP IS APPARENT BY FRUIT."

May it be the deep and longing desire of each heart as we walk in close, intimate communion and fellowship with our heavenly Father that He might begin to produce the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, and that people can truly see Christ in us.

v.10 In this it is made visible: the children of God and the children of the devil. Everyone who is not practicing righteousness is not of God, and the one who is not loving his brother.

Here in this final verse John makes the distinction between "THE CHILDREN OF GOD" and "THE CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL."

"EVERYONE WHO IS NOT PRACTICING RIGHTEOUSNESS IS NOT OF GOD."

In other words, the one who is making it a continual practice to be sinning is not of God.

Galatians 5:21

. . . of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

John identifies "THE CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL" in 2 WAYS:

1. THE ONE "WHO IS NOT PRACTICING RIGHTEOUSNESS,"
2. "THE ONE WHO IS NOT LOVING HIS BROTHER."

HATE and SIN are ways to tell "THE CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL" from "THE CHILDREN OF GOD." The opposite of these could also be true, and that is love and obedience should characterize the children of God.

THE CHRISTIAN'S BADGE

D. L. Moody said that when he was a new convert he wished every Christian would wear a badge to signify his faith in Christ. He was so excited about being in the family of God that he wanted to know who his brothers and sisters in the Lord were. But later he changed his mind about labeling Christians. He said, "Every hypocrite would have a badge within 30 days if Christianity should become popular."

The problem with a literal tag is that it could easily be worn by a counterfeit and most people wouldn't know the difference. But there is a reliable way of identifying genuine followers of Christ that cannot be duplicated. It is their love for each other--a love that springs up within their hearts.

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

John is making a sharp differentiation between sin and righteousness, between the children of God and the children of the devil.

When a Christian sins, he conceals who he really is, rather than making it manifest.

1 John 2:29, 3:1

If you know that He is righteous, you are knowing also that everyone who is doing righteousness has been born of Him.

Behold how glorious a love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and we are. For this reason the world is not knowing us, because it knew Him not.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary goes on to say:

John is now expanding his thoughts on righteousness and seeing it primarily in terms of Christian brotherly love, and to show us how such love expresses itself. A failure to perform righteousness and a failure to love ones brother can never be traced to God. Love is righteousness in action.

Dr. Mitchell says:

If you really love the Lord, sin will not characterize your life. If you love to sin and love to rebel against the things of God, then you should examine your heart to find out if you are truly trusting the Saviour. A new creation, born of God, is created in righteousness and true holiness.

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Sin is a serious matter when it is manifested in the child of God.

LESSON #2: The sinless Savior came into the world to take away sin.

LESSON #3: To be continually sinning indicates that we have not seen Him nor known Him.

LESSON #4: We must be careful not to be led astray in taking a soft view of sin.

LESSON #5: Righteousness will be a normal manifestation in the life of a child of God.

LESSON #6: The one who is doing sin is of the devil.

LESSON #7: Jesus Christ came into the world to do 2 things:

1. to take away sin
2. to destroy the works of the devil.

LESSON #8: The greatest protection for the child of God against sin is the indwelling Christ and the living word of God.

LESSON #9: How we deal with sin in our lives is crucial for our relationship with the Father and our future spiritual development.

LESSON #10: The children of the devil are characterized in 2 ways:

1. They are not doing righteousness.
2. They are not loving their fellowman.

In this particular study, we have been talking about:

"FELLOWSHIP IS APPARENT BY FRUIT."

If I am having fellowship with the world and I am not a child of God but a child of the devil, it's going to be recognizable by the fruit of this fellowship--the continual practice of sin in my life.

If on the other hand, I am a child of God, fellowship with the Father will also manifest itself in works of righteousness.

1. First, the fruit born in my life will be the fruit of the Spirit changing me personally,
2. and then the works of righteousness which are performed by the Spirit toward others will also reveal the fact that I am His child.

Nowhere does the scripture suggest that we can take a light view of sin and have fellowship with our heavenly Father.

For instance, you cannot take a light view on the homosexual issue and expect to have fellowship with God. Nowhere does the scripture suggest that if one is born with homosexual inclinations that this negates the prohibitions.

It must be dealt with as sin and victory must be attained in order for fellowship to be restored.

1 Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.

WHO ARE YOU?

The dilemma of an unclear sense of personal identity was illustrated by an incident in the life of the famous German philosopher Schleiermacher, who did much to shape the progress of modern thought. The story is told that one day as an old man he was sitting alone on a bench in a city park. A policeman thinking that he was a vagrant came over and shook him and asked, "Who are you?" Schleiermacher replied sadly, "I wish I knew."

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

(The Existence and Attributes of God by Stephen Charnock)

. . . for our sakes he was made a curse, and scorched in the furnace of his Father's wrath; for our sakes he went naked, armed only with his own strength, into the lists of that combat with the devils that led us captive. Had he given him to be a leader for the conquest of some earthly enemies, it had been a great goodness to display his banners, and bring us under his conduct; but he sent him to lay down his life in the bitterest and most inglorious manner, and exposed him to a cursed death for our redemption from that dreadful curse which would have broken us to pieces, and irreparably have crushed us. He gave him to us, to suffer for us as a man, and redeem us as a God; to be a sacrifice to expiate our sin by translating the punishment upon himself, which was merited by us. Thus was he made low to exalt us, and debased to advance us, made poor to enrich us, 2 Cor. viii. 9, and eclipsed to brighten our sullied natures, and wounded that he might be a physician for our languishments; he was ordered to taste the bitter cup of death, that we might drink of the rivers of immortal life and pleasures; to submit to the frailties of the human nature, that we might possess the glories of the divine; he was ordered to be a sufferer, that we might be no longer captives, and to pass through the fire of divine wrath, that he might purge our nature from the dross it had contracted. Thus was the righteous given for sin, the innocent for criminals, the glory of heaven for the dregs of earth, and the immense riches of a Deity expended to re-stock man.

p. 584

J. Dwight Pentecost, in his book Design for Discipleship, says:

Now when the mind is in harmony with the mind of the Master and the heart responds to the love of the Master and the will obeys the will of the Master, one is in fellowship with the Master.

Francis Schaeffer, in his book Death in the City, says:

The Bible teaches us plainly that Christ promises to bear his fruit through us. In Romans 7:4 Paul says a very striking thing, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; in order that you should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, in order that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

At conversion, we are married to Christ, who is the Bridegroom. And as we put ourselves into His arms, He will produce His fruit through us in the external world. That is beautiful and overwhelming just as with the natural bride who gives herself to her husband and puts herself into his arms, there will be children born into a home. The bride can't just stand with the bridegroom at the wedding ceremony, she must give herself to him, and then children will be born to him through her body into the external world.

As an example, let us think of Mary in Christ's birth. When Mary heard the enunciation, she did not say to the angel, "I won't give myself to God in order that the Messiah may be born." She said the one thing she could say that could be right, "I am your servant, I give my body into your hands, do with me as you will." She put herself into his hands, and he was the one who produced this marvel of the virgin birth.

In a very different way, the same situation holds with each of us as Christians. If I will put myself in Christ's arms moment by moment, He will bring forth His fruit through me into this poor external world.

May I conclude our meditation with 2 verses from the Phillips translation:

Romans 12:1, 2

With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give him your bodies, as a living sacrifice, consecrated to him and acceptable by him. Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity.

STUDY #7 - 1 John 3:4-10

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Sin is a serious matter when it is manifested in the child of God.

LESSON #2: The sinless Savior came into the world to take away sin.

LESSON #3: To be continually sinning indicates that we have not seen Him nor known Him.

LESSON #4: We must be careful not to be led astray in taking a soft view of sin.

LESSON #5: Righteousness will be a normal manifestation in the life of a child of God.

LESSON #6: The one who is doing sin is of the devil.

LESSON #7: Jesus Christ came into the world to do 2 things:

1. to take away sin
2. to destroy the works of the devil.

LESSON #8: The greatest protection for the child of God against sin is the indwelling Christ and the living word of God.

LESSON #9: How we deal with sin in our lives is crucial for our relationship with the Father and our future spiritual development.

LESSON #10: The children of the devil are characterized in 2 ways:

1. They are not doing righteousness.
2. They are not loving their fellowman.