

Are True Christians Sinless?

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Doctrine of Sin - 1 John 3:4-9

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Introduction: Read 1Jn 3:4-9. Are you sinless? Verse nine of our text says, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." Without knowing the context, that statement poses a problem. It states that if I sin, I have not been born of God. While a few people are bold enough to claim that they never sin, I know that I have not been perfect since I trusted Christ.

Transition: Are true Christians sinless? To answer this question, we must understand three Bible facts about sin.

1. Missing God's Mark of Perfection is Sin, v.4-5

a. God is holy and expects us to be holy, v.4.

- 1) God's law is the perfect standard of right.
 - a) The Ten Commandments are a summary of God's law. They forbid things like **putting anything before God, idolatry, swearing, dishonouring parents, killing, adultery, stealing, lying and coveting.**
 - b) Today, many of the Ten Commandments are ignored, but life would be happier and more peaceful if they were all obeyed. God **is** right!
- 2) Any action that misses God's mark of perfection is sin. Sin is anything less than 100% obedience to God's law 100% of the time from birth until death.
- 3) Perfection is required to enter heaven and man has a big problem.

b. Christ came to earth to take away our sins, v.5

- 1) Christ alone can atone for our sins because **he alone** is eternal and perfect.
- 2) Christ came to earth and died as our substitute.
 - a) (2Co 5:21) "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."
 - b) (1Pe 5:8) "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:"
- 3) God loves us so much that he died for our sins so we might have fellowship with him. (Ro 5:8) "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." This solves our sin problem.

So, the first Bible fact about sin we must understand is that **Missing God's Mark of Perfection is Sin**, the second Bible fact about sin we must understand is that

2. Abiding in Christ Prevents Sin, v.6-7

a. Abiding fellowship with Christ keeps us from sin, v.6

- 1) Abiding in Christ is the theme of this book. It is synonymous with walking in the light, having fellowship with God, and knowing Christ. **When we are in harmony with God, we will not sin.** Paul wrote the same thing in (Galatians 5:16) "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."
- 2) Verses six and nine confuse many people.
 - a) Some say that if a Christian sins, he loses his salvation. If so, we are all in big trouble.
 - b) Some claim that Christians are perfect and never sin after salvation. This contradicts 1 John 1:8, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."
 - c) Others say the verb is present tense continual action and that Christians do not **habitually** sin. **How much can one sin before it is habitual?** If we translated the present tense verb in (1 John 1:8) "If we say that we are not habitually having sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," we would have a contradiction. This cannot be the answer.
 - d) When John said the sinning Christian has "not seen him, neither known him," he was speaking of that intimate fellowship of abiding in Christ. I believe John was saying that when a Christian walks in close fellowship with God he does not sin.

b. Only righteousness comes from a righteous nature, v.7

- 1) Christ is totally righteous. He is sinless as we read in v.5. He has a perfectly sinless nature. The writer of Hebrews tells us the same. (Hebrews 4:15) "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

- 2) Those abiding in him, walking in the light, fellowshiping with God, are righteous because they are in the presence of the holy God. Christians do righteousness when they are righteous or right with God. **Being right with God is abiding in him.**

So, the first Bible fact about sin we must understand is that [Missing God's Mark of Perfection is Sin](#). The second Bible fact about sin we must understand is that [Abiding in Christ Prevents Sin](#). Now the third Bible fact about sin that we must understand is that

3. Our Sin Problem is Caused by Our Old Nature, v.8-9

In these two verses the Holy Spirit is contrasting our two natures. First he describes life when the old nature is in control, then he describes life when the new nature is in control.

a. Our two natures are very opposite

- 1) Our **old nature** sins because it is from the devil (v.8)
 - a) The devil has **sinned from the beginning**. Shortly after his creation, Satan rebelled against God. The Prophet Isaiah records his fall. (Isaiah 14:12-14) *"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High."* Jesus called him a liar and murderer (Jn 8:44).
 - b) Christ came to earth to destroy the devil's work and deliver believers from the old nature. (Hebrews 2:14-15) *"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."*
 - c) Though conquered, Satan is not yet bound (cf. Rev 20:10).
 - d) When a Christian sins, he is yielding to the lusts of his old nature. He is obeying the devil. This verse does **not** teach that all who sin are children of the devil. It teaches that Christians are sometimes ruled by the old nature. (Romans 6:16) *"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"*
- 2) Our **new nature** is from God and never sins (v.9).
 - a) When a person is **"born of God"** this new birth gives him a new nature and the capability of abiding in Christ without sin. **"Born of God"** describes the new nature, God's seed, that cannot sin.
 - b) Again, John is not speaking of habitual sin because all Christians struggle with sin.
 - c) When a Christian sins, it is **never** his new nature that sins but his old nature.

b. If we yield to our new nature, we abide in Christ

- 1) Abiding in Christ is a daily challenge for every Christian, but it produces victory over sin.
- 2) When we abide in Christ, the devil is defeated, our old nature is suppressed, and sin is avoided.

Conclusion: **So are true Christians sinless?** No, they are not sinless, but they do have a new nature that is sinless. If you are a true Christian, you have been born of God and received a new sinless nature. Now you have two natures. Your old nature still wants to sin. **The key to victory is to abide in Christ.** How do we abide in Christ? Walk in God's light by confessing and forsaking sin, by not loving the world, and by purifying yourself as Christ is pure. The choice is up to you. Do it now!

If you have not been born of God, you only have a sinful nature. You cannot have true victory over sin. To be born of God, you must admit your sin guilt, desire a change, believe that Jesus died and rose again to pay your sin debt, then ask him to save you.

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