

Behold  the Lamb
Publications

What is Freedom from Sin?

*“...how sayest thou, Ye shall
be made free?”*

John 8:33

by Leroy Surface

“Found guilty with Jesus Christ!”

There is an old adage that asks the question, **“If you were on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?”** Many in the modern church seem to fear that “trial” will come to them, and have prepared their defense in advance; “We are all sinners; we sin every day; we will continue to sin as long as we live in this body of flesh.” It seems to me they do not want to be condemned by the world for being a Christian.

The Apostle John spoke of this in his first epistle, offering many proofs that those who are *“born of God”* are not *“sinners,”* and *“do not sin.”* He said, *“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself”* 1 John 5:10. In the Greek text, the word *“witness”* means *“evidence given.”* According to John, the “proof” of whether or not a person is a “believer” is in the believer.

The next verse of John’s epistle begins *“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son”* 1 John 5:11. The Greek word that was translated *“record”* in this verse is the same that was translated *“witness”* in the previous verse, and means *“evidence given.”* The only proof that any person is a “believer” is the eternal life that is in that person.

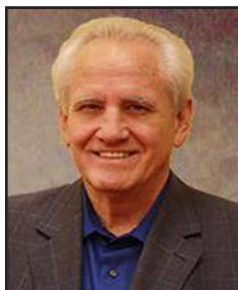
John explains *“eternal life”* in parenthesis in the second verse of his

epistle; *“(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)”* 1 John

1:2. John had seen eternal life in Jesus Christ. He presents the case that the only proof a person is a believer is that same life

which was in Jesus Christ, manifest in them. They are *“born of God,”* *“free from sin.”* They have been “found guilty” of being a Christian.

“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” 1 John 5:11



Leroy Surface



Keith Surface

What is Freedom from Sin?

Message by: Leroy Surface

“But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.” Romans 6:22

Introduction

I received a letter from a prisoner who was very upset because we preach the children of God are not sinners, and cannot continue in sin. My purpose in writing this message is not to belittle or besmirch the one who wrote to me his complaint. To the contrary, I can see his viewpoint if I look through the lens of common church doctrine of today. I also became aware that we have not always written clearly enough about the sin a child of God cannot possibly commit unless they have fallen from the grace of God. To begin this message, I will reprint a portion of his letter which I believe contained a valid complaint, and seek to explain the scriptural truth concerning freedom from sin. For the purpose of my message, I will refer to the one who wrote this complaint as “Mr. Doe,” which is obviously not his name. Mr. Doe wrote:

*“Know that I read that first title you sent several times through, making a point of checking each verse quoted from scripture with my Hebrew and Greek lexicons. While I was glad that the verses were quoted intact and even in context the majority of the time, I was and am disappointed that you chose to use them to propagate the burdensome teaching that true believers do not ever sin. By doing so you load men with burdens hard to bear that you yourselves can’t touch, much less carry. Yes, I John 3:8 reads, **“The one doing sin is of the devil....”** And the next verse reads, **“Everyone having been born of Elohim does not sin...he is powerless to sin, because he is born of Elohim.”** (Quoted from “The Scriptures; Institute for Scripture Research, South Africa.)*

*However, those who received John's teachings fully understood that he clearly taught that true believers do not and will not make a practice of sinning, that all believers sin to some degree, but sin less and less as their relationship with our Father and Savior matures over time. I love that John made it very clear that he himself obviously continued to sin by the use of the word "we" in I John 2:1, **"My little children, I write this to you, so that you do not sin, and if anyone sins, we have an advocate/intercessor with the Father, Yahshua Messiah, the righteous One."** Before that, in 1:8, John again uses "we" as he wrote, **"If we say that we have no sin, we are misleading ourselves, and the truth is not in us."** That being scriptural FACT and TRUTH, I can state unequivocally that anyone disseminating the teaching that believers do not sin at all is obviously teaching a lie!"*

The "Practice" of Sin

It is an obvious truth that the children of God "do not practice sin," and that those who do "practice sin" are not born of God. Every child of God will acknowledge this great truth. The controversy arises as to the reason we do not "practice sin," and John clearly gives that reason in the scriptures. We do not "practice sin" only because we who are born of God "cannot sin," because we are born of God. John actually said, **"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God"** 1 John 3:9 KJV.

The Greek word which was translated as "commit" is "*poieo*." The Strong's Concordance with its Greek Lexicon has designated the Greek word "*poieo*" as "G4160," and gives this very simple definition; **"Apparently a prolonged form of an obsolete primary; to make or do (in a very wide application, more or less direct):"** Strong's Greek Lexicon also instructs us to **"Compare G4238."**

"G4238" is the designation given by Strong's Concordance for the Greek word "*prasso*," which is defined by Strong's as follows:

G4238 **prassō**: A primary verb; to practice, that is, perform repeatedly or habitually (**thus differing from G4160, which properly refers to a single act**);

Notice in the comparison between “*poieo* (commit)” and “*prasso* (practice),” Strong’s says the Greek word *poieo* “*properly refers to a single act.*” This is the word the apostle John used throughout his epistles concerning whether those who are born of God are also sinners. John did not use the Greek word “*prasso*” even once in his epistles. When he said “*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin,*” John purposely chose the Greek word which indicated that those who are “*born of God*” do not commit a single act of sin. I agree with Mr. Doe that this is “*a burden hard to bear*” for the religious man or woman who has never been “*born of God.*” It is, however, the “*glorious liberty*” which is given to the children of God Romans 8:23.

Jimmy Swaggart, in his “Expositor’s Study Bible,” added the word “practice” six times in verses five through nine of the third chapter of I John. What a dangerous thing to do, considering the fact that John never used the Greek word “*prasso*,” which means “*to practice*,” but deliberately chose the Greek word “*poieo*,” which refers to a single act. Mr. Doe, in his complaint, wrote, “*those who received John’s teachings fully understood that he clearly taught that true believers do not and will not make a practice of sinning, that all believers sin to some degree....*” How could any of us know what John intended to say, if it was different than what he actually said? John confirmed his message, writing in the conclusion of his epistle, “*We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not...*” I John 5:18.

He Cannot Sin

The key to understanding the great rest we have in Christ is actually found in the words “*...he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*” I John 3:9. The word “*cannot*” does not speak of someone being strong enough not to sin, but of an inability to sin. This

might seem unbelievable, but consider this: Most people would agree with me if I said, “A mother cannot take the life of her child!” They would know she could not do it because it is not in her heart to do such a thing. Even so, when you are born of God, sin is washed from your heart and you are left with that same kind of “inability.” There is no struggle to not commit a sin when it is not in your heart to do it. You simply cannot do it. This is the rest from sin we find in Jesus Christ.

If Any Man Sin

*“My little children, these things write I unto you, **that ye sin not.** And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”* I John 2:1-2

John wrote in the introduction to his epistle, *“And these things write we unto you, **that your joy may be full**”* I John 1:4. It is obvious these words are not written as a commandment to have fullness of joy. Some, not understanding the gospel of Christ, have tried to receive “fullness of joy” by running, shouting aloud, leaping, etc., all to no avail. The word “*that*” in the phrase “*that your joy may be full*,” was translated from the Greek word “*hina*,” which is defined by “Strong’s” as “**in order that** (*denoting the purpose or the result*).” John wrote the truth of the gospel of Christ, knowing that everyone who believed it would be filled with the fullness of joy.

His words in I John 2:1 are written in the same tenor as his words in I John 1:4; those who believed the gospel he preached would not sin, because he wrote the truth which Jesus spoke of, saying, *“The truth shall make you free”* John 8:32. The words “*That ye sin not*” are not a command, but rather say “**in order that ye sin not**,” speaking of the glorious truth of the gospel that would make every believer free from sin.

John's words, "*And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous...*" are often misquoted to say "...if **we** sin..." but John said "*if **any man** sin.*" Who is the "*any man*" which John speaks of in this verse? John's use of the words "*any man*" indicates any and every person, man or woman, who lives on this planet at any given time. "*Any man*" could be a Muslim, a Hindu, an atheist, a communist, a person of any race, color, or creed, because Jesus Christ died for the sin of the entire world.

We Have an Advocate

The Greek word which was translated "*advocate*" is also translated "*comforter.*" Jesus said, "*I will not leave you comfortless; I will come unto you*" John 14:16-18. We have what every man, woman, or child on this planet needs; we have an advocate with the Father *abiding in us*. Jesus told us, "*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature*" Mark 16:15. Tell them about the one who loved them, and died on the cross to "*take away their sin*" John 1:29, I John 3:5. John said, "*He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but **also for the sins of the whole world***" I John 2:2. Christ as our "*advocate*" is for those who believe, but Christ as the sin offering ("the propitiation") is for the sin of the entire world.

Mr. Doe also wrote, "*Before that, in 1:8, John again uses 'we' as he wrote, 'If we say that we have no sin, we are misleading ourselves, and the truth is not in us.'*" That being scriptural FACT and TRUTH, I can state unequivocally that anyone disseminating the teaching that believers do not sin at all is obviously teaching a lie!"

In I John 1:6-10, the apostle John give six hypotheticals. A hypothetical is indicated whenever a sentence begins with "if," as is the case with those which John gives. By virtue of being a "hypothetical," the situation described may or may not be true. For example, John said in his first hypothetical, "*If we say that*

we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth” I John 1:6. In his second hypothetical, he said, “*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin*” I John 1:7. The apostle included himself in both of these hypotheticals, but only one of them properly describes his relationship with God. One is true for John, and the other is false. The key to understanding which is true for John and which is false is found in the hypotheticals themselves. Did John walk in the light, or did he walk in darkness? Obviously, John walked in the light of the gospel, and the blood of Jesus Christ had cleansed him from all sin. There were those, however who claimed to have “fellowship with God” while at the same time they walked in the darkness of religion, and John said their claim to fellowship was a lie. These first two hypotheticals give us the basis for rightly understanding the next three, which apply only to those who claim fellowship with God while walking in darkness.

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” I John 1:8

The unbelieving Jew did not believe they were sinners, and had no concept of a sin nature. The scribes and Pharisees actually kept the Law of Moses so perfectly that Jesus said of them, “*If I had not come and spoken unto them, **they had not had sin**: but now they have no cloke for their sin*” John 15:22. The “sin” they could not cover was their hatred for Jesus John 15:23-24. They “*walked in darkness*” and said “*I have no sin.*”

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” I John 1:9

Regardless of who it is who has sin, if they “*confess*” their sin, Christ is faithful and just to forgive their sin, but He does not stop with forgiveness. John said Christ also “*cleanses us from all unrighteousness,*” thus we are freed from sin.

“If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.” I John 1:10

Certainly we were all sinners until we trusted in Christ, who died to *“take away our sin.”* We would all be liars who say we have never sinned, but those who are *“cleansed from all sin”* I John 1:7, and *“cleansed from all unrighteousness”* I John 1:9 do not have sin, and do not commit sin.

“And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.”

I John 3:5-6

The Sin Test

The scribes and Pharisees had a “sin test” that not even Jesus could pass. Many of those who are truly *“born again”* of God do live their lives in condemnation, believing they are still sinners because of the theology of the modern church. There are those who are very religious, who also deny the truth which Jesus said *“shall make you free”* John 8:32, who have a “sin test” that all who choose to take it are destined to fail. Jesus promised all those who came to him would receive rest, but the theology of the modern church has given them only struggle. The gospel I preach brings glorious liberty to those who can believe it. They are freed from sin, from depression, oppression, and every other device of the enemy. The words of John, which speak of those who are *“born of God,”* saying *“...they cannot sin”* I John 3:9, describe the wonderful freedom we have in Christ. We are not as those who try really hard not to sin, or of those who try to “die to sin” every day. We are *“free”* and *“free indeed”* because the Son of God has made us free John 8:36.

The scribes and Pharisees had “proof” that Jesus was a sinner. They said to the man born blind whom Jesus had healed, *“We know that this man (Jesus) is a sinner”* John 9:27. Their proof Jesus was a sinner was that He healed on the Sabbath Day John 9:16. He

had walked through the fields on the Sabbath, breaking the law of the Sabbath day's journey. His disciples had gathered the grain in their hands as they walked, breaking the law against harvesting on the Sabbath, and they ate the grain without washing their hands, breaking the law against eating with unwashed hands. To the scribes and Pharisees, this was sufficient proof of sin and despising Moses' law to require His death, which ultimately they achieved. If Jesus could not pass the sin test of the scribes and Pharisees, how much less can we, if we give attention to those who seek to prove we are all sinners?

E.V. Hill was a famous pastor/evangelist of the last generation. He had a "sin test" of 120 sins, which he said would prove to any person who took it that they were sinners. He taught that the blood of Jesus covered our sins while the Holy Ghost worked "undercover" to throw out our sins one at a time. He said his sins were down to about twenty in number. On one occasion, Jan Crouch of TBN pressed E.V. to tell what some of his remaining sins were, and E.V. reluctantly confessed after much pressing, his greatest remaining sin was a "profane tongue." No one can deny the great works of charity that E.V. Hill had done for many years, among them feeding hundreds of the poor and homeless in his adopted city every day. I can only imagine the condemnation and guilt the man had while struggling to control a profane tongue, whatever that meant to E.V. Hill. In order to live with himself, however, he found it necessary to "prove to himself" that every child of God was also a sinner just like himself.

Sins we cannot commit

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." 1 Corinthians 6:9-10

I preached on this subject at a campmeeting some months ago. In this text, the apostle Paul gives a list of ten kinds of sinners he said would never inherit the kingdom God. My message, however was on the next verse which gives the remedy for those whom God will absolutely not receive:

“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” I Corinthians 6:11

Every one of us were “born sinners,” and we continued in sin until we trusted in Jesus Christ to do in us what Christ came into the world to do; that is to “*take away the sin of the world*” John 1:29, and to “*make an end of sins*” Daniel 9:24-25. The apostle Paul revealed the remedy for what we were in this eleventh verse: “*But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*” I pointed out the order which Paul gave, which is the opposite of the order the modern church believes. The apostle Paul said we are “*washed, sanctified, and justified.*” The modern church says we are “*justified without change, and must enter the process of sanctification,*” which is a lifetime of struggle against the sinful nature that continues in such “believers.” In the modern theology, there is no concept of being “washed in the blood of Jesus,” which is where our salvation begins and ends. Those who are “*washed*” are also “*sanctified,*” and those who are “*sanctified*” are also “*justified,*” and everything about them has changed. They are “*New Creations in Christ Jesus*” II Corinthians 5:16.

After the service I was approached by a man who said he worked with a missionary on a foreign field. He was obviously very troubled as he questioned me. He asked, “*Are you saying you never sin?*” I understand the traps people lay for us exactly as the scribes and Pharisees tried to trap Jesus in His words. If I said I never sin, he would write me off as a liar and a deceiver, because of the scripture we have reviewed earlier in this message: “*If we*

say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” I John 1:8. Instead, I spoke briefly to him about what Christ came into the world to do, and that He did it on the cross for all who believe the truth of *“what He came into the world to do.”* Before I could finish, his wife took him by the arm and said *“We have to go; our friends are waiting for us.”* I watched as a very troubled man walked away, and I never had opportunity to speak with him again.

It was some time later that I realized that this man almost certainly was not a sinner, but a sincere child of God who had been deceived by his churches definition of sin. The “scribes and Pharisees” in the church had given him a “sin test” which he could not pass, one which he rightly understood that no one could pass. It was not the preaching of the gospel that condemned this man; it was the “sin test” someone had given him.

The text I had preached from in that campmeeting service listed ten categories of sinners which Paul said *“shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”* They are listed clearly in the scriptures as **1. Fornicators 2. Idolaters 3. Adulterers 4. Effeminate 5. Abusers of themselves with mankind 6. Thieves 7. Covetous 8. Drunkards 9. Revilers 10. Extortioners.** Even though I did not know this man who was so troubled over my message, I have no reason to believe he was a sinner. I was puzzled as to why he was troubled. If I had asked him, *“Which of these ten sinners are you,”* I am certain he would have been hurt and indignant, because almost certainly he was none of these. If that were the case, it could only be that he had been *“washed, sanctified, and justified,”* because, as Paul said, *“such were some of you.”* I know that I was such before He washed me. Those who are *“washed, sanctified, and justified”* by Christ are not, and cannot be self-righteous, because no one can cleanse their own heart from sin. It is the modern theology that has people going through processes, and “jumping through hoops,” trying to cease from sin, which they cannot do for themselves. It is never the truth of the gospel of Christ that

troubles a child of God. It is the “sin tests” which have been given them by man, to prove we are all sinners.

Be Not Deceived

The apostle Paul said no fornicator (#1) or adulterer (#3) shall enter the kingdom of God. Jimmy Swaggart has said God will accept an adulterer, if his faith is anchored in the cross, even if the adulterer is in the act of adultery at the moment the last trumpet sounds and Jesus returns for His church. This scenario was first presented on the “Francis and Friends” broadcast on December 22, 2011. During that broadcast, Donnie, in response to a question by a viewer, said, “...*the silly question about if a Christian is in the middle of committing adultery when the rapture takes place...He’d go to heaven as long as his faith in anchored in Christ.*” There is an old saying, “A foolish question deserves a foolish answer!” Donnie certainly gave a foolish answer to that question. About a week later, Frances brought her husband Jimmy on the broadcast, “*because of the hornet’s nest we have stirred up.*” I expected Jimmy to correct the situation with truth, but it was not to be so. He only compounded the error, saying the man living in fornication with his father’s wife 1 Corinthians 5:1 would be accepted by God, and David, while in the bed of adultery with Bathsheba, or while plotting the death of Uriah, would also be accepted by God. The apostle Paul said, “*Let God be true, but every man a liar*” Romans 3:4. I do not know if Jimmy still clings to these errors; I pray that he does not, for the sake of his own soul.

Works of the Flesh

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; 1. Adultery, 2. Fornication, 3. Uncleaness, 4. Lasciviousness, 5. Idolatry, 6. Witchcraft, 7. Hatred, 8. Variance, 9. Emulations, 10. Wrath, 11. Strife, 12. Seditions, 13. Heresies, 14. Envyings, 15. Murders, 16. Drunkenness, 17. Revellings, and 18. Such

*like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, **that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.***” Galatians 5:19-21

In I Corinthians 6:9-10, Paul spoke of ten things a person could be, which would guarantee they would not inherit the kingdom of God. In this text, he tells of seventeen things a person can do, which also guarantees they will not inherit the kingdom of God. He adds after #17 the words “*and such like,*” which indicate there are many other things a child of God simply does not do; things which are in the category of “*works of the flesh.*”

Someone said to my son Keith, “*Paul did not understand the doctrine of grace when he wrote these things.*” What an absurd statement! The apostle Paul spoke of grace over a hundred times in his writings, while Peter used the word “*grace*” ten times, and John only one time in his epistles. We would know nothing about the “*grace of God*” except for the writings of the Apostle Paul. How dare any to say Paul “did not understand grace.” If there is a conflict between the modern doctrine of grace and the things Paul listed that “*shall not inherit the kingdom of God,*” it is the modern doctrine of grace that must be wrong. According to Paul, “*grace*” is the reason “*sin shall not have dominion over you*” Roman 6:14. It is because of the grace of God that we who believe are “*made free from sin*” Romans 6:18, 22.

Sins unto Death

*“If any man see his brother sin **a sin which is not unto death,** he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. **There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.** All unrighteousness is sin: and **there is a sin not unto death.**”* I John 5:16-17 KJV

It is commonly believed that all sin is alike. The apostle John, however, shows distinction between what he calls “*sins unto death,*” and “*sins not unto death.*” Only these two verses in the

bible seem to deal with this subject, which makes it difficult to reach a consensus as to exactly what John made reference to. With that said, I will give that which I believe God has given to me on this subject.

First, a “*sin unto death*” is not speaking of an “unpardonable sin,” such as Jesus said of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. Sins unto death are those which Paul listed in I Corinthians 6:9-10, and Galatians 5:19-21. The apostle made it very clear that those who are such, or those who do such things “*shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*” Sadly, Paul had to make it clear, he was not speaking of the sinners of the world, whom we know to be lost, but of those who claim to be believers. Concerning fornication and several other “sins unto death” he said, “*I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat*” I Corinthians 5:9-11.

The key in this verse that makes these so severe is they are “*called a brother.*” A sinner of the world is a sinner only because he or she does not “believe in Jesus” John 16:9. Those who are sinners in this verse are those who claim to “believe in Jesus” while continuing in those sins which are listed as “*sins unto death.*” The Apostle Paul said not to eat with them, and John said not to pray for them. In fact, Paul instructed the church concerning the man who was living in fornication with his father’s wife, to “*deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus*” I Corinthians 5:5.

I realize this sounds harsh and cruel, but Paul was actually watching for the soul of the one in fornication. Being ostracized

from the church, the indication is in Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians that the fornicator repented and was restored to the church. If he had died in his sin, he would have been lost forever. That is what it means to "*sin unto death.*"

"*Sins unto death*" can only be committed by those in whom the sin nature remains. When Christ takes away our sin, it is the "sin nature" which He takes away, and we go free from sin to serve God. We are made partakers of His divine nature II Peter 1:4, which guarantees the impossibility of such a one committing a single act of sin which is unto death unless they fall from God's grace. Galatians 5:4.

Sins not unto Death

"...and **there is a sin not unto death.**" This is a "*sin*" most difficult to explain. In Hebrews 12:1 Paul exhorts us to "*...lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us....*" The "besetting sin" cannot be a "*sin unto death,*" for such would disqualify us from the race. Instead, the besetting sin is anything which is not sin of itself, which competes for our time and attention. To one it may be excessive interest in sports, fishing, hunting, etc. To another it may be hobbies and other things which rob us from our time of prayer and study in the scriptures. These things, though not sins of themselves, are dangerous, because those who are beset by them most often grow cold and indifferent to the Spirit and presence of God. They are easily led into temptation and sin "*revives*" in their heart, working in them those sins which are "*unto death.*"

Two Trees

*"Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so **every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.**"*

Matthew 7:16-17

The prophet Isaiah prophesied of those who would be called “*trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD...*” Isaiah 61:3. These are “*good trees*” which bring forth “*good fruit.*” There are also “*corrupt trees*” which can only bring forth “*evil fruit.*” These are those whom Jesus referred to when He said “*Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.*”

“*A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.*” Matthew 7:18.

The nature of a thorn tree is such that it can only produce thorns. The nature of an apple tree is such that it can only produce apples. A “thorn tree” will always have a full supply of thorns, but though an apple tree may sometimes be found with a shortage of good fruit, it will never bear thorns. It is in this analogy of these two trees that I understand the difference between “*sins unto death,*” and “*sins not unto death.*” Those sins which the Apostle Paul listed as those who “*shall not inherit the kingdom of God*” are thorns on a corrupt tree. These are “*sins unto death.*” Sins that are “*not unto death*” are represented as a shortage of good fruit on a good tree.

“*Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*” James 4:17.

The old men and women of God in my youth spoke of “*sins of commission*” and “*sins of omission.*” Sins of commission can only be committed by those in whom the nature of sin remains. The Apostle John spoke of these when he wrote, “*Whosoever is born of God doth not **commit** sin...,*” and brings this conclusion in the same verse, “*...and he cannot sin, because he is born of God*” I John 3:9. I purposely left out six words in the middle of this verse which give the only reason that any among us cannot commit sin; “*...**for His seed remaineth** (abide) **in Him....***” We who are “*born of God*” are “*His seed.*” Not only does Christ abide in us, but we “*abide in Him.*” This is the answer to every

problem in the so called “Christian walk.” Jesus said, “*He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit*”

John 15:5.

The Apostle John presents “*Abiding in Christ*” as the complete answer for the Christian walk. He said to the new converts, “*And now, little children, **abide in him**; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming*” I John 2:28.

“*And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. **Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not...***” I John 3:5-6.

Sins of Omission

First, we must understand, there is a difference between “omission” and “disobedience.” Paul said, “*...the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.*” Disobedience is a “*sin unto death*,” while “omission” may be a sin “*not unto death.*”

Sometimes we feel prompted to witness, or to help someone in need, but we neglect to do so until it is too late for the one in need. Our heart is smitten and so it should be, but do not accept the premise that your “omission” is the moral equivalent of adultery, lying or stealing. Those in religion who say “*We are all sinners; we sin every day*” are making excuse for those in the church who commit sins that are “*unto death*,” because there are those sincere children of God who sometimes “*sin a sin which is not unto death*” I John 5:16. O child of God! Don’t allow those who are only “religious” drag you down and bring you into condemnation with their sin tests. Draw near to Jesus Christ! Be “one” with Him, and “*don’t let them make a sinner out of you.*”

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