

# 1 John 3:9 Commentary

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## FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND HIS CHILDREN

Click chart to enlarge

Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission  
Another Overview Chart - [1 John](#) - [Charles Swindoll](#)

BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP		BEHAVIOR OF FELLOWSHIP	
Conditions of Fellowship	Cautions of Fellowship	Fellowship Characteristics	Fellowship Consequences
Meaning of Fellowship 1 Jn 1:1-2:27		Manifestations of Fellowship 1 Jn 2:28-5:21	
Abiding in God's Light		Abiding in God's Love	
Written in Ephesus			
circa 90 AD			
From Talk Thru the Bible			

## STUDY GUIDE

### 1 JOHN 3

What is this? On the photograph of the Observation Worksheet for this chapter you will find handwritten 5W/H questions (Who?

What? Where? When? Why? How?) on each verse to help you either personally study or lead a discussion on this chapter. The questions are generally very simple and are stated in such a way as to stimulate you to observe the text to discern the answer. As a reminder, given the truth that your ultimate Teacher is the Holy Spirit, begin your time with God with prayer such as Psalm 119:12+ "Blessed are You, O LORD; Teach me Your statutes." (you can vary it with similar prayers - Ps 119:18, 26, 33, 64, 66, 68, 108, 124, 135, 171, etc) The questions are generally highlighted in yellow and the answers in green. Some questions have no answers and are left to your observations and the illuminating/teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. Some qualifying thoughts - (1) Use "As is" - these are handwritten and will include mistakes I made, etc. (2) They may not be the best question for a given verse and my guess is that on some verses you will think of a far superior 5W/H question and/or many other questions.

Dr Howard Hendricks once gave an assignment to his seminary students to list as many observations as they could from Acts 1:8. He said "So far they've come up with more than 600 different ones! Imagine what fun you could have with 600 observations on this passage. Would you like to see Scripture with eyes like that?" (P. 63 [Living by the Book](#) - borrow) With practice you can! And needless to say, you will likely make many more observations and related questions than I recorded on the pages below and in fact I pray that the Spirit would indeed lead you to discover a veritable treasure chest of observations and questions! In Jesus' Name. Amen

Why am I doing this? **Mortimer Adler** among others helped me develop a questioning mindset as I read, seeking to read actively rather than passively. Over the years I have discovered that as I have practiced reading with a 5W/H questioning mindset, it has yielded more accurate interpretation and the good fruit of meditation. In other words, consciously interacting with the inspired Holy Word of God and the illuminating Holy Spirit has honed my ability to meditate on the Scripture, and my prayer is that this tool will have the same impact in your spiritual life. The benefits of meditation are literally priceless in regard to their value in this life and in the life to come (cf discipline yourself for godliness in 1Ti 4:8+.) For some of the benefits - see Joshua 1:8+ and Psalm 1:2-3+. It will take diligence and mental effort to develop an "inductive" ([especially an "observational"](#)), interrogative mindset as you read God's Word, but it bears repeating that the benefits in this life and the rewards in the next will make it more than worth the effort you invest! Dear Christian reader let me encourage you to strongly consider learning the skills of [inductive Bible study](#) and spending the rest of your life practicing them on the Scriptures and living them out in your daily walk with Christ.

Although Mortimer Adler's advice is from a secular perspective, his words are worth pondering...

*Strictly, all reading is active. What we call passive is simply less active. Reading is better or worse according as it is more or less active. And one reader is better than another in proportion as he is capable of a greater range of activity in reading.* (Adler's classic book [How to Read a Book is free online](#))

[John Piper](#) adds that "Insight or understanding is the product of intensive, headache-producing meditation on two or three verses and how they fit together. This kind of reflection and rumination is provoked by asking questions of the text. And you cannot do it if you hurry. Therefore, we must resist the deceptive urge to carve notches in our bibliographic gun. Take two hours to ask ten questions of Galatians 2:20+ and you will gain one hundred times the insight you would have attained by reading thirty pages of the New Testament or any other book. Slow down. Query. Ponder. Chew.... (John Dewey rightly said) "People only truly think when they are confronted with a problem. Without some kind of dilemma to stimulate thought, behavior becomes habitual rather than thoughtful."

*"Asking questions is the key to understanding."*

--Jonathan Edwards

That said, below are the [5W/H questions](#) for each verse in this chapter (click page to enlarge). This is not neatly typed but is handwritten and was used for leading a class discussion on this chapter, so you are welcome to use it in this "as is" condition...



**1John 3:9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God:**

**Greek:** Pas o gegennemenos (RPPMSN) ek tou theou hamartian ou poiei (3SPAI) hoti sperma autou en auto menei (3SPAI) kai ou dunatai (3SPPI) hamartanein (PAN) oti ek tou theou gegennetai (3SRPI).

KJV 1 John 3:9 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.

BGT 1 John 3:9 Πς γεγεννημνος κ το θεο μαρταν ο ποιε, τι σπρμα ατο ν ατ μνει, κα ο δ ναιται μαρτανει, τι κ το θεο γεγεννηται.

NET 1 John 3:9 Everyone who has been fathered by God does not practice sin, because God's seed resides in him, and thus he is not able to sin, because he has been fathered by God.

CSB 1 John 3:9 Everyone who has been born of God does not sin, because His seed remains in him; he is not able to sin, because he has been born of God.

ESV 1 John 3:9 No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.

NIV 1 John 3:9 No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.

NLT 1 John 3:9 Those who have been born into God's family do not make a practice of sinning, because God's life is in them. So they can't keep on sinning, because they are children of God.

NRS 1 John 3:9 Those who have been born of God do not sin, because God's seed abides in them; they cannot sin, because they have been born of God.

NJB 1 John 3:9 No one who is a child of God sins because God's seed remains in him. Nor can he sin, because he is a child of God.

NAB 1 John 3:9 No one who is begotten by God commits sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot sin because he is begotten by God.

YLT 1 John 3:9 every one who hath been begotten of God, sin he doth not, because his seed in him doth remain, and he is not able to sin, because of God he hath been begotten.

MIT 1 John 3:9 Everyone fathered by God does not continue to sin. Because God's seed of heredity remains in him, he cannot go on sinning. He has descended from God.

GWN 1 John 3:9 Those who have been born from God don't live sinful lives. What God has said lives in them, and they can't live sinful lives. They have been born from God.

BBE 1 John 3:9 Anyone who is a child of God does no sin, because he still has God's seed in him; he is not able to be a sinner, because God is his Father.

RSV 1 John 3:9 No one born of God commits sin; for God's nature abides in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God.

NKJ 1 John 3:9 Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

ASV 1 John 3:9 Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God.

**ICB** - When God makes someone His child, that person does not go on sinning. The new life God gave that person stays in Him. So he is not able to go on sinning, because he has become a child of God.

**Wuest** - Everyone who has been born out of God, with the present result that he is a born-one (of God), does not habitually do sin, because His seed remains in him. And he is not able to habitually sin, because out of God he has been born with the present result that he is a born-one (of God). ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

- **Born** - 1 Jn 2:29 4:7 5:1,4,18 John 1:13
- **Because** - Job 19:28 1Pe 1:23
- **He cannot sin** - Mt 7:18 Ac 4:20 Ro 6:2 Ga 5:17 Titus 1:2
- See comments on Born Again in John 3
- [1 John 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 Peter 1:23-25+ Peter explains "**you have been born again** not of **seed** which is perishable but imperishable, [that is,] through the living and abiding word of God. For, "ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS, AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERS, AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF, BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ABIDES FOREVER." And this (THE SEED) is the word which was preached to you.

2 Peter 1:4-5+ For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them

you might become partakers of [the] divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in [your] moral excellence, knowledge.

## **BORN OF GOD: BECAUSE HIS SEED ABIDES**

**No** (*ou* = absolutely) **one who is born** (*gennao* - perfect tense speaks of permanence) **of God practices** (*poieo* - present tense - continually commits) **sin** (*hamartia*) - Born speaks of not only to a new relationship but also to a new life. Practitioners of sin are not of God! They are not regenerated and indwelt by the Holy Spirit as indicated by their unholy lives! They are not born from *above* as shown by their pattern of living like those from *below*!

**Daniel Akin** reminds us that "the false teachers of John's day, **as well as those of our own**, will teach that it is possible—somehow, somehow—to be righteous without doing what is right. God's Word says, "No way!" Those abiding in Christ will not, indeed they cannot, go on living in sin as the consistent and prevailing pattern of their lives. "Impossible," says the Bible. It simply is not in the realm of reality. Conversion changes everything. Regeneration does not produce invisible or rotten fruit. ([Exalting Jesus in 1, 2, 3 John Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary](#))

**Ligon Duncan** continuing the thought of "*You do what you are.*" calls us to notice "again how he says this: **No one who is born of God practices sin.**" The child of God bears the marks of whose child he is in his life... The one who practices sin shows that he is not of the heavenly Father; he is not born of God. And so you *do* **whose** you *are* as well. What you *do* reveals **whose** you *are*. Our lives show **whose** we are, whether we are of Christ or of Satan. Now we need to pause right there and say that it would be very easy to read this passage and think that John is teaching something like **sinless perfection** or that you must be perfect in order to be a Christian, and John is teaching neither. He's already addressed in 1 John 1 people who taught that Christians could be sinlessly perfect, and he has contradicted that (false teaching). He said, 'No, Christians cannot be sinlessly perfect.' He has also addressed the issue of sin in the Christian life: **Does a sin in the Christian life mean that one is not really a Christian?** No. 1 John 1:9+: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us." No, sin in the Christian life is not the issue that he is addressing; he is addressing fundamentally the issue of a person who **claims to be a Christian** but the bent or habit or characteristic of his or her life is one which is not in accordance with God's word. That person is not living in accordance with the grace of God, the truth of God, is not following in the way of righteousness. That's what John is dealing with here. **Do Christians sin?** Yes. **Do Christians sin more than once?** Yes. **Does that make them not Christians?** No. But John is asking about the **bent**, the **habit**, the **characteristic** of a life, and he's saying that our **lives** reveal who we **are**." (Bolding added) (**1 John 2:29-3:10 The Test of Righteousness**)

**Vine** on "**Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin**" (KJV),—this is set in contrast to the beginning of v. 8. The phrase rendered "is begotten" is in the perfect tense, "has been begotten"; in other words, "has become and therefore remains a child of God." The phrase "to be begotten of God" is, in the New Testament, confined to the writings of the apostle John. The statement here again conveys the thought of sinning as a practice, a habit. The better and accurate rendering would be "doeth not sin." "Doeth no sin" states what is not a fact, for it suggests that no sin is committed by such. What is here taught is not that the divine nature in man does not sin, and that it is only the old nature, the flesh, that sins; the fact is that the apostle is still distinguishing between the child of God and the unregenerate.

[Life Application Study Bible](#) - "Does not sin" and "cannot sin" mean that true believers do not carelessly or purposely continue to sin, nor do they become indifferent to God's moral law. All believers still sin, but they are working consciously (ED: SOME DAYS ARE BETTER THAN OTHERS!) to gain victory over sin.

**John Stott** - In this whole section John is arguing rather the incongruity than the impossibility of sin in the Christian. If even isolated sins are incongruous, what is utterly impossible is persistence in sin, 'a character, a prevailing habit, and not primarily an act' (Westcott). (BORROW [The Letters of John](#))

**Born of God** - Regenerated. Believers. New creations in Christ, possessing a new inner nature. Ultimately believers have a new indwelling Source of power, to motivate and enable one to NOT practice sin. Paul was clear when he wrote

Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a **new** (*kainos*) creature (*ktisis*); the old things passed away (*parerchomai* and in **aorist tense** = at a point in time = day of our salvation!); behold, new things (*kainos*) have come.(2Cor 5:17+)

**Born of God... born of God** - Both uses of the verb **born** (*gennao*) are in the **perfect tense** which signifies past completed action at a point in time (the moment of our new birth) with continuing effects of that new birth. The perfect tense speaks of the complete and final and forever nature ([eternal security](#)) of our new birth!

*Seed means growth and expression,  
and God's expression is always holy.*

- W Glyn Evans

**Born** (begotten, father of, conceived) (1080)(**gennao** from **genos** = offspring, in turn from **ginomai** = to become) ) means to beget, to bring forth, to give birth, to procreate a descendant, to produce offspring, to generate. **Gennao** describes the commencement of life where previously none had existed. Figuratively gennao refers to the spiritual new birth. To be regenerated. Note the passive voice (action from outside the subject - i.e., the Holy Spirit - Jn 3:6) which in this context would be a so-called "[divine passive](#)." Gennao is used 10x in 1John and all but one use are in the perfect tense, which is significant because this tense speaks of past completed action (the day we confessed Christ as Lord - Ro 10:9,10+) with the effect/result of the new birth continuing, enduring or abiding. In short, even the perfect tense serves to support the doctrine of [eternal security](#)!

**GENNAO IN JOHN'S WRITINGS** - Jn. 1:13; Jn. 3:3; Jn. 3:4; Jn. 3:5; Jn. 3:6; Jn. 3:7; Jn. 3:8; Jn. 8:41; Jn. 9:2; Jn. 9:19; Jn. 9:20; Jn. 9:32; Jn. 9:34; Jn. 16:21; Jn. 18:37; 1Jn. 2:29; 1Jn. 3:9; 1Jn. 4:7; 1Jn. 5:1; 1Jn. 5:4; 1Jn. 5:18

**What does it mean to be born of God?** Most authorities see the new birth and regeneration as essentially synonymous terms. The **Baptist Faith and Message 2000** says...

**Regeneration (Ed:** Greek word study - **paliggenesia** = literally a *birth again*), or the **new birth**, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. **Repentance** is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior. **Justification** is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God. **Sanctification** is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life. ([Baptist Faith and Message 2000](#) )

**New Bible Dictionary on regeneration** - We may define regeneration as a **drastic act** on fallen human nature by the Holy Spirit, leading to a change in the person's whole outlook. He can now be described as a new man who seeks, finds and follows God in Christ. (Borrow [New Bible Dictionary- I. Howard Marshall, A.R. Millard, J. I. Packer, D. J. Wiseman page 1016](#))

**Manser** defines **regeneration** as "The radical renewal of a person's inner being by the work of God's Spirit."

#### **Related Resources:**

- See comments on Born Again in John 3
- Regeneration - multiple articles and quotes
- [What does it mean to be a born again Christian?](#)
- [What is regeneration according to the Bible?](#)
- [What is the meaning of spiritual rebirth?](#)
- *Without the new birth it is impossible for us to live like new people*

**Daniel Akin** comments on the **new birth** - Without the new birth it is impossible for us to live like new people. Sin will dominate us. Satan will have his way with us. Hate and not love will fill our hearts. However, as a result of the new birth, the Bible says we cannot make "a practice of sinning" and we "cannot keep on sinning because [we have] been born of God" (1Jn 3:9ESV). These are words that should impart both comfort and humility to us. We are comforted to know sin cannot and will not win, ultimately, in our lives. We may stumble, even fall on occasion, but we know "the One who is in [us] is greater than the one who is in the world" (1Jn 4:4). Our Lord will pick us up and get us moving again in the right direction. We are destined to be like Jesus (1Jn 3:2; cf. Ro 8:29-30)! Neither sin nor Satan will have the last word. These words also humble us because if it were not for Christ, His atonement, His advocacy, and His victory, we would forever be enslaved to Satan and sin. Any righteousness we do flows from the righteousness of Christ poured into our lives by means of the new birth. (See [Exalting Jesus in 1.2.3 John - Page 70](#))

*Practice of sin is the evidence and  
confirmation that one is not born of God*

**John Piper** - The practice of sin is the evidence and confirmation that one is not born of God. Doing confirms being. Not practicing sin is the evidence and confirmation of being born again. ([No One Born of God Makes a Practice of Sinning](#))

*On some days we are much closer  
to Christ and obey Him much more readily.*

**Warren Wiersbe** - "Whosoever is born of God does not practice sin!" Why? Because he has a new nature within him, and that new nature cannot sin. John called this new nature God's "**seed**." When a person receives Christ as his Savior, tremendous spiritual changes take place in him. He is given a new standing before God, being accepted as righteous in God's sight. This new standing is called "justification." It never changes and is never lost. The new Christian is also given a new position: he is set apart for God's own purposes to live for His glory. This new position is called "sanctification," and it has a way of changing from day to day. On some days we are much closer to Christ and obey Him much more readily. (**ED**: AMEN OR O MY!) ....Just as physical children bear the nature of their parents, so God's spiritual children bear His nature. The divine "seed" is in them. A Christian has an old nature from his physical birth and a new nature from his spiritual birth. The New Testament contrasts these two natures and gives them various names (SEE CHART BELOW) ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#)) (As an aside Wiersbe entitles 1 John 3:1-10 "THE PRETENDERS"!)  
(**ED**: See [The Unusual Teachings of Zane Hodges](#))

Old Nature	New Nature
"our old man" (Ro 6:6)	"the new man" (Col 3:10)
"the flesh" (Gal 5:24)	"the Spirit" (Gal 5:17)
"corruptible seed" (1Pe 1:23)	"God's seed" (1Jn 3:9)

**Wuest** - **Is born** is a perfect participle in the Greek text, speaking of the past completed act of regeneration, namely, the impartation of the divine nature (2Pet 1:4+) or divine life, and the present result, the fact that the person who has been made the recipient of divine life is by nature, and that **permanently**, a spiritually alive individual. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

**Jerry Bridges** - Just as parents pass on certain physical and personality traits to their natural-born children, so traits of divine life are passed on to those born of God. Thus John could say that those born of God do what is right, love others, believe in Jesus, and cease to practice sin. These are all family traits that show up to some degree in everyone born of God. (Now in the Family - see [Holiness Day by Day: Transformational Thoughts](#))

[ESV Study Bible \(page 2432 - borrow\)](#) - the hearts of genuine Christians (those who are truly children of God) have been so transformed that they cannot live in a pattern of continual sin—though this does not mean that Christians are ever completely free from sin in this life (see 1 John 1:8–10).

**Wuest** says **practices** - is [poieo](#) in the present tense which always speaks of continuous action unless the context limits it to punctiliar action, namely, the mere mention of the fact of the action, without the mentioning of details. The translation reads, "Everyone who has been born out of God, with the present result that he is a born-one (of God), does not habitually do sin." ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

*Immortal principles forbid the child of God to sin.  
The new-born life within us keeps us holy.*

**Spurgeon on No one who is born of God practices sin** - That is to say, he does not live in it, it is not the tenor of his life. He is not outwardly so that others could convict him of it, or inwardly so that his own conscience could chide him with it, a man who loves sin... Immortal principles forbid the child of God to sin (**ED**: I would add "as a lifestyle"); the new-born life within us keeps us holy. We have our imperfections and infirmities over which we mourn; but no child of God can live in sin, and love it. He hates it; (**ED**: **ILLUSTRATION**) he is like a sheep that may fall into the mire, but he will not wallow in it, as the swine do. As soon as possible, he is up again out of the mud and the filth. He goes sorrowing, with broken bones, when he perceives that he has grieved his God. His life as a whole is a holy life." ([1 John 3 Exposition](#))

*He keeps purifying himself (1Jn 3:3),  
is constantly busy sweeping out sin.*

--R C H Lenski

**Practices** (poieo) **sin** - **present tense** = as the general direction of their life. Jon Courson "Because Jesus came to take away sin and to destroy the works of the devil, he who is truly born again doesn't practice sin."

**Kenneth Wuest on practices** - Poieo (is) in the present tense which always speaks of continuous action unless the context limits it to punctiliar action, namely, the mere mention of the fact of the action, without the mentioning of details. The translation reads, "Every one who has been born out of God, with the present result that he is a born-one (of God), does not habitually do sin." ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

**William MacDonald** writes that John "is contrasting the regenerate man with the unregenerate, and is speaking of constant or habitual behavior. The believer does not have the sin habit. He does not defiantly continue in sin." (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

*God's nature and the grace of the Spirit abide in him and he cannot practice a life of sin;  
he is born of God! A life of sin is distasteful to him who pants after holiness and desire to be like Christ*

**Henry Mahan** - He that is regenerated by the Spirit of God, in whom Christ is formed, who is a new creature in Christ, does not make sin his practice and course of his life. He is not without the motions of sin within, nor free from thoughts, words and deeds of sin in his life, but he does not give himself up to sin, excuse it, nor continue in it as a **servant** of sin. God's nature and the grace of the Spirit abide in him and he cannot practice a life of sin; he is born of God! A life of sin is distasteful to him who pants after holiness and desire to be like Christ. ([1 John 3 Commentary](#))

*1 John 3:9 does not mean that we cannot sin;  
it means that if we obey the life of God in us, we need not sin.*

**Oswald Chambers** - "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin" (1 John 3:9). Do I seek to stop sinning or have I stopped sinning? To be born of God means that I have the supernatural power of God to stop sinning. In the Bible it is never — Should a Christian sin? The Bible puts it emphatically — A Christian must not sin. The effective working of the new birth life in us is that we do not commit sin, not merely that we have the power not to sin, but that we have stopped sinning. 1 John 3:9 does not mean that we cannot sin; it means that if we obey the life of God in us, we need not sin. ([Signs Of The New Birth](#))

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## THE NEW BIRTH: ITS EVIDENCES AND RESULTS 1 JOHN [James Smith - Handfuls on Purpose](#)

The Apostle John does not point out in this Epistle how regeneration can take place, because that he had already done in his Gospel, particularly John 1:12, 13+, and the whole of chapter 3. Here in his Epistle he points out the proofs whereby we may know we are born from above.

I. **Faith** is both the condition and the proof of regeneration. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John 5:1+).

II. **Love**. "Every one that loveth is born of God" (1 John 4:7+).

III. **Life**. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit (margin, "practice") sin; or as W., "No one who is a child of God is habitually guilty of sin" (1 John 3:9+). This is to say, one of the clearest proofs of the new birth is to be found in the fact that a new life is begun. Not a life of sin as before, but a life of victory—there may be, there usually is, especially in the early days, lapses into sin, but not a life of sin. By and by we learn the secret of full victory.

IV. **Overcomes**. "For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world" (1 John 5:4+).

V. **Kept**. "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not, but He that was begotten of God (i.e., the Lord Jesus) keepeth him" (1 John 5:18+, R.V.). The begotten one is kept by the only Begotten of the Father. And the result?

VI. **Holiness**. Personal holiness. "Every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him" (1 John 2:29-)

## LIKE FRUIT TREES BEARING FRUIT AFTER THEIR KIND

(Ge 1:11)

**Because** - Another term of explanation. What is John explaining? Clearly, he is explaining why a believer cannot habitually practice sin, not because they have an inherent ability of their own, but because they have been born of God's seed and have His indwelling Spirit Who is continually working in them giving them the desire and the power to work out their salvation in fear and trembling, walking in a manner worthy of the Lord to please Him in all respects. (Php 2:13NLT+, Php 2:12+, Col 1:10+)

**His seed** ([sperma](#)) **abides** ([meno](#)) **in him and he cannot sin, because he is born of God** - Seeds bear fruit trees after their kind and if the seed of the tree is holy, the fruit of the tree cannot be unholy. Sinners with God's **seed**, cannot continually commit sins and

still claim to be born of God! As Jesus taught "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit." (Mt 7:18+) **Abides** ([meno](#)) describes something that remains where it is, continues in a fixed state, or endures. John uses the present tense which in the context of God's seed abiding in us would serve to emphasize the [assurance of our salvation](#). Indeed, John's description conveys the picture of the permanence of our new birth, a regeneration which cannot be reversed. In short, he is eternally secure! This is not an excuse to wantonly commit sins. Rather it is a guarantee that he will not go on habitually sinning. As MacDonald says "This divine relationship precludes the possibility of continuance in sin as a lifestyle."

*Experience tells every Christian that sin still has its hold.*

*For true believers, however, deep inside their spirits, they aspire not to sin.*

-- Bruce Barton

**Zodhiates** on **seed** - "In 1Jn 3:9 the spérma of God denotes the power of God operative through the Holy Spirit working in believers." (BORROW [The Complete Word Study Dictionary](#))

**Vine** on **seed** - the seed signifies the divine principle of imparted life in the believer, and this, once it is imparted, is unalterable; it remains in the believer. The child of God stands eternally related to Christ. The one who goes on doing sin (in other words, lives in sin), has never become a child of God. He has not the principle of life in Christ in him. There are other interpretations, but this seems to be in accordance with the general tenor of the epistle and the immediate context, both preceding and succeeding. ([Collected Writings](#))

*In regeneration, the new creation in Christ  
has real, inevitable effects on our physical life of obedience.*

**John Piper** - the reason the new birth inevitably changes the life of sinning, John says, is that when we are Born Again, "God's seed" abides in us, and we "cannot keep on sinning." That's how real the connection between the new birth and daily physical life is. The seed may be the Spirit of God or the Word of God or the nature of God—or all three. Whatever it is specifically, God himself is at work in the new birth so powerfully that they cannot keep on practicing sin. God's seed cannot make peace with a pattern of sinful behavior. These false teachers who think they can separate who they are spiritually from who they are physically do not understand either the incarnation or regeneration. In the incarnation, the pre-existent Christ is really united with a physical body. And in regeneration, the new creation in Christ has real, inevitable effects on our physical life of obedience. ([No One Born of God Makes a Practice of Sinning](#)- read the entire sermon for his excellent subtopic - How Do the Born Again Deal with Their Sin?)

**W A Criswell** - God's **seed** represents the new life which results from spiritual regeneration. ([Believer's Study Bible](#))

**Charles Ryrie** on **seed** - The divine nature given the one born of God (cf. John 1:13+; 2Pe 1:4+). This nature prevents the Christian from habitually sinning. (Borrow [The Ryrie Study Bible](#))

*"That's right. I do what I want to do, but in regeneration Christ did something to my 'wanter.'  
I just don't want to do the things that you are talking about."*

-- W. T. Conner

**David Allen** on the meaning of **seed** - There are four possibilities. The "seed" could be the Word of God itself (James 1:18). A second option is the Holy Spirit. The third view is that "seed" refers to both the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. The final interpretation is the best option given the context. John is referring to the fact of the divine nature in us by virtue of the new birth. This new birth prohibits a lifestyle of sin in one who is truly born again. Christians may sin as John has already confirmed in his letter (1Jn 1:5-10). But genuine Christians don't want to sin. Sometimes people assume that the doctrine of the eternal security of the believer becomes a license for Christians to sin with impunity. Have you ever heard someone say something like, "If I believe such a doctrine, I would do as I want to since I would be saved regardless." W. T. Conner, professor of theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in a bygone era, had a good answer to such an egregious slur on God's saving grace: "That's right. I do what I want to do, but in regeneration Christ did something to my 'wanter.' I just don't want to do the things that you are talking about." (SEE [1-3 John: Fellowship in God's Family](#))

The classic description is Paul's declaration that if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." (2Cor 5:17+). In Gal 6:15+ Paul again refers to "a new creation." And in Eph 2:10 he says we were "created in Christ Jesus for good works." (Eph 2:10+).

**John MacArthur** explains that "The New Birth involves the acquisition of a **seed**, which refers to the principle of God's life imparted to the believer at salvation's New Birth. John uses this image of a planted seed to picture the divine element involved in being born again." (See [MacArthur Study Bible](#))

*Accompanying our sincere desire to obey God*

*will be a heightened sensitivity to our indwelling sin.*

--Jerry Bridges

**David Smith** on the **seed** abiding in us - The germ of the divine life has been implanted in our souls, and it grows—a gradual process and subject to occasional retardations, yet sure, attaining at length to full fruition. The believer's lapses into sin are like the mischances of the weather which hinder the seed's growth. The growth of a living seed may be checked temporarily; if there be no growth, there is no life. ([Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

**He cannot sin** (dunamai = able) (hamartano = sin). Note that both verbs are in the present tense which speaks of the general direction of one's life. As discussed above, believers can and do still commit individual acts of sin, but John is not describing our occasional sins, as abhorrent as those are! Nor is he describing sinless perfection as some have falsely interpreted it (1 Jn 1:8+, 1Jn 1:10+ both negate "perfectionism"). What John is saying is that an individual who is truly Born Again, who has God's seed, cannot continually live a lifestyle of lawlessness. Notice that John uses the Greek negative "**ou**" (not "me") which signifies absolute negation. In other words he is saying that there is ABSOLUTELY NO WAY a genuine believer can continually live in sin! This is in contrast to the [teaching of Zane Hodges](#) which states that a person can "believe" and then live the rest of their life in sin! In a sense such an aberration is supernaturally impossible! Why? Because believers have a new nature (cf God in us, the Spirit, continually "energizing" us giving us the desire and power to live pleasing to God - see Php 2:13NLT+) that pursues (however imperfectly) righteousness and not lawlessness.

*"He cannot keep sinning,"*

*as the seed cannot cease growing.*

-- [David Smith - Expositor's Greek Testament](#)

**W E Vine** on **He cannot sin** - here again, not the committal of an act is in view, but **continuance in sin**. It is not a case merely of moral impossibility, relationship to God, once it is established, not only abides forever but precludes the possibility of **continuance of sin as a practice of the life**. This difference between the **children of God** and those who are not is categorically stated in the next verse (1 Jn 3:10+). ([Collected Writings](#))

*Regenerated life is not an "up and down" life;*

*it is a life "up and up."*

-- Oswald Chambers

**Kenneth Wuest** - "**Cannot sin**" is **dunamai**, "I am not able," and the present infinitive of **hamartano**, "to sin." The infinitive in the **present tense** in Greek **always speaks of continuous, habitual action**, never the mere fact of the action, since the aorist infinitive which refers to the fact of the action, may be used at will if the writer wishes to speak of the mere fact without reference to details. The translation therefore is, "**He is not able to habitually sin.**" The Greek text here holds no warrant for the erroneous teaching of sinless perfection. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

*Habitual actions*

*indicate one's character.*

**Charles Ryrie** on **cannot sin** - I.e., **cannot sin** habitually. See note on verse 8 ("practices = continually practices. I.e., sins as a regular way of life."). Habitual actions indicate one's character. (Borrow [The Ryrie Study Bible](#))

*A great deal of false theology has grown out of*

*a misunderstanding of the tense of hamartanein here.*

**A T Robertson** considers "cannot sin" a wrong translation because it means the believer cannot commit sin -- The present active infinitive hamartanein can only mean "and he cannot go on sinning," as is true of *hamartanei* in 1Jn 3:8 and *hamartanon* in 1Jn 3:6. For the aorist subjunctive to commit a sin see *hamartate* and *hamartei* in 1Jn 2:1+. A great deal of false theology has grown out of a misunderstanding of the tense of hamartanein here. Paul has precisely John's idea in Ro. 6:1 *hamartiai*... in contrast with *hamartesomen* in Ro. 6:15.

*Those who do habitually sin have neither seen Him nor known Him.*

*They are not genuine Christians.*

**ESV Study Bible (borrow)** - True followers of Christ do not recklessly and habitually violate what their anointing (1Jn 2:20, 27) has planted within them (see note on 1Jn 3:9-10). Those who do habitually sin have neither seen him nor known him. They are not genuine Christians.

**F F Bruce** - The new birth involves a radical change in human nature; for those who have not experienced it, sin is natural, whereas for those who have experienced it, sin is unnatural—so unnatural, indeed, that its practice constitutes a powerful refutation of any

claim to possess the divine life. John's antitheses are clearcut. While they are to be understood in the context of his letter and of the situation which it presupposes, any attempt to weaken them out of regard for human infirmity, or to make them less sharp and uncompromising than they are, is to misinterpret them ([The Gospel and epistles of John](#) page 92)

**F B Meyer** - We do not presumptuously and habitually yield to known sin (1 John 3:9, R.V.).—The apostle is not speaking of some isolated act into which a man may fall under unexpected temptation, but of habitual courses of inconsistency and wrong-doing. Test yourselves, therefore, whether ye are indeed born again.

**Stephen Smalley** on **he cannot sin** - John concludes this section by reminding his readers that the true child of God is (like the Father himself) opposed to sin. Whereas **the determined sinner** (the heretic in John's church, perhaps, as opposed to the orthodox Christian) **belongs to the devil** (1Jn 3:8), the spiritually reborn believer, being a member of God's family, **cannot as a settled policy act lawlessly** (cf. 1Jn 3:4). In other words, we reproduce in our lives a "family" likeness depending upon our spiritual parentage; and those who are "born of God" do not sin (cf. 1Jn 3:7, 8, 10). (BORROW [1, 2, 3 John](#))

*Christians don't go on sinning without conflict and confession.*

*Christians see it, hate it, confess it and fight it.*

*And they do so with increasing vigilance as they grow up into Christ.*

**John Piper** - When 1 John 3:6 says, "No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him," and when 1Jn 3:9 says, "No one who is born of God practices sin," the key is to realize that the present tense verbs used here in Greek for "sins" (1Jn 3:6) and "practices" (1Jn 3:9) imply ongoing, continuous action. This probably means that, in John's mind, what is impossible for the Christian is a life of unchanged continuation in sin the same as when he was not born of God. In view of all his insistence that Christians do sin, we can't take these verses to mean Christians don't sin at all. We should take them to mean that Christians don't go on sinning without conflict and confession. Christians see it, hate it, confess it and fight it. And they do so with increasing vigilance as they grow up into Christ. ([The Son of God Appeared to Destroy the Works of the Devil - December 20, 1998](#))

*No Christian can possibly be a deliberate and consistent sinner;*

*no Christian can live a life in which sin is dominant in all his actions.*

**William Barclay** - What John is saying may be put down in four stages. (a) The ideal is that in the new age sin is gone forever. (b) Christians must try to make that true and with the help of Christ struggle to avoid individual acts of sin (**ED: BETTER = THE ENABLING POWER OF THE SPIRIT - SEE Ro 8:13+**). (c) In fact all men have these lapses and when they do, they must humbly confess them to God (1Jn 1:9, Pr 28:13), Who will always forgive the penitent heart (**ED: NOTE THAT THE ACT OF CONFESSION RESTORES FELLOWSHIP. CONFESSION IS NOT A MERITORIOUS ACT THAT EARNS GOD'S FAVOR BUT DOES RESTORE FELLOWSHIP. EVERY SIN OF A BELIEVER HAS BEEN PAID FOR IN FULL ON THE CROSS. SEE Jn 19:30+**). (d) In spite of that, no Christian can possibly be a deliberate and consistent sinner; no Christian can live a life in which sin is dominant in all his actions. John is not setting before us a terrifying perfectionism (**ED: HE HAS REFUTED THAT IN 1Jn 1:8, 10**); but he is demanding a life which is ever on the watch against sin, a life in which sin is not the normal accepted way but the abnormal moment of defeat. John is not saying that the man who abides in God cannot sin; but he is saying that the man who abides in God cannot continue to be a deliberate sinner. ([Daily Study Bible](#))

**Because** - Another term of explanation. What is John explaining? He is explaining why a believer cannot live a life of sin and lawlessness.

**Born of God** - Repeated for emphasis. His new nature gives him new desires, because He now has the Holy Spirit within his body (cf 1Jn 2:20, 27) and habitual unholy behavior is not even possible for a genuine born again individual.

**John Piper** - Now anybody can sin who wants to sin. So when John says that a person born of God cannot sin, he must mean that a person born of God has new wants, new desires. It's like a birth; something new has come into existence. Paul calls it a new creation (Ephesians 2:10; Eph 4:24). Jeremiah calls it a new heart (Jer 24:7). Ezekiel calls it a new spirit (Ezek 36:26). Being born of God is being changed by God so that the dominion of sin is broken. How is it broken? 1Jn 3:9 says that when a person is born of God, God's seed abides in him. That's why he cannot sin. The image is taken from ordinary human birth. When a father begets a child, the father's seed abides in the child. Something of the father is in the child and it makes him like his father. God's character is the very opposite of sin, therefore the child of God will be like his Father—he will not be able to sin. I know this sounds like John is teaching sinless perfection. But there are several reasons we know he isn't. One is that the Greek verb "commit sin" or "sin" in 1Jn 3:9 implies continuous action. It would be well translated, "No one born of God is content to keep sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot be content to keep on sinning because he is born of God." The most obvious reason (even if you don't know Greek) we know John isn't teaching sinless perfection is what he says in 1Jn 1:8 and 1Jn 1:10, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us ... if we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." So John goes so far as to tell Christians that it is a sin to say you are sinless. ([The Son of God Appeared to Destroy the Works of the Devil -](#)

[December 23, 1984](#))

**John Stott** - The new birth involves the acquisition of a new nature through the implanting within us of the very seed or life giving power of God. Birth of God is a deep, radical, inward transformation. Moreover, the new nature received at the new birth remains. It exerts a strong internal pressure towards holiness. It is the abiding influence of God's seed within everyone who is born of God, which enables John to affirm without fear of contradiction that he cannot go on sinning (cf. 2Cor. 5:17; 2Pe 1:4). Indeed, if he should continue to sin (**ED**: Referring to habitual sin), it would indicate that he has never been born again. It was this conviction which enabled John to assert that the heretics, who not only persisted in sin but had seceded from the Christian fellowship altogether, were not true Christians at all (1Jn 2:19). (BORROW [The Letters of John page 130](#))

*The believer's lapses into sin are like the mischances of the weather which hinder the seed's growth. The growth of a living seed may be checked temporarily*

**Wuest** - "**His seed**" refers to the principle of divine life in the believer. It is this principle of divine life that makes it impossible for a Christian to live habitually in sin, for the divine nature causes the child of God to hate sin and love righteousness, and gives him both the **desire** and the **power** to do God's will, as Paul says, "God is the One who is constantly putting forth energy in you, giving you both the desire and power to do His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13NLT+). **Smith** comments: "The reason of the impossibility of a child of God continuing in sin. The germ of the divine life has been implanted in our souls (**ED**: Read what God does for us in Ezek 36:27+), and it grows (**ED**: i.e., progressive sanctification or growth in holiness)—a gradual process and subject to occasional retardations, yet sure, attaining at length to full fruition (**ED**: cp Php 1:6+, 1Th 5:24+). The believer's lapses into sin are like the mischances of the weather which hinder the seed's growth. The growth of a living seed may be checked temporarily; if there be no growth, there is no life." ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

**What is the seed which abides within believers?** One cannot be dogmatic but here are several possibilities - (1) Christ, (2) the Gospel message (1Jn 2:24+), (3) the anointing, i.e., the Holy Spirit (1Jn 2:27+), (4) God Himself (1Jn 3:24; 1Jn 4:12,15,16), (5) the new nature imparted through regeneration (Titus 3:5-6+, 2Pe 1:4+), etc.

**Jon Courson** offers a more limited list writing that "The **seed** spoken of here in 1Jn 3:9 could either refer to the life of Christ within the life of the believer (John 1:13) or to the Word of God (1Pe 1:23+). Which is it? I believe it's both. When the Spirit of Christ comes into a man and when the Word of God stirs within him, he cannot continue sinning indefinitely. Oh, he might struggle with sin. He might even be ensnared at times by sin. But he's not comfortable in sin. That's why a Christian involved in sin is the most miserable person in the world. He has too much of the Lord to enjoy sin, and too much sin to enjoy the Lord. The seed—be it the Person of Christ, the Word of God, or both—does not allow a person to habitually, continually practice sin." (SEE [Jon Courson's Application Commentary](#))

While believers can sin and even become ensnared at times in sin Thomas Manton warns that "One sin let alone and allowed, is Satan's nest-egg in our hearts, that he may come thither again and lay more." Manton added that "Faith makes us hate sin." The upshot is that if you find yourself loving sin more than loving God, then you need to read and ponder 2Cor 13:5+ "Test yourselves [to see] if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?" Peter says we need to "be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble." (2Pe 1:10+)

**Chris Benfield on he cannot sin** - This ought to bring great comfort to the heart of every believer. Again we must emphasize that John does not speak of sinless perfection. He does reveal an eternal truth that we must grasp. Those who are born of God through Christ the Son will never revert back to the old man. We are saved and secure in Christ. I will certainly miss the mark on occasion, and hinder my fellowship with the Lord, but I will never be separated from Him because of sin! [1 John 3:4-10 Seeing Sin for What it Is](#)

**Colin Kruse** - Putting these things together and allowing them to inform our understanding of the present verse, we may say that to be born of God here means being brought to new spiritual life by the will of God and through the agency of his Spirit. Of such people, the author says, it is impossible for them to continue to sin. The author uses a present tense form of the verb 'to sin' (hamartanō), indicating that it is sinning as an ongoing action that he has in mind here as impossible for those born of God. (See [The Letters of John - Page 124](#))

**Simon Kistemaker** - In Greek, the verbs express continued action, not a single occurrence. Therefore, by using the present tenses of the Greek verbs, John is saying that the believer cannot practice habitual sin. "The thought being conveyed in 1 John 3:9 is not that one born of God will never commit a sinful act but that he will not persist in sin." (Distinctive Johannine Vocabulary and the Interpretation of 1 John 3:9," WJT 40 1977: 142.)

*He keeps purifying himself (1Jn 3:3),  
is constantly busy sweeping out sin.*

**R C H Lenski** - To this extent the Son of God has already destroyed the devil's works in everyone that has been born of God, that by regeneration has been born into a new life, has become a child of God, has God as his Father. Everyone who is so born "does not go on sinning." The present durative ποιεῖ is as vital for John's meaning here as it was in v. 6. Ο χ μαρτάνει (v. 6) = μαρτίαν ο ποιεῖ : "does not go on sinning"—"does not go on doing sin" (anarthrous: what is of the nature of sin). He keeps purifying himself (1Jn 3:3), is constantly busy sweeping out sin. (BORROW [The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude](#))

*If even isolated sins are incongruous, what is utterly impossible is persistence in sin, 'a character, a prevailing habit, and not primarily an act'*

**John Stott** - In this whole section John is arguing rather the incongruity than the impossibility of sin in the Christian. If even isolated sins are incongruous, what is utterly impossible is persistence in sin, 'a character, a prevailing habit, and not primarily an act' (Westcott). (BORROW [The Letters of John page 130](#))

*John is not talking about sinless **perfection**, but rather about the **direction** of the life of a believer.*

**Steven Cole** - 1Jn 3:9 has generated a lot of confusion and controversy. It's one thing to say that no one who is born of God practices sin, but then John goes farther and states that he is not able to sin! I'm sure that my experience is like yours: I feel quite capable of sinning and years of walking with the Lord have not lessened my ability! So what does John mean? Here are some principles to guide us.

(1) we must assume that John did not contradict himself or any other New Testament writer. He has said (1Jn 1:8), "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us." He said that he is writing so that we may not sin, but then he adds (1Jn 2:1), "and if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." He would not have written those words if believers were incapable of sinning.

(2) John's main concern is not to delve into some deep theological discourse, but rather to be pastorally practical. He does not want his flock to be deceived by the heretics, whose errors lie behind the apostle's words. 1Jn 3:10 is crucial to understanding the entire passage: John wants us to be able to identify the children of God and the children of the devil by observing their behavior. To do that, he again paints in black and white, with no gray areas. His point is that those who are truly born of God practice righteousness; those who are of the devil (the only other category) do not practice righteousness. There have been many different attempts to explain 1Jn 3:9 ([John Stott in The Letters of John](#) lists seven; these are a few from his list. - **ED**: See also [1 John 3:9 Special Study on Ways it Has Been Interpreted](#))

(a) Some have said that John means that believers cannot commit terrible sins, such as murder or what the Catholic Church labels "mortal" sins. But, clearly, John does not specify sins, and besides, believers are capable of committing such sins.

(b) Others draw a distinction between the old and new natures of the believer, and argue that the new nature is incapable of sinning. While this may be true, it clearly is not John's meaning here. The heretics could have used this to argue, "I'm not sinning; only my old nature is!" But in 1Jn 3:10 John says that by observing the person's behavior, we can tell whether he is a child of God or of the devil. He is talking about a whole person sinning, not just his nature.

(c) Some holiness teachers think that the verse is teaching the possibility of attaining sinless perfection. They say that if you learn the secret of abiding in Christ, you will live without sin. While that may be so, John does not attribute the believer's not sinning to the abiding life, but to the fact that he has been born of God. This is true of every believer, not just those who have attained it.

(d) Some say that John means that believers cannot sin willfully or deliberately. But, both experience and Scripture show that believers are quite capable of willful, deliberate sin!

The key question in interpreting this verse is whether John is speaking about committing individual acts of sin, or is he talking about sin as a way of life? John uses the present tense throughout this section, and while the Greek present tense does not necessarily emphasize continuous action, it certainly allows for it. In 1Jn 3:8, when John says, "the devil has sinned from the beginning," the verb is present tense. Clearly he means, "From day one and persisting ever since, the devil is characterized by sinning." Thus when John says that those born of God do not practice sin and that they cannot sin, he means that it is impossible for a child of God to persist in a lifestyle marked by sin. The reason for this is not only that he has been born of God, but also that God's

seed abides in him. This refers to the new life that God imparts to those He begets as His children. That word picture is helpful in understanding John's meaning. When you plant a seed in the ground, it does not sprout, grow and bear fruit in a day. It takes time, cultivation, water, and sunshine. Or, to use the human analogy, when a husband's sperm unites with his wife's ovum, new life begins. But it takes nine months before birth, and after that it takes years to grow to maturity. But, if life is present, it affects everything. It is impossible for a normal child not to grow. So John is not talking about sinless perfection, but rather about the direction of the life of a believer. If God has imparted new life to you, so that you have become His child, you cannot go on living in sin. (Ed: But I don't recommend you test the veracity of this immutable principle!) When you do fall into sin, you will recognize that you cannot go on in it. God will convict you of it and you will repent and walk in righteousness. (ED: **ILLUSTRATION**) A pig and a sheep may fall into the same mud hole, but there is a difference. The pig will love it and wallow in it, because that's its nature. The sheep will want to get out and avoid that mud hole the next time, because it has a different nature. If God's seed abides in you, you cannot wallow in the mud. If you like it in the mud and don't want to get out, you may need to ask whether you truly have been born of God. ([The Believer and Sin 1 John 3:4-10](#))

*In this text, the key which unlocks the door of difficulty is discovered in the meaning of the Greek tenses.*

**Believer's Study Bible** on 1Jn 3:6 and 1Jn 3:9 - Together with 1Jn 3:9 and 1Jn 5:18 (also cf. 1Jn 1:8-2:21), this verse constitutes a most difficult assignment for the reader in English. In this text, the key which unlocks the door of difficulty is discovered in the meaning of the Greek tenses. **This verse does not teach that a Christian will never commit an act of sin.** The verb employed in the Greek is in the present tense, which indicates continual action. These verses, therefore, do not claim that a Christian never sins after conversion, nor, for that matter, that a believer ever reaches perfection in his life. The present tense, in this context, indicates the breaking of the perpetual hold of sin in the life of the disciple. Thus the verse can be understood to mean, "*Whoever abides in Him does not continually and habitually sin.*" The power to overcome habitual sin is based on the invulnerability of the believer to the ravages of satanic influence (1Jn 5:18), and on "His seed" remaining in him (1Jn 3:9). The expression "His seed" is a reference to the divine principle of life that abides in a man after regeneration in Christ. This principle prevents slavery to Satan and sin.

*The idea is not just one act of sin;  
the idea is that he does not live in sin.*

**J Vernon McGee** - "Whosoever is born of God" -- this is the new birth we have been talking about. This is what the Lord Jesus spoke of when He said to a religious ruler, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John 3:7).

**"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.

**"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin"** -- unfortunately, this gives a wrong impression here. The idea is not just one act of sin; the idea is that he does not live in sin. John has said earlier in chapter 2, "If any man [any Christian man] sin, we have an advocate with the Father" -- the believer will sin. However, John makes it very clear that it is God's will that we live without sin: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not" (1John 2:1). Sin is anything contrary to the will of God, but when sin comes into our lives, John says that we have an advocate with the Father, and "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1John 1:9). Again, John is talking to believers, and he is saying that believers will sin. Therefore, when John says, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin," he is saying that that new nature will not continue to live in a pigpen -- never, under any circumstances will it do that.

"For his seed remaineth in him." If you are a child of God, you have a divine nature.

"And he cannot sin." Why? Because he "is born of God." John is talking about something that is real and genuine. He is not talking about some little profession which you made when you went down to the front of a church and shed a few tears. The question is: Have you been born of God? I believe in the security of the believers, but I also believe in the insecurity of make-believers. It is well for us to take an inventory and to look at our lives. We must examine ourselves and see whether we are in the faith or not. Are you really a child of God? Do you long after the things of God? That is the important thing.

Someone might say of this young man who is a homosexual, "He cannot be a child of God." I say that he can be; but if he is a child of God, he is going to give up that sin. A prodigal son ought not to be in a pigpen, and

he will not live there. He is going to get out. The day will come when he will say, "I will arise and go to my Father." And his Father is not anywhere near that pigpen -- He is as far from it as He possibly can be.

*Whosoever is born of God does not practice sin.*

*He does not go on in sin.*

Whosoever is born of God does not practice sin. He does not go on in sin. When we received a new nature, we did not lose our old nature -- that is the problem. No wonder Paul cried out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:24). Only the Spirit of God can deliver you, my friend (**ED: MEMORIZE Ro 8:13+**). If you recognize that you are helpless and hopeless, if some sin binds you down, spoils your life, robs you of your joy, and you are miserable, then may I say to you that He can and He will deliver you -- if you want to be delivered. If you want to get rid of that sin, if you really want to serve Him, if you mean business with Him, He means business with you. "For his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." (See [Thru the Bible Vol. 56: The Epistles 1 John](#))

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#### **Jerry Bridges - OUR NORMAL PRACTICE** [Holiness Day by Day: Transformational Thoughts](#)

No one born of God makes a practice of sinning. (1 JOHN 3:9)

The apostle John gave us another indicator for knowing we have eternal life: "You may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him" (1 John 2:29).

This test can be a tricky one. We might understand John to say that only those who always do what is right are born of God. Though that's certainly God's standard for us, obviously none of us measures up to it. Even John himself said, "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8).

When John spoke of "everyone who practices righteousness," he was thinking of our normal practice, of the dominant direction of our lives.

Sometimes our obedience is marked more by desire than by performance. So we have to ask ourselves: Is my life characterized by an earnest desire and a sincere effort to obey God in all that He commands? What is my attitude toward God's Law? Do I find it to be holy, just, and good? And do I delight in it in my inner being, even though I find my sinful nature struggling against it? (See Romans 7:12, 22–23.)

Accompanying our sincere desire to obey God will be a heightened sensitivity to our indwelling sin. Often it's our increased awareness of sin that causes us to doubt our salvation or to give Satan an inroad into our minds to suggest that "a Christian wouldn't sin like you do." But Satan would certainly not suggest such a thought to an unbeliever. Rather, he wants unbelievers to be complacent about their sin. So turn the tables on Satan and your own internal doubts. Ask yourself if those accusations or doubts are not really a sign that you do trust Christ.

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#### **Bruce Barton - FINDING VICTORY** [Life Application Study Bible](#)

Everyone has areas where temptation is strong and habits are hard to conquer. These weaknesses give the devil a foothold, so we must deal with our areas of vulnerability. If we are struggling with a particular sin, however, these verses are not directed at us, even if for a time we seem to keep on sinning. John is not talking about people whose victories are still incomplete; he is talking about people who make a practice of sinning and look for ways to justify it. Three steps are necessary to find victory over prevailing sin: (1) seek the power of the Holy Spirit and God's Word; (2) stay away from tempting situations; (3) seek the help of the body of Christ—be open to their willingness to hold you accountable and to pray for you.

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**Octavius Winslow - Daily Walking with God - MARCH 4.** - Whoever is born of God does not commit sin; for his seed remains in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 1 John 3:9

*Sin dwells in him, but does not govern—it has power, but does not rule—  
it torments, but does not reign with a continued, unbroken supremacy*

THESE words have received two interpretations, both of which we believe are equally true. **The more general one is, that he who is born of God does not willingly sin, having "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," he cannot sin with the full consent and concurrence of the will. He hates it, he fights against it, he resists it.** But it may be inquired, is not all sin an act of the will? We reply, not the renewed will. The apostle speaks of two wills in a believer, or rather, the same will under two opposite influences. Thus, Rom. 7:15: "That which I do, I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I." Ver. 19: "For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." Few will question that

Paul here speaks of himself as a regenerate man. And yet he refers to two antagonist principles dwelling in him—the one on the side of holiness, the other on the side of sin. "What I hate, that I do." No man can possibly hate sin, unless he is "born of the Spirit." "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil." And still he says, "what I hate," the sin that is so abhorrent to me—"that I do." Is there volition in the act? True philosophy demands that we reply, "Yes." Every sin must be voluntary; if not so, it cannot be sin. Is there the concurrence and consent of the renewed will in the act? True grace demands that we reply, "No." "For what I hate,"—there is the mark of the regenerate man—"that do I,"—there is the act of the will under the influence of indwelling sin... We beg the reader to mark this great evidence of regeneration. "Whoever is born of God does not commit sin." He does not commit it with the total, absolute, and complete assent (abandon) and concurrence of the renewed will. He does not give himself over to sin "with greediness." He "would do good." He hates sin. Grace reigns, not sin. Sin dwells in him, but does not govern—it has power, but does not rule—it torments, but does not reign with a continued, unbroken supremacy; in accordance with the promise, "sin shall not have dominion over you." (Ro 6:14) **It may for a moment triumph, as it did in David, in Solomon, in Peter, and in a host of other eminently holy men; yet still the promise is verified, as we see in the restorings of the blessed Spirit in their spirit and conduct, in their humblings and confessions, and their holy and upright walk with God in after-years.** Reader, have you ever been made sensible of the inward plague? What do you know of the warfare within—of "the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh"? (Gal 5:17+) Your honest reply will decide the great question, whether you are born of God.

### **Bill Bright - Can't Keep on Sinning 1 JOHN 3:9**

I am sobered by the thought that, having served the Lord for more than 30 exciting, wonderful, fruitful years, I might yet dishonor His name and bring disgrace to His cause. I know what has happened to other brothers and sisters in Christ—some of whom had been Spirit-filled Christian leaders, and I know that I too could fail the Lord if I do not continue to trust and obey Him. Even the apostle Paul lived in reverential fear that he might dishonor the name and cause of our Lord.

*So be careful. If you are thinking,  
'Oh, I would never behave like that*

"So be careful. If you are thinking, 'Oh, I would never behave like that,' let this be a warning to you. For you too may fall into sin. But remember this: The wrong desires that come into your life aren't anything new and different. Many others have faced exactly the same problems before you. And no temptation is irresistible.

"You can trust God to keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it, for He has promised this and will do what He says. He will show you how to escape temptation's power so that you can bear up patiently against it" (1 Corinthians 10:12, 13).

For many years it has been my prayer, as I pray on the offensive, "Oh, God, if there is a possibility that I may dishonor or disgrace Your name by becoming involved in a moral, financial or any other kind of scandal that would discredit my ministry and nullify my witness for You, I would rather You take my life first before such a thing could happen."

The Scripture warns all believers that any one of them, too, could fall. No one reaches the place of spiritual maturity or perfection where he can say, "I don't need the Lord's help anymore." The only one who can enable us to live victorious lives is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself [Promises: A Daily Guide to Supernatural Living](#)

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**Rick Renner** - John writes, "... for his [God's] seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." The word "seed" is the Greek word sperma—and yes, it is where we get the word sperm. According to this phenomenal verse, God injected His own seed into you the day you gave your life to Christ! Just as the sperm of a human father carries the DNA of that father, God's seed—the Word of God—carries the life and nature of God within it. When that divine seed was implanted on the inside of you, it imparted the very nature of God Himself to your spirit. See full discussion [A True Child of God Cannot Continue To Habitually Practice Sin!](#)

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### **Martyn Lloyd-Jones - THE DIVINE SEED 1 JOHN 3:9 [Walking with God Day by Day: 365 Daily Devotional Selections](#)**

The power of sin is not immediately destroyed in us. God has chosen to do this work gradually. This word "seed" is rather significant. Does that not simply mean God's method and plan in every realm? In the realm of nature you sow the seed, but it may be weeks and months and perhaps years before you get the full bloom. Why does God do it like that? My answer is, I do not know, but that is God's method; it is His way, and it seems to me that is what we are taught in the Scriptures. We are taught about being "babes in Christ," we are taught about growing and developing, we are taught about "growing in grace." John has already dealt with that when he said, "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:3).

It is a process, a development, and surely if we do not interpret a section like this in that way, then it means that we are denying what he has already told us in the first chapter: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (verse

8).

John's object in writing is "that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father" (2:1). But why is that if the Christian is immediately delivered and made perfect? This is a great mystery. It is not for us to understand, but we must face the facts. We must realize that experience, the experience of the greatest saints, denies the teaching of sinless perfection, and we see that it is not in accordance with the teaching of Scripture.

John exhorts us to strive to purify and cleanse ourselves and to interpret Scripture in our daily lives. We do not just have to submit and resign ourselves in order to be made perfect; we are to understand the Scriptures and their doctrine. We are to see their implication and to implement them in our daily lives.

Sinless perfection is not in accordance with the teaching of Scripture.

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**Gregg Laurie - TRUE BELIEVERS [Because... - Page 68](#)** ("Only Acting" but essentially same devotional)

"Those who have been born into God's family do not sin, because God's life is in them. So they can't keep on sinning, because they have been born of God" (1 John 3:9 NLT)

Of the twelve disciples, we envision Judas Iscariot as the one with shifty eyes, lurking in the shadows. While the other disciples wore white, Judas would have worn black. He was the one you would have immediately recognized as the bad guy.

But I think Judas Iscariot was the very opposite: a phenomenal actor who came across as an upright man, devout in his faith. As one of the Twelve, Judas had been handpicked by the Lord Himself, but eventually betrayed Him for a few pieces of silver.

Judas made the wrong choice to do the wrong thing, even though he had been exposed to so much truth. With his own ears, Judas heard Jesus deliver the Sermon on the Mount. With his own eyes, Judas saw Jesus walk on water. He saw Lazarus raised from the dead. He saw the multitudes fed with the loaves and fishes. He saw the blind receive their sight. He saw it all. He heard it all. Yet he became more hardened in his unbelief.

Judas could go deeper into sin because he really never knew Jesus. If you are a true Christian and you begin to compromise, you will sense the conviction of the Holy Spirit. But if you can sin without any remorse, then one must question if you really know God. The true child of God, though still a sinner, simply will not live in a pattern of sin.

If you find yourself, as a follower of Christ, immediately experiencing conviction when you start to sin, then rejoice. It is a reminder that you belong to the Lord.

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**Wayne Grudem - Sanctification Has a Definite Beginning at Regeneration ([Systematic Theology](#))**

THREE STAGES OF SANCTIFICATION 1. Sanctification Has a Definite Beginning at Regeneration

A definite moral change occurs in our lives at the point of regeneration, for Paul talks about the "washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5). Once we have been born again we cannot continue to sin as a habit or a pattern of life (1 John 3:9) because the power of new spiritual life within us keeps us from yielding to a life of sin. This initial moral change is the first stage in sanctification. In this sense, there is some overlap between regeneration and sanctification, for this moral change is actually a part of regeneration. But when we view it from the standpoint of moral change within us, we can also see it as the first stage in sanctification. Paul looks back on a completed event when he says to the Corinthians, "But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:11). Similarly, in Acts 20:32 Paul can refer to Christians as "all those who are **sanctified**." (The Greek expression is *tois hēgiasmenois*, a substantival perfect passive participle that expresses both a completed past activity --they were sanctified-- and a continuing result -- they continue to experience the sanctifying influence of that past action). This initial step in sanctification involves a definite break from the ruling power and love of sin, so that the believer is no longer ruled or dominated by sin and no longer loves to sin.

In practical terms, this means that we must affirm two things to be true. On the one hand, we will never be able to say, "I am completely free from sin," because our sanctification will never be completed (see below). But on the other hand, a Christian should never say (for example), "This sin has defeated me. I give up. I have had a bad temper for thirty-seven years, and I will have one until the day I die, and people are just going to have to put up with me the way I am!" To say this is to say that sin has gained dominion. It is to allow sin to reign in our bodies. It is to admit defeat. It is to deny the truth of Scripture, which tells us, "You also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 6:11). It is to deny the truth of Scripture that tells us that "sin will have no dominion over you" (Rom. 6:14). This initial break with sin, then, involves a reorientation of our desires so that we no longer have a dominant love for sin in our lives.

2. Sanctification Increases throughout Life (Scroll down to page 649 in [Systematic Theology](#))

3. Sanctification Is Completed at Death (for Our Souls) and When the Lord Returns (for Our Bodies) [Systematic Theology](#)

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**Lehman Strauss - born of God. (1 John 3:9)** borrow [The Epistles of John](#)

Two things are affirmed here—"doth not commit sin" and "he cannot sin." Who is it that doeth no sin and cannot sin? That which is "born" or begotten of God. If you are born of God you have God's nature in you (2 Peter 1:4). The divine nature in every child of God is just the same as it is in Christ. Christ was born of God, and because He escaped the sin principle through His supernatural conception apart from a human father, He neither did sin nor could He sin. It is wrong to say that Christ did not sin but could have sinned if He liked. The fact of the matter is He could not sin. The nature of God is so abhorrent to sin, that it is impossible for Him to have any participation with it. You could no more get Christ to sin than you could contaminate the sun by the stagnant water on which it shines. Christ not only did not sin, but He could not sin.

Here is one difference between Christ and the Christian. Christ had one nature only; the Christian has two natures. When we became partakers of the divine nature, the old sin nature was not eradicated. The old nature remains unchanged, just as bad as ever, unalterable and unmodified. But then too, the divine nature, His Seed, which is Christ Himself, remains unchanged and cannot sin. The word seed is used metaphorically of spiritual offspring, but it also signifies the principle of spiritual life imparted to the believer, and which remains in him unaltered and unalterable. Whenever I as a man, a Christian, commit an act of sin, it is the prompting of the old nature, and no Christian can say that he does not possess the old nature, for,

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### **1 John 3:6,9 God Too the 'Want To'**

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit (that is, practice) sin; for his seed remaineth in him and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John 3:9).

It is the grace of God working in the soul that makes the believer delight in holiness, in righteousness, in obedience to the will of God, for real joy is found in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. I remember a man who lived a life of gross sin.

After his conversion, one of his old friends said to him, "Bill, I pity you—a man that has been such a high-flier as you. And now you have settled down; you go to church, or stay at home and read the Bible and pray; you never have good times any more."

"But, Bob," said the man, "you don't understand. I get drunk every time I want to. I go to the theater every time I want to. I go to the dance when I want to. I play cards and gamble whenever I want to."

"I say, Bill," said his friend, "I didn't understand it that way. I thought you had to give up these things to be a Christian."

"No, Bob," said Bill, "the Lord took the 'want to' out when He saved my soul, and he made me a new creature in Christ Jesus."

When we are born of God we receive a new life and that life has its own new nature, a nature that hates sin and impurity and delights in holiness and goodness.

Illustrations of Bible Truth by H. A. Ironside, Moody Press, 1945, p. 43

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The apostle John gave us another indicator for knowing we have eternal life: "You may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him" (1 John 2:29).

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**ILLUSTRATION - H A Ironside** - When I think of **justification**, I think of a forensic act of God by which I am cleared of every charge of guilt. When I think of **regeneration**, I think of the imparting of a new nature through the power of the Holy Spirit in which the whole direction of my life is changed. Years ago when I went to California as a boy, the only oranges we knew were the ones with seeds. But then two of the Washington navel orange trees were brought to Riverside from Brazil and cultivated. Cuttings were taken from these parent trees at Riverside, and orange trees were budded with the Washington navel shoots, and their character was completely changed. A man having a forty acre orchard and not wanting to be left completely without fruit, would have the tops of one half of the trees cut off. Twenty acres would go on bearing the oranges with the seeds. But he would cut under the bark of the lopped trees, and put in the navel orange cuttings, and in a couple of years all those trees would have new branches and would be loaded with oranges. I might say to the owner, "What kind of oranges are these?" "Washington navel oranges," he would reply. "Is that the only kind of oranges they bear? Don't they sometimes bear oranges with seeds?" "Oh no," he would say; "A budded tree does not produce seeded oranges." But even as he speaks I stoop down and see a little shoot under the branches coming out of the trunk of the tree, and say, "Look, what is that shoot?" He would snip it off, or taking his knife out of his pocket would cut it away, saying, "That's from below the graft. It must be pruned off." You see what is characteristic of the budded tree is that it bears the navel oranges, but if one does not watch, below the grafting there will be a shoot of the old nature. Likewise as children of God we cannot go on living in sin. If you ever find a Christian slipping into anything unclean or unholy, you know that this comes from below the graft- it is the old nature manifesting itself! How can you keep the old nature from producing sin? By using the pruning knife of self-judgment. Whenever you find any tendency of rebellion against God, any tendency of self-will, any tendency to think of unclean or unholy things, get out the pruning knife and use it unsparingly on yourself. These tendencies are of the old nature, not of the new, and they must not be allowed to grow and develop, or they will destroy your fellowship with God. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin,...because he is born of God." The new life given to him is eternal life. It abides in him, and he cannot continue in sin because he is born of God. ([1 John 3 Commentary](#))

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### **Oswald Chambers —1 John 3:9**

WHAT PAUL DESCRIBES IN THE seventh chapter of Romans is a person's human nature in the throes of two alternating dispositions. One disposition wishes to fulfill the lusts of the flesh, while the other disposition longs to obey the Spirit of God in all things.

Too many people think that this struggle is the highest possible experience of grace through the atonement of Jesus Christ. They suppose that all Jesus does is to disturb their natural peace, awaken them, and then taunt them with the consciousness of what they ought to be—without any possibility of being it.

But the regenerated life is not an "up and down" life; it is a life "up and up."

Regeneration divorces the disposition of the flesh and the disposition of the Spirit; and it then can produce a wonderful thing in your nature—a life without sin (1 John 3:9).

This is not sanctification; it is another aspect of salvation. Sanctification makes little difference in your external life, but it makes all the difference inside. Yet even before sanctification, every man or woman who is born again of the Spirit of God has victory over sin!

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### **Adrian Rogers - 1 John 3:9**

You may say, "I'm not sure I'm saved, because I know that the ability to sin is still within me." The word John used for "sin" in this verse is in the present tense, meaning a habitual course of action. John was saying that a person who is born of God does not make sin his practice, his lifestyle, his habit. It doesn't mean that he never, ever slips into sin.

Before I was saved, I was running to sin. Since being saved, I am running from it. I may fall, I may slip, I may fail, but my heart's desire is to live for God. If that is your testimony as well, you can be assured of your salvation.

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### **Oswald Chambers - Signs of the new birth**

Ye must be born again. John 3:7.

The answer to the question “How can a man be born when he is old?” is—When he is old enough to die—to die right out to his ‘rag rights,’ to his virtues, to his religion, to everything, and to receive into himself the life which never was there before. The new life manifests itself in conscious repentance and unconscious holiness.

“As many as received Him.” (John 1:12.) Is my knowledge of Jesus born of internal spiritual perception, or is it only what I have learned by listening to others? Have I something in my life that connects me with the Lord Jesus as my personal Saviour? All spiritual history must have a personal knowledge for its bedrock. To be born again means that I see Jesus.

“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3.) Do I seek for signs of the Kingdom, or do I perceive God’s rule? The new birth gives a new power of vision whereby I begin to discern God’s rule. His rule was there all the time, but true to His nature; now that I have received His nature, I can see His rule.

“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin,” (1 John 3:9.) Do I seek to stop sinning or have I stopped sinning? To be born of God means that I have the supernatural power of God to stop sinning. In the Bible it is never—Should a Christian sin? The Bible puts it emphatically—A Christian must not sin. The effective working of the new birth life in us is that we do not commit sin, not merely that we have the power not to sin, but that we have stopped sinning. 1 John 3:9 does not mean that we cannot sin; it means that if we obey the life of God in us, we need not sin.

## QUOTES ON REGENERATION

**John Blanchard** - [The Complete Gathered Gold: A Treasury of Quotations for Christians](#) - excellent resource

Repentance is a change of the mind and regeneration is a change of the man.  
Thomas Adams

Regeneration is the fountain; sanctification is the river.  
J. Sidlow Baxter

Seeing we are born God's enemies we must be new-born his sons.  
Richard Baxter

Becoming a Christian is not making a new start in life; it is receiving a new life to start with.  
John Blanchard

Take away the mystery from the new birth and you have taken away its majesty.  
John Blanchard

Man's basic need is not a grasp of logic but the gift of life.  
John Blanchard

Regeneration is God's mysterious prerogative.  
John Blanchard

The new birth is infinite in its beginning because its beginning lies in infinity.  
John Blanchard

The new birth is not only a mystery that no man can understand, it is a miracle that no man can undertake.  
John Blanchard

Faith does not proceed from ourselves, but is the fruit of spiritual regeneration.  
John Calvin

When God designs to forgive us he changes our hearts and turns us to obedience by his Spirit.  
John Calvin

Adoption gives us the privilege of sons, regeneration the nature of sons.  
Stephen Charnock

Regeneration is a spiritual change; conversion is a spiritual motion.  
Stephen Charnock

Regeneration is a universal change of the whole man ... it is as large in renewing as sin was in defacing.  
Stephen Charnock

If the second birth hath no place in you, the second death shall have power over you.  
William Dyer

Regeneration, however it is described, is a divine activity in us, in which we are not the actors but the recipients.  
Sinclair Ferguson

Regeneration is the communication of the divine nature to man by the operation of the Holy Spirit through the Word.  
A. J. Gordon

Regeneration is a single act, complete in itself, and never repeated; conversion, as the beginning of holy living, is the commencement of a series, constant, endless and progressive.  
A. A. Hodge

Whatever man may do after regeneration, the first quickening of the dead must originate with God.  
A. A. Hodge

Spiritual life is the consequence of spiritual quickening. The baby cries because it is born; it is not born because it cries.  
Erroll Hulse

God's work of regeneration is never directly perceived by the soul: it takes place in man within the region of what has now come to be called the subconscious.  
Ernest F. Kevan

To expect Christian conduct from a person who is not born again is rank heresy.  
D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

When God works in us, the will, being changed and sweetly breathed upon by the Spirit of God, desires and acts, not from compulsion, but responsively.  
Martin Luther

We cannot be changed by altering a few of our bad habits. Reformation will not do, for the disease of sin has captured our very life system. We need regeneration, a new heart.  
Will Metzger

The genesis of Christianity as an experience is that of being born again of the Spirit.  
G. Campbell Morgan

Just as in the beginning 'God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light' so, at the moment he appointed for our new birth, he said, 'Let there be life' and there was life.  
J. A. Motyer

We are helpless to co-operate in our regeneration as we are to co-operate in the work of Calvary.  
Iain H. Murray

Regeneration is inseparable from its effects and one of its effects is faith.  
John Murray

The embrace of Christ in faith is the first evidence of regeneration and only thus may we know that we have been regenerated.  
John Murray

We are not born again by repentance or faith or conversion: we repent and believe because we have been born again.  
John Murray

Let them pretend what they please, the true reason why any despise the new birth is because they hate a new life.  
John Owen

Regeneration has made our hearts a battle field.  
J. I. Packer

Sinners cannot obey the gospel, any more than the law, without renewal of heart.

J. I. Packer

There is no regeneration without spiritual activities.

J. I. Packer

Regeneration is the transforming not only of an unlovely object, but of one that resists with all its might the gracious designs of the heavenly Potter.

A. W. Pink

The regenerate have a spiritual nature within that fits them for holy action, otherwise there would be no difference between them and the unregenerate.

A. W. Pink

The act of God in our regeneration is so momentous that no single category of thought is sufficient to describe the changes it brings about in and for us.

Maurice Roberts

Grace does not run in families. It needs something more than good examples and good advice to make us children of God.

J. C. Ryle

If you are never born again, you will wish you had never been born at all.

J. C. Ryle

There are no still-born children in the family of grace.

William Secker

Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born,  
If he's not born in thee, thy soul is still forlorn.

Johannes Scheffler

A dead man cannot assist in his own resurrection.

W. G. T. Shedd

The very first and indispensable sign of regeneration is self-loathing and abhorrence.

Charles Simeon

A person is never partially born. He is either regenerate or he is not regenerate.

R. C. Sproul

Every generation needs regeneration.

C. H. Spurgeon

Regeneration is a change which is known and felt: known by works of holiness and felt by a gracious experience.

C. H. Spurgeon

The new creation is as much and entirely the work of God as the old creation.

C. H. Spurgeon

God regenerates the soul by uniting it to Jesus Christ.

Augustus H. Strong

Regeneration is a restoration of the original tendencies towards God which were lost by the Fall.

Augustus H. Strong

Regeneration is essentially a changing of the fundamental taste of the soul. By taste we mean the direction of man's love, the bent of his affections, the trend of his will.

Augustus H. Strong

Regeneration gives our birth a value and our death a glory.

David Thomas

Mere outward reformation differs as much from regeneration as white-washing an old rotten house differs from pulling it down and building a new one in its place.

Augustus M. Toplady

## Sam Storms - Special Study

### 1 John 3:9 (1 John 5:18)

### And the Doctrine of Perseverance

From [1 John 3:9 and the Doctrine of Perseverance](#)

One thing John emphasizes is the reality and gravity of sin. In 1John 1:8 he forcefully labels those who say they have no sin as self-deceived and void of the truth. In 1John 1:10 the claim not to have committed sin is tantamount to calling God a liar, and in 1John 2:1 John clearly implies that Christians will sin (although he writes to help them avoid it). How then do we understand the statement in 1John 3:9 that the one who is begotten of God **"does not do sin"** (lit.) and in fact "is not able to sin"?

Following are the major interpretative options (excluding the suggestion of some that John simply contradicts himself):

(1) To avoid the difficulty some have narrowed the definition of "sin" to notorious crimes or offences against love (this was the view of both Augustine and Luther).

(2) It has been suggested that what John means is that a Christian cannot sin because what is sin in the life of an unbeliever is not regarded as such by God when committed by a believer. This is contrary to both John and the rest of the NT.

(3) One interpretation draws a distinction between the "old" nature in the Christian and the "new" nature. The "old" nature may continue to sin but the "new" cannot. But how do we isolate a "nature" from the "individual" himself/herself? We may speak of "flesh" and "spirit" in a person, but it is always the person who sins or does not sin, not merely a "nature".

(4) Others say John is speaking about the ideal and not reality. The argument is: Since all anticipate that sinlessness will be characteristic in the age to come, and since John believed that the age to come had come (1John 2:8), he naturally asserted the sinlessness of Christians!

(5) Some say that John, in the heat of controversial circumstances, breaks forth in holy passion and speaks with apparent exaggeration and over-emphasis.

(6) One view stresses 1John 3:6 where it is stated that the one who **"abides"** in him does not sin. They contend that this "abiding" in Christ is not descriptive of all Christians but is a condition which only some (those "in fellowship") believers fulfill. The degree of a believer's holiness, then, and his ability to sin or not sin are dependent on whether or not he **"abides"**. When one is abiding in Christ he cannot sin. When one does not abide, one does sin. But 1John 3:9 makes it clear why a Christian doesn't practice sin, indeed, is unable to sin, and it has nothing to do with abiding. It is because he/she **"is born of God"**.

(7) Others say that the sin of which John speaks in 1John 3:9 is willful and deliberate sin. The Christian, so they say, cannot commit such deliberate sin in the face of the Lord. Oh, really? What of David?

(8) A few take John quite literally. Hence they believe he is teaching **perfectionism**. 1John 3:9 proves that sinlessness is attainable in this life. The statements in 1John 1:8,10 and especially 1John 2:1 are describing the immature believer who although not yet sinless may still become such through diligent activity and love.

**[I personally find either of the next two options to be the most likely.]**

(9) Some argue that the "sin" which a believer does not and cannot commit is the "sin that leads to death" in 1 John 5:16, namely, hatred of believers and denial of Jesus. I will address this view in great detail when we come to 1John 5:16.

(10) **The view adopted by most commentators is that the sin a Christian does not and cannot commit is habitual, persistent, unrepentant sin.** John is not concerned so much with the momentary, individual acts of sin as he is with the overall characteristic tendencies and inclinations of a person's life. John is looking at the pervasive temper of one's overall experience in life, not at the singular incidents individually. John is not taking a snapshot, but a moving picture. His repeated use of the Greek present tense appears to bear this out. He focuses on the habitual character of the activity in view.

In 1John 3:6 John says that the believer who abides in Christ "sins not" (present tense). Also, the one who "does sin" (present tense) shows that he has neither seen nor known Him. John nowhere denies that a Christian commits acts of sin. He does deny, however, that the Christian sins persistently, habitually as a reflection of the characteristic inclination of his soul.

Note that in 1John 3:9a he says the one begotten of God "does not do sin." "Again," notes [Stott](#), "it is **not the isolated act of sin** which is envisaged, but **the settled habit of it**, indicated by the verb *poiein*, to do or to practice, which is used of 'doing' sin in 1John 3:4a, 1John 3:8 and 1John 3:9, of 'doing' lawlessness in 1John 3:4b, and of 'doing' righteousness in 1John 2:29, 3:7 and 3:10a" (126).

John also says the one begotten of God **is not able to sin**". But again notice that **"to sin"** is not an aorist infinitive but a present infinitive. If the infinitive had been aorist John would be contradicting what he said in 1John 2:1. The present infinitive again indicates that he has in mind **the inability of the born-again believer to habitually live in sin as if it were the prevailing temper of his soul**.

If the Christian "does not" practice sin, indeed, "cannot" practice sin, wherein lies this "impossibility"? That is to say, how does a believer avoid the life of persistent sin so characteristic of the non-believer? Stott's answer is excellent:

"Wherein lies this 'impossibility'? John's answer is given in two phrases: for his seed remaineth in him and because he is born of God... his seed is accurately rendered in the RSV text 'God's nature', or 'the divine seed' (NEB), and ... in him refers to the child of God. In this way the two parts of verse 9 become exactly parallel, each part consisting of a statement that the Christian does not or cannot sin, to which is added the reason for such an assertion. The implication will then be this: the new birth involves the acquisition of a new nature through the implanting within us of the very seed or life giving power of God. Birth of God is a deep, radical, inward transformation. Moreover, the new nature received at the new birth remains. It exerts a strong internal pressure towards holiness. It is the abiding influence of his seed within everyone who is born of God, which enables John to affirm without fear of contradiction that he cannot go on living in sin... **Indeed, if he should thus continue in sin, it would indicate that he has never been born again**" (borrow [The Letters of John page 130](#)).

**When those born of God do sin, conviction, grief, brokenness, misery, sorrow, discontent, all of which lead to repentance, will occur.**

## GREEK WORD STUDY

**Sin** (266) **hamartia** literally conveys the idea of missing the mark as when hunting with a bow and arrow (in Homer some hundred times of a warrior hurling his spear but missing his foe). Later **hamartia** came to mean missing or falling short of any goal, standard, or purpose. **Hamartia** in the Bible signifies a departure from God's holy, perfect standard of what is right in word or deed (righteous). It pictures the idea of missing His appointed goal (His will) which results in a deviation from what is pleasing to Him. In short, sin is conceived as a missing the true end and scope of our lives, which is the Triune God Himself. As **Martin Luther** put it "*Sin is essentially a departure from God.*" From a Biblical perspective **hamartia** describes the missing of the ultimate purpose and person of our lives, that purpose being to please God Who is also the Person the sinner misses! **Hamartia** is a deviation from God's truth or His moral rectitude (righteousness). It is a deviation from the straight line, marked off by the "plumb line" of God's perfect, pure Word. As someone has well said ultimately sin is man's (foolish) declaration of independence of God, of the "apostasy" of the creature from his Creator! Woe!

**HAMARTIA USES BY JOHN** - Jn. 1:29; Jn. 8:21; Jn. 8:24; Jn. 8:34; Jn. 8:46; Jn. 9:34; Jn. 9:41; Jn. 15:22; Jn. 15:24; Jn. 16:8; Jn. 16:9; Jn. 19:11; Jn. 20:23; 1 Jn. 1:7; 1 Jn. 1:8; 1 Jn. 1:9; 1 Jn. 2:2; 1 Jn. 2:12; 1 Jn. 3:4; 1 Jn. 3:5; 1 Jn. 3:8; 1 Jn. 3:9; 1 Jn. 4:10; 1 Jn. 5:16; 1 Jn. 5:17; Rev. 1:5; Rev. 18:4; Rev. 18:5

**Abides** (3306) (**meno**) in simple terms means to remain in the same place or position over a period of time. It means to reside, stay, live, lodge, tarry or dwell. **Menō** describes something that remains where it is, continues in a fixed state, or endures. **Meno** can mean "to take up permanent residence" or "to make yourself at home." **Meno** is the root of the Greek noun *mone* which means mansion or habitation (Jn 14:2, 23). More than one half of the uses of **meno** are by John in his Gospel and letters. Here is a summary of some of the nuances of **meno** related specifically to dwelling or abiding in Christ - (1) to dwell in God (or Christ) means that we walk as Christ walked (1Jn 2:6, Php 2:5, Jn 13:15); (2) to dwell in Christ means that we don't habitually live in sin (1Jn 3:6); (3) to dwell in Christ means that we continue in His Word (Jn 8:31, 1Jn 2:17); (4) to dwell in Christ means that we bear fruit (Jn 15:5, Heb 13:5, Col

1:10, Ro 6:22, Php 4:7, 1Co 16:5, Jn 4:36)

**MENO IN JOHN'S EPISTLES** - 1 Jn. 2:6; 1 Jn. 2:10; 1 Jn. 2:14; 1 Jn. 2:17; 1 Jn. 2:19; 1 Jn. 2:24; 1 Jn. 2:27; 1 Jn. 2:28; 1 Jn. 3:6; 1 Jn. 3:9; 1 Jn. 3:14; 1 Jn. 3:15; 1 Jn. 3:17; 1 Jn. 3:24; 1 Jn. 4:12; 1 Jn. 4:13; 1 Jn. 4:15; 1 Jn. 4:16; 2 Jn. 1:2; 2 Jn. 1:9

**Seed** (04690)(**sperma** from **speiro** = to sow) means literal **seed** (source from which something is propagated) as of plants or of humans (sperm) (Mt 13:24, 27, 37f; Mk 4:31; Jn 7:42; 1 Cor 15:38; 2 Cor 9:10; Lxx - Ge 1:11, 12, 29). By **metonymy** sperma refers to the offspring of the "sperm," (product of insemination) the natural **posterity**, the children (Mt 22:25 = "children"; Mk 12:20, 22; Lk 1:55; Jn 8:33, 37; Ac 13:23; Ro 9:7f; 11:1; Gal 3:16, 19; Heb 11:11 (Lit = *power for the laying down of seed*); Lxx - Ge 3:15+ - **protoevangelium**; Ge 4:25). Jesus is referred to twice as "Seed" (singular) by Paul in Galatians 3 (Gal 3:16+ and Gal 3:29+).

John 7:42 refers to Messiah "from the **descendants** of David." (Acts 13:23 = "From the **descendants** of this man" that is **David**, cf Ro 1:3, 2 Ti 2:8)

In John 8:33, sperma refers to Jews who professed belief in Messiah but were not truly saved claiming to Jesus "We are Abraham's **descendants**." Yes, these Jews were his physical but not his spiritual **descendants** for they sought to kill Jesus (Jn 8:37, note Paul's contrast of the physical and spiritual **descendants** in Ro 9:7,8).

In the figurative sense **sperma** refers to a surviving remnant or posterity (see remnant = a few survivors) (Ro 9:29).

Figuratively refers to **spiritual posterity** (Abraham's spiritual offspring in Ro 4:13, 16,18; Ro 9:8 = "children of promise"; Heb 2:16 = "He gives help to the descendant of Abraham", Rev 12:17+ = "the rest of her **children**"). In Acts 3:25 "IN YOUR SEED ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH SHALL BE BLESSED," the "Seed" ultimately refers to the Messiah.

Figuratively **sperma** refers to the principle of life implanted by the Holy Spirit (1 Jn 3:9) and thus speaks of the supernatural power of God available to believers

**BDAG** says sperma can refer to "genetic character, nature, disposition, character, of the divine sperma (the word of God; the beginning or germ of a new life, planted in us by the Spirit of God; the grace that makes us holy) that dwells in one who is and makes it impossible for such a person to sin (ED: continually) - 1 Jn 3:9." (BORROW [A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament, and other early Christian literature](#);) )

**Gilbrant** - The usage in Galatians 3:16,29+ is significant. In Gal 3:16 Paul cited the Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 13:15; 17:7,8) to make a point that Jesus, in the truest sense, is the (singular) "seed"—posterity—promised to Abraham. Then, in Gal 3:29+, he affirmed that all who are in Christ are therefore Abraham's "seed." (Compare Ps 22:30 where **sperma** identifies the spiritual "progeny" of the Messiah.)

**Gilbrant** on **sperma** in classic use and in the **Septuagint** - In classical Greek sperma can refer to the seed of plants or animals, to the basic element of anything, to one's immediate children or further progeny, and to anything that has life-giving force (Schulz, "sperma," Kittel, 7:536f.). In other Greek literature sperma has breadth of usage similar to that of the classical period. Philo, for example, used the word both literally and metaphorically, the latter sometimes approaching our use of "germ" (as in the germ of life). As well, he used sperma of the starting point of the universe. Sperma appears over 200 times in the **Septuagint** (see passages below) with a similar variety of meanings including (occasionally) the male "sperm" (semen), as in Leviticus 15:16 for humans and Jeremiah 31:27 (LXX 38:27) for animals. One of the most common uses of sperma in the Septuagint is for the seed of plants described in the creation narrative (Genesis 1:11,12,29). Growing out of this, apparently, the Old Testament cultivates a sense of respect and care for seed as God-given and containing a precious, life-giving force (see Leviticus 11:37,38; 26:16; 27:30). Just as seed produces the plant, and the plant produces seed, so a person's immediate offspring or subsequent lineage are his "seed" (posterity). This explains the other most common use of sperma in the Septuagint in reference to the seed of Abraham (Isaiah 41:8), seed of Aaron, seed of David, seed of Jacob (Isaiah 45:19), etc. Again, implicit in this is the sense of a God-given, life-giving force that is kept alive from one generation to another and represents its progenitor. Thus the ancients despaired if they had no "seed" (Genesis 15:3). This gives a reason for God's provision for levirate marriage (Genesis 38:9; cf. 19:32,34) and the seriousness of a judgment that "cut off" one's seed (1 Samuel 24:21 [LXX 1 Kings 24:22]). ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

**Vine** on **sperma** - akin to speirō, "to sow" (Eng., "sperm," "spermatc," etc.), has the following usages, (a) agricultural and botanical, e.g., Matt. 13:24, 27, 32 (for the AV of vv. 19-23, see sow, as in the RV); 1 Cor. 15:38; 2 Cor. 9:10; (b) physiological, Heb. 11:11; (c)

metaphorical and by metonymy and for "offspring, posterity," (1) of natural offspring e.g., Matt. 22:24, 25, RV, "seed" (AV, "issue"); John 7:42; John 8:33, 37; Acts 3:25; Rom. 1:3; Rom. 4:13, 16, 18; Rom. 9:7 (twice), 8, 29; Rom. 11:1; 2 Cor. 11:22; Heb. 2:16; Heb. 11:18; Rev. 12:17; Gal. 3:16, 19, 29; in the 16th ver., "He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ," quoted from the Sept. of Gen. 13:15; Gen. 17:7, 8, there is especial stress on the word "seed," as referring to an individual (here, Christ) in fulfillment of the promises to Abraham, a unique use of the singular. While the plural form "seeds," neither in Hebrew nor in Greek, would have been natural any more than in English (it is not so used in Scripture of human offspring; its plural occurrence is in 1 Sam. 8:15, of crops), yet if the Divine intention had been to refer to Abraham's natural descendants, another word could have been chosen in the plural, such as "children;" all such words were, however, set aside, "seed" being selected as one that could be used in the singular, with the purpose of showing that the "seed" was Messiah. Some of the rabbis had even regarded "seed," e.g., in Gen. 4:25; Isa. 53:10, as referring to the Coming One. Descendants were given to Abraham by other than natural means, so that through him Messiah might come, and the point of the Apostle's argument is that since the fulfillment of the promises of God is secured alone by Christ, they only who are "in Christ" can receive them; (2) of spiritual offspring, Rom. 4:16, 18; Rom. 9:8; here "the children of the promise are reckoned for a seed" points, firstly, to Isaac's birth as being not according to the ordinary course of nature but by Divine promise, and, secondly, by analogy, to the fact that all believers are children of God by spiritual birth; Gal. 3:29. As to 1 John 3:9, "his seed abideth in him," it is possible to understand this as meaning that children of God (His "seed") abide in Him, and do not go on doing (practicing) sin (the verb "to commit" does not represent the original in this passage). Alternatively, the "seed" signifies the principle of spiritual life as imparted to the believer, which abides in him without possibility of removal or extinction; the child of God remains eternally related to Christ, he who lives in sin has never become so related, he has not the principle of life in him. This meaning suits the context and the general tenor of the Epistle. ([Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words](#))

**Sperma** in the NT 43x in 40 verses - children(7), conceive\*(1), descendant(4), descendants(16), posterity(1), seed(10), seeds(4). Matt. 13:24; Matt. 13:27; Matt. 13:32; Matt. 13:37; Matt. 13:38; Matt. 22:25; Mk. 4:31; Mk. 12:19; Mk. 12:20; Mk. 12:21; Mk. 12:22; Lk. 1:55; Lk. 20:28; Jn. 7:42; Jn. 8:33; Jn. 8:37; Acts 3:25; Acts 7:5; Acts 7:6; Acts 13:23; Rom. 1:3; Rom. 4:13; Rom. 4:16; Rom. 4:18; Rom. 9:7; Rom. 9:8; Rom. 9:29; Rom. 11:1; 1 Co. 15:38; 2 Co. 9:10; 2 Co. 11:22; Gal. 3:16; Gal. 3:19; Gal. 3:29; 2 Tim. 2:8; Heb. 2:16; Heb. 11:11; Heb. 11:18; 1 Jn. 3:9; Rev. 12:17

**Sperma** in the **Septuagint** - Gen. 1:11; Gen. 1:12; Gen. 1:29; Gen. 3:15; Gen. 4:25; Gen. 7:3; Gen. 8:22; Gen. 9:9; Gen. 12:7; Gen. 13:15; Gen. 13:16; Gen. 15:3; Gen. 15:5; Gen. 15:13; Gen. 15:18; Gen. 16:10; Gen. 17:7; Gen. 17:8; Gen. 17:9; Gen. 17:10; Gen. 17:12; Gen. 17:19; Gen. 19:32; Gen. 19:34; Gen. 21:12; Gen. 21:13; Gen. 21:23; Gen. 22:17; Gen. 22:18; Gen. 24:7; Gen. 24:60; Gen. 26:3; Gen. 26:4; Gen. 26:24; Gen. 28:4; Gen. 28:13; Gen. 28:14; Gen. 32:12; Gen. 35:12; Gen. 38:8; Gen. 38:9; Gen. 46:6; Gen. 46:7; Gen. 47:19; Gen. 47:23; Gen. 47:24; Gen. 48:4; Gen. 48:11; Gen. 48:19; Exod. 16:31; Exod. 28:43; Exod. 32:13; Exod. 33:1; Lev. 11:37; Lev. 11:38; Lev. 15:16; Lev. 15:17; Lev. 15:18; Lev. 15:32; Lev. 18:20; Lev. 18:21; Lev. 19:20; Lev. 20:2; Lev. 20:3; Lev. 20:4; Lev. 21:15; Lev. 21:21; Lev. 22:3; Lev. 22:4; Lev. 22:13; Lev. 26:16; Lev. 27:30; Num. 5:13; Num. 5:28; Num. 11:7; Num. 14:24; Num. 16:40; Num. 18:19; Num. 21:30; Num. 23:10; Num. 24:7; Num. 24:20; Num. 25:13; Deut. 1:8; Deut. 3:3; Deut. 4:37; Deut. 10:15; Deut. 11:9; Deut. 14:22; Deut. 22:9; Deut. 25:5; Deut. 28:38; Deut. 28:46; Deut. 28:59; Deut. 30:6; Deut. 30:19; Deut. 31:21; Deut. 34:4; Jos. 24:3; Ruth 4:12; 1 Sam. 1:11; 1 Sam. 2:20; 1 Sam. 2:31; 1 Sam. 8:15; 1 Sam. 20:42; 1 Sam. 24:21; 2 Sam. 4:8; 2 Sam. 7:12; 2 Sam. 22:51; 1 Ki. 1:48; 1 Ki. 2:33; 1 Ki. 2:35; 1 Ki. 11:14; 1 Ki. 18:30; 2 Ki. 5:27; 2 Ki. 11:1; 2 Ki. 14:27; 2 Ki. 17:20; 2 Ki. 25:25; 1 Chr. 16:13; 1 Chr. 17:11; 2 Chr. 20:7; 2 Chr. 22:10; Ezr. 2:59; Ezr. 9:2; Neh. 7:61; Neh. 9:8; Est. 9:27; Job 5:25; Ps. 18:50; Ps. 21:10; Ps. 22:23; Ps. 22:30; Ps. 25:13; Ps. 37:25; Ps. 37:26; Ps. 37:28; Ps. 69:36; Ps. 89:4; Ps. 89:29; Ps. 89:36; Ps. 102:28; Ps. 105:6; Ps. 106:27; Ps. 112:2; Ps. 126:6; Prov. 11:18; Eccl. 11:6; Isa. 1:4; Isa. 1:9; Isa. 14:20; Isa. 14:22; Isa. 14:29; Isa. 14:30; Isa. 15:9; Isa. 17:5; Isa. 17:10; Isa. 23:3; Isa. 30:23; Isa. 31:9; Isa. 33:2; Isa. 37:31; Isa. 41:8; Isa. 43:5; Isa. 44:3; Isa. 45:19; Isa. 45:25; Isa. 48:14; Isa. 48:19; Isa. 53:10; Isa. 54:3; Isa. 55:10; Isa. 57:3; Isa. 57:4; Isa. 58:7; Isa. 59:21; Isa. 61:9; Isa. 61:11; Isa. 65:9; Isa. 65:23; Isa. 66:22; Jer. 7:15; Jer. 22:30; Jer. 23:8; Jer. 31:27; Jer. 35:7; Jer. 35:9; Jer. 46:27; Jer. 50:16; Ezek. 17:5; Ezek. 17:13; Ezek. 20:5; Ezek. 31:17; Ezek. 43:19; Ezek. 44:22; Dan. 1:3; Dan. 1:12; Dan. 1:16; Dan. 2:43; Dan. 9:1; Dan. 11:6; Dan. 11:31; Mal. 2:15;

## [Can A True Believer Continue in Sin and Persist in Sin?](#)

"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. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not

righteousness is not of God" (1 John 3:9-10).

"We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not" (1 John 5:18).

The Teaching of Zane Hodges and Joseph Dillow	
The fruitful believer The partaker or heir The believing believer The overcomer	The barren believer The carnal one (non-heir) The saved person who stops believing The non-overcomer
This righteous saved person has a new nature that never sins. Moreover this saved person consistently walks in the Spirit and does not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.	This unrighteous saved person continues in sin and persists in wickedness. This carnal believer does not practice righteousness. He is born of God and has a new nature but he consistently walks in the flesh. He will not inherit the kingdom and will not reign with Christ.

There are three factors which prevent a true believer from continuing in sin, and they all begin with the letter "C."

(1) **CONFESSION**—The sinning believer need not continue in a state of sin because he may CONFESS his sins (1 John 1:9) and God is faithful and just to forgive his sin and cleanse him from all unrighteousness.

(2) **CONVICTION**—Spirit wrought conviction ought to lead to humble confession. If it does not, the conviction continues. The Holy Spirit makes His grieved presence felt (Eph. 4:30). The true believer can never be comfortable in his sin, even as righteous Lot's soul was vexed in Sodom (2 Pet. 2:7-8). We can thank God that He makes us miserable when we are not right with Him. When we are disobedient we are unsettled, unpeaceful, unhappy. Thank God it is so!

(3) **CHASTENING**—If the sinning believer does not respond in the right way to God's conviction in the heart, then the Father will chasten His child whom He loves (1 Cor. 11:31-32). Maximum chastisement can even result in the physical death of the believer (1 Cor. 11:30). As a good human father will not permit his child to continue doing wrong, so the Heavenly Father will not permit His child to continue in wickedness. [Hodges teaches that it is possible for true Christians to be "bastards" (Heb. 12:8--KJV) or illegitimate sons, and even though they are saved, they will not be chastened of the Father and they will lose their inheritance!]

See Hodges discussion of Hebrews 12:8 in The Bible Knowledge Commentary. See also [The Teachings of Zane Hodges](#) ]

#### A Key Question:

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" (Rom. 6:1)

#### Paul's answer:

"God forbid (Perish the thought!). How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. 6:2)

#### Hodges/Dillow answer:

The believer should not continue in sin but many believers do. Many persist in sin and practice unrighteousness (even persisting in the sins mentioned in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10). They will be saved but they will not inherit the kingdom.

*Questions:* Why are not these believers convicted? Where is the Father's chastening hand? Where is the heavenly restraint?

R. Gene Reynolds in his helpful book Assurance—You Can Know You're A Christian said the following on page 73:

- A person who is living sinfully, who knows he is living sinfully, who enjoys living in such a manner, who intends to continue that sinful way of living—that person does not have the Holy Spirit living within him. The very fact that he is 'comfortable' about his sin is proof of the Spirit's absence. His spiritual vital sign registers 'no life.' (From [Assurance: You can know you're a Christian](#) See also Gerald Borchert's book "[Assurance and Warning](#)")

Hodges teaches that righteous living proves that a person is saved but that unrighteous living does not prove that a person is lost

(*Bible Knowledge Commentary*, p. 893). He says, "the converse does not follow" (p. 893). In other words, Hodges teaches that a person can give evidence that he is saved but he cannot give evidence that he is lost! His righteous living points to LIFE but his unrighteous living does not point to DEATH! He can have assurance of salvation but not assurance of damnation!

For more discussion of this dangerous, deceptive teaching of Hodges, Dillow, Wilkin, et al see [INDEX PAGE](#).

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