

**1 John 3:4-10**  
**Do Not Abide in Sin**

**I. Intro**

**Does sinning adjust our status as a child of God?**

When we sin, does it change who we are?

Last week we were encouraged to live in the identity of who we are, if you have put your faith in Jesus, you are a Child of God. And I hope this past week you spent some time reflecting on that.

But if you were like me, as you spent time reflecting on being a Child of God, there was something very troublesome and difficult that happened... you sinned. And this concept of who you are was rattled because of what you did. And you wondered, am I really a child of God? Does my sin show that I am not a child of God?

And then you read a passage like this. A challenging passage about sin. Statements like, 'no one who abides in Him keeps on sinning' and 'no one born of God makes a practice of sinning'.

And when you hear some of the language that is in this passage how does it make you feel?

Some of us feel helpless: and we see ourselves as a phony, and a fake and a hypocrite. We beat ourselves up. Some of us feel fear: and we bully ourselves. And we counsel our hearts. I want to show you a clip where a counselor is advising a lady... and I wonder if when you sin you counsel your own heart like this counselor.

**CLIP – STOP IT.**

Sin can be a real struggle for many of us. A struggle that eventually lead us down a path of questioning our identity. We being to wonder: am I a Child of God or am I a Child of someone else?

Today, John wants to assure you today who you are. He doesn't want there to be any ambiguity. He wants you to know that when you are born of God your DNA changes, and once it changes you can't change it back. Even if there is sin in our lives.

In fact, today we will see that:

**Being born of God starts a transformation that is solidifying and shifting.**

So today... we are going to look at two things ...

The transformation solidifies who I am.

The transformation shifts my practices.

**1. The transformation solidifies who I am.**

John is establishing two very clear and distinct children in this passage.

He is saying you are either a child of God or you are a child of the devil.

He doesn't leave any ambiguity. You are one or the other.

And he uses two phrases over and over... the practice of sinning and keeps on sinning. Now when you hear that phrase what do you hear? Well, I sinned yesterday, and the day before that, and the day before that, and I might even be sinning right now.... In fact, if I think about it, there isn't anything in my life that I practice as well as I practice sinning. Hence... I must be a child of the devil!

But we need to look closely at it. John actually is pretty clear about what it means to practice sinning and it's not when we miss the mark, or stumble.

Look at verse 4 and 8. These are parallel verses. And the first point he makes is that if you practice sinning you are of the devil.

## **I John 3:8**

He says that whoever makes a practice of sinning of the devil.

And now look at **1 John 3:4**.

The word lawless here is an important word. It's a specific Greek word that when used corresponds with false prophets and those who oppose God's kingdom, not a specific breaking of God's law.

**Colin Kruse a commentator said this: This describes the spiritual reality of the sinner, his situation, his interior state and not so much the evil act he commits.**

What does that mean? John is saying, look the difference between the child of the devil and the child of God is obvious. Someone who is born of God has God dwelling in him, does what God does, lives the life Christ lived, but the child of the devil can only do what his father wants. The people who practice sinning are just like the devil, they don't want God, they don't need God, they are like the devil in their pride and their arrogance. To practice sinning is to be opposed to God.

Some people when they read this passage they think that John is saying there is a possibility for Christian sinlessness. But they miss the contrast that he is trying to make. He is not pointing the Christian towards the possibility of sinlessness, he is making a very clear distinction. You are either a child of God or a child of the devil.

To be a little light hearted... it's like in baseball. There are two kinds of fans, there are Cardinal fans and there are Cubs fans. One is of the light, one is pure, one is righteous, while the other is... well... And the two are not even close to each other. They have nothing in common and there is no in-betweens.

And John here is trying to solidify who you are.

**You are either a child of God or a child of the devil.**

It's not your struggles with sin that determine who you are, in fact, to struggle with sin is the very evidence that you are a child of God!

Here's the point... this passage is not saying, if you sin you are a child of the devil! This passage is declaring that if you want nothing to do with God, if you think God's ways are silly, if you oppose God, then you are a child of the devil. If you view sin as something you needed to be set free from. If you understand your need for a savior. If you understand the grossness and devastation of sin... then you are a child of God!

When I was 18 I went through this huge time of doubt, where I wondered. Am I really a Christian? And a bible teacher of mine told me, Brian the hunger to be like Christ and to want to know God more is evidence that God is in you, that you are His child.

And that moment has shaped me for 25 years. I go up and down, sometimes I live in my new identity and some days I don't... But I come back to, even when I sin, just knowing that I have broken fellowship with God is a reminder that I am something different. I am His child.

Why does this matter? Because we have this tendency when we sin to feel helpless, to start yelling at ourselves STOP IT, and what we are doing is often questioning the status of our identity, of our sonship, of our DNA, of the fact that we are God's child.

But the new birth, being born of God is so powerful, that our sin can't change that status. Because the one born of God is very distinct and different from the one of the devil. The Bible actually never says that we are born of the devil, it only uses that language for God. And so when we are born again, when we experience this second birth there is nothing that can change that. And actually, the awareness of your sin, the perspective that there is something wrong with sin, is evidence that you are God's child.

You see only God can create in us the desire to handle sin differently.

Which leads to our second point... when I become a child of God... this transformation shifts my practices.

## **2. The transformation shifts my practices.**

### **1 John 1:9**

John wants you to know that when you are born of God, it's like being born.

You have a new DNA. He calls it a seed.

The comfort is that when God's seed comes in, at first, that doesn't mean there's a whole lot of change, necessarily. When you plant a seed, one minute after you plant a seed there's no difference at all. You can't tell anything has changed. This is a way of saying the Holy Spirit does not come in like a tidal wave, necessarily (sometimes it does, but that's not the essential thing); it comes in like a seed.

And your practices will shift. There will be a desire within you to practice what is right.

If Jesus came to eradicate sin, then His followers will not cherish sin.

### **1 John 3:5**

And the process of growing in our new identity means we will address sin differently.

You see the closer you get to the light the more dirt you will see.

And so Christians demonstrate their status as a child of God through obedience.

Now, I know what you are saying... 'See, this passage does say that when I sin I need to just stop it!'

But look at what this next verse says.

### **1 John 3:6**

Yes... when you become a child of God your practices will shift, you will view sin differently, but the most important practice that shifts, to say it in the positive from this verse, is our abiding, our knowing and our seeing.

You aren't changed by anything you aren't paying attention to.

This is the whole point of this series. Again, the invitation is to abide. To dwell with God.

How does abiding, how does dwelling with God work against sin?

Let me tell you how it worked for me this week. I've really been wrestling with this passage. It's a tough passage to understand and a tough passage to preach. In our preaching cohort this week the guys felt sorry for me.

And so at some point... probably Thursday or Friday I started to worry about this sermon. I started to worry about my presentation, would this message matter, would it help people.

And that led to some irritability. Dondra had to listen to me talk about this message like 4 times... And the last time, I was like, what is going on in my heart? Why am struggling so much?

Well, yesterday, I had this hour-long drive, and so I turned off the radio and I just was super honest with God. I acknowledged my sin of worry and that I didn't want to live there, and I asked God to just help me embrace His presence. God, help me abide with you as your child. Speak into my heart that I'm yours. And I just spent some time abiding with God.

And experiencing the joy of God and the presence of God brought more freedom from that sin than any yelling at my soul to Stop it!

And that's the invitation to you today... If you have put your faith in Jesus, God calls you His child. And nothing can change that status. And as that transformation occurs, your practices will shift. Let's let that practice be the practice of abiding with God, of dwelling with Him, of having Him say... you are my child!

## **Conclusion**

### **Does sinning adjust our status as a child of God?**

No... in fact it can be the very opposite. If your heart is broken by your sin and your struggle with it, if you heart longs for obedience, that is the very evidence that God made you His own. So don't beat yourself up... dwell with the one who gave you new birth.

Dwell with the one who sent His son to deal with sin, so you could just be His kid.