



Northside Proclaimer

Proclaiming The Word Of The Lord

1 Thessalonians 1:8

Northside Church Of Christ Welcomes You!

October 25, 2015

Can One Go Without Sinning?

Bryan Garlock

John wrote, "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin..."

Reader, have you ever considered that the Bible was written, "that you may not sin"? It is true that since the flesh is weak and temptations are many, we stumble and fall from time to time. Paul wrote, "...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3.23). This article is not meant to deny the sinfulness of man or to say man does not sin. In fact in the same letter he wrote his instructions so that we may not sin John said, "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" and "If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1.8, 10). However, it seems to this writer that there are some who are under the impression that we cannot go without sin; almost to say, it is impossible.

John's letter is filled with instructions for the God fearing and seeking saint. Surely then it cannot be said that those who kept the commandments found within his epistles cannot go without sin. The concept is quite contradicting to say the least. Thus all those in the first century who kept the commandments and all those today that do so, can go without sinning. This is not to say we are without sin; remember the above teachings of John. On the other hand one who is diligently imitating Christ and has truly perfected the love of God within himself can keep from sinning. This man is no longer living or walking in sin (Col. 3.7). He may fall short at times, yet he can go without sinning at the present time.

To say, "go without sinning" is not to contradict John's words. These words do not claim prior or future sinlessness, but they can claim present innocence. There are simply too many passages commanding the saint to be faithful, holy, obedient, etc. and as many passages warning of impending judgment on those who do not obey and eternal blessings for those who remain faithful to claim one cannot keep these commandments and admonitions (Rom. 6.23, James 1.12, etc.)

Further, it should be noted that sinlessness is possible because all temptations are capable of being withstood. Let that sink in for a moment. Paul penned, "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it" (1 Cor. 10.13). Notice that God will not allow us to be tempted beyond our ability. Too, He will always provide a way of escape. Thus if we want to escape a temptation we have been given the opportunity. Jesus did so and so can we (Matt. 4.1-11).

Another way we can keep from sinning is to add to our faith. Peter wrote, "For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

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Announcements

- Remember the shut in's.
- Pray for the church and one another.
- Remember the spiritual sick among us.
- Call or email Bryan to add announcements, thanks.
- We need volunteers for door knocking. Please see Bryan.
- We need volunteers for picking folks up. Please see Bryan.

Chronological Bible Reading Plan

Oct 25 Luke 10-11,
John 10:22-42
Oct 26 Luke 12-13
Oct 27 Luke 14-15
Oct 28 Luke 16-17:10
Oct 29 John 11
Oct 30 Luke 17:11-18:14
Oct 31 Matt 19, Mark 10

For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1.5-11). Concerning verse ten, let us examine another translation that reads, "...ye shall never stumble" (ASV).

Some contend that Peter is not saying that we will never sin, but that we will not fall so far that we will not fall away or from grace. This writer can concede that after adding all the qualities given by Peter that one can still sin, however, can none concede that by adding all the qualities that one can keep himself from sinning?

For instance if one was to add self-control to his faith, could he not be diligent and always abounding in that area so as to not be "ineffective or unfruitful"? If he practices self-control does he not remember that his sins were washed away and is he being diligent to make his calling and election sure? Thus one who has added these necessary qualities to his life will not only keep himself from being spiritually blinded, but also keep himself from falling or stumbling. If John could write so as to invoke his readers not to sin, could not Peter? Could these passages not be parallel in principle?

Therefore it should be concluded that one could go an hour, a day, a week, maybe even a month without sin. It may not be probable, but it is not impossible. It depends on if the person is adding to his faith, escaping temptations, keeping the commands of God, loving like he should, etc. This should not be too far-fetched to see. Even David said, "I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119.11). If one were to contend: "but we cannot help but sin" we must respond, "How can we be held responsible if we cannot help but sin?" Thus through God's word we are capable of rising above sin.

In addition, John said, "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" (1 John 3.9). The one who cannot keep on sinning may be likened to the child who cannot have a cookie before dinner; he does not have the permission. We are not to sin because we do not have the permission. Instead we are to be blameless. It would be appropriate to add here as well that one cannot boast about his faithfulness. Though we may go a day or more without any known sin, this does not give us the right to boast before God. We may, however, be confident in our salvation. John wrote, "Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him" (1 John 3.21-22).

Finally, John writes, "...But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." As noted above, we will from time to time fall short God's glory. In the event that it should happen, John promised us, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1.9).

Can one go without sinning at the present time? What's stopping you from trying? BG