

The Life: Dealing with Temptation and Sins (I John 2:1-6)

Pastor John tells his readers quite directly that they can make it their aim not to sin. Once you have believed and come to know you are in fellowship with the Sinless One, it would be perfectly logical. If you resist such a liberating truth, you might make it your aim not to sin... very much! If you think you are still a "sinner..." and sinners sin... every day, you still have an excuse for sinning. John says every believer in fellowship with Christ has a reason not to sin. How in the world - the world opposed to God, the one where a tempter is still active and sin is still present - are we supposed to do that? Make it our aim not to sin? Mostly by remembering the truth!

Remember Who lives in you. We have "Jesus Christ the Righteous" living in us (2:1). Through His saving activity He put an end to a sinful, separated, "under matched" life and created an altogether new life for us - forgiven, joined to the Righteous One, to Triumphant Life. Why? "So we may walk in the newness of life." (Ro 6:4) The One living in us defeated all our enemies and joined Himself to our human spirits. Sin is not inevitable. The devil is not stronger. With Christ as our life we are never "under matched" (I Jo 4:4).

Secondly, remember the temptation to sin has not been removed. (Stop looking on earth for what exists only in heaven.) "When", not "if", you experience various temptations (Ja 1:2-4) - when you are enticed to get what you might want in an illegitimate way, remember: 1) Temptation... is... not... sin! (Heb 4:15). Jesus was tempted in every way (like us) yet was without sin. 2) God means the temptation (Ja 1:2-4). What Satan means to tear you down is what God uses to build you up in Christ. 3) See the temptation not against you... "just you"... "sinful you"... "only human you"... but, **AGAINST THE SINLESS LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST THE RIGHTEOUS ONE LIVING IN YOU!** He is the "way of escape" (I Cor 10:13). Since He could not be overcome by evil, it behooves us to learn to yield by faith to the One able to resist and overcome every ungodly offer.

But, "if" you do sin - an "if", not a "when" - deal with it God's way. No casual tolerance nor defiling self-hatred. No excuses and no condemnation. Immediately look to Jesus Christ, your Righteous Advocate. Don't focus on the sin, concentrate on yourself, denounce the world or blame the devil. Never plead your own case - trust Him to plead His case in the courts of heaven and fully apply His Sacrificial Life as your defense. Own your foolish choice and thank Him for His death to sin and the cleansing of His blood already applied.

Finally, admit the foolishness of self-government and put the government of your life upon His shoulders by obeying Him in the very next thing in front of you (2:3-5). Keep His precious directives by honoring what you already know to be true and watch His Light overpower and cast out the darkness, His Life swallow up and defeat death. And then what? Keep right on walking in step with Him (2:6). Abiding in Him, walking in Him is not so much something you do as it is Someone you believe. As He walked on earth - in the light of His Father's "say so" (faith), by the compelling of His Father's passion for oneness (love) -so you may walk. That is open to anyone and everyone in Christ. Life "a la" Christ is life lived by faith in love. No created thing can keep you from doing that. That is how we make our aim not to sin!

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Greetings

Once again we have removed our calendar from our newsletter. With one exception, the remaining events for 2020 have been removed from our schedule. The October 9-11 conference in Binghamton, NY is on hold. Currently, visitors from Florida to New York must quarantine for 14 days before participating in public events, thus precluding my in-person presence. Also, the positive tests continue to rise in Florida, making airport/airplane travel from here problematic. A final decision will be made at the end of August, with the news to be announced in our September mailout (or, by contacting Don Frantz (607-239-5006).


I'm doing a handful of Zoom casts and Skype meetings with local churches and other ministries around the country. It's not quite the same... but better than I anticipated! If you are interested in "meeting up" in such virtual conditions, let me know. I make no guarantees of success (you know me and technology!), but so far we've had no major failures to "connect".


In the meantime, as always, continue to trust the Teacher Who lives within you. Listen for your Father's voice and consider recording (journaling) some of what you are hearing. It's not only good

to "objectify" the impressions and urgings that come from God during our "subjective" personal communion with Him, but it will also be encouraging to re-read some of His precious gifts of truth in the days to come.


Thank you for your prayers, your encouragement, and your support as we do what we always do... "wait upon the Lord", trusting Him to "renew our strength" as He lifts us up into His eternal perspective, empowers us for every crisis, and energizes us for pressing on daily (Is 40:31).

Praise & Prayer

 For sensitive ears to ear God's truth

 For centering on our Righteous Advocate

 For the Indwelling Sinless Life of Christ

 For our full and perfect forgiveness