

1 John 3:1-7 ESV

Do Christians Keep On Sinning?

Sunday, April 19 at 8:00 & 10:45 + Monday, April 20 at 7 PM

Third Sunday of Easter – 2015

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: The letter of 1 John can be difficult, *but it is also important*; may the Holy Spirit grant us a *right and blessed* understanding and application!

1. **What are we In Christ?** ¹ See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called **children of God**; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.
 - a. Past: We were *in sin and death*; we were also known by the world because we were *part of the unbelieving world*.
 - b. Present: But now – *by God’s grace* – we have been born of God through holy baptism! Jesus said to Nicodemus: “...unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5 ESV). *So God took action to make us His very own children!* Lenski wrote: “Grieve not that the world does not know you; this is one proof that you are God’s child” (450).
2. **Who will we be like When Jesus Comes?** ² Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears **we shall be like him**, because we shall see him as he is.
 - a. The world is spiritually blind: If we speak of being God’s holy children, *who are forever*

blessed, we are looked upon as fools. People may see our outward practice of living as Christians, *but they also see us struggling and suffering like everyone else*, so they conclude that we are *not* God’s holy children.

- b. We have the eyes of faith: So we believe that “we shall be like [Jesus]...” What does that mean? He died, *yet He lives!* He is not a ghost; instead, *He was touched and He ate!* Think about our time *here* and *in eternity* like this: Lenski wrote: “Here on earth we are in a humiliation that is similar to that of Christ, eventually we shall be in a glory that is also similar to that of Christ” (453).
3. **What does our New Nature desire?** ³ And everyone who thus hopes in him **purifies himself as he is pure**.
 - a. Some important differences:
 - i. Jesus: He never sinned; He was, is, and always will be in a **state of purity**.
 - ii. Believers: Through baptism they are pure *in God’s sight*, but *not* in reality; so, *in their daily lives*, they desire to **grow in purity**. Our entrance into heaven is always connected to *how God sees us through Jesus*, not to our growth in purity.
 - b. Dr. Luther’s Fourth Baptism Question:
 - i. What does such baptizing with water indicate? It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all

sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

- ii. Where is this written? St. Paul writes in Romans chapter six: “We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life” (Romans 6:4 NIV).

4. **Why is what we Practice significant?** ⁴ Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness [literally: everyone doing sin also does lawlessness]; sin is lawlessness. ⁵ You know that he [the Christ] appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. ⁶ **No one who abides** [present participle – literally abiding, remaining] **in him keeps on sinning**; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. ⁷ Little children, let no one deceive you. **Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous.** // What we practice tends to point to what we are: ⇨ those who keep rejecting God’s ways tend to show themselves to be unbelievers, while ⇨ those who keep following God’s ways tend to show themselves to be believers. Let us understand that such *rejecting* and *following* come from the heart; unbelievers—*rejecting*, believers—*following*. However, it’s not the rejecting or following that condemns or saves, the rejecting and following only show *the truth of the heart!*

- a. Believers are righteous in God’s sight and desire to practice righteousness: ^{ESV} **Romans 7:19** “For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.” ^{NAS} **1 John 1:8-9** “If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” ^{NAS} **1 John 2:1** “...I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous...” Believers sin, but they know they are forgiven in Christ!
- b. Unbelievers are not righteous in God’s sight and practice unrighteousness: ^{NAS} **1 John 1:6** “If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth...” Lenski wrote: “What one is, his conduct shows...” (460)

Conclusion: So do Christians keep on sinning? Yes! However, *at the same time*, **✦**they are sorry for their sins, **✦**they know they are forgiven in Christ, and **✦**they desire to go and sin no more!

With that said, may our confidence for heaven never rest on anything we do *but only on the finished work of Jesus* – our risen Savior and Lord!

And all God’s people said: **Amen!**