

Born of God; 1 John 3:8-9

I. Children of God

- A. A name given to those who have claimed Jesus as their savior
- B. A name given to those who have allowed God to add them to the church
 - 1. The church is not some building that is a place of sacred worship
 - 2. The church is the people whom God loves and calls His own
 - 3. The church is the people who have all sorts of talents and uses them to glorify God and serve the community
- C. 1 John 3:10 (ESV); By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.
- D. The church is clearly evident by their “practice of righteousness”

II. Practice of Sinning

- A. 1 John 3:4–6 (ESV); ⁴ Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. ⁵ You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. ⁶ No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.
- B. Practice
 - 1. This word is used to imply, “a continual practice of sin as well as a realization of sin’s completeness. In other words, it is a willful, habitual action.” ¹
 - 2. To practice sin is to have no regard for the word of God and His will and desire for us, His children
- C. Sinning
 - 1. This word’s roots come from archery
 - 2. Judges 20:16 (ESV); Among all these were 700 chosen men who were left-handed; every one could sling a stone at a hair and not *miss*.
 - 3. The root understanding is to miss the mark
 - 4. There are 7 different words in the Hebrew for sin. All of them come from this word that means “to miss the mark”
 - 5. But God (through John) is not talking about some accidental mistake
 - 6. There is a deeper understanding than just slings and stones
 - 7. God draws a parallel to disobedience (missing the mark) and death
 - 8. Genesis 2:17 (ESV); but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”
 - 9. And God makes the connection between sin and death very clear in Cain’s offering and subsequent murder of Abel
 - 10. Genesis 4:7 (ESV); If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it.”
 - 11. It is clear from Cain’s response (killing his brother) that he desired a settled practice of sin, a lifestyle of sin
- D. The New Testament has some very clear examples of the type of behavior God calls sin
 - 1. Matthew 15:16–20 (ESV); ¹⁶ And he said, “Are you also still without understanding? ¹⁷ Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? ¹⁸ But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this

¹ Daniel L. Akin, 1, 2, 3 John, vol. 38, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 140.

defiles a person. ¹⁹ For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. ²⁰ These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone.”

2. Galatians 5:19–21 (ESV); ¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
 3. Revelation 21:7–8 (ESV); ⁷ The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. ⁸ But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”
 4. There are more Scriptures that describe what God calls sin
- E. We must be careful to say the same thing as God about sin
- F. Those who practice these thoughts and behaviors are the ones who are not children of God

III. Practices Righteousness

- A. ¹ John 3:7 (ESV); Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous.
 1. This word is used to imply, a continual practice of righteousness as well as a realization that it is the righteousness of Christ
 2. Only by His sacrifice are we righteousness
- B. Jesus gives us a few examples of practicing righteousness
 1. Giving
 - a) Matthew 6:1–2 (ESV); ¹ “Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. ² “Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.
 - b) We must have a heart to give to those in need
 - c) Hebrews 13:16 (ESV); Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.
 - d) Ephesians 4:28 (ESV); Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.
 - e) We labor and work so we can give to those in need
 2. Prayer
 - a) Matthew 6:5 (ESV); “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.
 - b) Prayer is an integral part of Christianity
 - c) Through prayer we recognize God as the Almighty, the Creator
 - d) We recognize that it is His will that must be accomplished, not our own
 - e) We recognize the gifts he has given us (food, drink, shelter from the elements)
 - f) We recognize His forgiveness which drives us to forgive those who have sinned against us
 - g) We recognize that He is the Savior
 3. Fasting

- a) Matthew 6:16 (ESV); “And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.
 - b) Fasting is a way to eliminate things from our life (for a time) to help us get closer to God
 - c) Esther 4:16 (ESV); “Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish.”
 - d) God fearing Israelites fasted twice a week (Luke 18:12) on Monday and Thursday
 - e) “And let not your fastings be with the hypocrites, for they fast on the second and the fifth day of the week; but do ye keep your fast on the fourth and on the preparation”² (The Didache, or The Teaching of the Lord to the Gentiles by the Twelve Apostles)
 - f) “But before the baptism let him that baptizeth and him that is baptized fast, and any others also who are able; and thou shalt order him that is baptized to fast a day or two before.”³
 - g) Fasting was a normal part of Christians’ lives in the 1st century
 - C. Christianity is not a passive religion — it is active with Christians working and serving in God’s kingdom
 - D. Ephesians 2:10 (ESV); For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.
- IV. Born of God
- A. 1 John 3:9 (ESV); 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.
 - B. To be born of God is to put away our past life and live a life dedicated to God through His Son, Jesus
 - C. We must remember who we gave ourselves to and what He expects of us
 - D. To practice righteousness, not sin

² Joseph Barber Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer, *The Apostolic Fathers* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1891), 232.

³ Ibid