

1 JOHN: DEFEATING MISLEADING SPIRITUAL ERROR TRULY TO COMMUNE WITH GOD

Part VI: Blessings The Mature "Father" Has In His Walk With God

B. The Blessing Of Confidence We Are Maturing By A Growing INTOLERANCE Of Sin In Our Lives (1 John 3:3, 4-10b)

I. Introduction

- A. True fellowship with God produces a tremendous, multifaceted, spiritually fulfilling lifestyle even on this earth, something John briefly stated in 1 John 1:3-4.
- B. So, having laid out the three basic levels of spiritual maturity, John supplied insight into the blessings that spiritual "fathers" have as a result of overcoming a dependence on others as a "little child" and the world's lusts as a "young man", and the **second** blessing is the great confidence we are maturing by a growing intolerance for sin in our own lives as 1 John 3:4-10b with 1 John 3:3 reveals:

II. The Blessing Of Confidence We Are Maturing By A Growing INTOLERANCE Of Sin In Our Lives.

- A. A debate exists on how to handle 1 John 3:6, 9-10 that can seem to teach the error of sinless perfection:
 - 1. Some claim John here teaches one who is truly saved cannot sin, but this is not correct as follows:
 - a. John had previously taught in 1 John 1:8-10 that if we believers say we have no sin nature and that we have not sinned, God's truth is not in us, cf. Bible Knowledge Commentary, N. T., p. 894.
 - b. Thus, John taught with other Scriptures that believers are saved though they do commit acts of sin.
 - 2. Others hold that since words translated, "commit" (v. 9) or "doeth" (v. 10) (KJV) are in the present tense of the Greek New Testament, they indicate John meant one who "keeps on sinning" in **habitual sin** as the NIV has it, v. 6; Ibid. Yet, this rendering does not do justice to N. T. Greek grammar: nowhere else in the New Testament does the present tense indicate habitual activity unless the verb is assisted by other words, cf. S. Kubo, "1 John 3, 9: Absolute or Habitual?" Andrews University Seminary Studies 7. 1969:47-56; C. H. Dodd, The Johannine Epistles, pp. 78-81; I Howard Marshall, The Epistles of John, p. 180 as cited by Hodges, Ibid., Bible Knowledge Com., N. T.
- B. Thus, Zane Hodges (Op. cit.) effectively argues John meant to explain in the verses of 1 John 3:4-10b that, as he summarized in 1 John 3:6, ***sin cannot be considered a normal part of fellowship with Christ!***
- C. This explanation makes clear sense in keeping with John's context and argument as follows:
 - 1. As we established in our first lesson of this series, John wrote to believers who were confronted with false beliefs including Gnosticism that saw the material world as evil, Ryr. St. Bib., KJV, '78 ed., 1770.
 - 2. Since the body is material, the Gnostics felt it was evil, so committing acts of sin in the body that is to be eventually annihilated is permissible, so the Gnostics upheld a low ethical standard for living, Ibid.
 - 3. To counter this error, 1 John 3:3-10b then revealed that as we **mature** in Christ, just the **opposite** of the Gnostic's **low ethic** should occur: we are to become **intolerant of sin** in our **lives**, for the new nature (in which we increasingly live) does **not** sin as does the old sin nature (we increasingly boycott).
- D. Thus, we understand 1 John 3:3, 4-10 to teach that as we believers mature in Christ, we will become ever more intolerant of sin so that it **should GENERALLY cease** in our experience as follows:
 - 1. 1 John 3:4-10 follows immediately upon John's stating a [maturing, see our previous lessons] believer who hopes for Christ's return **purifies** himself of **sin** via confessing it, 1 John 3:3 with 1 John 1:9.
 - 2. That being said, John went on to teach that sin is the opposite of all that is righteous in God: it counters the law (1 John 3:4), it counters the purpose of God's saving us, i.e., that we live righteously (1 John 3:5) and it counters the experience the believer truly fellowships with Christ, 1 John 3:6a.
 - 3. Hence, John held that if a believer sins, or tolerates or advocates it as did the errant Gnostics, he acts unlike God and the **new** nature God created in him that does **not** sin, 1 Jn. 3:6b-10b, Ibid., p. 894-895.
 - 4. By implication of this context, John implied the believer who **matures** will increasingly be intolerant of sin unlike what the heretical Gnostics taught, for a **mature believer just does not (generally) SIN!**

Lesson: *If we mature in Christ, we SHOULD see evidence of a growing INTOLERANCE for ANY sin in our lives so that we appropriately, GENERALLY, DO NOT SIN, and THAT to our joy in the Lord!*

Application: *(1) The more we grow in Christ, the LESS TOLERANT we SHOULD become for letting ANY SIN even CROP UP in life! (2) Hence, if we TOLERATE sin on a "regular" basis in our lives, we reveal we have some maturing to do, and we best grow into spiritual "fatherhood" for fulfillment!*