

RELATIONAL THEOLOGY SERIES SEVEN
THE GREATEST HINDRANCE TO INTIMACY WITH GOD
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I Jn. 3:4-10

Recognize Satan's work for what it is. The weed that sprouted in the Garden has now spread worldwide. Remember that the earth is now Satan's world. Jesus will get it back in the end (See Revelation 5.) But, until then, the world is under the influence of the Evil One. Therefore, it behooves us to develop a proper worldview. The Bible teaches that the world is not a basically good place where evil happens occasionally. The world is a place where sin and evil are commonplace and Christians are enlisted as good soldiers of Christ to push back the darkness.

Let's read our passage from 1 John 3:4-10.

Perhaps we need to clear up a common misconception. 1 John 3:9 is problematic to Christians with sensitive consciences. The verse is best interpreted by understanding the fact that the Gnostics of John's day minimized sin. "You can be a Christian and sin all you want," they proclaimed. Paul confronted the same problem in Romans 6, where some believers had apparently viewed sinfulness as an opportunity to exercise the grace of God more fully.

There is a balance between our passage and 1 John 1:8. Both passages ask the question, "Does the Christian sin?" 1 John 1:8 answers "Yes!" 1 John 3:4-10 answers "No!" The balancing statements are not meant to teach perfection and introspection. Rather they are meant to give assurance, and to maintain the standard of not-sinching as the Christian goal.

Now, let's get a handle on what John is teaching.

- The Christian Enterprise Involves The Destruction Of Sin And The Destruction Of The Devil's Work (1 John 3:5-6).

Sin is the devil's work. Let's be certain we understand what sin is. Sin is multi-dimensional (1 John 3:4). There are five basic Greek words which describe sin.

Hamartia was originally a shooting word and means "missing the target." Therefore, sin is the failure to be what we might have been and could have been. See Romans 3:23.

Parabasis means stepping across. Sin is stepping across the line drawn between right and wrong. See 1 Timothy 2:14.

Paratoma means "slipping." It is the kind of slip we might make on an icy road. See Matthew 6:14-15.

Anomia is lawlessness. *Anomia* is the person who knows what is right and still does wrong. See Romans 6:19.

Ophelia means *debt*. It is a failure to pay what is due. It is failure to do a duty. See Matthew 6:12.

John defines the purpose of the incarnation as destructive. Christ came to "destroy" the works of the devil. The verb (*luo*) means, at root, *to untie and so to set free*.

1 John 3:5 describes Christ's work on our personal behalf in the destroying sin.

The Old Testament story of the uplifted serpent from Numbers 21:4-9 is an intriguing picture story of Christ destroying the personal effects of sin. See John 3:15.

1 John 3:8 describes the global war.

Christianity is all about a campaign in which God plans to destroy sin all together. It came to a climax on the cross. There the prince of this world was driven out (John 12:31), bound (Luke 11:22), disarmed (Col. 2:15), and hurled down (Rev. 12:9). However, the final stages of the victory are still being worked out.

The church is not like a university! It is like a battleground! We are not taking a theological course! We are in the midst of the greatest battle and conflict that there is. Jesus is not a university lecturer. He is the Captain of the armies of God.

●Christians Do Not Have Permission To Sin For Two Reasons (1 John 3:6-7, 9-10):

1. Sin furthers the Devil's work. Sinning is like playing for they wrong team!

John's use in verse 4 of the term *lawlessness* may possibly refer to the meaning of *lawlessness* in 2 Thessalonians 2:3,7. The word describes the antichrist, "one who is lawless", one who stands in direct opposition to Christ at his second coming. To sin is to participate in his kingdom.

2. Sin impairs our intimacy with God.

Sin is why Jesus had to die. Don't take this lightly.

"We don't do that around here."

Sin and fellowship with God are incompatible. "Seeing God" refers to fellowship. Moses was able to do amazing things for God because he could "see Him who is invisible" (Hebrews 11:27).

●Confession Cleans Up a Sin-soiled Inner Spirit.

1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

Confess means *to agree with*, or *to speak the same thing as*. Confession means that I say the same about my sin as God does. What does God say about my sin? It causes Him pain. My sin drove nails into His hands and feet. This causes us to deal theologically with personalized Christianity. It means to get alone with God and deal with the fact that my behavior is intricately involved with the fact of why He had to die.

2 Corinthians 7:10: "Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death."