

# THE PRACTICE OF SIN

February 24, 2020

**1 JOHN 3:7-9 CEB** - (7) Little children, make sure no one deceives you. The person who practices righteousness is righteous, in the same way that Jesus is righteous. (8) The person who practices sin belongs to the devil, because the devil has been sinning since the beginning. God's Son appeared for this purpose: to destroy the works of the devil. (9) Those born from God don't practice sin because God's DNA remains in them. They can't sin because they are born from God.

We know that obedience is not optional in the Christian life. Confession is not optional, either. Martin Luther once said, "All of life is repentance." All of life! In essence, all of life is confession and turning from sin. The life of repentance is a life of confession. This leads to joy, hope, and peace. To avoid the "practice of sinning" we read in 1 John, we must increasingly engage in confession and repentance. This can only be done by reflecting on the gospel.

The "practice of sinning" is not overcome by relentlessly focusing on the act of our sins; it is overcome by consistent, daily reflection on the gospel. When we reflect on the gospel and the beauty of Jesus, it becomes easier to confess our sins and to confess any righteousness that is not rooted in Christ. It is in this way that the "practice of sinning" can be overcome. A relentless focus on Jesus.

We must remember that obedience is not optional in the Christian life. Confession is not optional, either. "All of life is repentance." All of life. In essence, all of life is confession and turning from sin. The challenge for the Christian is that we need to not only confess our sin, but also confess our righteousness before God. This is because so often our sense of righteousness is not rooted in Christ, but in pride.

We are called to be righteous. In **1 John 3:7**, we are told, "Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous." Righteousness is a testimony of the Christian life of God's Spirit living in us. We have a righteous standing before God because of Jesus, and His Spirit in us produces righteousness as a part of the process of sanctification.

Yet, oftentimes we are like the macumbista spiritists, and we attempt to offer up a sacrifice of righteousness to God. A sacrifice of our own effort. We do this, believing that our works will enable us to be righteous enough to gain favor in the sight of God.

The challenge is this: the Scriptures teach that righteousness that originates from humanity is as filthy rags before the Father. All of it! And so while a bouquet of righteousness may give evidence of the Christian life, our works will never be good enough to cause us to be declared righteous in the sight of a perfect God. They will never be a sufficient sacrifice.

That's why confession is so important to the Christian life. Because our propensity to sin, even "in our righteousness," is so great, our need for confession is even greater.

**SCRIPTURE READING: JAMES 4:4**

**THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:** No evil dooms us hopelessly except the evil we love, and desire to continue in, and make no effort to escape from.

"A JOURNEY OF THE HEART"