

Born of God, Done With Sin

A Five-Day Devotional from 1 John 3:1-11

Big Idea: God's love made us His children. His children still stumble, but they no longer live in sin as a way of life, because Jesus came to take sin away and to tear down the devil's work.

Memory Verse for the Week: "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3:8b, KJV)

Day 1: Loved Into a New Family

Read: 1 John 3:1-3

Key Verse: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." (1 John 3:1)

From the Sermon: "God didn't hire us as servants. He made us sons and daughters."

Devotional

Before John says one word about sin, he tells us who we are. That order matters. God doesn't start with our behavior. He starts with His love.

John says, "Behold, what manner of love." That phrase carries the idea of "from what country is this love?" It's foreign to us. It doesn't come from here. Human love usually has conditions. It rises and falls with how we perform. But the Father's love didn't wait for us to get it together. He looked at people who were far from Him and said, "I want them in My family."

Think about the prodigal son in Luke 15. He came home hoping to be a hired servant. The father wouldn't hear it. He put a robe on his back, a ring on his finger, and shoes on his feet. That's what God has done for us. We didn't get a job in His house. We got a place at His table.

And notice the word "now." "Beloved, now are we the sons of God" (v. 2). Not someday. Not when you finally get everything right. Now. God isn't finished with you yet, and one day "we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." But your place in the family is already settled.

Then John adds this: "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (v. 3). Real hope changes how you live today. A bride who knows the wedding day is coming doesn't go roll around in the mud in her dress. When you know who you belong to and where you're headed, you start wanting to be ready.

Holy living doesn't earn God's love. It flows out of it.

Practical Application

Write 1 John 3:1 on a card and put it somewhere you'll see it every day this week: your bathroom mirror, your dashboard, or your phone's lock screen. Each time you see it, say out loud, "I am a child of God. Right now." Then ask yourself one question: "Is there anything in my life right now that doesn't fit the family I belong to?" Don't fix it all today. Just be honest.

Prayer

Father, thank You for a love I could never earn and don't fully understand. Thank You for not just forgiving me but adopting me. You didn't make me a servant. You made me Your child. Help me to live today with the confidence of someone who belongs in Your house. When the world doesn't understand me, remind me that it didn't understand Jesus either. Let the hope of seeing Him face to face make me want to live clean and ready. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 2: Call It What It Is

Read: 1 John 3:4-5; Psalm 51:1-4

Key Verse: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4)

From the Sermon: "We soften sin with nice words. We call it a mistake, a struggle, a lifestyle, a weakness... But at the bottom, sin is me putting my will above God's. Until we see it that way, we'll never take it seriously."

Devotional

The Greek word John uses here is *anomia*, which means lawlessness. Newer translations say it plainly: "sin is lawlessness." John isn't talking about accidentally breaking a rule. He's describing a heart that says, "I'll decide what's right for me."

That's the root of every sin since the Garden. Adam and Eve didn't just eat a piece of fruit. They decided their judgment was better than God's word.

The false teachers in John's day treated sin like a small thing. "The body doesn't matter, so what you do with it doesn't matter." We have our own versions of that today. We rename sin so it doesn't sting as much. Gossip becomes "just sharing a concern." Lust becomes "just looking." Bitterness becomes "just being honest about how I feel."

But here's the good news right on the heels of the hard news: "And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin" (v. 5). Jesus showed up in real flesh with a real mission. He is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Only a sinless Savior could carry away our sin, and He did (2 Corinthians 5:21).

So think about it this way. If Jesus came to take sin away, how can the people who belong to Him keep holding on to it? You can't embrace the Savior and embrace the very thing He came to remove.

Calling sin what it is isn't about beating yourself up. It's the first step toward freedom. You can't be healed of a sickness you keep calling a cold.

Practical Application

Name it. Set aside ten quiet minutes today. Pray Psalm 139:23-24: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me." Then sit still and listen. Write down any sin you've been calling by a softer name. Next to it, write what God calls it. Then confess it to Him directly, using His word for it, not yours (1 John 1:9).

Prayer

Lord, I confess that I've made excuses for things You call sin. I've given them nicer names so I wouldn't have to deal with them. Open my eyes today. Show me where I've put my will above Yours. I don't want to hide it or manage it anymore. Thank You that Jesus came to take away my sins, and that in Him there is no sin. Because He was spotless, I can be clean. I bring these things to You now, trusting that You are faithful and just to forgive me and cleanse me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 3: Falling in a Ditch vs. Living in One

Read: 1 John 3:6-7; 1 John 1:8-2:2

Key Verse: "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him." (1 John 3:6)

From the Sermon: "There's a difference between falling into a ditch and living in one. A sheep may fall in the mud. A pig lives there and likes it."

Devotional

This is the verse that scares people, so let's handle it carefully.

John is not saying Christians never sin. He already told us, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1:8). He already told us what to do when we do sin: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (2:1). John isn't contradicting himself in the same letter.

The verbs in this passage are in the Greek present tense, which describes ongoing, continuing action. The idea is "whoever abides in Him does not keep on sinning" or "does not make a practice of sinning."

So the question is not, "Have I ever sinned since I got saved?" Of course you have. We all have. The real question is, "What direction is my life going?"

When a sheep falls in the mud, it wants out. It's uncomfortable. It doesn't belong there. A pig lies down in the mud and settles in. Same mud, different nature.

John also gives a warning: "Little children, let no man deceive you" (v. 7). Somebody was telling those believers, "You can know God and live however you want." That voice is still around. Sometimes it even sounds religious. But real grace never says "sin doesn't matter." Real grace "teaches us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11-12).

We're not made righteous by doing right. We're made righteous through Christ. But people who have been made righteous start doing right. The root produces the fruit.

Practical Application

Take an honest inventory tonight. Ask yourself three questions about any area where you keep stumbling:

1. Do I fight it? Or have I stopped trying?
2. Do I grieve it? Or does it no longer bother me?
3. Do I confess it? Or have I made peace with it?

If you find an area where you've made peace with sin, don't panic. Take it seriously. Tell God the truth about it today. Then, if it would help, share it with one trusted brother or sister in Christ this week (James 5:16).

Prayer

Father, thank You that when I fall, I have an Advocate. Jesus stands for me, and You don't throw me away. But Lord, I don't want to live in the ditch. Where I've gotten comfortable with sin, stir me up. Where I've stopped fighting, give me fresh strength. Protect me from every voice that would make me comfortable in what You hate, even when that voice sounds spiritual. Keep my life pointed toward You. Let me be quick to grieve, quick to confess, and quick to get back up. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 4: Jesus Came to Tear It Down

Read: 1 John 3:8; Colossians 2:13-15; Hebrews 2:14-15

Key Verse: "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3:8b)

From the Sermon: "You don't have to negotiate with the thing that's been holding you. Jesus didn't come to help you manage it. He came to destroy it."

Devotional

This is the heart of the whole passage, and it's good news.

The Greek word for "destroy" is *luō*. It means to loosen, untie, undo, or break apart. It's used for untying a sandal and for tearing down a building. Both pictures fit what Jesus came to do. He came to untie what the devil tied up, and to tear down what the devil built.

Think about what the enemy builds in people's lives: addiction, lies, shame, bondage, broken families, cycles that get handed down from one generation to the next. Some of us have been told, "That's just how our family is." Anger is just how we are. Drinking is just how we cope. Leaving is just what the men in our family do.

Jesus came to undo "just how our family is."

At the cross, He "spoiled principalities and powers" and "made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them" (Colossians 2:15). Through His death He broke the power of "him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Hebrews 2:14).

Notice the words "for this purpose." Jesus didn't come down from heaven for a visit. He came on purpose, with a mission. And that mission includes whatever has been holding you.

You don't need a better strategy for living with your chains. You need the One who came to break them. Stop negotiating with what Jesus already defeated.

Practical Application

Cut off its supply. Identify one thing that feeds a sin or pattern you're fighting. It could be an app, a website, a relationship, a habit, a place, a time of night, or even a certain kind of music or show. Jesus used strong language on purpose: "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out" (Matthew 5:29). Remove that one supply line today. Delete it, block it, avoid it, or tell someone who will help you stay away from it.

Then memorize this week's memory verse, 1 John 3:8b. When temptation shows up, say it out loud.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for coming on purpose. You didn't come to help me cope with bondage. You came to destroy it. Today I bring You the things that have held me: the habits, the lies, the shame, and the patterns that have run through my family. Untie what the enemy has tied. Tear down what he has built, brick by brick. I refuse to keep negotiating with what You already defeated at the cross. Give me the courage to cut off what feeds my sin, and let my family's story change starting with me. In Your mighty name, Amen.

Day 5: Feed the Seed, Love on Purpose

Read: 1 John 3:9-11; 1 Peter 1:22-23; Galatians 5:16

Key Verse: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." (1 John 3:9)

From the Sermon: "Your victory over sin is not mostly about trying harder. It's about feeding the seed... What you feed grows. What you starve dies."

Devotional

Salvation is not turning over a new leaf. It's receiving a new life. Jesus said, "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7).

When you were born of God, He placed His own seed in you. The Greek word John uses is *sperma*. God puts His life in you by His Spirit and His Word. Peter says we are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God" (1 Peter 1:23).

A seed carries the nature of what it will become. An acorn doesn't grow into a pine tree. God's seed in you grows into a life that looks like Him.

That's why John says the believer "cannot sin." Again, it's present tense. It means he cannot keep on living in sin comfortably. Why? Not because he's strong, but "because he is born of God." The new nature won't let him rest in it.

That's why a believer who sins feels miserable. The old you could sin and sleep just fine. The new you can't. That restlessness is not a sign that God has left you. It's evidence that the seed is still there.

Then John gives the two family marks of God's children: doing right and loving people (vv. 10-11). He won't let us pick just one. Some people are strict about sin but cold toward people. Others are warm toward people but soft on sin. God's children look like their Father in both. And the command is the same one we heard "from the beginning": "that we should love one another."

So feed the seed. Stay in the Word. Stay in prayer. Stay in fellowship. Stay close to Jesus. And let that life overflow into how you treat the people around you.

Practical Application

Do two things today:

1. **Feed the seed.** Commit to a set time each day next week for the Word and prayer, even if it's only 15 minutes. Write it on your calendar like an appointment. Start by memorizing Psalm 119:11: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."
2. **Love somebody on purpose.** Pick one person and show them practical love before the week is over. Make a call, buy a meal, run an errand, write a note, or help with a need. John says, "let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18).

And if you're not connected, get connected. Sin grows in isolation. Join a small group, a men's or women's ministry, or find an accountability partner (Hebrews 3:13).

Prayer

Father, thank You for placing Your life in me. I am not who I used to be. I am not my worst habit, and I am not my family's pattern. I am born of You. Help me feed the seed You planted through Your Word, through prayer, and through Your people. Starve the things in me that pull me away from You. And Lord, don't let me be holy and cold. Fill me with Your love so the people

around me can see what my Father looks like. Show me who needs that love today, and give me the courage to act. In Jesus' name, Amen.

A Final Word

If this week stirred something in you, don't hear it as condemnation. Hear it as a call home. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). The fact that you care is a sign the seed is still in you.

And if you've never been born into God's family, you can't clean yourself up enough to get in. Jesus came to take away your sin and break the devil's hold on you. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12). You can receive Him today.

If you're His child, live like it. If you're not yet, today you can be.