

# 1 John 3:6 Commentary

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## FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND HIS CHILDREN

Click chart to enlarge

Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission  
Another Overview Chart - [1 John](#) - [Charles Swindoll](#)

| BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP                    |                        | BEHAVIOR OF FELLOWSHIP                         |                         |
|--|------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| Conditions of Fellowship               | Cautions of Fellowship | Fellowship Characteristics                     | Fellowship Consequences |
| Meaning of Fellowship<br>1 Jn 1:1-2:27 |                        | Manifestations of Fellowship<br>1 Jn 2:28-5:21 |                         |
| Abiding in God's Light                 |                        | Abiding in God's Love                          |                         |
| Written in Ephesus                     |                        |  |                         |
| circa 90 AD                            |                        |  |                         |
| From Talk Thru the Bible               |                        |  |                         |

## STUDY GUIDE

### 1 JOHN 3

What is this? On the photograph of the Observation Worksheet for this chapter you will find handwritten 5W/H questions (Who?

What? Where? When? Why? How?) on each verse to help you either personally study or lead a discussion on this chapter. The questions are generally very simple and are stated in such a way as to stimulate you to observe the text to discern the answer. As a reminder, given the truth that your ultimate Teacher is the Holy Spirit, begin your time with God with prayer such as Psalm 119:12+ "Blessed are You, O LORD; Teach me Your statutes." (you can vary it with similar prayers - Ps 119:18, 26, 33, 64, 66, 68, 108, 124, 135, 171, etc) The questions are generally highlighted in yellow and the answers in green. Some questions have no answers and are left to your observations and the illuminating/teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. Some qualifying thoughts - (1) Use "As is" - these are handwritten and will include mistakes I made, etc. (2) They may not be the best question for a given verse and my guess is that on some verses you will think of a far superior 5W/H question and/or many other questions.

Dr Howard Hendricks once gave an assignment to his seminary students to list as many observations as they could from Acts 1:8. He said "So far they've come up with more than 600 different ones! Imagine what fun you could have with 600 observations on this passage. Would you like to see Scripture with eyes like that?" (P. 63 [Living by the Book](#) - borrow) With practice you can! And needless to say, you will likely make many more observations and related questions than I recorded on the pages below and in fact I pray that the Spirit would indeed lead you to discover a veritable treasure chest of observations and questions! In Jesus' Name. Amen

Why am I doing this? **Mortimer Adler** among others helped me develop a questioning mindset as I read, seeking to read actively rather than passively. Over the years I have discovered that as I have practiced reading with a 5W/H questioning mindset, it has yielded more accurate interpretation and the good fruit of meditation. In other words, consciously interacting with the inspired Holy Word of God and the illuminating Holy Spirit has honed my ability to meditate on the Scripture, and my prayer is that this tool will have the same impact in your spiritual life. The benefits of meditation are literally priceless in regard to their value in this life and in the life to come (cf discipline yourself for godliness in 1Ti 4:8+.) For some of the benefits - see Joshua 1:8+ and Psalm 1:2-3+. It will take diligence and mental effort to develop an "inductive" ([especially an "observational"](#)), interrogative mindset as you read God's Word, but it bears repeating that the benefits in this life and the rewards in the next will make it more than worth the effort you invest! Dear Christian reader let me encourage you to strongly consider learning the skills of [inductive Bible study](#) and spending the rest of your life practicing them on the Scriptures and living them out in your daily walk with Christ.

Although Mortimer Adler's advice is from a secular perspective, his words are worth pondering...

*Strictly, all reading is active. What we call passive is simply less active. Reading is better or worse according as it is more or less active. And one reader is better than another in proportion as he is capable of a greater range of activity in reading.* (Adler's classic book [How to Read a Book is free online](#))

[John Piper](#) adds that "Insight or understanding is the product of intensive, headache-producing meditation on two or three verses and how they fit together. This kind of reflection and rumination is provoked by asking questions of the text. And you cannot do it if you hurry. Therefore, we must resist the deceptive urge to carve notches in our bibliographic gun. Take two hours to ask ten questions of Galatians 2:20+ and you will gain one hundred times the insight you would have attained by reading thirty pages of the New Testament or any other book. Slow down. Query. Ponder. Chew.... (John Dewey rightly said) "People only truly think when they are confronted with a problem. Without some kind of dilemma to stimulate thought, behavior becomes habitual rather than thoughtful."

*"Asking questions is the key to understanding."*

--Jonathan Edwards

That said, below are the [5W/H questions](#) for each verse in this chapter (click page to enlarge). This is not neatly typed but is handwritten and was used for leading a class discussion on this chapter, so you are welcome to use it in this "as is" condition...



## 1 John 3:6 No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him:

**Greek** - pas o en auto menon (PAPMSN) ouch hamartanei (3SPA1) pas o hamartanon (PAPMSN) ouch eoraken (3SRA1) auton oude egnoken (3SRA1) auton .

BGT 1 John 3:6 π ς ν α τ μ νων ο χ μαρτ νει· π ς μαρτ νων ο χ ρακεν α τ ν ο δ γνωκεν α τ ν.

KJV 1 John 3:6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

NET 1 John 3:6 Everyone who resides in him does not sin; everyone who sins has neither seen him nor

known him.

CSB 1 John 3:6 Everyone who remains in Him does not sin; everyone who sins has not seen Him or known Him.

ESV 1 John 3:6 No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.

NIV 1 John 3:6 No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

NLT 1 John 3:6 Anyone who continues to live in him will not sin. But anyone who keeps on sinning does not know him or understand who he is.

NRS 1 John 3:6 No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him.

NJB 1 John 3:6 No one who remains in him sins, and whoever sins has neither seen him nor recognised him.

NAB 1 John 3:6 No one who remains in him sins; no one who sins has seen him or known him.

YLT 1 John 3:6 every one who is remaining in him doth not sin; every one who is sinning, hath not seen him, nor known him.

MIT 1 John 3:6 Everyone who remains in him does not sin. Everyone who continues to sin has neither seen him nor known him.

GWN 1 John 3:6 Those who live in Christ don't go on sinning. Those who go on sinning haven't seen or known Christ.

BBE 1 John 3:6 Anyone who is in him does no sin; anyone who is a sinner has not seen him and has no knowledge of him.

RSV 1 John 3:6 No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him.

NKJ 1 John 3:6 Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.

ASV 1 John 3:6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither knoweth him.

**Wuest** - Everyone who in Him is constantly abiding is not habitually sinning. Everyone who is constantly sinning has not with discernment seen Him, nor has he known Him, with the result that that condition is true of him at present. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

- 1Jn 2:28 Joh 15:4-7
- 1Jn 3:2,9 2:4 4:8 5:18 2Co 3:18 4:6 3Jn 1:11
- Thomas Manton - [1 John 3:6 - No one who abides in him keeps on sinning](#)
- [1 John 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **ABIDERS DON'T SIN HABITUALLY SINNERS DON'T ABIDE AT ALL!**

**No one who abides** ([meno](#) - present tense) **in Him sins** ([hamartano](#) - present tense); (ou - absolutely) **no one who sins** ([hamartano](#) - present tense) **has seen** (perfect tense) **Him or** (absolutely does not) **knows** ([ginosko](#) - perfect tense) **Him** - YLT - "every one who is remaining in him doth **not** (ou) sin; everyone who is sinning, hath **not** (ou) seen him, **nor** (oude) known him." From **Young's Literal** it is easy to see John's three negatives and it is notable that all three in Greek signify **absolute** negation or categorical denial of what follows! John is saying that the one who abides in Christ is one who absolutely does not manifest a lifestyle of continual, habitual, unabated sin. To the contrary, if one continually lives a life of sin, in simple terms, they don't really know Jesus. Regardless of what they profess, they are not truly born again! They may cry "*Lord, Lord*" (Mt 7:22+) but they do not continually do the will of the Father in heaven (Mt 7:21+). Beloved, do not be deceived! Genuine salvation results in a new creation, a new lifestyle, a new direction. No it is not *perfection*, but it is a new *direction*! Do not be deceived dear reader remembering that...

*Sin and Christ are irreconcilably at enmity with each other.*

*Christ in His sinless Person and saving work is fundamentally opposed to it"*

-- [John Stott](#)

1 John 5:18 makes a similar statement in the first clause...

**We know that no one who is born**(perfect tense - past belief in Christ resulting in a permanent/eternal effect) **of God** (CONTINUALLY, HABITUALLY, UNREMITTING, UNREPENTANTLY) **sins** (present tense); but He who was born of God keeps him and the evil one does not touch him. (1 John 5:18+)

**No one who abides** ([meno](#) - present tense) **in Him sins** ([hamartano](#) - present tense) - If we abide in Christ, we cannot live in sin! Sin is no longer our master. Genuine believers cannot live a lifestyle of sin.

**Who** is the one who **abides in Him**? Some say this speaks of the **practice** of a believer abiding (thus speaking of fellowship with Christ) but others say it describes the **position** of the believer (thus speaking of identity as a follower of Christ). Remember that **context is king** in interpretation, so what is the immediate context? While there is not a **"but"** separating the first clause from the second, when one compares these two clauses, they clearly depict a striking contrast - the first person abides in God in contrast to the second who does not abide in God because he has neither seen nor known Him. Clearly the latter clause depicts an unbeliever, not having seen or known God. And so he sins habitually because he does not have God's Spirit within to give him power not to sin. On the other hand, the first clause depicts a believer (defined as one who abides in God) and because he abides in God (i.e., that is his position), God's Spirit abides in him and gives him power to not sin continually (i.e., that is his practice).

Here is an example from **Thomas Constable** (whose expository notes are often quoted on this website as they are generally well done) of what I consider to be an erroneous interpretation of what John is saying. Constable comments "*If **abiding in God equals being a Christian**, this verse appears to contradict what John wrote in 1:8 and 10 (Ed: but see Hiebert's and Stott's comments below). There he said that Christians sin (cf. 2a:1; 15, 29; 3:12, 18; 5:16, 21). It also seems to contradict personal experience since genuine Christians do indeed sin.*" Yes, Christians do sin as all believers know too well! But a Christian does not go on sinning (**sin** is in the present tense). I realize that some like **Grant Richison** (his commentaries are also well-done and are quoted on this website) say the present tense does not speak of habitual action in this verse ([Zane Hodges \[see his unusual teachings\]](#) takes a similar position), but he has to say that in order to make the the first clause speak of **fellowship of the believer** rather than **identity as a believer!** (For more detail see [Harris' discussion on the present tense in this passage](#))

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, do not be deceived! (1Jn 3:7+) If the bent of one's life is continually toward sinning, how can one even remotely claim to be a follower of Christ? How can one claim to have the indwelling Holy Spirit if the entire tenor of their life continually gravitates toward unholiness? This is a dangerous teaching and one to which our Lord Jesus surely warned in the Sermon on the Mount, declaring to those who "*professed*" to know Him (They said "Lord, Lord," etc - Mt 7:21-22+) "I never (at any time) knew you (speaks of intimacy, of union). **Depart** (present imperative) from Me, (Why? What was Jesus' criterion?). You who **practice** (present tense - the same tense as sin in 1Jn 3:6) lawlessness (which John calls sin in 1Jn 3:5+)." (Mt 7:23+).

*Now we are sure that cannot mean that he does not sin at all,  
but it means that sins not habitually, he sins not designedly,  
he sins not finally, so as to perish.*

I love **C H Spurgeon's** approach of letting the plain sense of the text speak plainly! - This plain, simple verse, has been twisted by some who believe in the doctrine of perfection, and they have made it declare that it is possible for some to abide in Christ, and therefore not to sin. But you will remark that it does not say, that some that abide in Christ do not sin; but it says that none who abide in Christ sin. "Whosoever abides in Him does not sin." Therefore this passage is not to be applied to a few who attain to what is called by our Arminian friends the fourth degree—perfection; but it appertains to all believers; and of every soul in Christ it may be said, that he does not sin. In reading the Bible, we read it simply as we would read another book. We ought not to read it as a preacher his text, with the intention of making something out of every word; but we should read it as we find it written: "Whosoever abides in Christ does not sin." Now we are sure that cannot mean that he does not sin at all, but it means that sins not habitually, he sins not designedly, he sins not finally, so as to perish. The Bible often calls a man righteous; but that does not mean that he is perfectly righteous. It calls a man a sinner, but it does not imply that he may not have done some good deeds in his life; it means that that is the man's general character. So with the man who abides in Christ: his general character is not that he is a sinner, but that he is a saint—he sins not openly and willfully before men. In his own heart, he has much to confess, but his life before his fellow creatures is such a one that it can be said of him: "Whosoever abides in Him does not sin; but whosoever sins [the sins of this world. in which the multitude indulge] hath not seen him, neither known him." ([Spurgeon Expositions and Sermons on 1 John](#))

**Hiebert** (who is an excellent expositor with great expertise in the original Greek) explains that "Everyone in the first group (Ed: "No one who abides in Him sins") is characterized by his **abiding relationship with Christ**: "Whosoever abides in Him sins not" (literally, "every one in Him abiding not is sinning"). The position of "**in Him**" (en autō) between the article and the present participle marks his ongoing relationship with Christ as an essential feature of his identity. He continually "abides" in Christ as the true sphere of his life, dwelling in Him in Whom there is no sin. This relationship of remaining "in Him" implies obedience to Him (Jn 15:10) rather than following his own will. Of such a one John asserts that he "sins not" (ouch hamartanei), does not continue in willful, habitual sin. John has already indicated that the believer cannot claim never to commit an act of sin (1Jn 1:8–9+; 1Jn 2:1+). Sin may enter his

experience as an exception which calls for immediate confession and cleansing; he is not at liberty to make occasional excursions into sin but should continually seek to avoid any lapse into sin. John's apparently contradictory statements concerning sin and the believer reflect that inner tension which Paul discusses in Romans 7:1-25+. ([1 John 2:29-3:12 Online](#))

**John Stott** - The logical deduction follows (the truth in 1Jn 3:5+). If the eternal nature of the Son of God is sinless, and if the purpose of His historical appearing was to remove sin, then **no-one who lives in Him** (**Ed:** "*abides in Him*") keeps on sinning, **while, on the other hand** (**Ed:** Note how Stott also sees a contrast), no-one who continues to sin has either **seen Him** or **known Him**. It is typical of John's method that he should drive the truth home by this double hammer-blow about sinning and not sinning. (borrow [1-3 John MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#)) (Bolding added for emphasis).

*John does not teach that believers do not sin,  
but is speaking of a character, a habit*

**Kenneth Wuest** who is well known for his expert writings on the Greek comments that "The words **abides** and **sins** are used here to designate a certain class of individual. Character is shown by one's habitual actions, not the extraordinary ones The tense of the verbs is **present**, the kind of action, continuous, habitual. Thus, "*every one who habitually is abiding in Him,*" is a **saved person**, and, "*every one who habitually is sinning,*" an **unsaved person**. **A Christian as a habit of life is abiding in fellowship with the Lord Jesus**. Sin may at times enter his life. But sin is the exception, not the rule. The unsaved person as a habit of life sins continually. "**Sins**" is present tense, continuous action being indicated. **The person who is abiding in Christ is not habitually sinning. The child of God as a habit of life, does righteousness, and sin is not a habit with him**. John is not teaching sinless perfection here. Vincent says: "*John does not teach that believers do not sin, but is speaking of a character, a habit. Throughout the Epistle, he deals with the ideal reality of life in God, in which the love of God and sin exclude each other as light and darkness.*" He does not deny that a Christian sins at times. Indeed he admits the possibility of sin in the Christian's life in 1Jn 1:9+, and forbids sin in 1Jn 2:1+. What John denies here is that a Christian sins habitually. He denies that the life of a Christian is wholly turned towards sin as is that of the unsaved person. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission) (Bolding added)

**Tom Wells** comments on **No one who abides** ([meno](#) - present tense) **in Him sins** ([hamartano](#) - present tense); (ou - absolutely) **no one who sins** ([hamartano](#) - present tense) **has seen** (perfect tense) **Him or** (absolutely does not) **knows** ([ginosko](#) - perfect tense) **Him** - Here "**abiding**" is described in such a way that it must be true of every Christian. The argument runs thus: (i) If a man sins, he does not abide in Christ. (ii) Such men who sin and do not "abide" have neither seen or known Christ. (iii) Therefore, by definition, anyone who is a Christian abides; anyone who abides is a Christian. There are no non-abiding Christians. All others have neither seen nor known Christ. (Pitfalls in Understanding 1 John - no longer on internet)

*The contrast he is drawing here is between abiding and sinning.  
They are opposites. One cannot sin and abide. One cannot abide and sin.*  
-- Gary Derickson

**John MacArthur** on **abides** ([meno](#) - present tense) **in Him sins** ([hamartano](#) - present tense) - John taught that no one who sins (the present tense of the verb again denotes the habitual action of defiance and rebellion by a fallen heart) can also abide in Christ. It is not that people who become Christians will never sin again (1:8), but they will not live as they did, because no one who sins consistently or habitually in the pattern of the unregenerate has seen Him or knows Him. (See [1-3 John MacArthur New Testament Commentary - Page 126](#))

*If someone lives in sin, it shows that he has not seen Jesus as He revealed Himself,  
and does not know Him as Savior.*

**Steven Cole** on **abides** ([meno](#) - present tense) **in Him** - **Abides** is John's word for fellowship, but we need to understand that in his mind, every Christian abides in Christ. The idea that there are two types of Christians, those who abide in Him and do not sin, and those who do not abide and do sin, was foreign to the apostle's thinking. The word **abide** in 1Jn 3:6 is parallel to **is born of God** in 1Jn 3:9 (**Ed:** Which shows the vital importance of Keeping Context King in order to arrive at a correct interpretation!). This is further evident by the fact that John adds (1Jn 3:6), "**no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him**." The false teachers claimed to have special revelation or knowledge of Christ. John says that their sinful lives betrayed them. His point is that anyone that knows Jesus Christ as the holy, sinless Savior, Who came to offer Himself on the cross to forgive our sins, does not live in sin. If someone lives in sin, it shows that he has not seen Jesus as He revealed Himself, and does not know Him as Savior. ([Sermon](#)) (Bolding added)

**Warren Wiersbe** on **abides in Him** - 1Jn 3:6 ought to read, "Whosoever abides in Him **does not habitually sin**." Ephesians 2:1-3+ makes it clear that the **unsaved sin constantly** because they live in the flesh and for the devil. But the Christian has a new nature within (**Ed:** cp Ezek 36:27) and is no longer Satan's slave. (Borrow [Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament](#)) (Bolding added for emphasis)

*Those who are true Christians do not habitually sin.*

-- Albert Barnes

**S Lewis Johnson** on what John means by **abides** in this context - **Abiders** do not sin, is what he says. What does it mean to **abide**? To realize our oneness, taking his view of things, understanding sin as he understands it, understanding law as he understands it, understanding righteousness as he understands it, understanding guilt as he understands it, understanding holiness and desiring holiness, that would be reflective of being in him. But on the other hand, non abiders, this is why John's words are so blunt, non abiders have "not seen him, neither known him." ([The Inadmissibility of Sin](#))

**PROFESSION** is an act of declaring that one has a particular feeling or quality, especially when this is **NOT** the case!

**George Findlay** flatly states that - Not only is the practicer of sin *ipso facto* out of Christ; his life argues that he always has been so, and that his **Christian profession** was never genuine. "Every one that sins has not seen Him nor known Him." The same thing St John had said of the "many antichrists," extruded from the Church and seducing its membership: "they went out from us, but they were not of us" (1Jn 2:19). Their outer severance and overt rebellion against the law of Christ disclose a radical difference of spirit in them. Men of **religious profession** living in deceit or impurity or lovelessness, who reconcile themselves to sinful practice and yet deem themselves Christians, had from the beginning (the Apostle supposes) no proper knowledge of the Lord they profess to serve. They have never truly seen what Jesus Christ is like nor come to any real acquaintance with Him, or they would recognize the absurdity of their position. For his own part, the writer felt that once to have known the Lord makes any other ideal impossible; once and for all, **the love of sin was killed in the disciple by the companionship of Jesus** He would no more think of returning to it now, than the civilized man of reverting to the tastes of the savage, or the philosopher to the babblings of the child. "Mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" cries the young prophet Isaiah; his purged lips could not after this return to their uncleanness (Isa. 6:5-7). "The time past may suffice" to have wrought folly, to have lived in envy and malice. The sun is up! who that sees it can longer walk as in darkness? ([1 John 3:4-9 Commentary - scroll down to page 252](#))

**THOUGHT** - The practical application of John's teaching is that if one professes to know Christ and yet demonstrates relentless rebellion against God, they do well to do some serious soul searching lest they deceive themselves and end up hearing Jesus' command to "**Depart!**" (Mt 7:23) Paul alludes to the need for all of us (yours truly included) to perform self-examination writing "**Test (present imperative)** yourselves [to see] if you are in the faith; **examine (present imperative)** yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?" (2Cor 13:5+)

**W Harris** on **abides** ([meno](#)) - The meaning of menōn, "resides" in 1Jn 3:6. Here the verb menō refers to **the permanence of relationship between Jesus and the believer**, as in 1John 2:27 and 1Jn 2:28. It is clear that Jesus is the referent of the pronoun translated "Him" in the phrase en autō, "in him" because He is the subject of the previous discussion in 1Jn 3:5. ([Exegetical Commentary on 1 John 2:28-3:10](#))

**Abides** ([meno](#)) in simple terms means to remain in the same place or position over a period of time. It means to reside, stay, live, lodge, tarry or dwell. **Meno** describes something that remains where it is, continues in a fixed state, or endures.

John uses the **present tense** to emphasize the continuing aspect of this abiding. Some say that this is not the case, that only those who are not sinning are abiding in unbroken fellowship. While there is certainly truth in that statement, that is not what John is saying. The **present tense** signifies continually abiding in Jesus, in covenant with Him, in oneness with Him. Positionally this truth cannot be changed for HE is the one who keeps us in the position of abiding. That's what John is describing. Not a on again, off again abiding, but a continual abiding. In support of this interpretation, note that other 3 verses later John uses the same verb meno in the present tense to describe God's seed abiding in us. Does God's seed abide in us some days and not others? I don't think so. His seed abides continually, just as His children abide in Him continually. One reason some commentators don't like this interpretation is because of the clear implications. John's point is simple and clear - abiding in Jesus is incompatible with a continuing in a lifestyle of rebellion against God. In fact, if one practices the latter (regardless of their profession), John says they are fooling themselves. They don't know Jesus and one day He will say to them "I never **knew** you. **Depart** from me, you who **practice (present tense) lawlessness.**" (Mt 7:23+).

**Charles Ryrie** - The lifestyle of the believer who keeps God's commands (abides) will be obedience, not sin. The lifestyle of the one who keeps on sinning demonstrates that he does not know God... Habitual actions indicate one's character. ([The Ryrie Study Bible](#))

**Nelson's NKJV Study Bible** - Habitually sinful conduct indicates an absence of fellowship with Christ. Thus, if we claim to be a Christian but sin is our way of life, our status as children of God can legitimately be questioned.

*The believer may fall into sin*



*but he will not walk in it.*

(ED: Or [wallow](#) it it!)

-- D. Smith

**Daniel Akin** - John is describing a way of life, a character, a prevailing lifestyle. Here the present tense verb contextually depicts linear, continual action. In other words, the believer will not live a life characterized by sin. (See [1.2.3 John: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

*To sin is human;*

*but to persevere in sin is not human but altogether satanic.*

--John Chrysostom

**John MacArthur** on **no one who sins** ([hamartano](#) - present tense) - the sense conveyed here is the idea of habitual, constant sinning. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. If no check against habitual sin exists in someone who professes to be a Christian, John's pronouncement is absolutely clear—salvation never took place.

*"How do you react when you sin? Do you give into the pattern of sin, and let it dominate your lifestyle?*

*Or do you humbly confess your sin, and do battle against it with the power Jesus can give?"*

**David Guzik** - It is very important to understand what the Bible means - and what it does not mean - when it says does not sin. According to the verb tense John uses, does not sin means does not live a life style of habitual sin. John has already told us in 1 John 1:8+ If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. In 1 John 1:8, the grammar indicates John is speaking about occasional acts of sin. The grammar of 1 John 3:6 indicates that John is speaking of a settled, continued lifestyle of sin. John is not teaching here the possibility of sinless perfection. "The present tense in the Greek verb implied habit, continuity, unbroken sequence" ([Stott](#)); the NIV has the right idea when it translates these verbs with phrases such as *keeps on sinning*, *continues to sin*, and he *cannot go on sinning*. **John's message is plain and consistent with the rest of the Scriptures It tells us that a life style of habitual sin is inconsistent with a life of abiding in Jesus Christ.** A true Christian can only be **temporarily** in a life style of sin. Paul's teaching in Romans 6:1-23+ is a great example of this principle. He shows us that when a person comes to Jesus, when his sins are forgiven and God's grace is extended to him, he is radically changed - the old man is dead, and the new man lives. So it is utterly incompatible for a new creation in Christ to be *comfortable* in *habitual* sin; such a place can only be *temporary* for the Christian. In some ways, the question is not "*Do you sin or not?*" We each sin. The question is, "How do you react when you sin? Do you give into the pattern of sin, and let it dominate your lifestyle? Or do you humbly confess your sin, and do battle against it with the power Jesus can give?" This is why it is so grieving to see Christians make excuses for their sin, and not humbly confess them. Unless the sin is dealt with squarely, it will contribute to a pattern of sin that may soon become their lifestyle - perhaps a secret lifestyle, but a lifestyle nonetheless. What is important is that we never sign a "peace treaty" with sin. We never wink at its presence or excuse it by saying, "Everybody has his own sinful areas, and this is mine. Jesus understands." This completely goes against everything we are in Jesus, and the work He has done in our life. ([1 John 3 Commentary](#))

**Daniel Akin** - 1Jn 3:6 logically and necessarily flows from 1Jn 3:5. Because there is no sin in Jesus, no one who abides in Him keeps on sinning. In fact, if one does continue in a pattern or practice of sin, another logical and necessary conclusion must be drawn: "everyone who sins [keeps on sinning] has not seen Him or known Him" in a personal, saving relationship. John's theology is flawless. If the sinless Son of God appeared in history to take away sin, how is it possible to abide in Him and sin at the same time? The answer is, you can't. It is impossible. Some have understood 1Jn 3:6 and 1Jn 3:9 to affirm sinless perfection in this life. This, however, would contradict what John said in 1Jn 1:8, 10+. No, the use of the **present tense** verb in 1Jn 3:6 and 1Jn 3:9 help us see what John is saying. Because of the new birth, we have a new nature. Because Christ has taken away our sins, we have a new liberty and freedom (**Ed**: cp Jas 1:25+). Sin no longer dominates us or enslaves us (**Ed**: Ro 6:11-14+). Sin is no longer the character and conduct of my life. Because I now abide in Christ and in the power of His person and work in the Gospel, **I may fall into sin, but I will not walk in sin. Sin will not be my habit; it will not be my normal practice I no longer love sin; I hate sin. I no longer delight in sin; I despise sin.** In my union with Christ, which is another way of saying abiding in Christ, I have experienced a definite and decisive break with sin. It no longer rules me. Christ does! A life of living in sin and living in the Savior is an oxymoron. It does not make sense. It is spiritually absurd. (See [Exalting Jesus in 1.2.3 John](#)) (Bolding added)

**Holman NKJV Study Bible** - John was aware that Christians sin (1Jn 2:1+). They can receive forgiveness through Jesus' death (1Jn 1:7+) as they confess their sins (1Jn 1:9+). In condemning whoever **sins**, John had in mind flagrant sin by false "believers" whose confession of Jesus was feigned (1Jn 2:23+), whose love was set on the world rather than God (1Jn 2:15+), and whose obedience was lacking (1Jn 2:4+). Jesus Himself warned about people who called Him "Lord" and did great things in His name, but ultimately were not genuine disciples (Mt. 7:21-23+).

**Sins** ([hamartano](#)) in the present tense means continually misses the mark, living a lifestyle which is contrary to the will and law of God. I like the

ESV translation as "keeps on sinning."

*Those who do habitually sin have neither seen him nor known him.*

*They are not genuine Christians.*

[ESV study Bible](#) (borrow) - To confess the Son and to have the Father (1Jn 2:23) profoundly alters daily living... True followers of Christ do not recklessly and habitually violate what their anointing (1Jn 2:20, 1Jn 2:27) has planted within them (see 1Jn 3:9–10). Those who do habitually sin have neither seen him nor known him. They are not genuine Christians.

[A T Robertson](#) (well known expert in Greek Grammar) on the two uses of sin - Linear present (linear *menōn*, keeps on abiding) active indicative of *hamartanō*, "does not keep on sinning." Present (linear) active articular participle like *menōn* above, "the one who keeps on sinning" (lives a life of sin, not mere occasional acts of sin as *hamartēsas*, aorist active participle, would mean).

**Peter** taught a similar truth writing "Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose (cp 1Pe 2:21+), because he who has suffered in the flesh **has ceased from sin** (not speaking of so-called "sinless perfection," but of a general lifestyle dominated by sin), so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God." (1Peter 4:1-2+) As **Ryrie** says "The thought is this: Christ suffered in the flesh. He is your example. So, arm yourselves by taking the same view of suffering as Christ took, which is to accept it in the will of God. Thereby the **dominion of sin** is broken in practical experience."

**Nelson NKJV Study Bible** - if we claim to be a Christian but sin is our way of life, our status as children of God can legitimately be questioned.

**Matthew Henry** - "Practical renunciation of sin is the great evidence of spiritual union with, continuance in, and saving knowledge of the Lord Christ."

**Marvin Vincent** (an renowned Greek scholar) - "John does not teach that believers do not sin, but is speaking of a character, a habit; throughout the Epistle he deals with the ideal reality of life in God, in which the love of God and sin exclude each other as light and darkness."

I like the way old **John Trapp** explains that one who abides in Christ cannot sin as their habitual way of life -**Sin may rebel, it cannot reign in a saint.** He sinneth not sinningly... **he loves not sin, he lies not in it** but rises again by repentance, and is restless till that be done, and done to purpose.

**Chris Benfield** comments that **sins** in 1Jn 3:6 "has the idea of "continuing in sin; to go on sinning and sinning John speaks of those who live in sin, never having been born again in Christ. Those whose lives are dominated by sin, marked by a continual desire to please the flesh, have not encountered the Lord, nor are they known of Him. That certainly blows a large hole in the argument of: "what can a little sin hurt?" Many see no real consequence of their sin, especially while they are young. They feel as if they are entitled to live a little and indulge themselves. Continuing in sin, with no desire for reconciliation to God through sanctification in Christ, confirms one is apart and separated from the Lord in their sin." ([1 John 3:4-10 Seeing Sin for What it Is](#))

**H A Ironside** - Next the apostle went on to show what holiness really means in the Christian's life. "Whosoever abides in Him sins not [is not characterized by sinning]: whosoever sins hath not seen him, neither known him" (1 John 3:6). This verse used to trouble me, because I was not clear about it. I used to read it as though it said, "Whosoever commits a sin hath not seen him, neither known him." Verse eight was particularly disturbing: "He that commits sin is of the devil; for the devil sins from the beginning." And as I got my eyes off the Lord and allowed myself to fall into something that dishonored Him, those words were the torment of my life—"He that commits sin is of the devil." This verse seems to say that whoever sins has never been a Christian at all. I was greatly troubled, for I knew I had not gotten to the place of sinless perfection, even though I was trying to get there in those days. I was so sure I was born of God—that I was converted—but wondered if it had all been a mistake. I went to a teacher and asked him about this, and he said, "You have been converted all right, but every time you commit a sin you become unconverted again, and a child of the devil once more." (**Ed: Which of course is total heresy!**) That made me even more bewildered than before, and I wondered how I would ever know when I was converted to stay. If I were converted over and over again how would I know for sure that I was still converted just before I died? I might suddenly become a child of the devil again and miss everything. What a relief of mind it was to get a better understanding of the tense of the verbs! Contrast 1John 3:6 with 1John 2:1+, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." He does not say if any man sin he ceases to be a child of God, but, "We have an advocate with the Father." The word sin is in the **aorist tense**, and refers to a definite action at a given point of time, "If any man should fall into a sin." But chapter three verse six (1 John 3:6) is in the present continuous tense (**present tense**), "**Whosoever goes on practicing sin, whosoever makes it the habit of his life to live in sin**, hath not seen Him neither known Him." Peter fell into grievous sin, and that sin was repeated and repeated. But when the Lord turned and looked at him, he went out and wept bitterly. His heart was broken because of his failure, and he was soon restored. **True believers fall into sin if for a moment their eyes are taken off the Lord Jesus Christ. But the advocacy of the Lord Jesus begins at that moment, and He restores their souls.** ([1 John 3](#))



## WHEN SEEING IS BELIEVING

**No one who sins** ([hamartano](#) - present tense) **has seen** (perfect tense) **Him or** (absolutely does not) **knows** ([ginosko](#) - perfect tense) **Him - No one** is literally all (every one), which in essence means all without exception. Sin practitioners are not Savior seers! To all who do not know Jesus in this life, He will declare "I never knew you" (Mt 7:23+)!

**Hiebert** goes on to explain that in the "second group John asserts that "whosoever sins has not seen Him, neither known Him." The construction again depicts a distinct class, all of its members **characterized by the practice of sin as the ruling principle of their lives**. The basic contrast between the two groups is sharply drawn; the first is marked by a **continuing relationship with Christ**, the second by the **continuing practice of sin**. There is also a strong contrast in the negative expressed concerning each group; the first group **does not practice sin**, but the second group "has not seen Him, neither known Him" (ouch heōraken auton oude egnōken auton). The two negations (ouch... oude) concerning the second group are not identical in meaning. The first verb, "has seen" (heōraken), here does not refer to a literal seeing of Jesus in the flesh, as in 1Jn 1:2–3+, but denotes a spiritual vision of Him through faith (cf. "eyes of your heart may be enlightened" = Eph 1:18+; "seeing Him Who is unseen" = Heb 11:27+); he has never arrived at a clear perception of the true nature of the incarnate Christ. The second verb "**known**" (egnōken) denies that he has entered into a personal relationship with Him so as to become familiar with the characteristics of the incarnate Christ." ([1 John 2:29-3:12 Online](#))

**Sins** ("keeps on sinning" = ESV) ([hamartano](#)) in the present tense describes continually living a lifestyle which is contrary to the will and law of God. This lifestyle of sin testifies to the fact that they are not regenerate. To say that this description applies to a genuine believer as some do, is to simply not allow the text to say what it says! Be a Berean (Acts 17:11+)!

John makes a similar statement in his third epistle - "Beloved, **do not imitate** ([present imperative](#)) what is evil, but what is good. The **one who does good** ([agathopoieo](#) = to do good - present active participle = continually) is of God; the **one who does evil** ([kakopoieo](#) - present active participle = continually) has not seen God." (3 John 1:11+) So again John paints a striking, simple, straight-forward contrast between **believers** and **non-believers** based upon their habitual practice (of good or evil). Obviously those who habitually do good will still do evil because they possess the fallen flesh, but committing evil is not their way of life. The upshot is that genuine believers do not habitually practice evil! Do not let anyone tell you that you can profess faith in Christ at some point in time and then spend the rest of your life doing evil! That is a lie and as discussed in this section, it is a lie that is being perpetrated by pastors and commentators that many would classify as "evangelical!" Beware! Heed the apostle John's clear warning in his epistles. The heretical teaching is not new! The **NET Note** on 3 John 1:11+ says "**The one who does what is bad has not seen God...** reiterates the common Johannine theme of behavior as an indication of genuine faith, found in 1 John 3:6, 10; 4:7, 20; and in the Gospel of John 3:17–21. By implication, the genuineness of Diotrephes' faith is called into question, because he has obviously done what is bad (3Jn 1:11b; cf. 3Jn 1:9–10). In John's terminology it is clear that the phrase **has not seen God** is equivalent to "**is not a genuine Christian**" (see John 3:17–21 and 1 John 3:6, 10; 4:7, 20)."

**Holman Christian Study Bible** - John was aware that Christians sin (1Jn 2:1+). They can receive forgiveness through Jesus' death (1Jn 1:7+ ) as they confess their sins (1Jn 1:9+). By everyone who sins has not seen Him or known Him, John had in mind flagrant sin by false "believers" whose confession of Jesus was false (1Jn 2:23+), whose love was set on the world rather than God (1Jn 2:15+), and whose obedience was lacking (1Jn 2:4). Jesus Himself warned about people who called Him "Lord" and did great things in His name, but ultimately were not genuine disciples (Mt 7:21-23+). (BORROW [HCSB Study Bible : Holman Christian Standard Bible](#) )

**MacArthur** - If no check against habitual sin exists in someone who professes to be a Christian, John's pronouncement is absolutely clear—salvation never took place. ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

*The continuous sinner has not known God  
and is therefore an unregenerate person.*

**Wycliffe Bible Commentary** on **abide** and **sin** - Both words are in the present tense and indicate the habitual character of the person. The person who is abiding in Christ is not able to sin habitually. Sin may enter his experience, but it is the exception and not the rule. If sin is the ruling principle of a life, that person is not redeemed (Rom 6); thus a saved person cannot sin as a habit of life. When a Christian does sin, he confesses it (1 Jn 1:9) and perseveres in his purification (1Jn 3:3). The continuous sinner has not known God and is therefore an unregenerate person. (BORROW [The Wycliffe Bible Commentary](#))

Earlier John had written that "The one who says, "I have come to**know** ([ginosko](#) also in the perfect tense) Him," and does not keep (present tense - as his general direction, not perfection!), His commandments, is a liar, and the truth (cp Jn 14:6!) is not in him." (1Jn

2:4+ ) In short, this person is not a believer as shown by his persistent disobedience!

**Has seen** (perfect tense) **Him or** (absolutely does not) **knows** ([ginosko](#) - perfect tense) **Him** - These two phrases in simple terms are saying this person is not a genuine follower of Jesus Christ now and they never have been, regardless of what they may have professed (See discussion of John's use of perfect tense under "know"). Earlier John spoke of seeing Jesus explaining that "when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is." (1Jn 3:2+) These individuals will not see Him in the same sense and certainly will not be like Him (glorified). On the other hand they will one day see Jesus when He comes as their Judge not their Savior - "BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and **every eye will see Him**, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. Even so. Amen." (Rev 1:7+, cp Php 2:9-11+)

**Wuest** - He asserts that "**Everyone who keeps on continually sinning, has not seen Him neither known Him**" This is an unsaved person. The verbs "**seen**" and "**known**" are in the perfect tense, implying that he has neither **seen** nor **known** God in times past, with the present result that He is still invisible and unknown to him. The particular word for "**see**" here means "to see with discernment." ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

**Seen** ([horao](#)) means to literally to perceive by sight or to see and in this context speaks figuratively of spiritual sight. The Greek negative particle signifies absolute negation, categorically denying that had seen Him (spiritually speaking, with eyes of faith, "for faith is the the assurance of [things] hoped for, **the conviction of things not seen.**" Heb 11:1+). **Seen** and **knows** are both in the perfect tense (see discussion under "knows")

**David Jackman** - Earlier John referred to a literal seeing of Jesus in the flesh (1Jn 1:2-3), but here the emphasis rests on seeing the true nature and purpose of the incarnate Christ. The one who sees Christ for who he is and embraces his redemptive work is the one who abides in him. (See [The Message of John's Letters](#))

**A T Robertson** on **has not seen Him** - The habit of sin is proof that one has not the vision or the knowledge (egnōken perfect active also) of Christ. He means, of course, spiritual vision and spiritual knowledge.

**Johann Bengel** on those who have seen Him and know Him - Light and knowledge produce likeness to God.

**Cambridge Greek Testament** - the habitual sinner does none of these things: sin is his ruling principle. And this could not be the case if he had ever really known Christ. Just as apostates by leaving the Church prove that they have never really belonged to it (1 John 2:19), so the sinner by continuing in sin proves that he has never really known Christ.—Seeing and knowing are not two names for the same fact: to see Christ is to be spiritually conscious of His presence; to know Him is to recognize His character and His relation to ourselves.

**Spurgeon** - The man who dwells in Christ is the holy man; but the man who lives in Sin is no child of God, for he proves by his evil conduct that he has no vital union with Christ. The fruit of Christianity is holiness; and if thy life be a sinful one, if that be the main run and tenor of thy life, thou art none of his... If this declaration related to any one act of sin, none of us could ever say that we have seen or known him, but it relates to the habit of sin, — if we love sin, and live in sin, if the main course of our life is sinful, then we have "not seen him, neither known him." (See the exposition beneath the sermon [The Sinful Made Sinless](#))

**David Allen** - In verse 6 John affirms that no one who "abides in [Christ]," meaning no one who is genuinely a Christian, "keeps on sinning." The key here is the present tense verb expressing an ongoing sinful lifestyle. John has already affirmed the possibility that a Christian can sin. That is not his point here. He does not refer to an occasional specific act of sin but rather a lifestyle of sin. Such a lifestyle indicates someone who has neither "seen" nor "known" Jesus. The use of the word "know" here suggests knowledge based on experience. Not to "know" Christ here describes someone who is not genuinely saved. (SEE [1-3 John: Fellowship in God's Family](#))

Jesus desire for the chosen was expressed in John 17:3+...

And this is eternal life, that they may **know** (intimately and personally = [ginosko](#) - present tense) Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent.

**Knows** ([1097](#))([ginosko](#)) generally speaks of knowledge obtained by experience. Knowledge possessed through the intellectual process of learning is one thing. Knowledge gained by experience, by an active relationship between the one who knows and the person known, is far superior to the former. **Ginosko** describes the latter quality of knowledge. Every true follower of Christ has come to experience a personal, permanent possession regarding the Person of Christ (e.g., see [ginosko](#) in Jn 8:32, Jn 17:3, Php 3:10+). As noted above, both **seen** and **knows** are in the perfect tense which speaks of a past completed action with ongoing results or relationship. In other words these individuals who were habitually practicing sin had absolutely never at any point in time come to spiritually perceive and personally know Jesus. Because they never knew Jesus, He will one day say to them "I never ([oudepote](#) - not ever!) **knew** ([ginosko](#)) you. **Depart** ([present imperative](#)) from Me (eternal separation and sorrow in solitary confinement and darkness), you who practice ([ergazomai](#) - present tense - as you lifestyle you engage with consider expenditure of

effort in) lawlessness (= sin - 1Jn 3:4)" (Mt 7:23+)

**GINOSKO IN FIRST JOHN** -1 Jn. 2:3; 1 Jn. 2:4; 1 Jn. 2:5; 1 Jn. 2:13; 1 Jn. 2:14; 1 Jn. 2:18; 1 Jn. 2:29; 1 Jn. 3:1; 1 Jn. 3:6; 1 Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 3:19; 1 Jn. 3:20; 1 Jn. 3:24; 1 Jn. 4:2; 1 Jn. 4:6; 1 Jn. 4:7; 1 Jn. 4:8; 1 Jn. 4:13; 1 Jn. 4:16; 1 Jn. 5:2; 1 Jn. 5:20; 2 Jn. 1:1

### [Knowing you Jesus](#)

Knowing you, Jesus, knowing You.

There is no greater thing!

You're my all, You're the best

You're my joy, My Righteousness

And I love You, Lord.

[\(Sing this song as prayer of praise to Him\)](#)

**Daniel Akin** - To **know** (*egnōken*) him is to enter into that personal, dynamic relationship with him. It is not a mere intellectual assent or innate comprehension, but rather it is a knowledge based upon experience. It is the subjective appropriation of who Christ is and what he has done for sinful humanity. The verb is ingressive, which means that this knowledge is obtained rather than naturally possessed. It is coming to know him more and more in a personal way. The apostle asserts with absolute clarity that those who live in habitual sin have not seen Christ and do not know Christ. This is the same as saying they do not have a saving relationship with Christ. On the other hand, those who abide in him live a life marked by habitual righteousness and purity instead of lawlessness (rebellion) and disobedience. While the unbeliever lives in sin and has not seen or known Christ, the believer has terminated a life of sin for a life of abiding in him. The child of God has experienced a decisive break with sin. **Sin no longer controls his life.** (See [1.2.3 John: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

*Continual flagrant sinning reveals that  
one does not know Christ and has never known Christ*  
-- Bob Utley

**John Calvin** on **no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him** - According to John's usual manner he adds the opposite clause, so that we may know that it is in vain to claim faith in Christ and knowledge of him unless there is newness of life. For Christ is never dormant where he reigns, but the Spirit makes his power effective. It may rightly be said of him that he puts sin to flight, just as the sun drives darkness away by its own brightness. Again, this passage teaches us how strong and efficacious the knowledge of Christ is, for it transforms us into His image. So by seeing and knowing we are to understand nothing other than faith.

*"When does sin become habitual?  
How often does a person have to commit it  
for it to become characteristic behavior?" John does not answer this.*

**William MacDonald** - This verse contrasts the true believer with one who has never been born again. It can definitely be said of the true believer that he does not go on sinning. John is not here speaking about isolated acts of sin, but rather continued, habitual, characteristic behavior. This verse does not imply that when a Christian commits an act of sin, he loses his salvation. Rather it says that when a person sins habitually, it is conclusive that he was never regenerated. The question naturally arises, "When does sin become habitual? How often does a person have to commit it for it to become characteristic behavior?" John does not answer this. Rather he puts each believer on guard, and leaves the burden of proof on the Christian himself. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

*Undisturbed persistence in sin exposes the individual  
as one who has neither seen (with the eye of faith) nor heard him*

**Sam Storms** - If Christ was sinless and came to remove sin, how can one abide both in him and in it simultaneously? The one who abides in Christ does not sin as a prevailing habit. Conversely, an undisturbed persistence in sin exposes the individual as one who has neither seen (with the eye of faith) nor heard him. ([1 John 3:4-10 Sermon Notes](#))

*Do you keep on sinning?*

**David Jackman** - The important question, in the light of the cross, then becomes, 'Have my sins been taken away?' 1Jn 3:6 tells us that the answer lies in our present experience. Do I keep on sinning, or is my life distinctively different? 'Look at your lifestyle,' is John's message. There may be key moments of change to look back to, in a response at an evangelistic meeting, the signing of a commitment card, or events such as baptism or being received as a member of a local church, which all have their place in our spiritual pilgrimages. (ED: THIS IS A CRITICAL POINT FOR SO MANY PEOPLE SAY "I ACCEPTED CHRIST" IN THE PAST AT SO

AND SO EVENT, AND YET THEIR LIFE TODAY FAILS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE ACCEPTANCE WAS REAL BUT WAS MORE EMOTIONAL AND TRANSIENT) Nevertheless John does not ask us about those; he simply says, 'Do you keep on sinning?' The person who does has not yet seen or known Christ, in that personal way that is described in verse 6 as 'living in him'. If Jesus was sinless and came to this world expressly to take away our sins, how can sin be cherished by anyone who is really living in Christ?... The implications for us are clear. **Fellowship with a sinless Saviour and continuance in our sins (keeping on sinning) are mutually contradictory.** No compromise is possible. And the logical conclusion we are to draw is that we cannot expect to be confident on that day when we see Christ (1Jn 2:28+), if we are complacent about sin in our lives here and now. (See [The Message of John's Letters](#))

*If you are obeying you are abiding,  
and if you are abiding you are obeying.*

**Lehman Strauss** - The Prohibition of Sin - **My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not...** (1 John 2:1) We have just seen that the principle of sin in the believer makes it possible for him to commit sin. And yet he is told to "sin not." The principle and possibility of sin is present, but the practice of sins is prohibited. This is a strange paradox to some, and it becomes even more confusing to those already confused when they read a verse such as the following: **Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him.** (1 John 3:6) In this verse there are two present tenses not to be overlooked. The first verb in the present tense is "abideth" To abide means to obey (John 15:10). If you are obeying you are abiding, and if you are abiding you are obeying. The second verb in the present tense is "sinneth not." The tense of both verbs means a continuous, habitual action. Every one who continuously and habitually abides in Him will not continuously and habitually keep on sinning. The text does not deny that a Christian ever commits an act of sin, but it does deny that a Christian sins habitually. Whosoever keeps on continually sinning has neither **seen** Him with the eye of faith nor **known** Him in experiential salvation. What is implied here is a ruling principle of life. **To continue to abide in Christ and to continue to practice sin are incongruous. The practice of sin excludes any professed knowledge of Christ** (Matthew 7:21-22). (Borrow [The Epistles of John](#)).

**PROFESSION** is an act of declaring that one has a particular feeling or quality, especially when this is not the case!

[Phil Newton](#) gives a testimony apropos to this passage in 1 John - Deception has been part of human existence since the serpent asked, "Has God said?" With that catastrophic deception in the Garden through which humanity fell into sin, deception continues in every generation. The devil has not changed his tactics. Paul warned the Corinthians about the devil's deception that would lead them away "from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ" (2 Cor 11:3). He also warned them about the deception that sin is not that big of a deal regarding one's eternity (1 Cor 6:9). John declares the devil as the arch-deceiver of all who rebel against God (Rev 20:10). So deception can ensnare any of us. I can trace points of deception that affected me. In my early Christian life, thinking that a **profession of Christ guaranteed heaven** (ED: MANY THINK THEY HAVE A "FIRE INSURANCE POLICY" WHEN IN FACT THEY ARE ACTUALLY INSURED OF EXPERIENCING ETERNAL FIRE!) rather than the certainty of the new birth, kept me from the joy of perseverance in Christ. Deception led me down a path of legalism by which I thought that I found favor with God by my rigid practice. Hearing various theological ideas without anchoring them in the Word deceived me into wrong doctrine that led to sloppy Christian living. By failing to grasp the power of the redemptive work of Christ, deception snared me in long periods of doubt and unbelief. I could go on but simply want to reinforce, deception continues its attempts to blind us to the fullness of Christ. That's why John wrote this epistle. Some deceived themselves by thinking they had no sin (1 John 1:8). Others listened to the allurements of false teaching and seemed to be heading down the path of deception (1 John 2:26). Now he warns of deception a third time, using one of the rare imperatives in the letter, "Little children, make sure no one deceives you" (3:7). He calls for action in three areas of deception. But we can only act if we understand to some degree how we're being deceived. We must guard against deception concerning Christ's work and the Christian walk. John set the stage for teaching on this painfully difficult subject by lifting us into the stratosphere of God's love for us. He ends that doxology by contemplating how it affects us, "And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."....

*But union with Christ—abiding in Him  
—alters the practice of sinning*

**Union with Christ affects practice** (1Jn 3:6) John writes, "No one who abides in Him sins" [or better, *goes on in the practice of sin*']. The ESV translates, "*No one who abides in him keeps on sinning*" If he means sinless perfection then we're all excluded from seeing Christ through the eyes of faith and knowing Him intimately. "No one who sins has seen Him or knows Him." Again, the present tense implies the ongoing practice of sinning, the disposition of lawlessness that offers no restraint by the law against sin. But union with Christ—abiding in Him—alters the practice of sinning. Now, the danger in consoling ourselves with the present tense verbs is to go light on sin. That's not what John does. He's insistent that everyone who fixes his eternal hope on Christ "purifies himself, just as He is pure." So knowing Christ, being united to Him by faith means that

your disposition toward sinning has changed. You may sin but the pattern of sinning is different than when Christ saved you. You sin but you sin less. You sin with grief and regret and the desire to turn from it. Sin feels odd when it used to feel normal. You abide in Him—that is, you live in reliance upon Jesus as your life. You cannot, with the life of Christ dwelling in you, feel comfortable going on in sin. **(ED: READ THAT SENTENCE AGAIN!)** Otherwise, if that's not the case, then it's because you have never known Him. **John Stott** adds, "Sin and Christ are irreconcilably at enmity with each other. Christ in His sinless Person and saving work is fundamentally opposed to it" [Borrow [TNTC: The Epistles of John, 123](#)]. So that means, with abiding in Him, the root of our new disposition is to oppose sin and practice righteousness. [Phil Newton](#)

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**Abides** (continues, endures, remains, stays) ([3306](#)) **meno** in simple terms means to remain in the same place or position over a period of time. It means to reside, stay, live, lodge, tarry or dwell. Menō describes something that remains where it is, continues in a fixed state, or endures.

**Meno** can mean "to take up permanent residence" or "to make yourself at home." **Meno** is the root of the Greek noun mone which means mansion or habitation (Jn 14:2, 23).

More than one half of the uses of **meno** are by John in his Gospel and letters.

**MENO IN JOHN'S LETTERS** - 1 Jn. 2:6; 1 Jn. 2:10; 1 Jn. 2:14; 1 Jn. 2:17; 1 Jn. 2:19; 1 Jn. 2:24; 1 Jn. 2:27; 1 Jn. 2:28; 1 Jn. 3:6; 1 Jn. 3:9; 1 Jn. 3:14; 1 Jn. 3:15; 1 Jn. 3:17; 1 Jn. 3:24; 1 Jn. 4:12; 1 Jn. 4:13; 1 Jn. 4:15; 1 Jn. 4:16; 2 Jn. 1:2; 2 Jn. 1:9

Here is a summary of some of the nuances of **meno** related specifically to dwelling or abiding in Christ - (1) to dwell in God (or Christ) means that we walk as Christ walked (1Jn 2:6, Php 2:5, Jn 13:15); (2) to dwell in Christ means that we don't habitually live in sin (1Jn 3:6); (3) to dwell in Christ means that we continue in His Word (Jn 8:31, 1Jn 2:17); (4) to dwell in Christ means that we bear fruit (Jn 15:5, Heb 13:5, Col 1:10, Ro 6:22, Php 4:7, 1Co 16:5, Jn 4:36)

**THOUGHT** - This short list describing abiding in Christ begs the simple question - How is your daily abiding in Christ going beloved? Are you walking like He walked, in the power of the Spirit? Are you daily fighting off temptations to sin against God? Are you daily in His living Word and even more important is it truly in (being assimilated into your inner man - cf 2Co 3:18+), or is it in one ear in the morning and out the other by noon (cf Jas 1:22+)? Is the Spirit bearing fruit in your life, fruit that will endure throughout eternity (Jn 15:16+)? Let me encourage you, by God's Spirit and Word, to [redeem the short time](#) you have left, doing all for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph 5:16KJV+). Amen.

**Sins** ([264](#)) **hamartano** literally means to miss the mark (and so not share in the prize). Hamartano means to act contrary to the will and law of God. To commit a wrong. To be in error. **Hamartano** emphasizes loss which always results from missing God's mark or target, His **good and acceptable and perfect will** (Ro 12:2). Gary Hill adds that "hamartánō ("choosing sin") asserts the agenda of self, by (for) self, over God's loving plan. Ironically, this insists on bringing self-made condemnation (cf. Titus 3:11 = "and is sinning, being self-condemned."). In sum, hamartánō always results in loss of reward for believers, and everlasting condemnation for unbelievers. **Hamartano** means to **err** (err is from Latin **errare** = to wander or to stray!) which means to wander from the right way, to deviate from the true course or purpose and so to violate an accepted standard of conduct. To err is to miss the right way. To **err** means to deviate from the path or line of duty. To stray by design or mistake. **Toerr** is to stray from God and/or His commandments.

**Hamartano** means to swerve from the truth, to turn aside from the straight course charted by the Word of Truth. To **swerve** means to wander from any line prescribed, or from a rule of duty; to depart from what is established by law, duty or custom.

In short hamartano means to miss the mark of God's perfect standard of righteousness, a mark which in the final analysis was "hit" every time by only one Person in all of human history, the God-Man Christ Jesus, the sinless Son of God and personification of righteousness. (cf Jer 23:5,6, 1 Cor 1:30)

**HAMARTANO -37V (7X IN FIRST JOHN)** - Matt. 18:15; Matt. 18:21; Matt. 27:4; Lk. 15:18; Lk. 15:21; Lk. 17:3; Lk. 17:4; Jn. 5:14; Jn. 8:11; Jn. 9:2; Jn. 9:3; Acts 25:8; Rom. 2:12; Rom. 3:23; Rom. 5:12; Rom. 5:14; Rom. 5:16; Rom. 6:15; 1 Co. 6:18; 1 Co. 7:28; 1 Co. 7:36; 1 Co. 8:12; 1 Co. 15:34; Eph. 4:26; 1 Tim. 5:20; Tit. 3:11; Heb. 3:17; Heb. 10:26; 1 Pet. 2:20; 2 Pet. 2:4; 1 Jn. 1:10; 1 Jn. 2:1; 1 Jn. 3:6; 1 Jn. 3:8; 1 Jn. 3:9; 1 Jn. 5:16; 1 Jn. 5:18

[Webster's 1828 Dictionary](#) has a "bibliocentric" definition of **sin** as "*The voluntary departure of a moral agent from a known rule of rectitude or duty, prescribed by God; any voluntary transgression of the divine law, or violation of a divine command; a wicked*



act; iniquity. Sin is either a positive act in which a known divine law is violated, or it is the voluntary neglect to obey a positive divine command, or a rule of duty clearly implied in such command. Sin comprehends not actions only, but neglect of known duty, all evil thoughts, purposes, words and desires, whatever is contrary to God's commands or law."

Now compare with the [2024 Webster's definition](#) of sin - "1a: an offense against religious or moral law (b) an action that is or is felt to be highly reprehensible it's a sin to waste food (c) an often serious shortcoming : FAULT 2a : transgression of the law of God b : a vitiated state of human nature in which the self is estranged from God."

**No** (3756)(ou, ouk, ouch) expresses negation absolutely ([Click here for more detailed discussion of "ou" in Zodiates](#) - borrow for full definition). **Ou/ouk/ouch** means not or no and expresses **direct and full negation, independently and absolutely, and hence, objectively**. This differs from **me** (See Zodiates discussion of me = [G3361](#)) which implies a conditional and hypothetical neg., and is, thus, subjective. Before consonants the form is **ou**, before unaspirated vowels it is **ouk**, and before aspirated vowels it appears as **ouch**, only for phonetic reasons with no change in meaning. Ou is a marker introducing a negative statement in contradiction of discourse that precedes, not at all, by no means. **Ou/ouk/ouch** is found 6715 times in the Septuagint and the New Testament. The combination of ou, ouk, ouch + me signifies **very strong negation** as in Hebrews 13:5+ "I will **never** (ou me) desert you!"

[Gingrich \(page 1070\)](#) - **ou** (before consonants), **ouk** (before a vowel with smooth breathing), **ouch** (before a vowel with rough breathing) negative adverb—

1. ou; with an accent means no Mt 5:37; Mk 12:14; Lk 14:3; J 1:21; 7:12; 21:5; 2 Cor 1:17–19; Js 5:12; cf. Ro 7:18.—

2. ou as an enclitic means not in a wide variety of uses, examples of which may be found in the following passages: Mt 1:25; 7:21; Mk 4:25; Ac 12:9; 13:10; 17:4, 12; Ro 7:7; 1 Cor 15:51; 2 Cor 2:11; Heb 12:25.—ou is regularly used with the indicative, but it is found with the participle in the following passages Mt 22:11; Lk 6:42; Gal 4:8, 27; Heb 11:1, 35; 1 Pet 2:10.—

3. ou is used in direct questions when an affirmative answer is expected *ouk akoueis* you hear, do you not? Mt 27:13. Cf. Mt 6:26, 30; 17:24; Mk 6:3; Lk 11:40; Jn 6:70; Ac 9:21.—

4. in combination with other negatives—

a. strengthening the negation Mt 22:16; Mk 5:37; esp. Lk 23:53; Jn 6:63; 15:5; Ac 8:39; 2 Cor 11:9. For ou me, see me,

b. destroying the force of the negation. In questions, if the verb is already negated (by ouv, the negation can be invalidated by me, used as an interrogative particle (see me [G3361](#)); the stage is thus set for an affirmative answer: *me ouk ekousan* surely they have heard, have they not? Ro 10:18, cf. *me okias ouk echete* you have houses, do you not? 1 Cor 11:22; cf. 9:4f. [pg 142]

**No** (3361) me ([For detailed discussion click Zodiates](#)) - In classical Greek this negative particle is used for the negative of thought, i.e., negation that depends on a condition that is understood. It is distinct from ou (3620) which denies, while mē rejects. When one thinks a thing is not, mē is used. It is subjective, involving will and thought, not fact and statement (*Liddell-Scott*). The Septuagint generally uses ou for negative thought, particularly in Daniel where it occurs 36 times, while mē occurs 4 times (2:24; 4:19; 5:10; 9:19) and only in petition (e.g., in the formula "let not"). The Hebrew terms for ou and mē are lō and 'al, respectively. Emphatic negation is indicated when the objective ou is combined with the subjective mē: "By no means ye will complete the cities of Israel" (Matthew 10:23, literal translation); "By no means may ye enter into the Kingdom" (Matthew 18:3, literal translation). **Me** occurs 602 times in the NT. The combination of ou, ouk, ouch + me signifies **very strong negation** as in Hebrews 13:5+ "I will **never** (ou me) desert you!" Wish is expressed by mē: "God forbid," literally, "May it not be"—**mē genoito** (Lxx = Ge 44:7; Jos. 22:29; Jos. 24:16; NT uses - used especially by Paul - Lk. 20:16; Ro 3:4; Ro 3:6; Ro 3:31; Ro 6:2; Ro 6:15; Ro 7:7; Ro 7:13; Ro 9:14; Ro 11:1; Ro 11:11; 1Co. 6:15; Gal. 2:17; Gal. 3:21; Gal. 6:14). Mē is also used in hesitant questions where a negative answer is expected: "(Not) a stone he will give him?" (Matthew 7:9, literal sense). When mē introduces the question and ou negates the verb, however, the double negative calls for an affirmative answer.

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## THE WAR IS OVER

For many months after the close of World War II, Japanese troops were discovered hidden in the caves and jungles of the Pacific islands. Some of these stragglers were living like frightened savages; they didn't know the war was over. Once they understood that it was no longer necessary for them to fight, they surrendered.

Christians may rest in the truth that Satan is a defeated enemy. He may still win a few battles here and there, but he has already lost the war! Sentence has been pronounced on him, but it will be a while before the punishment is meted out. A person who knows

Christ, and who has been delivered from the bondage of sin through Christ's death on the cross, has no desire to obey Satan and live like a rebel.

Counterfeit Christians were trying to convince true believers that a person could be "saved" and still practice sin. John does not deny that Christians sin, but he does deny that Christians can live in sin. A person who can enjoy deliberate sin and who does not feel convicted or experience God's chastening had better examine himself to see whether or not he is really born of God. [Be Real \(1 John\): Turning from Hypocrisy to Truth - Page 112](#)

Applying God's Truth:

1. In what ways do you live in celebration of the fact that the war with Satan is over and that he has lost?
2. Would any of your actions or attitudes indicate that your victory is in doubt?
3. What would you tell a friend who professed to be a Christian, yet claimed to enjoy indulging in a particular sin on a regular basis

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**Henry Mahan** - . 1 John 3:6 - Those who know Christ and abide in him hate sin in themselves, and they hate sin about them. They do not deliberately practice a life of sin because, to continue in sin, is to give clear evidence that one has not truly seen his glory or ever known him for "if any man be in Christ he is a new creature" (2 Cor. 5:17).

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### **Lawrence Richards - Toward the Light (1 John 3:4–10)**

I remember when I was in grade school I had to do an experiment growing a lima bean. I guess education hasn't advanced all that much, because now, 50 years later, the nine-year-old in our house has grown a lima bean too. But what's interesting is that, the sprouting plant will always grow toward the sun. Somehow the life of the bean is drawn toward the light. You can turn the plant around, even lay it on its side. Whatever you do, the sprout will orient toward the sun.

That's what John was saying about us when he wrote, "No one who lives in Him keeps on sinning" (v. 6). The NIV captures the vital tense of the verb. It's not that a Christian never sins. It's that believers will not "keep on sinning." John said the reason is that God's seed—the principle of divine life —has been planted in our personalities. God's life within us grows in the direction of godliness. His life is oriented toward purity. And if God's life really is in us, there will be a definite tilt toward what is right, and away from sin.

Anyone may sin at times, and in all likelihood will. But you can still tell the DIRECTION in which a person is growing. And so can everyone else!

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### **DANGER! OUT OF BOUNDS!**

A RESORT in Breckenridge, Colorado, posted signs warning skiers to keep off a certain slope. The signs, large and distinct, warned, Danger! Out of Bounds! In spite of the warnings, however, several skiers went into the area. The result? A half-mile-wide avalanche buried four of the trespassers beneath tons of snow and rock. This tragedy never would have happened if the signs had been heeded.

God has posted clear warning signs in the Bible to tell us what kinds of behavior and attitudes are off limits. The Lord loves us and wants us to avoid tragedy. He warned us about lying, stealing, blasphemy, filthy language, adultery, murder, drunkenness, and a host of other sins. Yet many times we ignore His warnings and intentionally wander into a forbidden area. We convince our-selves that nothing bad will happen to us or that we can turn back if we sense danger.

But God is not kidding. Sinning guarantees His disapproval and opens the door to remorse and tragedy. People who repeatedly commit these sins may be giving evidence that they have never really been saved (1John 3:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9).

When tempted to explore a forbidden area, don't be foolish. God's warning signs are posted for good reason.—D C Egener (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

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### **William MacDonald - Truths to Live By**

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

Yesterday we considered a passage that often proves distressing to sincere Christians. Today we will look at three verses in John's first epistle that also disturb believers who are all too aware of their sinfulness. There is the verse already quoted at the top of the page. Then there is 1 John 3:9: "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." And 1 John 5:18: "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." Taken as is, these verses might very well make any one of us question

whether he is a true believer.

And yet other verses in this same letter recognize that the believer does sin, for example 1:8-10; 2:1b.

The problem is largely one of translation. In the original language of the New Testament, there is a difference between committing occasional acts of sin and practicing sin as a way of life. The Christian does commit acts of sin, but sin is not what characterizes his life. He has been freed from sin as his master.

The New International Version shows that the verbs in these verses are in what we might call the present continuous tense, as follows: "No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him."(3:6). "No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God" (3:9). "We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one does not touch him" (5:18).

Any Christian who says he does not sin has imperfect views of what sin is. He apparently doesn't realize that anything that falls short of God's perfect standard is sin. The fact is that we do commit acts of sin every day in thought, word and deed.

But John makes a distinction between what is exceptional and what is habitual. With the true saint, sin is alien and righteousness is characteristic.

When we see this, there is no need to torture ourselves with these verses that make us doubt our salvation. The simple facts are these: God's will is that we should not sin. Unfortunately we do sin. But sin is no longer the dominating power in our lives. We no longer practice sin as we did before we were saved. If we do sin, we find forgiveness through confessing and forsaking our sin.

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## No Sin [Experiencing God Day by Day - Page 26](#)

Everyone who remains in Him does not sin; everyone who sins has not seen Him or known Him.—1 John 3:6

The Bible makes two things clear about sin. First, living a lifestyle of sin indicates that you are not walking in the power of the Holy Spirit, regardless of what you say about your spiritual condition. You cannot regularly spend time studying and meditating on God's word, praying and walking in fellowship with the Holy Spirit, and persist in sin.

Second, if you do not hate sin the way God does, then you do not truly know Him. There are those who continue in their sin yet insist that they love God and belong to Him. John makes it clear: If you have a lifestyle of sin, you have not seen Him and do not know Him. You may have prayed a "sinner's prayer," or made a commitment in your church, or been baptized, but the evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence in your life is that you are defeating sin. This does not mean that you will never sin, but it does mean that you refuse to make sin a lifestyle and you immediately seek forgiveness when you sin (1 John 1:10). It means that you are opposed to sin, as God is, and you allow the Holy Spirit to eradicate every trace of sin in your life. It means that when you sin, you immediately confess it and repent of it and do whatever is necessary to avoid repeating your sin.

If you find yourself falling into sinful habits or not grieving over your sin as you once did, this indicates that you are not abiding in Christ. Return to Him in repentance; restore your fellowship with Him, and you will once again experience victory over your sin.\

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## Johnny Sanders - II. HE WHO REMAINS IN CHRIST DOES NOT SIN, 1Jn 3:6.

**A. There is no Contradiction in the Scripture.** We are not going to gloss over what may seem to some to be a contradiction here. It is a fact that in 1Jn 1:8, John says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." It is also a fact that he says in 1Jn 1:10 that, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us." And now, he is saying that "He who abides in Christ does not sin." Is he not saying here right the opposite of what he has said in chapter one? Absolutely not. Let me explain. In 1Jn 1:8 and 1Jn 1:10, John is dealing with the principle of sin that remains active in the heart even after one has received a judicial pardon for his sins. Justification is a metaphor of the court room. When you believe in Jesus Christ, God, the eternal and omniscient Judge, pronounces you just. When you sin from that time forward - and you will sin ("come short of the glory of God," Ro 3:23b) - we "have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (Ro 2:1b). When the lost person sins, he is in rebellion against the law of God and God will deal with him as his Judge. When the Christian sins, God will deal with him as Father, as a father dealing with a child. Chapter one teaches that even after we are saved, there is a sin principle (some call it the old sin nature) which remains in operation until we are glorified. Because of the sinful nature, the believer will commit acts of sin, and at times those acts may be shocking, not only to others, but also to the individual who commits them. Paul, in the section of Romans dealing with Sanctification, shares his personal testimony with us: "For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man" (Rom. 7:19-22).

Christians do, and will continue to commit acts of sin. There is never a day that we do not need to confess our sins and receive God's forgiveness and cleansing (1 John 1:9). Now, John is going to make a statement that may seem to contradict 1Jn 1:8 and 1Jn 1:10, but in fact, there is no contradiction at all.

**B. "Whoever abides in Him does not sin," 1Jn 3:6** "Well," one may say, "that certainly sounds like a contradiction! Just read 1Jn 1:8-10; 2:1-21; and 1Jn 3:9 and see if you do not see a problem." Let us begin by admitting that this is not easy for one who is reading this in the English. However, in this text the key that unlocks the mystery to the truth is in the meaning of the Greek tenses. This verse does not claim that Christians will never commit any acts of sin (which would contradict 1Jn 1:8). The verb here denotes continuous action. This passage does not teach that a Christian never sins at all after his conversion. Those who claim that they can reach sinless perfection in this life cannot point to this verse as a proof text. The note in the Believer's Study Bible states, "The present tense, in this context, indicates the breaking of the perpetual hold of sin in the life of the disciple."

**C. Whoever Abides in Him Does not Continually and Habitually Sin.** In Justification, we are delivered from the eternal penalty of sin. In Sanctification, we are being delivered from the power of sin. In Glorification, we will be delivered from the very presence of sin - for ever! The lost person, because he is a slave to sin and Satan, is presently under a sentence of death (John 3:18). His only hope is in receiving Jesus Christ by grace through faith. The Christian is one who has been born again, and is being nurtured and developed by the Holy Spirit. As you are being conformed to the image of Christ, there are many sins that should no longer be a problem for you. That does not mean that we do not sin, for we do (1 John 1:8). We must confess our sins and seek God's forgiveness (1Jn 1:9). There is no contradiction here. What John is saying here is that the born again believer in Jesus Christ will not continue in sin so as to make it his lifestyle. He will not sin habitually. That does not mean that we have some magic formula we can use to determine whether or not our neighbor is really a born again believer. The Believer's Study Bible Notes may help us: "The power to overcome habitual sin is based on the invulnerability of the believer to the ravages of satanic influence (1Jn 5:18), and on "His seed" remaining in him (1Jn 3:9). The expression "His seed" is a reference to the divine principle of life that abides in a man after regeneration in Christ. This principle prevents slavery to Satan and sin."

**D. "Whoever Sins Has Neither Seen Him nor Known Him."** The person who continually sins so as to make it his lifestyle demonstrates that he has never known Jesus. Sadly, some have taught that one sin will condemn the believer to hell. A friend told me of the sermon he heard in his youth that troubled him for years. An evangelist stated a hypothetical situation in which the pastor of his church might be called on to visit a dying church member. He went on to say that if his buggy wheel hit a stump and he was thrown out of the buggy and hit his head on another stump and was killed, the pastor would spend his eternity in hell if he uttered a profane word before his head hit the stump. This is not what John is teaching. He says that when a person continues in sin, that is, sins habitually, he is demonstrating that he has never known Jesus Christ. He has no saving relationship with Him. You either abide in Christ or you abide in sin. Now, I would suggest that before we apply that to all the other members of our church, we apply it to ourselves first. If I can continue in sin, I must ask myself if I really know Jesus Christ. ([1 John 1-3 Commentary](#) 123 pages)

## [Can A True Believer Continue in Sin and Persist in Sin?](#)

"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. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God" (1 John 3:9-10).

"We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not" (1 John 5:18).

| <b>The Teaching of Zane Hodges and Joseph Dillow</b> |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| The fruitful believer                                | The barren believer                  |
| The partaker or heir                                 | The carnal one (non-heir)            |
| The believing believer                               | The saved person who stops believing |
| The overcomer  | The non-overcomer                    |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>This righteous saved person has a new nature that never sins. Moreover this saved person consistently walks in the Spirit and does not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.</p> | <p>This unrighteous saved person continues in sin and persists in wickedness. This carnal believer does not practice righteousness. He is born of God and has a new nature but he consistently walks in the flesh. He will not inherit the kingdom and will not reign with Christ.</p> |
|---|--|

There are three factors which prevent a true believer from continuing in sin, and they all begin with the letter "C."

(1) **CONFESSION**—The sinning believer need not continue in a state of sin because he may CONFESS his sins (1 John 1:9) and God is faithful and just to forgive his sin and cleanse him from all unrighteousness.

(2) **CONVICTION**—Spirit wrought conviction ought to lead to humble confession. If it does not, the conviction continues. The Holy Spirit makes His grieved presence felt (Eph. 4:30). The true believer can never be comfortable in his sin, even as righteous Lot's soul was vexed in Sodom (2 Pet. 2:7-8). We can thank God that He makes us miserable when we are not right with Him. When we are disobedient we are unsettled, unpeaceful, unhappy. Thank God it is so!

(3) **CHASTENING**—If the sinning believer does not respond in the right way to God's conviction in the heart, then the Father will chasten His child whom He loves (1 Cor. 11:31-32). Maximum chastisement can even result in the physical death of the believer (1 Cor. 11:30). As a good human father will not permit his child to continue doing wrong, so the Heavenly Father will not permit His child to continue in wickedness. [Hodges teaches that it is possible for true Christians to be "bastards" (Heb. 12:8--KJV) or illegitimate sons, and even though they are saved, they will not be chastened of the Father and they will lose their inheritance!

See Hodges discussion of Hebrews 12:8 in The Bible Knowledge Commentary. See also [The Teachings of Zane Hodges](#) ]

#### A Key Question:

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" (Rom. 6:1)

#### Paul's answer:

"God forbid (Perish the thought!). How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. 6:2)

#### Hodges/Dillow answer:

The believer should not continue in sin but many believers do. Many persist in sin and practice unrighteousness (even persisting in the sins mentioned in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10). They will be saved but they will not inherit the kingdom.

*Questions:* Why are not these believers convicted? Where is the Father's chastening hand? Where is the heavenly restraint?

R. Gene Reynolds in his helpful book Assurance—You Can Know You're A Christian said the following on page 73:

- A person who is living sinfully, who knows he is living sinfully, who enjoys living in such a manner, who intends to continue that sinful way of living—that person does not have the Holy Spirit living within him. The very fact that he is 'comfortable' about his sin is proof of the Spirit's absence. His spiritual vital sign registers 'no life.' (From [Assurance: You can know you're a Christian](#) See also Gerald Borchert's book "[Assurance and Warning](#)")

Hodges teaches that righteous living proves that a person is saved but that unrighteous living does not prove that a person is lost (*Bible Knowledge Commentary*, p. 893). He says, "the converse does not follow" (p. 893). In other words, Hodges teaches that a person can give evidence that he is saved but he cannot give evidence that he is lost! His righteous living points to LIFE but his unrighteous living does not point to DEATH! He can have assurance of salvation but not assurance of damnation!

For more discussion of this dangerous, deceptive teaching of Hodges, Dillow, Wilkin, et al see [INDEX PAGE](#).

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