

Lesson 20 – 1 John 3:4-10

How Do You Approach The Bible?

Expositionally vs. Topically

Exegesis vs. Eisegesis

Our Text

1 John 3:4-10 – “Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.”

What do you “Make a Practice of”?

ποιῶν – ‘poiōn’

- “To make, to do, to perform, to practice”
- The present active participle tense
An indication of present, continuous, ongoing activity, as opposed to occasional or sporadic actions

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This verb, in this tense, is present in 5 of the 7 verses in this passage.

- vv. 3, 8, 9 – “makes a practice of sinning”
- vv. 4, 7 – “practice(s) righteousness”

John accounts for 13 of the 27 times this verb is used in the NT:

- John 8:34 – Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.
- Matthew 7:21 – Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

There are other present active participles in this passage:

- vv. 6, 9 – “keep(s) on sinning”
- v. 10 – “does not love his brother”

In light of this, we deduce that this passage is not necessarily stating that the believer will never commit any sin, but that he or she does not make a regular practice of sinning.

Does this deduction line up with the rest of the counsel of Scripture?

John 18 – Peter (a believer) explicitly denies Jesus three times

Philippians 1 – Paul describes rivals preaching out of selfish ambition

Romans 7 – Paul describes his own ongoing struggle against sin

Hebrews 11 – Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Jacob, Moses, Samson, David, sinners all, listed in the “hall of faith”

1 John 2:1 - My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

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HOWEVER, John is not saying that believers can continue to sin with impunity; rather, that such habitual, unrepentant sin (and lack of righteousness) is an indication that one is not a true believer at all!

Why Did Jesus Come to Earth?

1. To take away sins

v. 5 – “You know that he appeared in order to take away sins”

To abide in Christ is to be subsumed into his purposes

If Christ came to take away sins, and we are habitually continuing to walk in sin, then this is a sign that we do not abide in him

On the other hand, the habitual practice of righteousness is a sign that we are abiding in Christ, clothed in his righteousness, and being progressively conformed into his image

2. To destroy the works of the devil

v. 8 – “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil”

To abide outside of Christ is to work contrary to his purposes

v. 8 – “the devil has been sinning from the beginning” The devil’s agenda: murdering (John 8:44a), deceiving (John 8:44b), binding (Luke 13:16), destroying (1 Cor. 5:5), blinding minds (2 Cor. 4:4), scheming (Eph. 6:11), accusing (Rev. 12:10), ensnaring (2 Tim. 2:26), devouring (1 Pet. 5:8)

Christ is “the way the truth, and the life” (John 14:6); Satan comes to obscure the way, distort the truth, and destroy life.

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“Who Is Your Daddy, And What Does He Do?”

To whom do you bear a family
resemblance?

Into whose image are you growing?

Whose character are you practicing?