

# Questions/answers on Sin

by James Blaine Chapman

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*The sermon discusses the nature of sin, its effects on believers, and the importance of sanctification and justification in overcoming sin.*

**Scripture:** 1 John 5:18

**Topics:** "Sin And Sanctification", "Christian Living"

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## Description

James Blaine Chapman addresses various questions related to sin, backsliding, sanctification, and the consequences of sin in the believer's life. He emphasizes the importance of seeking God's forgiveness and cleansing when sin arises in a believer's life, and the need for believers to pursue sanctification to overcome carnal uprisings. Chapman also explains the concept of the 'second death' as damnation for sin and the necessity for Christians to live righteously to maintain fellowship with God.

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## Transcript

QUESTION #276 -- If sin is willful transgression of God's law, and outbreaks of carnality are against the will of the converted person, should we say the person who has had an outbreak of carnality is backslidden and must be converted again?

ANSWER #276 -- When sin rises up in a justified believer he should not cast his confidence away, but should immediately seek a place of private prayer and should confess his sin and acknowledge his weakness and definitely trust the blood of Christ to cover all. And we should instruct Christians just this way. But upon the basis of such outbreaks we should urge all justified believers to go on at once and get sanctified wholly-that is the only cure for carnal uprisings, and no Christian can afford to tolerate these in himself. But nothing can be gained by our legalism by which we make chronic seekers out of faulty Christians. There is a better way to help them on into the grace of holiness.

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QUESTION #277 -- What is the meaning of the "second death" (Revelation 21:8).

ANSWER #277 -- The first death is condemnation for sin, the second death is damnation for sin. The sinner dies in that he is separated from fellowship with God while in this world. But his separation is final and irreparable when he dies in his sins and goes to "the bottomless pit," and this is the "second death" -- damnation, the execution of the penalty of guilt

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QUESTION #278 -- Some of my Sunday school scholars asked how it can be that a lost sinner can yet be rewarded in the future for the good deeds he does in this life. Please explain this to us.

ANSWER #278 -- This question is in substance the same as Jesus asked, "what is a man profited if he gain the world and lose his soul?" and the answer to that question evidently was "nothing." One must save his soul before he can save his life. If he misses heaven he misses all. It is like that in this world. One must be alive before he can own anything. A dead man cannot hold titles. Sinners will be rewarded in this world for any kind deeds they may done -- rewarded by the inner glow of an approving conscience, if not otherwise, but they cannot be rewarded in heaven, for they will not be there to be rewarded, unless they are saved in this world by the free grace of God.

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QUESTION #279 -- I John 5:18 says, "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not." But Ecclesiastes 7:20 says, "There is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good and sinneth not." How do you reconcile these two statements?

ANSWER #279 -- The passage from Ecclesiastes and one of like import in 2 Chronicles 6:36 are given to enforce the liability of all men to sin Hebrew scholars, without exception, I think, agree that the rendering most consistent with the evident meaning is, "There is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good and may not sin." This is a fact beyond dispute. No man alive has yet finished his probation, and he is yet liable to temptation and to sin "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." As to the text from I John: it is a fact proved by universal experience that no one can keep his fellowship with God and still commit known sin Either his fellowship with God will stop him from sinning or else his sinning will break his fellowship with God. A man must live right if he would be right.

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QUESTION #280 -- Please explain I John 3:6, "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him." Does that mean that anyone who sins after he claims to have become a Christian proves by his sinning that he never really knew the Lord?

ANSWER #280 -- I think the whole difficulty arises from the mixture of tenses. It would be plainer for us if we read it, "whosoever continually abides in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth does not (at the same time) see him or know him," and that would be in keeping with the real meaning. The statement is just an affirmation of the truth also stated in other scriptures to the effect that one cannot sin and at the same time be saved and right with God. It is a moral impossibility for one to be a Christian and a sinner at the same time, just as it is impossible for one to be truthful and a liar or honest and a thief at the same time. There is nothing here to contradict the fact that a sinner may repent and find forgiveness, even though his sinning may take place after he has been regenerated, or that other fact that we also know is true -- a Christian may give up his faith and drift into backsliding and into final apostasy.

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QUESTION #281 -- Please explain Hebrews 10:26. Does this mean that once we have had a good Christian experience and if all there remains no sacrifice for our sins? If so, how do you explain I John 2:1, "If any man sin, we: have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous"?

ANSWER #281 -- The warning in Hebrews means that the Jewish sacrifices had lost their efficacy and that one who thought to turn from Christ back to these would find no safety there. The text from I John 2:1 is our faith and hope. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father." Let us come to God through this advocate and we shall never have our petition denied.

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QUESTION #282 -- Many in my community hold to what they call "eternal security," but I believe the Bible teaches it is possible for Christians to backslide, and that we should be always on our guard lest we fall. I have many scriptures which I believe teach this. What do you think about it?

ANSWER #282 -- I believe this idea that one who has been born again cannot be "unborn" or that it is a reflection on the power and goodness of God to suppose one can backslide after having been made a child of God, arises from a too literal interpretation of the symbols by which the grace and power of God are set forth in scripture and Christian literature. The opposite of "born" is not "unborn," but "death," and relationship with God is for the whole course of human life on earth based upon conditions. To hold anything else is to hold that probation ends at conversion instead of at death. I think you are just right in your judgment, and that your position is in agreement with the Word of God. I Corinthians 10:12, I think covers every possible case and is a warning no one can afford to ignore.

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QUESTION #283 -- What is the line between the human and the carnal emotions? Is a wounded spirit or hurt feelings a sign of carnality? If so, what are the scriptural proofs? Is an emotion of anger possible to the sanctified? Please explain, "Be ye angry and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (Ephesians 4:26).

ANSWER #283 -- The line between the human and carnal emotions is the point at which ethical content becomes involved. Let us take covetousness as an example: it certainly is legitimate for a Christian to desire money and goods -- even to some degree beyond the creature requirements of the moment and the day, and beyond the measure of that which will sustain life on its lowest plane. And desire for such things is the basis of industry, economy, and many other virtues, so that we cannot define covetousness -- the sinful kind which Paul says is idolatry -- just as "desire for things we do not actually possess."

Rather, we must come to think of covetousness as excessive desire for that which belongs to another." And notice: it is not simply excessive desire, but excessive desire for that which belongs to another. Things belong to people who earn them, and when I reach the place where I desire to possess that which I do not earn, ethical content has entered into my desire, and the desire is sinful and carnal. But the man who desires, even excessively desires, an opportunity to earn what he would possess, is not sinfully covetous or carnal.

The same principle enters into other emotions. It is no indication of carnality for one to be wounded and hurt -- only if he bears it patiently. Christianity is not stoicism. It refines the feelings, but does not destroy them. A sanctified wife is hurt by the brutishness of an unthinking husband. A sanctified parent is wounded and deeply hurt by the choices of a wayward child. In fact a sanctified Christian is capable of the deepest hurt the human heart can know. But ethical content is involved when there is present a desire for revenge.

Take the case of our own Master: in the synagogue, among the cold, legalistic Pharisees, when He was about to heal the man with the withered arm, it is said, "He looked about upon them with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their hearts." But there was here no emotion of revenge. It was the hurt and anger of insulted justice and mercy, but this was mixed with a deep desire to do good to those who sinned against themselves. And on the text which you mention: Anger is a thing of degrees.

Yesterday I saw some coarse boys tormenting a weak, incompetent little fellow, and I resented the unfairness to the point where I was compelled to espouse the cause of the unfortunate. I felt I would be a coward and a partaker of their sin if I did not interfere. But I went just far enough to rescue the boy, and not far enough to take vengeance into my own hands, and when it was over I was ready and anxious to do any favor I could to the offenders. Even justifiable resentment against evil must not be cherished, lest it become an obsession, and take on the qualities of carnal wrath.

I think it is much better and much safer for us all to remember that the human may quickly become the carnal, and that we are never safe except when we are on guard. The idea that some bestowal of grace will work automatically, and that we have no further need of care and restraint and the purposeful practice of temperance, has, I think, caused much spiritual disaster. This grace will work, only we have to work it by observing its conditions.

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QUESTION #284 -- What is the meaning of I John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

ANSWER #284 -- The whole question along here is how to get rid of sin. John says that if we deny we have sinned, we make God a liar, for God has said, "All have sinned." Further, John says that if we say we have no sin principle (inbred sin) we deceive ourselves, and sin still remains. We cannot get rid of the guilt of sin by refusing to admit we have sinned, and we cannot get rid of inbred sin by denying we have it. What then shall we do? Why, says John, confess your sins, God will forgive you; confess your depravity, God will cleanse and sanctify you. Sin exists in two forms: guilt and pollution, and it takes two works of grace to rid us of it, and those two works of grace are forgiveness and cleansing, justification and sanctification.

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QUESTION #285 -- If sin is a voluntary act, involving choice and intention, is it not possible for a child to be brought to Christ before he has committed any actual sin? I know the Bible says, "All have sinned," but does that prove that all must sin?

ANSWER #285 -- As your thesis suggests, it is theoretically possible for the innocent child-that is innocent of knowing transgression -- to be brought to Christ and saved. But in this connection, it might be well to remember that the basis of the need of the new birth is in the fallen state and not in the guilt of actual transgression. Therefore the child, if brought in, as you suggest, would at the time of his faith in Christ have the same inward moral change wrought as adults have when they are regenerated and born of the Spirit.

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QUESTION #286 -- In Psalm 19:17 David prays to be kept from "presumptuous sins." What are presumptuous sins? I have been told that it is judging other people by putting our construction on their deeds and words, and that we should not do this.

ANSWER #286 -- Matthew Henry says presumptuous sins are those sins in which men sin against the habitual convictions of their own conscience, in contempt and defiance of law and its sanctions. It is high-handed sin, and for this reason is called "the great transgression." The distinction here is as between the sins which men commit in uncertainty -- not being sure whether the course is right or wrong--and the sins they commit against clear light. And David prays especially to be saved from sins which have no possible cover--these are the presumptuous sins.

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