

Old Man Is Sinning, Not the New Creation

by Tim Conway

The Christian's life demonstrates the new creation, and the old man is the source of sin, not the new creation.

Duration: 30:20

Scripture: Matthew 5:3-10, Matthew 7:21, Romans 6:6, Romans 8:13, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 2:10, James 1:22, 1 John 5:18

Topics: "Sanctification", "New Creation"

Description

This sermon addresses the misconception that as Christians, only the 'old man' within us sins while the 'new creation' cannot sin. It emphasizes the danger of nullifying biblical warnings by justifying ongoing sin as the actions of the 'old man.' The speaker refutes this view by highlighting the need to align with Scripture, emphasizing that believers are radically new creations where the old has passed away. The importance of living in holiness and obedience to God's commandments is stressed, debunking the idea of a dual nature within believers.

Transcript

Together with a friend, we're thinking about 1 John 5.18. Somebody want to read 1 John 5.18? We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him. So basically, the primary point of that verse that this person is bringing out is the fact that if you've been born of God, you do not continue in sin. You do not sin.

You do not keep on sinning. So, together with a friend, we were thinking about 1 John 5.18, about the Christian who cannot sin, keep on sinning, they have in brackets. Now, my friend explained it like this.

Christians are born again. They have two natures. The old and the new nature.

The old and the new man. So, when a Christian sins, it's the old man who is sinning, not the new creation. Because the new creation cannot sin.

So, even when a Christian is sinning, 1 John 5.18 is still true, because it's not the person who is sinning, but only the old man is sinning. I believe the text isn't telling us that. The danger of this view is we can nullify all the warnings in the Bible, because we, our new nature, cannot sin.

Is this view wrong? How wrong? And how to refute it? With kind regards, Quay. Good question. But, notice this.

When a Christian sins, it's the old man who is sinning, not the new creation. Because the new creation cannot sin. So, even when a Christian is sinning, 1 John 5.18 is still true, because it's not the person who is sinning, only the old man is sinning.

So, how wrong and how to refute it. First thing is, I'll tell you how wrong it is. It is so wrong that texts that directly deal with this say, do not be deceived.

Repeatedly, you get that kind of language concerning this very thing. Do not be deceived. Why? Because if you are deceived at this point, you will basically live an ungodly life, thinking that you're on your way to heaven, and in the end, you're going to be told to depart.

Who? The lawless. Those who are workers of lawlessness. Depart from me, you workers of iniquity, or you workers of lawlessness.

This is damnable. Satan loves to convince people that they can live in their sin and go to heaven. That is the lie of the ages.

You will not surely die if you violate God's commandment. Go ahead and eat it. You won't die.

That's been his lie from the beginning. It's his lie now. It will be the lie to the end of this age.

That is how he deceives the vast majority of mankind. You can sin, and then you can do something to make up for it. You can try to do some good works and gloss over the bad.

You can try to do some penance and gloss over the bad. Every religious system aside from Christianity is structured this way. Live in your sin, compensate for it somehow, redefine what righteousness is.

There's all sorts of ways. But basically, it comes down to this. And then you have the power to somehow pick up the pieces of your wretchedness and make up for it, and atone for it, and work for it.

This is the lie of the ages. It's bad. It's damnable.

So how do we refute it? Well, listen. The first thing is we just need to listen to what Scripture says. Now, I recognize that if you look at the King James translation of that text in 1 John, perhaps some other passages in 1 John, if you take the King James rendering, it basically says that if you're born of God, you don't sin.

Brethren, that's just not a good translation. That is a misleading translation. And it is keep on sinning.

The idea there is not perfection. The idea there is, is your life demonstrating the new creation? Is it demonstrating the fact that we have died to sin? The fact that the old man is crucified? Is it demonstrating that the body of sin is being brought to death? Is it demonstrating that by the Spirit, we are putting to death the deeds of the body? That's the issue. Scripture doesn't talk perfection.

In fact, John allows for the fact that we may fall into sin in that letter. But still, isn't it interesting? Within the space of how many verses he can say, little children, I write to you that you don't sin, but if you do, we have an advocate with the Father. Within just two verses, he talks about the fact that we should walk like Christ walked.

And that if we say we know Him, but we don't keep His commandments, we're liars and the truth isn't in us. And so those truths are there. But the other thing is, we just need to listen to Scripture.

Where does Scripture say the new man never sins, and it's only the old man, and we're a dual personality? There's a total misunderstanding of what the old man is. Have you ever read 2 Corinthians 5.17? What does it say? Yeah, if you're in Christ, you're new. You are new.

Yes, there's flesh, but where does Scripture ever deal with us as though, oh, well, if you sin, it's not really you. It's that old part of you. You are perfect.

It wasn't you. Scripture never speaks that way. In fact, John says, little children, I write to you that you don't sin.

Who's he writing to? Their old man? He's writing to them as little children. Little Christians. Little children, I write to you.

But if you sin, if you sin as little children, not as old men, not like you've got this old guy back behind you somewhere. You're not that old man anymore. Some of them would go to Romans 7.20. They would quote that.

You mentioned that there isn't a verse, but they would say, well, Paul says, now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. And they'll justify. See, that's where it's not the new man, it's the old man.

Well, I don't want to argue there because there's fundamental differences on what those texts mean. But rather than using Romans 7 as the platform, let's just use Romans 6. I mean, let's back up a chapter. And somebody read Romans 6.6. Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin.

Yeah, the idea is that we will no longer be slaves to sin. It's not saying that we've still got the old man and we're carrying around the old man and the old man is still a slave to sin. Scripture doesn't differentiate between this old and this new like we're two natures walking around.

Look, you are you. And Scripture deals with you. If you sin, it's you.

It doesn't seek to delineate between well, is it your old self or is it your new self? In fact, Paul says, look, if you're in Christ, you are new. You are little children. You are in Christ.

The old has passed away. That doesn't mean that there may not be demonstrations of sin, but the old has passed away. Listen, Paul says this, if you live according to the flesh, you will die.

Now you could say, well, the flesh, yeah, that's like the old man. Okay. The flesh is that which is human, carnal.

That's what flesh is. It's meat, carnal. Is that part of you that's human still? That's still fallen? But who you were when you were lost? That's gone.

But even if you wanted to try to equate the two, listen to Romans 8.13. If you live according, let's just say for a second, okay, well, flesh, yeah, the flesh is what lost people are. That's like the old man. Okay, let's use them interchangeably.

If you live according to the old man, in other words, still sinning, still freely doing the deeds of the body, you're going to die. And he's talking physical death. You're going to perish.

But, if by the Spirit, he doesn't say if your new man lives perfectly. You see, what he's describing is a life of putting sin to death. Not always perfectly, but there's a war being waged against these lustful passions that wage war against our soul.

And by the Spirit's power, we're putting these things to death. Not perfectly, but as a pattern. Or think with me about the text in 1 Corinthians 6. Because this is one of the do not be deceived texts.

1 Corinthians 6. And here's what you want to look at. Not just verses 9 and 10, which are so commonly looked at. I want to pull in 11 too.

Somebody read verses 9, 10, and 11. Real loud. Okay, the unrighteous.

He's not delineating between the old man and the new. Like the new is perfect, and the old is unrighteous. And so the old man is not going to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.

Listen, what he's saying is you. He's not saying part of you. He's not saying like, well, the new man's going to go to Heaven, and the old man's going to go to Hell.

What's that? We're not two persons. We're not two natures. We are what we are.

And what we are, if we're Christians, is we're not people who are characterized by all this list here. Do not be deceived. Nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor those who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.

Yeah, don't be deceived. Listen, if you want to say, well, it's my old man doing it. Okay, we'll say that, but still, it's you doing that.

And if you're doing that and it characterizes your life, he's not delineating between old man and new man. He's saying you. You.

If you do this, don't be deceived. You're not going to inherit the Kingdom. But then look at verse 11.

"...And such were some of you, but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." See, not just their new man. You. You used to be like that, but you aren't anymore.

Come on. Listen, if you say, okay, well before, I was only old man, and I sinned all the time. Now, I'm a new man, but I still got the old man, and the old man sins just like before.

You know what you're telling me? There's basically a new man somewhere packaged in there, but really, what your life looks like? Not any different. That's basically what you're saying. I still got the old man, and the old man still lives just as much in wickedness and in sin as he did before, and so what? Oh, there's really no difference in my life other than I just tacked the new man on.

But I'm still just old man. All the old man deeds come out. What's that? Paul never talks that way.

Paul basically says to these people, you know what? If fornication, if greed, if covetousness, if witchcraft, these different things, these works of the flesh, if they characterize you, you're not going to inherit the

kingdom. And that's how some of you were, but not anymore. You're washed.

You're cleansed. Those things don't characterize your life anymore. Because if they do, don't be deceived.

You're not going to inherit the kingdom. To talk that way, Jesus said, it's not everybody that says to Me, Lord, Lord, is going to inherit the kingdom of heaven. He doesn't even get into this old man, new man.

That's ridiculous. He doesn't divide people up like that. The thing He's saying is, you, you.

The thing that's going to characterize the life of a true Christian is a conformity to the will of His Father in heaven. And when He says, depart from Me, it's workers of lawlessness. Not your old man worked lawlessness.

You did. Think with me here. Jesus comes along and He says, if you look at a woman, you lust after her, you've committed adultery in your heart, and then you know He goes into, it is going to be better for you that you pluck that eyeball out and go into life blind than that you perish keeping that eyeball or right hand.

There's your right hand. What's He saying? He certainly isn't getting into any kind of dissection of man between old and new. He's saying you, you.

He's not saying cut off the old man. Like that's what the eye is and that's what the hand is. He's saying whatever is in your life, you need to cut it off.

There needs to be repentance. You need to cast it from you because if you don't, you are going to perish. But it comes back to the same truth.

By the Spirit we put to death the deeds of the body. We don't do it in our own might. We do it in His.

But even talking that way, that's death talk. When people want to create that kind of theology, and they do it because they want to justify the sin that's in their life and they still want to comfort their own conscience that they're Christians, even though there's all manner of unrighteousness in their life, and so they come up with twisted and perverted... Listen, this is the kind of twisting of Paul's teaching that leads to people's destruction. And I know it's John that was originally on the table here, but that's how Peter speaks about what people do.

They rest these things to their own destruction. That's what happened. Don't be deceived.

Don't be deceived. Jesus said it in John 8. He looked at those Jews and He said, You will prove to be My disciples indeed if My Word abides in you. You have it both in Matthew 7 and again over in Luke 6. The wise man builds his house on the rock and he is the one who hears the Word of God and he does it.

The foolish man hears the Word. There's no old man, new man. It's you.

It's you. And if you're in Christ, you're a new creation. And old things have passed away.

You're regenerated. You're born of God. And if you're born of God, His seed abides in you.

If you're born of God, the new man created in this image, this likeness of God, in true righteousness and holiness is going to characterize your life. Not perfectly, but radically. I mean, new life is radical.

And what? These works will flow out of our life. It's not just the negative. It's not just what we don't do.

We're His workmanship, like we looked at in Ephesians. Created in Christ Jesus under good works, which God purposed and determined and planned before the very foundation of the world beforehand that we should walk in them. So we just want to listen to Scripture.

People come along with their theories about what things mean, but what we have to do is we have to stop and actually ask, is this really what Scripture's teaching? I think this is one of the things about Romans 7. Whatever you want to do with Romans 7, you don't want to deny Romans 6 and Romans 8 in your interpretation of Romans 7. You don't want to deny what is so clear in all manner of portions of Scripture. You don't want to deny 1 Corinthians 6. You don't want to deny 2 Corinthians 5. You don't want to deny 1 John and James because of some idea you have about what Romans 7 means. Any conclusion that people come to that basically lead them to believe that they can live an ungodly life and go to heaven, that's deception.

Without holiness, no one will see the Lord. What? Without holiness of old man? Without holiness of new man? What? The Bible doesn't even talk that way. It's you.

You. If you aren't holy, you will not see the Lord. We refute error with truth.

We refute error with Scripture. And the thing to do is to go to Scripture and listen to it and ask, what is it saying? Paul says to those Corinthians, examine yourself whether you be in the faith. Well, how do you do that? If we all walked around with an old man that did all the exact same things that we did when we were lost, how would you even know? How would you even see that? How could we tell? There would be no self-examination.

There would be no test. You wouldn't know. How would you know? How would anybody know? How could we distinguish anybody who's righteous from anybody who's wicked and ungodly if all the righteous people had old men tagged on their being that basically went around doing all the same things? You wouldn't know because the person would be unchanged.

Because the person still has the old man. And all the new man living in perfect righteousness, that's just a mirage. What is that? You're going to say, well, the new man is perfect.

Yeah, but you're ungodly. Yeah, but that's an old man. That's just downright damnable error.

You think of them being divided. They loved. I was hungry and you fed me.

Radical change. I was hungry and you didn't feed me. But you see, he wouldn't be able to say that if their old man was operative in their life all the time.

How do you even distinguish between them? Basically, what we're told in the end is we are going to be judged according to our works. What are you going to say? Believer and unbeliever are no different. No, judgment day there's going to be a separation based on what we did.

Based on what we didn't do. Difference of life. Everything about the teaching of the New Testament is that if you're saved, you are radically new and different than you were before.

Every letter. All the teaching. Jesus hit on it over and over and over again.

Even simple things like putting your hand to the plow. Old man doesn't put his hand to the plow. But if you don't put your hand to the plow, and if you look back, you're not worthy of the kingdom.

Strive to enter in. Everything about the New Testament is we've entered into this narrow way. We hear the Word of God and we do it.

That's what James says. If you don't do that, if you hear the Word and you don't do it, you're deceiving your own selves. There's one of those deceiving texts.

Don't deceive yourself. We don't want to deceive people with that kind of thinking. We don't want to deceive ourselves with that kind of thinking.

Listen, we need to be very much settled that little children, when we sin, we can confess our sins and He's faithful and just to forgive them. We do have an advocate with the Father. We can run to the Lord and we can confess because we are going to fail.

But the truth is, Scripture everywhere indicates we're radically new and the old has passed away. If the old hasn't passed away, we're not new. Simple as that.

And if you say, well, I am, then you're just deceiving yourself and you're deceiving others. We don't want to teach that. One of the ways that we experience assurance is this very way.

If you say that you know Him, what should be true? You should be somebody that is impressed by His commandments. His commandments mean something. You don't just brush them off.

They're important to your life. Because you're a liar if you say, I know Him, and you don't keep His commandments. Oh, but it's my old man who doesn't keep it.

John doesn't talk that way. John says you are a liar. Not your old man's a liar.

You are a liar. Because something is defective in you. Something's not right in you.

James, you have something you're... Yeah, they have. And it's the idea of putting to death. It's not the idea of, well, one part of this is perfect, and the other part isn't, and that's just how it is.

It's like, no, we're one package. We're new. And there's something that's been crucified.

There's a battle that continues, but we have crucified lusts and passions. Well, anyway, you just think about the Beatitudes. The Beatitudes are characteristic of the people that make up Christ's kingdom.

Blessed are the poor in spirit. And blessed are those who mourn, and blessed are the meek, and blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, and the merciful, and the peacemakers, and the pure in heart, the persecuted. That's the character.

That's the new man. Well, Lord, we thank You that You've given us a lamp unto our feet, and I pray that these folks here would live in the light of Your Word. We pray in Christ's name, Amen.

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