

**Living The Christian Life Series**  
***“Lesson 17 – Graduating from I John 1:9 to James 1:16”***

By  
Dr. Troy S. Welch, Pastor-Teacher  
Spheres of Grace Ministries, Inc.  
6809 E. Hudlow Road  
Hayden, ID 83835  
(805) 701-6643

**Series Text: Romans 12:1** *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

**Applicational Text: James 1:16** *Do not err, my beloved brethren.*  
(Litteral Reading: **Stop Being Seduced, my beloved brothers.**)

**Introduction:**

Graduating from I John 1:9 to James 1:16 means we change our focus from confessing sin after the fact to focus on resisting temptation and that we stop being seduced.

Our current study series is titled “Living The Christian Life,” and focuses on the struggle we have in achieving that standard. We have seen that as a result of Adam’s sin we have inherited a natural disposition to sin. *“The wages of sin is death,”* but God became flesh, by virgin birth, in the person of Jesus Christ, and after living a sinless life, He volunteered to pay our sin debt if would just accept His offer. Because the “sin nature” is passed on in the human race through the male, Jesus was born of a virgin to bypass that inherited nature, and then He conquered death and the grave with a victorious resurrection and offers eternal life to **“...whosoever will call upon Him for salvation.”**

This “Salvation” is brought about by a new birth in which we receive a “Human Spirit” by which we can understand and relate to “spiritual things” according to I Corinthians 2:14. This new birth enables us to live the Christian life. This program is called grace – we have received God’s Righteousness At Christ’s Expense. However, because we continue to reside in a human body, we retain our “Old Nature” and there is continual conflict between the “Old Man” and the “New Creature” that we are in Christ Jesus (II Corinthians 5:17). This payment of our debt covers all our sins, past, present, and future. Our sins keep on being charged to Christ, but we have been commissioned to live for Him, and we need to learn how to live the Christian life effectively.

Because our salvation is a “new birth” experience we are equated as being “babes in Christ.” Thus, we need to learn how to live the Christian life effectively. In our previous study we have seen the distinction between “Salvation” resulting in all our sins being charged to Christ, past, present, and future and “Fellowship” in which we are empowered

to live the Christian life. We have seen that although the penalty of sin is not charged to us, that sin is now a family matter and disrupts our fellowship with the Father and quinces the power of the Holy Spirit that enables us to live a life that results in true peace and inner happiness. (I Thessalonians 5:19)

In our study last time we explored the provision God has made for us to successfully deal with temptations – those solicitations to sin that we encounter. We concluded in that study, “This sets the stage for us to explore our transitional graduation from I John 1:9 to James 1:16 to live the Christian life effectively.”

Yes! There are four techniques revealed in the Bible for living the Christian Life, and each believer will receive an award based upon the development of these techniques. Four “stephanos crowns” are awarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ to each believer reflecting the degree of development of these techniques in living the Christian life. However, the real benefit of developing the techniques is to experience the fulness and joy God has designed for us while we Live The Christian Life. But, before we review those techniques we need to answer the question, “Can a Believer Practice Sin?” in order to *“...Stop being seduced...”*

I John 1:9 provides critical instruction to the Believer for dealing with the issue of sin. *“...If we confess us sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

However, when we examine I John 3:9 it says, *“...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.”*

These two statements in the Epistle of First John emphasize the importance of our understanding the difference between Salvation and Fellowship as is illustrated by the cross and the two spheres of Grace, and raise the question, *“Can a true Believer sin as a Practice?”* Attempts to answer that question have confused theologians, split churches, and led to deliberate mistranslations of passages such as I John 3:9. So, let’s get a biblical answer to that question in order to understand the four biblical techniques for effectively living the Christian life.

There is a growing distortion of the doctrine of Grace today that parades under the banner of Lordship Salvation - The idea that if Jesus is not Lord of all He is not Lord at all. So, Let me again raise a question? Can a genuine Believer sin as a practice?

Can a Believer practice sin? Now that’s an interesting question. Before we pursue that question, it let me remind you that we have seen in this series we have titled, “Living The Christian Life,” that God has given believers the potential to live a godly life. I Corinthians 10:13 tells us that God will not allow us to be tempted above what we are able to bear - but will with every temptation provide the way of escape.

But, experience and observation teach us that we don’t always look for that escape.

There has been an attempt, on the part of some Bible translators and teachers, to translate the present tense of the Greek word **"poieo"** as **"practice."** An example of this is found in the New American Standard translation of the New Testament. In I John 3:9 they have translated the word **"commit"** which is from the Greek word **"Poieo"** as **"practice."** There is an inherent danger in translators attempting to interpret instead of translating. The King James text reads as follows:

*"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."*

The New American Standard reads as follows:

*"No one who is born of God practices sin, because his seed abides in him; and he cannot sin because he is born of God."*

The NASB explanation for translating **"poieo"** as **"practice"** is based on the use of the present tense (continuous action).

However, the Koine Greek provides a different word for practice, it is the Greek word **"prasso."**

The writers of the New Testament used these two words (**"poieo"** and **"prasso"**) very distinctly. As, a matter of fact, the writers were very careful in their choice of words to declare distinctly their messages from God. An example of this distinction is found in Paul's writing in Romans 7:15 where we find three different Greek words translated in the King James by our one English word, **"do"**.

Romans 7:15

*"For that which I do I allow Not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that Do I."*

The three Greek words in their respective order are: **"katergadzomai"** (something on the inside working its way to the outside); **"prasso"** (practice); and **"poieo"** (perform).

The literal translation from the Greek New Testament says:

*"For that which keeps on working out from inside of me I understand not: for what I desire, I do not practice; but what I hate, that is what I keep on performing".*

It is my personal belief that it was by God's design that the language on the New Testament was Koine' Greek for us to be able to know exactly what God intended. The original writers were directed by the Holy Spirit in a very deliberate use of words. I believe the divine inspiration of Scripture includes inspired grammar and syntax.

If a person who practices sin is unsaved, then the Apostle Paul was unsaved when he wrote the book of Romans. Because, in Roman 7:19 Paul said he **practiced** sin. He used the Greek word **"prasso"** – *"...the evil that I would not, that do (prasso=keep on practicing) I..."*

## LET'S DEVELOP AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF I JOHN 3:7-9

While studying this passage it is important for us to understand the Greek sentence construction of this Epistle. It is written 'polemically'. The Koine' Greek did not have punctuation. The grammar and syntax of the language did not require punctuation. As a matter of fact, in the original writing of Greek there was no spacing between the words. The language is so exact that spacing and punctuation were not necessary. To write 'polemically' was to express, in grammar and syntax, the idea of raising one's voice, or in an action of our day, striking the pulpit with the fist. This letter is filled with "sanctified sarcasm". It is written in a completely different style than John's gospel or II and III John. The term, "*my little children.*" is sanctified sarcasm. He is saying "*my little babies.*"

### Let's examine I John 3:9

#### Whosoever (Pas) - *every single one*

Pronominal Adjective - ascribing quality of identification  
Nominative Case- identification  
Masculine Gender- initiator of action  
Singular - individual position

#### (ho) = *the one*

Definite Article - specific  
Nominative Case - identification  
Masculine Gender - initiator  
Singular- each person individually

#### is born: (ge-gen-ne-meh'-os) *having been begotten*

Verbal Participle - indicating action and principle  
Perfect Tense- completed action in past time with results continuing  
Nominative Case - identification  
Passive Voice – subject is acted upon (having been begotten)  
Masculine Gender - initiator  
Singular- individually

#### *of God: out from the source of the God*

(ek) *out from source of -*

Preposition - genitive/ablative (clarifies action)

(tou) *the -*

Definite article - specific

(theou) - *God*

Nominative Case - identification

Genitive/Ablative - source

Masculine - initiator

Singular - one God

**doth (poiei) - performs**

Verb - action

Indicative Mood - reality

Present Tense - continuous action

Active Voice - subject produces action

**not (ou) - not**

Negative Adverb meaning “not”

**commit sin; (ha-mar-tian) - sin**

Noun- person, place or thing

Accusative Case – establishes limits and boundaries

Feminine Gender - response

Singular - one (see! does not commit one single sin)

**for (hoti) -because**

Subordinating Conjunction (introduces the means)

**his (autou) of Him** (The grammar takes us back to God - His seed refers to God’s seed)

Pronoun – substitutes for a noun to avoid repetition

Genitive Case- possession

Masculine Gender - initiator

Third Person Singular – he, she, or it

**seed (sperma) - sperm**

Noun – person, place, or thing

Nominative Case - identification

Neuter Gender - instrument (not initiator or responder)

Singular-

**remaineth (me-nei) - remains**

Verb- expresses action

Indicative Mood- reality

Present Tense - continuous action

Active Voice - the sperm produces the action of remaining in him

Third person Singular

**in (ehn) - in the sphere of**

Preposition (clarifies action)

Dative/locative/instrumental – Advantage/Location/Means

**him: (autoh) - him** (the one begotten)

Pronoun – substitutes for a noun to avoid repetition

Dative Case - dative of advantage - Locative - Instrumental

Masculine Gender - initiator

Third Person Singular

**and (kai) - and**

Coordinating Conjunction

**he cannot (ou)(dunatai) - he cannot**

(ou) – adverb – modifies verbs and adjectives

(dunatai)

Verb- expresses action

Indicative Mood - reality

Present Tense- continuous action

Middle or passive deponent – with the negative means no participation

**sin, (hamartanein) - to sin (he can't intentionally sin!)**

Infinitive - denotes purpose or intention

Present Tense- keeps on not being able to sin

Active Voice - subject keeps on not being able to sin

**because (hoti) - because**

Subordinating Conjunction – explaining the reason

**he is born (ge-gen-ne-tai) - he has been begotten**

Verb- expresses action

Indicative Mood - reality

Perfect tense - completed action with results continuing forever

Passive Voice - he has been begotten

**of (ek) out from the source of**

Preposition (clarifies action)

Genitive/Ablative - out from the source of

**(tou) - the**

Definite Article - specific

**God. (theou) - God**

Noun- person, place or thing

Genitive-Ablative Case - source

Masculine Gender - Initiator

Singular - one God

**Expanded Translation of I John 3:9:**

*Every single one, the one having been begotten in a completed action with results continuing forever, out from the source of The God, keeps on not performing a single sin, because the sperm of Him remains in the sphere of him, and he cannot even participate in purposed, intentional sin, because he has been begotten in a completed action with the results continuing forever, out from the source of God.*

Does this create a problem for you? Have you committed even one sin since you were saved? Of course you have! Experientially! But not positionally! Positionally our sins are charged to Christ!

This verse only becomes a problem when one fails to see the distinction between our eternal position in Christ and our experience. Yes! We perform the act, but the deed is not charged to our account.

Remember! We must observe three rules in biblical interpretation: What does it say? What is the context of the statement? and, How does it harmonize with every other passage of Scripture in the Word of God?

## **We Must Harmonize This Statement with Romans 4:1-8**

**Study Passage: Romans 4:1-8**

- 1 *What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?*
- 2 *For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath [whereof] to glory; but not before God.*
- 3 *For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.*
- 4 *Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.*
- 5 *But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*
- 6 *Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,*
- 7 *[Saying], Blessed [are] they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.*
- 8 *Blessed [is] the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.*

This passage indicates we receive the righteousness of God by Faith - it is not our righteousness that makes us accepted - our own righteousness disqualifies us from any relationship with God.

Justification has always been by grace through faith and provides the capacity for inner happiness.

### **I. THE EXAMPLE OF ABRAHAM: (Romans 4:1-3)**

Let's note a couple of things found here in the text.

***“What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?”***

***“What shall we say then...”*** This is an idiomatic phrase to introduce an argument concerning faith as opposed to works. The phrase, ***“ti er-ou-men”*** in the Greek anticipates an objection

***“...Abraham our father...”*** The Greek text says: Abraham our first father. This is a reference to the fact that Abraham was the first father of the Jewish race. The Jews start their genealogies with Abraham. remember Matthew’s record of the genealogy of Christ - It started with Abraham.

***“...as pertaining to the flesh...”*** The question here is, what did Abraham find out with reference to the flesh and its ability to justify oneself?

A. If he was justified by works, he has something to boast about.

***“For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath [whereof] to glory”*** (verse 2a)

***“...if...”*** This is a first class, debaters’ technique conditional clause and should be translated, Let’s assume for the sake of our discussion that Abraham was justified by works.....

***“...he hath whereof to glory...”*** Assuming that was the case he would have something to boast about.

***“...glory...”*** (kauchema) = boast

B. However, before God, man is unrighteous.

***“but not before God.”*** - not when facing God. When man compares himself to another man, he might be able to boast - Abraham could have. But when man is compared to God’s standard he has nothing to boast of - He can only accept the grace God has provided.

C. Genesis 15:6 is the Scripture which tells us that Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.

***“And he believed in the LORD; and He counted it to him for righteousness.”***

(1). ***“believed”*** (believed in a point of time) The Grammar here indicates that this belief occurs in a point of time with continual results.

(2). ***“counted”*** (elogisthe) = put down as a credit to one’s account



Expanded Translation of verses 1-3: *“What shall we say then that Abraham our first father found with reference to the flesh? Assuming that Abraham was justified on the basis of his works, he has grounds for boasting - but not when facing God. For what does the Scripture say? [Genesis 15:6] Now Abraham believed God, and it was credited to his account as righteousness.*

## II. IF SALVATION WAS BY WORKS GOD WOULD BE INDEBTED TO US -TO PAY US: (Romans 4:4)

*“Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.”*

*“worketh”* (ergadzomeno) = to do that from which something results

*“reward”* (misthos) = wages - dues paid for wages

*“not reckoned”* (logidzetai) = not put down as a credit to one’s account

*“of grace”* (kata)(charin) = according to the standard of grace (unmerited favor)

*“but”* (alla) = the strongest conjunction of contrast in the Greek language

*“of debt”* (kata)(opheilema) = according to the standard of that which is legally due - a debt

Paul uses an illustration here calling attention to the fact that when the employer gives the worker his pay it is not for unmerited favor but to satisfy a debt that the employer is bound to discharge. And, while the employee might thank the employer out of courtesy, he is not morally obligated to do so because he has earned the wages. If man earned salvation by good works God would be indebted to give it to him.

Expanded Translation of verse 4: *Now the one who works looking with a definite result in view [wages]. The remuneration is not put down on his account as unmerited favor, but as a legally contracted debt.*

## III. FAITH IS COUNTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE: (Romans 4:5)

*“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”*

*“But to him that worketh not”* - but the one that does not work with wages in view....

*“But believeth on”* - but makes it a principle to put his dependency upon.....  
Participle - matter of principle

**“on him that justifieth”** - on the one who is the justifier of.....

**“the ungodly”** (asehbe) -the one who is destitute of reverential awe toward God,...

**“his faith”** (he)(pistis)(autou) - his dependency [upon the one who justifies]..

**“is counted”** (logidzetai) - is credited to his account....

**“for righteousness”** - as having conformed to the plan [of God].

Expanded translation of verse 5: *“But the one that does not work with wages in view, but makes it a principle to put his dependency upon the one who is the justifier of the one who is destitute or reverential awe toward God, his dependency is credited to his account as having conformed to the plan [of God].*

#### IV. DAVID’S STATEMENT: (Romans 4:6-8)

6. *Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,*
7. *[Saying], Blessed [are] they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.*
8. *Blessed [is] the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.*

##### A. Quotation of Psalms 32:1-2

1 *Blessed [is he whose] transgression [is] forgiven, [whose] sin [is] covered.*

2 *Blessed [is] the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit [there is] no guile.*

- B. Inner happiness's belong to those whose iniquities have been forgiven and whose sins are covered.

**“Blessed”** (makairoi) - inner happiness's are possessed by ...

**“they whose iniquities are forgiven”** - Inner happiness's are possessed by those whose lawlessness's were put away....

**“iniquities”** (anomi'an) - lawlessness's

**“forgiven”** (apheh'thesan) -put away (a judicial term for acquittal)

**“whose sins are covered”** Remember! David lived before the cross and sins were only covered on that side of the cross. Today they are wiped away.

C. Inner happiness's belong to those to whom sin is no longer charged.

***“Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin”***

***“impute”*** (logi'setai) - to charge to one's account

-inner happiness's belong to the man to whom the Lord by no means charges his account with a sin.

Expanded translation of verses 6-8: ***“Even as David also declares the inner happiness's of the man to whose account God credits conformity to the specifications of his plan apart from works.***

***Inner happiness's are the possession belonging to those whose lawlessness's were put away and whose sins were covered.***

***Inner happiness's belong to the man to whose account the Lord does not, by any means, charge with a sin.”***

## **Conclusion:**

David knew about the grace of God and about God not charging sin to one's account.

II Samuel 12:13 says:

***“And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.”***

***“put away”*** this is from the same word that means to charge to one's account. God was not going to charge it to David's account.

However, David was disciplined. And God used the same measure of discipline that David had prescribed in his response to Nathan's story of the rich man who took the poor man's ewe lamb ***“And he shall restore the lamb fourfold...”*** (II Samuel 12:6). Four of David's children were killed: that child conceived by Bathsheba; Amnon, David's firstborn; the two other sons, Absalom; and Adonijah.

The believer will experience discipline designed to change his behavior. But the believer's sin is charged to Jesus Christ's account and is not charged to the account of the believer.

If those who practice sin are not saved then the Apostle Paul was not saved. I base that on Paul's statement in Romans 7:19 where in the Greek text he said, ***For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.***

The word, "do" is used twice in this verse. The first time it is translated from the Greek word, 'poioh' (perform). The second time it is translated from the Greek word, 'prasso' (practice).

Expanded translation of verse 19: *"For the good that I purpose, I perform not; but the evil which I purpose not, that I keep on practicing."*

Yes! A believer can practice sin, but they open themselves up to "Divine Discipline" and they miss the joy God has designed for us to experience in Living The Christian Life.

So, stay with us as we explore "The Four Techniques for Living The Christian Life in order to graduate from I John 1:9 to James 1:16.

**But it begins at Salvation:**

*For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God...*

*The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life...*

*With the heart man believes unto righteousness...*

*But with the mouth confession is made unto salvation...*

*For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved!*

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that  
ye present your bodies a living sacrifice,  
holy, acceptable unto God, which  
is your reasonable service.*

**(Romans 12:1)**