

THE LINK

March 2019



OLD PEACHTREE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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The Christians and Sin

We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not.

--1 John 5:18, KJV

We have been studying the Gospel of John on Sunday morning. We noted that John's purpose was to show us Jesus so that we might believe in him and be saved. John's first *epistle*, on the other hand, is about certainty: how do I know if I really am saved? In his letter he gives a number of tests by which we might evaluate ourselves. Then, in the closing verses (13-21), the apostle states no fewer than five affirmations of what we know. One of those affirmations is quoted above, from the King James Version, the translation I grew up on. It is a good translation, though admittedly with an "olde worlde" flavor. The New American Standard is almost the same, except for some updating: "We know that no one who is born of God sins."

So what is the problem? I sin! And I think I am safe to say that you sin as well (1 John 1:8, 10). But the verse said that no one who is born of God sins. Does that mean we are doomed because we sin? That we are not real Christians? Is sinless perfection the mark of the Christian? This problem warrants a closer look. "Here is where," as a seminary professor of mine used to say, "a knowledge of Greek grammar will bless your soul."

The verb translated "sin" (or "sinneth") is a Greek present tense, which indicates ongoing action. In other words, the point is not just that I sin once or twice, but as a regular pattern. The English Standard Version reflects the meaning of the tense by translating the phrase, "We know that everyone who has been born of God does not *keep on* sinning (italics mine). This rendering clarifies the meaning, though even it could imply that the Christian stops sinning at some point.

What John is getting at is this: The Christian does not allow sin to be the pattern of his life. 1 John 1:6 says the same thing in different words: "If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth." In other words, if a person is comfortable with his sin, if he feels no conviction about it, if he has no concern to put it to death, he may well not be in Christ.

John is not saying that if you sin once, you are no Christian. He is not even saying that if you sin repeatedly (some sins become deeply ingrained and hard-to-break patterns), that your profession is false. What he is saying is that if you are comfortable with "walking in darkness" then you do not know the God who is Light, and in whom is no darkness at all (1:5).

As Christians, we should hate sin, and nowhere more than in our own heart. If you are "born of God" (5:18), you will hate your sin. When you sin, your heavenly Father will not leave your conscience untouched. But we can be more proactive in dealing with our sin than merely suffering a guilty conscience. Examine your life and heart in the light of God's Word. Fight with all your strength

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(and the grace of God) against anything in you that is contrary to that Word. Do not be easy on yourself. Do not excuse your sin. Don't say, "That's just how I am." Do not presume on God's grace. Make every effort to ensure that the pattern of your life is not sin but obedience, not darkness but light. Have you grown careless and let your guard down? Resume the fight!

You do this, of course, not in order to be saved, but because you are saved. You do it because you are "dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Romans 6:11).

Alan Johnson

MARCH BIBLE STUDIES

WOMEN

Monday Evening

This study meets 6:30-8:00 p.m. on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month (6:30-8:00 p.m.) (*Reading Ephesians with John Stott*) (March 11 & 25). All women are welcome to attend! Contact Jenni Sickert (jsickerts@gmail.com) or Jane Horner (jane@outstand.com) if you have questions.

Tuesday

The OPPC Tuesday women's Bible study meets every week at 9:45 a.m.—11:45 a.m. Childcare is provided. The study is Philippians using *In All Things, a nine-week devotional Bible Study on Unshakeable Joy* by Melissa Kruger. Please join us.

Saturday

The Saturday women's study meets approximately every other week (March 9 & 23) from 9:00–11:00 a.m. No childcare is provided. Please feel free to join us at any time as we study Ephesians using the study guide *Reading Ephesians with John Stott*.

All women's Bible studies meet at OPPC in the fellowship hall.

MEN

Tuesday

The men's Bible study meets every Tuesday at 11:00 a.m. at Duluth Diner (3620 Peachtree Ind. Blvd., Duluth 30096). Questions? Contact Ken Larson (pro2bug@gmail.com).

JOHNS CREEK SMALL GROUP

Please join us for Johns Creek Small Group on Wednesdays, March 6 and 20, at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Owen and Tina Malcolm (310 Dewpoint Lane, Johns Creek, GA 30022). If you are interested or need information, please contact Owen Malcolm (owen.malcolm@unitedcp.com) or Tina Malcolm (tinammalcolm@gmail.com).

MISSIONARY UPDATE

Summary of Ministry David & Daniela Larson

Team: Amazon Net Team
Location: Pucallpa, Peru, South America
January 30, 2019

Ministries are in order of how much time we spend on each, with the first ministry being the most time.

Launch Team Ministry

- Our mission is to mobilize, train, and launch church planting efforts to the unreached tribes of the Amazon. This involves training two times per week, yearly retreats, monthly fasting, and weekly team meetings. We mobilize new missionaries from around the world but mostly from the US. We also are now working with national Peruvians to partner with us which is an answer to our prayers. One Peruvian couple is now leading a multi-cultural team in the remote Naporuna tribe.
- Mobilizing involves Skype conversations, reviewing their application and inviting them to visit us in Peru on a 10-day vision trip. If they join our team, we help them learn the Spanish language and train them for about 4 months. We teach them character formation and relevant ways to survive and thrive here amongst spiritual warfare, team conflict, etc. We teach team dynamics on how to live and minister together effectively in unity in a tight but stressful community where people are living in a new culture (the jungle region), hot uncomfortable weather, and with a new language.
- We teach bonding with the local culture, cultural adaptation, worldview understanding, time management, bush craft (how to survive in the jungle), church planting methods, discipleship and leadership training methods.
- Coaching helps to retain missionaries and provides for emotional needs as well as the much-needed cultural understanding. David spearheaded the coaching effort and now every new missionary is assigned a personal coach.
- David has led our team for the last 6 months by teaching Church Planting Movements. He developed documents that the team uses to teach the new missionaries on safe practices, contingency plans, crises standard operating procedures, evacuation protocol, bug out bags, etc.
- We also help host an 8-week summer "EDGE Trip" where 5 college age students come minister with us who are considering long term ministry in the tribes.
- Overall, we've launched out five members to long term tribal ministries.

House Church Ministry

- I (David) have had our house church to be trained on how to multiply and make disciples by sharing their testimony, sharing the Gospel, teaching Bible stories and leading inductive Bible studies. Leaders are chosen and trained to continue and multiply the process.
- Daniela models and empowers other ladies on how to teach the children about God and the Bible.
- David is partnering with a large traditional church with our Church multiplication strategy as the pastor wants to empower his members to plant house churches that partner with the mother church.
- Daniela disciples the ladies and David disciples the men in small groups. Marriages have probably been saved due to this. Several now lead their own groups and are trying to plant new churches.

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Regional Child Safety Officer Ministry

- David serves as the new Regional Child Safety Officer for the entire Americas, from Canada, the US, Central, and South America.
- This involves sitting on cases to decide what the best course of action is in cases of abuse, as well as making sure every member of my region takes the yearly training that they are required to do.
- This involves yearly training and child abuse cases when and if they come to light.

Heart Beats of Hope Ministry

- Daniela volunteers with a crisis pregnancy center. She counsels and shares the Gospel with young women who've often times made bad decisions or have been raped and are pregnant. Daniela also shares at camps and local schools to wait for marriage and the blessings found by following Biblical principles related to romantic or sexual relationships.

Shipibo Bible Institute Ministry (Cacao Fields)

- This ministry's main purpose is to have Shipibos teach other Shipibos the Bible in their own language that they can be prepared for ministry and missions.
- PIONEERS has helped to set up the institute and to plant Cacao fields to financially support the Bible Institute and pay the professors. David partners with them by helping with their fields and teaching.
- They allow us to bring our groups for a few days or weeks to practice ministry in a safe and relatively easy village community before we launch them out to more hostile and/or harsh environments.
- This ministry opened doors to bond with a tribal community where there is mutual trust and help.

YOUTH GROUP—WESTMINSTER RETREAT—MARCH 1-2

Those attending our annual spring youth retreat please meet at OPPC at 6:00 p.m. on Friday, March 1, leave by 6:15, and caravan to Camp Westminster in Conyers, 2412 Lake Rockaway Road. There will be sandwiches (likely Chick-fil-a) to eat on the way. We will return to OPPC Saturday evening, March 2, by 10:00 p.m. Chaperones are Kara-Mia Appleton, Denise Funk, Elizabeth Pajares and Gabe Pajares. If you are a middle or high school student, we would love for you to join us! Contact Joe (joe.deighton@oldpeachtree.org).

RYM CONFERENCE—SAVE THE DATE—JULY 8-13, 2019

Location: Laguna Beach Christian Retreat Center in Panama City Beach, FL

Speaker: Rev. Russ Whitfield, Pastor, Grace Mosaic, Washington, DC, Director of Cross-Cultural Advancement, RUF

YOUTH GROUP FOOD SCHEDULE

Volunteers supply food for the Youth Group on Sunday evenings (5:30 p.m.). Thank you for your help with this fellowship. Please contact Jennifer Taylor (taylorkhandan@yahoo.com) for more information.

March 10 - Wilson
March 17 - Wong

March 24 - Oliver
March 31 - Horner



MEETINGS AND GROUPS

First Sunday Lunch

Join us for First Sunday Lunch on March 3. Please invite your friends and neighbors.

Communion Week

We celebrate the Lord's Supper in the morning service on March 10. We have communion on the second Sunday every month.

Deacons Meeting

The Diaconate meets Wednesday, March 13, at 7:00 p.m. in the fellowship hall (the second Wednesday of each month).

Session Meeting

The Session meets Wednesday, March 27, at 7:00 p.m. in the fellowship hall (the fourth Wednesday of each month).

Youth Group

All 6th grade -12th graders, even college students, are welcome to join us for dinner at 5:30 on Sundays except for the first Sunday of each month. Food volunteers are the Wilson Family (March 10), the Wong Family (March 17), the Oliver Family (March 24), and the Horner Family March 31.

NURSERY SCHEDULE - MARCH 2019



DATE	11:00 a.m.	6:00 p.m.
3/3	Bennett, Dunahoo, Elizabeth	No Service
3/10	Chandy, Meier, Rebecca B.	Richards
3/17	Johnson, Kang, Amanda	Wilson
3/24	Ellison, Josiah	Butler, Horner
3/31	Taylor, Rebecca L.	Yamazaki

LINK DEADLINE: Please turn in articles and information for the April *LINK* by Thursday, March 21.

Old Peachtree Presbyterian Church exists to glorify God and to extend the kingdom of Jesus Christ. To accomplish this end, Old Peachtree aims to be a church that is continually growing in vital worship, in theological depth, in true fellowship, in assertive evangelism, and in deeds of compassion. The distinctiveness of Old Peachtree is in its desire to be Presbyterian in government and Reformed in theology, with the vitality that comes from evangelism and discipleship.

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