

# The Fathering Influence of God

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While writing this, the Lord spoke to me with an urgency, compelling me to warn and help prepare His people against the encroaching deception of this hour. He told me that if His people do not allow Him to deal with the ongoing sin problems in their life that they would not be safe from the darkness but seduced by it. Two years ago on New Year's Eve the Lord gave me a prophetic word warning that "the wolves were coming." As I write this, I sense the Lord's heart welling up within me as a shepherd who has seen the wolves on the horizon, heading toward his sheep. When a shepherd knows his sheep are in danger, he will use whatever means that he has available to protect them at the expense of his own life. I see the wolves coming and with that urgency do I present this message.

First, I will lay some groundwork through Scripture.

The fathering influence of God plays the most vital role in delivering and keeping us from sin and its hostile nature toward God, therefore, deception. 1 John 3:6-9 reveals:

"Whoever abides in Him [Christ] does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. (7) Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. (8) He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. (9) Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God."

Some difficulties must first be cleared up concerning this passage. Some of our minds may have become clouded because of having been subjected to various interpretations. Even so, its true meaning becomes quite clear when we look at it in context.

Some have taught that the apostle was referring to the spirit of the born again Christian when he stated that those who are born of God does not or cannot sin (v.9). However, the verse in question uses "whoever" and "he" as referring to the whole person instead a part of them. The verse does not state that "the spirit of whomever" or "the spirit of him" does not or cannot sin. Others suggest that the passage is referring to the "practice" of sin instead of an act of sin. The actual definitions of the original Greek words for "does" and "cannot" convey the idea of *not having the ability* to sin.

Could the passage be referring to “sin” as that which is committed against Christ by those who do not believe—the sin of rejecting the glorified Christ as our only Redeemer and Savior? Such sin is coupled with the mindset of a person that is, by nature, continually alienated and hostile to the things of God. This passage is at least alluding to such sin and our drifting away into as God’s people. This would include *hostile* sins committed against His body—the Church. The heart of a person, devoid of love, that maligns Christ’s Church has sinned against Christ, proving their hostility toward Him. Such sin can be forgiven but slanderously accrediting the works of the Holy Spirit to the devil will never be forgiven (Mt. 12:31).

To further explain the first point referencing the spirit of a Christian, we become a *partaker of* the divine nature according to 2 Peter 1:4, but do not become divine in nature. Scripture indicates that only the divine (God) is incorruptible (James 1:13), and that the spirit of a Christian and also the conscience thereof can be defiled—made unclean by sin (2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Corinthians 8:7). Since we are not divine, we can become corrupted—spirit, soul, and body. By deliberately partaking of the divine nature, we are kept from both the sins of rejecting and abusing God’s most excellent grace and the sins of the flesh. By doing so, we are continually reconciling ourselves to God through Christ Jesus. Because we are corruptible, this should greatly motivate us to partake of or abide in the Lord our Vine, making sure we are in no way becoming a stranger and ultimately hostile to His wonderful presence (Jn. 15; Eph. 4:18; Col. 1:21).

While attempting to understand the passage in 1 John 3, one must also consider the fact that John cannot be teaching that it is impossible for us to commit an act of sin. He alluded to that possibility in 1 John 1:8-2:1. Secondly, 1 John 3:6 states that those who abide in Christ do not (have the ability to) sin. Abiding in Him, alludes to the adoration of, the giving of thanks because of, and praising the person of Christ who is the exact representation of the Father. A heart given to such a love of Christ can hardly turn against Him. One can therefore conclude that verse nine is an extension of and complimentary to verse six. The problem lies with our attempting to take verse 9 out of its context and then understand it.

Now, having laid the correct foundation to understand this passage, let us go on to understand the truth about it that sets us free indeed.

According to the passage in 1 John 3, a person must abide in Christ (v.6), be born of God (v.9), and have His seed remain in them (v.9) to keep from sinning. In other words, in order for us to keep from sinning, as already defined, we must be entirely surrendered to the fathering influence of God in our hearts. The phrase “His seed” used in the passage discloses the fathering aspect of God to which I am referring.

Verse 8 of the same chapter reveals:

“He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”

It is not too difficult to see that the apostle is contrasting God's fathering influence in people with the devil's influence of hostility toward God. That is the devil's seed. If we sin, we are "of the devil" or, more specifically, we are allowing the devil's seed (his fathering influence) to rule us. So, we have a choice either to yield to the seed of Father God and produce righteousness or behave like the offspring of the serpent. Abiding in Christ would, therefore, be equivalent to yielding to the seed of God (His fathering influence in our hearts). As long as we are abiding in Christ or are allowing God's fathering influence to prevail in us, we will not practice or even commit an act of sinful hostility toward God. Complacency and lukewarmness will be far from the heart of a Christian who abides in Christ. Sin should be the exception and righteousness the rule since we have been born of God and do have the seed of His fathering influence in us.

Our greatest longing should be to know God as our Father, in unison with the cry of the Spirit of adoption in us, "Abba, Father." Because His fathering mercies are new every morning, our every awakening morning can and must involve a new commitment to surrender to God's fathering influence. One thing that I find quite enjoyable is to shower my daughter with love and affections after she wakes up in the morning or wake her up in doing so. This gives her a new, affirming, and awakening assurance of my love for her. Can you imagine our Father God being the same way toward us? He is! We must acknowledge this reality every morning if we are going to experience it. Every morning when we awake we can and must cry, "Abba, Father. He is!" Let's shout that together now.

Ongoing sin in our lives will keep us from knowing God as our Father. I am not just referring to things like anger and sexual lust but anything that is less than walking in Christ's love. This would include our making subtle and unrighteous judgments against others. If we do not know or are not secure in who is our Father, then the world, sin, and the kingdom of darkness will provide seductive substitute counterfeits that will fill up the vacuum. We will end up loving and giving ourselves to lies instead of the truth. As my Father in Heaven told me once, "If you do not find your place of security in Me every day, you will look for it in something else." In other words, we will not have a heart full of faith in God, but one that is plagued with expectation toward the tangible temporary. Instead of standing in faith, waiting on the Lord's provision for our needs, we will be seduced by those things that appeal to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2). Our hearts will be desensitized to God and locked into the things that are seen. The pure in heart will see, discern, be sensitive to, and recognize God as their Father (Matthew 5:8). They will be alert to the cry of the Spirit in them and content with God's provision. Hostility toward God (the seed of the serpent) will be far from them.

When we are born again, God's fathering seed is placed in our hearts and remains there to produce His likeness in us. More specifically, the Lord desires to mature a people who are led by the Spirit—the sons of God. However, the Christian will remain carnal (a spiritual babe), if this seed is not nurtured and developed. We will follow and boast in spiritual leaders, affiliations, and organizations instead of the Spirit of adoption from our Father (1 Cor. 3). Submission to and the fear and praise of men will take the place of the Lord.

If we truly desire to be and remain free from sin and its defilement, then we must subject ourselves to the Father of spirits and live (Hebrews 12:9). Understanding that He will often father us through the mature apostle, prophets, evangelist, pastors, and teachers in the body of Christ. God has ordained these as protectors and nurturers of the seed of the Father in every one of us. Every mature spiritual leader is vital in the growth process of the Church, and we must heed their words, embrace their correction, and accept their reform and order. Not one of the five-fold ministry functions is more important than another; however, if any one of them is missing or their influence and authority not embraced, our spiritual growth will be inhibited.

We must ask ourselves, “Are we truly allowing ourselves to be fathered by God or is the father of lies taking control of our lives?” The father of lies offers pseudo promises of self-worth, financial riches, power, fame, enjoyment, peace, and happiness by appealing to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. This deceiver is so crafty that he will have us convinced that it is of God, and will send us “assurance” through other “Christians” under the influence of a lying spirit.

Again, “Who are you allowing to father you?” If you have bought into the devil’s lies then you are not only deceived but have also become a deceiver. Are you heeding those whom God has put into your life, those through whom He speaks, or are you only listening to those who tell you what you want to hear? Those who are of the world only hear those who are of the world. Unless we have been deceived as a Christian, then we will only listen to the voice of our Abba Father. The best indication of our being deceived and heading toward disaster is that we no longer listen to the true people of God whom we would normally listen to. We refuse to heed the objective counsel of those who are not walking in our shoes, but gravitate toward those who scratch our itching ears. The “wolves in sheep’s clothing” to which Jesus referred in the Gospels seek to condition or indoctrinate God’s people in such a way that they can only hear those who propagate the deception.

Satan’s greatest tool of deception is offense. “He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling [offense] in him. (11) But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes” (1 Jn. 2:10-11). Offense that takes root within the heart spiritually blinds us and greatly stifles our God-given sense of destiny and purpose. Instead we stumble around in life, not knowing where we are going. Seducing spirits and doctrine of demons often use offense as the door of entrance into a person’s belief system. They will also use any intellectual pride.

The times we are living in are perilous so we must be sober and vigilant because the devil is walking about *as* a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. The wolves have appeared on the scene wearing sheep’s clothing. Identify them and warn others about them. Thoroughly know who your real Father is. Overcome the father of lies by the anointing (the influence of the Spirit of truth) that abides in you. It never will lie to or mislead you. By it, you will abide in Christ and His love for you, thereby, keeping you from the fiery darts of the enemy (1 Jn. 2:27).

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Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotes are from the New King James Version of the Holy Bible.

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