



# God's Standard for His People

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hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." All the days of our life we are to live holy, according to Luke's Gospel.

Then, 1 Peter 1:15-16 says: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." The standard for God's people is holy living. Logical reasoning would teach us that we are to live holy. We serve a holy God, a holy Christ, and a Holy Spirit; we read from a Holy Bible, and we are going to a holy Heaven. So, it stands to reason that we will have to live holy to get there.

The standard for God's people is a perfect standard. The word *perfect* scares some people. Matthew 5:48 says, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." There is only one way we can be perfect as the Father in Heaven is perfect, and that is heart perfection. In the beginning God said, "Let us make man in our image . . ." (Genesis 1:26). Then man fell, but God through His Son's death on the Cross brought us back into His image.

Man's soul was first made in the image of God. Colossians 3:10 tells us, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." When we are born again of the Spirit of God and then consecrate our lives fully unto God, we are back in the image of God, just as God first made us.

Jesus told the rich young ruler how to be perfect in Matthew 19:21. He said, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." Hebrews 10:14 tells us, "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." We must be perfect in heart. The heart must be pure. Matthew 5:8 reads, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." We will make mistakes as long as we live, but mistakes are not sin. Study the words *sin* and *mistake* in *Webster's Dictionary*.

Several times the Bible teaches us about perfection. Matthew 21:16 tells us about perfect praise. First John 4:18 lets us know that "perfect love casteth out fear." Then, James 1:4 says, "But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Also, in Hebrews 7:19 we read, "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did."

First John 2:1-2 tells us: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." The standard is that you sin not. Verse 6 of this same chapter reads like this: "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." To find out how Jesus walked, turn to 1 Peter 2:21-22: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." Here Christ set the example for us and said we should follow it.

The world has standards, and we are settled on them. Twelve inches is a foot, three feet is a yard, and sixteen ounces is a pound. We can be just as settled on God's Word when it comes to the standard. We just need to drop our former theories and traditions and simply read the Bible and let God talk to our hearts. The world is full of people who will tell you that you cannot live above sin. Every one of them has been taught this theory by men. If a hermit or a man marooned on an island, who had never heard a preacher and never made any contact with religious people, got saved and started to read his Bible, he would read about holiness, holy living, and a life above sin.

In Titus 2:11-12 we read: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Right in this world with sin all around, we are to live godly, above sin. We read in Luke 1:74-75: "That he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the

Not only is the standard for God's people a holy and perfect standard, but it is a sinless standard. First Corinthians 15:34 reads, "Awake to righteousness, and sin not." Jesus told the adulteress woman in John 8:11 to "go, and sin no more." Jesus told the healed cripple in John 5:14 to "sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." The modern doctrine tells us that living above sin is not true; in other words, Jesus told those two people to do the impossible. The truth is He told them to do what they could do. John wrote in 1 John 2:1, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not." This is the standard for God's people. Second Timothy 2:19 says, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

Paul said in Romans 6:1-2: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" When you are dead to sin, you will not live any longer in sin. It is a religious mockery to be baptized unless you are dead to sin, for water baptism signifies a death to sin and a resurrection to the newness of life in Christ. If we are not dead to sin, it would be hypocritical to be baptized in water.

John had more to say on the sinless standard. First John 5:18 says, "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." John was very positive: "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not . . . and that wicked one toucheth him not." The devil cannot touch us if we keep ourselves in the hollow of God's hand.

We read in 1 John 3:6-9: "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. 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."

This should be plain enough for every honest heart to see the truth. Notice what Paul said in verse 7: "Little children, let no man deceive you." That is just exactly where all this deception has come from: men whom the devil has worked through, who deceive people by twisting the Scriptures. Regardless of what Scriptures you find that may not seem to agree with these Scriptures, they will when they are rightly divided. This modern theory that has gone out to deceive the world, by telling people they cannot live above sin, is not even an inducement to good moral living. It encourages careless and sinful living. The Old Testament writer penned, ". . . lift up a standard against him" (Isaiah 59:19). The modern preacher has lowered the standard, because lowering the standard gives him more prestige with the world.

Another theory that generally bounces out when people are cornered with such Scriptures as I have used on holy and sinless living is the theory that the soul lives holy but the body sins a little more or less every day. This theory is far from Bible truth. It is impossible for the body to commit sin. Ezekiel 18:20 says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

You cannot find one Scripture text that says the body commits sin. We read in 1 Corinthians 6:18, "Every sin that a man doeth is without the body." Then, the modern theory that says the body sins must be wrong. The soul is the seat of affections, the governor or the control room, and whatever the soul says to do, the body does it.

The soul commits the sin, and the body carries out the act. Many a sin is committed by the soul, yet the body never moves to carry out the act. For example, Jesus said all a man had to do to be an adulterer was to lust in his heart (Matthew 5:28). Also, all a man has to do to be a murderer is to hate his brother (1 John 3:15).

In these two examples, the body has not moved, but the soul has transgressed against God. It is absolutely impossible, unscriptural, and unreasonable to think that the soul can live pure and holy while the body sins a little more or less every day. In John 9:31 we have the statement that "God heareth not sinners." Psalm 66:18 also says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." If we want the Lord to hear us, we are going to have to quit the sin business. When we turn our backs on sin, then God will hear our cries. Proverbs 28:13 tells us, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." I am glad that when God saves us, He takes the desire for sin out. We do not have any desire for sin, so we will not be committing sin.

Before I conclude, I would like to ask these three questions: (1) Did you ever see an honest thief? No! And you never will. The fact that he steals disqualifies him from being honest. (2) Did you ever see a truthful liar? No! And you never will. The fact that he lies keeps him from being truthful. (3) Did you ever see a sinning Christian? Think really hard before saying yes. Be sure that he is a Christian, and be sure that he sins. The answer is no! You have never seen one, and you never will see one. The very fact that he sins disqualifies him from being a Christian.

The day that you produce the sinning Christian, I will produce the truthful liar and the honest thief. I cannot produce

the truthful liar or the honest thief, and you, my friend, cannot produce the sinning Christian. Let us face the Word of God. Matthew 1:21 says, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." He did not say He would save us *in* our sins, but *from* them. Hebrews 12:14 tells us, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." May God bless you and help you to study the Word of God and forget the theories of men.

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