

THEY CANNOT CEASE FROM SIN!


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“Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:” II Peter 2:14

The apostle Peter describes some very wretched people in his epistle whom he says *“cannot cease from sin.”* He spoke of them, *“as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed...”* II Peter 2:12, who will receive the same eternal reward *“...as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time”* II Peter 2:13. In other words, these people, whoever they are, are no better before God than those who would stick a gun in your back and take your wallet, or those who riot in the streets, break store windows and haul off the “loot.” The secular world would call them “confidence men,” but Peter identified them as false teachers and false prophets. Those who trust in them always come out a “loser” in the end. Their target is the elderly and those whom Peter called *“unstable souls”* II Peter 2:14. Peter described their method of enriching themselves at the detriment of others in this way: *“...through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you”* II Peter 2:3. These lay awake at nights plotting their next scheme to get more money from those who trust in their lies. Peter said, *“an heart they have exercised with covetous practices”* II Peter 2:14.

“For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.” II Peter 2:18

These seem to be natural leaders who have great persuasive powers over people. Through their *“damnable heresies”* they are *“bringing on themselves swift destruction”* II Peter 2:1, and Peter said, *“...many shall follow their pernicious ways”* II Peter 2:2. Jesus explained *“pernicious ways”* (ways of destruction) when He said, *“... wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat”* Matthew 7:13. These wretched creatures have chosen the “wide gate” and the “broad way” for themselves, but multitudes are following them to their own destruction. Considering the wretchedness of these and the detail with which Peter describes them, perhaps the best identifying label for these is ***“those who cannot cease from sin.”***

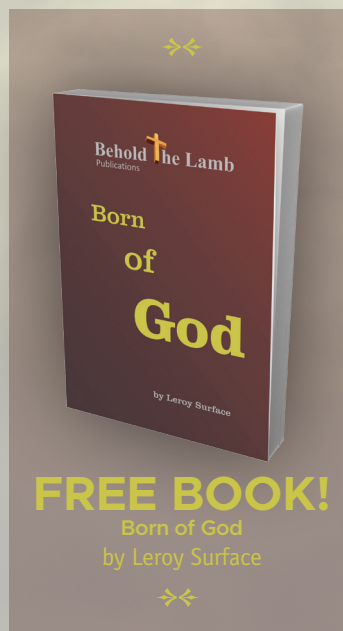
As astounding as it is to consider that Peter warned of a group of people who *“cannot cease from sin,”* it may be even more shocking to consider that the apostle John speaks of another group whom he says *“cannot sin.”* Isn't this amazing that from these two apostles we discover two distinct groups of people? The identifying

mark of the one is ***“they cannot cease from sin,”*** but the other is identified as those who ***“cannot sin.”*** Now here is the problem we face in this discovery; every person on earth fits in one of these two groups. While it is true that not every sinner is as wretched in their ways as those described by Peter, it is also true that there has never been a “sinner” who could “cease from sin.” The reason John gave for those whom he said *“cannot sin”* is *“because they are born of God”* I John 3:9. He didn't say it only once, however, but repeatedly: *“...whosoever abideth in Him (Christ) sinneth not”* I John 3:6; *“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin...”* I John 3:9; and *“We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not...”* I John 3:18.

When a pastor friend heard me preach on “Freedom from Sin,” he said, “I don't sin, but I can sin!” I told him, “A person can only do what is in their heart to do.” If a sin is not in your heart, you cannot commit it. There are many who have been caught up in the mantra, “We are all sinners” who perhaps are not themselves sinners, but one thing is certain: Those whom the precious blood of Christ has purified their heart when they first trusted in Him, CANNOT continue in sin.

My question for everyone who reads this message is, “which of these are you?” Are you of those Peter spoke of who *“cannot cease from sin?”* Or, are you of those John spoke of who *“cannot sin?”* In a “church age” that constantly chants, *“We are all sinners; we sin every day...”*, where do you fit? Many people say, *“We are all sinners,”* but somehow believe they can “cease from sin.” Those who believe they can cease from sin and have not ceased are twice guilty, obviously of “willful sin” Hebrews 10:26.

The fact is, however, no “sinner” can cease from sin, but there is “good news.” Christ, the creator of heaven and earth became a man to die on a cross to *“take away the sin of the world”* John 1:29. The Prophet Daniel said, *“The Christ”* would *“...make an end of sins...make reconciliation for iniquity...and bring in everlasting righteousness”* Daniel 9:24-27. If you know you are a sinner and *“cannot cease from sin;”* if you know *“the wages of sin is death”* Romans 6:23; and if you know you are “lost” because of sin, there is good news for you. Jesus Christ died on the cross, not just to “forgive you” and leave you in a struggle with sin, but He died to *“make you free from sin”* Romans 6:18 and fill you with His life and righteousness. Jesus said, *“If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”* John 8:31-32. Turn your heart to see Jesus Christ, who *“loved you, and gave Himself for you”* Galatians 2:20. He will *“take your sin away.”*



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