

RELATIONAL THEOLOGY SERIES SEVEN
THE GREATEST HINDRANCE TO INTIMACY WITH GOD
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I Jn. 3:4-10

Turn to 1 John 3.

- SLIDE #1: “Tucson Citizen: Nation tries to make sense of 1st grader killing classmate.”
- SLIDE #2: “School shooting doesn’t surprise local parents”
Are we that calloused to sin.
- SLIDE #3: And Satan just laughs! This is his work.

- SLIDE #4: “Cybersex compulsion called ‘public health hazard.’”
- SLIDE #5: And Satan just laughs. This is his work.

- SLIDE #6: War devastation in Chechnia
- SLIDE #7: Drug killings in Columbia
- SLIDE #8: Fox’s I want to marry a Millionaire cheapened marriages
- SLIDE #9: Divided families
- SLIDE #10: and Hurting children
- SLIDE #11: And Satan just laughs. This is his work. Of course, God never designed the world to be like this.

- SLIDE #12: There once was a time of great harmony among God and Adam and Eve in the Garden; intimacy and oneness, walk and talk together in the Garden.

- SLIDE #13: This is probably how God designed it all throughout the Universe. *Astronomy* magazine 33 confirmed planets outside our solar system. Our planet is the one that messed up.

- SLIDE #14: Genesis 3 the temptation by Satan begins. Eve fell into sin.

- SLIDE #15: Let me show you schematically what happened in the Fall.
Before the Fall perfect balance: 3 circles of Adam and Eve emphasizing Relationship (spirit) and Knowledge (soul)

- SLIDE #16: Let me show you what happened at the Fall: 3 Circles of Adam and Eve—Relationship shriveled and Knowledge (Ate of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil) all enormous.

- BUILD SLIDE #17A: Now Adam and Eve are hiding from God in the Garden. Describe the sadness, “Where are you Adam?”

READ GENESIS 3:8-9:

- BUILD SLIDE #17B: “Where are you?”

Do you hear the sadness in God’s voice—or do you just read the verses intellectually and rationally?
Do you hear the hurt?

READ GENESIS 3:10-13 and EMPHASIZE GOD’S horror and hurt at what has happened in their relationship.

Describe feelings of Divorce between Adam and God:
Great Pain,
Regret
No spiritual connection—lost intimacy

- **SLIDE #18:** Great intellectual religion divorced from feelings and emotions. “I was afraid so I hid.” That is why God is a heavy taskmaster. Relationship with God has been destroyed. God longs to restore it back.
Barter system of alimony: payoffs, buy offs, trade offs, Old Testament sacrifices and offerings, “I don’t want your stuff. I want your heart.”

Many of you have gone through a divorce and, OK, let’s get real—it would have been easier if your spouse had died. Close the book and get on with life. But, that is not what a divorce is like. You still have to deal with them, interact with them.

A great divorce occurred between us and Adam—I am certain God thought about just killing him off and starting over (that was His intention with Israel at one point.).
But, God choose to woo man back. Not like a death. It is like a divorce.

- **SLIDE #19:** Adam and Eve being thrown out of the Garden. This is Satan’s Work.
- **SLIDE #20:** Here is a picture of Jesus Christ dying on the cross to forgive the sins of the world and open the door to reconciliation with God. This is God’s work.

With that introduction, we may read our passage.

- **SLIDE #21:** I John 3:4-10: Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.
- **SLIDE #22:** Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.
- **SLIDE #23:** No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.

Let’s clear up a misconception from the outset. Repeatedly John says, “Christians don’t sin.” So, we look at our sin and wonder if we are Christians.

There is a balance between our passage and 1 John 1:8. READ 1 JOHN 1:8. Both passages ask the question, “Does the Christian sin?” 1 John 1:8 answers “Yes!” 1 John 3:4-10 answers “No!”

Of course we sin. John is saying one of two things.

First, Xns don’t just keep on sinning, over time they clean up their lives.

But, second, John is probably referring to the fact that the Gnostics of John’s day minimized sin. “You can be a Christian and sin all you want,” they proclaimed.

John replies, “No Christians don’t sin. Need inflection to comprehend properly.

Like learning rules of respect in grade school: “Show respect to teacher. Don’t sass back at the teacher.”

Child sasses and speaks disrespectfully to teacher. Teacher says, “Young lady, we do not talk like that in this class.” Well, the child just did. Yes, but, that is not the point.

People still today say, “hey, you can sin and still be a good Christian, God will forgive you.” John says emphatically, “No. Christians don’t sin. We don’t behave like that.”

- **BUILD SLIDE #24A:** Christians Do Not Have Permission To Sin For Two Reasons:
- **BUILD SLIDE #24B:** 1. Sin furthers the Devil’s work.
- **BUILD SLIDE #24C:** 2. Sin impairs our relationship with God.

We live in a society that has so minimized sin we don’t know what sin looks like. When I watched president Clinton unable to acknowledge that his behavior with Monica Lewinski was a sin against Monica, God, Hillary, and Chelsea, I knew that we have lost all sense of sin in America.

There are five basic Greek words which describe the multi-dimensional nature of sin.

- **SLIDE #25:** *Hamartia* (the word used in this passage) was originally a shooting word and means “missing the target.” Sin is the failure to be what we might have been and could have been. “I know, God, I know should have been there to help raise the kids. I know how much they are hurting. I know I should have been there in those early growing up years, but I just got distracted.” God’s heart weeps for what might have been.

- **SLIDE #26:** *Parabasis* means stepping across. Sin is stepping across the line which is drawn between right and wrong.

“OK, God, I know it was wrong to go to bed with another man’s wife. We both knew it was wrong. But we were both so lonely. Both of our marriages were struggling. But, God, I never knew it would end like this. My children despise me, my reputation is shattered.”

Counseling Center: Most don’t repeat adultery. Once is enough.

Some how or other God resists the temptation to say, “I told you so. He just aches.”

- **SLIDE #27:** *Paratoma* means “slipping.” It is the kind of slip we might make on an icy road.

“All right, God, I know I was hanging around the wrong kind of friends in the wrong kind of places, but I never dreamed that I would get hooked on drugs. It just sort of happened.”

And God weeps as He views the broken down mom and dad and the thrown away life crumpled on the floor before Him.”

- **SLIDE #28:** *Anomia* is lawlessness. *Anomia* is the person who knows what is right and still does the wrong. It describes an attitude of life that says, “I don’t need God, or his way. I will do just fine on my own, thank you.”

We see him at the Judgment: “But, God, I am so sorry that I decided to live without a savior. Surely, I did enough good things to enter Heaven. Please let me in. I don’t want the lake of fire.

I want to see the look on God’s face in deepest agony: Weeps as he dispatches the lawless man or woman into a Hellish eternity.

- **SLIDE #29:** *Ophelia* means a debt. It is a failure to pay what is due. It is failure to do a duty. It is the essence of selfishness. You keep for yourself something that belongs to another.

“I can’t believe God how miserable I am after 20 years of marriage. It has not turned out at all like I imagined. I guess the only reason we are still together is for the kids. Otherwise we would have split up long ago. What happened to our relationship?”

God weeps over the marriage of a man who forgot that one of the most important thing in life was to invest himself in his life partner. Instead, he spent 20 years investing in other things.

•SLIDE #30: The Christian Enterprise Involves the Destruction of Sin and the Destruction of the Devil's work.

•SLIDE #31: 1 John 3:5: But you know that he appeared so that he might take away (luo) our sins. And in him is no sin.

1 John 3:8: He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy (luo) the devil's work.

•SLIDE #32: 1 John 3:5 describes Christ's work on our personal behalf in the destroying sin.

Let me show you how intentional Jesus was about this. How many here know John 3:16?
How many know John 3:15?

•SLIDE #33: Jesus is referring to the Old Testament story of the uplifted serpent from Numbers 21:4-9 is an intriguing picture story of Christ destroying the personal effects of sin.

The people had sinned and God sent poisonous snakes for punishment. Begged for mercy—God told Moses to make the bronze serpent and put it on a pole. Poison coursing through veins, did not matter, Whoever looked at the uplifted serpent lived.

We all have sin coursing through our bodies. Christ crucified. Look at uplifted Cross and believe and sin has no effect.

A terrible storm swept the Atlantic coast of England and a ship was thrown on the rocks. The storm rose higher as the night deepened. Fires were kindled all along the shore. The lifeboat was manned. Out through the breakers and into the storm they went to the rescue. Several hours later they came back with all except one sailor.

John Holden cried, "Why did you not get him?"

"Our strength was gone, we were exhausted. It was all we could do."

Then John Holden said: "Who will go with me to rescue the last man?" and six sturdy men came promptly forward.

Then John Holden's mother threw her arms about his neck and said, "John, don't you go! Your father was drowned by the ocean, and your brother William two years ago went out upon the sea, and I fear that he is lost, too. Who will care for me if the sea swallows you also?"

Then John Holden gently pushed his mother aside: "There is a man there drowning, and I must go, mother." Kissing her cheek, he turned and stepped into the lifeboat and they pushed out into the sea. They found the man still clinging to the rigging, got him into the boat, and pulled back to the shore.

As the boat neared the shore, someone shouted, "Have you found the man?" "Yes," answered John Holden, "and tell my mother he's my brother, William!"

Jesus pushed back again and again into the angry sea of sin until He rescued you—and me.

Jesus will go to the utmost lengths to restore our relationship with Him.

•BUILD SLIDE #34A: Like the story of the Prodigal Son. He waits with open arms for our return.

•BUILD SLIDE #34B: With some of us, He has to say, "This is the fourth time I've had to kill the fatted calf."

•SLIDE #35: 1 John 3:8 describes the global war.

Remember that the earth is now Satan's world. Jesus will get it back in the end (See Revelation 5.) But, until

then, the world is under the influence of the Evil One. Therefore, it behooves us to develop a proper worldview. The Bible teaches that the world is not a basically good place where evil happens occasionally.

- SLIDE #36: The world is a place where sin and evil are commonplace and Christians are enlisted as good soldiers of Christ to push back the darkness.

The war is on. Evil abounds. We are to pray and work earnestly for the Kingdom of God to come on earth.

- SLIDE #37: Christians Do Not Have Permission To Sin Because: 1. Sin furthers the Devil's work.

John's uses the term *lawlessness* in verse 4. Same term used by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2 to refer to the antichrist, "one who is lawless", one who stands in direct opposition to Christ at his second coming. To sin is to participate in his kingdom.

Sinning is like playing for they wrong team!

Story of Tommy Tucker Scoring a basket for the wrong team. Walnut Hill vs. Stephen Foster; 14-10; fourth grade.

- SLIDE #38: Christians Do Not Have Permission To Sin Because: 2. Sin impairs our relationship with God.

1 John 3: 6: No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

Sin and fellowship with God are incompatible. "Seeing God" refers to fellowship. Moses was able to do amazing things for God because he could "see Him who is invisible."

- SLIDE #39: God lives in our human spirit. This is where we know and experience God.

- SLIDE #40: Sin dirties up our human spirit and impairs our ability to see and experience God.

STORY of Running Stop Sign and Fogged over windshield in Hillsboro, Tx.

- SLIDE #41: Confession Cleans Up a Sin-soiled Inner Spirit

- SLIDE #42: 1 John 1:9: If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

- SLIDE #43: Confession cleans up a dirty spirit.

Let me show you what a good confession looks like.

- BUILD SLIDE #44A: *"I realize that I have hurt you deeply by my selfishness, inattention, and wrong priorities, and that was wrong of me, will you please forgive me?"*

Confess means to agree with, or to speak the same thing as. Confession means that I say the same about my sin as God does. What does God say about my sin?

- BUILD SLIDE #44B: It causes Him pain. My sin drove nails into His hands and feet.

This causes us to deal theologically with personalized Christianity. It means to get alone with God and

deal with the fact that my behavior is intricately involved with the fact of why He had to die. You mean to tell me that my selfishness is a part of why He had to die? Yes.

•BUILD SLIDE #44C: I agree that what I did was wrong—no excuses.

•BUILD SLIDE #44D: Then we ask, “Will you please forgive me?” —And He will.

Julie sat down this week and wrote “God’s love letter of divorce.”

Where are you?

Why did you walk out? We were so close...we had it all.

We thought the same thoughts. We could talk with a glance...no words were needed.

Every time I saw you, my heart leapt to my throat. I felt such joy and pride at how amazing you were. But then one day, I saw a restlessness in your heart. You wanted more, although you weren’t sure what “more” was.

Then I came home to you one afternoon and you had left me.

How could you do that? I’d given you all I had to give...

The divorce got really ugly. You would hide and run every time I came near. You became fearful and suspicious. You questioned my every motive...

Then came the charades. You’d wear these masks to show how happy you were without me. You’d fill your days and nights with other things so your misery wouldn’t show.

You’d manipulate me to get what you want.

Then the custody fights started. Everything is no longer ours, it’s mine and yours...and mostly yours.

What happened to the life we built together?

Now you’re two people—you say all the right things with your mouth, just like a trained robot.

But the heart is gone.

You make empty promises...

And you live like we were never together.

Where are you?

Oh, my sweet love, don’t walk away from again....

If you do, it will kill me—

Jesus.