

What is a Christian?

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I John 3:9

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.

This is one of the most controversial New Testament texts. Can a person sin and still be a Christian or if a person sins is he or she not a Christian? What does the Apostle John mean when he says, “Whoever has been born of God? does not sin . . . and he cannot sin”? Does he mean that a true Christian is perfect? Is he to be understood to say that if someone says they are a Christian and sins, they only prove they have never been a child of God? What does he mean a Christian cannot sin? To answer that question you must know the answer to another question—what is a Christian? Not until you know that will you know what John is saying.

This second question is also controversial and a great deal of confusion circles it. Some believe Christianity is simply a religious tradition into which one is born. They believe you are born a Christian because the religious tradition of your family is Christian. It is no different than the question of your ethnicity; it is just a part of your family identity. Others say that a Christian is someone who has been received into the membership of a church; it does not matter whether by infant baptism or adult baptism so long as a church has granted you acceptance into membership. In other words, an organization or institution confers Christianity upon someone; they make you a Christian by some religious rite.

A more evangelical definition of a Christian is that a Christian is a person who has received Christ Jesus as Savior. It is a decision one makes and that is what makes one a Christian. Others argue that it is not a decision but an experience, a personal religious experience where you feel God’s love and acceptance in a very special way. Some say that a Christian is someone who believes in God and tries to do good.

Well, you can see why there is so much confusion on what is a Christian. But this is too important to not be sure. You may think your definition of a Christian is the right one but that doesn’t make it right. As a man was driving down the freeway, his phone rang. When he answered, he heard his wife warn him urgently, “George, I just heard on the news that there’s a car going the wrong way on 280. Please be careful coming home!” “I’m on 280 right now,” said George, “and it’s not just one car. It’s hundreds of them.”

The answer to our question is all too important. Just thinking you have the right answer may not be right enough. How you answer this question has eternal consequences. Your answer will determine if your unending existence will be either glorious or gruesome. You must have the right understanding of what is a Christian.

The Apostle John answers the “What is a Christian?” question throughout this epistle. But I maintain that if all we had of John’s first epistle was this one verse, you would know what a Christian is. He tells us that a Christian is one who has been born of God and His seed remains in him. That is a Christian.

Everything hinges on the word seed. What does he mean by this word?

I. The Seed

A. Definition of Seed.

What is the seed?

Since we are in a mixed crowd and there are children here, I need to answer this delicately and carefully. Simply put, John is borrowing a metaphor from human biology. He’s talking about conception. This is what he means here by *seed*, it’s God’s seed, or in other words, His life. His seed is implanted into the heart of an individual. It’s spiritual DNA that God puts within the heart of an individual.

B. A Christian is Someone Who Has Experienced a Supernatural Spiritual Infusion.

This is what John is saying to us.

“Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him.”

God has done something to and for this individual. He has implanted His own life into them. There it is.

A Christian is a person into whom God has infused Himself.

A divine principle has entered into his heart and the person is no longer the same. Change has taken place. But the change has not been acquired by the person’s efforts, no, the Christian has the life of God in him or her.

Those who are of born of God have the very Creator housed within them like an occupant in a vessel. We have the life of God in us. A spiritual supernatural thing occurred and it didn’t come as a result of a prayer or a decision or walking an aisle or baptism—it’s a miracle! It’s an act of God. It’s something you and I could not achieve in a thousand lifetimes. To bring the life of God in

heaven down into the soul of the human being is quite a remarkable thing when you think about it. Ritual and religious rites do not achieve it; it's the work of God.

*“who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”
(John 1:13)*

The Christian is a creation of the Lord, a sovereign act of God in the human heart. It's inexplicable. It's hard to understand and it's hard for me to even define it for you. In all of my years of preaching I have yet to find the right phraseology that makes it click in the heart of the person who is yet to be saved. Every Christian knows what I'm talking about; they can say, “Yes, I know what you mean. I can't explain it either, but I do know what you're talking about because it happened to me.” But when talking to the unbeliever there's an invisible wall there hindering understanding. This is supernatural. It's outside of man's ability.

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I say unto you, ‘You must be born again.’” (John 3:6)

So John tells us what a Christian is. A Christian is someone born from above. A creative act of God has taken place within his or her soul that has created newness, a difference in life and purpose.

C. The Seed is Holy.

Why do I say that? Because the seed is God Himself and God is holy. We're not trifling with the “Big Man Upstairs” or some grandfatherly benevolent being in the sky, no, we're talking about the thrice-holy God whom angels worship day and night, covering their eyes lest they dare see Him. He's that holy. Whenever He's appeared to men throughout the Scriptures, the reaction is always the same, “Woe is me!”

This seed is the life of God in us and it is a holy seed. It is a holy, divine impulse that's placed in every one of us. The Christian is someone with a holy principle working in them, driving them, motivating them to be holy as God is. Isn't this the command of every Christian, “Be ye holy as I am holy”? How is that humanly possible? To be like God? Ridiculous! It's sheer folly to try to be like God. But what if that divine impulse is placed in you? What if that holy seed has been planted in your heart and now there is something within you that wasn't there before, a desire for holiness and all that's good? Yes.

Peter says it this way in his first epistle,

“having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.” (1 Peter 1:23)

You see, the seed of God is God Himself and He is incorruptibly holy. You cannot corrupt this holiness within you. If you have been saved there is a divine motivation that lingers in you. It's

always there, whether you recognize it or not and it is there to motivate and spur you on to holy, wonderful, biblical good works. This is the change that makes a Christian different. The believer's life has been transformed, he or she is no longer the same. I'm not talking about turning over a new leaf. I'm not talking about changing your behavior and aspiring to a new beginning, no. A man can do that and still perish because he's absent of the seed of God. The divine, holy principle is not in him and without that there is no recognition from God. God will not acknowledge you or recognize you as His own.

Do you have this divine principle in you? Is there a desire to be holy? You might say to me, "I agree with you that the Christian is somebody who has had the life of God implanted within them, no argument from me, but I'm wondering if to say that the life of God in us is incorruptible is a little too far-fetched? Because, isn't it true that the life of Christ comes in us who remain still yet impure?"

There's still remaining corruption in every Christian here, including myself, so isn't this holy principle we're talking about now mixed with that which is unholy and there is now an adulteration, pollution? Not hardly. We're not talking about God giving you a little goodness along with your badness and mixing the two, hoping there is more good than bad. That's not the Christian life. We're talking about the very life of God, the person of God is in you, and the person of God is unchangeable, immutable, no shadow of turning, no variableness. He is the eternal I AM THAT I AM. He remains holy even though I may not be.

Let me illustrate. Take a pristine seed and plant it in your garden. The seed has been cleansed, it's beautiful, there's no bacteria, and you plant that in the dirty soil where there is bacteria and microbes and what happens? The seed does become polluted, the hull of the seed begins to disintegrate, but what is in that seed? Life. And that life is not polluted, it's not mixed, it's not adulterated, it's not compromised. Life springs up even in the corruption. A Christian is a person who has a divine life living within him or her and that life is never corrupted. No matter how much they struggle with their sins, they remain the same because within them is a constant, unchanging, holy, divine principle. "I am the Lord and I change not." That holy principle remains and so this seed is holy. It's been planted within us.

What is a Christian? He is a person who has had the life of God placed within him as a divine principle to strive and love everything holy, everything good. It is not conferred by some church or institution, it is not by the mere decision of a person to start afresh, it is not granted in the waters of baptism or any other Christian memorial or rite. A Christian is a person in whom God has done something that he or she could not do for him or herself.

II. THE SEED REMAINS

"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."

A. The Seed Continues to Live.

The life of God continues. The life of God is eternal, without beginning or end. Dear Christian, the life that you feel and experience is an eternal life. God is the Un-sustained Being, nobody sustains Him, He is self-sustaining, having no beginning and no end. That continual life has been placed in those who believe in Him, who have committed their lives to Him in sacred trust. God is the eternal One and so John says this seed remains within us.

This leads us to a question, which is a common division among Christians. Some say the life of God can enter into a Christian but that life can be grieved to the point that God's life can flee and leave. One can be saved but lost again. I know about that position, I believed it for many years. I grew up in a church and even preached in a denomination that believed that. I understand that doctrine quite well and I understand why people would believe it. But here John seems to answer it not by pointing to you and me but pointing to the seed within us. The seed that is in us *remains*. Why? Because God is the ever-present I AM. He is unchanging. He is the constant present One. His life is given to us and it remains.

There's another reason that it remains. God is eternal but surely He could leave us, could He not? Surely isn't it possible that we could so grieve Him and sin to the point that God disowns us? The Bible answers no. Stop and think about what you are saying about the love and grace of God. Is not God omniscient? Does He not know everything? That's what omniscient means—He knows all things. There is never a time when God learned anything. Isn't that remarkable? God doesn't learn. You can't teach God anything. Now if your daddy told you, "I can't teach you one blessed thing," that's not what I'm talking about. No, God cannot learn. How can you teach somebody that knows all things? He has never had a moment of surprise or astonishment. You have never caught God off guard. That means the Creator of time knew all about you before He saved you, before He invested His life in you, and He still did it.

When we say He is the Creator of time, what do we mean by that statement? Most of us would say He created the mechanism of time and that He created this thing called time and now time unfolds and He is able to predict quite accurately what's going to happen. That's not biblical at all. God created the mechanism of time but what is time? I don't want to get too complicated here, but a simple scientific definition of time would be the sequential order of events. In other words, time is an event after an event after an event. Time is nothing more than the passing of events in a chronological manner. If God created time that means all things were created by Him and that must include all things that were created within the closure of time.

Every day was created by God; every one of your days and every event of those days. That doesn't mean He made you to sin, no, He gives you a great deal of latitude. There's a great deal of human responsibility in this thing called time, but do not think God created time without knowing what He was creating. He knew your every day, your every moment, your every temptation, and your every failure. He knew that before He saved you but He loved you and He saved you knowing all that about you.

Do you think “becoming a Christian” makes our lives acceptable to God in every act and behavior and attitude? Come now, you’ve been living in a fantasy world. Being a Christian doesn’t make you automatically acceptable to God in actions and attitudes and behaviors. We can displease Him. We can grieve the Spirit. We can quench His work and operation by what we do and what we think. But here’s the beautiful thing—God knew all that about you before He placed His seed, His life within you and He said, “I’m going to do it because He or she needs me and I love them.”

To me, this is one of the most remarkable things about the Gospel—that the God who didn’t need me, who was self-sufficient, would love me even knowing that the moment I was saved, December 1, 1986, that I would continually grieve Him and sin against Him from time to time. He knew I would not perfectly follow Him and yet He still invested His life in me. That’s the only Gospel I know.

B. The Seed Evolves.

The life of God does not evolve. Here my metaphor will breakdown, but think with me. Why does John use this metaphor of a seed in the first place? John uses the word *seed* because he wants us to know that no Christian starts out perfect or mature. A seed is a life in its most immature stage. He purposely uses this word *seed* so that you and I might know that when a person becomes a Christian, when God implants within them this divine principle of holiness they are far from perfect and mature.

What happens when you plant the seed within the soil? It sends down a root then a tender shoot breaks forth and it climbs from the prison of the soil so it can find the warmth of the sun shining on its tender green leaves. What happens then? It begins to develop into a small plant and the small plant eventually grows to be a large plant and within a few more weeks buds and blossoms appear on it. With a little more time fruit appears and in a little more time it becomes mature. John strategically uses the word *seed* for us to know that the life of God in you and your interaction with it begins very small and you evolve and grow in this understanding of the life of God in you and your interaction with it.

Over the years I’ve heard people say, “I can’t give my life to Jesus because I know I can’t live like you. I can’t live like a Christian.” None of us can. It’s not you and me that lives the Christian life, it’s the life of God implanted. “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless not I but Christ liveth in me.” My interaction with that life is very minimal in the beginning. I’m not talking about the degree of your conversion and whether it was dramatic or not, I’m talking about your understanding and how to work and participate in cooperation with this life of God in you. That evolves and then what happens? What do we say of a person who is just saved? We call them a babe in Christ, a newborn. With any newborn there is physical maturation process. The newborn becomes a toddler, the toddler becomes a small child, the small child becomes an adolescent, the adolescent becomes a teenager, the teenager becomes an adult, and the young adult eventually becomes a mature adult. An evolution, a progress of change occurs.

What is a Christian? It is a person in whom the life of God has been infused and they evolve in progress and understanding and interacting with that life. That's what a Christian is. A person who enters the church by confession or profession is just a babe, just a seedling that needs to be nurtured and cared for. He starts out helpless and immature but the seed evolves.

There are some who really stumble in one or two ways here. There are only two camps, I would say. There are some who say salvation is entirely a work of God and man has nothing to do with it. Then there are those who say, "Salvation is a man repenting and believing. It's an act of a man surrendering his life to God." The two sides seem to argue, but my question is why couldn't it be both? It seems to me that it is.

I could never have saved myself with all my repentance or believing. Faith has not saved us. The Bible never says faith saves you. No, Jesus saves! Jonah said it this way, "Salvation is of the Lord." Why would I ever want God when my heart was locked, fast bound in my nature (which was opposed to God)? God does a regenerating work, totally unrestricted, sovereign act, but, dear friend, I must engage with this grace. I must repent, I must believe, I must repent, I must yield, I must learn how to interact with this life—this divine principle within me. And apart from me doing that, well, I'm going to have a problem with sin and immaturity. I am to work out my salvation with fear and trembling but thankfully God is there who is working in me both to desire and do His good pleasure.

A Christian is an amazing thing. Yes, he or she is a person who has been made by God, born from above, created; the sprout doesn't grow earth to heaven, it comes from heaven to earth. But at the same time, I learn about this life of God in me, I learn how to yield to it and work with it so I am growing and developing until one day I will be like Him.

C. The Spiritual DNA Remains.

I want to be very clear and let no one leave here today without knowing beyond any shadow of a doubt if you are a child of God, if you are a Christian, so I want to give you a few evidences of this divine life that is within the Christian.

III. Evidences of the Seed

How do you know it's there? Is there any evidence you can look to and say, "The Scriptures would clearly grant *that* as an evidence that you have been saved by God"? Yes, there are many, more than we can deal with this morning. I just want to give you three.

A. A Continual Desire For God.

Why is that? Because this seed is a holy principle. This seed is a holy motivation implanted within your heart that creates the desire for holiness. Again, the Scriptures says, "for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure." This desire is for God Himself because it

is the very life of God. “Deep calls unto deep,” God calls unto God. God is Spirit and the Spirit of God in us is constantly working in the child of God, yearning, striving, and hungering for Him.

Listen to the aged Apostle Paul. He had planted many churches, he and Luke had written almost two-thirds of the New Testament, and yet he says,

“Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ . . . ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.” (Philippians 3:8, 10)

Why does he want to gain Christ? Because he wants to know Him! This is what this divine principle, this divine seed does in a believer. It maintains a desire for the holy and there is none holy but God. Therefore, only God can satisfy this divine principle within. There is a constant longing for God.

Some of you are quite concerned at this moment because you can say, “I believe I’m a Christian but there are times I know I don’t always long for God. I couldn’t say I have a continual longing for God.” That leads me to my second evidence.

If the seed of God is in you there is:

B. A Continual Returning to God.

Yes. I understand all too well what you mean when you say there have been seasons, days, weeks, even months when the desire of your heart was in a passionate pursuit of everything else but God. Your heart was dull, your sensibilities were cold, the Scriptures meant nothing to you, prayer was a chore. I know something of those kind of days and I hate them too. But if you are a Christian, there is a principle working in you that will not allow you to wander way too far. There comes a moment where the agitation of this seed works a glorious wonder to bring you back to God.

Let me illustrate it this way. A little boy was playing in his yard but decided he wanted to wander beyond the perimeters of his yard and explore the world. So he chose to leave, to do what his mama told him not to do. “Don’t leave this yard,” she said. He did it anyway. He left the safety of his yard and enjoyed the feeling of his newfound independence. He explored and went places he had never been. He was having a wonderful time until suddenly it dawned on him that he didn’t recognize anything he saw. He acknowledged something internal at that moment—he felt it—a terror gripped his heart. A fear. He didn’t know where he is. *I’m lost! I’m lost!* All of a sudden something was forced out of the corner of his eye, a tear ran the course of his cheek and he cried out, “Mama!” But mama was too far away to hear his cry so there was no response.

He then ran in a direction he hoped was home. He ran harder and faster as his heart pumped more out of fear rather than the exercise. All along he cried, “Mama! Mama!” until finally he saw his street and at that moment something returned—assurance. He ran down the street, into the yard, into the back door and there found his mother working in the kitchen and he threw his arms around her legs and said, “Oh, mama, I love you!”

What was it that spurred the young boy to return home? It was the principle of love and security that only mom and dad can give.

Dear friend, if you are a Christian, you have that same principle in you only it’s not your earthly father and mother, it’s your heavenly Father. This is a heavenly principle. There’s a honing beam within the heart of a Christian, that when it wanders, it suddenly will go off and you’ll wake up and realize, *I’ve strayed. I’ve wandered, and God is nowhere to be found. Oh, God, help!* But you don’t feel Him. He doesn’t show up immediately. You begin to run and you run hard for God and there is finally a day, a moment, when you sense His conscious presence again, you’re back home! And what joy! What is that? It’s that holy seed! And everyone who has been born of God has that seed and this seed remains in them. No, we don’t always hunger with the same intensity that we may have had in earlier days but eventually you will return. What keeps you from straying, never to return? This divine seed.

That means then the opposite is true. Many have professed faith in churches, many have professed faith in this church, but nothing changed, there was no internal impulse of the heart. They still loved the same things they loved and they’re still repulsed by the same things they were repulsed by—holy things. We heard a testimony from our brother Whitt earlier in the service, did we not? Here is a man who went forward in a church, prayed, and was baptized. In his outward behavior there was a great change, but on the inside, this divine seed was missing. This inner impulse, this holy motivation for God was absent. I’m thankful to God that it finally did happen and that God did save Whitt two years later, but that is the exception not the rule.

There are many who make professions of faith and they go to church all of their lives, some of them don’t go to church much after their profession, but either way they’re in the same predicament—lost without God. They’ve not been born from above. The seed of God is not in them and they can wander from God and not be alarmed at all.

C. A Continual Repentance.

I want to be very clear here. I do not believe John is saying in our text that the Christian is perfect. I do not believe that at all. I do believe he is suggesting that at the very least there is a continual repentance in the life of a believer.

The question that was posed earlier, *if this life of God is so holy and is placed within such unholy vessels as you and I, isn’t there a mixture or pollution?* I’m saying to you that the life of God cannot be corrupted, but there is a struggle within the life of the believer. There is still remaining sin.

The evolution of the process called sanctification has not been finished yet. We are not like Jesus altogether. And in the meantime there is a work of God's grace by this seed that motivates repentance when we sin. What do I mean by *repentance*? I don't mean saying, "I'm sorry, God." I mean a turning from sin. I may need to turn a hundred times from the same sin but there has to be turning. There has to be a confronting about our sins and an agreeing with God that it is what it is: an abomination to Him, whatever the sin may be. It's all repulsive to God because it's contrary to His holy nature.

There is a continual desire for God. It never leaves because the seed is there.

There is a continual returning when we do leave and wander.

There is a continual repentance. Things come to our mind, an exposure of our sin, an acquaintance with our sins and we see it as unholy and we turn from it because the holy seed works the holy principle of repentance.

This is constantly the practice of a Christian so that a Christian is mostly repulsed with himself and that's one of the reasons he loves Jesus so much. He can't abide within himself; he can only find solace in Christ.

This leads us to our original question, what does the apostle mean when he say, "Whoever has been born of God? does not sin . . . and he cannot sin"? Can a person sin and still be a Christian or if a person sins is he or she not a Christian? Does John mean that a true Christian is perfect? I would answer hastily no. That's not what he's saying.

The very word *seed* tells me this but there are also contextual reasons. Christian perfection—there are those who believe Christians can be perfect and above sin, I don't think that is what the Bible says but there are some who say that. However, such would contradict what John said earlier in the epistle.

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John 1:8)

Notice the personal pronoun. It's in the second person, which means it's inclusive of the author and the audience. John is including himself here. He is saying, "If I say that I have no sin, I deceive myself and the truth is not in me. If you say that you have no sin, you deceive yourself and the truth is not in you." It's *we, us*, John says, "If I dare state that I have no sin then I am a liar. I know I still have problems with sin."

If Christians could not sin, why would he tell us in verse nine,

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

That's a ridiculous statement if Christians could not sin. "Ah," you say, "that's for unbelievers. That's an evangelistic text, pastor. Come on, get with it, you ought to know that you use 1 John 1:9 to preach to sinners and tell them if they simply confess their sins God will forgive them!" My friend, if that's the case, why does he say two verses later,

*"My little children, these things I write to **you**, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John 2:1)*

John is not saying a Christian cannot sin, he's saying a Christian cannot *practice* sin. Go back to our text. In the context, verse seven, we find an answer.

"Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous." (1 John 3:7)

Notice the word *practice*. Now look at verse 10.

"In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother." (1 John 3:10)

There's a way you can tell the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian. Who is a Christian? One who practices righteousness. Why does he practice righteousness? He has the divine seed in him, the divine motivation constantly bringing him back to this.

What is a non-Christian? Someone who doesn't practice righteousness, they practice unrighteousness. The norm and consistency, the trajectory of their life is sin. They habitually sin and they do so seeking its amusement and pleasure. This is what he is saying. A Christian cannot turn to sin for his constant enjoyment and pleasure. Yes, there is a pleasure in sin for a season but that's all and it's very short-lived for the Christian because the moment a Christian enters into unrighteousness, something on the inside—this divine seed—begins to be agitated and this agitation causes him to return to the Lord. He has a new desire! He loves holiness and cannot abide by sin. And when we do sin we don't habitually practice a lifestyle thereof.

If you practice a lifestyle of habitual sin you may be good on the outside and everyone might think you're a Christian, but internally you secretly harbor the love of sin and you really don't love God. You don't pursue Him like a lover would pursue his darling. You don't chase after Him because being in His presence is the greatest delight you've ever experienced, no, He's only a covering for your sins. You use grace as an excuse and a license to hide behind.

If this describes you I warn you today that John is saying clearly by his definition you are not a Christian. I know it's hard for us to come to these terms, especially when we think of loved ones we know, who have professed faith in Christ at one point but now they are giving us a lifestyle, an evidence to believe they may not be a Christian. We look at people who have stood up and confessed faith in Christ and been baptized and we see them no longer and we hear about their

sin and lifestyle and we groan inside and weep for them but we never see change. They seem to be at home in their sin and we wonder what happened, it pains us to think that perhaps they were a false convert.

Listen to what Peter says in his second epistle,

“But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: ‘A dog returns to his own vomit,’ and, ‘a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.’” (2 Peter 2:22)

Peter is not trying to be cruel or harsh, he's wanting us to understand and be warned that when you cleanse the pig, making it so clean it could walk into a church sanctuary, the moment you turn loose of that pig it's nature is to desire the mud pit. Why? That's one of its means of cooling itself in the hot summer. That's its nature to do so. It's a native mechanism to do so. Turn loose a cat and he'll avoid water at all costs. It's not in its nature to love the water. Two different natures, two different creatures. As disgusting as it is to think of a dog returning and eat its vomit, that's the nature of a dog. It does that but a horse will not. Two different natures, two different creatures.

Peter's statement is clear. They may have looked clean on the outside, they may have made a profession, there was a knowledge of God, an interaction with God, but they returned to that which they loved, to that which their nature dictated. But the true Christian, though he may wander and sin for a season, his nature has within it a divine impulse, a holy motivation that he cannot love where he is. He is miserable. The believer is not at home and something of home keeps calling him back and back they return. The son may leave a hundred times but they always find their way back. Why? Because the seed of God remains. Is it in you?

Do you have this divine impulse? Is it working? Are you far from God this morning? Have you strayed? Is there something within that is agitated saying, “This is not what I surrendered my life for, this is not pleasing or satisfying, I'm as empty as when I came to Christ. I have to get back to the fountain! I have to get back to the living waters. My soul is dry and parched and I need a cool drink from the Savior, from Jesus!” You have that divine seed in you, it's working.

But if you're just hoping you can get through this service and get out of here, my dear friend, I warn you in the name of Christ, where is this divine seed and where is its work in your life? Do you know it? It's a sad thing for me to sometimes contemplate. Is it possible that some of my dearest friends, hearers of the Gospel week in and week out have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof? Oh, you don't know the wrestling of my heart thinking that may be true. I pray today that you let God have His way in you so that you might be a living definition of what it means to be a Christian. For you to live is Christ and to die will one day be gain. Amen.