

1 John 5:18 God Preserves Us --18 We know that no one who has been born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him.

The final verses of this epistle give some summary statements about things that we know concerning our Christian life. The overall idea is that a healthy relationship with God produces confidence in our relationship with Christ, and our position as believers in this hostile world.

We know that everyone who has been born from God does not sin

We can be sure that everyone who has been born of God, born again lives as a child of God. And because we are His, John is echoing his words in 1st John 3:9 saying **9 No one who has been born of God practices sin, because His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin continually, because he has been born of God. 10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother and sister.**

If we are really saved, then we are changed—we have a new heart of flesh, and God has removed the old heart of stone. 2 Cor 5:17 **Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.** And, of course, this will be reflected in our life. Our Christianity is shown in our walk. The way we choose to walk is infallibly and perfectly expressed in the walk itself. It's obvious to all.

But, John is not claiming sinless perfection. 1st John 1:7-10 **7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous, so that He will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.**

So Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit allows us to walk in the light, as He is in the light, and allows us to have Holy Spirit inspired agape, self-sacrificing love for our brothers and sisters in Christ. And this same Jesus, God's Son makes sure that the Holy Spirit reveals the truth to us—that we sin. And the Holy Spirit intercedes for us on our end of the communication line Romans 8:27 continues: **27 and He who searches the hearts (that would be Jesus) knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.** Then we come to God in agreement that sin is sin, in confession that we have sinned, and in repentance, that we turn away from our sin, and Jesus is faithful and righteous to forgive us of our sin. For those of us who have put our faith in Jesus, **we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous"** (1 John 2:1). It is the work of God's Holy Spirit in us, working in the deepest part of us, the Spirit, in sanctifying us from the inside out, that enables those who are abiding with Jesus to avoid sinning. And to the extent that we do sin, as John lets us know that we're not walking in the newness of life that has been purchased for us on the cross. The ideas of divine sonship and sin are mutually exclusive—sinful acts are the expression of the imperfectness of our walk. And, as we confess our sins, and rely on the faithfulness of Christ to act as our Advocate before the father, forgiving our sins, we allow ourselves to be sanctified, set apart for service. As Eph 5:26 puts it **26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.** So, John is affirming that the new nature, from God does not participate in sin.

When Paul commands believers not to let sin reign in our mortal bodies (Rom 6:12), he lets us know that this can and does happen in the lives of believers, unfortunately. Remember that enslavement is not something that someone can just walk away from. It requires a fight in cooperation with the Holy Spirit to break the bonds of sin, in order to even walk in the new nature that we've been given in Christ. Being born from God gives a person a new nature, that nature does not guarantee immunity to habitual sin any more than occasional sin, we must choose to follow Jesus; we must choose to live righteously. The flesh is still active and tempting, and still likes to sin. It has neither been eradicated nor incapacitated. It must still be dealt with in the life of the believer by putting it to death, or it will continue to rise up.

That's why Paul commands us to "reckon" ourselves "dead to sin" (Rom 6:11) and alive to Christ, and to walk by the spirit, not by the flesh. Failure to do this causes drifting away from God, then backsliding, resulting in slavery to sin rather than righteousness, and then, ultimately, if not corrected, to apostasy, or rejection of Christ completely. A born-again believer has a struggle against sin, while an unregenerate person may dislike the consequences of sin, may have enough of a conscience to feel bad about it, but doesn't hate sin itself—they would do whatever is best for them, and whatever they think that they can get away with. It's a completely different attitude.

but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him.

He who was born of God, Jesus, protects us from the evil one's influence. Through the power of the Holy Spirit molding us into the image of Christ, Jesus guards and keeps every believer by allowing us to confess our sins and be forgiven. Jesus affirmed His preservation of the eleven during His earthly ministry, saying in His High Priestly Prayer in John 17:12 **12 While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name, which You have given Me; and I guarded them, and not one of them perished except the son of destruction, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.** Judas heard Jesus' teachings, and participated in ministry, along with the others, but his heart just wasn't in it. He chose not to follow, and so was lost. He refused to submit to Jesus, and let Him guard his heart.

So just as Jesus Guarded the disciples hearts who trusted in Him, God keeps us. John 10:27-30 **27 My sheep listen to My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and I give them eternal life, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one.** So those who are truly God's Children will know Jesus' voice and Follow Him in discipleship. These are the ones who have eternal life and no-one else, and nothing can take that away. Rom 8:38-39 **38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

As followers of Jesus, we can and should have eternal security. Remember that according to 1st John 5:13 John's purpose for writing is to make us secure in our salvation. **These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.** Jesus also prays for our protection from "the evil one" to God, saying in his High Priestly prayer John 17:15 **15 I am not asking You to take them out of the world, but to keep them away from the evil one.**

We see also see something similar in the Model Prayer the Lord gave us in Matthew 6:13 when Jesus concludes His prayer saying, **13 And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.** Or from the evil one, depending on the translation.

And, so it's no surprise that since the Lord is keeping us, then **"and the evil one does not grasp him."** The result of God's watchful preservation and protection is that "the evil one" is kept from grasping and destroying us. Because God keeps us, and because Jesus has prayed for us, and intercedes for us, we can be secure in our salvation, because it depends on God, not on us! All we have to do is follow Jesus in obedience to God, and when we mess up and sin, repent, confess, and be forgiven.