

of righteousness."

6:22 -- "But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life."

8:2 -- "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death."

We have become slaves of righteousness, enslaved to God, and have been freed from the sin principle by the righteousness principle communicated by the Holy Spirit to us at regeneration.

Because the righteousness principle has been communicated to us in such a way that it has become part of our nature (what we now are), John in his First Epistle can state with confidence that the true believer in Christ is one who is characterized by righteousness -- "everyone who practices righteousness is righteous" -- and that the one who has been born of God cannot practice sin, because God's seed remains in Him.

This great truth can be traced through John's First Epistle with the help of a charting of statements regarding the begotten-one's relationship to sin and righteousness.

2. The second phase of Step Three is that we are to be becoming progressively more alive to the power of innate righteousness.

Paul deals with this phase in a few places in this section of the book.

6:13b -- "present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God."

6:19c -- "so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification."

8:4 -- "in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." To walk according to the Spirit appears to mean to live under the increasing control of the Holy Spirit, whose purpose it is to produce righteous character and conduct in us.

8:5-6 -- "For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace."

To set one's mind on the things of the Spirit appears to mean to dwell upon, concentrate on, think about, the things that pertain to the Holy Spirit rather than the things that pertain to innate sin. It means to think about righteous things and to be molded by them rather than by sinful things or things that do not edify. It means to concentrate on:

whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.