

Seven Signs of a Safe Son

Brian Coatney

Why are there seven signs of a safe son? I like the number seven; it's complete and mystical, but if you come up with fewer or more than seven, bless you—I won't argue. Also, I picked sons since the Bible calls us sons of God, and there is much mystery behind that, which I can't go into here, but all seeming gender conflicts get easily resolved in the new creation—a subject for another discourse.

Here we go: safe sons know a safe God. Before there can be such a thing as a safe son, we must have a safe God because if God is random or evil, then ultimately we fall apart and perish in the convulsions of a universe that does not follow love and a plan. I used to think life unfair since I have to choose love but God automatically is love. Norman Grubb was the first person I ever met who said that God has made the eternal choice to be self-for-others, so therefore He is safe.

Instead of being a devil who is self-for-self, exploiting His creation for destructive and self-centered purposes, always demanding that we be for Him but He will not be for us—He is instead love, which means that He has a Cross in His heart—the same Cross that led Him to send Christ in to the world to sacrifice Himself for our sins. A God who dies to save His fallen creation is safe! Further, He is eternal and never changes, so He won't burn out like a planet or star in the fallen cosmos. Out of His eternal fire, He will

recreate the fallen universe, and safe sons will enjoy forever their safe God and His new, upcoming universe, after this time of testing.

Next, safe sons know that they are not God but vessels and temples to contain God. The whole fall centered on Adam and Eve swallowing the deception that they could be God. I won't retell the Genesis story, but we know that the serpent brought to them the same deception that he made a fixed choice on—that a creature can become God. Adam and Eve didn't make the same fixed choice: they fell into deception and could be rescued since their choice was not yet fixed, leaving the door open to us as well, as their offspring. Thank God the Fall was on a flesh level and not a fixed spirit level, in which a created being can decide forever to use freedom as a means of trying to attain god-hood. False religion always has this idea at heart, as well as the idea that we keep trying by our own works until we get good enough.

It takes adversity and desperation to see that God created us to indwell us and express His life in us. He is love; we are not. He is righteousness; we are not. Continue the list with every attribute the Bible commands us to manifest. This is why Paul, for example, lists the fruit of the Spirit: it is the Spirit's fruit, not ours, but the vital point is that God means for us to be in union with whom and what He only is. So we don't have to be love, and God certainly does not give us love: instead, He is love, and He is love in us, the vessels and temples.

At first, while still blanketed with deception, we hate this idea, for we want to be independent selves who can be like God. Impossible! Only God can be

like God. Trying to be like Christ avails no better, for though the idea sounds holy, it carries the same deception of fallen man right into the Christian life, making it the same miserable treadmill of trying to get our humanity to be deity. I remember the day, after hitting bottom, when I said to myself, “I don’t want to be God.” The statement surprised me in a non-condemning way, and I thought, “On some level, even though I have known the theory of union with God—that we are not God but the vessels—I have wanted to be God.”

I loved seeing this! It sent the flag of liberation up my flagpole because now I could accept God as God and get on with being a creature—more specifically one whose job is simple to receive and contain. I’m just a pop can, and He’s the pop. That’s why I nicknamed our Bibles study at the jail “Pop can 101.” Until we really know this, we’re still on some level trying to be God.

Wait a minute though. If I’m just a vessel and a temple—a mere container, how can I know union with God? Safe sons, once they know that they are not God and never will be, are safe to know that they are branches of the vine and the body of His head. God is a God who knows, desires, and wills, and He created us with the same faculties in His image, meaning that like unite to like in a union in which we forever know He is God, but we go on then to live in a union in which we move to the forefront to manage His universe.

How can I say this? Think about a branch for a moment. We call the branch the tree, and it is in a secondary sense, knowing that if the branch were

separated from its source it would dry up and get burned. Safe sons, therefore, know that God means to run His universe by them, the Sons being the second generation, managing God's universe, which gives Him great pleasure. We get to experience God in our forms and manifest Him in as many varied ways as there are sons. Nothing could be more exciting!

Safe sons also perform a vital job as the first step in this management: they preach the full Gospel, meaning the blood and body of Christ. Safe sons know that though everyone is a son of God in a created sense, only those who receive the new birth in Christ will spend eternity with God. Therefore, safe sons preach that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God and can only be justified by faith in the sacrificial work of Christ on the Cross, through the shedding of His blood for sins. No works can ever compensate for sins; in fact, good works done from pride and self-effort are really Satan's work in a person. This is a shock to see, for independent self is Satan at work, though the person doing the good works thinks that he is just himself doing a good work.

Just as there is a blood side of the Cross (the wine in communion), there is a body side of the Cross (the bread in communion). Christ's blood was shed for our sins; His body was crucified so that Christ would die to sin as us. Though he never sinned, He was made to be sin (2 Cor. 5:21), we were baptized into His death (Rom. 6), and we are crucified with Christ, meaning two things: first, Christ became who we were as lost people—vessels indwelt by the spirit of error and children of the devil; second, we are raised in His resurrection so that it is no longer we who live, but Christ in us.

He died as us so that we could rise in Him, expressing His resurrection life as new creatures.

The old sin master, Satan, is out by the Cross, and Christ is in us who have received Him. Safe sons preach the details of both the blood and body sides of the Cross, not shirking from telling lost people that they are lost and not shirking from telling Christians about their death, burial, and resurrection in Christ and the Scriptural support for these. Those who teach that Christ is already in every man and that every man is already saved, without repentance and an actual new birth, are not safe sons. Beware of them. Union to them means that everyone is already God whether he or she knows it or not.

Further, safe sons understand the nature of temptation and sin, knowing that temptation is not sin. Safe sons have learned not to take guilt for temptation, but rather to see temptation as another opportunity for God's keeping grace. They say, "God, I will commit that sin unless You keep me, and thank you that You *are* keeping me." They see that their humanity, including the will, is regularly drawn toward a will contrary to God's will, but they do not falter as if the contrary pulls are they. Instead, they know that feelings are just feelings, thoughts are just thoughts, and the enemy always works in the same way—trying to convince us that we are our souls and bodies instead of our spirits joined in union with our Keeper who is keeping us by faith.

Regarding sin, safe sons know that a Christian can commit a sin but doesn't have to, as John says, "I write these things unto you that ye sin not" (1 John 2). If we do commit a sin, we confess it and even more confess the work of

Christ, not taking condemnation, so that we do not commit the sin of self-righteousness as if we could have kept ourselves. We magnify Christ and glorify His work of forgiveness and restoration, knowing that Christ's blood does cleanse and entirely wash away, laving us clean and without a sin-consciousness.

With thee foundations in place, safe sons live lives of faith, manifesting the fruit of the Spirit and entering into a life of miracles, where the supernatural is the norm and not the exception. To the safe son, God is *always* at work, even in our suffering. Every situation, no matter how negative gets turned into opportunity for faith and further advance of God's kingdom. The devil is not an equal power with God but must serve the will of God as His convenient agent. God uses the devil to make people miserable in their sins; He uses the devil to train God's sons, bringing them to an end of themselves so that they will know that they are dead to sin and the law; He uses the devil in adversity to keep God's sons practiced in turning temptations and trials into faith; and He uses the devil's evil doings to bring glory through suffering, thus perfecting the sons of God.

Safe sons, in living lives of faith as just described, launch out into great exploits, seeing the universe and people as limitless opportunity for expansion by the love and glory of God. Safe sons see oil in empty jars, quickening in bodies pained by infirmity, enterprises out of ashes, fields white for the harvest, and revival where things look dead. They constantly reverse appearances, swallowing up death with life. Through clenched teeth if need be, they call themselves more than conquerors.

Lastly, safe sons find themselves consumed and irresistibly driven to reproduce Christ in others, leading to even more safe sons, which the devil hates and resists in every way. Safe sons know their gifts and callings and manifest them in every way possible to see Christ formed in others so that those sons can manifest the fruit of the Spirit and go on to reproduce themselves in every way that their mentors do. Safe sons live a “can’t help it life” of taking up the Cross of Christ to ensure that the next generation will know itself prepared to reproduce yet more generations of safe sons.

Things often look grim; few believe, many slip back, and progress looks unbearable slow. But safe sons do not fall into despair no matter how perplexed they get. The devil’s pressure to make them think that all will fail or end in a blighted way, only turns up the heat of faith to repeat God’s promise to Abraham, “I have made thee a father of many nations.”

Safe sons do all these things, and they do them well.