



Finer Grounds Bible Study

1, 2, & 3 John Lesson 7: 1 John 2:28-3:10

Read 1 John 2:28-3:10

While in the last lesson we learned about the identity and behavior of those against Christ (antichrists), in this passage of Scripture we learn about the identity and behavior of those who stand with Christ. Notice while reading how John describes both us and our God.

What is said of God:

1. He is righteous (2:28; 3:7)
2. He adopts (3:1)
3. He is pure (3:3)
4. He takes away sins (3:5)
5. He is sinless (3:5)
6. He destroys the works of the devil (3:8)

What is said of the followers of God:

1. They can have confidence and not be ashamed (2:28)
2. They practice righteousness (2:29)
3. They are born of God (2:29)
4. They are the sons [and daughters] of God (3:1)
5. They purify themselves (3:3)
6. They do not sin (3:6, 8-9)
7. They are righteous (3:7)
8. They love their brethren (3:10)

While the antichrists (2:18-27) deny Christ and through their lies take away the hope of the promise of eternal life (2:25-26), in contrast, if we live in Him and His Word, we can have confidence at His coming (2:28-29). Confidence

here mean boldness, openness, freedom, and fearlessness. All these things are ours in Christ. We ought to be confident and unashamed at the thought of Christ returning (v.28)—but we can only have that confidence if we abide in Him. In the ESV, it says that if we live in Him, we will not have “to shrink from Him in shame” (v.28)

Our certainty that He is righteous—just and holy—should give us confidence in our salvation (v.29). Because we know that He is righteous, we know He will do just as He promises, and that if we give our lives to Him, He will “be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (Romans 3:26).

The true children of God lead lives that are consistent with the teaching of Christ. John not only wants us to make sure we listen to the right message (1 John 2:18-27), but that we live it. We must embody His teachings—that’s what it means to “abide in Him” (v.28).

What comes to mind when you reflect on the righteousness of God?



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How are we like God and how are we not like God? Reflect upon what this passage says about our identity and God’s character and what that means.

Read 1 John 3:1-3

John calls us to consider God’s love towards us—a love so great that we can’t really comprehend it. He has given us the ability to become His sons and daughters (v.1). The kind of love that God gives us is perhaps beyond our full comprehension—but we do understand what it means to be adopted. Adoption is an incredible act of love—a choice to make someone your own who once wasn’t—and a perfect example of what God does for us when we are baptized into His church. Though this adoption is freely given, it doesn’t come without its responsibilities. We are called to act like His children (v.3).

When Christ returns, then will the saints be glorified with Him (cf. 1 Thessalonians 1:12) and because of this—as those who seek to lay hold of the promise of eternal life—we pursue purity (3:3). Paul stated in Romans that we are saved by hope (Romans 8:24) and here John mirrors that sentiment in stating that it is our hope in Heaven and victory which drives us to purity (1 John 3:3). When we accept the terms of adoption and purify ourselves as He is pure, then we can know we have eternal life with Him waiting—a life where we will have a new, glorious body just like His (v.2). And we have comfort and hope in that, while we have the most glorious state possible available to us on earth (to be His children), the

greatest glory has still not been revealed to us—the glory that will be revealed at His coming (3:2).

It is this hope which allows us to go through this life and its trials. The world around us will not know us, because they do not know God (1 John 3:1)—and because they do not know God, they will hate and persecute us (John 15:18, 19; 16:1-3). It is hope and trust in God that will get us through, despite the opposition.

In all this, we learn that we cannot take our spiritual blessings for granted. Our pursuit of purity never ends, because the aim of our purity is to become as pure as God—something we must never stop reaching for (see also: 1 Peter 1:13-16; Philippians 3:13, 14).

“For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” (Romans 8:15).

What do these verses tell us about the nature of God? Reflect upon both the blessings and expectations He has towards us.

What does it take to “purify ourselves as He is pure”? What actions will we change if this is our aim?



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How can you balance the two thoughts of both free grace and an active faith in your Christian walk?

Read 1 John 3:4-6

The next difference between the children of light and darkness that we see is that, unlike Satan's children, God's children do not keep a relationship with sin. This is a difficult concept for people to grasp. John reiterates many times in this epistle the complete freedom that we have from sin—highlighting the struggle, perhaps, that these brethren felt in accepting that they were free from sin and victorious—the same struggle that we often have. The struggle is in the fact that while we don't make a habit of sinning, we sometimes do fall. This makes it hard for the Christian to accept that they truly are "free" from sin.

We must begin to think of this differently. True freedom from sin does not mean that we are incapable of sinning, but that we have access to complete release from its bondage and snares. Like this verse says in the ESV, "Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness". The KJV also uses the word "committeth"—indicative of a continual action, meaning, "continues to commit". The difference between the children of light and the children of darkness is that the children of the light choose to keep coming back to the light—they are in the continual process of removing darkness, so that Christ shines brighter and brighter through them.

While some often think of sin as a mysterious force that simply "happens" to us, God has made what He expects of us clear—He has given us His law so that we can know when we've gone against it. Sin is clearly defined here: "sin is the transgression of the law (3:4). The New Testament is a law (Romans 3:27; Galatians 6:2; James 1:25; etc)—and so for us to transgress the commandments of the New Testament is sin.

John then gives them further evidence of their freedom from sin (1 John 3:5; John 1:29). How can you know that you are free from sin? Because Jesus came to take it away. They know this, John says—instilling in them the confidence that they are free from sin. If we really believe that Jesus came to take away our sins, then we too will truly believe in our freedom. This was the very reason that He came in the flesh (1 John 3:5; Luke 19:10). He cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7) by taking our sins away from us and bearing them Himself

Jesus didn't just die to save us from sin—He also died to save us from sinful behaviors. That's why the child of God stops engaging in the practice of habitual sin. There was no sin in Him (v.5b) and so the ability for a human to choose righteousness is possible. Jesus proved that (Hebrews 4:15; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Isaiah 53)—and while we can't undo past sins, we can choose the path of light going forward.

Again, John repeats the sentiment: those who are in Christ do not continue in sin (3:6). We need to realize that sin is a choice, it's not inevitable—although sometimes we may stumble, we do not keep on sinning (See also Romans 6).



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Seeing as though Christ coming to this earth and dying was the act that removed our sins, how should we treat sin moving forward?

If He had no sin, how do we keep ourselves pure as He is pure? Consider 1 John 1:5-10; 2:1.

What comfort and hope can we take away from the concept that the one who abides in Christ “does not sin?”

Read 1 John 3:7-10

“Little children, let no man deceive you” (v.7)—when an apostle starts off a warning like this, you had better lean in and listen. Do you think, if he was careful to warn them not to be deceived, that perhaps this is a point that many will try to deceive us about? You had better believe it.

Though there are going to be some who are going to try and deceive us, we need to remember that if we choose the path of righteousness, we are righteous (3:7). Remember, righteousness does not equal perfection. We will never, ever be able to claim perfection—but we can claim righteousness (Philippians 3:12-14). We are not sinners, we’re righteous—sin is something that has no hold over us anymore (Romans 6:16, 17).

Jesus came to free the world from sin and the devil’s power (3:8). He came to completely destroy Satan’s power—the word destroy here means to loose, undo, or dissolve. In taking away our sins Jesus also destroyed the works of the devil—both in the world, and in us. We need to believe this. We need to believe that Jesus has power over Satan, and there is nothing he can do to win if we keep walking in the light. The one in us is greater than the devil outside of us.

We need to believe and act like we are free from sin, because:

- Children of God do not sin
- Children of the devil do sin
- Jesus came to take away our sins (3:5)
- Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (3:8)

The pursuit is what makes the difference between the children of God and the children of the devil: are we in pursuit of righteousness, or sin? The one who is born of God does not commit sin, because He keeps God’s word in Him (3:9). The seed is God’s Word (Luke 8:11). If we keep God’s Word in us and abide in it, we will not sin (cf. Psalm 119:11; Matthew 4:1-11).

If we want to be children of God, we will not only be known by the Word we hold and the sin we avoid, but also by what we actively practice (3:10). We show ourselves to be the children of God by our righteousness and love for others. Our righteousness will show in our right behaviors and our love needs to be the driving force and motivation behind the action. One cannot be without the other and be true righteousness. As children of God we not only uphold the truth, but also love (Ephesians 4:15).



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It is not enough for us to do right or to love alone—we must have both the right actions and the right motivation/mindset in our service (John 4:24; James 2:22).

“As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” (1 Peter :14-16)

John says, “do not be deceived” (3:7)—do you think that there are people deceived about this teaching today? Where do you think this deception has come from?

What are “the works of the devil” (3:8)?

Consider 1 John 3:9:

- **What does this verse teach us about sin and how we can overcome it?**

- **How is this in harmony with 1 John 1:8?**

Consider 1 John 3:10:

- **How can we keep a balance between the right practice and the right teaching?**

- **What are some ways we can uphold the truth in love?**
