

1 John 3: 1 - 10 (New International Version)

²⁸ *And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.* ²⁹ *If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.*

^{3:1} See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ² Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears,^[a] we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. ³ All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

⁴ Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. ⁵ But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. ⁶ No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

⁷ Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. ⁸ The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. ⁹ No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God. ¹⁰ This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God's child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister.

Footnotes:

- a. [1 John 3:2](#) Or *when it is made known*

OASIS: Living Deep: 1 John 3: 1-10

Preface: Welcome to our 1 John “Living Deep” Bible studies, which are published twice a month, at the start of each LIFE Community week. These studies are available in the Sunday morning OASIS course or on the GC “Sermon” webpage by the following Monday. This set of 8 studies proceeds sequentially through the entire book of 1 John. These studies complement our fall message series but are not sermon-centered. We hope you will get great transformational benefit from both.

Possible starter question: When you were a teen (that may seem like a long time ago ☺), what were a couple factors that were integral in defining your identity or self-image? (*Maybe a skill or personal characteristic, or something in your background or upbringing, or an ambition.*)

Transitional comment: How we perceive or define ourselves is very significant in the way we approach others and the way we live. Today’s passage deals with this foundational theme of identity. John wants us to know how God views us—and to let God’s view reform how we think and act.

So let’s listen as several people read our passage aloud (2:28-3:10), beginning with two transitional verses from our last study. (4 people since 4 paragraphs?)

(Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead your study, if you haven’t already prayed.)

Read and Overview: Now take several minutes by yourself to study this passage. Look for repeated words and ideas. Note some of the key contrasts.

O What are a few of the repeated words and ideas you saw? What key contrasts did you spot? (3-5 min.)

First Section (v. 2:28 -3:3):

O In these five verses, what are some of the characteristics of God (or Christ) that are mentioned?
(n.b. In 1 John, it is not always clear with some pronouns whether they refer to God or Jesus Christ. Since God and Jesus are so intertwined, it is even possible that John intentionally blurs them.)

Which of these characteristics does God want his people to share or develop?

O Since God has poured out his love upon us, what are some of the benefits and consequences?

I For each benefit, what is its value (or what difference can it make)?

A How might it change you (attitude or action) if your “default self-concept” was that of being God’s child? Why is this concept so hard to maintain? What helps keep it primary?

O What does John want the readers to know and do in preparation for Christ’s future coming (appearing)?

Second Section (v. 4-6):

O What do you learn about sin or sins in this dense, little paragraph?

O What does John underscore about Jesus Christ purpose and character?

I In what way is this an Advent (Christmas) verse?

O What difference does John expect between those who know Christ and those who don’t?

- I What does the emphasis on “keeps on” or “continues to” imply?
(*n.b. The NIV translation works very hard to express correctly the continuing or ongoing activity of sin that is conveyed by the verb tense*).

A As someone trying to follow Jesus, how do you think God wants you to think about or deal with whatever sinful attitudes and behavior surface in your life?

Third Section (v. 7-10):

- O What is John’s concerned about for the believers to whom he writes?
(*n.b. The false teachers were full of lofty, mystical ideas that apparently had no moral application.*)
- O What are major insights that John wants the readers to grasp in vs. 7-8?
- O What differences does it make, as John explains, if someone is “born of God”? What evidence does John expect?

Summary: One of our LIFE Community Leaders, who has undergone significant health challenges, recently wrote: “I know no greater joy than being His child.”

What is the goodness of this statement and how can it be possible?

How can you cultivate this inner understanding of who you are in God’s great love? (And what alternative identities and temptations do you need to remove or replace?)

Prayer together:

- ❖ Praise God for his character.
 - ❖ Thank God for his activity on our behalf in sending his Son and his Spirit.
 - ❖ Pray for one another that our identities would become more defined by God’s love and our way of life would become more consistent with being God’s children.
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Text notes (you can access biblical texts via www.Biblegateway.com)

- a. BIG idea: Developing your identity as a child of God is foundational to Christian maturity.
- b. Key verse/idea: I John 3: “Dear friends, now we are children of God...”
- c. KEY: O = Observation; I = Interpretation; A = Application (or C = Challenge)

Advice to study leaders:

- d. Complement your OIA questions with “process questions” (what else? What more? What do others of you see/think?).
- e. Determine the core questions you’ll ask (know which ones to skip if pressed for time).
- f. Always reword questions in words that are comfortable for you (and, if the question doesn’t make sense to you, then discard it.) You want to “own” each question.
- g. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. How long do you wait? Take your time; don’t rush people but encourage their participation. And avoid answering your own questions!
- h. Timing/pacing: allocate your time and move forward gently, with a steady pace.
- i. Application: Pace the study to conclude with “difference making” application.
- j. Secondary texts—use other texts very sparingly, even if they are relevant. Otherwise, other texts will push you more into the “teacher role,” rather than that of facilitator. It also can cause some people to feel distracted or de-powered.
- k. If you are utilizing this “on-line” study and not part of the OASIS course, I recommend that you get the 1-volume commentary entitled New Bible Commentary, Revised (21st Century Edition, IVP). It is well worth the \$40.