

October 22, 2017 -

I John 3:1-10 -

“The ID of the Believer”

### Introduction:

God loves us far beyond what we can imagine. He works in our lives behind the scenes guiding us and leading us and even chastening us because of His great love. He even works in mysterious ways when we are just completely out of it. Such is the true story as told by Joe McKeever. A pastor friend of his felt he had taken all he could stand. So he sat down and wrote a letter to every member of his congregation. He was really upset and a bit angry. He didn't exactly resign, but came close to it. “Perhaps my work here is finished,” he confessed.

He printed out the letter and, against his wife's better judgment, stuffed the envelopes and applied the stamps. He dropped them off at the Post Office and drove home.

To act rashly when upset is part and parcel of being human. I think his own advise as most pastors would be, “that these things often look different after a good night's sleep, and that at the very least he should have let that letter “set” overnight and read it more dispassionately the next morning. But, he had done it and that was that. Or so he thought. Thank God he knows better.

The next day, every single one of those letters was back in his mailbox. The cost of postage had gone up that week and he had not put enough postage on them.

The pastor stood there glaring at all those returned letters and recognized God had sent him a message. “This just ain't funny, Lord, just before breaking into laughter. When things like this happen it reassures us that we belong to God and that God cares, that he loves us and knows what we are feeling and what we think and what better to do or in this case not to do. John relates to the believers first –

John explained in chapter two how we can recognize counterfeit Christianity. We talked last week about how banks and retailers train agents to recognize counterfeit money. Well that is the same approach that John takes here in 1 John 3. The discussion is about the children of God and about the children of the devil. Instead of going into a long dissertation on how we might recognize the children of the devil, he tells us how to recognize the children of God.

### I. The Spectacular Love of the Father vv. 1-3

**“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us (3:1 a).**

1. The word **“behold”** means to pay attention and observe because what is about to be said is very important and deserves our full attention. The word translated **“what manner”** describes something different or out of the ordinary. We could say, “How awesome is the Father's love for us. Let me be very honest. It is shocking how much God loves you! He knows all about you and still loves you and me. According to I John 3:1b, the result of God bestowing His love on you is that we who are saved are identified as “teknon” that is Greek for the word “children” as it is translated in most scriptures. He loves us so much He wants us to be His children, part of His family forever.

2. God loves us so much He wants us to live with Him forever. We don't want our kids to live with us forever; we can't love like that, but God can. Since we are His children, the world knoweth us not because it knew him not (3:1c). The unbelieving world doesn't know or understand us because it doesn't know Him. In **John 1:10** John writes about Jesus who was God in flesh and blood, when He was in the world, the world knew him not.

**Look at vv. 11-13 & John 15:18-20**

3. John continues in verse 2, telling us that one of these days we will see Jesus Christ in all His glory. The only time any of disciples saw Jesus in all His glory was when He was transfigured before Peter, James, and John in Matthew 17:2 on the Mt. of Transfiguration. **And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.**

4. The Bible tells us we shall be like him. We may not be very brilliant now, but we will be in heaven. Something wonderful, beyond human comprehension, awaits us in heaven because of God's awesome love for us. Look at these verses: **I Co. 15: 50-53**

5. In John 3:3 to what hope is John referring? The hope of meeting Jesus and sharing His glory in heaven! Hope is joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation. This future hope produces a holy behavior in the present. The word purifreth means to make free of moral and ethical corruption. These verses were written to combat the false teaching of the Gnostics who did not live morally. A true Christian does not habitually sin because of the love of the Father and....

## II The Sacrifice of the Son (3:4-8)

1. God's love for us does not stop with the new birth. It continues throughout our lives and takes us right up to the return of Jesus Christ! Jesus died to save us from our sin; but what is sin? John gives us the clearest description of sin found in the Bible: **Whosoever coinmitteth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law (3:4).** Most people don't like the word sin. Whenever we sin we say, "I made a mistake." A mistake is a fault in understanding or a misinterpretation. Sin is not a mistake. It is knowing God's law and breaking it. Transgresseth = the idea of breaking; or contempt and violation of law.

2. True believers will want to live a righteous life because Jesus died to take away our sins (3:5b). We can never forget why Jesus died on the cross. Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:27 that Jesus want to receive His church holy and without blemish. So, to know of His sacrifice and then to keep on sinning "depreciates" the death of Jesus on the cross. Not only did Jesus die to take away our sins, but He also lived to give us an example to follow because in him is no sin (1 Jn 3:5c). If we really appreciate what Jesus did for us on the cross, we do what we can to avoid sin in our lives

3. An unbeliever who sins is a creature sinning against his Creator. A Christian who sins is a child sinning against his Father. The unbeliever sins against law; the believer sins against love. This reminds us of the meaning of the phrase so often repeated in the Bible: "the fear of the Lord." This phrase does not suggest that God's children live in an atmosphere of terror, "for

God hath not given us the spirit of fear” (2 Tim. 1:7). Rather, it indicates that God’s children hold their Father in reverence and will not deliberately disobey Him or try His patience.

#### Illustration:

A group of teenagers were enjoying a party, and someone suggested that they go to a certain restaurant for a good time. “I’d rather you took me home,” Jan said to her date. “My parents don’t approve of that place.” “Afraid your father will hurt you?” one of the girls asked sarcastically. “No,” Jan replied, “I’m not afraid my father will hurt me, but I am afraid I might hurt him.” She understood the principle that a true child of God, who has experienced the love of God, has no desire to sin against that love.

4. In verse 6, the word “sinneth” is in the progressive present tense in Greek and conveys continuous, ongoing action. John is referring to “habitual, continual sin. John is referring to isolated incidents of sin, which were part of the lives of even the greatest Bible characters. For example: Noah got drunk, Abraham lied, Moses got angry, David committed adultery and murder, and Peter cursed and denied the Lord. However, these sins were only sporadic incidents in their lives and were contrary to their normal lifestyles.

A true Christian commits occasional acts of sin, but no true believer keeps on sinning because whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. If we habitually, continually sin, we are not abiding in Christ. We need to check for sure our salvation.

5. Apparently, some false teachers were claiming they knew God, but they were living unrighteous lives. Therefore, John writes: Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous (3:7). Jesus, in Matthew 7:16a, tell us we can recognize false teachers by their fruits.

6. John makes this point very clear: He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil (3:8). There are only two kinds of people in the world-children of God and children of the Devil. Jesus illustrates this truth to the religious leaders in **John 8:44**.

### III. The Indwelling Holy Spirit vv.9-10

1. The Bible puts it like this: Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God (3:9). When we receive Jesus Christ as Savior, the Holy Spirit takes up residence in our lives. Ephesians 1:13 describes this fact and 1 Co. 3:16. **Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and [that] the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?**

2. John is referring to this when he writes God's seed remaineth in him. When we are saved, the Holy Spirit enters our lives and a new life begins (2 Cor. 5:17). In Christ we are new persons; the old life is gone, and a new life has begun because God's seed remains in us.

3. If a pig and a lamb fall into a mud puddle, the pig will be content to stay there and wallow in the mud, but what will the lamb do? He will get out of the mud because it is not a sheep's nature to stay there. In the same way, a believer and an unbeliever can fall into the same sin a true believer will not be content to wallow in sin because it is not his or her nature to do so.

A person who has God's seed, the Holy Spirit, cannot live a life of habitual sin. When true Christian's sins he or she will feel guilty, dirty, remorseful & will pray as David in **Psalm 38** & 51 a prayer of repentance and cleansing.

4. That's what all true Christians should pray when they sin. John sums up this passage: In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God (3:10).

5. According to the last phrase of this verse an unloving attitude to your brother reveals one is not a child of God. This is sin because it violates the second greatest commandment **1Jo 4:20** If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen

This we will take up at length next time. For now a true Christian cannot habitually sin because of the spectacular love of the Father, the sacrifice of the Son, and the indwelling seed of the Spirit.

#### Conclusion:

If you are a Christian you should act like one. **Eph 5:8-15**.....

**1Ti 4:12** Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.