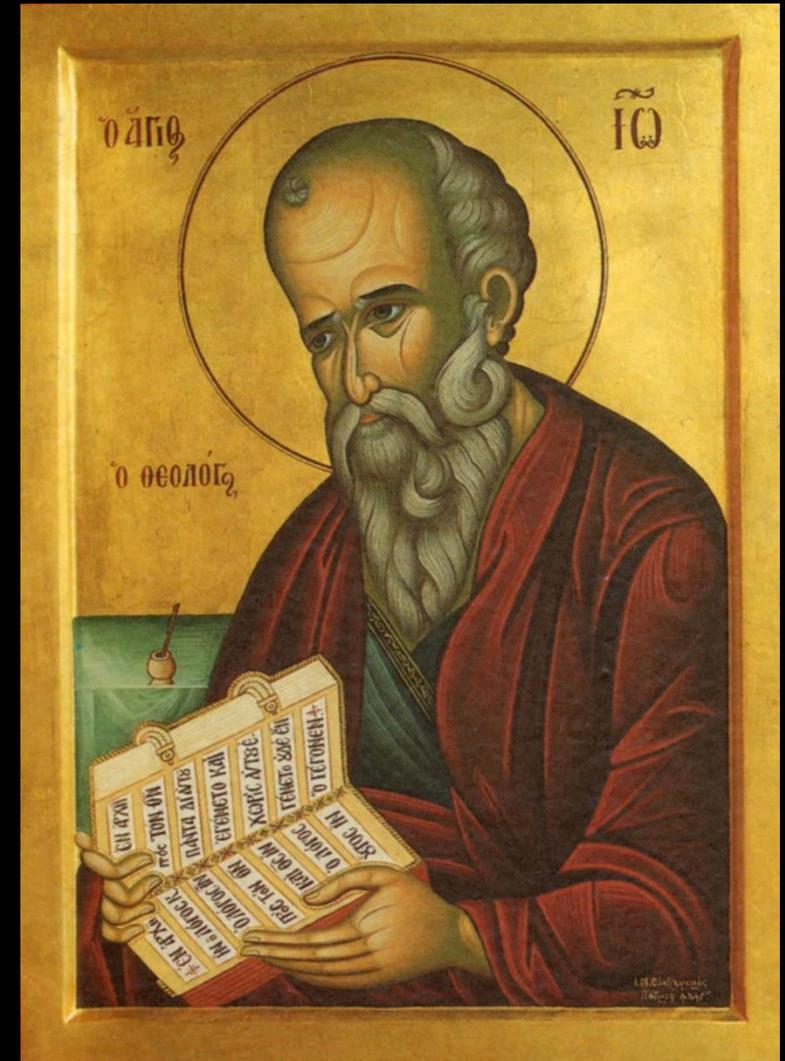


Children of God

1 John 3



Children of God Introduction

Children of God Introduction

- **Author:** John the Apostle
- **Date:** 90 AD (more or less)
- **Location:** Ephesus
- **Recipients:** Believers in and around Ephesus in the Roman province of Asia.
- **Circumstances:** Some leaders separated from John, teaching false doctrines and soft views of sin.
- **Purpose:** John writes both to warn and encourage the flock to remain faithful to the original apostles' teaching.

Children of God Introduction

Today's Passage

1. Children 3:1-3
2. Sin 3:4-10
3. Love 3:11-18
4. Assurance 3:19-24

Children of God Introduction

Soundbite:

Being in a family brings both privileges and responsibilities.
The same is true for children in the family of God.

1. Children 3:1-3

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- **3:1** This may be the main verse in this whole chapter.
- At least half of our problems in the Christian life come from not understanding – or not truly believing this verse.
- We tend to underestimate either:
 1. The depth of our sin.
 2. The depth of God's love.

1. Children 3:1-3

- **3:1** First let's consider **the depth of our sin**.
- When we underestimate the depth of our sin, we tend to think of it as no big deal that God would love us.
- We may think, "Of course God loves us; that's his job."
- Or we may look at others and think, "I'm not so bad, really."
- The reality is that our sin renders us worthy only of death and more or less unlovable.

1. Children 3:1-3

- **3:1** Then there is **the depth of God's love**.
- Some of us come from backgrounds that make it easy to see ourselves as guilty before God.
- We see our sin clearly enough, and are deeply ashamed of it.
- What we cannot imagine is that God love us anyway.
- We need to accept the fact that God knows us better than we know ourselves and loves us still.

1. Children 3:1-3

- **3:1** The other side of our connection with God is our distance from the world and its values.
- The world cannot and will not grasp who or what we are.
- It should now take us some effort to relate to the world.
- If it comes too naturally, we should look back at **2:15-17**.

1. Children 3:1-3

- **3:2-3** While we struggle to adapt to our new identity, we should look forward to the day we see Jesus.
- On that day we may be shocked by the family resemblance.
- We are destined for glory.

2. Sin 3:4-10

2. Sin 3:4-10

- Again, the leaders that broke away from John and the original apostolic teaching were soft on sin.
- John senses a need to clearly address this issue.
- Paul's contrast of the “works of the flesh” with the “fruit of the Spirit” would be a similar emphasis.
- The same goes for James reminding us that “faith without works is dead.”

2. Sin 3:4-10

- The ESV does us a favor by including words like “practice” or “keep on” to show continuity.
- John is not teaching some kind of sinless perfection, but he is sharply emphasizing the change that takes place in us.
- God’s children cannot help inwardly desiring to please him.

2. Sin 3:4-10



John is not saying that no believer will ever sin (that would contradict 1:8-10). What he is saying is that no believer makes a habit of sinning. Sinning cannot be an accepted part of our way of life. Those who happily carry on sinning cannot have had any sort of fellowship or communion with God.

– Pastor Ramylal Fernando, Singapore

2. Sin 3:4-10

- It may sound too strong to label some people (like us) as “children of God” and others as “children of the devil.”
- In this, however, John is simply following Jesus.

2. Sin 3:4-10

- John 8:42-44 (ESV)

⁴² Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. ⁴³ Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. ⁴⁴ You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

2. Sin 3:4-10

- John wants us to understand that ongoing sin is unacceptable for us as children of God.
- It's wonderful to be God's children, but walking away from sin is one of our responsibilities.

2. Sin 3:4-10

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Being in a family brings both privileges and responsibilities.
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3. Love 3:11-18

3. Love 3:11-18

- After 3:1 in importance and maybe equal to it is 3:16.
- It matches nicely with John 3:16 from the Gospel.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

3. Love 3:11-18

- The murder of Abel by his brother Cain reveals how quickly sin expressed itself in human relations.
- By contrast Christ laid down his life for us.
- The love we show for one another should be the exact opposite of the hate that Cain showed for Abel.

3. Love 3:11-18

- Romans 5:7-9 (ESV)

⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—

⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

3. Love 3:11-18

- Our love needs to start within our Christian family.
- This is where our love should be most obvious.
- But love also includes love for our neighbor and love for our enemies, because this is how far Jesus went.

3. Love 3:11-18

- Going way back to the book of Leviticus we read,
- **Leviticus 19:17-18** (ESV)

¹⁷ “You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. ¹⁸ You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

3. Love 3:11-18

- Jesus brought this up too,
- **Matthew 22:36-40** (ESV)

³⁶ “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” ³⁷ And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

3. Love 3:11-18

- But then he took it even farther,
- **Matthew 5:43-48** (ESV)

⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust ...

3. Love 3:11-18

- But then he took it even farther,
- **Matthew 5:43-48** (ESV)

... ⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸ You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

3. Love 3:11-18

- Just to clarify, loving our enemies does not mean saying they are right in all that they do.
- It was precisely because Jesus saw us in our sin and great spiritual need that he died for us.
- We can do the same, displaying self-sacrifice in the personal interest of those whose behavior we disagree with.

4. Assurance 3:19-24

4. Assurance 3:19-24

- Our generation seems to love doubt and question all forms of certainty.
- We might almost say skepticism has become a virtue.
- The only thing we are not allowed to question or doubt is whether our doubts are warranted.

4. Assurance 3:19-24

- John's followers were likely experiencing personal doubts as a result of the recent divisions caused by other teachers.
- We all experience doubt at some time and at some level.
- It is for these moments that John wrote this section.

4. Assurance 3:19-24

- God knows our failures, faults and inconsistencies better than we do.
- And he still loves us despite our great sin.
- Still, he commands two things – belief and love.

4. Assurance 3:19-24

- Believing or trusting in Jesus requires an act of the will.
- We have to choose to do it, just as we believe or trust our spouse, the bank, our employer or our friend.
- Sometimes they fail us.
- For example, I had my PayPal account hacked – which I thought would be safer than giving out credit card info.

4. Assurance 3:19-24

- Our eternity is something we really have little control over.
- We all sin, we all die, and we all need forgiveness that goes beyond the grave.
- Jesus offers exactly that and he asks us to trust him.

4. Assurance 3:19-24

- Again, God also commands our love.
- He is not asking us to feel all bubbly and affectionate toward everyone at all times.
- He is asking us to love others, to do them good, to show them respect, to meet needs that fall within our ability.

Children of God

Conclusions

Children of God Conclusions

- We need to finish at the point where we started.
- We are children of God.
- Our place in the family of God gives us our identity.

Children of God Conclusions



It does seem to me more and more that what accounts for most of our failures in Christian living is our failure to realise what we are. It is our failure to realise what God has done to us, what has happened to us. Our whole tendency always is to rush to practical applications before we have truly grasped what we are

*– D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899 – 1981),
medical doctor and minister in London.*

Children of God Conclusions

- Knowing that we are God's children makes loving him and obeying God easier.
- Love and obedience toward a Father comes naturally.
- It is not the same as trying to love a boss, a political leader, or a distant superhuman power.

Children of God Conclusions

- **1 John 3:1** (ESV)

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

- **1 John 3:16** (ESV)

By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

Children of God Conclusions

- It is an undreamed-of privilege to now be children in the family of God.
- Our relationship with him is now firm and secure.
- He asks two primary things of us in return:
 1. Trust or faith in his Son Jesus Christ who died for us.
 2. Obedience, most fully expressed by love.

Children of God Conclusions

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