

Lesson Three: 1 John 3

See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

"Behold" is plural here, literally, "behold ye." The usual form is singular. John is calling upon all the saints to wonder at the particular kind of love God has bestowed upon them. Wuest

"What manner of" is *potapēn*, "from what country, race or tribe?" The word speaks of something foreign. The translation could read, "Behold, what foreign kind of love the Father has bestowed upon us." The love of God is foreign to the human race. Wuest

"Hath bestowed" is from *dedōken*, the perfect tense form of *didōmi*, "to give something to someone." The perfect tense is used here to indicate that the gift becomes a permanent possession of the recipient. Wommack

God has placed His love upon the saints in the sense that they have become the permanent objects of His love. One of the results of this love in action is that we are called sons of God. But the greatest manifestation of God's love toward man is the coming and sacrifice of God's sinless Son. Those who truly want to see God's love for them can find it revealed in God's actions through Jesus. Wuest

Not only did God our Father not give us the wrath we deserved by making Jesus our substitute and paying our debt, but He also gave us all the blessings we didn't deserve by exalting us to children; i.e., joint-heirs with Jesus (Romans 8:17). Wommack

Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

John 3:16

Because in this manner God loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son (in death), that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life.

2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

The verb in the expression "it doth not yet appear" is aorist passive. The correct reading is, "It has not yet been made manifest or visible." Wuest

This likeness in this context has to do with a physical likeness, not a spiritual one. Saints are spiritually like the Lord Jesus now in a relative sense; and through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, are being conformed more and more to His spiritual likeness. Wuest

2 Corinthians 3:18

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

The idea of *hagnizein* (to purify) is much the same as that of *katharizein* (to cleanse) (1:9): it is entire purification, not merely from unchastity, but from all defilement of flesh and spirit." Thus, the hope of being like the Lord Jesus arouses the determination to be pure like Him, Wuest

4 Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. 5 You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. 6 No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. 7 Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; 8 the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. 9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

Everyone who habitually does sin, also habitually does lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. And you know absolutely that that One was manifested in order that He might take away our sins; and sin in Him does not exist. Wuest

Since sin is the transgression of the Law, what happens when there is no Law? The answer is found in Romans 5:13. This is not to say there is no sin, but sin is not imputed when there is no Law. Wommack

Verse 6, The tense of the verbs is present, the kind of action, continuous, habitual. Thus, "every one who habitually is abiding in Him," is a saved person, and, "every one who habitually is sinning," an unsaved person. Wuest

What John denies here is that a Christian sins habitually. He denies that the life of a Christian is wholly turned towards sin as is that of the unsaved person. Wuest

He asserts however that "Everyone who keeps on continually sinning, has not seen Him neither known Him." This is an unsaved person Wuest

Verse 7 The apostle cuts away vain pretences by a sharp principle: a righteous character expresses itself in righteous conduct. Wuest

Deceive" is planaō, "to lead astray." Wuest

Translation, Little born-ones, stop allowing anyone to be leading you astray. The one who habitually does righteousness is righteous, just as that One is righteous. Wuest

Verse 8 "Committeth" is poieō, in a present tense participle, "He who is continually doing sin." Smith suggests, "He that makes sin his business or practice." Wuest

"Destroy" is in the Greek text luō, "to loosen, dissolve." Wuest

Translation, The one who is habitually doing sin is out of the devil as a source, because from the beginning the devil has been sinning. For this purpose there was manifested the Son of God, in order that He might bring to naught the works of the devil. Wuest

Verse 9 The part of us that is born of God, or born again, is the spirit. That born-again spirit was created in righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:24) Wuest

It is this born-again spirit that cannot sin (this verse). When we are walking in the spirit, or being led by the spirit, we cannot sin.

"Commit" is poieō in the present tense which always speaks of continuous action Wuest

"Cannot sin" is dunamai, "I am not able," and the present infinitive of hamartanō, "to sin." The infinitive in the present tense in Greek always speaks of continuous, habitual action, never the mere fact of the action, Wuest

a Christian can live a sinful life and still be truly born again because of wrong, legalistic teaching. 1 Corinthians 15:56 says, "...the strength of sin is the law." Romans 7:8-11 says, "But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." Wommack

The translation reads, "Every one who has been born out of God, with the present result that he is a born-one (of God), does not habitually do sin." Wuest

Verse 10 How can we accurately evaluate the condition of someone's heart? It's not just religious actions but actions of love. Wommack

11 For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; 12 not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.

Why did Cain kill his brother, Abel? It was because he was convicted by his brother's life. Those who see their comparative unworthiness often try to ease their conscience by silencing the one through whom the conviction comes, rather than changing their behavior. Wommack

13 Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you.

John's readers were astounded at the fact that people of the world should hate them because they were children of God. Wuest

14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.

The test is not its hatred but our love." Wuest

this is specifically speaking about loving our brothers and sisters in the Lord. Jesus said that it would be our love for each other that would tell the world we are His true disciples (John 13:34-35). Wommack

Translation, As for us, we know absolutely that we have passed over permanently out of the sphere of the death into the life, because we are habitually loving the brethren. The one who is not habitually loving is abiding in the sphere of the death. Wuest

15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

Translation, Every one who habitually is hating his brother is a manslayer, And you know absolutely that every manslayer does not have life eternal abiding in him. Wuest

16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

The way we perceive the love of God is by looking at His actions. The way others will perceive the love of God in us is by our actions. Wommack

17 But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

Those who say they have this true, God-kind of love but don't have a compassion for those around them that expresses itself in actions are deceived. Wommack

18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. 19 We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him 20 in whatever our heart condemns us, for God is greater than our heart and knows all things.

Truly loving others is a sure indication of the work of God's grace in our hearts. Wommack

This verse is clearly saying our hearts can condemn us without God condemning us (Romans 8:1). Wommack

The sense of the whole passage is therefore, "In this we shall know experientially that out of the truth we are, and in His presence shall tranquilize our heart in whatever our heart condemns us, because God is greater than our hearts and knows all things." Wuest

when our heart condemns us we shall quiet it with the assurance that we are in the hands of a God who is greater than our heart—who surpasses man in love and compassion no less than in knowledge. Wuest

21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; 22 and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

"Confidence" is parrēsia, "freedom in speaking, unreservedness in speech, free and fearless confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, assurance." Wuest

"Toward" is pros, "facing, toward," thus, "face to face" with God, "facing" God. Wuest

It is, "whatever we keep on asking for," speaking of repeated and continuous praying, day after day. The prerequisites for answered prayer are an uncondemning heart, the habitual keeping of God's commandments, and the habitual doing of those things which please Him. Wuest

23 This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.

The word "Name" stands for all that the Son of God is in His wonderful Person. Robertson quotes Westcott, "a compressed creed." This belief is an intellectual assent to all that the Bible states is true of our Lord and a heart submission to Him personally. Wuest

The writer of Hebrews expressed a similar thing in Hebrews 8:8-13. Those verses speak of a new covenant. Hebrews 8:13 says, "In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." So, following this same

reasoning, if a new covenant made the first covenant old and ready to vanish away, then likewise, a new commandment made the first ones old and ready to vanish away. We are not to be living our lives by the old commandments but by this new commandment that Jesus gave here. Following this one command will fulfill all the righteousness of the Old Testament commandments (Matthew 22:36-40). Wommack

The old commandments (for instance, the big ten in Exodus 20:3-17) were how we were to love God and how He would respond to us. This new commandment is about how we are to respond to the love God has already shown us (1 John 4:10). The Law commandments were done in order to obtain God's love. The N.T. law is in response to God's love. What a difference! Wommack

24 The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

What is His commandment? 1 John 3:23 clearly states it: It is to believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and to love one another. That's it. All the Law can be summed up into these two commands (Matthew 22:36-40). Wommack

Paul prays in Ephesians 3:16, 17 that the saints might "be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man in order that the Christ might finally settle down and feel completely at home" in their hearts. Wuest