

The Christian Arsenal

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1 JOHN 2:28-3:10

Today, as we begin a new year and a new millennium, we're going to see a lesson for us that I hope will start this new year off right. Up until now in our study of **1 John**, we've seen John focus mainly on how we are to have fellowship with God and today we are going to see how this is accomplished. We cannot have fellowship until we have sonship. **Chapters 1 and 2** is the "fellowship section" of **1 John** and **chapters 3 through 5** is the "sonship" section of **1 John**.

Verses 28 and 29 of **chapter two** are a bridge that connects the two sections.

Verses 28-29...

Before John begins to teach us about our sonship, he uses three words that ought to encourage us to live in fellowship with God.

"abide"...We saw this word in our last lesson...in fact this has been the theme of **chapters 1 and 2**. We abide in Christ by believing the truth, obeying the truth and loving other Christians. If you're a Christian, yet find yourself out of fellowship with your Heavenly Father, it is because you have disobeyed His Word, or you've lacked love for a fellow believer, or you've believed a lie.

How do you get back into fellowship with the Father? Well, you go before God and confess your sins and allow Him to forgive you and cleanse you.

"appears"...**verse 28**...John doesn't deal with endtime events in the Book of **1 John** as he does in the **The Book of the Revelation**...He just sort of mentions it in passing...but I believe the point he's making here is that the every fact that Jesus may return at any moment ought to be incentive for you and me to live in fellowship with Him and be obedient to His Word.

"ashamed"...**verse 28**..."and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming..."

All believers will be accepted at His coming, but there's a difference between being "accepted" and being "acceptable." If you tell your child not to do something and he goes on and does it anyway...he may be "accepted", but he won't be "acceptable" until his behavior changes.

No matter which direction we look, we as God's children find reason to obey God.

If we look **back**, we see **Calvary**, where Jesus died for us.

If we look **within**, we see the **Holy Spirit** who teaches us truth.

If we look **around**, we see our **Christian brothers and sisters** who love us and hold us accountable, and we also see **men and women who need to be won to the Lord Jesus**.

If we look **forward**, we see **the return of the Lord Jesus**.

Let me ask you...if God sent you an email or a FAX or a letter and said Jesus is coming back on January 20, 2000, how would that affect your conduct in the next two and a half weeks? Would you get "stuff" out of your life that shouldn't be there? Would you have an urgency in your spirit to witness to your lost family members or friends or co-workers or neighbors...or just the clerk at Goldsmith's or the sacker at Kroger's?

I believe what John is telling us is that since we don't know **when** Jesus is coming back, then we should live every day so that we won't be ashamed when He does come!

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Having said all that, John then launches into the section on “sonship.” Last week we took a look at **false believers** and the qualities **they** have and today we’re going to look at **true believers** and **their** qualities.

The United States Treasury Department has a special group of men whose job is to track down counterfeiters. Naturally, these men need to know a counterfeit bill when they see it.

Oddly enough, they’re not trained by spending hours examining counterfeit money. They’re trained to spot the counterfeit by studying the real thing. They become so familiar with authentic bills that they can spot a counterfeit by simply looking at it or even touching it.

This is the approach John takes in this chapter. Instead of listing the evil characteristics of the children of the devil, he gives us a clear description of God’s children.

The key verse is verse 10...

- 1) a true child of God practices righteousness
- 2) a true child of God loves other Christians despite differences.

The passage before us today deals with the first topic and next week we’ll see the second topic.

Chapter 3:1-10...

What is a righteous life? It’s a holy life, isn’t it? John gives us three reasons we should live a holy life...

1) God the Father Loves Us

God’s love for us is unique. Warren Wiersbe says **verse 1** could be translated: *“Behold, what peculiar, out of this world kind of love the Father has bestowed on us.”*

The whole plan of salvation begins with the love of God... “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us...”

a) God’s love called you. If you’re a Christian, it’s because one day God called you.

“He called me long before I heard, before my sinful heart was stirred. But when I took Him at His word, forgiven He lifted me.”

God called us **from** something and He called us **to** something. He called us **from the world** and He called us **to Himself**.

b) God’s love placed us into His family.

Does it ever overwhelm you with awe and wonder that you and I are God’s children? I hope we never get over the fact that God loved us enough to call us to be **His** children.

Verse 1 tells us what we are.

Verse 2 tells us what we shall be.

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See, God's love doesn't stop with the new birth. It continues throughout our lives and takes us right up to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. When Jesus comes, we'll not only **see Him**, but we will be **like Him**. We'll have no more sickness or paralysis or pain or heartache or tears...We'll have glorified bodies like Jesus and we'll be perfectly suited for heaven.

Not only does John tell us what **we are** and what **we shall be**, he also tells us what **we should be** because we are loved by God the Father.

Verse 3...Because of the fact that Jesus will return, we should keep our lives clean.

An unbeliever who sins is a creature sinning against his Creator. But a Christian who sins is a child sinning against his Father.

An unbeliever sins against Law...a believer sins against Love.

A group of teenagers were at a party and someone suggested that they go to a certain restaurant for a good time.

"I'd rather you take me home," Jan said to her date. "My parents don't approve of that place."

"Are you 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."

I believe the heart of God is **hurt and grieved and broken** when His children sin against Him.

We've seen that we should live holy lives because God the Father loves us, but also because

2) God the Son Died for Us (**verses 4-8**)

These are difficult verses. There have been disturbing doctrines developed based on a misinterpretation of these verses. Before we get into that though, let me point out to you some things in these verses that are absolutely crystal clear.

a) there are two distinct kingdoms operating in this world...the kingdom of righteousness and the kingdom of lawlessness.

b) these two kingdoms are run by kings who are diametrically opposed to each other....The kingdom of righteousness is run by King Jesus. The kingdom of lawlessness is run by king Satan.

c) every person...living or dead...is a citizen of one of these two kingdoms.

d) the citizens of Christ's kingdom are born again believers. The citizens of Satan's kingdom are lost.

Now, let me share with you something that will help you understand the difficulties in this passage of Scripture.

The key is understanding the tense in the Greek of the verb "sin" or "practice sin".

In our language the tense of a verb refers to time, doesn't it?

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Present tense is present time.
Past tense is past time.
Future tense is future time.
In the English language tense means time.

But in the Greek language, the significance of the tense of a verb is more on “kind of action” and less on time. A verb in the present tense means **continuous action**. A verb in the present tense means continuous, persistent, habitual action.

So we would read

Verse 4... “Every one who continuously, persistently, habitually practices sin also continuously, persistently, habitually practices lawlessness...”

and we would read

Verse 6... “No one who abides in Him continuously, persistently, habitually sins; no one who continuously, persistently, habitually sins has seen Him or knows Him.

And the same is true of **verse 9**.

Now, while a Christian may commit an act of sin or even acts of sin...a Christian will not live a life of persistent, continuous, habitual sin.

Beloved, if the driving force in your life is sin. If the overwhelming thrust in your life is sin...If you wake up in the morning planning sin and go through the day committing sin and go to bed plotting tomorrow's sin and that's the pattern of your life, and it's day after day after day...persistent, habitual, and continuous sin, then I want to tell you...you have never been saved!!

Please understand...**a Christian can sin!** A Christian can commit acts of sin. John's already told us... “if any man sins, he has an Advocate with the Father...” John's already told us... “if we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness...”

So, how do we know it's true that a Christian will not habitually, persistently and continuously sin?

Well, I believe among others there are several reasons right here in these few verses we just read...

Verse 5...

After a person has become a child of God, born again by faith in Jesus Christ, he cannot practice lawlessness...

(what did we say “practice” means?...continuous, habitual persistent...)

- a) Jesus was without sin and if we abide in Him and He abides in us, it means we are identifying ourselves with One who is sinless.
- b) Jesus died to take away sin...Through His death, Jesus broke the power that sin had over us.

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Verse 8...After a person has become a child of God, born again by faith in Jesus Christ, he cannot practice lawlessness because lawlessness is of Satan.

c) Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil. Now, "destroy" doesn't mean that Satan has been annihilated, but it does mean that Jesus has broken the power of sin with which Satan comes against the Christian. It doesn't mean we will never ever sin...but it does mean we are no longer enslaved by sin.

Satan still exists, but his power has been reduced and his weapons have been impaired and one day, he will be completely destroyed. He may win an occasional battle...but, he's already lost the war!

What we need to remember is this...a person who knows Christ, and who has been delivered from Satan's bondage has no desire to continuously, persistently and habitually sin!!!

And let me say this...a person who can enjoy deliberate sin and who does not feel convicted or experience God's chastening had better examine himself to see whether or not he is really born of God!

Well, let's see one more thing and we'll be through. We should live holy lives because God the Father loves us and God the Son died for us and also because ...

3) God the Holy Spirit Enables Us (verses 9-10)

Beloved, when the Holy Spirit comes into your life, He gives you a new nature. And, by the way...the Holy Spirit came into your life the moment you were saved. You didn't have to beg for Him to come...you didn't have to do something extra or extraordinary. The moment you gave your heart to Jesus, the Holy Spirit came in and took up residence in your life, and when He did, He gave you a new nature.

Now...when the new nature came in...what happened to the old nature? Did it die? Was it eradicated?

Well, let me just say this...the old nature is also your sin nature...so let me ask you...do you ever sin?

Well, if you ever sin, then you still have the old nature. Just as you cannot drive a car without an engine, you cannot sin without a sin nature. And if you say you don't have a sin nature, then you're saying you never sin, and if you say that, you're on dangerous ground.

Look at **1 John 1:8-10...**

I believe Paul struggled with his old nature. Go home this afternoon and read Romans 7 and see if you don't agree with me...

Having said all that, let me say this...

Because we do have a new nature, and because we do have the enabling power of the Holy Spirit, we do not have to sin!

It is not true that after salvation the believer is not able to sin, but it is true that after salvation the believer is able not to sin.

Think of the sins we commit...***Do we have to do them?*** No, we do them because we've allowed the old nature within us to override and overrule the new nature within us!!

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The old nature produces sin, but the new nature leads you into a holy life. So, your responsibility is to live according to your new nature, not the old nature.

One way to illustrate this is by contrasting the “outer man” with the “inner man”. The physical man needs food, and so does the inner man. Jesus said, “**Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God**”...and unless a Christian spends time daily meditating on the Word of God, his inner man will lack power.

A converted Indian explained it this way... “I have two dogs living with me...a mean dog and a good dog. They are always fighting. The mean dog wants me to do bad things, and the good dog wants me to do good things. Do you want to know which dog wins? ***The one I feed the most!***”

I promise you this...if you feed the new nature from the Word of God it will be strong and you will have power to live a godly life. But, by the same token...if you feed the old nature what **it** wants to hear and what **it** wants to read and where **it** wants to go and what **it** wants to do and who **it** wants to be with...**it will be stronger** and you won't have any power to live a holy life!!

We also need to be sure that just as we keep our outer man clean, we will keep our inner man clean. Keep short accounts with God. Don't have anything in your life that is **unconfessed** and **unrepented** and **unforgiven**.

1 Corinthians 14:45 tells us our old nature is from Adam and calls it “the first Adam” and it tells us our new nature is from Jesus and calls it “the last Adam”.

This means there are two “Adams” living inside me.

Think of it this way...

When temptation comes knocking at your door...if you send the “first Adam” (the old nature) to answer...you'll sin. But, if you send the “last Adam” (the new nature) to answer, you'll get victory!!”

I believe if we're honest with God about these issues, our lives will be more and more pleasing to Him.

My prayer is that this coming year will find us living lives that are **persistently** and **habitually** and **continuously** lived in righteousness before God!