

— 1 John —
Lesson #10 Chapter 3:1-10

Charles Spurgeon comments on this passage saying, “As dear Dr. Hawker said concerning this, here is a chapter in every word and a sermon in every letter. How it opens with a “Behold!” because it is such a striking portion of sacred Scripture, that the Holy Ghost would have us pay particular attention to it. “Behold!” says he, “read other Scriptures if you like, with a glance, but stop here. I have put up a way-mark to tell you there is something eminently worthy of attention buried beneath these words.”¹

Ask the Lord to prepare your heart for life-changing truths contained in this lesson! This section of John’s letter showcases important aspects of our lives as children of God. Its truths have power to encourage and strengthen us, whether we are new to the faith or mature in Christ.

1. What thought ties 1 John 2:29 with 1 John 3:1?
2. What command is given at the beginning of 1 John 3:1?
3. Define *bestowed* (Strong’s #1325 [ESV, HCSB *given*; NIV *lavished*]). See Colossians 1:25 and 1 Timothy 4:14 to gain a bit more insight into the word.
4. How is God’s love for us revealed according to 1 John 3:1? What do you learn about that immense privilege from John 1:12; 2 Corinthians 6:16-18; Galatians 3:26; Revelation 21:7?

¹ Spurgeon, C. H. 1856. “The Beatific Vision.” In *The New Park Street Pulpit Sermons*, 2:70. London: Passmore & Alabaster.

5. What is a unique result of our special relationship with God according to the second half of 1 John 3:1? What did Jesus have to say about this reality? See John 8:19; 15:18-21; 16:3.

6. In contrast to the world, who did not know God (1 John 3:1), what is true of us according to 1 John 3:2?

7. The word *now* indicates a change has taken place. What change is John referring to from verse 2? See also John 1:12; Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 3:26; 4:5-7; Ephesians 1:5.

8. What does John mean when he says in 1 John 3:2, *it has not appeared as yet what we shall be*? See 1 John 3:2 for some clues, then look at Romans 8:18-25; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Philippians 3:21; 2 Peter 1:4.

9. Where do we place our hope according to 1 John 3:3? See also 1 Peter 1:3 as an added encouragement. What is the result of our hope according in verse 3? See also 2 Corinthians 6:18-7:1; 1 Peter 1:13-16, 22.
 - a. As you review 1 John 3:1-3 what amazing truths move you to worship the Lord for His great work?

10. Define *practice* [Strong's #4160 (NKJV, HCSB *commits*; NIV *breaks*)]. Note how the same word is used by John in 1 John 1:6; 2:29; 3:4, 7, 8, 9, 10.
- a. After considering the point John is making in 1 John 3:4, why is *practice* a better translation choice (as used in the NASB and ESV) than *commits* or *breaks* as the NKJV, NIV, and HCSB use?
11. The same Greek word for *practice* is also used in Matthew 6:1; Romans 10:5; Galatians 3:12; 1 Thessalonians 4:10; 2 Peter 1:10. What do you learn about the word as you see how it's used in these verses?
12. What insight does that little word study (questions 10 and 11) give you into John's use of "practice" in 1 John 3:4?
- a. What does the *habitual practice* of sin teach us about the inner workings of someone's heart and their spiritual life? See also John 8:31, 34-36; Romans 6:8-13; 2 Corinthians 5:17, 21; 2 John 9.
- b. Verse 4 could also be translated, "Everyone who makes a practice of sinning, breaks the law, in fact, sin is the breaking of God's law and throwing off the law of God." How is the *habitual* breaking of God's law incompatible in the life of a believer? See Psalm 1:2; 119:97; Romans 7:12, 21-23.

13. John reminds his readers of two things they know. What are these truths according to 1 John 3:5?

14. How does the information in 1 John 3:5 support what John has been saying in 1 John 2:28-1 John 3:5?

15. By way of review, let's look again at what the word *abides* means when John uses it in 1 John 3:6. Please define *abides* [Strong's #3306 (NIV *lives*; HCSB *remains*)]. See also John 15:10; 1 John 2:6; 3:9, 24.

16. In 1 John 3:6 John gives us his own explanation of what abiding is like. What do you see in verse 6 that helps explain *abiding*?

(3:6) The words "abideth" and "sinneth" are used here to designate a certain class of individual. *Character is shown by one's habitual actions, not the extraordinary ones.* 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. A Christian as a habit of life is abiding in fellowship with the Lord Jesus. Sin may at times enter his life. But sin is the exception, not the rule. The unsaved person as a habit of life sins continually. "Sinneth" is present in tense, continuous action being indicated. The person who is abiding in Christ is not habitually sinning. The child of God as a habit of life, does righteousness, and sin is not a habit with him. John is not teaching sinless perfection here. Vincent says: "John does not teach that believers do not sin, but is speaking of a character, a habit. Throughout the Epistle, he deals with the ideal reality of life in God, in which the love of God and sin exclude each other as light and darkness." He does not deny that a Christian sins at times. Indeed he admits the possibility of sin in the Christian's life in 1:9, and forbids sin in 2:1. *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.*²
~Kenneth Wuest

² Wuest, Kenneth S. 1997. *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*. Vol. 13. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

17. What is John concerned about for his *little children* in verse 7? What truths does he remind them about to help protect them in verses 7-8?

18. John states in verse 7 that “the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.” What obvious connection does John want us all to understand about the life of a believer? See John 8:41, 44; 1 John 2:12-13, 29; 3:1-3.
 - a. Paul makes this same correlation in 2 Corinthians 6:16-7:1. What is the expectation for all God’s children?

19. Trace the word *appear* from 2:28 to 3:10. What do you learn about the Lord Jesus’ “appearing” on earth?

20. What are some examples of the works of the devil (verse 8)? See John 8:12, 44; Acts 10:38; 1 Corinthians 7:5; 2 Corinthians 4:4; James 3:14-16.

21. In this passage, we discover two reasons Jesus “appeared.” What are they from verses 5 and 8?

- a. See also John 8:31-32; Romans 13:14; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Corinthians 5:17, 21; Galatians 5:1; 1 John 1:9; 2:29; 3:5, 8. Now consider what impact those two realities should have upon how you view your salvation. Next consider what impact those two realities should have upon how you live each day.

“Destroy” is in the Greek text *λυω* (λυω), “to loosen, dissolve.’ Westcott comments: “The works of the devil are represented as having a certain consistency and coherence. They show a kind of solid front. But Christ, by His coming, has revealed them in their complete unsubstantiality. He has ‘undone’ the seeming bonds by which they were held together.” But He has done more than that. By the blood of His Cross He has paid for sin, made a way of escape from the arch enemy of men’s souls, defeated the purposes of the devil, and will finally bring about his complete downfall.”³ ~Kenneth Wuest

“Who but he could have ever redeemed us from sin and death? Who but he could have ever destroyed for us those works of the devil? Think what would have been the state of the world, if he had never become incarnate; what slaves we must have been if he had not liberated us; and what a death we must have undergone, if he had not died in our stead! Verily, if we felt our obligations as we ought, we should scarcely pass a moment without adverting to them, and magnifying him with songs of praise and thanksgiving. Let us dwell on the delightful thought, which, wherever it is entertained, creates a heaven upon earth: and in a little time our deliverance shall be complete; and we shall unite with all the hosts of heaven “in singing Hallelujah to God and to the Lamb for ever and ever.”⁴
~Charles Simeon

22. What iron clad promise and truth does John state in verse 9 that refutes false teaching about the life of a believer? How is that incredible promise an encouragement to your own heart when you find yourself discouraged in your battle against sin?
23. According to verse 10, what is *obvious* (ESV, HCSB *evident*; NKJV *manifest*; NIV *how we know*)? See also Matthew 7:15-20; Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Timothy 5:24-25; 2 Timothy 3:9.

³ Wuest, Kenneth S. 1997. *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*. Vol. 13. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

⁴ Simeon, Charles. 1833. *Horae Homileticae: James to Jude*. Vol. 20. London: Holdsworth and Ball.

24. John MacArthur has said the old Puritans used to teach the Christian life wasn't one of *perfection* but rather one of *direction* and *affection*, which showed the heart's transformation.⁵ How does that line up with what John is teaching in verse 10? See also 2 Timothy 2:13.

"In summarizing this section of the epistle, the child of God is reminded of his unique calling and heritage. The believer's life is one marked by righteousness. Sin does not characterize the child of God. Our pattern is the Righteous One, Jesus Christ, who came to destroy the works of the devil and the power of sin. Those who have been born of God live a life that resembles the righteous life of Christ. The child has the distinguishing marks of his parent. Therefore the child comes to imitate, and even embody, the distinguishing marks of his parent."⁶ ~Daniel Akin

"The gospel demands and also creates holiness of character; and wherever it works effectively upon the heart and conscience, it produces purity in the life."⁷ ~Charles Spurgeon

⁵ From John MacArthur's sermon on Ephesians 4:17-24, "What's Wrong with Everybody?"

⁶ Akin, Daniel L. 2001. *1, 2, 3 John*. Vol. 38. The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

⁷ Spurgeon, C. H. 1897. "The Sinful Made Sinless." In *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, 43:142-43. London: Passmore & Alabaster.