

Live Like a Christian!
1 John 2:28-3:10a

And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure (1 John 3:3).

As a father protecting his little children, John warns his friends that the false teachers who have left their assemblies will steal the greatest joy any believer will ever know—the joy of life in the family of God. The theme of First John is *fellowship*—that experience of intimacy with Christ and His people only available to those who belong to Him. The false teachers were telling them lies that would steal this intimacy.

This joy is not confined to our existence here on earth as Christians. A day is coming when every believer will stand before the Savior to give an account for his or her life. John's extended exhortation to live in fellowship with Christ now so that we will have confidence at His Coming is marked by the inclusio—that you may have confidence at His coming judgment (2:28; 4:17). This introduces a new idea to the discussion of the joy of fellowship: The joy or lack of it at the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Three inclusions within the inclusio paint a portrait of the abiding and loving Christian who will stand before Christ with the open confidence of a friend who has nothing to hide and nothing to be ashamed of. The confident believer lives righteously, loves other Christians, and releases the life of God (2:29-4:16):

- Inclusion—key word, *manifest*: You know that the life of God produces righteous behavior, not sin (2:29-3:10a). *Live like a Christian!*
- Inclusion—key phrase, *love one another*: You know that the love of God produces love for Christians, not hate (3:10b-23). *Love like a Christian!*
- Inclusion—key idea, God *abiding in believers*: You know that the Spirit of God produces spiritual victory—confessing Christ and overcoming the world (3:24-4:16). *Live like a New Creation!*

The first unit makes a simple, logical point. If we are abiding in Christ we will display His righteousness. The Greek word for *manifest*, translated *manifest appear* or *reveal*, occurs six times. What we display today in our lives on earth will be acknowledged at His Judgment Seat:

Christians who abide in Christ will display His _____—live like a Christian!

1 John: Life in the Family

Prologue—*call to fellowship* (1:1-4)

Preamble—*living in fellowship with God* (1:5-2:11)

Walking in God's Light—*stay on the path of holiness* (1:5-2:2)

Knowing the God of Light—*follow Christ and love His people* (2:3-11)

Body—*the confidence of fellowship* (2:12-4:17-19)

Reassurance—*spiritual assets to resist the world* (2:12-17) and the *antichrists* (2:18-27)

Exhortation—*live in fellowship with Him now and you will be confident at His Coming* (2:28-4:19)

Abiding Christians display Christ's righteousness (2:28-3:10a)

Sin and abiding are mutually exclusive. Abiding produces the righteousness you would expect from a child of God.

- I. Only those believers who live righteously are truly abiding in Christ (1 John 2:28-3:10a).
 - A. Those who live in fellowship with Christ will have confidence when they meet Him and not shrink away in shame (2:28!)
 1. Every Christian must give an account of his or her life in Christ—from the time they believed to the time they died (2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10). This is not merely a citing of our “good works” to be rewarded but a comprehensive review of both “good and bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Corinthians 3:5-15). The goal of every believer should be to hear Christ's “well done” as we stand before Him at His Coming.

2. The word *abide* was repeated seven times in 2:12-27. This same abiding relationship with Christ—intimate fellowship—that brings joy here on earth brings confidence at His Judgment Seat.
 3. When Christ is *manifested* (appears) believers will either greet Him confidently or shrink away in shame.
- B. The purifying hope of seeing Him who came to display His righteous glory motivates us to display His righteousness here on earth (2:29-3:10a).
1. When Christ is revealed (manifested, Rapture) the essential character of those born of God will be revealed—our purifying hope (2:29-3:3).
 2. Since the sinless Christ was manifested (1st Advent) to take away sin and destroy the wicked works of the devil, *abiding* in Him and sin are mutually exclusive (3:4-9).
 - a. Sin stands in opposition to the purity that our hope of seeing Him should bring. Lawlessness has more to do with wickedness than it has to do with following specific laws. The false teachers were trying to separate sin from righteousness (4). But two facts believers know prove that sin is a serious issue—Christ became incarnate to remove sin and there is no sin in Him (review, *God is light*, 5).
 - c. Abiding Christians do not sin and are the only ones who can claim they see and know God (review, *intimate fellowship*, 6). Note: If abiding in Christ equals being a Christian, this verse contradicts what John wrote in 1:8 and 10, and the personal experience of every honest believer. But, if abiding in Christ is living in intimate fellowship with Him and confessing any and every sin that His light exposes (1:5-10), then there is no contradiction. The present tense solution, *continually sin* (NASB, NIV), cannot be supported by the grammar: For instance, we would never read John 14:6 to say, “No one continually comes to the Father except through me,” implying that this same person would not come to the Father intermittently. The Christian who sins is not seeing and knowing God at that time, not in the way John means it—*see* Him up close because you are in His light (1:7) and *know* Him intimately because you are following Him (2:6).
 - d. To refute the false teachers’ claims that sin had nothing to do with spirituality, John reminds his readers that conduct manifests spiritual relationship. God hates sin (v 5) and sin has its source in the devil (7-8). Note: Though devilish conduct should cause us to reconsider someone’s claim to be a child of God by examining their belief, the primary application of these verses is to expose the false claim that we can abide in Christ while tolerating sin in our life.
 - e. When a Christian sins he or she is behaving like a child of Satan—who they really are is not made evident (9; 1 Corinthians 3:3). Sin is never the product of our new nature (*seed*=what God imparted when we believed and were reborn).
 3. The absence or presence of righteousness manifests the children of God and Satan (3:10a). Again, though a professing Christian who lives like the devil needs to be challenged to see what he or she is believing about Christ, the primary application is for the Judgment Seat of Christ. “If you live your life embarrassing Christ by your devilish behavior, then He will embarrass you when you see Him.”

II. Righteous behavior is required if you want confidence at the Judgment Seat of Christ!

- A. Only those who abide in Christ will have confidence at His coming!
- B. The mark of an abiding Christian is righteous behavior; sin is never the result of abiding!