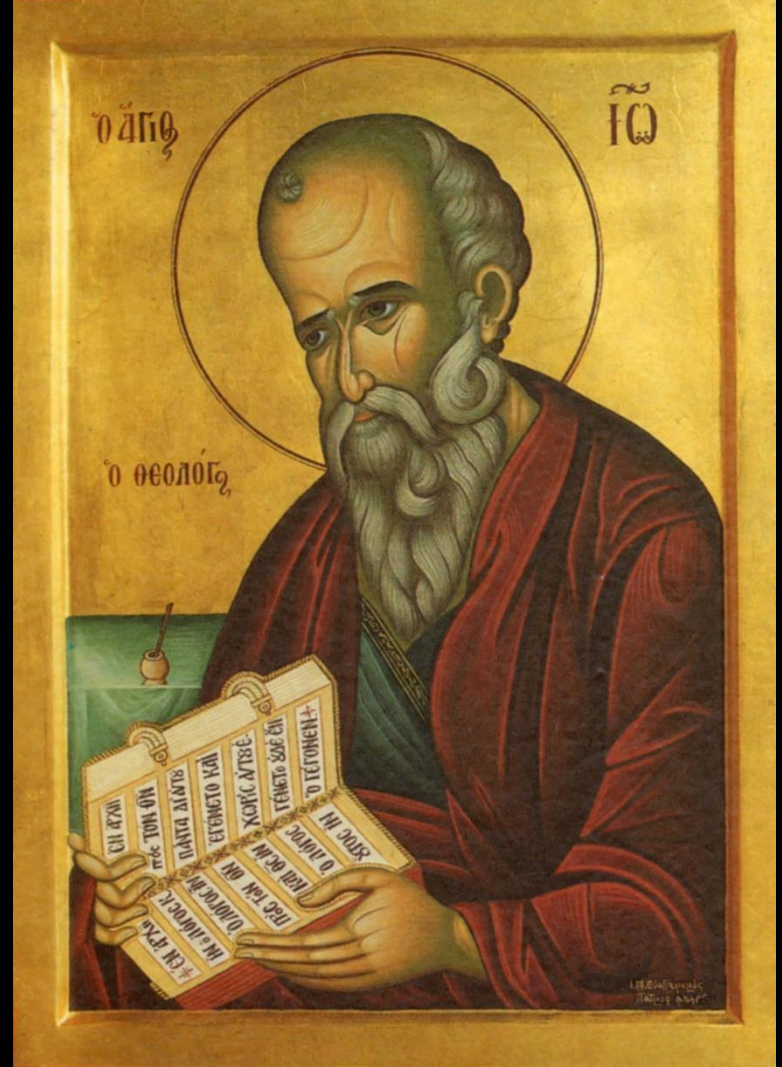


Children of God

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.

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

1. Children 3:1-3

- Key Verse #1
- 1 John 3:1

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. Children 3:1-3

- 3:1 At least half of our problems in the Christian life come from not understanding this verse.
- Or perhaps not truly believing it.

1. Children 3:1-3

- 3:1 We tend to underestimate either:

1. The depth of our sin – which makes God's love less amazing to us.
2. The depth of God's love – which sees our sin as something God is unable or unwilling to overcome.

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."

1. Children 3:1-3

- 3:1 First let's consider the depth of our sin.
- Or we may look at others and think, "I'm not so bad, really. – not as bad as that person."
- In reality, our sin renders us worthy only of death, and utterly unlovable were it not for God's great love.

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.

1. Children 3:1-3

- 3:1 Then there is the depth of God's love.
- What we cannot imagine is that God loves 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 now are.
- It now takes us some effort to relate to the world.
- If it comes too naturally, we should probably look back at 2:15-17.

1. Children 3:1-3

- 3:2-3 While we struggle to adapt to our new identity, we can 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

- Many modern translations like the ESV do us a favor.
- They include words like “practice” or “keep on” to show continuity.
- John is not teaching some kind of sinless perfection.
- He is sharply emphasizing the change that ought to take place in us.
- God’s children cannot help but inwardly desiring to please him.

2. Sin 3:4-10

"I have learned what suffering means. In a way that was impossible, I think I can understand something of the pain black people have come to endure. I know I contributed to that pain, and I can only ask your forgiveness."

*— George Wallace,
at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church
in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1979*

"He was a changed man."

CIVIL RIGHTS LEADER AND CONGRESSMAN, JOHN LEWIS

GEORGE WALLACE

From Segregation to Salvation



He showed the courage of asking for forgiveness.

By George Wallace Jr.

2. Sin 3:4-10

- It may sound too strong to label some people 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 ...

2. Sin 3:4-10

- John 8:42-44 (ESV)

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

Soundbite:

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

3. Love 3:11-18

3. Love 3:11-18

- Key Verse #2
- 1 John 3:16

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

3. Love 3:11-18

- 1 John 3:16 pairs nicely with John 3:16.

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 can 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, in **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 Jesus 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 Jesus 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.
- We can display self-sacrifice in the 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 probably experiencing personal doubts about their faith.
- This might have been as a result of the recent divisions caused by other teachers.
- We all experience doubt pertaining to our faith at some time.
- It is for these moments that John wrote this section.

4. Assurance 3:19-24

- 3:23 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

- 3:23 Believing or trusting in Jesus requires an intentional act of the will. We have to choose to do it.
- That is why God can command it.
- This is much like choosing to believe or trust our spouse, the bank or our employer or our friend.
- They can all fail us, but we choose to trust anyway.

4. Assurance 3:19-24

- 3:23 God asks us to trust him with our eternity.
- We all sin, we all die, and we all need forgiveness that goes beyond the grave.
- God offers exactly that, and he asks us to trust him.
- He asks us to believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ.

4. Assurance 3:19-24

- 3:23 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 consider their well-being.
- He asks us to be willing to meet the needs of others 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.

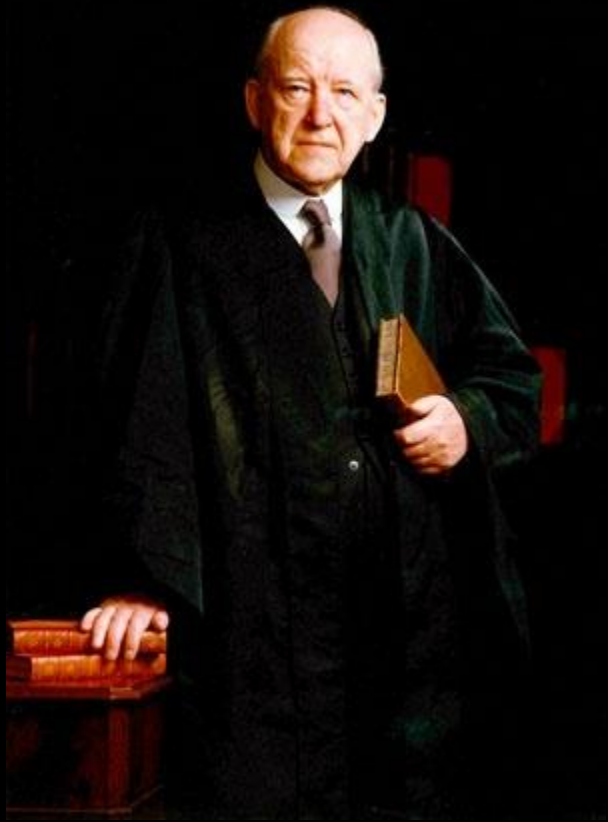
Children of God Conclusions



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 ...

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

Children of God Conclusions



... 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 more naturally than many others.
- It is not the same as trying to love a boss, a political leader, or a distant superhuman power.

Children of God Conclusions

- Key Verse #1
- 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.

Children of God Conclusions

- Key Verse #2
- 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.

Children of God Conclusions

- 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

Soundbite:

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