

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, July 31, 2024 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study



THAT YOU MAY KNOW – A STUDY OF 1,2 & 3 JOHN *The Purifying Hope* *1 John 3:1-3*

“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.” -1 John 3:1-3 (NKJV)

BACKGROUND AND SETTING FOR 1ST, 2ND, & 3RD JOHN:

(1) **AUTHOR = The Apostle John** – If you will notice, the letter of 1 John bears no inscription (name, autograph, signature). It doesn't give us a name of an individual in the actual letter itself. For that reason 1 John is often called an “anonymous letter,” but 2 and 3 John do carry an inscription. They are written by someone called “the Elder,” a reference to one of Jesus' closest disciples/apostles who was a part of Jesus inner circle, John. The moniker “Elder” does indicate that John is advanced in years when these letter were written. The language and style of all three letters are identical to each other as well as to John's Gospel, so the traditional view and the most commonly held view is that all three were written by the “disciple whom Jesus loved” (John 21:20-24). There is no reason to doubt this and early church leaders titled these three little book by John's name.

John actually wrote 5 books in the New Testament... not just these three.

5 Books Written by the Beloved Disciple:

1. The Gospel of John

2. First John
3. Second John
4. Third John
5. The Book of the Revelation

And this I think is significant... all of his books were written later in life and after all the other books in the Bible were recorded.

Here are some facts we know about John:

- **He was the son of Zebedee and Salome (Mt. 4:21; 27:55-56; Mk. 15:40-41)**
- **He and his brother James were fishermen with their father (Mk. 1:19-20)**
- **He and James were called Boanerges or Sons of thunder by Christ because of their fiery behavior at times (Mk. 3:17; cp. Lk. 9:53-54)**
- **He was one of the 3 most intimate disciples of the Lord (Mt. 17:1ff; 26:37)**
- **He was a close associate of Simon Peter... the first ones to arrive at the tomb (Jn. 20:2-8), they suffered imprisonment together after healing a lame man (Acts 3 & 4), and they traveled together to Samaria after the gospel was preached (Acts 8:14-17) not to mention that they were the disciples closest to Jesus**
- **He was one of the pillars (prime leaders) of the church in Jerusalem (Gal. 2:9)**
- **From external and extra-biblical sources (history/tradition), like Polycarp, Papias (*pappy-us*), and Justin Martyr (early church fathers) we are told the following about John from his writings – These early church fathers often quoted John and used his writings**
- **Polycarp and Papias were identified as pupils of John - They have writings dated as early as the 2nd century**
- **John was eventually banished to the isle of Patmos by the Roman emperor Domitian, from where he received the visions and wrote The Revelation (cp. Rev. 1:9)**
- **He returned to Ephesus to live out the rest of his life, from where he wrote these three epistles as well as the gospel that bears his name - Archeological remains bear his name in ruins of churches and shrines**
- **John outlived all the other apostles**
- **The book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ was written by John probably close to the same time he wrote these small epistles which bear his name.**
- **Remember the book of the Revelation was written about the vision that John saw while banished to the Greek island of Patmos on the Aegean sea.**
- **Tradition says that this was after John had been sentenced to death by martyrdom.**
- **We know little about John's later life and death from the Bible**
- **The most insightful bit of information comes from John 21 when the risen Christ was talking to Peter about Peter's death - After Jesus told Peter that he would not live long Peter asked about John's death. Jesus replied that if John lived until Christ's return, that was not Peter's concern. This was not a promise that John would live until the Lord**

returned, but it does seem to indicate that the Lord knew John would live a long time (John 21:19-23)

- **Tradition holds that John was sentenced to death in a boiling vat of oil, yet he emerged unharmed from the experience**
- **Again tradition tells us that John lived into old age perhaps dying sometime after AD 98... He is thought to have died in Ephesus – But in fact the mystery and unknowns concerning John’s death and what happened to him are not known and are varied...**

God Questions? How Did the Apostle John Die?

We know that the apostle John was exiled for his faith late in life (Revelation 1:9). The Bible does not give us details on how the apostle John died, but tradition gives us a few theories.

The most plausible theory of John’s death states that John was arrested in Ephesus and faced martyrdom when his enemies threw him in a huge basin of boiling oil. However, according to the tradition, John was miraculously delivered from death. The authorities then sentenced John to slave labor in the mines of Patmos. On this island in the southern part of the Aegean Sea, John had a vision of Jesus Christ and wrote the prophetic book of Revelation. The apostle John was later freed, possibly due to old age, and he returned to Ephesus, in what is now Turkey. He died as an old man sometime after AD 98, the only apostle to die peacefully.

Another theory concerning John’s death is associated with a second-century bishop named Papias of Hierapolis. According to one commentary on Papias’s writings, John was killed by a group of Jewish men. However, many historians believe Papias was misquoted or misread and doubt the credibility of this theory.

There is also a legend that says John did not die but rather ascended straight to heaven like Enoch and Elijah. There is no biblical evidence to lend validity to this story.

Ultimately, it is not essential to know how the apostle John died. What is important is the fact that he was not ashamed of Christ (see Luke 9:26) and was willing to die for his faith. A man will not die for something he knows to be a lie. John knew the truth that Jesus had been resurrected, and he was willing to die rather than to renounce his faith in his Savior.

(2) DATE = A.D. 90-95 - As with most books in the Bible, we cannot know for certain when and from where these epistles were penned. As to a date, it is commonly believed to have been written close to the end of the 1st century, with a fairly wide possible time frame... somewhere between 90-95 A.D. Again, we don’t know the exact time or order of the books having been written, but here are some possible dates for John’s writings...

Dates for John’s Biblical Writings:

- 1. The Gospel of John = AD 80 to 98**
- 2. First, Second and Third John = AD 90 to 95**
- 3. The Book of the Revelation = AD 94 to 98**

Of course we know God inspired the Bible and that it was written with His leading, but this may explain why the book of John seems so applicable to the readers of today. **Think of this... John had more time to think about what questions were raised in the 50 or more years after the resurrection of Christ. He knew what doubts had been raised and how to answer the questions before we knew to ask them.**

(3) PLACE OF WRITING = Ephesus – Again, as with most books in the Bible, we cannot know with certainty when and from where these small letters of John were written. Some guesses are better than others, but are still just that guesses. It is believed by most Biblical scholars that John wrote these letters from Ephesus, the place believed to be where he died. It is usually accepted that John wrote them late in his life. Supporters of this point to 2 John 1 and 3 John 1. In both verses, the author calls himself “the elder.” In the original text, there is a definite article before “elder.” Thus, the reference is probably to an older man rather than to one who serves as an overseer in a local church. Also, 1 John 2:1,12,28; 3:7,18; 5:21; and 3 John 4 all reference John’s readers as his “little children.” Such a fatherly concern points to John as an older man.

(4) RECIPIENTS = 3 different audiences - The Epistles of John were written to various audiences. They were all written after John was an old man living in Ephesus.

3 Recipients of John’s Letter:

1. **Letter 1 = The Ephesian church (and/or surrounding churches)** - The first epistle was not addressed to anyone in particular, but was written more as a sermon
2. **Letter 2 = Elect lady** - The second was written to an unnamed “elect lady.”
3. **Letter 3 = Gaius** - The third to a man name Gaius. There are three men who bear that name to whom the letter could have been written. There was a Gaius in Macedonia (Acts 19: 29), Corinth (Rom. 16:23), and Derbe (Acts 20:4).

(5) PURPOSE = Multiple purposes - In terms of a positive stated purpose, John actually gives us reasons why he wrote these epistles:

3 Stated Positive Purposes for These Letters:

1. **That your (our) joy may be made complete = 1 John 1:4**
2. **That you may not sin = 1 John 2:1**
3. **That you may know that you have eternal life = 1 John 5:13**

“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.” -1 John 3:1-3 (NKJV)

It is pretty clear, maybe even abundantly clear that God calls this children (Christians/believers) to purity. You really can't escape Scriptures' call. But the call to purity isn't an easy one nor an automatic one. What does it mean to be pure? How do I fulfill this call to purity? How do I become "pure" as He calls?

DEFINING AND UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIAN PURITY

What is purity? How would you define it? _____

Why do you think "purity" in our life is important to God? _____

Why, in your opinion, do we struggle with living this way... truly pure? _____

Defining Purity:

Purity = "Purity is freedom from anything that contaminates, it is the quality of being faultless, uncompromised, or unadulterated."

3 Illustrations of Purity:

- 1. Pure water is free from any other substances**
- 2. Pure gold has been refined to such a degree that all dross has been removed**
- 3. Pure life is one in which sin no longer determines the choices one makes**

Purity is important to God, who alone is truly pure and He shows us how important it is in His Word...

Some Things You Need to Know About Purity in Scripture:

- 1. Purity is often used in Scripture as a means to communicate holiness or perfection**
 - When Moses was building the tabernacle, God specified that the lampstand and other items inside the Holy Place be made "of pure gold" (Exodus 25:31; cf. 37:2, 16). The oil used in the tabernacle was to be pure, as was the frankincense (Leviticus 24:2, 7). The Lord has "pure" eyes (Habakkuk 1:13) and speaks "pure" words (Psalm 12:6). The New Jerusalem is described as a "city of pure gold, as pure as glass" (Revelation 21:18).
- 2. When God created the heavens and the earth (*Genesis 1-2*), everything was pure -**
 - There was no death, decay, pollution, or sin. God creates pure things because He is pure.

In Him, there is no confusion, contradiction, or compromise. Everything He does is good (Psalm 18:30; 145:17). He created human beings to reflect His image and to live in pure, unbroken communion with Him (Genesis 1:27).

3. **Sin is the corruptor of purity (Psalm 14:3)** - Impurity is often listed as one factor that will keep us away from the presence of God (Colossians 3:5–6; Galatians 5:19–21; 1 Corinthians 6:9–10). Impurity renders a person or a nation unfit for entrance into God’s presence (Joshua 3:5; Revelation 21:27; Ephesians 5:5; James 4:8).
4. **In order to have fellowship with a holy God, we must reclaim the purity that He originally intended for us** - *“Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart”* (Psalm 24:3–4). In the Old Testament, people reclaimed purity by sacrificing animals in the way God specified. God had declared that He would purify them (Leviticus 22:32) if they kept all His commands (Leviticus 22:31), His Sabbaths (Leviticus 26:2), and His sacrifices (Exodus 8:27). Repentance and faith in a coming Savior, as shown in their obedience to the Law, were sufficient for God to pronounce people righteous. In the New Testament, purity is reclaimed by placing our faith in the perfect sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3–7).
5. **We cannot be pure enough on our own to see God (Romans 3:23)** - We must have Christ’s righteousness credited to our accounts (2 Corinthians 5:21). That’s what it means to be a Christian.
6. **The term purity is often used today in relation to sexuality** - Sexual purity is freedom from immorality or perversion. Girls sometimes wear purity rings to indicate their commitment to saving sex for marriage. Purity is closely related to holiness, and those who walk in holiness will keep themselves sexually pure: abstinent before marriage and monogamous within marriage.
7. **When we have been born again through faith in Jesus (John 3:3), we desire to live in purity (1 Peter 1:15–16)** - That purity is not limited to our sexuality, although that is important (Ephesians 5:2; 1 Corinthians 6:18). God desires that we live purely in all our dealings with others (Ezekiel 45:10; Luke 6:31). Purity should define our thought life (2 Corinthians 10:5), our words (Ephesians 4:29), and our actions (1 Corinthians 10:31). Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8). When our hearts are clouded with impurities, we cannot experience God’s presence or hear His voice. But when our claim to righteousness is based on what Jesus has done (Titus 3:5), we will strive to forsake sin (1 John 3:9) and live in purity of heart, enjoying fellowship with the God of purity.

The evangelical church in America desperately needs holiness. In *The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience* ([Baker], pp. 12-13), Ron Sider writes,

“Scandalous behavior is rapidly destroying American Christianity. By their daily activity, most “Christians” regularly commit treason. With their mouths

they claim that Jesus is Lord, but with their actions they demonstrate allegiance to money, sex, and self-fulfillment.

The findings in numerous national polls conducted by highly respected pollsters like The Gallup Organization and the Barna Group are simply shocking. “Gallup and Barna,” laments evangelical theologian Michael Horton, “hand us survey after survey demonstrating that evangelical Christians are as likely to embrace lifestyles every bit as hedonistic, materialistic, self-centered, and sexually immoral as the world in general.” Divorce is *more* common among “born-again” Christians than in the general American population. Only 6 percent of evangelicals tithe. White evangelicals are the *most* likely people to object to neighbors of another race. Josh McDowell has pointed out that the sexual promiscuity of evangelical youth is only a little less outrageous than that of their nonevangelical peers.”

It is also odd to me that American Christians are enamored with biblical prophecy, yet they ignore the application of prophetic truth to their daily lives. Several decades ago, the best-selling evangelical author of prophecy books left his wife and moved in with his girl friend, whom he subsequently married. The church that he was attending disciplined him, but he just shrugged it off and started his own church. He has continued to write best sellers and to appear on the Christian TV talk show circuit.

Application Questions

1. What is at the root of the current evangelical moral scandal? Why aren't believers different than our culture?
2. Why are Christians so enamored with biblical prophecy, and yet they do not seem to apply it to their lives?
3. If we honestly don't yearn for the Lord's return, is there a problem? What should we do about it?
4. How can a depressed Christian gain hope? What steps would you advise?

Our text confronts head on this deadly disease of the modern church. John shows that if you understand biblical prophecy rightly, you *will* purify yourself from sin. He does not say that you *ought to* purify yourself, but rather, you *will* do it. The true hope of Christ's coming is a purifying hope. John says that...

Understanding our present position as children of God and our future hope of being like Jesus when He comes will motivate us to grow in holiness now.

These verses are closely connected with verse 1, which we studied last week. **The Father's great love for us as His children is probably the strongest motivation for holy living.** When you contemplate the staggering truth that God gave His own Son on the cross to forgive all

of your sins and to make you His own child, it should compel you to be distinct from the world and to grow in holiness. John continues that theme by addressing his readers as “beloved.” They are beloved by God and also by the aged apostle. He reminds us, again, that...

“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.” -1 John 3:1-3 (NKJV)

3 Important Keys to Living Pure Lives as Christians: (from 1 John 3:1-3)

- 1. Our present position is that we are children of God**
- 2. Our future hope is that when Jesus comes, we will be like Him**
- 3. Understanding our present position and our future hope will motivate us to grow in holiness now**

Let’s take a look at these...

OUR PRESENT POSITION IS THAT WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD

John has just said in verse 1 that we are actually the children of God. Why does he repeat it again in verse 2? Because he wants to hammer this essential truth home and clinch it in our minds. He says, “*now*”—right now in the present, “*we are children of God.*” That is our current position, and it ought to dominate every aspect of our daily lives.

Being a child of God comes with benefits. Paul wrote in Romans 8:15-17, “*¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” ¹⁶ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*”

We are sons and daughters of the King of the universe. God the Father claims us as His children because of the atoning death of Jesus Christ. There is no status greater than this on earth. Our new status as believers in Jesus Christ brings new benefits, rights and responsibilities to our lives.

7 Benefits of Being a Child of God:

- 1. Security -We are not to fear, but enjoy sonship. Romans 8:15 “*¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”* And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” An employee or a servant**

basically obeys out of fear of punishment, loss of job, etc. But a child-parent relationship is not characterized by a fear of losing the relationship.

2. **Authority** - We have the status not of “a slave” but of “sonship”. Romans 8:15 *“¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’”* And by him we cry, *“Abba, Father.”* In a house, slaves have no authority. They can only do what they are told. But under their parents, children do have authority in the house—they are not mere servants. The children of God are given authority over sin and the devil. They are to move about in the world knowing that it belongs to their Father. There should be confidence and poise about them. Children have the honor of the family name. There is a wonderful new status conferred on us
3. **Intimacy** - Romans 8:15 *“¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’”* *“By Him we cry, ‘Abba’”* The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. *“...By whom (Him) we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’”* We need to know the original language here. “Abba” was an Aramaic term which is best translated “Daddy”—a term of the greatest intimacy. A child does not always (or even often) address his father as “Father”; likely, he has a different term for him that shows his loving, trusting familiarity with his father, such as “Dad” or “Papa” or “Daddy.” And this is how Christians can approach the all-powerful Creator of the universe, who sustains every atom in existence moment by moment! **Martyn Lloyd-Jones** is worth quoting here, *“Let us notice the word ‘cry’... we cry ‘Abba, Father.’ It is a very strong word, and clearly the apostle has used it quite deliberately. It means ‘a loud cry’ ... it expresses deep emotion ... It is the spontaneity of the child who sees the father ... and not only spontaneity, but confidence.”*
4. **Assurance** - Romans 8:16 says, *“¹⁶ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”* The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. When we cry out to God as “Abba,” the Spirit of God somehow comes alongside us (“with our spirit”) and gives us assurance that we truly are in God’s family. There is a lot of debate about the nature of this *“witness,”* but it appears to be an inner witness in the heart, a sense that yes, he really loves me. Notice, Paul says our spirit is already testifying, *“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit.”* This means we already have evidence that we are Christians. We know we trust Christ. We have his promises. We see our lives changing and growing. All these pieces of evidence lead our *“spirit”*—our hearts—to have a measure of confidence that we really are his. But Paul says that the Spirit can come alongside us and, in addition to all we see, “witness.” This seems to refer to a direct testimony of the Spirit in our hearts. This probably is a sense of God’s immediate presence and love that sometimes comes to us. Paul writes in **Romans 5:5**, *“⁵ Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”* We don’t get this all the time, or even often; and it may not be a very strong feeling. But there will be times when, as we

cry out to Abba, we find ourselves deeply assured that he really is our Abba. That is the Spirit's work, testifying for us and to us that we truly are sons of the living God.

5. **Inheritance** – Paul says in Romans 8:17, *“¹⁷ And if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”* This means we have an incredible future. In more ancient times, the first son was the heir. There may have been many children, and all were loved, but the heir got the largest share of the wealth and carried on the family name. This was the way a great family kept its influence intact and did not have it divided and dissipated. (Paul's reference should not be read as either supporting or rejecting this practice. It is simply illustrative) Now, in a breathtaking turn, he calls all Christians “heirs of God.” This is a miracle, of course, because the heir got the lion's share of the parent's wealth. Paul is saying that what is in store for us is so grand and glorious that it will be, and will feel, as though we each had alone gotten most of the glory of God
6. **Discipline** - Romans 8:17, *“¹⁷ And if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”* Fathers always discipline their children. When parents discipline a child, they allow or introduce a milder form of pain in order to teach or mature the child away from behavior that will lead to far greater pain later. Hebrews 12:9-11, *“⁹ Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰ For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. ¹¹ Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”* A good father will lovingly discipline. He will not use his authority selfishly to indulge his own need to feel powerful or in control. But neither will he be so needy for his child's love and approval that he never does what is hard or difficult. It is a (painful) privilege to be put through discipline by the most loving Father in the universe.
7. **Family likeness** - Romans 8:17, *“¹⁷ And if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”* Christians will suffer, not simply in the pains of this world that all people face, but specifically because they are brothers and sisters of Christ. Christ faced rejection because of who he was, and because he had come to expose sinfulness, warn of judgment and offer salvation through himself. Likewise, his family will suffer in the same ways as they live for him and speak of him. We get to be like him! Romans 8:28-29, *“²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. ²⁹ For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.”* Though we are adopted, God actually implants Christ's nature in us. As sons of God, we actually come to resemble the Son of God. As we bear the family likeness of suffering, we become more and more like the Son, and our Father, in our characters and attitudes. This is how the Christian looks at persecution and counts it as a privilege. Acts 5:41 tells us that follow a bout with persecution, *“⁴¹ So they departed from the presence*

of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.” 1 Peter 4:12-13 says, “¹² Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; ¹³ but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.” We get to be like him!

For better or worse, the families into which we are born have a huge impact on how we grow up and live.

- Some grow up in unloving, abusive homes where anger flares up every day - The TV spews moral filth into the living room every evening, while the family wallows in it, laughing at the shameful antics. The Bible is never read, family prayer times are non-existent, and moral training, if it exists at all, consists of, “Make sure that you have safe sex.” A child growing up in that kind of home is bound to be damaged by it, unless the grace of God through the gospel lays hold of him.
- Other children grow up in godly homes, where love and kindness are the daily fare. The husband treats his wife with gentleness and respect, and the wife submits to and speaks well of her husband. The children are instructed in the ways of the Lord and they see it modeled in front of them every day. The family often reads the Bible and prays together. They worship with God’s people on Sundays. Growing up in that kind of home will have a far different impact on the children. Their position as children in that kind of home greatly affects how they think and live.

Perhaps you lament that you did not enjoy such a godly upbringing. But, if you have been born again by the Holy Spirit, you now are in such a godly family—the family of God. You can rightly call the holy, almighty God, “Father.” You are His beloved child, more precious to Him than any child is to his earthly father. As a child of God, you are an heir to a vast fortune. Again, Paul put it this way in Romans 8:16-17, “¹⁶ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.” That new position of being a child of God in the family of God should shape how you think, how you live, and how you relate to the many temptations in this evil world.

- ➔ Martyn Lloyd-Jones writes (*Children of God* [Crossway], p. 23), “I do feel that this is perhaps the greatest weakness of all in the Christian church, that we fail to realize what we are, or who we are. Most of our unhappiness is due to our failure to relate our trials to our glorious position as children of God. If only we realized who we are, then the problem of conduct would almost automatically be solved.... The more I read the New Testament, the more I am impressed by the fact that every appeal for conduct and good living and behavior is always made in terms of our *position*.” Godly conduct rests on our understanding of our true, great position as children of God.

If you begin to see this truth and allow it to shape your identity, it works out like this:

Line of thinking for a child of God when it comes to purity:

1. **The temptation** - You are tempted to engage in some sin or to join the world in some degrading form of entertainment
2. **The thinking** – As one who belong to God as His child you think, *“I can’t do that because I’m a child of God and it would disgrace the name of my heavenly Father.”*
3. **The conviction** - You’re reading the Bible and it convicts you that some of your behavior is not godly. It may be lustful thoughts or a grumbling, ungrateful attitude or words that put down others. Perhaps you frequently bend the truth to cover up your own misdeeds.
4. **The commitment** - When Scripture confronts you, you think, *“I’m now a child of God. I can’t do that as a member of His family.”*
5. **The motivation** - Your new identity motivates you to grow in holiness. John begins with the foundation of our present position.

OUR FUTURE HOPE IS THAT WHEN JESUS COMES, WE WILL BE LIKE HIM

Note three things...

3 Things to Note Concerning our Future as a Child of God:

1. **Our future state is not yet completely revealed or known** - 1 John 3:2 says, *“² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”* He seems to mean two things... (*we once we come to know Him as our personal Lord and Savior we are His children, but we in ourselves may struggle as a child to fully comprehend what and all that that means*)

2 Possible Meanings by Our Status Being “Not Yet Revealed”:

- (1) **Presently we are not like Him** - First, since he immediately adds that when Jesus appears, we will be like Him, he means that presently we are not like Him. Our future state of glorified perfection, where we will be free from all the impurity of sin, is not a present reality. Right now, we live in the flesh. We are not and never will be perfectly sanctified in this life. Thus we need to grow in purity, as he goes on to say (3:3).
- (2) **Future state of glorification is not completely revealed yet** - Also, John may be acknowledging that the fullness of our future state of glorification has not been completely revealed. *“Now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known”* (1 Cor. 13:12). Or, as Paul puts it (Col. 3:3-4), *“For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.”* But even though we cannot fathom everything that we will be in heaven, we can trust God that it will be far better than anything we can imagine. Our future hope of being totally conformed to the image of Jesus Christ should motivate us to holiness now.

2. **Our future transformation is linked to seeing Jesus just as He is** - 1 John 3:2 says, *“² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”* As I understand it, John is saying that the instant that we see Jesus, we will become like Him. At the moment He comes, we will be totally sanctified in body, soul, and spirit.

Of course, this only applies to those who are His children in this life. Unbelievers will see Jesus just as He is, but that sight will not transform them into His likeness. Rather, they will shrink away in shame and terror from His absolute holiness and the splendor of His glory (1 John 2:28). As John describes it in Revelation 6:16, they will call out *“to the mountains and to the rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb’; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”*

The apostle John had seen the earthly Jesus with his own eyes (1 John 1:1). Believers have seen Him with eyes of faith (1 Pet. 1:8). Unbelievers, who live in sin, have not seen Him or known Him (1 John 3:6). But, when He comes again in power and glory, *“every eye will see Him”* (Rev. 1:7). At that glorious moment, all that believe in Jesus Christ in this life will be transformed completely into His image and be with Him for all eternity!

Even though we may not know in great detail what awaits us in heaven, we can rest in this hopeful promise: we will see Him and be like Him and be with Him forever!

3. **Our future transformation is certain and will be instantaneous** - 1 John 3:2 says, *“² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”* Notice, John says, *“We know....”* It is not, “we speculate,” or, “the best forecasts indicate....” It is, *“We know!”* Biblical hope is not a good guess about the future. It is not, “There is a 50 percent chance that this will happen.” It is 100 percent certain because it is based on the sure promises of God and on the testimony of His Son as relayed to us by the apostles in the New Testament.

➡ As Francis Schaeffer so helpfully pointed out, *“One of the errors of our times is to relegate faith to the ‘upper story,’ rather than to recognize that the Christian faith is rooted in true historical facts.”*

In other words, the modern way of thinking is, “Your faith is your own subjective reality. It may be true for you personally, but it is not absolutely true for everyone.” But, the Bible is clear that God’s truth about Jesus Christ is what Schaeffer called “true truth.”

It is supremely revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, all of which are historically validated. He fulfilled all of the Old Testament prophecies regarding the Messiah. His word about the future is not uncertain speculation. It is absolutely certain, but just not yet realized.

We know certainly that He will appear and in that instant, we will be instantly transformed. This instantaneous transformation will include our bodies. In the great chapter on the resurrection, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:50-53, *“⁵⁰ Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.”*

In Philippians 3:20-21, Paul refers to this same truth, *“²⁰ For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”*

Since sin now dwells in our earthly bodies (Rom. 7:18, 23, 24; 8:10, 13), we have to do battle against it until we die or Jesus returns. But when He returns, instantly we will receive our new resurrection bodies. At that moment, we will be freed from all sin. Thus John has shown us our present position as children of God and our future hope, that when Jesus comes, we will be like Him

In verse 3, he applies it... 1 John 3:3 says it, *“³ And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”*

UNDERSTANDING OUR PRESENT POSITION AND OUR FUTURE HOPE WILL MOTIVATE US TO GROW IN HOLINESS NOW

As I said, **verse 3** does *not* say that if we have our hope fixed on Christ, we *ought to* purify ourselves. **Rather, it says that everyone who has this hope fixed on Him *does* purify himself.**

In other words, the test of whether or not you truly understand the teaching of verse 2 will be evident in your practicing the truth of verse 3. If you understand that you are presently a child of God and that when Jesus comes, you will be like Him, then you will be progressively purifying your life, just as Jesus is pure. Note three things:

3 Things of Note in Purifying Your Life:

- 1. We must fix our hope on Jesus** - Although the word *hope* is frequent in Paul and in Peter's writings, **this is the only time that John uses the noun**. Oddly, it does not even occur in Revelation. As believers, our hope is not in circumstances or in some optimistic wish for a better tomorrow. Our hope is in the person of Jesus Christ.

He said that He was returning to heaven to prepare a place for us (John 14:2). Then He added these wonderful words of hope in John 14:3, **"If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also."** He didn't leave us forever! He's coming back for us, and when that happens, we will go to be with Him in the place that He has prepared for us! All of our hope should be fixed on Him.

Hope is one of the three cardinal virtues that Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 13:13, faith, hope, and love. Christians should be people of hope, because we fix our hope on Jesus, who never disappoints. Depression is one of the most common psychological maladies of our day. I realize that there are complex factors involved in depression, some of them physiological. So I don't mean to be overly simplistic here. Depressed people lack hope, but God promises hope to His people. Memorize some verses on hope, such as **Romans 15:13, "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."** Our God is the God of hope, and the hope that He gives centers on the Lord Jesus Christ.

- 2. We must come to know Him in His holiness** - The holiness of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ is a frequent theme in 1 John.

- In 1 John 1:5, he told us, **"God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all."**
- In 1 John 2:1, he refers to Jesus as **"Jesus Christ the righteous."**
- In 1 John 2:20, he refers to Jesus as **"the Holy One."**
- In 1 John 2:29, he again affirms that **"He is righteous."**
- In 1 John 3:3, **"He is pure."** 1 John 3:3 says it, **"³ And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."**

The word originally referred to ceremonial purity, but it came to mean that which is "pure in the highest sense" (R. C. Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament* [Eerdmans], p. 333). It refers to freedom from all defilement of sin, especially moral sin. As we've seen, in that glorious future day when we see Jesus, that vision will transform us. But I also believe that to the extent that we presently see Jesus in His holiness with the eyes of faith, to that same extent He will transform us into His glory.

Paul says essentially the same thing in **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."**

There is a similar thought in John 14:21, where Jesus says, *“He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.”*

If we want Jesus to disclose or reveal Himself to us, we must obey Him. It becomes, *not* a vicious cycle, but a *victorious* cycle, where when we obey, we see more of Jesus; this in turn makes us more like Him, which means that we see even more of Him. There is a transformational power in seeing Jesus for who He is, the Holy One. Of course, our only source for this knowledge is His Word. Thus we must fix our hope on Him and we must come to know Him in His holiness.

3. **We must purify ourselves now so that we will grow to be like Him** - 1 John 3:3 says it, *“³And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”* We need to maintain the biblical balance here. In Romans 8:29, Paul says that God has predestined us to become conformed to the image of His Son. In that sense, it’s a done deal and clearly, God does it. Yet at the same time, John says that we must purify ourselves.

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 7:1, *“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”* He commands Timothy to keep himself pure [lit.] from sin (1 Tim. 5:22). James 4:8 commands, *“Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”* 1 Peter 1:22 says that believers have purified their souls. So, there is a definite sense in which we must be active in the process of purification from sin.

The other side is that only the blood of Jesus can cleanse us (1 John 1:7, 9). We are clean through the washing of water with the Word (Eph. 5:26). So God’s Word and His Holy Spirit are like the soap and water. But we’ve got to apply it to the dirt of our sin. The Word is also like a mirror, revealing to us the dirt on our faces. When it does that, rather than ignoring it, we must confess our sins to the Lord, apply His shed blood as our source of cleansing, and take the necessary steps to avoid that sin in the future. In brief, if you can’t imagine Jesus Christ, the righteous one, doing something, then you shouldn’t do it either. Clean the filth out of your life, beginning on the thought level.

CONCLUSION

Maybe you’re thinking, “But it’s hard to let go of my sins!” If we’re honest, we sin because we *enjoy* sinning, at least for the moment. We don’t consider the long-term consequences. So we need motivation for purity.

2 Important Motivations for Purity in the Life of a Christian:

1. That we are **God's children** should motivate us to purity - John says that our motivation should be that we are God's beloved children
2. That **Jesus is coming again** should motivate us to purity - And that Jesus is coming to make us pure. These facts should motivate us to purify our lives now.

Jesus is coming. When you see Him in His glory, you will be like Him. If you have your hope fixed on Him, you'll start cleaning house now! You don't want the Lord who is pure to come to a filthy house!

How to Live a Life of Purity?

1. **Avoid sexual immorality** - In 1 Thessalonians 4:3–8, Paul emphasizes sexual purity as part of holy living, *“³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴ that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, ⁵ not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; ⁶ that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. ⁷ For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. ⁸ Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.”*
2. **Be obedient to God** - Beyond avoiding sexual immorality and keeping sex within God's design for marriage, we can live a holy life by being obedient to God in all areas of life (1 Peter 1:14–16). When we live in obedience to God, we are staying separate from evil. We are offering our bodies as “living sacrifices” to God (Romans 12:1–2). The purpose of living a holy life is to glorify God and display His nature to those around us (Matthew 5:16). Living a holy life of obedience to God is living in true freedom from the bondage of sin (Romans 6:6). It's not always easy to choose obedience to God, especially if we're trying to do it all on our own. Satan would love nothing more than to bring us back into bondage through disobedience. But we have the promise, *“You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world”* (1 John 4:4). The Holy Spirit will produce Christlikeness in us, and, as we yield to Him, we can live a holy life (Galatians 5:16).
3. **Know and put into practice God's Word** – This is key (John 17:17). Hiding God's Word in our hearts keeps us from sin (Psalm 119:11). Being grounded in God's Word, spending time in His Word getting to know who He is and who we are in Him, what He has called us to, also learning of those who have gone before us who have done it well give us the help and hope we need to live up to what He has called us to.
4. **Count yourself dead to sin and alive to Christ** - Here is the mindset we should have, *“Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus”* (Romans 6:11). Any time we face temptation, we should say, *“I'm dead to that! That was part of my old life! I am a new creation in Christ!”* (see 2 Corinthians 5:17).
5. **See yourself as a child of God** - To live a holy life, to separate ourselves from sin, we must see ourselves as God does—as born-again children of the Most High, clothed with the righteousness of Christ. We also have the benefit of being part of the Body of Christ.

Fellowship with other Christians and making ourselves accountable to them is a great source of strength in living a holy life. As Christians, we are called to encourage one another in this matter (Hebrews 10:24–25). Remember, we are not trying to live a holy life in order to earn salvation; living a holy life is a natural outgrowth of being saved by God's grace and filled with His Spirit.

- 6. Don't give up when you mess up** - It is also important to not give up when we mess up. When we fail, our response should be to confess the sin and keep moving forward in our Christian walk (1 John 1:9). Romans 8:1 says, "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." God's grace doesn't go away when we make mistakes.