

# 1 John 3:1 – 16

New American Standard Version

1 See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we  
2 would be called children of God; and *such* we are. For this  
3 reason the world does not know us, because it did not know  
4 Him. <sup>2</sup>Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not  
5 appeared as yet what we will be. **We know** that when He  
6 appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just  
7 as He is. <sup>3</sup>And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him  
8 purifies himself, just as He is pure. <sup>4</sup>Everyone who  
9 practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is  
10 lawlessness. <sup>5</sup>You know that He appeared in order to take  
11 away sins; and in Him there is no sin. <sup>6</sup>No one who abides  
12 in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.  
13 <sup>7</sup>Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one  
14 who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is  
15 righteous; <sup>8</sup>the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the  
16 devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God  
17 appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.  
18 <sup>9</sup>No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed  
19 abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.  
20 <sup>10</sup>By this the children of God and the children of the devil  
21 are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is  
22 not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. <sup>11</sup>For  
23 this is the message which you have heard from the  
24 beginning, that we should love one another; <sup>12</sup>not as Cain,  
25 *who* was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what  
26 reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his  
27 brother's were righteous. <sup>13</sup>Do not be surprised, brethren, if  
28 the world hates you. <sup>14</sup>We know that we have passed out of  
29 death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does  
30 not love abides in death. <sup>15</sup>Everyone who hates his brother  
31 is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal  
32 life abiding in him. <sup>16</sup>We know love by this, that He laid  
33 down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for  
34 the brethren.

## **Observation (What does it say?):**

Box references to **knowing** (we know, you know, etc.)

Underline universal or general statements John makes in the passage.

## **Interpretation (What does it mean?):**

How would you summarize the different things John says Christians know?

How do you understand the universal and absolute contrasts John makes repeatedly in this passage?

How do purposes John gives for Jesus' ministry relate to the statements he makes about sin, righteousness, etc?

What specific sins does John seem to have in mind?

## **Application (What does it mean for me?):**

What parts of this passage give you comfort, and which parts make you the most uncomfortable?

How do you reconcile the strong statements about sin and righteousness with what you know of your own life and your own heart?

How can you apply John's exhortation in v. 16?

**Additional questions for thought and discussion:**

- If you had to speculate, what conditions or attitude or questions might have prompted this reaction from John? What problems was the church facing that needed this response?
- What is the difference (if any) between sinning (*hamartanei*, ἁμαρτάνει) and practicing sin (*poiōn hamartian*, ποιῶν ἁμαρτίαν)? Is the distinction relevant to what John writes in this passage?
- After mentioning the world not knowing us (v. 1b), John returns to the subject in v. 13, with the stronger word “hate.” Why does he return to that subject? How does that relate to the rest of what he says in this passage?

## Inductive Bible Study

(A few general ideas)

### Observation (What does it say?)

What facts do you **observe** about the passage that help bring out the writer’s thought process?

- Who are the people involved?
- What action takes place?
- What type of literature is it (poetry, history, didactic, etc.)?
- What details are included or left out?
- Are any unusual words used?
- Is there symbolic language?
- What is the grammar of the passage (pronouns, prepositions, verb tenses)?
- Are words or ideas repeated?
- Any comparisons or contrasts?
- Any cause and effect?
- Are there indications of purpose (“in order that...”)?
- Are there conclusions (“Therefore...”)?
- Are there explanations?
- Does the passage logically break into sections?
- How would you summarize the passage?
- What would be a good “headline” for the passage?

### Interpretation (What does it mean?)

What questions come to mind about the facts that would help you **interpret** the meaning?

- How would the original readers have understood the passage?
- What is the main emphasis?
- Why does the writer use repetition, or contrast, or unusual words?
- What does the grammar or structure of the passage reveal about the writer’s thought pattern?
- Is there a logical sequence in the passage?
- How are different ideas in the passage connected?
- Are there any new ideas or concepts presented?
- Are there difficulties in the passage?

### Application (What does it mean for me?)

What is the impact on your life? What **application** does the Holy Spirit want to show you?

- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a promise to be thankful for?
- Is there an attribute of God to worship?
- Is there an example to follow?

**Read nothing into the Scriptures, but draw everything from them, and suffer nothing to remain hidden that is really in them.**  
J.A. Bengel (1687-1752)