

# CHILDREN OF GOD LET TRUTH ABIDE IN YOU

(1 John 2:24 – 3:3)

## What is True & What to Do:

*We are commanded to let the truth of the Gospel “abide” (remain) in us, so embrace the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and allow it to control every aspect of your life (i.e., your thoughts, words, deeds/actions).*

### 1.) Do not be deceived: if you accept and adhere to the Gospel, true Christians continue in fellowship with the Father and Son and receive the promise of eternal life w/ God (v. 24–26).

- “What YOU have heard”; the pronoun “you” is emphatic as a comparison to the false teachers that John writes against (v. 24).
- The Gospel has not changed (“heard from the beginning,” v. 24)
- We are commanded (yes, commanded!) to let the truth of the Gospel we heard from the beginning “remain” in us; this means Jesus is the controlling influence of every aspect of our lives.
- Promised by Jesus to those who know the Father and Son in a saving way (by faith), eternal life is a gift of God that has both a quantity and a quality of time.
  - Quantity of time → never ending life
  - Quality of time → continually fellowship with God

### 2.) Deception comes in many forms, so remain in Christ and stay connected to the truth in confidence (v.26–29).

- Most deception is intentional, but spiritual deception is the worst because the eternity of our soul is at stake (v.26).
  - Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44); there is no truth in him and he is behind all false teaching and spiritual deception. He seeks to lead people astray (Mt. 24:24, 2 Tim. 3:13)

- The phrase “is true, and is not a lie” is important. The Bible claims it is “absolute truth.” Not all viewpoints are equally true (v.27)
- What you “received” (past tense); meaning the anointing of the Holy Spirit is currently in every Christian (see v.27 and “from the Holy One” in v. 20);
- Christians stay connected to the truth by the Holy Spirit and Scripture. Because you have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, you recognize basic spiritual truth versus error (v. 27).
- The Holy Spirit teaches us the truth via the Bible (the Scriptures) and will never teach contrary to Scripture (e.g., someone that claims, “I believe God wants us to live together before we get married” or says, “God affirms to me that homosexuality is okay if we are lovingly committed to each other” does so falsely and contrary to Scripture and contrary to the Holy Spirit). Jesus says the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth, and will be with you and in you to help you discern truth (See v. 27, and Jn. 14:17, 16:13).
- The Scriptures are (2 Tim. 3:15-16):
  - Unlike any other book
  - God-breathed; divinely inspired; inerrant and infallible
  - Sufficient for wisdom unto salvation
  - Truth; the only source for true doctrine (the standard, or plumb line by which all teachings should be measured)
  - Profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness
  - Unchanging from the beginning (the Holy Spirit teaches timeless and old truth); there is no “new” revelation in Scripture. Some in the charismatic off-shoots of Christianity wrongly believe the Holy Spirit gives new revelation that is on par with Scripture.
- John is likely combating Gnostics and others who were attempting to import “new” knowledge into the church; we should be wary of anyone teaching “new” doctrine that they have come up with or found in the Bible that has some how been overlooked or missed over the past 2000 years!

- Fellowship is a theme for John (v. 1:3). Abiding/remaining is a basic theme. In an abiding fellowship with Christ, we find confidence before God (v. 28) at Christ's second return. True spiritual fellowship with God brings confidence when we meet the Lord. (e.g., you will "know that you know" you are saved).
  - God's desire is that we be confident when He comes (no wondering, no second-guessing, and no uncertainty); unsaved people will be ashamed because Christ's second return means judgment of their sins. So, ask yourself: will you meet Jesus at His coming in confidence or in shame?
  - The phrase "at His appearing" (when he appears) (v28) focuses on the visibility of the return of Christ. It is a literal reality because we are told that "every eye will see Him" (Rev. 1:7). The word for "appears" is never used of the Father or the Holy Spirit. First century usage often implied the coming of a King or ruler in splendor and dignity.
- Right living evidences our new birth. Our practice of the truth and living right demonstrates we have been born into the family of God. We know Jesus is righteous, thus we know that all who practice righteousness give evidence of a true salvation (v.29).

### 3.) Children of God forever and ever, amen! (v. 3:1 – 3:3)

- Christians are God's children (3:1), who shall be conformed to the image of God ("like Him", 3:2) and who should live pure lives (3:3). 1 Jn. 2:29 speaks of being "born of Him." In chapter 3, John starts to speak of life in the family of God, now and forever ("and we are [God's Children]" is ongoing, continuous, action in 3:1).
- How did Christians gain entrance into the family? God's love for us (3:1). We should never cease to marvel at God's love.
- To live the Christian life well, you should know who you are in Christ's family. Regardless of your crisis, you are God's child. People who are not God's children do not recognize Him (v. 1–3).
- Our ignorance of heaven does not limit our inheritance. We are being conformed to the image of Christ now (i.e., we should think,

talk, and act like Jesus). Our full inheritance awaits us in heaven. The legal right is ours now, but we receive it in fullness then).

- We become similar to Jesus ("like Him," v. 2) in unity, in purified character, and in righteousness, as well as in a resurrected body. BUT, we never become "like Him" in the sense of equality of His divine nature. We do NOT become little gods like certain false religions claim!

#### APPLICATION:

- ✓ Live your life aware of your status as a child of God. Act like it. Your love for Christ should prompt you to obey God's Word. How do you live your life today? Your way, or His way?
- ✓ Christianity's doctrines have not changed in 2000 years. Beware of those claiming new revelations from God. Do not be deceived by anybody who claims to have new spiritual teachings or knowledge.
- ✓ Godly living according to the Bible is evidence of salvation. Inspect your life. Can you say, "To live is Christ, to die is gain?" (Phil. 1:21)
- ✓ Never stop marveling at God's love for you and how great a salvation you have in Jesus Christ.
- ✓ When a person says, "I believe God wants me happy," or that God approves of something, etc., always verify it against Scripture and ask the Holy Spirit in prayer to help you discern the truth.

#### FIVE TESTS FOR "RELIGIOUS" TEACHING OR EXPERIENCE: <sup>1</sup>

- ❖ Bible test: Does it align with Scripture? Is it old truth or a new claim?
- ❖ Jesus test: Does it magnify Christ? Does it acknowledge Him per the Bible? (i.e., as the Son, fully God, fully man, God in flesh, etc.)
- ❖ Character test: Does it promote godly living? Do those who teach it live holy lives?
- ❖ Decency and order test: See 1 Cor. 12–14:40.
- ❖ Evangelism test: Does it promote or hinder winning people to Jesus?

<sup>1</sup> David L. Allen, *1–3 John: Fellowship in God's Family*, ed. R. Kent Hughes, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 124.