

## I John 2:28 – 3:23 Boldness Through Abiding

This section, 2:28 through 4:19 is marked by a Greek literary device known as *inclusio*. The writer would mention a word or phrase at the beginning of a unit and then repeat that word or phrase at the end of the unit to signify that the section or thought was complete.

**Theme Statement – Verse 28** “...abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence...” The closing of the inclusio, “...love is perfected with us, that we may have confidence in the day of judgment...” is found in 4:17.

### Verses 28 – 3:10a Learning to see God’s children

Abide (Greek verb-*meno*) John uses this word 66 times; 40 times in John, 23 times in I John, and 3 times in II John. The abiding life is in accord with his basic theme of fellowship.

Born of Him (Born of God) – See 3:9, 4:7, 5:1, 4, 18. This is the first direct mention of the new birth in I John.

True righteousness can only be manifested by the new nature. A born again Christian who is abiding, (walking in fellowship) in Him is the only person who can do righteous acts.

Verses 1-3 flow out of verse 29 as John contemplates the wonder of the new birth and how amazing God’s love is for us.

Verses 4-10a teaches us that sin is the antithesis of the purity that belongs to Christ. This section deals with absolutes not habits! As born again believers our new nature cannot sin (verse 6, 9).

This section has been wrongly interpreted by most commentators. An appeal is made to the Greek present tense to introduce the idea of ‘habitual sin’ or ‘continuing in sin’. A number of recent studies by Greek scholars have shown this translation to be faulty. If we apply the habitual ‘present tense’ logic to other verses in the book like 1:8 the results would lead to total confusion.

## Verses 3:10b – 3:23 Learning to love God’s children

### 1. What Love Is Not ( 3:10b – 15)

Not of God – the person does not find their source of actions in God. John uses this phrase six more times (4:1,2,3,4,6,7).

Unrighteous living and hatred toward other believers is a sure sign that we do not love our brothers.

Cain – an illustration of what love is not!

1. His actions were influenced by Satan
2. His actions were prompted by comparing his deeds with his brother’s.

Passed out of death into life – (see John 5:24 for the only other use of this phrase) Here the spheres of ‘life’ and ‘death’ are being treated experientially and determined by one’s actions.

Eternal life *abiding* in him – John is not saying that we do not *possess* eternal life if we hate our brother. 1 John 1:1-2 tells us that Jesus is ‘The Eternal Life’ and we cannot possibly be abiding in Him if we have hatred in our hearts toward our brothers.

### 2. What Love Is (3:16-18)

True love is exemplified in Jesus who laid down His life for us. In light of His sacrificial love we should also love sacrificially. The true test of our love is not what we *say* but what we *do* for one another.

### 3. What Love Does For Us (3:19-23)

We can have assurance that we are participating in the truth when we are doing practical acts of love for others.

As a result of active participation in the truth by real deeds of love, we can calm our disapproving hearts and achieve boldness in prayer.

Our confidence that our prayers will be answered comes from knowing that we are subject to His will, keeping His commandments and doing the things that are pleasing to Him.

### Conclusion:

A single command consisting of faith and love – “...believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another...”