



Date: 10/12/2025

Text: 1 John 3:1 – 3:10 NLT

Sermon: Family Resemblance: You Look Like Who You Belong To

1 John 3:1–10 NLT

See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! But the people who belong to this world don't recognize that we are God's children because they don't know him. Dear friends, we are already God's children, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is. And all who have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure, just as he is pure. Everyone who sins is breaking God's law, for all sin is contrary to the law of God. And you know that Jesus came to take away our sins, and there is no sin in him. Anyone who continues to live in him will not sin. But anyone who keeps on sinning does not know him or understand who he is. Dear children, don't let anyone deceive you about this: When people do what is right, it shows that they are righteous, even as Christ is righteous. But when people keep on sinning, it shows that they belong to the devil, who has been sinning since the beginning. But the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil. Those who have been born into God's family do not make a practice of sinning, because God's life is in them. So they can't keep on sinning, because they are children of God. So now we can tell who are children of

God and who are children of the devil. Anyone who does not live righteously and does not love other believers does not belong to God.

1 John 3:1 NLT

See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! But the people who belong to this world don't recognize that we are God's children because they don't know him.

Notes:

Our _____ and _____ are found in Christ.

1 John 3:2–6 NLT

Dear friends, we are already God's children, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is. And all who have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure, just as he is pure. Everyone who sins is breaking God's law, for all sin is contrary to the law of God. And you know that Jesus came to take away our sins, and there is no sin in him. Anyone who continues to live in him will not sin. But anyone who keeps on sinning does not know him or understand who he is.

Notes:

We must put off our _____ identity and put on our _____ one found in Christ.

1 John 3:7–10 NLT

Dear children, don't let anyone deceive you about this: When people do what is right, it shows that they are righteous, even as Christ is righteous. But when people keep on sinning, it shows that they belong to the devil, who has been sinning since the beginning. But the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil. Those who have been born into God's family do not make a practice of sinning, because God's life is in them. So they can't keep on sinning, because they are children of God. So now we can tell who are children of God and who are children of the devil. Anyone who does not live righteously and does not love other believers does not belong to God.

Notes:

The _____ of your life reveals the _____ of your heart.

Next Steps: Living Out Your Identity in Christ

1. Remember Who You Are

Each day, remind yourself: “I am loved. I am forgiven. I am a child of God.”(1 John 3:1, 2 Corinthians 5:17)

2. Live Like You Belong to Jesus

Choose what honors Christ in your work, home, and relationships. Let your actions reflect your new identity.(1 John 3:7, Ephesians 4:22–24)

3. Turn Back Quickly When You Fall

When you sin, don’t stay down. Confess it, receive God’s grace, and start fresh.(1 John 1:9, Romans 8:1)

Life Group Questions:

Get to Know You

Question: We’ve all heard people say that pets start to look like their owners or couples start to act alike over time. What’s something funny or true you’ve noticed that you’ve started to pick up from someone you spend a lot of time with?

Digging Deeper in the Bible

Read 1 John 3:1-10 and write down any questions, observations or things that stood out to you.

Question: Read 1 John 3:1–3. What stands out to you about how John describes our identity as “children of God”? What does it mean that our value and identity are given by the Father, not earned by the world? How should this truth shape the way we see ourselves — especially when we fail or feel unseen?

Question: In 1 John 3:4–10, John draws a sharp contrast between those who “practice sin” and those who “practice righteousness.” What do you think John means by “making a practice” of sin? How does this connect to the doctrine of sanctification — the ongoing process of becoming more like Christ? How can we tell the difference between struggling with sin and living in it?

Application

Question: Look back at the three Next Steps: Remember who you are. Live like you belong to Jesus. Turn back quickly when you fall. Which one do you need to focus on this week — and what’s one practical action you can take to grow in it?

God's Love

God's love is the divine attribute that indicates God's disposition to be self-giving and *for* the good of the other.

For many, God's love is considered his central attribute in that all other divine attributes are but expressions of his love. Others consider God's holiness or sovereignty to be his central attribute. Still others argue that there can be no single primary attribute. Regardless of whether one views divine love as the central description of God's being, there is no doubt that every divine attribute is in harmony with every other. Each attribute expresses God's superabundant love. This means that God demonstrates his love not only in his goodness, mercy, grace, compassion, and faithfulness, but also in his holiness, justice, jealousy, and wrath. His love is holy, just as his holiness is loving.

God does not exercise his love solely toward his creation, for this would imply that God was not fully actualized until he created something. Rather, the eternal triune relations of the Father, Son, and Spirit are characterized by love. Some theologians describe the Trinity as a reciprocity of loving relationships, while others describe this original love in terms of a rightful divine self-love. Either way (or perhaps both), Christians agree that from eternity God has overflowed with love.

The God of love has revealed himself to be self-giving, self-sharing, and self-communicating. His love is personal and relational. God's immanence is to be proclaimed as passionately as his transcendence; he is a God who comes near to his creatures, seeking fellowship with them. The Old Testament represents the divine disposition toward loving relationships in the Hebrew word *chesed* (God's covenantal faithfulness). Through his covenants with Israel, Yahweh bound himself to his people in an act of profound love and reciprocity, a love not called forth by anything meritorious in them (Deut 7:7). In the New Testament, God's love is demonstrated most poignantly in Jesus Christ's incarnation and death, whereby God the Son exchanged heavenly glory for earthly servitude and laid down his life for the sake of his beloved enemies (Phil 2:1–11). In love, God has exposed himself to great suffering and violence at the hands of his beloved (Rom 5:6–10). God loves, as James would say, not only in word but in deed. His love is his divine disposition to be for his creatures and to act on behalf of their good, even at great cost to himself.

God's love toward humanity is salvific, meaning that he seeks reconciliation with all whom he loves. God wills the good of his creatures from eternity past (through election) and into eternity future (the promised consummation of God's work). God loves all his creatures

(John 3:16), though he bears a special love and commitment toward his believing children (Deut 7:7–8; Mal 1:2–3; Eph 5:25).

God should not be conceived of as living under some independent standard for what counts as love; rather he himself defines love for humanity. God is love (1 John 4:8). God's love is a communicable attribute in that it is to be imitated by humanity. As recipients of divine love, believers return love—albeit in a limited human fashion—both to God and to others. By his own actions, God teaches the world to love actively and sacrificially, not just those within one's own family or tribe but every neighbor (Matt 22:39–40)—even one's enemies (Matt 5:44).

Three theological tensions related to the doctrine of God's love are the following:

- The difficulty of reconciling a God of love with a broken and suffering world: the problem of evil.
- The relationship between God's love and his justice: can God be said to be loving when he eternally punishes those who rebel against him?
- The tension between God's love and the doctrine of divine impassibility: can God be said to be loving if he does not “suffer” with his creatures?

But God through Christ *did* suffer with his creatures, and the Bible proclaims the love of the cross a more powerful force than anything in existence (Rom 8:31–39). “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). Despite some ongoing mystery remaining in the three tensions listed above, Christians place their faith in God's revealed character. Believers can be assured that God's love is neither diminished nor threatened by our unanswered questions. God himself has demonstrated that true love is inherently self-giving.

Passages

KEY VERSES

1 Jn 4:7–11; 1 Jn 3:1; 1 Jn 3:16; Eph 3:17–19; 1 Co 13; Mt 5:43–48 (God's love for the world.); Jn 3:16 (God's love for the world.); 1 Jn 4:14 (God's love for the world.); Dt 7:7–8 (God's love toward his people.); Dt 12 (God's love toward his people.); Jn 15:13–14 (God's love toward his people.); Ro 5:8 (God's love toward his people.); Re 1:5 (God's love toward his people.); Dt 7:9 (God's covenantal faithfulness.); Ne 1:5 (God's covenantal faithfulness.); Ne 9:32 (God's covenantal faithfulness.); Mic 7:20 (God's covenantal faithfulness.)

ADDITIONAL VERSES

Ex 34:6–7; Dt 10:15; Ps 32:10; Ps 36:7; Ps 106:1; Ps 136:1; Ps 145:8; Joe 2:13; Ro 8:38–39; 2 Co 13:11; Eph 2:4–5; Tt 3:4–5

Recommended Resources

Systematic Theology (Frame), 231–256.

The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God (Carson).

The Love of God (Chambers).

God's Love (Sproul).

Treatise on the Love of God (St. Francis de Sales).