



### **“I Can See Your Dad in You”**

Rabbi Cosmo Panzetta

#### **Devotion and Discussion Questions**

**Key Texts (TLV):** 1 John 2:29-3:10; Jn. 14:6; 1 Jn. 1:5-2:6; Jn. 3:3; Jn. 14:19-21; Jas. 4:8; 1 Pet. 1:22; Matt. 7:21-23; Lk. 6:35-36

There are some families where you can just see it. You look at someone and say, “Oh, I know whose family you belong to.” It may be the eyes, the smile, the way they talk, the way they stand, or even the way their strong will comes out when they are little. There are these family resemblances, these markers that show up and make people say, “I can see your dad in you.”

John is pressing that same kind of question into our lives, but not in terms of our nose, our eyes, or our last name. He is talking about the character of the Father being seen in the children of God. If we know that He is righteous, then those who have been born of Him should begin to bear His resemblance. The question is not whether we ever struggle or stumble. John has already made clear that if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. The question is: What path are we walking? Who are we becoming like? Can the family resemblance of the Father be seen in us?

#### **1. THOSE BORN OF THE RIGHTEOUS ONE PRACTICE RIGHTEOUSNESS**

John begins this section by saying, *“If you know that He is righteous, you also know that everyone who does what is right is born of Him”* (1 Jn. 2:29). This is a foundational statement. Since we know that He is righteous, we also know that those who are born from Him, out of Him, begotten of Him, will begin to walk in righteousness. This is the first time in this letter that John brings forward the theme of new birth with God as Father, a theme that is foundational in the Gospel of John. Yeshua told Nicodemus, *“Amen, amen I tell you, unless one is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God”* (Jn. 3:3).

John is not saying that righteous living produces the new birth, as though we earn our way into the family of God. The new birth comes first. Those who receive Him, those trusting in His name, are given the right to become children of God, *“born not of a bloodline, nor of human desire, nor of man’s will, but of God”* (Jn. 1:13). But when we have been born of Him, His life begins to show in us. Like father, like child. If He is righteous, then His children are called to walk in what is righteous. The family resemblance is not merely what we claim; it is seen in the path we pursue.

#### **2. GOD’S CHILDREN ARE BEING MADE LIKE THE SON**

John then says, *“See how glorious a love the Father has given us, that we should be called God’s children—and so we are!”* (1 Jn. 3:1). That word “see” is an imperative. Look. Behold. Open your eyes to this kind of love. What kind of love is this, that we should be summoned, invited, called the children of God—and we are. Even us. Right now, with our

faults, flaws, and struggles, we are God's children. The world does not know us because it did not know Him. The world did not understand the love that drove Yeshua, and it will not understand that same love when it begins to drive us.

But John also says, *"Loved ones, now we are God's children; and it has not yet been revealed what we will be. But we do know that when it's revealed, we shall be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is"* (1 Jn. 3:2). We are not who we were, and we are not yet fully who we will be. But we know where this is going—toward the likeness of Yeshua! When we see Him as He is, we will be like Him. That hope is not wishful thinking; it is certainty. And *"everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure"* (1 Jn. 3:3). We pursue purity because we are pursuing Him. We want to be like that One—the Righteous One, the Pure One, the Son who perfectly reveals the Father.

### **3. THOSE WHO ABIDE IN HIM DO NOT MAKE PEACE WITH SIN**

John's language becomes uncomfortably black and white: *"Everyone practicing sin also practices lawlessness—indeed, sin is lawlessness"* (1 Jn. 3:4). Lawlessness is not merely breaking a rule. It is the heart that resents the very idea that there is a higher authority to whom we must submit. It is the old impulse that says, "I will rule. I will decide. I will do what I want." Yeshua warned that not everyone who says, *"Lord, Lord,"* belongs to Him, but the one who does the will of His Father. To those who worked lawlessness, He says, *"I never knew you. Get away from Me, you workers of lawlessness!"* (Matt. 7:23).

So John presses the point: *"You know that Yeshua appeared in order to take away sins, and in Him there is no sin"* (1 Jn. 3:5). How can someone claim to follow Yeshua, who came to take away sin, and then rationalize sin? We do not pretend we have no sin. We bring our darkness into the light. We confess it. We say the same thing God says about it. But we do not defend it, excuse it, or make peace with it. *"No one who abides in Him keeps on sinning"* (1 Jn. 3:6). This is about what characterizes our life, what path we are walking, and whose likeness is being formed in us.

### **CONCLUSION**

John closes by saying, *"It is clear who are the children of God and who are the children of the devil by this—anyone who does not act righteously or love his brother is not of God"* (1 Jn. 3:10). The light shines and makes it manifest. The family resemblance becomes visible. Those born of God act righteously and love their brother. That does not mean we never struggle. It does not mean there are not moments when the flesh rises up, when anger, hostility, selfishness, or pride tries to take over. But it does mean that we do not submit to those ways as our way. We belong to the Father, and His seed remains in us.

So our prayer is this, that the Father's character be seen in us. Let people see His righteousness, His mercy, His compassion, His love. Yeshua said, *"Love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Then your reward will be great and you will be sons of Elyon, for He is kind to the ungrateful and evil ones. Be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate to you"* (Lk. 6:35–36). Today, bring your darkness into His

light. Stop defending what He came to destroy. Ask Him to purify your heart, to cleanse your hands, to reshape your desires, and to make the family resemblance unmistakable. May our lives say, “I can see your Father in you.”

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. In 1 John 2:29, John connects being born of God with doing what is righteous. Why is it important to understand that the new birth comes before righteous living, but also produces righteous living?
2. John says, “*See how glorious a love the Father has given us*” (1 Jn. 3:1). What makes being called a child of God so astonishing?
3. What is the difference between struggling with sin and making peace with sin? How does 1 John help us hold that tension honestly?
4. In modern life, where are believers most tempted to rationalize sin rather than bring it into the light?
5. If someone looked at your words, habits, relationships, and responses under pressure, what kind of “family resemblance” would they see? Where do you most need the Father’s character to become clearer in you?

### **CLOSING PRAYER:**

*Avinu Malkhenu*, Our Father, Our King, thank You for the glorious love You have given us, that we should be called Your children—and so we are. Help us not to take that lightly. Teach us to walk as those who have been born of You, not merely in words, but in righteousness, purity, humility, and love.

Yeshua, You came to take away sins and to destroy the works of the devil. We bring our darkness into Your light today. We confess what we have excused, defended, hidden, or minimized. Purify our hearts, cleanse our hands, and teach us to abide in You. Let the character of the Father be seen in us, so that our lives would bear the unmistakable family resemblance of the children of God.

*B'Shem Yeshua*, In the name of Yeshua, amen.