

Deep Practice Discipleship Guide

1 John 2:29–3:10 – “Living as Children of God”

1. Opening Reflection

Begin by sharing honestly in your group:

- **How did you do with last week’s deep-practice commitment?**
- Where did you notice growth?
- Where did you struggle or encounter resistance?
- What did you learn about God or about yourself as you tried to practice?

Remember: Deep Practice is about **small, focused, consistent growth**, not perfection.

2. Sermon Overview

HOOK – Two Kinds of People

John says the world is not divided by personality, background, wealth, or politics—but by **identity**:

Children of God or **children of the devil**.

This is not meant to shame but to *awaken*: God’s love creates a new identity, not just new behavior.

HEAD — Understanding the Passage

1. The Binary Reality (3:4–10)

John gives two patterns of life:

Children of God

- Will see Him (3:2)
- Purify themselves (3:3)
- Do not *practice* sin (3:6, 9)
- Have God’s seed abiding in them (3:9)

Children of the Devil

- Practice sin (3:8)
- Do not do what is right (3:10)
- Do not love brother or sister (3:10)

Identity reveals itself in conduct.

Illustration: A player can't wear both jerseys in a game. You're either on one team or the other.

2. The Tension Within 1 John

John speaks in bold absolutes—but he also acknowledges the believer's ongoing struggle:

- 1:8 — We all still have sin.
- 2:1 — We have an Advocate when we do sin.
- 5:16 — We pray for believers who fall into sin.

John is contrasting a **life characterized by rebellion** with a **life being purified by Christ**.

3. What Is Sin?

Scripture speaks of sin through many images: disobedience, uncleanness, folly, rebellion, injustice, hypocrisy, omission, falling short of God's glory.

Here, John defines sin as **lawlessness** — willful disregard of God's will.

John Wesley echoes this:

"Sin is a voluntary transgression of a known, written law of God."

Core Point:

"John is not saying that God's children never fail—but that they cannot live in willful rebellion. To belong to God is to be caught up in His life, where the Spirit reshapes our desires and leaves no room for rebellion."

4. How Is This Possible? (v. 9 and v. 3)

A. God's Seed Abiding in Us (v. 9)

- God's "DNA" fills and reshapes us
- The Spirit gives power over deliberate rebellion
- Grace transforms our will

Illustration: A pot continually filled with water eventually overflows—no room for anything else.

B. Purify Themselves (v. 3)

A New Testament fulfillment of Old Testament purification rhythms:

- **Water:** removal of impurity → moral cleansing (confession, repentance)
- **Sacrificial Blood:** atonement → dependence on Christ's cleansing blood
- **Fire:** God's holiness consuming sin → Spirit-led refining
- **Waiting:** purification over time → ongoing growth into Christlikeness
- **Confession & Repentance:** covenant realignment → turning from sin as we live in hope of seeing Christ

HEART — Identity Before Obedience

At the center:

"See what love the Father has given us... and that is what we are!" (3:1)

We turn from sin because we *belong*.

We purify ourselves because we are *loved*.

We fight rebellion because we are *children of God*.

HANDS — Practicing Purity Through Love

1. Pray for the Spirit to fill you and reshape your desires.
2. Open the spigot wide:
 - pray continually
 - fill your life with Scripture

- purge sin as soon as it appears
 - engage in worship and practices that increase holy desire
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3. Discussion Questions (Bloom’s Taxonomy)

REMEMBER (Recall the Text)

1. What contrasts does John make between the “children of God” and the “children of the devil”?
2. What does John mean by “God’s seed abides in them”?

UNDERSTAND (Explain)

3. How does John define sin as “lawlessness”? Why is this significant?

How does John use the idea of “identity” to explain why the children of God live differently from the children of the devil?

APPLY

5. In your own life, where do you sense the Spirit reshaping your desires?
6. What practices most help you “turn the spigot on” and open yourself to the Spirit’s work?

ANALYZE

7. How does identity shape behavior in John’s argument?
8. How does the metaphor of a jersey (or team identity) help you understand this text?

EVALUATE

9. Where do you see the greatest temptation toward “lawlessness”—a willful disregard of God—in contemporary Christian life?
10. How does fear-based obedience differ from identity-based obedience?

CREATE

11. What picture, metaphor, or phrase best helps you describe what it means to “purify yourself” in response to God’s love?
12. If you were explaining this passage to a young believer, how would you summarize its core message?

4. Storying Exercise (Bible Story Retelling)

Selected Story: *John 8:1–11 — Jesus and the Woman Caught in Adultery*

Why this story?

It beautifully shows the contrast between **sin**, **lawlessness**, **mercy**, and the **transforming identity** Jesus gives:

“Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin again.”

Identity → transformed life.

Instructions

1. Have one person read *John 8:1–11* aloud slowly.
2. Close Bibles.
3. As a group (or individually), retell the story from memory—what happened first? What happened next?
4. Fill in missing details together until the story is fully retold.

Storying Discussion Questions

1. What do you notice about Jesus’ response to her sin?
2. How does Jesus give her a **new identity** before calling her to **new behavior**?
3. What does this story teach us about grace, purity, and belonging?
4. How does this connect to John’s teaching that God’s children cannot live in willful rebellion?

5. Deep Practice Commitment for the Week

Take 2–3 minutes in silence. Then write:

If you don’t have a deep practice to work on, consider the following question.

What is one specific practice you will commit to this week to “purify yourself” as God’s child?

Examples:

- A daily prayer inviting the Spirit to fill me

- Confessing a particular area of rebellion
- Setting aside 10 minutes to memorize 1 John 3:1–3
- Responding with forgiveness or love toward someone difficult
- Removing something that dulls spiritual desire

Write it clearly.

Share it briefly.

Pray for one another to grow.