



BEREAN
SMALL GROUPS

FOR THE GOSPEL
ROMANS 1:16

True Vigilance

1 John 2:28-3:10

Read 1 John 2:28 – 3:10 together:

And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming. If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him. See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

Context:

Vigilance is to watch or to be watchful. It is to be alert to danger or to stay awake. John is going to challenge the integrity (or soundness) of our lives. He intends to bring to light the sin we ignore, the laziness we embrace, the weak and slipshod approach we take all too often regarding life. Too often we believe that we can live a life that is “good enough.”

- ? Do you spend time thinking about the inevitable storms of life?
- ? Are there areas of darkness in your life that would cause you to be ashamed if Christ returned today?
- ? Do you need to be more vigilant in any of your spiritual disciplines? Reading and meditating on Scripture? Prayer and solitude? Corporate worship and giving? Confession and repentance?

Content:

There are four movements within the passage above. Let's quickly consider the first three and then dive deeper into the fourth.

As a Child of God, I have a Secure Position.

In the King James Version of the Bible, I John 3:1 starts with “*Behold!*” This means to “gaze upon and wonder.” John wants to draw our attention to the wonder of the truth that we are God’s children. He repeats this truth in verse 2 also. John reminds these Christians, and us, that we need to remember – to bask in – the wonder of being God’s child!

As a Child of God, I am being Transformed.

As a part of our salvation, God continues to transform us; He sanctifies us. Sounds great, doesn’t it? Well, not always! As we are sanctified, we look less and less like the world and more and more like Jesus! John warns us that the world will not “know” us.

? What do you think John means by this? In what way will the world not know us?

? Do you find comfort in the fact that John reminds us that the world didn’t “know” Jesus either?

As a Child of God, I Pursue Purity.

It is impossible to look to Jesus for salvation and at the same time to cherish the old life of sin. It takes constant vigilance to build and fit your life for its ultimate purpose of glorifying God.

As a Child of God, I must be Vigilant to Practice Fellowship with Christ.

Verses 3 & 4 of I John 3 have spawned a great deal of debate throughout the ages among theologians. Notice John’s use of the word “abide” in the book of 1 John. He uses “abide” twenty-three times. In fact, “abide” is used six times in the verses just preceding this passage (I John 2:23-28).

John is writing not only to believers in the Church, but he is also writing to correct the false beliefs taught by the Gnostics. The Gnostics taught that we may live any way we wish. “*We should live,*” said the Gnostics, “*to please ourselves.*” But John says, “*Not so!*”

Defeat of Sin:

The whole purpose of Jesus coming to earth was to make atonement for sin. Christ’s death and victorious resurrection defeated sin once and for all.

? What argument is John making in verses 3 & 4 regarding Christians and holiness?

? Is John trying to say that we will be perfectly holy and sinless in this life?

? When we sin, can we then lose our salvation?

Danger of Sin:

Read verses 4-6. John speaks of “practicing” sinning.

? What is the key word in these verses? What does John mean when he speaks of “abiding” in Christ?

? Think of the relationship between a parent and a child. When a child disobeys or disappoints a parent, does the parent quit loving the child?

? How does the parent-child relationship change when disobedience comes into play?

? What are you willing to sacrifice to have a more intimate relationship with Jesus?

Destruction of Sin:

In verses 7 & 8, John contrasts those who practice righteousness with those who practice sinning.

? Have you ever watched a small boy with his father? How do young boys act around their fathers?

It is so natural for young children to emulate their parents. Should it not be as natural for us to emulate our Heavenly Father?

Application:

Our Father has not left us alone in our battle against the flesh. He has given us the tools we need to remain vigilant and to fight against sin.

Seed:

How we live our life is the ultimate paternity test! As children, we will naturally have a built-in desire to be like our father.

Spirit:

In John 14:15-17, Jesus said, *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you."*

? Do you feel the Spirit moving in your heart and mind? Are you listening?

? How often do you pray and ask your Father to help you hear and obey the Spirit?

Self-Control:

It is both dangerous and lazy to put off the Holy Spirit when you are under conviction. The fruit of the Holy Spirit comes through repeated confession and repentance. It is the outcome of the pursuit of righteousness.

Satisfaction:

Remember John's purpose statement for I John 1:4. Joy! John writes to Christians over the millennia that our joy may be complete. If you are living as a "miserable Christian," turn back to the Father! As David cried in his great Psalm of repentance and contrition, *"Restore to me the joy of my salvation!"*

Like the father of the prodigal son, our Heavenly Father stands ready to run to his repentant child!