

“MOTIVATION TO OBEDIENCE”

From Christ’s Past Appearance

1 John 3:4-10

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Three Marks of an Authentic Christian

- #1: Obedience - Consistent obedience to the commandments of God; walking in the same way that Jesus walked.
- #2: Love - Love for one another in the family of God.
- #3: Truth - Belief that Jesus in the flesh is truly the Son of God.

Last week

“Motivation to Obedience from Christ’s FUTURE Appearance”

1 John 2:28 – 3:3

- To be ready for Jesus Christ’s coming again, abide in Him as little children. 1 John 2:28-29
- The Father’s great love has made us His children and it distinguishes us from the world. 1 John 3:1
- Understanding our present position as children of God and our future hope of being like Jesus when He comes will motivate us to grow in holiness now. 1 John 3:2-3

This week

“Motivation to Obedience from Christ’s PAST Appearance”

1 John 3:4-10

- Because sin is serious and it is opposed to the reasons why Christ came, Christians do not and cannot live in sin.

3:4-7

- Sin is serious because it is rebellion against God. 4
- Sin is opposed to Christ’s appearing to take away sins. 5
- A true Christian does not live in sin. 6
- A true Christian practices righteousness. 7

3:8-10

- Sin is serious because it originates with the devil. 8a
- Sin is opposed to Christ’s appearing to destroy the works of the devil. 8b
- A true Christian cannot live in sin. 9
- A true Christian practices righteousness and love. 10

1 John 3:4-7

Sin is lawlessness.

Jesus came to destroy sin.

Believers have Christ’s righteousness.

Believers should not live in sin.

1 John 3:8-10

Sin is from the Devil.

Jesus came to destroy the Devil’s works.

Believers are children of God.

Believers should live a godly life.

I. FROM LAWLESSNESS TO RIGHTEOUSNESS.

1 John 3:4-7

- A. Sin is Lawlessness. 3:4
- B. Christ Took Away Sins. 3:5, 6
- C. Christ Produces Righteousness. 3:7

II. FROM SIN TO LOVE. 1 John 3:8-10

- A. Sin is from the Devil. 3:8a
- B. Christ Destroyed the Works of the Devil. 3:8b, 9
- C. Christ Produces Righteousness and Love. 3:10

CONCLUSION

John restated the moral test as **doing right** and gave the motivation based upon Christ's past appearance. How a person measures up in that test lands him in one of two camps. There is no middle ground. You are either a child of the devil or a child of God. Whose you are is evident in how you live.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- ✓ What is sin? Why does John define sin as lawlessness?
- ✓ In what ways do Christians harbor sin? Encourage sin? Excuse sin?
- ✓ What does a life characterized by sin demonstrate about that person?
- ✓ How are sinful people children of the Devil?
- ✓ What did Jesus Christ do to the Devil when He came to earth?
- ✓ How does John distinguish between the children of God and the children of the Devil?
- ✓ Why is a right knowledge of sin at the root of all saving Christianity? How does this relate to the user-friendly "gospel"?
- ✓ The apostle John says that a child of God *cannot* sin. Does he mean that we will no longer desire to sin or have to struggle against it?
- ✓ How would you counsel someone living in sin? Would you give the person assurance of salvation? Why or why not?
- ✓ Can a person who tolerates some glaring sin in his/her life be truly saved? How would you deal with him/her?

SINLESS PERFECTION?

Most followers of Christ would agree that they should pursue the highest moral integrity that they can. But John's statements in 1 John 3:6 appear to raise that standard to the point of sinless perfection. In fact, if the person who sins **has neither seen [Christ] nor known Him**, then what hope is there for believers who fail?

Here is a case where the English language fails us. In English, the word "**sins**" appears absolute and final: one sin and you're cut off from God. However, the form of the Greek verb here conveys a sense of continuous action: "**No one who abides in Christ makes a habit of continually sinning.**" The point is that true believers diminish their old patterns of sin as they grow in Christ, replacing them with new patterns of faith and love.

Of course, the fact that we won't obtain sinless perfection in this life does not mean that we should deal lightly with sin. To do so would be an offense to God, as well as destructive to ourselves. Yes, God forgives individual sins, but if we persist in sinful patterns, we keep the power of Christ from operating in our lives. We also risk grave spiritual consequences, such as losing the ability to repent (Hebrews 6:1-12).

Do we keep falling into a particular area of sin? John says that the way out of that frustrating predicament is to learn to continually "**abide**" in Christ. We need to confess our sins to Him and then concentrate not so much on avoiding sin as on maintaining our relationship with Him. After all, He has come to keep us from sin (1 John 2:1, 2). But if we turn away from Him and yield to sin's mastery, then, as John has written, we can neither see Him working in our lives nor know the joy of His presence.