

Devotional Questions – 1 John 3:1-10

1. *How does the realisation that we are God's children* help us grasp the greatness of [H]is love for us (1 John 3:1)? *The correct term is “sons” in 1 John 3:1.*
2. *Why is a right knowledge of sin at the root of all saving Christianity?*
3. *In what ways will we be like Jesus (1 John 3:2)?*
4. *In what specific ways does our hope of heaven, and the anticipation of seeing Christ affect our day-to-day life (1 John 3:4-6)*? *1 John 3:3 should be included.*
5. *What specifically is the deception John warns against in this passage (1 John 3:7)?
What deceptive things are said about sin today?*
6. *What does John mean when he says that Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8)?
How does that help us today?*
7. *What does John mean when he says ‘his seed’ remains in believers? What seed is he talking about (1 John 3:9)?*
8. *What does John mean when he says that a child of God cannot sin?*
9. *Why does John add the aspect of brotherly love to his emphasis on practising righteousness in 1 John 3:10?*

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Answers to Questions

For detailed comments see Dr Ruckman's commentaries *The Book of Luke* pp 745-748, *The Books of First and Second Corinthians* pp 346-37, *The Books of Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians* p 544, *The Books of the General Epistles Volume 2* pp 81-106 and the *Ruckman Reference Bible* pp 7, 1234, 1380, 1423, 1524-1525, 1633-1636.

Note: NIV corrupts this verse. 

Verses cited in this study that the NIV has corrupted are Luke 24:42, John 14:23, Ephesians 5:30, Hebrews 2:14, 1 Peter 1:22, 2:2, Revelation 1:18, seven verses in total.

1. *How does the realisation that we are God's children* help us grasp the greatness of [H]is love for us (1 John 3:1)?* *The correct term is “sons” in 1 John 3:1.

Note first that the word “**love**” and its derivatives occur 328 times in the New Testament. Of those occurrences, 57 are in John’s Gospel and 61 in John’s letters, 51 in 1 John alone. That is in total 118 occurrences in John’s Gospel and letters or over a third of the New Testament occurrences of the word “**love**” in its various forms. “**Love**” is clearly an important topic for John.

Paul sets out what this realisation should grasp with respect to God’s great love for His adopted sons, Galatians 4:5:

- Richness of God’s mercy

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;” Ephesians 2:4-5.

- Resurrection with Christ

“And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” Ephesians 2:6.

- Revelation of God’s abundant grace and kindness for all eternity

“That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” Ephesians 2:7.

2. Why is a right knowledge of sin at the root of all saving Christianity?

The reasons are:

- You are a sinner

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” Romans 3:23.

- Sin will kill you

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” Romans 5:12.

- You deserve death but God will give you life

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” Romans 6:23.

- You cannot save yourself, only the Lord Jesus Christ can

“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” Romans 5:6.

- You must ask the Lord to save you in order to get saved

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation...For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" Romans 10:9-10, 13.

3. In what ways will we be like Jesus (1 John 3:2)?

These are some of the ways, the ability to:

- Move as Jesus does, unrestricted by time, space, matter

"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you" John 20:19.

- Eat as Jesus does, unrestricted by digestion, assimilation, elimination

"And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground...And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat" Genesis 18:1-2, 8.

"And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them" Luke 24:42-43. 

- Think, speak and act as Jesus does, unrestricted by doubt, ignorance, fear and “without sin” Hebrews 9:28 in the case of “the redeemed of the LORD” Psalm 107:2, Isaiah 51:11, 62:12 in that “in him is no sin” 1 John 3:5

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ...For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" 1 Corinthians 2:16, 13:12.

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" 2 Corinthians 5:21.

- Live as Jesus does, unrestricted by illness, infirmity, mortality

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" Philippians 3:20-21.

"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen..." Revelation 1:18. 

In sum “like him...as he is” 1 John 3:2 except for the scars:

"Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet" Luke 24:39-40.

Noting the Lord’s statement that “a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have” Luke 24:39 and “that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” 1 Corinthians 15:50*, the Christian should observe that with “the redemption of our body” Romans 8:23 “when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality” 1 Corinthians 15:54, today’s believer will have an immortal, indestructible “flesh and bones” body

like that of the Lord Jesus Christ in Luke 24:39 as Paul explains to the Ephesians. It is something to look forward to.

"For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" Ephesians 5:30. 

Observe that the scripture uses the expression "**flesh and blood**" five times to denote mortality, Matthew 16:17, 1 Corinthians 15:50, Galatians 1:16, Ephesians 6:12, Hebrews 2:14. The unique New Testament expressions "**flesh and bones**" and "**his flesh, and of his bones**" denote immortality in that they refer explicitly to the Lord Jesus Christ "**the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality**" 1 Timothy 6:15-16.

4. *In what specific ways does our hope of heaven, and the anticipation of seeing Christ affect our day-to-day life (1 John 3:4-6)*? *1 John 3:3 should be included.*

Today's believer may make *practical* application of 1 John 3:3-6 as Peter, Paul and John explain:

- *Purity of heart as in 1 John 3:3*

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" 1 Peter 1:22. 

- *Separation from sin as in 1 John 3:4*

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" 2 Corinthians 6:17-18.

- *Abiding in Christ as in 1 John 3:6*

"Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" John 14:23. 

"And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming" 1 John 2:28.

5. *What specifically is the deception John warns against in this passage (1 John 3:7)?*

Speaking practically, not doctrinally, 1 John 3:7 can be taken to match the warnings that the Lord Jesus Christ and the apostle James made, with respect to profession without practice.

"Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not" Matthew 23:1-3.

"Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works" James 2:18.

Note that 1 John 3:7 cannot be applied *doctrinally* to the Christian according to Paul's letters. According to the apostle Paul, the Christian is righteous *not* because he "**doeth righteousness**" 1 John 3:7 but because "**of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption**" 1 Corinthians 1:30, as Paul testifies of himself for each of today's believers that he "**be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith**" Philippians 3:9.

See www.timefortruth.co.uk/bible-studies/alan-oreillys-studies.php 1 John 2 Part 2 p 9 for remarks on 1 John 2:29 and Paul's warning against satanic "**ministers of righteousness**" and "**their works**" 2 Corinthians 11:15. They are satanically-sown "**tares among the wheat**" Matthew 13:25.

1 John 3:7 is a transitional passage that applies *doctrinally* to Tribulation saints who refuse to take “***the mark of the beast***” Revelation 16:2, 19:20 and “***which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ***” Revelation 12:17 that “***are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus***” Revelation 14:12.

What deceptive things are said about sin today?

The same that has always been said, that it is good, pleasant* and desirable, Genesis 3:6, according to “***the rudiments of the world***” Colossians 2:8, 20. *In practice* these include the following snippets of “***foolishness: and...mischievous madness***” Ecclesiastes 10:13: *only “***for a season***” Hebrews 11:25

- *A little bit won't hurt you* (in truth it will kill you, see *Question 2* and Romans 5:12).
- *Everybody does it.*
- *It depends on how you look at it.*
- *You have to make a living.*

As James rightly says of “***the rudiments of the world***” as expressed above:

“**Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin**” James 4:17.

6. What does John mean when he says that Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8)?

John meant what he said, noting “**For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you**” Matthew 10:20.

The *essential* meaning is that Lord passed judgement on the Devil at the 1st Advent as He said “***because the prince of this world is judged***” John 16:11. Note that the Devil's works were *not* destroyed at the 1st Advent. He is *defeated* but neither *derelict* nor *departed* and he is still “***the prince of this world.***” He can still deceive, disrupt and devour.

“***But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them***” 2 Corinthians 4:3-4.

“**Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us**” 1 Thessalonians 2:18.

“**Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour**” 1 Peter 5:8.

Note carefully that Satan is “**seeking whom he may devour**” *not* whom he *will* devour. See below.

The judgement that the Lord Jesus passed on the Devil in John 16:11 will be fulfilled at the 2nd Advent, for the Devil, his principal associates and all his works.

“**And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever**” Revelation 20:10.

Note nevertheless that the Lord Jesus Christ did deprive the Devil of a major component of his power at the 1st advent as Paul explains, essentially reiterating 1 John 3:8. Note the past tense.

“**Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil**” Hebrews 2:14. *

Hebrews 2:14, 1 John 3:8 confirm that God will destroy *both* the Devil *and* his works.

The Devil “had the power of death” before Calvary. He could kill anyone unless God explicitly told him *not* to.

“And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life” Job 2:6. Compare with Job 1:12-19. The Devil could kill anyone of whom God said “is in thy power” Job 1:12 unless God explicitly forbade him. Now, however, the situation is different. Note again 1 Peter 5:8 and the Lord’s testimony with respect to hell and death with His use of the *present* tense. **“I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death”** Revelation 1:18. 



In effect, whomsoever the Devil wants to kill, he has to get explicit permission from the Lord Jesus Christ, borrow the keys and return them on completion of his mission or face serious consequences from the Chief Bailiff www.bailiffjob.co.uk/bailiff-badge-9.html.

See Dr Ruckman’s commentary *The Book of Hebrews* pp 52-53.

How does that help us today?

Awareness of the Devil’s defeat and eventual destruction *in essence* helps today with respect to:

- Effective resistance

“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” James 4:7.

- Perfect security

“We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not” 1 John 5:18.

- Steadfast faith

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world” 1 Peter 5:8-9.

7. What does John mean when he says ‘his seed’ remains in believers? What seed is he talking about (1 John 3:9)?

“His seed” is first that which brings about the new birth as Peter explains for the Christian. **“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever”** 1 Peter 1:23.

“The word of God” 1 Peter 1:23 “remaineth in him...Whosoever is born of God” 1 John 3:9 because John states in 1 John 2:14 “I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.”

John is addressing “young men” specifically but “the word of God” must abide in all believers in the sense of sustaining both the new birth and spiritual growth, as Peter explains, this time addressing “little children” 1 John 2:12 not “young men,” with emphasis on letting “the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom” Colossians 3:16.

That is how “little children” progress to becoming “young men” and then “fathers” and “overcome the wicked one” by means of “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” Ephesians 6:17.

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" 1 Peter 2:2. 

"**His seed**" though is also for "**the body of Christ, and members in particular**" 1 Corinthians 12:27 "**the Word of God**" Revelation 19:13 capital W "**Christ in you, the hope of glory**" Colossians 1:27 because every Christian is by definition "**in Christ...a new creature**" 2 Corinthians 5:17 "**the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness**" Ephesians 4:24 "**the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him**" Colossians 3:10.

"**The new man**" is to be "**put on**" Ephesians 4:24, Colossians 3:10 *and lived out* Ephesians 4:25-32, Colossians 3:12-23.

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him" Colossians 2:6.

8. *What does John mean when he says that a child of God cannot sin?*

See the latter part of *Question 7*. The reference is to "**the new man**" Ephesians 4:24, Colossians 3:10.

9. *Why does John add the aspect of brotherly love to his emphasis on practising righteousness in 1 John 3:10?*

For the same reasons that Paul and Peter do for the *outworking* of "**the new man**" Ephesians 4:24, Colossians 3:10 "**to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace**" Ephesians 4:3:

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another" Romans 12:10.

"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous" 1 Peter 3:8. That is how "**to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace**" Ephesians 4:3.

A dramatic photograph of a lightning storm over the ocean. The sky is filled with dark, billowing clouds, and several bright, jagged bolts of lightning strike through them, illuminating the scene. The ocean in the foreground is dark blue with white-capped waves. The overall mood is powerful and dramatic.

Submit yourselves therefore to God.
Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.
James 4:7

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“Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world” 1 Peter 5:9