

John was writing to ordinary people like you and me who became Christians, looked forward to a new kind of life, then perhaps were crushed to discover that everything wasn't magically different and felt like they had failed. Experiences like these are common, because the Christian life involves growth. We are born again into a new world through faith in Christ, yet the world that we knew so well has patterned our personalities. The gift of new life does *not* include spiritual amnesia, or wipe away old thought patterns, emotions, and responses. All these are still there; still deeply ingrained. The old *will be* replaced, but gradually—through growth and grace.

It is the "gradually" that so troubles us, we want to be all new, *now*. When we stumble and fall and then fall again, it's we wonder if we've made a mistake about our relationship with God. God's word will release us from this torment. If you want to be sure you know Jesus, first look within. If you are responsive, even in a stumbling way—if you find love in your heart—you can be confident.

But what about our failures and sins? "Dear children," John wrote, "*continue* in Him" ([1 John 2:28](#)).

John said several important things about sin in this short passage:

- Through faith we are now God's children. When Jesus appears we will be completely like Him. As we keep His promise of transformation in view, and fix our desire on the goal of perfection, we will grow in purity here and now ([1 John 3:1-3](#)).
- There is no compromise with the sinfulness of sin. Violating God's standard of righteousness is sin. There is no sin in God. No one living in Him keeps on sinning ([1 John 3:4-6](#)).
- Objectively we can say that one whose life is committed to habitual sin is "of the devil" rather than of God. No one "born of God will continue in sin" ([1 John 3:7-10](#)).

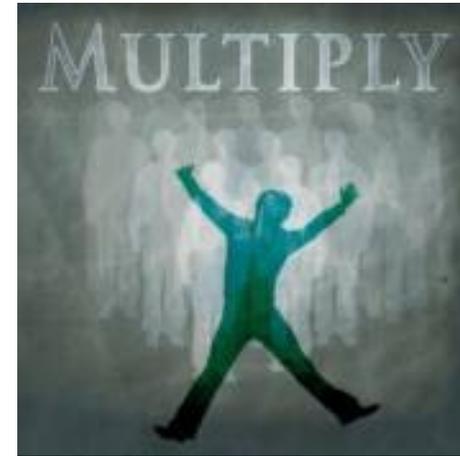
Putting it to work

- What does it mean to continue in Christ?
- How are you preparing yourself for Christ's return?
- When have you felt that your non-Christian friends did not really know or understand you?
- How do you reconcile the fact that Christians do sin with the statements that they cannot sin or keep on sinning?
- How can we know that we are children of God?

Trinity Christian Center

"More than a Church, we're family"

Wednesday Night Bible Study
March 30, 2011



Children of God

1 John 3:2

² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

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- In what ways are you like your mother or father?
- What was one of the benefits of being the child of your parents as you were growing up?
- What was the most dreaded words anyone could say when you knew you were doing something wrong?

1 John

Who was this letter to and how does it relate to us?

The Roman province of Asia, part of what is now called Asia Minor or Turkey, was a cultural melting pot. Greek conquerors had brought their language, philosophy, art, and religion from the west, while immigrants from Egypt, Persia, and Syria were carrying their customs from the east and mixing them with whatever ancient ways still lingered in Asia. Few people judged it necessary to hold one school of thought rigorously.

There were many roads to truth, and a man took what he liked from each: a pinch of Plato, a dash of Persian dualism, and one's ancestral cult for tradition's sake. Modern scholars call this mixing of Greek and Oriental culture syncretism; it was pluralism taken to extremes.

In this environment, Jews and Christians were considered narrow-minded and impious for paying homage to just one God. Most people acknowledged hundreds and favored several deities. Some hedged their bets by joining one or more "mystery" cults—groups with secret rites of initiation that promised encounters with the divine and bliss in the after-life. There were sects that mixed Judaism with Plato or astrology or secret revelation. Thus, it was inevitable that someone would try to add Christianity to a Greek-Persian-occult casserole and challenge the apostles' gospel.

1 John 2:28-29 (NKJV)

²⁸ *And now, little children, abide in Him, that when^[6] He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.* ²⁹ *If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.*

- Why did John encourage his readers to continue in Christ? ([2:28](#))
- What is true about everyone who does what is right? ([2:29](#))

- Righteous: 1. Morally right or justifiable; virtuous.
 2. Perfectly wonderful; fine and genuine.

Synonyms: all right, decent, ethical, honest, honorable, just, moral, nice, right, good, right-minded, straight, true, upright, virtuous

1 John 3:1-10 (NKJV)

¹ *Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.* ² *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.* ³ *And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.* ⁴ *Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.* ⁵ *And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.* ⁶ *Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.* ⁷ *Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.* ⁸ *He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.* ⁹ *Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.* ¹⁰ *In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.*

- How has the Father lavished love upon believers? ([3:1](#))
- Why doesn't the world know Christians? ([3:1](#))
- What will happen to the children of God when they see Christ? ([3:2](#))
- What kind of person purifies himself or herself? ([3:3](#))
- What is sin? ([3:4](#))
- How is a person who lives in Christ unusual? ([3:6](#))
- What does it mean to do what is right? ([3:7](#))
- What did John say about the person who does what is sinful? ([3:8](#))
- Why did the Son of God appear? ([3:8](#))
- Why can't the person who is born of God continue to sin? ([3:9](#))
- How are children of God and children of the devil identified? ([3:10](#))