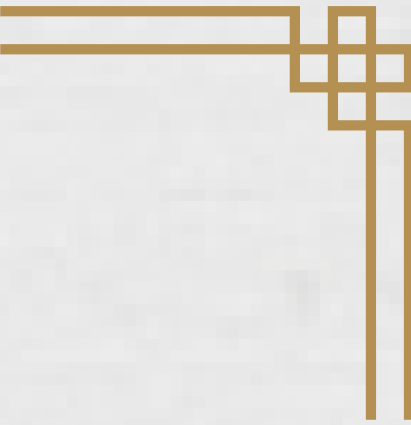
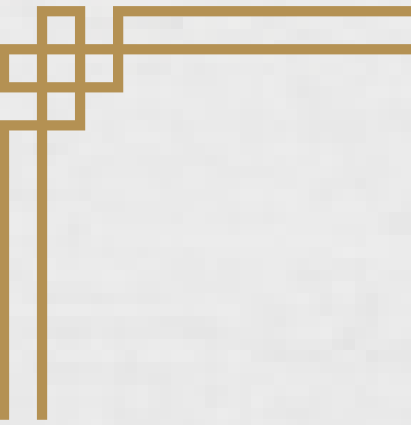


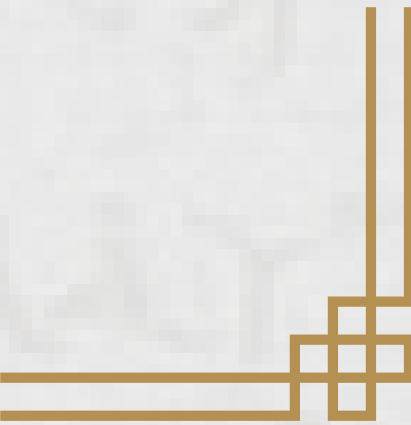
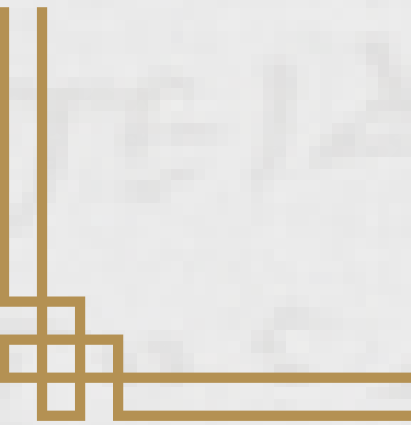


1 John

An Exegetical Series

1 John 3:4–6 Children of God, Part 2:

Lawlessness vs. Submission



Summary of 1 John 2:28-3:3

- The first mark of a child of God is an eschatological hope, love, and transformation that shapes present holiness. Because we have been born of God, we can have confidence that Christ will return, that we will be made like Him, and that the Father's love has been given to us and distinguished us from the world who does not know him or us.
- This hope, love, and transformation does not merely give us something to look forward to—it [ought] to shape how we live now.

Summary of 1 John 2:28-3:3

- Those who have this hope actively pursue purity, not in order to earn God's love, salvation, or future transformation, but because their pursuit of holiness evidences that they belong to God and remain in His truth.
- ➔ **Application:** Therefore, rather than allowing present struggles with sin or the brokenness of the world to define our perspective, we learn to view those struggles through the lens of our future hope: I belong to God, Christ is coming, I will be made like Him—therefore, I pursue holiness now.

Opening Questions

- When you become aware of a sin in your own life, what is your natural response?
- Why do you think our instinct can be to pull away from God when we become aware of our sin?
- What does our response to our own sin reveal about what we believe about God?

Opening Questions

- What happens when God's Word confronts something in our lives that we don't want to surrender?
- What is the difference between struggling against sin and resisting God's authority?
- ➔ **The Reality:** A Christian will say, *"I hate this sin. I don't want this sin. I keep struggling with this sin. Lord forgive me and help me."* a Non-Christian will not say this! This week, our focus is on what Christians do when they are pursuing holiness as they struggle with

First, Addressing An Apparent Contradiction

Remember John's Comments from Chapter 1:

- If we say, "We have no sin..." we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us (1 John 1:8)
 - If we say, "We have never sinned..." we make him a liar and his word is not in us (1 John 1:10)
- ➔ **The Challenge:** John now says that those who "remain" in Christ do not sin and more strongly, that those who do sin "has not seen him or known him" (1 John 3:6). How can this be? As Christians, we cannot say either of these things!

Key Aspects to Keep in Mind!

- John knows Christians will sin, but the goal is to sin “less” not be “sinless,”
- the status of sinless belongs to Jesus, alone, who is “The Righteous One” (1 John 2:1)
- What John is concerned with are patterns of life that, again, “mark” the Christian through certain, traceable and theological behaviors that someone who professes Christ would have and would strive to achieve (1 John 3:3! “... Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself...”)

Behavior's of the Non-Christian

Lawlessness As the True Nature of Non-Christians (3:4)

- Infraction upon God's law or God's commands is not, simply, what John has in mind—the term used for “lawlessness,” (ἀνομία, *anomia*) denotes *covenant disobedience*
 - ▶ *Leviticus 26:43b*, ““They themselves shall accept their lawlessness [anomia] on account of which they disdained my judgments and were vexed in their soul by my ordinances” (NETS—New English Translation of the Septuagint[The Old Testament Trans. in Greek])

Behavior's of the Non-Christian

Lawlessness As the True Nature of Non-Christians (3:4)

- In essence, the “mark” of the non-Christian or one not “born of God,” is the *resolute, conscious rejection* of God’s authority and an *exaltation* of personal, human autonomy where a person becomes a “law unto themselves,” as it were (Cf. Rom 2:14)
- In other words, if we desire to stand confidently as Jesus’ second coming, we must deliberately and vigorously reject sin—not doing so reveals a heart that rejects God’s authority

Pressing the Point of Who God Is

Jesus's Sinlessness As the Benchmark (3:5)

- John is building a case here to demonstrate the behavior by which Christians—true Christians born of God—model their life after
- Jesus appeared to take away sin and was able to do so because of his sinlessness!
- Therefore, the Christian's (redeemed!) interaction with sin must not be to defend their actions but to confess it and seek proper fellowship with God through repentance (1 John 1)

Digging Deeper

John further defines what “remaining” in God means (3:6)

- Refraining from sin!
- Remember, those who sin by not loving their fellow, professing Christian and do not keep the commands of Christ is in the darkness, walks in the darkness, and is blinded by the darkness—they do not know God nor know where they are going (1 John 2:11)
- This verse is tough, though—the plain reading is challenging and uncomfortable

A Variety of Views

John further defines what “remaining” in God means (3:6)

- ▶ There are two positions that have emerged:
 - **First View:** Present tense concept (Especially captured the NIV, “no one who lives in him keeps on sinning”)
 - **Second View:** The *anomia* approach (Karen Jobes’s position)
- ➔ Both are biblical and defensible, but let’s take a closer look at each view and move toward an answer!

The Traditional Understanding of 3:6

Habitual Sinning as the Mark of one “Born of God”

- The NIV captures the argument well, “no one who lives in him keeps on sinning.”
- That is, those born of God do not make a habit of sinning but rather are in process of being sanctified (purified) until Jesus returns
- While believers are not yet perfect, they show the genuine nature of being born of God by confessing sin and attempting to live in purity from sin

An Emerging View of 3:6

The “Type” of Sin and its Eschatological Implication Toward Apostasy

- Rather than “habits of sin” which the context does not allude to (as the argument goes), it is the way in which a person sins and how they “handle” that sin that John has in mind
- The one not born of God sins “lawlessly,” in that they embody the characteristics of 1 John 1:6, 8, and 10 specifically
- The one born of God, by contrast, sins but confesses that sin as a continual act of submission to God’s authority and grace

I Tend Toward Jobs!

Context Determines!

- The context does not mention habits of sin but rather what sin is, which is equal to Lawlessness (3:4)
- John's concern is with the nature of the sinning—one type of sinning is lawless while the other is grounded in the Gospel and seeks continual restoration relationally in fellowship with God (1 John 1:7, 9)
- Submission to God is ultimately in mind here rather than habits of sin

The Mark of the one Born of God

Submission As the Mark, Not Habits

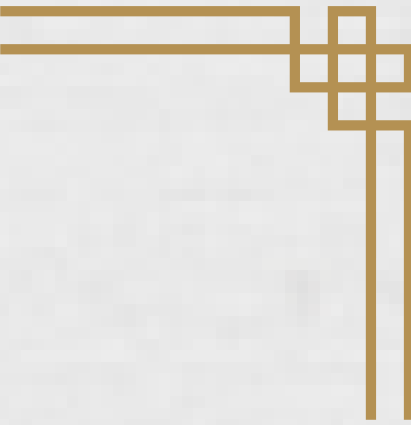
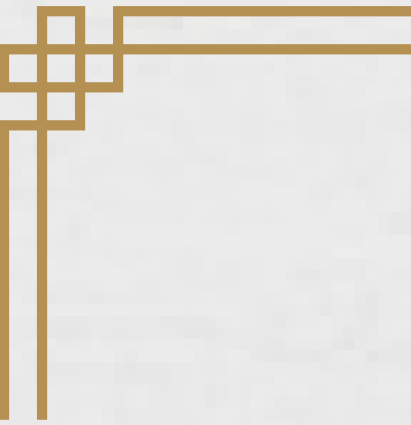
- Think back to Leviticus 26:43, “They themselves shall accept their lawlessness [anomia] on account of which they disdained my judgments and were vexed in their soul by my ordinances”
- The attitude of “disdain” captures well the idea of the ones not “born of God” because they hate God’s commands because they *do not submit to God in any capacity*
- The one born of God *does continually submit to God! ! !*

The Two Marks of Child of God

1. Willful, active, and delightful purification of oneself, modeled after Christ — “I belong to God, Christ is coming, I will be made like him—therefore I pursue holiness now”
2. Willful, continual submission to God’s authority in Christ when we do mess up and sin — “I belong to God, yet I still encounter sin; therefore, I do not run from God but rather I run back to him”
3. Tune in next week for the Third “mark” 😊

Closing Questions

- How do the hope of becoming like Christ and the willingness to submit to God's authority work together in the Christian life?
- When you become aware of your sin this week, what would it look like to respond with the two marks John has given us: hope in what Christ is making you and submission to God's authority in the present?



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