

# Sermon: We Know We are Children of God

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Preacher: Dr. Wes Feltner

[ 0 : 0 0 ]     Thank you.

Thank you.

1 John 2. How many of you, that last song was new to you? Quite a few of you. Isn't it good? Just that, take this world, my God's enough.

It so fits with what we've been learning in 1 John about, do not love the world, but know that you are loved by God. He really is enough. Well, we continue in our series through 1 John, coming to the end of chapter 2, and then we'll take a chunk out of chapter 3 tonight as well.

And so let's just dive right in. I know, maybe I should just keep you standing until I get up here, because you get comfortable and then I ask you to stand right back up. So if you're able, would you please do that?

[ 1 : 3 9 ]     It's a way of us honoring the reading of God's Word and recognizing the authority of Scripture. John writes here under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Look in verse 29 of chapter 2.

It's the last verse of chapter 2, and I think it really fits with chapter 3, and hopefully you'll see why that's the case. 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 thus hopes in Him, purifies himself as He is pure. Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness. Sin is lawlessness.

[ 2 : 5 5 ]     You know that He appeared 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's 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. Wow, what a great, great text. Pray for me.

Let's ask God to teach us from His Word. God, thank you for the privilege to open your Word. We get to open that every day, whether it's our personal time with you.

[ 3 : 56 ] We get to open it when we gather for corporate worship. Your Word is always there. You have not been silent. So thank you for speaking and giving us opportunities like this where we're able now to unpack your Word and hear your voice in our lives.

So come talk to us this evening, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated.  
Hank, why do you drink? Why do you roll smoke?

And why must you live out all those songs that you wrote? Over and over, everybody makes my prediction.

So if I get stoned, I'm just carrying on an old family tradition. Some of you are giggling. You know those are the words written by country music legend Hank Williams Jr.

Hank Jr. was known for his songs like A Country Boy Can Survive and All My Rowdy Friends, which became the Monday Night Football Anthem, A Country State of Mind.

[ 5 : 05 ] But maybe his most famous song of all was a song called Family Tradition. It's actually a song that describes how his wild behavior in life kind of ran in the family, so to speak.

And trust me, Faith Family, the words of that song are absolutely accurate. And I had kind of always known that. I'd known about the wildlife of Hank Williams Jr.

You know, I grew up just outside of Nashville. In fact, probably only 30 minutes from one of Hank Jr.'s home. I'm a country music fan. And so I'd always kind of known it.

But I really came to understand the similarities between Hank Sr. and Hank Jr. and then the third generation, Hank III, how many similarities they had.

When I read a book by Susan Masano entitled Family Tradition, The Generations of Hank Williams. This is what I read when I'm not reading about beasts with horns that come out of the sea.

[ 6 : 16 ] And when I read this book, I was absolutely amazed to discover how many similarities existed in all three of their lives.

Here's just a few of the examples. I could give you a lot. Physical pain. Some of you may know Hank Sr. was born with a disease that caused him back problems. He suffered with back pain all of his life.

Hank Jr. fell from a Montana mountain and had to have like multiple surgeries to repair his face. Alcoholism. All three men, heavy, heavy drinkers, partied, lived hard.

They've all been in and out of treatment centers. All of them would miss shows because of alcohol abuse. Women, multiple marriages, broken relationships, just again, part of their party lifestyle.

All three of them had to fight against the Nashville music establishment. As some of you know, Hank Sr. was fired from the Grand Ole Opry. Something Hank III is trying to gather up a group of people to persuade them to take that back.

[ 7 : 28 ] Hank Jr. was not allowed in the Country Music Hall of Fame, irregardless of all of his success, until just this year.

They all had to make their own style, forge their own brand of music, at least for Hank Jr. and Hank III, so as to not live in the shadow of their father.

And speaking of fathers, none of them really had a father. Hank Sr. was not raised by his father. He was never around for Hank Jr.

In fact, died when Hank Jr. was only three years old. And Hank Jr. was never around for Hank III. I could keep going on and on. I mean, the similarities, you read the book and you're like, oh my goodness, it's almost like they lived the same life.

In fact, one quote said this, and it really summarizes the point. Quote, it is remarkable how many of the same mistakes, same tragedies, same struggles, and same successes reoccur in all three men.

[ 8 : 41 ] You see, Hank Jr. was right. It was a family tradition. And it got me thinking about something. It got me thinking about how there are certain similarities and characteristics and personalities that run in our families, right?

How different things, it's amazing how different things get passed down the family line. Now, they may not be as elaborate or excessive as celebrities like Hank Williams, but listen, everybody here tonight, everybody watching online, all of you have certain things that run in the family.

Maybe for you, it's physical appearance. You know, people will say, oh, you've got your father's eyes. You look just like your mother. Or maybe it's character traits.

You know, you've got athleticism just like your father. Or you've got your mother's sense of humor. Or sometimes it's addictions. That boy drinks like his daddy.

Or he dips snuff like his grandmama. All right? I actually had a grandmother that dipped snuff anyways. Or maybe it's personal habits.

[ 9 : 55 ] Like you love to work on cars. Like your dad loved to work on cars. Maybe it's medical conditions. They'll say stuff like, you know, well, heart disease really runs in the family.

You're following me, right? Like regardless of what it is, in one way or another, even if you don't know your biological family, there are themes and patterns and characteristics that run in the family.

We all have a family tradition. That's exactly John's point in 1 John chapter 3.

That is exactly what this text teaches us. Except John is not referring to physical characteristics like hair color. He's referring to spiritual characteristics like holiness.

He's not talking about physical characteristics, but spiritual characteristics that run in the family. Now, before we dive into more detail on that, notice how John starts off.

[ 11 : 07 ] Verse 29 of chapter 2. 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 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 didn't know him. Beloved, we are God's children now. Here's how the argument starts off.

We know that we are children of God. And we've already been talking about thus far in this series about how you can know that you know Jesus. And by this point, we've established that, the signs that give us the confidence that we know Jesus.

And if you know Jesus, you are a child of God. And John uses the present tense. He says, right now.

[ 12 : 09 ] Like, faith family, how incredible is that? That if you have put your faith in the Son of God, you are a child of God. And that means that you get to look to the sovereign God of the universe, the one who created everything just by the power of his saying so.

The very one that in the book of Revelation we've seen is on a throne above every other throne. You get to call that God Father.

Father. Because you're his child. Jesus, after all, taught us to pray. How? Our Father who is in heaven.

Paul in Romans 8 says that we have received the spirit of adoptions whereby we cry out, Abba, Father. John, same author of 1 John, in his gospel says this.

This is John chapter 1 verse 12. But to all who receive him, who believe in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

[ 13 : 23 ] Oh, faith family, tonight I want you to know. I want you to know beyond the shadow of a doubt that you're a child of God. You belong to him.

And isn't this, after all, the essence of what makes Christianity Christianity? I mean, this idea that we are children of God and we are able to say to the sovereign God of the universe, Father, that is what makes Christianity Christianity.

You say, what do you mean? Here's what I mean. This is so important. Being a Christian is not turning over a new leaf. Being a Christian isn't making a life resolution or deciding, you know, I think I'll be a better person.

No, no, no. Notice it on the screen. Being a Christian means you have experienced a new birth. As Jesus said in John 3 to Nicodemus, you must be what?

Born again. That's what it means to be a Christian, to experience a new birth. And if you're a child of God, born of God, you will be his child forever.

[ 14 : 32 ] And I know some of you are like, you know, you bring this up a lot. That's okay. I bring it up when it's appropriate. But this is why I'm absolutely convinced in the doctrine of the security of the believer. That when you become a child of God, you are a child of God forever and nothing will change that.

And here's why. Because Christianity is not about making a decision. Christianity is about experiencing a conversion. You're not who you were.

That big, tall, scrapping young man that runs the slides for me, my son. He was born of me. So whether he likes it or not, he will always be mine.

Because he was born of me. It's a new birth. He doesn't get to decide, although there's some days he probably wish he could, I don't think I want that guy for a dad anymore.

He doesn't get to make that choice because he experienced a birth. Christianity is not a decision. It is a conversion. And you are God's child.

[ 15 : 37 ] You've experienced a new birth. Does that amaze you today? Have you given much thought recently to the unbelievable and incomprehensible reality that you're God's child?

And have you thought about how this is what separates Christianity from all other religions? Look at this quote. It's rather lengthy, but from J.I. Packer.

It's so good. Notice it on the screen. If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he or she makes of the thought of being God's child and having God as his or her father.

If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his or her worship and prayers and whole outlook on life, it means he or she does not understand Christianity very well at all.

For everything that Christ taught, everything that makes the New Testament new and better than the old, everything that is distinctly Christian as opposed to merely Jewish, is summed up in the knowledge of the fatherhood of God.

[ 16 : 59 ] Father is the Christian name for God. Preach. Preacher. Right? And I didn't even say it.

J.I. Packer did. All right? It's unbelievable. It's unbelievable. And the truth is even more overwhelming when you realize the family you used to belong to. Look at what John says in chapter 3, verse 10.

Look at chapter 3, verse 10. By this, it's evident who are children of God and who are the children of the devil. Well, okay.

According to John, and remember, John loves his extremes. There's no middle ground. You're either black, you're white. You're either of God, you're either of the devil. You're either this, you're either that.

There's no middle ground. There's no gray here. And John says there's really only two family trees. There's only two. Two family trees spiritually in the world.

[ 17 : 57 ] The family tree that knows God and the family tree that opposes God. Which family do you belong to? It's the only option according to John.

It's why Jesus very controversially said to the Pharisees in John chapter 8, You are of your father the devil. He's not saying, you know, y'all been sitting around with glowing eyes, cutting the heads off chickens, and y'all are a bunch of Satanists.

That's not what he's saying. He's saying you oppose the things of God just like the devil does. You belong to that family tree.

Look at what Paul says in Ephesians 2. Ephesians 2. Therefore, remember, I'm a little excited tonight, that at one time, there was a time, faith family, you Gentiles in the flesh called the uncircumcision by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands.

Remember, you were at that time separated from Christ. You were alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise.

[ 19 : 02 ] You had no hope and you were without God in the world. But now in Christ, you who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

So then you are no longer, praise God, strangers and aliens. Here's what you are, fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.

It's great, amazing truth. Amen. It's the best news on the planet. It's why I get so excited to teach this, that you are far off, but you're brought near.

Your father was the devil, that is, you were opposed to God, but now it is God. You know him. You were orphans. You've now been adopted. Rejoice, O child of God.

As John says, for we are children of God now. That's what John is saying. Why? Why are we children of God?

[ 20 : 07 ] Well, obviously you were a beautiful baby. And God looked at you and said, oh, what a beautiful child.

I got to have that one. Or maybe it was because you were so talented and smart. I mean, God looked at you and said, I got to have that child in my family.

Is that why you're a child of God? No, we should let the text tell us. Let's look at verse one. See what kind of love the father has given to us that we should be called children of God.

So here's the next point. Yes, we know that we are children of God. That's great truth. But it's because, faith family, of the love of God. That's why you are his child.

You're not a child of God because you're good looking. Some of you are offended by that. You're a child of God because he's amazingly loving. You're not a child of God because you're good looking.

[ 21 : 19 ] You're a child of God because he's amazingly loving. How many of you remember when we went through the series this summer in Hosea? I mean, I don't know of a series I've enjoyed as much as I did teaching the book of Hosea.

It was called Boundless. If you weren't here for that, you can go back online and watch all of that. It blew our minds as to the boundless, amazing love that God has for us.

And do you remember the two metaphors that were throughout the book of Hosea? The first that describes who we are. The first was a wayward spouse.

Israel was God's bride. We are the bride of Christ. And what kind of bride are we? Remember the intense language? We are whores. We are spiritual adulterers is what the scripture says.

That is, we love other things more than God. That's the word idolatry. And so we are, spiritually speaking, prostitutes. And the question in Hosea was who would love, I mean, not just love, but choose to love a prostitute?

[ 22 : 28 ] And the answer was God would. And we rested in the amazing truth that God married us in Christ, knowing full well the kind of spouse we would be before, during, and after He married us.

That being a metaphor of entering into salvation. We see this in the Old Testament where God told Hosea to marry a prostitute, have children with the prostitute, while she was prostituting.

Meaning, His love was to image someone knowing, I know who you are, I know what you're doing, and I know what you're going to do, and yet I still choose to love you. That's amazing.

It's amazing. It's absolutely amazing. In the New Testament, it goes like this. God demonstrates His love towards us in that while we were sinners.

While we were sinners. Are you with me? While we were sinners. Not once we got our act together, oh, then God said, I love you now. No, no, no.

[ 23 : 31 ] While you were yet sinners, Christ died. Meaning, He didn't love you once you got your life where it ought to be. He loved you even while you were a mess.

That's good news. That was the first metaphor. The second metaphor was that of a rebellious son. So a wayward spouse and then a rebellious son. Remember, notice this on the screen.

This is Hosea 11. When Israel was a child, I loved him. And out of Egypt, I called my son. The more they were called, the more they went away.

They kept sacrificing to the Baals. That's their idolatry, their spiritual adultery. And burning offerings to idols. In other words, and I mentioned this, Israel was the Old Testament version of the prodigal son.

They just kept running away. They just kept running away. The Assyrian gods one moment and the Babylonian gods the next. And just on and on, they just kept running after other things.

[ 24 : 35 ] But God never stopped loving His wayward child. Look at the same chapter, verse 8. How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel?

How can I make you like Adma? How can I treat you like Zeboim? My heart recoils within me. Get this faith in me. My compassion grows warm and tender.

I can't stop loving my people. And I bet I said this 10 times. And so here's 11. I probably said it more than 10. God does not love you because you're good.

He loves you because you're His. I'm building up for something. I'm giving you a whole lot of background to drop the bomb in just a minute, okay? So hang on. The doctrine, this doctrine is known as the doctrine of adoption in Scripture, okay?

That part of our understanding of salvation is the doctrine of adoption. Paul says in Romans 8, we have the spirit of adoption. What that means, if you ever have known anything about adoption, you know this.

[ 25 : 36 ] That adoption doesn't happen because of the effort of the orphan, but by the grace of the parent. It's of the parent, not of the child. And my story, faith family, is that I was spiritually an orphan.

And one day, God showed up in the power of the Holy Spirit and said, you're mine. And He poured His love upon me and He gave me a new name. He brought me into a new people.

He gave me a new identity. And I am now His. And why am I His? It's not because I'm good looking. And it's not because I have any talents. It's because of His great love.

That's the only answer to my story. And what that means is, come on, land on us tonight. God wanted you.

Some of you, that's maybe the first time you've ever heard that in your life. God wanted you. He wanted you. Now, with all of that background, and I went to Hosea because that's the most freshest, recent part that we've studied about God's love.

[ 26 : 44 ] Now, take all of that that I've just talked about and bring it now into verse 1 of chapter 3. Because I want to show you what John's trying to make you feel. Chapter 3, verse 1.

See what kind of love the Father has given to us. Now, our translations, our English translations fall short a little bit here.

And when I say they fall short, I don't mean in meaning. I mean in emotion. You don't get the emotion of the Greek. So, for instance, the ESV says, see what kind of love the Father has.

If you've got a King James Version, it will say what manner of love. If you've got an NIV or a New American Standard, it will say, and I think this gets a little closer, how great of love the Father has.

Right? But do you know in the Greek, it literally means this. The Greek for this literally means from what country? Here's what John is saying. Where does this love come from?

[ 27 : 55 ] It's not of the world. Nobody loves like this. Nobody. See from what country the love of the Father has given to us.

Where in? It's like I literally remember the first time I moved to Minnesota, and we were bringing stuff up, put it in a storage unit, and I went to the guy behind the counter of the storage unit, and as soon as I spoke, couldn't have been five seconds, he goes, you ain't from around here, are you?

I was like, that offends me. Right? I'm like, no, I'm not from here. Because just immediately, like you can tell by my southern accent, like, you're not from these parts.

God, faith family, you have never experienced anything like the love of God. It's out of this world. The love of God is literally not from around here.

Amen? It's just not. It's otherworldly. So, faith family tonight, do you know, do you know that he loves you? I mean, do you know that he loves you? If you don't, go back through Hosea or parts of what we've looked at in 1 John.

[ 29 : 12 ] Here's why I say that. Because I want us, and myself included, okay, I'm talking to me as much as I'm talking to you. We have got to stop being that kind of kid.

You know the one I'm talking about that gets this kind of face when they get mad at their parents, and what do they say? You don't love me. If you're a parent, you've had that happen before, right?

And what happens in you? First of all, that's one of the most painful things that you can say to a parent. And secondly, everything within them wants to scream and say, if you only knew.

If you only knew how much I love you. You don't have a clue how much I love you. And yet, how many of us, when things don't go our way in life, and life gets turned upside down, we look to our Father and say, you don't love me.

And God's just saying, you don't even know. You don't even have a clue how much I love you. See how great the love of the Father is that we should be called children of God.

[ 30 : 31 ] John Owen, the great Puritan, said this, The greatest sorrow and burden you can lay on the Father, and the greatest unkindness you can do to Him, is to not believe He loves you.

To not believe He loves you. So faith family, you're a child of God. And you're a child of God because of the love of God, but there's more. Here's the third one.

Notice it here. Not only do we know that we're children of God because of the love of God, but that means we belong to the family of God. We have been brought in to God's family, brought into God's tree because the Son died upon the tree.

That'll preach. You belong. You have an inheritance waiting for you, 1 Peter 1. Jesus is preparing a place for you. Hey, you have literally blood brothers and sisters.

Because what defines our family is the blood, the crucified Savior that we belong to. We have a real family. And that means three things.

[ 31 : 37 ] You're like, you don't have time for three things? You hush. Okay? I have as much time for whatever I want. No, I'm just kidding. Three things that come as implication of this, right?

Watch. Watch. One, I'm saving until next week because that's from verse 11 on. Okay? I'll show you that in a minute. Two, I'll mention briefly because it's mentioned briefly in the text.

And then I'm only going to elaborate on the third. So, you follow in the train of thought. You are children of God. Wow. How could that be? Because of this otherworldly, not from around here, love of God that has brought you into the family of God.

And if you're in the family of God, that means three things. Here's the first. There should be loving family relationships. Look at verse 10.

Look at verse 10. Okay? I jumped on Caleb back there. Look at verse 10. 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 what?

[ 32 : 40 ] Brother. Okay? Now you can put that back up there. So, there should be loving family relationships. Oh, my goodness. If you really believe that you're a child of God because of the love of God brought into the family of God, that's going to have major implications by how you relate to one another.

I'm saving that one because that's next week. There's a whole message, whole passage on it next week. So, we'll look at that then. Here's the second part implication of being a part of the family of God.

Look at verse 2. Chapter 3, verse 2. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be is not yet appeared, but we know, we know that when he appears, we shall be like him because we shall see him as he is.

Now, this might get a hallelujah if you might get a little excited, but not only should there be loving family relationships, but there's also going to be a family reunion. There's going to be a family reunion.

And if you've been going through the Revelation series, you've seen this, how John continues in his vision as he sees the end of history. All of God's redeemed are brought together, and they're all worshiping together, crazy cousins and all.

[ 33 : 56 ] They're all there. They're redeemed of God. And what John says in this text is one day you're going to see Jesus face to face. One day.

We just sang about it in the song right before the sermon. You're going to see Jesus face to face. And so, not only should we have loving family relationships, that's one implication of being in the family of God, and not only will we have a family reunion, when you are going to see Jesus.

You're going to see Jesus. And the cares of this world are going to go strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace. Now, what I want to elaborate on just quickly, and this will be the last point, because it's the main, it's really, I'm just now getting to the main point.

Everything up to now was introduction. I tease. Here's the third, but it's important, so I'll just say a few things about it. Look at verse 9, chapter 3, verse 9.



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's been born of God. By this, it's evident who are children of God, and who are the children of the devil.

[ 35 : 08 ] Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother. So here's the third one. The third is this. Not only loving family relationships and a future family reunion, but there will be a family resemblance.

If you belong to the family of God, there will be a resemblance because there are things that run in the family when you're born of God.

You can't be born of God, and yet all the characteristics, patterns, and behaviors look like the world. It's a similar point to what John has made earlier. For instance, in chapter 1, where you can't say you know the light and all you ever walk in is darkness.

That doesn't make any sense. And so John is now making a similar point, namely with a different metaphor, that if you say God is your father, well, then there can't be no family resemblance.

Do you see? See, this is why the world doesn't understand you, John says, because it didn't understand Jesus. And if you're becoming more and more like Jesus, and they didn't understand Jesus, then they won't understand you because you're going to bear the family resemblance of the Son of God.

[ 36 : 24 ] And so the world that's of a very different family is going to say, you're weird. Like, we don't do that in our family. I know, because your family is of the world and our family is of God.

So there's obviously going to be a difference. It doesn't mean we don't love each other. It doesn't mean that I hate you. No, no, it just means there's clearly a different way that you live life, and there's going to be some differences in the way I live life because you're a part of that family, and I'm a part of this family.

That's what John is saying. You can't be born of God without a family resemblance. And, of course, this is true in the ancient Near East even more so because children, and particularly sons, always did what their fathers did.

That doesn't happen so much today, but like in, think of in Jesus' day. Jesus was a carpenter. Why? Joseph was a carpenter. If your dad was a shepherd, guess what you were going to be?

A shepherd. If your family had a fishing business, guess what you were going to have? A fishing business. Unless, of course, Jesus comes along and tells you to throw your nets away. All right? But otherwise, you're going to be in the fishing business because a child does what their parents do.

[ 37 : 33 ] That was the understanding in the ancient Near East. A true child mimics the father, imitates the father. Now, before, because some of you are already going to go too far the other way.

Remember the balance John is giving us? Before you start thinking, well, my goodness, does this mean sinless perfection? And pastor, if you're meaning that I've got to go out and I'm going to look like Jesus in everything that I do, and there's just, I'm going to be walking around with a halo on my head like I got no issues.

That's not what John's talking about. Look back in verse 2. It's so clear in the text. And if you've read the first two chapters, he says, Beloved, we're God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared, but we know that when he appears, we will be like him because we shall see him as he is.

So I think a healthy biblical way of thinking about this is this way. Look at it. If there is no resemblance at all, there's no relationship. I mean, there's no way you can have a relationship with Jesus and he hasn't made a difference in your life.

That's just not a reality. If there's no resemblance, there's no relationship. But full resemblance doesn't happen until final restoration. That's what the text is saying.

[ 38 : 50 ] We won't be fully that till we see him as he is. Do you see? But in the meantime, you ought to be showing some signs of a family tradition.

Some signs that you have been born of God. By the way, this is why John uses the word practice. What John means by practice is this lifestyle, committed, unrepentant ever of sin.

It goes along with being the father. Does the devil ever stop and say, Yeah, I probably don't want to do that. I should do the right thing. No, he doesn't.

He has a practice of unrighteousness. A practice of deception. A practice of things opposed to God. So all John is saying here is not by practice do you ever slip up.

Is your life committed to things opposed to God? Or is there any signs at all that in your life you're committed to the things of God? Do you see?

[ 39 : 53 ] That's what he means by practice. So don't despair. A lot of times new Christians will come to me and they'll say, My goodness, you know, I've been a Christian for a little while and I've got to tell you, Pastor, I see more sin in my life.

I think something's wrong. And I want to say, no, nothing's wrong. Because the closer you get to the light, the more junk you're going to see. If you were to come to me and say, I don't think there's anything wrong with me, then I'd say we have a problem.

We have a really serious problem. Somebody's been hiding in the dark. Somebody ought to turn the light on. Hello. But if you come to me and say, like, I feel like I have a greater understanding of my sin now than I did a year ago.

And I'm much more aware of the sin in my life than I was to you. I'm like, you're getting closer to the light. That's a good thing. You're aware of the things in your life that fall short of the glory of God.

Let me put all this together in one, only one application, and it's this. If I could bring all of the, you're a child of God by the love of God brought into the family of God, and then the main implication being that there should be then a family resemblance, the application would be this that brings all that together.

[ 41 : 11 ] Identity is going to influence your activity. Okay? So here's what I mean, is that when you really know and rest in that you are a child of God, you'll find there's more resemblance of God in your life.

Okay? When you're fully aware of who you are, that's going to impact what you do. How many of you remember in the temptation account when Jesus has just been baptized, at his baptism from heaven, there's the voice that says, this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.

You remember that? That happens in the baptism of Jesus. And then Jesus goes out into the wilderness, and in the very first temptation in the wilderness, do you remember what Satan says?

If you are the son of God, turn these stones into bread. What's the first thing he went after? Identity. Because if Satan can control your identity, you're not really the son of God.

You're not really a child of God. You believe all this stuff. Do you know what you've done? Do you know the skeletons in your closet? If he can start to control that identity, he's got your activity.

[ 42 : 37 ] You see? But if you know that you know that you know you are a child of God, loved by God, brought in the family of God, that's going to impact your wanting to reflect God in your life.

Notice this on the screen. Obedience, or what I'm calling family resemblance, or really that's what John is calling it. Obedience is not about how strong you are, but knowing whose you are.

It's not... I never preach obedience this way. Go out and do it, faith family. Come on. You're strong enough. You're bad enough. You're big enough. No. No, no, no, no, no.

In fact, I ended the Hosea series by saying, you don't love God by trying harder. You love God by resting in his love for you. Because as you rest in his love for you, that's going to pour out into love for him.

As you rest in the fact that you're a child of God, then you will begin to live out the resemblance of the family of God.

[ 43 : 44 ] Faith family, aren't you glad you know what you know? Aren't you glad you know what you know? That tonight, if you're a Christian, you know that you're a child of God, loved by God, belonged to the family of God.

And the reality, that reality will change the way you live in the world. And so the next time somebody comes up to you and says, hey, why do you love?

And why do you have hope? And why are you trying to live out all those things that God wrote?

Over and over, everybody makes my prediction. But you see, if I give up myself for somebody else, why?

God, that's just a family tradition. Let's pray. God, I pray that your truth tonight would affect us deeply.

[ 44 : 54 ] What the believers in John's day who were doubting the faith and disobeying the faith and drifting from the faith, what they needed was to be reminded that they belong to God.

And so do we. We need the truth over us and in us that we are your child. Nothing will take that away.

Because you love us, not because we're good, but because we're yours. And you have brought us into the family and we're trying to figure this family out. We're trying to figure out, God, how we live with brothers and sisters and how we live in the world with a different set of family values.

And so God, help us tonight understand these things. We thank you for your truth that we've learned in your word. We pray it in Jesus' name. And God's people said, amen.