

8. Learning to Live a Pure Life

In our last topic, we saw that one of our goals, as Christians, should be to help our physical and spiritual children learn to depend on the Holy Spirit to know what to speak and how to speak. We saw that as they depend on the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit will teach them how to explain Scripture with Scripture and that the Holy Spirit will help them to develop the attitudes that will make them effective as they teach. Today, we want to help them learn to live a pure life so that people will see they are applying what they teach to their own lives. Showing them how to live a pure life will be the focus of our topic today.

In 1 John 2:28-3:3, we read, “And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him. 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. 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. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.” 1 John 2:28-29 teaches us how to live a pure life. Then, 1 John 3:1-3 explains why we want to live a pure life as Christians.

In order to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to live a pure life, we see several key principles in the verses quoted above. In 1 John 2:28, we see that we are to show our children how to do two things, in the present, that will prepare them for the future. First, we are to help them recognize their relationship with Christ. As John wrote this book, he spoke several times to remind us that we are children of God. John also said the same thing, in John 1:12-13, where we read, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” We want to help our children understand that when they repented of their sin and placed their faith in Christ, they became the children of God. This was not a physical birth. This was not a birth based on their own will. This was a birth based on the will of God.

Second, 1 John 2:28 says that once they become children, they are to abide in Christ. John explained what it means to abide in Christ in much more detail, in John 15. In that passage, we see the results of abiding in Christ:

- We bear fruit – verse 2
- We allow God to take away (prune) the sin in our life – verse 2
- We will only bear fruit as we abide in Christ – verses 4-5
- We have answered prayer as we abide in Christ – verse 7
- We glorify the Father as we bear much fruit – verse 8
- We become disciples that bear much fruit – verse 8
- We abide in the love of the Father and Son – verses 9-10

- We love one another as we abide in Christ – verses 12, 17
- We are recognized as friends as we abide in Christ – verse 15
- We know the plans of Christ as we abide in Him – verse 15

1 John 2:28 also tells us that there we will be two results in the future, as we abide in Christ. We will have confidence at the coming of Christ. We will not be ashamed at the coming of Christ.

In 1 John 2:29, we see that we are to help our children learn to practice righteousness. This will happen as we help our children to understand that Christ is the Righteous One. We show them that Christ is the One who gives us the power to live a righteous life. We help them to understand that Christ tells us that a righteous life is clear evidence of the fact that spiritual birth has happened in their lives. Two key verses that help our children understand how Christ gives us the power to live a righteous life are Romans 6:13 and 6:16, where we read, “And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. ...Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?” In these verses, we see that we are to present ourselves to God, and then, yield our lives to Him. At all times we are yielding our lives to the Lord, He will give us His strength to do what is right.

As we look at the verses quoted above, from 1 John 3, we see why we want to live a pure life. In 1 John 3:1, we read, “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.” In this verse, we see that God has shown His great love to us. This means that God has made each Christian a special object of His love. That is why God made us His children and a part of His family. This also explains why the world cannot really understand us as Christians. Because of the sin nature, every person without Christ has a natural desire to do those things that are sin. Their lives are controlled by the fear, guilt, and shame that came into the world as soon as Adam and Eve sinned.

In contrast, as Christians, we have been given a new nature that has a desire to please God. We want to do the things that are right. Even when we depend on our own strength and sin, we still have a desire to do what is right. Romans 7:19-20 says, “For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.” In our own strength, we will yield to sin, even though we have a desire to do what is right. This is why God gave us the Holy Spirit so that we have the power to do what is right.

The Holy Spirit is mentioned nineteen times in Romans 8. Romans 8:28-29 says, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” Then, verses 35-39 conclude the chapter by saying, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: ‘For Your sake we are

killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.’ Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Here, we are assured that the love of God is causing Him to give us the power to become more and more like Christ as we yield to Him.

In addition to wanting to live a pure life, because of the love God has shown us, we also want to live a pure life because God is helping us to become like Him. 1 John 3:2 says, “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.” In this verse, we see five things. We are reminded that we are the children of God. We see that we cannot understand what we will be like in the future. We see that God has not yet revealed what we will be like. We see that we will be like Him. Finally, we will see Him as He is. Since God is helping us to become like Him, that gives us a desire to become more like Him during the time we are living on this earth.

We show our children how the love of Christ has changed the motivation of our life so that we want to become more and more like Christ while we live on this earth. We help them to understand 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, which says, “For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.” As we grow in our understanding of His love, by taking root in Christ (Colossians 2:6-7) and taking root in the love of Christ (Ephesians 3:17-19), we grow in our desire to live for Him, instead of living for ourselves. This gives us purpose in life because we realize that the things we do can have an eternal impact.

In 1 John 3:3, we see a third reason why we want to live a pure life. We read, “And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.” We were given the promise, in the previous verse, that we will be like Christ when we see Him. Here, we see that we want to purify ourselves so that we become more and more like Him now, as we live on this earth. Then, we can wait eagerly for the coming of Christ and not have fear in our lives. The day that Christ takes us to heaven will be a day of victory. That is why 1 Corinthians 15:57-58 says, “But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” Here, we see that our desire is to be ready to meet Christ when He comes because we are doing the things that He prepared us to do.

We want both ourselves and our physical and spiritual children to be able to say with Paul, in 2 Timothy 4:7-8, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.” May the Lord richly bless you as you help your physical and spiritual children prepare for the day when they will see Christ face-to-face.