

CORE COMPETENCIES

Core Beliefs

- Trinity
- Salvation by Grace
- Authority of Bible
- Personal God
- **Identity in Christ**
“I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.”
- Church
- Humanity
- Compassion
- Eternity
- Stewardship

Core Practices

- Worship
- Prayer
- Bible Study
- Single-Mindedness
- Biblical Community
- Spiritual Gifts
- Giving Away My Time
- Giving Away My Money
- Giving Away My Faith
- Giving Away My Life

Core Virtues

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness/Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-Control
- Hope
- Humility

Sin—now there’s an ugly word—kind of unpopular in many circles these days, too. But John doesn’t shy away from it. In fact, he used that word a number of times to help his readers to understand both natures of Jesus (sinless). But he also is addressing the false teaching that sin for the follower of Jesus is “no big deal.” In fact, it is really incompatible with our new nature because of Jesus. But simply knowing who we are in Christ is not enough—we’re called to “live out” and even “live into” our identity in Christ. What does that mean? What should it look like? I’ll encourage you to dig in to the Scripture this week and learn some of that through your own study. You’ll be glad that you did.

Because of His Grace,

Richard Gotthardt, Pastor of Spiritual Formation

If you are new to using the Engage:

There is a short guide that will give you the “Who, Why, What, and How” of using the *Engage* study Guide. You may access it through the Grace Community Church website at (www.gracecommunityaz.org). (Access the Spiritual Formation Ministry page and click “Resources” on the left panel.)

Review from last week’s study of 1 John 2:18-29, 4:1-6

Last week we saw the reality of antichrists, which are opposed to the unchanging truth of Jesus Christ. We noticed the warning that it is their purpose to deceive us. We observed it is equally crucial for us to have a correct understanding and steadfast confidence in Christ, in order to not be at risk to false teaching. We cannot enter into a relationship with God apart from Jesus Christ. We also observed God has given to all believers an anointing—the Holy Spirit Who lives in us, Who will teach us and testify concerning Jesus and reveal God’s truth to us.

Memory Verse for this week:

“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him.”

1 John 3:1

Day 1 (1 John 3)

Begin your time in God’s Word, asking Him to speak to your mind and your heart and to apply His truths to your life. Tell Him it is your desire to know Him better and to love Him more fully.

We will spend the next two weeks in the third chapter of 1 John. This week’s core passage includes the first ten verses. Next week we will look closely at the last fourteen verses, but before we begin to break it down, we will read through the entire chapter several times to get the overall flow.

Begin by reading the chapter at least two times, marking one of the following each time: *God*, and *Jesus*.

In this chapter, it can be difficult to determine whether a pronoun refers to God the Father or God the Son. Don't become frustrated or discouraged! Do the best you can and remember the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are after all one God!

Because one of the goals of inductive Bible study is to learn everything you can about God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, use your markings to help you add to your list anything that answers a who, what, when, where, why or how question about God or Jesus.

Did you notice any clear references to the Holy Spirit? If so, mark those, and add your observations regarding the Holy Spirit to your list as well.

Now spend some time reflecting and meditating on those truths God has revealed to you, and you have recorded, regarding His character and His ways as you have studied 1 John. Praise and thank Him for Who He is and how He has provided for you spiritually. Ask Him to continue to transform you so you would come to resemble Him as your Heavenly Father even more.

Day 2 (1 John 3)

Read or recite your memory verse. Begin your time in God's Word with prayer.

In the overview lesson on 1 John, one of your assignments was to read through the entire book of 1 John marking several key words. In doing this, we were able to observe that the words repeated most often in the book of 1 John and key to properly understanding and applying the truths presented here, were the words *love, know, sin* and *abide*. Each of these words appears a number of times in the third chapter and will help us to determine the main thoughts being communicated.

Once again, in order to get a sense of the flow of the whole, we need to read several times through the entire chapter. If you did the overview lesson on 1 John, you will have already done the first step of marking, so you can simply read through the chapter. Make sure you have all the key words and synonyms marked. If you did not do the overview, you will need to read through the chapter at least four times, each time marking a different key word with a distinctive color or symbol. Be sure to include any pronouns or synonyms of the words as well. This may seem repetitive to you and you may be tempted to read it only once or twice and mark all the words at the same time, but resist the temptation and allow yourself maximum exposure to God's truth!

love, know, sin, abides [NIV: *lives, remains, in vs. 15, 17*]

Once you have read and marked, count the number of times each key word or synonym appears in the chapter. Enter that number in the appropriate box of the chart below.

Key Word	1 John 3:1-10	1 John 3:11-24
Love		
Know		
Sin		
Abide [NIV lives, remains, in]		

As you examine your chart, take note of where the key words appear within the chapter. Keep in mind that key words help to convey subjects, themes and main ideas. Now look closely at verse ten. Would you agree that verse ten appears to be a bridge from one main subject to another? At this point in your observation of chapter three, what two main subject areas do you think John is trying to stress, point out, discuss or keep us from being deceived?

Now we will begin to focus on **just the first ten verses of chapter three!** Use your markings to add to (or begin if this is your first time using the *Engage*) your lists on the key words. On a separate sheet of paper, record anything you observe that answers a who, what, when, why or how question (5W's and an H.) You should already have one list where you are recording everything Scripture reveals to you about the ***abiding***, one about ***sin***, one about ***love*** and one for ***know***. Your list on the word ***know*** should be divided into two columns, **What I Can Know** and **How I Can Know It**. While you are adding to your lists, and if you have been using the *Engage* regularly, you may want to mark and add what you observe regarding the *world* to the list you began two weeks ago!

Day 3 (1 John 3:1-10)

Pray before you begin! Yesterday you saw that the first ten verses of 1 John 3 talk primarily about sin and the last fourteen verses talk primarily about love. You also observed verse ten as a type of bridge between the two main subjects. Verse ten also clearly identifies two groups, and only two. What are the two groups and what are we told about them in this verse?

The word translated in the NAS “*obvious*” [*known* in the NIV] is the Greek adjective *phaneros* and can be defined as apparent, manifest, evident, known, to be plainly recognized or known. It describes something that is an external manifestation to the senses.

Go back through the first ten verses of 1 John 3. List everything you observe regarding the children of God or the children of the devil. Remember you are either one or the other, according to 1 John 3:10.

Children of God

Children of the devil

Summarize what you observed regarding sin and the children of God or the children of the devil?

Did you notice the first phrase of verse seven, “Little children, let no one deceive you”? Last week we clearly saw in 1 John 2:26 there are those who would like to deceive you in regard to who Jesus is and what part He plays in our knowing we have eternal life (1 John 5:13.)

What other area are we in danger of being deceived regarding that you have seen thus far from your study in 1 John 3?

We have seen from our previous weeks of study in 1 John that sin is present in the life of everyone, but that God has one remedy for sin, and it is the only option that He offers...the very blood of Jesus Christ. God's righteous and pure Son offers Himself on our behalf. His sacrifice cleanses us, provides forgiveness and allows us to enter into fellowship with Him and each other. We also have seen that God gives to us the Holy Spirit to abide in us, to teach us, and to be greater in us than he who is in the world. This is the manifestation of God's love spoken about in 1 John 3:1 – we are children of God!

So what about sin in the life of a child of God? Is John contradicting himself when he says in 1 John 2:1 "And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;" and then in 1 John 3:6 he says "No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him."

Tomorrow we will look closer at this seeming dilemma. Close your time today in prayer to a Father Who loves you, who calls you His child, and Who desires that you would know Him and abide in Him.

Day 4 (1 John 3:1-10)

Read or recite your memory verse. Begin your time today thanking God for the *great* love He has *lavished* on you! Look closely at 1 John 3:5 and 8. Record what you observe about the purposes presented here for Jesus' appearance.

What does verse two tell you about the next time He appears?

Verse three addresses "everyone who has this hope fixed on Jesus." Within the context of 1 John 3, how would you explain this phrase to another person?

According to verse 3, what should we be doing now? Why?

Engaging the Greek

The word *purify* is in the active voice, meaning the subject produces the action, and the present tense, indicating continuous action. The Greek word is *hagnizo* and means to cleanse, dedicate or consecrate morally.

Read the verses printed out below from the New American Standard Version, and note the word practice(s) appears six times in these 10 verses. A clear contrast is presented: practice sin (or lawlessness), or practice righteousness

- 4 *Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.*
- 7 *Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous;*
- 8 *the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.*
- 9 *No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*
- 10 *By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.*

An understanding of the Greek will give greater clarity to interpretation and application of this passage, so read the box below and then take that information back to the text. Briefly describe what you understand these verses to be telling you in regard to the children of God and the children of the devil and practicing sin or righteousness.

Engaging the Greek

Practice(s): In 1 John 3, the Greek verb *poieo* is translated a number of different ways in the NIV, but consistently translated in the NAS with the word **practice(s)**. The definition of the Greek word is pretty simple; it basically means to do. The key comes in the tense and voice of the verb. In each instance the voice of the verb is active, meaning that the subject produces the action; you and I are responsible for the “doing.” Also in each use, the tense is present, meaning that the doing is continuous and ongoing. It is a pattern of your life.

Sin: The Greek word translated *sin* in this passage means to miss the mark; to miss or wander from the path of uprightness and honor; to do or go wrong; to wander from the law of God or violate God’s law. In our passage this week, the noun *sin* appears six times, and the verb form appears four times. Each occurrence of the verb form is in the present tense, indicating continuous and ongoing action. It is a pattern or lifestyle as opposed to occasional occurrences.

Righteousness: *dikaiosune* in the Greek can be defined as integrity, virtue, purity of life, rightness, correctness of thinking feeling, and acting. It involves conformity to the claims of higher authority and stands in opposition to *anomia*, lawlessness. The righteousness of God is the claim which God has upon man. In order for man to recognize and fully submit to that claim of God upon his life, he must receive God as He offers Himself and His righteousness to him as a gift (Rom. 5:17). Man can only accept the claims of God upon his life as he repents of his sin and receives Christ as His Savior by faith. He thus becomes a child of God, realizing God’s claims upon him by the miraculous regenerating action of the Holy Spirit (John 1:12; Rom. 4:11–13; 5:21; 6:16; 8:10; 9:30; 10:6; 2 Cor. 6:7, 14; Eph. 4:24; 6:14; 2 Pet. 1:1).¹

So what keeps a believer from practicing sin? Is it we are just automatically better people, more holy, more disciplined?

According to verse nine why do believers not practice sin?

Look again at two passages from our study last week, 1 John 4:4 and 1 John 2:16. Write what you think they have to do with 1 John 3:9.

Look up two more Old Testament passages. Record what they show you about God’s provision for His children in regard to sin.

Jeremiah 31:33

Ezekiel 36:26-27

¹Zodhiates, S. (2000, c1992, c1993). *The complete word study dictionary : New Testament* (electronic ed.) (G1343). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

Day 5 (1 John 3:1-10)

The Core Competency we will reflect on this week is our belief regarding the **Identity in Christ**. Our creed says, “I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.”

John 1:12, 13 *“Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.”*

The four statements listed below are ones that you can use to assess your own personal Christian experience.

1. I believe that God loves me and therefore my life has value.
2. I exist to know, love, and serve God.
3. I believe God loves me, even when I do not obey Him.
4. I believe I am forgiven and accepted by God.

Spiritually speaking, Scripture tells us that we are to look like our Father. You take on the characteristics of the one you belong to. Read the quotes below.² Reflect on everything your Father has shown you this week. Allow His Holy Spirit to teach and empower you to walk in love and obedience.

New Birth

The new birth or regeneration is an inner recreating of fallen human nature by the Holy Spirit. It changes the disposition from lawless, godless self-seeking into one of trust and love, of repentance for past rebelliousness and unbelief, and loving compliance with God’s law henceforth. It enlightens the blinded mind to discern spiritual realities and liberates and energizes the enslaved will for free obedience to God.

The use of the figure of new birth to describe this change emphasizes two facts about it. The first is its decisiveness. The regenerate man has forever ceased to be the man he was; his old life is over and a new life has begun; he is a new creature in Christ, buried with Him out of reach of condemnation and raised with Him into a new life of righteousness.

The second fact emphasized is that regeneration is due to the free, and to us, mysterious, exercise of divine power. Infants do not induce or cooperate in their own procreation and birth; no more can those who are dead in trespasses and sins prompt the quickening operation of God’s Spirit within them.

Your Father Loves You by James Packer, Harold Shaw Publishers, 1986, January 22

New Life in Christ

If I had a car with the engine that was ready for the grave, I’d have a new engine put in. I’d take the car into a mechanic who would put it in for me. If when I got that car back, it ran just as poorly, I’d begin to wonder if the old really had been replaced or just cleaned up. It is not different with our new lives in Christ.

Christian Personal Ethics, C.F.H. Henry, Eerdmans, 1957, pp. 383ff

By God Alone

Rebirth or regeneration is monergistic, not synergistic. It is done by God and by God alone. A dead man cannot cooperate with his resurrection. Lazarus did not cooperate in his resurrection. Regeneration is a sovereign act of God in which man plays no role. After God brings us to life, of course, we certainly are involved in “cooperating” with Him. We are to believe, trust, obey, and work for Him. But unless God acts first, we will never be reborn in the first place. We must also realize it is not as if dead people have faith, and because of their faith God agrees to regenerate them. Rather, it is because God has regenerated us and given us new life that we have faith.

R. C. Sproul, *Tabletalk*, 1989

Rose and Brier

Once there was a brier growing in a ditch and there came along a gardener with his spade. As he dug around it and lifted it up the brier said to itself, “What is he doing? Doesn’t he know I am a worthless brier?” But the gardener took it into his garden and planted it amid his flowers, while the brier said, “What a mistake he has made planting me among these beautiful roses.” Then the gardener came once more and made a slit in the brier with his sharp knife. He grafted it with a rose and when summer came lovely roses were blooming on that old brier. Then the gardener said, “Your beauty is not due to what came out but to what I put in.”

Source unknown

²Galaxie Software. (2002; 2002). *10,000 Sermon Illustrations*. Biblical Studies Press.