

## Text— 1 John 3:1-8

Fellow redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

The first epistle of John from which our text is taken is addressed to Christians, John's "brethren" in the faith of Jesus Christ. (1 John 2:7) Throughout the entire epistle, John emphasizes the need for Christians to live a sanctified life by being fruitful in the faith of Jesus Christ, showing love to the Lord and love toward one another— walking the walk and not merely talking the talk.

Fellow Christians, we must never forget that Ephesians 2:8-10 informs us, "by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Yes, God has graciously gifted us with faith in our Savior, and we are to bring forth the God-ordained fruits of faith— good works, works done in full accord with God's Word.

Our Scripture selection urges and encourages us Christians to strive to live a holy life as it reveals:

### "THE CORRECT ATTITUDE AND ACTIONS FOR GOD'S CHILDREN"

With that as our theme, may we, in view of our text and with the help of the Holy Ghost, see—

- 1) What the correct mental attitude for God's children is
- 2) What the correct actions for God's children are

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Verse 1, ----- (1 John 3:1)

The correct mental attitude for God's children rests on realizing how amazingly loving God has been to us in making us His adopted sons, for our text opens by saying: *Behold, what manner of love*

*the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.*

Think about it. Fellow Christians, God loves us so much that WE are now "sons of God" since we are God's adopted children, for Galatians 3:26-28 informs us, "ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Indeed, we Christians are "sons of God" because God has graciously gifted us with faith in His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, for Galatians 4:4-6 relates, "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Thus, we are truly God's sons – sons with a lower case "s" – because of the redemptive work of God's only begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Accordingly, the correct mental attitude for God's children surely rests on realizing how amazingly loving God has been to us in making us His adopted sons.

My friends, we are all sinners who in honesty must confess as did David in Psalm 51:5, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Consequently, we deserve temporal and eternal death and damnation from God, for Romans 6:23 declares, "the wages of sin is death; but" – and thank and praise our loving God for that "but" – "the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." It's as we read in John 3:16 & 36, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." 1 Corinthians 12:3 adds, "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth

Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." Hence, we again see that we who are Christians are Christians because God loving called us to be His adopted sons. Accordingly, as I said earlier, the correct mental attitude for God's children surely rests on realizing how amazingly loving God has been to us in making us His adopted sons.

The correct mental attitude for God's children also includes being aware of the fact that *the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not*. Indeed, we Christians are NOT to expect friendship from the unbelieving world. Rather, at the very least we should expect snide remarks and finger-pointing from the world because we don't go-along with all their sinful practices – such as drunkenness, gambling, and fornicating – for Jesus plainly says to His followers in John 15:18-21, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me."

Verse 2, ----- (1 John 3:2)

Here we see the correct mental attitude for God's children includes knowing and being convinced of the wonderful future which awaits us according to body as well as soul, for we just read: *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

Fellow Christians, the day is coming when our bodies will be perfected and glorified. We will not spend eternity as bodiless spirits floating around in the clouds strumming on harps. No, a wonderful future awaits us according to soul and body, for

Holy Writ clearly relates, "as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." (1 Corinthians 15:49, 53-54; Philippians 3:20-21)

My friends, Jesus Christ our Lord is visibly coming back to earth but once more, and when He comes He will judge the world, for it is written, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (Revelation 1:7; John 5:28-29) Therefore, let us who are God's children have the correct mental attitude by always keeping in mind the coming Judgment Day and the wonderful future awaiting us as God's adopted sons, "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." (1 Corinthians 13:12).

Verse 3, ----- (1 John 3:3)

Fellow Christians, we have the hope of eternal life according to soul and body. Hence, the correct mental attitude for us as God's children also includes knowing that *every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure*. Yes, purity of life is what we are to strive for as adopted sons of God, lest we bring shame on our dear Savior's name. It's as the Apostle Paul bids us in 2 Corinthians 7:1, saying, "Having therefore

these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” Thus, our mental attitude as God’s children definitely includes endeavoring to lead a sanctified life, living in a holy manner rather than indulging in sin to the max.

It’s as Ephesians 5:1-11 instructs, “Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”

Therefore, let us have the correct mental attitude as God’s children by remembering God’s amazing love toward us in calling us sons of God, and by bearing in mind the wonderful future in glory that awaits us according to soul and body, and by knowing we are to strive to live purely, being fruitful in our God-given faith in Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.

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As we ponder our text to its conclusion, let us see what the correct actions for God’s children are.

Verses 4-6, ----- (1 John 3:4-6)

The correct mental attitude for God’s children MUST be followed by the correct actions since the proper walk must accompany the proper talk. Purity of life, holy living, sanctification of life, is a matter of doing and not merely knowing, because our text says: *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.*

Let’s first consider the fact that *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.* Those words inspired by God are plain and clear. SIN is rightly defined as the TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW. Accordingly, we are NOT to disobey God’s Law in thoughts, words, or deeds, for we read in James 2:10, “whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”

We Christians also know that Jesus Christ *was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.* Yes, God’s only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, took upon Himself a real human nature in the womb of the Virgin Mary and was made man. Thus, Jesus is true God and true man but one Christ, the only Savior. Jesus our Savior had to be true man in order that He might take our place under the Law, and that He might be able to suffer and die for us. Jesus our Savior had to be true God in order that His perfect fulfilling of the Law might be sufficient for all people, and that His death and the shedding of His holy blood might be sufficient ransom for the entire world, and that He would be able to overcome death and the devil for us. Thus, Isaiah 53:4-6 reports, “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

Fellow Christians, Jesus has freed us from sin, not to sin; in other words, Jesus' redemptive work was not done so that we should now go on sinning. Rather, we are to fight against all temptations to sin since verse 6 of our text says: *Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.*

Now, it's true that we Christians still FALL into sin; but, we Christians are NOT to DELIBERATELY and WILFULLY sin! It's as we read in 1 John 1:6-10, "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

According to our new man we Christians do not sin; but, according to our old Adam, our sinful flesh, we do sin. It's as the Apostle Paul writes in Romans 7:14-25, "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I

myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." Thus, all true Christians have a constant battle going on between their sinful flesh and their renewed mind— their new man.

Fellow Christians, let us continue to fight against the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh, for such are correct actions for God's children.

Verses 7 & 8, -----. (1 John 3:7-8)

Fellow Christians, we are little children in the faith since we have not attained to perfection in warring against the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh. Consequently, our text closes by saying: *Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*

The correct actions for God's children include being on guard against deceivers who would lead us away from God's truth and say that it's O.K. to go on deliberately sinning and pleasing the flesh. I recently heard a T.V. preacher telling a woman that had written to him that it's O.K. that she was living with a man and having sex outside the bonds of holy wedlock since Jesus was still her friend and forgives her. The preacher did not tell the woman to repent, even though Hebrews 13:4 plainly states, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." My friends, deliberate and wilful sinning must be sincerely repented of and sinful behavior must be amended. Don't listen to false prophets!

Jesus says, in Matthew 7:15-20, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring

forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." We are also warned in 1 John 4:1, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." And, Colossians 2:8-9 declares, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Therefore, I repeat, the correct actions for God's children include being on guard against deceivers who would lead us away from God's truth and say that it's O.K. to go on sinning and pleasing the flesh. We must follow Jesus, not deceivers!

Fellow Christians, let us always act aright by keeping in mind at all times that *For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.* Yes, Jesus Christ came to earth to save us sinners, and that is exactly what He did, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Hebrews 2:14-15) Jesus Christ is our conquering King, and 1 John 4:19 relates, "We love him, because he first loved us." Let us therefore strive to show our love for our Savior by reflecting in our lives the fact that we know the correct attitude and actions for God's children.

Let us daily and sincerely repent of our sins; let us keep our full trust and confidence in Christ Jesus as our personal Savior and Lord; and, let us go forward striving to live in full accord with God's Word, showing we love Him, for He has been and still is so very loving to us. Amen.

m.e.l.