

# WORSHIP GUIDE



## FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

*Being God's Children*  
1 John 2:28—3:10

**Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.**

## **Leaders' Responsibilities:**

**Important:** Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #....). The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

## **Prior to this Coming Session:**

**Gathering Time Leader:**

**Bible Study Leader:**

**Worship Time Leader:**

## **Music Sources:**

**Behold What Manner of Love**, CCLI #1596

**The Love of God**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 111; CCLI # 18448 Public Domain

**Think About His Love**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 102; CCLI # 16299

**How Deep the Father's Love for Us**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 101; CCLI # 1558110

**They'll Know We are Christians**, *The Worship Hymnal* #385; CCLI # 26997

**I Love You with the Love of the Lord**, *The Worship Hymnal* #395; CCLI # 10130

**I Could Sing of Your Love Forever**, *The Worship Hymnal* #116; CCLI # 1043199

**Gathering Time:** (Suggested time: 15 minutes)***Being God's Children*****Focal Text**

1 John 2:28—3:10

**Background**

1 John 2:28—3:10

**Main Idea**

As God's children, Christians have both the privilege of relationship and the obligations of obedience, with obedience giving evidence to the reality of the relationship with God.

**Question to Explore**

What does being "children of God" mean?

**Teaching Aim**

To lead the church to describe what being children of God means.

**Gathering together:**

Sing one or more of the following:

**Behold What Manner of Love**, CCLI #1596

**The Love of God**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 111; CCLI # 18448 Public Domain

**Think About His Love**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 102; CCLI # 16299

**First thoughts:**

The concept of children of God is one very often used in language of literature, religious thought and even in every day conversation. It is a common idea in those cultures influenced by Christianity. But it is by the gift of God that a man becomes a child of God. By nature man is the creature of God, because God is his Creator, but it is by grace that man becomes the child of God (Barclay, Wm. **The Daily Study Bible, The Letters of John**. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960, page 87).

We will focus today on answering the question “What does being ‘children of God’ mean?” It is far more than just a comforting thought and it has implication for the way we live our lives and for the future we will experience in eternity.

### **Closing the Gathering Time:**

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won’t need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

**Note to the Bible Study Leader:** Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

## **Teacher Preparation**

### ***Being God’s Children***

#### **Focal Text**

1 John 2:28—3:10

#### **Background**

1 John 2:28—3:10

#### **Main Idea**

As God's children, Christians have both the privilege of relationship and the obligations of obedience, with obedience giving evidence to the reality of the relationship with God.

#### **Question to Explore**

What does being "children of God" mean?

#### **Teaching Aim**

To lead the church to describe what being children of God means.

### **Introduction to your personal study:**

These passages in John are incredibly deep. There is a sense in which he repeats the same idea again and again. That is because what he is saying is so very important. What does it mean to you to be a child of God? Think devotionally on this idea throughout the week as you prepare to teach the lesson.

### **Background:**

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Introduction**” article found at the beginning of this series (Bible Teaching #....) of Bible Study and Worship sessions. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

Barclay entitles this section is his commentary “Remember the Privileges of the Christian Life” (page 85). The Broadman Bible Commentary calls it “The Meaning of

Sonship – the Glory of Sonship” (**The Broadman Bible Commentary: Hebrews, Revelation, General Articles**. Volume 12, Nashville: Broadman Press, 1972, page 207).

The glory of sonship involves privileges and responsibilities. Some parents say to their children as they go to school or to social activities or off to university “Son or daughter, remember who you are” implying that their actions will bring honour or censure to the family of which they are a part. How much more our position as children of God requires that we remember to whom we belong.

## **Focusing on the Meaning:**

### **1 John 2: 28-29**

John addresses his readers as “dear children”. He is writing from a heart of love and concern. He writes “remain in him” or “continue in him”. Although not all scholars agree that John is the author of this letter, this emphasis seems so consistent with John 15 which speaks of “remaining in the vine” that it is hard to imagine that he is not the author.

Remain or continue so that when he appears we will be comfortable in his presence. When death comes or Christ returns, we will not be in the presence of a stranger, but in the wonderful presence of a dear friend. The author remembers being at the hospital bed of a godly man who had lived through the persecution of religious people during the Mexican revolution of 1910. He lived many years after that faithfully serving God in difficult circumstances with few financial resources. That day, as he was dying, he had his arms lifted toward heaven and a wonderful joy was on his face. Occasionally he would say, “Do you see? Oh, do you see?” Those in the room could not see what he was seeing, but there was no doubt that his vision was of a welcoming Saviour. He had continued faithful for many years and his homecoming was a glorious experience for him.

Rebecca Ruter Springer wrote many years ago, “If only we could realize while we are yet mortals, that *day by day we are building for eternity*, how different our lives in many ways would be. Every gentle word, every generous thought, every unselfish deed, will become a pillar of eternal beauty in the life to come. We cannot be selfish and unloving in one life, and generous and loving in the next; the two lives are too closely blended – one but a continuation of the other” (Springer, Rebecca Ruter, **Intra Muros**, Elgin, Illinois: David C. Cook, 285h printing, 1954; Reprinted as **My Dream of Heaven**, Tulsa, Oklahoma: Harrison House, 2002).

“In verse 29, John comes back again to a thought which is never far from his mind. The only way in which a man can prove that he is abiding in Christ, the only way in which he can prove he really has had a new birth is by the righteousness of his life. The

profession of a man's lips will always be proved or disproved by the practice of his life" (Barclay, page 85).

"God is righteous, meaning that He not only opposed what is evil but is the source of what is right. He actively seeks to make His people righteous. Righteous lives show God at work (Compare 3:10). God is the standard of righteousness. Disciples are His born again children who imitate His actions by doing right See 3:7" (**Disciple's Study Bible**, Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 1988, page 1617).

### **1 John 3: 1-2**

As indicated previously, Barclay entitled 1 John 3: 1-2 "Remember the Privileges of the Christian Life" (page 85). It is a privilege to be called *children of God*. "But as John points out, we are not merely called the children of God; we *are* the children of God. Not only the name is ours; the reality is also ours." "It is by the gift of God that a man becomes a child of God. By nature man is the creature of God, because God is his Creator, but it is by grace that man *becomes* the child of God" (page 87).

The familiar praise worship song captures the meaning of verse 1.

Behold what manner of love  
The Father has given unto us  
Behold what manner of love  
The Father has given unto us  
That we should be called  
The sons of God  
That we should be called  
The sons of God

CCLI song # 1596. Patricia Van Tine, © 1978 Maranatha! Music (Admin. by Maranatha! Music)

We, in fact, cannot read the words of verse 1 without wanting to sing them. What an amazing love that God himself would call us his children.

We can contrast John's teachings with the vague ideas of being God's children associated with New Age and other popular views which emphasize 'the God within you'. Such views tend to imply a relationship to God that roots in oneself and carries no obligations. But as God's children we must know that we will not be readily accepted by those who have not chosen to accept his love and thus become his children. There are expectations for being the children of God. We can understand that somewhat as we think of the human family where parents expect certain ways of being from their children. We will not "fit in" with popular culture although we will try to understand it and relate to those who are a part of it in order to love them and share the gospel with them. The Christian believer is always "in the world, but not of the world".

Be aware in interpreting 3:2 that competent Greek New Testament scholars differ on whether "he" and "him" refer to God or to Christ. Many believe that it refers to God since it is in the context of being called "children of God".



## **1 John 3: 3-10**

However, the consensus of scholarship is that "he" (*ekeinos*) in 3:3,5,7 refers to Jesus.

***Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure (verse 3), But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin (verse 5). Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous (verse 7).***

Verse 4 declares that sin is lawlessness. "One definition for sin in both the Old and New Testaments is lawlessness. Though sin is more than just breaking the law, that certainly is a part of it. Law may refer to Old Testament commandments, or to New Testament moral teachings of Jesus. It represents a willing rejection of God's right to direct our lives. Sin is following the law of human and satanic desire rather than following Christ in the way of God" (*Disciple's Study Bible*, page 1619).

Verse 6 **No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues in sin has either seen him or known him** and verse 9 **No one who is born of God will continue to sin** speak to the same concept. No true believer continues in sin. In Chapter 2, John says **But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense (verse 1).**

Believers do sin, of course. Jesus taught in the Lord's Prayer to ask for forgiveness for sin and indicated that it was a regular need – most likely a daily need. Yet John introduces the idea here of a continuous, deliberate choice to sin which is simply not possible for the child of God.

Verse 5 states **But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him there is no sin.** "In the statement **And in him there is no sin** John projects the sinlessness of Jesus as essential to man's victory over sin. He who identifies with Jesus, who participates in his life, shares in his sinlessness. **No one who abides in him sins.** The verb for sins is in the present tense, expressing durative or continuous action. The meaning is that the individual who abides in Christ does not go on sinning" (*The Broadman Bible Commentary*, page 209). Note the succinct statements in 3:5 and 3:8 of why Jesus came – to take away the sins of the world.

Verse 8 speaks clearly that he who sins is of the devil who has been sinning since the beginning. "In this manner he is identified as the primordial being who is the author of all sin and who never ceases to sin. His name is diabolos (Greek) which means slanderer or accuser. His Old Testament name is Satan (Hebrew) adversary. He appears under both names in the New Testament, under both names he is the great adversary of Christ who tried in the temptations to destroy the work of the Messiah at its beginning- see Matthew 4: 1-10 (*The Broadman Bible Commentary*, page 209).

This is in clear contrast to the one who belongs to God in whom God's seed remains. "God has armed his children for their warfare against Satan by implanting his own

nature in them, even as an earthly father engenders in his children his characteristics by implanting his sperm in the ovum of the mother” (**Broadman**, page 209).

Verse 10 summarizes the discussion. We know who belongs to the devil and who belongs to Christ by what they do. John returns to the theme of loving one’s brother - ***Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God, nor is anyone who does not love his brother.***

### **Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:**

Lead participants to understand the amazing reality of what it means to be children of God and what that implies for righteous behaviour.

### **For Personal Reflection:**

**What have I learned from this study?**

**What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?**

**What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?**

## **Bible Study Plan** (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

### ***Being God's Children***

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

**Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.**

#### **Focal Text**

1 John 2:28—3:10

#### **Background**

1 John 2:28—3:10

#### **Main Idea**

As God's children, Christians have both the privilege of relationship and the obligations of obedience, with obedience giving evidence to the reality of the relationship with God.

#### **Question to Explore**

What does being "children of God" mean?

#### **Teaching Aim**

To lead the church to describe what being children of God means.

### **Connect with Life:**

Begin by sharing this illustration: A parent repeats the same teaching over and over again. A teacher uses repetition as a powerful learning tool. Advertising repeats the message many times until the radio listener, TV watcher or billboard observer has literally incorporated the message into his or her thinking processes. John repeats his message again and again in the book of 1 John. However, the message in 1 John 3 is focused on believers being children of God. This concept may have trivialized in Christian life; let us recapture the amazing reality of what it means to be a child of God.

### **Guide the Study:**

Have someone read 1 John 2: 28-29.

State: These verses transition into the discussion which will follow in Chapter 3. John addresses his readers as “dear children”. John is writing from a heart of love.

Ask: What do you understand by the words “remain in him” or “continue in him”? Have someone read John 15: 4.

Say: We remain in him by our commitment, but we also remain because we are a part of the vine – Christ himself.

Use the Teacher Preparation material to speak to the issue of remaining faithful with the promise of eternal life not as a radically different existence, but as a continuation of a close relationship already existing on earth.

Share the statement by Rebecca Ruter Springer. “If only we could realize while we are yet mortals, that *day by day we are building for eternity*, how different our lives in many ways would be. Every gentle word, every generous thought, every unselfish deed, will become a pillar of eternal beauty in the life to come. We cannot be selfish and unloving in one life, and generous and loving in the next; the two lives are too closely blended – one but a continuation of the other”(Springer, Rebecca Ruter, **Intra Muros**, Elgin, Illinois: David C. Cook, 285h printing, 1954; Reprinted as **My Dream of Heaven**, Tulsa, Oklahoma: Harrison House, 2002).

Reread verse 29 and ask: What is evidence of our remaining in him? (The righteousness of one’s life).

Have someone read 1 John 3: 1-2.

Say: One commentator says that this passage encourages us to remember the privileges of the Christian life.

Ask: What is the privilege to which he refers here? (We are called children of God).

Consider: Are we just called the children of God or are we the children of God?

Explain that by nature all men are *creatures* of God because God is the creator. By God’s gift of grace, believers are *children* of God.

Emphasize: We are children of God because of God’s love. Read 3:1 from different translations of the Bible.

Ask: As children of God, can we expect to be well received in the world? (No, the world did not know God or Jesus and it will not know (honour) us as children of God.)

Consider: If that is true, what should be our attitude? (Love, as he loved.)

Have someone read 1 John 3: 3-10.

Ask: What is lawlessness? Sin (Discuss sin from the background materials – a willing rejection of God's right to direct our lives.

Reread verses 6 and 9.

Question the group: Will the true believer continue in sin? (No).

Have someone reread Chapter 2:1.

Ask: Do believers sin? (Yes).

Consider: Are these two ideas in conflict? No, the believer will sin, but will not continue in sin. When a true believer sins, there is repentance and Jesus Christ – the Righteous One speaks to the Father on his/her behalf.

Have someone read Chapter 3: 3, 5 and 7.

Explain: In these verses he (ekeinon in Greek) refers to Jesus. Ask someone to read the verses putting the name of Jesus in the appropriate places.

***Everyone who has this hope in Jesus purifies himself, just as Jesus is pure (verse 3).***

***But you know that Jesus appeared so that Jesus might take away our sins. And in Jesus is no sin (verse 5).***

***Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as Jesus is righteous (verse 7).***

Have someone read verses 3:5 and 3:8.

Ask: Why did Jesus come into the world? (to take away the sins of the world).

Continue: From verse 8 do we know how long the devil has been sinning? (since the beginning).

Discuss from the preparation materials: His name is diabolos (Greek) which means slanderer or accuser. His Old Testament name is Satan (Hebrew) adversary. He appears under both names in the New Testament, under both names he is the great adversary of Christ who tried in the temptations to destroy the work of the Messiah at its beginning.

Seek an answer: How do we know who belongs to the devil and who belongs to Christ? (See verse 10).

## Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Search for a brief discussion: What does it mean to know that we are children of God?

Now see what the group offers for this important question: What does this imply for the way we live?

Conclude by asking someone to pray for God's power to live without sinning.

**Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time.** Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

# Youth!!! Take Ten

## Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

### ***Being God's Children*** **1 John 2:28—3:10**

**A youth will lead the following activity and comments.** No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

#### **Whose Child Am I?**

Today's lesson emphasizes that all believers are children of God. Discuss the idea that there is a difference between being God's creation and being a child of God.

From the teacher preparation materials:

Barclay entitled 1 John 3: 1-2 "Remember the Privileges of the Christian Life" (page 85). It is a privilege to be called *children of God*. "But as John points out, we are not merely called the children of God; we *are* the children of God. Not only the name is ours; the reality is also ours." "It is by the gift of God that a man becomes a child of God. By nature man is the creature of God, because God is his Creator, but it is by grace that man *becomes* the child of God" (page 87).

**Worship Time** (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Being God's Children*****1 John 2:28—3:10****Beginning the Service:**

Sing two or more of the following:

**How Deep the Father's Love for Us**, *The Worship Hymnal* #101; CCLI # 1558110

**They'll Know We are Christians**, *The Worship Hymnal* #385; CCLI # 26997

**I Love You with the Love of the Lord**, *The Worship Hymnal* #395; CCLI # 10130

**I Could Sing of Your Love Forever**, *The Worship Hymnal* #116; CCLI # 1043199

**Offering:****Praying for the World:**

In Mombasa, Kenya teeming masses crowd the ferry to cross from one part of Mombasa to the other side. The call to prayer rings out, as colorfully clad pedestrians stream off the ferry to work, to study or to shop. The city of Mombasa is alive with sights and smells. The Indian Ocean breezes and fresh fish for sale are highlights of many who live here. Yet darkness is here as well; traditional sacrifices to ancestral spirits, blended with witchcraft, are a part of everyday life. Still, some are seeking truth – students from Somalia, fishermen from the islands and tribesmen from the hills.

**Sharing Guide:**

**This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.**



## Pursue

Dictionary definitions of the word “pursue” include to continue or proceed along a course of action; to follow or engage in something such as a course of study. It can also mean to seek the acquaintance or attention of a person. It means to persistently attend or stick to something. These concepts are included in the idea of seeking after or aiming for. We will think together about seeking the kingdom and God’s righteousness.

***But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Matthew 6: 33-34***

In earlier verses Jesus had talked about money, food, one’s body, clothes –

***So do not worry, saying, “What shall we eat?” or “What shall we drink?” or “What shall we wear?” For the pagans run after these things, and your heavenly Father knows you need them. Matthew 6:31***

Other New Testament passages continue this theme.

***Since then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. Colossians 3: 1-3***

***Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Matthew 5:48***

Seek, set our hearts, set our minds, be perfect – **pursue**. What then shall we pursue?

**Pursue prayer** – For whom are you uniquely responsible to pray? For each one of us there are those that are our responsibility – some, in fact, for whom we may be the only one who prays.

Who is on your list?

- Young children
- Older children and their spouses
- Grandchildren which may include babies, toddlers, young and older children, teens, young adult grandchildren with learning needs, relationship needs, spiritual growth needs, safety needs
- Extended family
- Families who have adopted your family through the years
- Children of friends
- Children of the church

- Co-workers
- The lost
- Those sharing the gospel in dangerous places

## **Pursue thankfulness**

We make many choices in our lives and a very important choice we can make is to have a thankful heart. Children growing up can be given one of the most important gifts – a thankful heart. A young mother wrote these words for an article “My parents always stress how rich we are as a family. They do not mean in a monetary sense, although in comparison to many of the people they worked with on the mission field that may have been true; but God blesses us in ways that we cannot begin to calculate.” She then listed those riches: the love we have for one another; the joy we have in shared ministry; being rich in the knowledge of the power of prayer; and being rich in unique perspectives on life.

A thankful heart frees us to enjoy those things we already have – our home, our family, the beauty of our world, our friends, good books, fellowship with other Christians - too many things to list. Yet we often want more and that is what causes the worry about which Jesus warned us.

## **Pursue Godliness**

***But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Matthew 6:33***

Seeking the kingdom involves seeking righteousness: that is, to live a righteous life. We aren't sure what a godly person looks like. And we are not really sure that we want to look like the mental picture we have. But, why ever would we imagine that the godly person would be drab, uninteresting and critical? Godly people are often beautiful, kind, fun, interesting, always looking for ways to serve, interested in other people – just the kind of person we want to be.

One of the themes of 1 John is seeking obedience to God's commands or righteous living. Here are some of the amazing quotes we have read in our study.

***God is light; in him is no darkness at all. 1:5***

***We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. 2:3***

***But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did. 2:5-6***

***Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. 2:9***

***If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. 3:17-18***

When we pursue righteousness we remember the qualities of the fruit of the Spirit:

***But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Galatians 6: 22-23***

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control – pursue these.

### **Call to Commitment:**

Pursue prayer, pursue thankfulness, pursue godliness.

***But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Matthew 6: 33-34***

***Since then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. Colossians 3: 1-3***

***Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Matthew 5:48***

### **Concluding the Service:**

Close with this benediction on the church:

***Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from[a] faith—to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen. (Romans 16:25-27)***