

Love  
PERFECTED

WEEK 4  
YOUR FAMILY IDENTITY IN CHRIST

1 John 2:28-3:10

Identifying Characteristic #1: Children of God \_\_\_\_\_ (2:28-29)

Identifying Characteristic #2: Children of God \_\_\_\_\_ (3:1-3)

Identifying Characteristic #3: Children of God \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (3:4-9)

Identifying Characteristic #4: Children of God show \_\_\_\_\_ of their \_\_\_\_\_ (3:10)

## DAY 1

**Pray:** Hebrews 3:8 says, “Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts...” Pray that the Lord will speak to you today through His Word. And pray for a soft heart that is willing to respond to Him.

**Memorize:** This week we will be memorizing 1 John 3:16. Read it below:

By this we know love, that He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers

Now write out the first phrase:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Study:** Please read 1 John 3:11-24. Today we will focus on verses 11-12.

1. From the beginning, God’s message to His people has been to love one another. Take a look at where love is first explicitly commanded. Read Leviticus 19:18. How is it worded?
  - a. You shall \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Why is it important that God included “as yourself” to this command rather than just leaving it “love your neighbor”? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. We will return to that idea of loving one’s neighbor; but for now, let’s dig in to the story of Cain, who is mentioned in verse 12. Read Genesis 4:1-8. After you read the story consider:
  - a. Whose deeds were evil? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Whose deeds were righteous? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What are some of the differences you notice between Cain’s offering and Abel’s offering? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. We know that the fact that Cain offered some type of plant and Abel offered some type of animal sacrifice was not of primary importance to God. Later in scripture, God asks for sheaf offerings and lamb offerings; grain, food, and drink offerings; bull, ram, and goat offerings (all noted in Leviticus 23). Read Leviticus 23:10. How does God specifically describe the sheaf that is to be offered?

“bring the sheaf of the \_\_\_\_\_ of your harvest...”

5. Based on how Cain and Abel’s offerings are described in Genesis 4:3-4 compared to what is commanded in Leviticus 23:10, why did God have no regard for Cain and his offering? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Cain’s offering was an outward expression of what was going on in his heart. Read Psalm 51:16-17. Then look back at Cain’s attitude described in Genesis 4:5. What was in Cain’s heart? \_\_\_\_\_  
When you compare Cain’s heart with what is described as pleasing to God in Psalm 51, again, why did God have no regard for Cain and his offering? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. God responds to Cain in Genesis 4:6-7 with the gentlest call to repent. God offers him full acceptance. Cain, however, remains hardened toward the Lord and murders his brother Abel. As hard as it might be to grasp, in Matthew 5:21-22, Jesus calls our anger toward one another just as serious as murder. Where is there an ongoing rift in a relationship for you? Have you taken time to deeply study your own heart?
  - a. Are you doing something wrong in the relationship? What attitudes or deeds do you recognize in yourself today as evil? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - b. You are probably also doing something right! What attitudes in your heart do you recognize today as righteous? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - c. In what ways might you need to confess you’ve hardened your heart? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Would the other person describe you as walking out a broken and contrite (showing remorse for sin or shortcoming) spirit? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - e. How specifically are you loving the other person as yourself? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Praise God for speaking through His Word. Thank Him that He offers you full acceptance. Pray for a softness to respond throughout today.

## DAY 2

**Pray:** Psalm 14:1 says, “The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’” Pray today for a fresh encounter with the real, eternal, loving God who has the fullness of life to offer you.

**Memorize:** Fill in the first phrase from our memory verse this week:

By \_\_\_\_\_ we \_\_\_\_\_

Now look back at 1 John 3:16 and write out the second phrase:

\_\_\_\_\_

Say the two phrases together several times. Ask God to hide His truth deeply within you.

**Study:** Please read 1 John 3:11-15 with special focus on verses 13-15.

1. Yesterday we saw that God’s people are going to face opposition. We studied the story of Abel, who met life-altering opposition in his brother Cain. In our passage today, what does verse 13 say should not surprise us? \_\_\_\_\_
2. While hatred characterizes the unrighteous, what does verse 14 say is a defining characteristic of those of us who are walking with Christ? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Let’s take some time to look more deeply into love. What do the following verses tell us about how love is to look? And as you read, do so prayerfully. Let the Holy Spirit speak.
  - a. John 15:13 \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Romans 12:9-10 \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. 1 Corinthians 13:4-6 \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. 1 Peter 4:8 \_\_\_\_\_

4. It should not surprise us that those who walk without Christ cannot be defined by love. Because it is impossible to love in the ways these verses describe without the strong work of our God within us! 1 John 3:14 warns us that anyone who does not love abides in \_\_\_\_\_. Think of a very recent situation where you did not love someone in the ways described in the verses we read above. What “death” was a result of your choice not to love? (consider death of relationship, of opportunity, of joy, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_
5. The world would tell you that you are right for standing up for yourself or avenging yourself or not continuing to love when someone does not act in love toward you. How have you found yourself tired or discouraged in continuing to love someone who is difficult for you right now? \_\_\_\_\_
6. The crazy thing is that no matter how hard it is to love, verse 15 goes on to tell us there is no life when we do not choose to love. So our choice is to either do the hard work toward loving others deeply, or live without real, vibrant, eternal life. How does Romans 12:17-21 encourage you as you seek to love even when facing opposition? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Hear this: you are not a fool for trusting our God. It is not easy to do the thing so many others would never choose to do and keep loving, keep sacrificing, keep putting others above yourself. No, you are no fool for loving. How can you put love into practice today? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Thank God that there is the promise of life in love. Praise Him for any strength He gives you today to love when you would not have otherwise chosen it. Write your prayer below.

## DAY 3

**Pray:** Deuteronomy 31:6 says, “Be strong and courageous...” Pray this morning that the Lord would strengthen you to open your heart to His word and to act on it; that you would not give in to fear.

**Memorize:** Fill in the first two phrases from our memory verse:

\_\_\_\_\_ this \_\_\_\_\_ know \_\_\_\_\_, that He \_\_\_\_\_ His \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

Read all of 1 John 3:16 aloud several times.

**Study:** Yesterday we ended thanking God for the strength He gives us to love in situations that are otherwise impossible for us. Please read 1 John 3:11-18. We will study verses 16-18 today.

1. How is it that we truly know love? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Because Jesus showed us how to love, what does verse 16 call us to do? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. We recognized yesterday that we are incapable of loving like Christ, completely laying down our lives, apart from His work in us. Read Hebrews 4:14-16. Jesus was tempted in every way. How do you imagine He was tempted not to love? List 3 or 4 ways. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Jesus lived a life that He knew would end in full sacrifice. Thinking through the stories we know of Him, there were numerous times when He would have been tempted to choose all kinds of other things over love. But Jesus did not give in to that. He was without sin. Thankfully, because of His perfect love and perfect obedience, we can now approach the throne. What does the passage in Hebrews promise we are fully given when we do? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Jesus demonstrated a life of continually going to the Father for grace and mercy. What might you encounter today that requires you to go to the throne for grace and mercy? How confident are you that you could love through the situation otherwise? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. 1 John 3:17 shows us that we have a tendency to close our hearts toward others who are in need. When is the last time you encountered someone who had a need? Be real here; it might have been a great need or it might have been something simple from someone at work or in your home. What was your response? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Remember we can never live out love perfectly without the work of the Spirit within us. But when we are opening our hearts, allowing His grace and mercy to pour over us, what kind of love does 1 John 3:18 say is the result?  
“not love in \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ but in \_\_\_\_\_ and in \_\_\_\_\_”
8. Real love will seep out into how we act. Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-8. In the daily moments of your life, would say that generosity characterizes you? How are you doing loving others by being generous with your time, your abilities, your words, your grace? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Thank God for the grace and mercy He offers you at His throne. Praise Him that because of all He has done for you, you can love generously. Ask Him to strengthen the areas where your love is weak. You may want to write out a prayer in response below. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## DAY 4

**Pray:** Hebrews 6:19 says, “We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor for the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain...” Pray that God would speak to you as you come today. Pray that you would see Him as the only anchor for your heart.

**Memorize:** Write out the first two phrases of 1 John 3:16 from memory then fill in the last phrase:

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ ought to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ our \_\_\_\_\_ for the \_\_\_\_\_.

**Study:** Read 1 John 3:16-22. You may want to go back and read from verse 11 to remind yourself of the context, or start from the beginning of chapter 3 for the bigger picture. Today we will focus on verses 19-22.

1. In verse 19, the phrase “shall know” in the original language is *ginosko*. It is in the future tense with the idea of something that *we will come to know*. What does verse 19 say we will come to know?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. “Assure” or “reassure” is the Greek *peitho*, which means to persuade or to pacify. What does the verse indicate needs to be reassured, persuaded, or pacified? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Our hearts often need to be calmed because, as verse 20 reveals, our hearts are guilty of condemning us. The word “condemn” in the Greek is *kataginosko*, which means to find fault with, accuse, blame, condemn. How have you recently found your heart (and your thoughts) finding fault with you, accusing you, blaming you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Praise to our gracious God that when our hearts condemn us, He offers us a promise to hold on to. What is the promise in verse 20? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Because we know God is bigger (the Greek word for “greater” is literally talking about size) than anything that comes against us, we can stand with the assurance of a calm heart. And not only that, but we can stand confidently before our God. The Greek for “confidence” (v. 21) is *parrhesia*, which translates to freedom in speaking or unreservedness in speech.

When we have confidence before God, what does verse 22 say we will receive? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Please be careful with that promise. We know that God does not give us everything we ask for, as though He were granting wishes. Go back and look at Psalm 51:16-17 that we read on Day 1 this week. What pleases God as we approach Him? \_\_\_\_\_
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7. Now look carefully at the end of 1 John 3:22. Why does it say we receive what we ask? \_\_\_\_\_
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8. These verses imply that there is a connection between our obedience and what we receive in prayer. And we know that coming to God in humility pleases Him.

Take some time to compare these two scenarios, thinking about what you ask God for and what your attitude is toward Him:

a. When my heart is frantic, finding fault, always focused on the things I am doing wrong, I approach God...\_\_\_\_\_

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b. When my heart is quiet and reassured, I approach God...\_\_\_\_\_

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9. How would you now describe the connection is between walking in obedience and receiving what you ask for in prayer? \_\_\_\_\_
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10. Praise God that He is an anchor for your soul. Come before the throne now with humility and confidence. He is greater than your heart, than your hurt, than your questions. He knows everything. \_\_\_\_\_
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## DAY 5

**Pray:** Romans 8:1 says, “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

Pray today that you would recognize the Spirit at work in you. Pray for ears to hear Him speak.

**Memorize:** Write out your memory verse for this week, along with the reference.

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**Study:** Please read 1 John 3:11-24. We will study the last two verses today.

1. John gives two simple statements about what God commands us to do. See verse 23. What are they? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Our last two verses today are tied directly to the verses before them. The depth comes in seeing it all together. Read carefully verses 16-24. As you read note 3 different times John uses the statement “By this we know...” In verse 16, how does it say we know love? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Yesterday we learned that the phrase “shall know” in verse 16 is in an ongoing future tense. Our salvation is secure in the work of Jesus Christ. We need never question that. However, the evidence of a life that has passed out of death into life and into truth is in verse 18. What does it say? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Read verses 17-19 straight through.

Over time, we can come to know and be assured that we are walking in truth because of the evidences of love in our lives. To make it clearer, read verse 14, which we studied on day 2. How do we know we have passed from death (pre-Christian) to life (Christ-following)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Love is an absolute defining characteristic of those who walk with God. Like we agreed on day 2, it does not come easily and we can only live it out by the grace of God and the work of the Spirit in us. When we obey God's command to love, what security do we have in our position with God? Fill in from verse 24:

"Whoever keeps His commandments \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_."

6. On a daily, even momentary basis, how do you see abiding in God as giving you the ability to obey and to love? \_\_\_\_\_

7. There are always going to be moments when we fail and do not choose obedience or love. In those times, our heart (with the prodding of the enemy) is often quick to condemn. However, failures are not evidence of a lack of salvation. At the end of verse 24, there is another "by this we know" phrase. How can we know and be assured that He abides in us? \_\_\_\_\_

8. The work of the enemy is to lie and condemn and bring death (John 8:44, John 10:10). Read John 16:7-14. The work of the Spirit is conviction that leads to truth and righteousness and restoration. When you fail, what is one way the enemy lies to your heart, bringing condemnation and death to the situation? \_\_\_\_\_

On the other hand, as you abide in God, how does the conviction of the Spirit look different than that? \_\_\_\_\_

9. We have the sweet reassurance of God that whenever we fail, we can trust we are of the truth because of the evidence of the Spirit at work in us. Spend some time right now in prayer, responding to God. You may need to acknowledge and work through the Spirit's conviction in an area of your life. Or you may need to pray through the reassurance that there is no condemnation for you in Christ. Praise God that He has overcome the enemy who accuses you! Write out and document your prayer. \_\_\_\_\_