



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## 1 JOHN 2:29 – DO YOU PRACTICE RIGHTEOUSNESS?

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*History is not an endless repeating cycle. We are all headed for God's ordained end and that end will be signaled by Jesus Christ's appearing. Since this is so, our great need is to be prepared for that day and this gives every believer strong incentive for godly living now. Jesus Christ has gone to prepare a place for us among the many mansions of His Father's house. (John 14:1-6) And why is He coming back? To take us to Himself that where He is we may be also! Could we possibly tolerate the idea of being ashamed at His coming when He comes on such an incredible errand? May we abide in Him always so when He appears we may have confidence! May we always be asking... if Christ were to come into my house, my room, and show Himself and speak face to face, would I have confidence? Could I meet His look of love without embarrassment? ONLY if He would find me abiding in Him. Only if He found me keeping Him near and close in my heart.*

### I. DO YOU PRACTICE RIGHTEOUSNESS? 1 JOHN 2:29

*(29) "If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him." 1 John 2:29*

A true believer will be accompanied with a life where righteousness is pursued and practiced. This is because it is our aim and sole ambition to please God. And what pleases God? John tells us over in many ways that obedience, or a righteous life is what pleases the Lord. John's appeal has been that we abide continually in Christ so we will not be ashamed at His coming. What would make us ashamed at His coming? Living a life we were saved from...*sin*. When we come to know Christ as our Savior and Lord, we turn from sin to righteousness. All who profess to be saved but do not demonstrate any tangible fruit of righteousness prove they are not true believers. Such believers have an empty claim on a relationship with Christ and their lives betray their heart. John asserts here in this verse that there is a connection between knowing God and doing righteousness. He continues to put the spotlight on this truth. Abiding in Christ will be by faith but also by obedience.<sup>1</sup>

#### A. "IF YOU KNOW..." - 1 JOHN 2:29A

John begins with a first class conditional clause, which means this truth is a certainty. "If you know that He is righteous...", John writes, and we know that God is righteous. This does not place God's righteousness in any doubt, rather reinforces it. The word "know" is the Greek word "oída", which means a sense of perceiving the absolute truth. And what is John absolutely clear about?

#### B. "THAT HE IS RIGHTEOUS..." - 1 JOHN 2:29B

John makes clear, again, that God is righteous, perfect, holy, and always right. God is absolute perfect in truth and holiness. God possesses absolute moral perfection. He is righteous; purity without sin or evil. God and sin are mutually exclusive. (Habakkuk 1:13, Isaiah 6:1-5, Revelation 21:27) We cannot treat God lightly, nor sin.

#### C. "YOU KNOW..." - 1 JOHN 2:29C

John uses a different Greek word for "know" here.

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"know" Greek "ginosko" means to know by experience, to recognize, come to perceive.

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In other words, John is saying, we know that since God is righteous, anyone who claims to be a Christian also has that character of righteousness as well. If believers know God is righteous, they can recognize that everyone also who practices righteousness, reflects His life, Christ's life. (1 Peter 1:13-16)

#### D. "THAT EVERYONE ALSO WHO PRACTICES RIGHTEOUSNESS..." - 1 JOHN 2:29D

John is saying that real believers are not verified so much by what they claim, as by how they live. Everyone that reflects Christ's life reflects righteousness in his or her life. Therefore, as John writes he emphasizes his call to personal holiness, as does all of Scripture. Romans 12:1-2 exhorts believers to pursue holiness. We need to make every effort to strive for holiness, which without no one will see the Lord. (Hebrews 12:14).<sup>2</sup>

Though as believers, we fall short of God's holiness, we must have a desire for righteousness instead of a disregard for it. We have as our aim to strive for holiness. We are not just to know the truth but we must live it. And by doing righteousness, the one who is truly a believer, a child of God, demonstrates that we are born of God. There are inherited family traits if you will. God is righteous and those who are born of Him must and will show traits of that righteousness. A person's righteousness is evidence of our new birth.<sup>3</sup>

#### E. "IS BORN OF HIM." - 1 JOHN 2:29E

The gospel is powerful to save and is life transforming. No one born of God lives godlessly. There is a clear difference. And in this verse, John looks at the effects of this verse which is "practices righteousness" (righteous living), to the cause for that

### BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS, GOVERNOR & SPOUSES: TUESDAY AT 7:15AM, CAPITOL BASEMENT, ROOM 0109

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# Colorado

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righteous living, which is the new birth. And so John says, “everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.” (1 Peter 1:3, John 3:7) A true believer does not have a mere outward profession, but rather gives evidence that regeneration has truly taken place by righteous living. (James 2:20, 26; 2 Peter 3:11; Romans 14:17) Those who do what is right are born of Him.<sup>4</sup>

In John 3, Jesus tells Nicodemus that it was necessary to be born again, “born from above”. This is something that can never be effected by any human action or desire. Rather it is an action that can only be accomplished by God Himself. Here in John’s Epistle, being born again is connected with doing what is right. This is what makes a true believer evident... living a righteous and pure life. So doing righteousness distinguishes a true believer from one with false claims. Since God is righteous, then those who are “born of Him”, will display the family likeness in their lives. They too will be righteous. And how do we know what is righteous? God’s Word makes it clear and our obedience to that Word is “practicing righteousness.”<sup>5</sup>

And we must keep in mind that our righteous behavior is never a cause for salvation, but must be a result of our salvation. Moreover, our motivation to practice righteousness comes only from the work of God.<sup>6</sup> Richard Baxter said, “Can you truly say that all the known sins of your past are the grief of you heart...Can you truly say, that your heart is so far turned from sin, that you hate the sins which you once have loved, and love that holy life which you had no mind to before; and that you do not now live in the willful practice of any known sin? Is there no sin which you are not heartily willing to forsake whatever it cost you, and no duty which you are not willing to perform?”<sup>7</sup>

Past sins should grieve our hearts. Do we feel that heavy burden of conscience? Do we acknowledge what a lost sinner we would be without our Savior? And present holiness in our lives should be the thrill of our souls! Have you turned from

the sins we once loved? Do we rejoice in the transformation of our lives to please God and pursue holiness, which is the freedom to turn from our willful sins to holy habits instead?

The question is this: do we practice righteousness?

John is not setting before us perfectionism, but rather demanding a life that is ever on the watch against sin, where sin is not the normal accepted way. We are now justified by faith in Christ, thus have a righteous position before God, but soon we will be just, when He returns, perfectly righteous. And when we see Christ, we will have glorified bodies, clean character and satisfied souls.

John does not write these verses to scare nor to assure Christians. He writes to show the incongruity of the attitude of indifference to sin. It is not acceptable for Christians to sin. For us believers, sin must be the exception and not the rule. We must be hating sin and sin fighting. And while we have sinful patterns or habits, our new habits of holiness are our prevailing lifestyle. Real and radical change has happened inwardly and outwardly. We have made a decisive break. Our way of life is not characterized by a life of sin, but a life of loving obedience for we “practice righteousness”. We are loved by God and saved by Christ’s cross. And holiness matters to a holy God. God is our Father and we are a reflection of our Father. Therefore, we live as God’s offspring now. Make a fresh effort to pursue holiness.<sup>8</sup>

And what does this mean for you as Legislators? Does your life reflect a holy God no matter where you are or who you are with? And what about your vote? If you call yourself a believer, is your vote a reflection of the holy God Who saved you and Whom you serve? Live now by the power of God, for the One Who died to destroy the works of the devil and Who will come again to reign in power and glory forever.

So think on this, if you are a true believer in Jesus Christ, do you practice righteousness?

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<sup>1</sup> MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary Series on 1-3 John*. Moody Press: Chicago, IL, 2007. Pg. 113.

<sup>2</sup> Stott, John R., *The Epistles of John*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company: Grand Rapids, MI, 1964, Pg.72.

<sup>3</sup> MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary Series on 1-3 John*. Moody Press: Chicago, IL, 2007. Pg. 114.

<sup>4</sup> MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary Series on 1-3 John*. Moody Press: Chicago, IL, 2007. Pg. 114.

<sup>5</sup> Kruse, Collin G., *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Letters of John*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company: Grand Rapids, MI, 2000. Pg. 114.

<sup>6</sup> O'Donnell, Douglas Sean, *Reformed Expository Commentary: 1-3 John*. P&R Publishing Company: Phillipsburg, NJ, 2015. Pg. 93-94.

<sup>7</sup> O'Donnell, Douglas Sean, *Reformed Expository Commentary: 1-3 John*. P&R Publishing Company: Phillipsburg, NJ, 2015. Pg. 95.

<sup>8</sup> O'Donnell, Douglas Sean, *Reformed Expository Commentary: 1-3 John*. P&R Publishing Company: Phillipsburg, NJ, 2015. Pg. 99.