

## THE PURIFYING OF THOSE PROFESSING SONSHIP

Please turn once again to I John 2:28 and follow along as I read through I John 3:3. On Father's Day, we noted from I John 3:1 the command to contemplate—to ponder—the manner of love the Father has given that allows us the opportunity to become His children. Last week, we looked at verse 2 and focused on the certainty of our **present position**—"Beloved, **now** are we the sons of God."

Right now—if you have Jesus as our Saviour—your current position is that of a son—or daughter—of God!

--It does not say, "Beloved, **maybe** you are the sons of God..."

It says, now **are we!**

--And it does not say, "Beloved, **later you will become** the sons of God..."

It says, **now** are we!

Does that bless your heart? It certainly should!

Way back in 1653, **Joseph Caryl** wrote: "The **greatest thing** that we can desire, next to the glory of God, is our own **salvation**; and the **sweetest thing** we can desire is the **assurance of** our salvation. In this life we cannot get higher than to be **assured of** that which in the next life is to **be enjoyed**. All saints shall enjoy a heaven when they **leave this earth**; some saints enjoy a heaven **while here on earth**." (Holiness; Ryle, 110).

That's not all we see in vs 2, though. There is a second certainty, and it is this: "we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." The "Him," of course, is Jesus! **How** will we be like Him?

--Will people **bow before us** as they will to Jesus?

Obviously not!

--Will we be given **creative power** like Jesus has?

No; that's not what it means, either.

Here's what it does mean. **First**, it means we will have a transformed **body**. When He shall appear, we will be given a "body like unto His glorious body" the Bible says in Philippians 3:21.

**Second**, I believe it means that we will have a transformed **nature**. To never sin again, our sin nature needs to be removed. **When** will that happen? We are not told exactly, but I believe our sin nature will be removed **the same time** that our body is transformed. The result—we will be **presented faultless** before the presence of God's glory as stated in Jude 24.

This morning, we are going to focus on vs 3: "And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." Title of my message: *The Purifying of Those Who Profess Sonship*

### 1. Who it is that purifies themselves?

Vs 3 "And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

Notice first... A. The people who have hope

This, of course, does not **leave out boys**, nor does it leave out "birthing people" or younger, potential "birthing people to be" 😊! (Sorry; couldn't help myself!)

On a more serious note, "man" is being used in a generic sense and refers to mankind in general—not people of the male gender in particular.

**Every person**—every man, woman, boy, and girl—that has **this hope** in Him—referring to, I believe, Jesus—purifies themselves as He is pure. That's the easy part of the verse!

Next, let's consider... B. The particulars of this hope

Vs 3 "And every man that hath **this hope**..." What hope is **this** hope? And why is it called "hope?" Jim J asked me that question probably 5 years ago and I'm finally going to answer it 😊!

Let's talk about what "hope" means first. Here's what we **usually** mean when we use the word "hope." We use it to indicate that we **want** something to happen or to be true—but there are **doubts** associated with it. A "hope" is something that **could** possibly happen—but also **may not** happen.

**Example 1:** *I hope it doesn't rain tomorrow.* Will it rain tomorrow? I don't know for sure—and neither does the weather forecaster!

**Example 2:** *I hope the kids behave at camp this week.* They may—or they may not. It is possible that they will—but it is also possible that they won't!

Hope, then, has **a desire** connected to it—but there are **also some doubts**.

The other thing we should see from these two examples is that it is **a verb**—an action-word. It is an **activity** that we are doing. **What** is the “activity”? Hoping!

**The Bible** uses the word “hope” in a different way, though. “Hope” in the Bible is often used as a **noun**. What is a noun? A person, place, or thing! In the Bible, hope carries the idea of a **confident expectation**. **Doubt is not** connected to it; it is something that will **certainly happen**—but **hasn’t happened** yet.

That is what we have going on here in vs 3. In vs 2, John tells us what will happen when Jesus returns. In vs 3, he then says that those who have **this hope**—the expectation of Jesus’ return referred to in vs 2—will purify themselves as Jesus is pure.

We see Paul making a similar statement to Titus. Notice on your handout...

**Titus 2:13** “Looking for that **blessed hope**, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;”

The verb in this verse is **looking**—not hoping. What are we looking for; what are we expecting? What is “that blessed hope?” Us being glorified—being made like Jesus—that takes place in conjunction with Christ’s glorious appearing! Sounds a lot like what John is saying, doesn’t it?

Who is it that purifies himself? The people who purify themselves are **God’s children**—but **not all of** God’s children. **Which ones** purify themselves? Those who think about...and are looking for...and have confidence in...the return of Jesus!

## **2. Why should we purify ourselves**

Back to our verse again: “And every man that hath this hope in him **purifieth himself**”

The wording here is kind of interesting. It doesn’t say, “And every man that hath this hope in him **should** purify himself...” Instead, it says **they do it**. In other words, God’s children that are anticipating the return of Jesus **will be** doing this.

In the Greek, it is in the **present** tense. That means it is something that should be **ongoing** in our lives. It is not done **once**—like salvation. It is something we are to **continuously be doing**.

It is also in the **active voice**. That means it is something **we do**—not something that is done **to us**. **Are you** actively seeking to purify yourself? Stated another way, are you **working on being holy**? God expects us to be. Why? Think about the progression here in these verses.

**First**, we are to ponder the **amazing love God lavished upon us** in allowing us to be made His child. **Second**, because God **did the saving and does the keeping**, we can **rest confidently** in the fact that **right now** we are His child. **Where** do we get that assurance from? **His Word!** And the same word that assures us **of our sonship** also teaches us that **the rest—and best**—is yet to come! We will be like Him for we shall see Him as He is!

And based on that, we should be purifying ourselves! But... **3. What does it mean to purify ourselves?** “Purify” comes from the Greek word *hag-nid’-zo* and, in a literal sense, has to do with **ceremonial cleansing**. We have examples of that in John 11:55; Acts 21:24, 26; and Acts 24:18.

It **does not** just refer to **outward**, ceremonial cleansing, however. It also has to do with purifying the **heart**—the inner man.

**James 4:8** “Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and **purify** your hearts, ye double minded.”

Here we see God is concerned not just with what **we do**—“cleanse your hands;” but also with how **we think**—“purify” [*hag-nid-zo*] your hearts. He isn’t just concerned about **our actions**—He is also concerned with **our attitude**. Our relationship with Him is not just about **our hands**—it is also about **our hearts!**

**John** says “purify yourselves” ...**James** says “purify your hearts...”**Peter** said—in a verse we looked at way back when—“Be ye holy, for I am holy.”

**Knowing** what God **wants us** to do is one thing—**doing it** is quite another! Let's consider now...

#### 4. How do we purify ourselves

John gives us the ways to do that throughout this book. He does not give us a **step-by-step** method per se, but he does give us the key ingredients!

First and foremost, we must... A. Be born again

We have to **start here**, don't we? **Why?** Because if we are honest with ourselves, we know that we are naturally sinful and **cannot purify ourselves** no matter how hard we try!

**Proverbs 20:9** "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?"

Rhetorical question, right? **No one** can make their own heart clean, so in order to "purify" ourselves, we need God to **give us** a new heart!

In one sense, our heart is like a fountain that "bubbles out" sin. James gives us that picture in James 3 when he writes **about the tongue**.

**James 3:10-12** "Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. <sup>11</sup> Doth a **fountain** send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? <sup>12</sup> Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so **can no fountain** both yield salt water and fresh."

Just as a fountain can only send forth one kind **of water**—and a plant can only bear one kind **of fruit**—our sinful hearts can only produce sin.

--To make something different come out of a **fountain**, you need to change the water source.

--To **make a plant** yield a different kind of fruit, you need to change the **root** of the plant.

--And to make something **good** come out of the **human heart**, it needs to be a new heart.

Here's just a couple of the references John makes about the need to be born of God.

I John 2:29 (read). God is righteous—and the only people who can do righteousness—right things—are those who are born of God!

I John 3:9 (read). When we are born of God, we will not continually live in a lifestyle of sin. Why? Because His seed—meaning the Holy Spirit—remains in us. The Holy Spirit is the One that enables us not to sin—and we do not have the Holy Spirit in us until we are born of God—meaning born again!

So the first step to purifying ourselves is to be born again and have the Holy Spirit **implanted** within us.

What are the other "steps"? I would suggest that there is not a 2,3, and 4 because they **all happen**—or should **be happening**—at the same time. So what are the other things **we need to do** to purify ourselves?

#### B. Forsake sin

I John 2:1 "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not."

Pretty straightforward, isn't it? Don't sin!

I John 2:15 "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world..." What's wrong with loving the world—this place we call home? We know from vs 16 that **loving our planet** is not what John is talking about!

I John 2:16 (read). What is the **lust of the flesh**? That which appeals to our natural appetites, but can lead to addictive behavior like alcohol, drugs, homosexuality, pornography, and promiscuity.

What is the **lust of the eyes**? Desiring excessive, expensive, and unnecessary "bells, whistles, and things" because of how **they look**. It can also mean desiring that which other people have.

What about the **pride of life**? Desiring that which tends to promote pride. It may be things, but it could also be fame, or power, or wealth.

It is interesting to me how John ends this letter. Look at I John 5:21. John the aged calls the believers he is writing to "little children." It is not talking down to them; it is a term of **endearment**. What does he tell them?

"Keep yourselves from idols." Why? Because God's children can have idols in their lives—and he is not talking about statues in people's yards! He is talking about things that get between us and God!

It can be our love **for us**...our love for **pleasure**...or our love **for things**. It can also be the love and trust we have **in our own wisdom**. We are way more prone to idolatry than we think we are...

How do we purify ourselves? What is our role—our responsibility—after we are born again and become a child of God? We obviously need to **forsake sin** and not do that which God forbids!

Purifying ourselves is not just about **forsaking the bad**, though, it is also about **doing good!**

How do we know the good we are to be doing? We need to know what God says—then do what God says!

In other words, we need to...C. Obey God's Word

I John 2:3 (read).

I John 2:5 "But whoso **keepeth** His word..."

I John 5:3 "For this is the love of God, that we **keep His commandments**: and His commandments are not grievous."

John tells us what some of those commandments are throughout this letter. Can't spend a lot of time on them, but I want to point out just a few.

I John 1:7 says we are to "walk in the light." I John 2:6 says we are to walk—meaning live—as Jesus lived. I John 2:10 says we are to love our brother. I John 3:16 says we are to lay down our lives for the brethren. I John 4:11 says we ought to love one another.

How are we to **purify ourselves**—once we are a child of God? We are to forsake sin—and obey God's commandments. Easier said than done, though, isn't it?

In fact, I believe that every Christian who has **seriously strived** to **forsake sin**—and **obey God**—has ended up feeling just like Paul in **Romans 7:18-19** "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. <sup>19</sup> For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do."

--"The good I want to do, I fail to do—and the evil that I don't want to do, that I end up doing!

What a discouraging, frustrating, helpless, never-ending feeling!

How can we "purify ourselves"—how can we make ourselves clean—when we fail so miserably to forsake sin—and to do right? The answer is found in the simple and yet profound words of I John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

In other words... D. Come to Christ for cleansing

We know we need to come to Christ **to obtain forgiveness of sins** and become a child of God in the first place. I wonder, though, if we appreciate the **daily cleansing** we can have from Christ when we confess our sins.

Here's what I mean. Think about the frustrating scenario I painted a few minutes ago regarding our desire to **forsake sin**—but then we sin anyway; and our desire to **do right**—and our failure to do that, too.

How do we respond when we sin? I know of some believers—and you probably know some too—that seem to "throw in the towel." Although they may not come out **and say**, 'What's the use,' that is how they respond. They quit trying to live for God and the next thing you know their lives don't seem much different than it was before they were saved.

Not all believers "throw in towel," though, do they? Some do the **same sins**—or what we might consider even **worse sins**—and in spite of their sin, they **keep fighting** to forsake sin—and to do right. Why? What's the difference? I obviously can't be dogmatic **about others**, but I can certainly tell you **why I personally** keep fighting—even though I fail daily.

The reason for me is found in 1 John 1:9. I believe when I come to God in humility and confess my sins, He does what He **promises to do**—cleanses me from **all** unrighteousness. I don't have to wallow in defeat and failure. Instead, I can experience the gratitude and joy of being forgiven, of having a "clean slate," so to speak.

I also know that the more I sense my own inadequacies, the more I come to Him. The more I come to Him, the more He helps. Seems so simple, and yet often times we need to be reminded of these simple things.

So...are you striving to purify yourself—to be clean on the inside and outside—the same way Jesus is pure? Don't let past failures keep you from pursuing holiness. Come to Him for cleansing...believe you are forgiven when you confess your sins...and ask Him to help you forsake sin—and do right.

**Phil 2:13** reminds us “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.”

We have a part in purifying ourselves—and God has a part. He certainly will do His! Are you doing yours?

So what would God have us do in light of His word?

1. First and foremost, you need to be born again. It is impossible to carry out the command to purify yourself if you don't have the Holy Spirit within you!

2. Second, if you are a child of God, how serious are you about striving against sin—and obeying God's Word? Maybe you've slipped. Maybe you've gotten lazy. Maybe you're discouraged and want to throw in the towel. Come to God for cleansing and forgiveness, then get back at it!

3. Lastly, Jesus is coming back! It will be worth it all, when we see Him! The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us!