

1 John

Introduction

God's love for you is beyond comprehension! As we struggle with personal feelings of inadequacy, recognition of personal failures and guilt, feelings of being unlovable, God's love continues firm and surpasses our wildest imagination.

God loves his children

Read 1 John 2:28-3:3. In the broader sense we can say, "Every human being is one of God's children." That's not the broad scope that John is speaking of here. In what sense is John speaking of "children of God"?

John encourages us to live our lives with Jesus' return in mind. What might make us "unconfident" and "ashamed" at the coming of Jesus?

Do you think regularly of Jesus' return as judge? Are you prepared for him to return at any moment?

The New International Version (NIV) of the Bible describes God "lavishing" his love upon us. Does that always seem to be the case for you? How do you experience God's love?

Discuss: Explore all the different aspects of the term "children of God." What are all the implications of that term?

The world does not recognize your elevated status as a prince or princess in God's royal family. How might the world around you look at you? Why is this the case?

What is going to happen when Jesus returns at the end of time?

- To the world?
- To all human beings?
- To those who are still alive?
- To you?

How does your anticipation of Jesus' imminent return shape your attitudes and your conduct as you wait? **(See 2 Corinthians 5:9,10.)**

Read 1 John 3:4-10. We've seen this theme earlier in 1 John: Persistent sin is incompatible with Christian faith.

Discuss: We often use the word "salvation" in a very narrow sense to mean "attaining eternal life in heaven." How can the word "salvation" be used both narrowly and in a broader sense?

Evaluate this statement: "A good church is a strict church." Explain your thoughts.

John says, "Dear children, do not let anyone deceive you." What are ways people might try to deceive us in this matter of faith, sin, and obedience?

Reflect on John's statement, "This is why the Son of God appeared: to destroy the works of the devil." How has the devil's work impacted the world ever since the Garden of Eden?

How is John's statement here in verse 8 true in every respect?

It has been said, "We cannot look into someone's heart to see whether they are a Christian or not." How does this fit with John's words in verse 10? Compare Jesus' words in **Matthew 7:17-20** and James' words in **James 2:17**.

Without presuming to look into someone's heart, is there ever a time when we can tell that a person is *not* a Christian?

How are we to deal with those who are straying or have strayed from Jesus?