

1 John: Part 11 – Marked

When we are made God’s children, we are marked or changed by our relationship with God. It is natural and necessary for dramatic changes to occur in believers when they come to Christ, abide in Him, and God’s seed remains in us. Several things that are notable about God’s nature and character are transferred into those who remain in Him. Think for a moment about God’s nature and character.

- God is merciful, faithful, and good.
- God has all grace, kindness, and love.
- God is righteous, holy, and pure.

As we continue abiding in Christ, our lives will be marked by His nature and character. We are marked by His goodness, righteousness, and love. A distinction is made here in those who belong to God and those who are not children. These words should cause each of us to examine our own nature and character. You can know whose child are you.

1 John 3:10–11 NKJV In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. ¹¹For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another,

John just said, “Whoever has been born of God does not keep on sinning, for His seed remains in them.” It is not enough to call ourselves a child of God. We bear evidence of our relationship with God and manifest marks of His nature and character.

Two things show that we are children of God. According to this text, we practice righteousness and love one another.

Those who do not practice righteousness are not of God. The key word in this text is manifest. The concept of what is being said gets to the core of who we have become in Christ. An unsaved person displays their true nature. It is important for us to remember that at one time we were all sinners and that we “manifested” that nature. We sinned because it was our nature to sin. When we became a child of God, our nature has changed and we began “manifesting” a new nature. What was natural for us is no longer our true nature.

2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

1 John 3:10–11 NKJV In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice **righteousness** is not of God, nor is he who does not **love** his brother. ¹¹For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should **love** one another,

This text focuses on two main characteristics of our new nature, righteousness and love.

When the seed of God remains in us, our nature and character experience a dramatic change. As a result of what has happened to us, we naturally practice righteousness and live in love. Both of these must be manifest if we are abiding in Christ and God's seed remains in us.

When we really love God, our lives will be marked by righteousness and love.

The manifestation of these shows whether or not we love God. This message is not new. John said we have heard this from the beginning. It is not just a New Testament doctrine. From the beginning, God commanded His people to live righteously and in love toward God and one another.

Since God is love, it is absolutely impossible to love God and not love one another.

The greatest proof that we love God is the mark of God's nature in our lives. Jesus made a distinction in His disciples.

John 13:35 NKJV By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

Jesus was talking about the way His disciples live, relate, and fellowship with one another. Their lives were marked by love. The mark of love upon our lives is manifested by our love for one another. The mark is so evident that the world will notice that we love one another.

Love reveals our connection with the Father.

1 John 3:10 HCSB This is how God's children—and the Devil's children—are made evident. Whoever does not do what is right is not of God, especially the one who does not love his brother.

When God is our Father, we live righteously and love God and one another. If we do not do this, we are not God's children. It is impossible to be God's children and practice a life that is against God's nature. If we stand opposed to everything that God stands for, we do not love God.

If our nature is not like God's nature, who are we like?

Whose nature is unholy, unrighteous, and impure? Whose nature is unloving? God's nature is holy, righteous and pure. God is love.

Our lifestyle and nature reveals exactly whose child we are. Where do we get this nature?

This nature is a result of the seed that God planted in us when we were born again, (1 John 3:9). We have the nature of God living inside of us.

You can do the test right now.

What is the prevailing characteristic of your life and behavior? You are revealing the nature of your father. There is no middle ground. God's nature will not change to accommodate our fluctuation or inconsistency. In Malachi 3:6 God said: "I am the Lord, and I do not change." God's nature is constant. He is not righteous and good one moment and unrighteousness and hateful the next. God is always good, righteous and loving. He does not change.

Listen to what John said after saying we should be righteous and love one another.

1 John 3:12-13 NKJV not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous. Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you.

Cain and Able had the same parents and the same exposure to God. Cain was of the wicked one and Able loved God. Cain hated Able because he was righteous and loved God. Cain tried to copy the behavior and character of Able, but miserably failed. When he did, he murdered his brother.

How can we know that we have passed from the realm of death into the sphere of life?

1 John 3:14-15 NKJV We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

Is there hope for the person who does not love and abides in death?

Without Christ there is no hope and we abide in death. Without Christ we do not have eternal life abiding in us. A miracle must take place for those abiding in death to have eternal life.

1 John 3:16 NKJV By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

John 3:16 NKJV For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

In love, God took action so that we may have life everlasting.

How do you know if you really love God? Look at the measure of love in your life. Do you love one another? Do you hold things against others? Do you think evil thoughts about others?

The nature of the devil is to tear down and destroy. He comes to steal, kill, and destroy.

That is not God's nature.

John 13:34–35 NKJV A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

1 John 3:18-20 NKJV My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.

Love is the proof that we are alive to God. Love is not the cause of our passing over into life, it is the evidence of new life in Christ. We cannot come into life by attempting to practice love. Love naturally occurs in those who are alive in Christ. When Jesus Christ saves us, He gives us life. Once He saves us, we will love one another.

We know we have eternal life by our LOVE.

New life in Christ makes us love one another. We know we are God's children because we live in love. If we are not God's children, we dwell, live, move, and have our being in death. All of Christ's rich blessings are not flowing in your life.

1 John 4:20–21 NKJV If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? ²¹And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.

The presence and manifestation of love in our lives is a testimony of our relationship with the Father and that we are His children.

The quality of God's love is revealed in what Jesus Christ did for us.

1 John 3:16 NKJV By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

- **He died for us...** when we were without strength to help or save ourselves (Romans 5:6).
- **He died for us...** when we were ungodly (Romans 5:6).
- **He died for us...** when we were sinners (Romans 5:8).
- **He died for us...** when we were enemies of God (Romans 5:10).

Jesus Christ loved us and died for us when we did not deserve His love. He took our sins and the guilt for them upon Himself. He paid the judgment for our sins.

Why did Jesus Christ die for us? He loves us enough to die for us. He loves us even when we oppose Him.

Is your life marked by that kind of love?