Everyone Who Practices Righteousness Has Been Born of God

(1 John 2:28–3:10)

**That We May Have Confidence**

John wrote this epistle in order to help the churches distinguish authentic Christianity from its counterfeits, and to give those who are authentic confidence that they are the children of God and heirs of eternal life. Throughout this letter, John cycles through three tests of authenticity:

* The doctrinal test—is there faith in the apostolic gospel?
* The relational test—is there love for the saints?
* The moral test—is there a trajectory of righteousness and obedience to the word of God?

**Two Births**

The authentic Christian life begins with a new birth that imparts a new nature.

* Being born of God is a spiritual birth that is distinct from our natural birth.
* Being born of God is a work of God’s grace and not of man’s will.
* Being born of God precedes and produces saving faith and its fruits.
* Being born of God imparts a hereditary nature bent toward righteousness.

Alternatively, those who do not receive this new, spiritual birth are not merely regarded as natural men existing in a neutral position; they are children of the devil with a hereditary bent towards evil.

**Two Trajectories**

The authentic Christian life follows a different trajectory than that of the counterfeit Christian.

* The children of God are righteous—they walk in repentance and bear the fruits of repentance. When they sin, they are grieved, they confess, and they take it to Christ as their atoning sacrifice and advocate before the Father.
* The children of the devil are lawless—they sin without repentance or remedy.

**Two Destinies**

The authentic Christian life has a vastly different destiny than that of the counterfeit Christian.

* The children of God will be glorified at the appearing of Christ on the last day.
* The children of the devil will be destroyed at the appearing of Christ on the last day.

The children of God and the children of the devil are evident (3:10). Which are you?