

FIRST JOHN 3:8-18

In this section John continues with his previous caution against continual habitual sin. He stresses once more that we can be identified by our choices.

8 He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. 9 No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.

What prevents those who are born again from continuing in sin?

Now, in the verses that follow, we will get another glimpse into why John is often referred to as "the Apostle of love."

10 This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother. 11 This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. 12 Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. 13 Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you. 14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. 15 Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.

What is the primary thing that identifies one as a child of God?

Reading on, we find great insight into the mystery of love.

16 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. 17 If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? 18 Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

How do we know what "true love" is?

How then, do we demonstrate true love?

What if we don't?

Points to Ponder

What is the connection between being born again and loving our brothers and sisters?

Read John 13:34-35. How are the words of Jesus there in harmony with John's words here?

How does the idea that refusing to help others in need call our identity into question strike you?

