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A Letter to Dear Children, Part 11

Who’s Your Daddy?

Text: 1 John 3:4-10

Christians are not perfect, but we are committed. We are, by profession of faith in Jesus the Christ, in a relationship with God. That relationship is one in which God speaks and we obey. God leads, and we follow. God corrects, and we comply. God loves, and we respond to His love.

In fact, we are so close to God that it could be said that His seed remains in us. Part of the character of God resides in us and keeps us tethered to our God.

The other option for how one could live, is to ignore the calling of God, the leading of God, the love of God, the commands of God and follow the evil one. Satan has a plan for his followers that is just as structured and comprehensive as is the plan of God. We will show ourselves, by our commitments, to be the children of one of these beings.

Verses 4-7 of our text speak to the possibility of a relationship. Look at what marks it.

1. Awareness of sin as a state of mind and practice (4)
2. Provision (eradication of sin’s dominion) made by Jesus (5)
3. Reminder of the importance of abiding in Christ (6; 2:24; John 15:1-7)
4. If we practice righteousness, we may call ourselves righteous (7).

Verses 8-10 contrast the children of righteousness, the children of God, with the children of Satan. The person who is continually evil, continually disobedient and continually antichrist is of the devil (8). The Son of God, Jesus, came that an alternative to the devil’s invitation might be established and offered (8).

Verse 10- The children of God (3:2) and the children of the devil show themselves by their practices. You won’t be able to hide your identity or the identity of your spiritual parent. We’ll know you're *God’s* child by the way you act, and we’ll know you’re a *devilish* person by the way you act. John will say that when we practice righteousness and when we practice love (10), we show who our father is. One’s parentage is a great predictor of one’s practices!!!!

Go with me to John 8, where this is clearly expressed by Christ Himself.

John 8:37-47

***37****“I know that you are Abraham’s descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.* ***38****I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have [a]seen with your father.”*

***39****They answered and said to Him, “Abraham is our father.”*

*Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham.* ***40****But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this.* ***41****You do the deeds of your father.”*

*Then they said to Him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God.”*

***42****Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me.* ***43****Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word.* ***44****You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.* ***45****But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me.* ***46****Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?* ***47****He who is of God hears God’s words; therefore, you do not hear, because you are not of God.”*

I want to put John 8:44 right alongside 1 John 9-10 and ask, “Who’s your Daddy?” “Whom do you obey?”

**Illus.**

Jerome and his wife and son were sitting at dinner at home when Jerome announced, “I made a purchase this week. I bought this robot. He’s very talented and can tell when anyone is lying. When a person lies, the robot slaps them. Son, how was your day in school today?” The son said he had a good day in school and the robot slapped him. “I lied, Dad. I went to my friend’s house. We watched cartoons”. The robot slapped him. The Mom said to the Dad, “That’s your boy”. The robot slapped the mother.

**Illus**.

The late Fred Craddock (1928-2015) told the story of going back one summer to Gatlinburg, Tennessee, to take a short vacation with his wife. One night they found a quiet little restaurant where they looked forward to a private meal—just the two of them.

While they were waiting for their meal they noticed a distinguished looking, white-haired man moving from table to table, visiting guests. Craddock whispered to his wife, “I hope he doesn’t come over here.” He didn’t want the man to intrude on their privacy. But the man did come by his table.

“Where you folks from?” he asked amicably.

“Oklahoma.”

“Splendid state, I hear, although I’ve never been there. What do you do for a living?

“I teach homiletics at the graduate seminary of Phillips University.”

“Oh, so you teach preachers, do you. Well, I’ve got a story I want to tell you.” And with that he pulled up a chair and sat down at the table with Craddock and his wife.

Dr. Craddock said he groaned inwardly: Oh no, here comes another preacher story. It seems everyone has one.

The man stuck out his hand. “I’m Ben Hooper. I was born not far from here across the mountains. My mother wasn’t married when I was born so I had a hard time. When I started to school my classmates had a name for me, and it wasn’t a very nice name. I used to go off by myself at recess and during lunch-time because the taunts of my playmates cut so deeply.

“What was worse was going downtown on Saturday afternoon and feeling every eye burning a hole through you. They were all wondering just who my real father was.

“When I was about 12 years old a new preacher came to our church. I would always go in late and slip out early. But one day the preacher said the benediction so fast I got caught and had to walk out with the crowd. I could feel every eye in church on me. Just about the time I got to the door I felt a big hand on my shoulder. I looked up and the preacher was looking right at me.

“Who are you, son? Whose boy are you?’

I felt the old weight come on me. It was like a big black cloud. Even the preacher was putting me down.

But as he looked down at me, studying my face, he began to smile a big smile of recognition. “Wait a minute,” he said, “I know who you are. I see the family resemblance. You are a son of God.”

With that he slapped me across the rump and said, “Boy you’ve got a great inheritance. Go and claim it.” From that point on, whenever anybody asked the boy “who’s your Daddy?” He would respond, “I’m a child of God”.

The old man looked across the table at Fred Craddock and said, “That was the most important single sentence ever said to me.”

With that he smiled, shook the hands of Craddock and his wife, and moved on to another table to greet old friends. Fred Craddock asked a waitress, “Who is that guy?” The waitress said, “Everyone knows him around here. That’s Ben Hooper, former governor of Tennessee”.

Who’s *your* Daddy?

Amen