

## Responding to the Father 1 John 2:28-3:3

How many of us have children? How many of us have come home from... & have received, upon arrival, very different forms of reception by our children?

Here are some of examples of what this often looks like in my home:

- “Daddy’s home!!!” and I’m greeted with a big hug!
- “Let’s go dad!!!” We have places to go, things to do, no time for greetings!
- “Oh... your home?!?” An hour later, b/c they were in electronics world!
- “I DON’T want to talk about it!!!” This is the “puberty pukes” response!
- “I’m sorry!!!”, “It was an accident!!!”, “I’ll pay for it!!!”
- “It’s his/her fault!!!” The blame game response!

And then there is the response of my wife who says, “They are all yours!!!” As she walks out the door and leaves the children for me to deal with now!

Children can respond to our presence very differently, & at various times! What about how we, as children of God, respond to our heavenly Father’s presence? And what will our response to Him be upon His second coming?

1 John 2:28-3:3 speaks of God’s arrival, when Jesus returns, & what our response to it/Him will be! Will my same examples apply in this context?

How we respond to Jesus’ return, is an extension of our relationship to the Father!

John blurs the lines of distinction between the Father, and the Son, because they are both also one in the same! Jesus said, “I and the Father are One!”

John also records Jesus’ words declaring, “If you’ve seen me, you’ve seen the Father!” When we see Jesus upon His return, we are seeing the Father’s arrival, & His presence with us, through the Son! 1 John 2:28-3:3

John calls us “little children” because our response to God the Father ought to be as a little child to his/her daddy as he comes home from work!

- Lily runs into my arms every day. Whether she has been good or bad, whether she is happy or sad, or whether she is busy doing something else when I arrive – “Daddy’s home” & she wants to be with me!

Little children love to “abide” with their father. Why? B/c they know their place as children. They know their value as a son/daughter. They are loved! Do we know our place with our heavenly Father? Do we know we are loved?

If we see God, like Lily sees me right now & how she responds to me when I come home, then our response can also be, “when He (God) appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.”

When we know that we can approach our heavenly Father without guilt/shame, this actually frees us to live differently today in anticipation of His coming!

The love of the Father is always a better motivator for right living than the fear of punishment! Fear doesn’t motivate Lily, love & praise does!

Isn’t this what we want from our children - a response of love, & not fear? It’s what our heavenly Father wants from us too!

What’s the greatest motivator in our homes? What about with God?

1 John 4:8 – “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, & whoever fears has not been perfected by love.”

What does John mean by “perfected by love”? When fear has been removed, b/c of our status with the Father as His children, then we can shift our focus to resembling His likeness, rather than earning our acceptance!

To resemble our heavenly Father likeness is to be perfect! We are not there yet, but are we looking more like Him (like Jesus), with every passing day?

Children, when they are little, want to look & be like their parents. And parents want their little children to turn out good and pure, so they try to model such attributes for them! It’s true in our homes, & it’s true with God!

It’s one thing to hear that your child looks just like you physically, it’s a far better thing to hear that they live like you (if your life is resembling Christ).

John wants the love of God to define us, to motivate us, & to assure us that even when there are things we haven’t figured out, it’s what we already know that matters most in this time between God’s arrivals in Christ! Vs. 2-3

Like it was said last week, there’s much that we cannot know until Christ returns, but what can be known – God’s love, our status as His children, that He is coming again. These truths are enough for us to live like Him today!

Don’t we want people to say that we look like Jesus? Then let’s be who we are because of Him - children of God, & let’s live as if it is true! 1 John 2:28-3:3

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