

# A CHILD OF GOD

## The Disciple's Security

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12)

Jesus taught His disciples to address God as their Father in Heaven (Luke 11:1-2). Followers of Christ have a special relationship with God. Jesus has made it possible for His followers to become God's children.

In this lesson we will consider some of the blessings and responsibilities of being a child of God.

### We Have A Right To Be Called A Child of God

Claiming to be a child of God would be a futile statement for one who is outside of Christ. However, those who receive Jesus as the Son of God have the right or authority to be recognized as children of God (John 1:12).

There is a way we can know for certain that we are a child of God. The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God (Rom. 8:16). The Holy Spirit tells us what we must do in order to be a child of God, and our spirit knows whether or not we have met the conditions. If we have met the conditions, then we know we are a child of God.

### We Have Been Born Again And Adopted

There are two ways that a child can become a member of a family: either by physical birth or by adoption. The Bible speaks of the saved as having been born again (1 Pet. 1:23). However, the Bible also speaks of the saved as having been made the children of God by adoption (Rom. 8:15-17; Gal. 4:4-7; Eph. 1:5).

Adoption is a deeper and more meaningful illustration than being born again. To take care of a child who is born to you is only natural. However, to choose to accept and take care of a child who is not born to you is an incredible act of love and compassion.

To settle a dispute about **greatness** in the kingdom, Jesus once set a **little child** in the midst of His disciples and told them, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means **enter the kingdom of heaven**" (Matt. 18:3).

## **Becoming Like Children - Matt. 18:3**

Disciples of Christ need to learn some important lessons from children.

○ **Humility.** The primary quality that the Lord had in mind was humility (v. 4). Children are a great example of the application of this quality. As a rule, children are not arrogant and boastful. Unless catered to, they do not exhibit a “my way or the hi-way” attitude. They are humble, respectful of authority, and willing to yield. We must humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, yielding obedience to His will.

○ **Trust.** Children are trusting, not because they are gullible, but because they have never been disappointed. God is faithful, and our willingness to trust Him should be an acknowledgement of His faithfulness.

○ **Innocence.** Childhood is characterized by purity and innocence. We protect our children from the ravages of reality in order to prolong this blissful stage of their lives. Children are free

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Being born again stresses a spiritual creation. Adoption is an image of rescue and redemption. The Bible portrays those who are orphaned as being helpless and vulnerable (Ps. 10:14, 17-18; James 1:27). The one who is adopted is rescued from a state of helplessness. He has been given an equal place in a family, with all the blessings, privileges, and responsibilities that go along with it.

### **The Blessings Of Being A Child Of God**

**1. We Have A New Name.** One who is adopted into a family takes on that family’s name. Disciples of Christ have a new name: “And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11:26). The Greek term that is translated “were called” is **chrematizo**, which means to reveal or speak by divine direction. God is the one who called the disciples “Christians.” We wear the name “Christian” as that name which is given to us by our Father.

With that new name we have a new identity with the world. We stand in stark contrast with the children of the devil (1 John 3:10), shining as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation (Phil. 2:15).

**2. We Are the Object of God’s Love and Attention.** Some people wonder if God really cares about them. The fact we are a child of God is evidence of His great love for us (1 John 3:1). This love is displayed when God sent His only begotten Son to die for us while we were still in our sins (Rom. 5:6-8).

As His children, we have God’s attention and interest (1 John 5:14-15). His eyes are open to our struggles, and His ears are attentive to our prayers (1 Pet. 3:12; cf. Ps. 34:17). John was told that God would be like a loving Father who tenderly wipes the tears from His children’s eyes (Rev. 21:4).

**3. A Father’s Provision.** Fathers are commanded to provide for their families (1 Tim. 5:8). God provides for His own (Ps. 37:25). As God’s children, we are not to worry about the necessities of life, but commit ourselves to His kingdom and trust in His care (Matt. 6:25-34). God knows our needs (Matt. 6:32), and will care for us as a good and loving Father (Matt. 7:7-11). We are to simply ask, and God will gladly give us what is good (James 1:5, 17), in abundance (Phil. 4:19).

**4. A Father's Protection.** Fathers protect their children, and the Bible shows that God protects His children. God is faithful to guard us from the evil one (2 Thess. 3:3), to limit the severity of his temptations, and to provide a way of escape out of temptation (1 Cor. 10:13).

God never abandons us (Heb. 13:5-6). We have confidence in the fact that He is our constant companion and helper. We can overcome the world because our Father is greater than anything in the world (1 John 4:4; 5:4). Nothing separates us from His love (Rom. 8:31-39), nor snatches us out of His hand (John 10:28-29).

**5. A Father's Guidance.** Fathers are to teach their children (Deut. 6:7, Eph. 6:4). God likewise gives us instruction and guidance. We are to look upon God as our shepherd (Psalm 23) and our guide (Matt. 6:13). A child of God is one who is led by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:14). A disciple abides in the words of Christ (John 8:31), and thus lives by the word of God (Matt. 4:4). God also gives us needed discipline, which is further proof we are His children (Heb. 12:5-11).

**6. An Inheritance.** Fathers leave an inheritance to their children. As children of God, we stand to inherit that which belongs to our Father (Rev. 21:7). If we are children, we are heirs (Rom. 8:16-17). We are qualified to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints (Col. 1:12), which is reserved in heaven for us (1 Pet. 1:3-4).

## The Responsibilities Of Being A Child Of God

Adoption into the family of God brings great blessings, but it also brings responsibilities.

We must live up to the precious new name that we wear by keeping ourselves separate from the sinful world (2 Tim. 2:19; 2 Cor. 6:17-18).

We must return God's love for us with a wholehearted love for Him, shown by our obedience to His commands (Matt. 22:36-38; 1 John 5:3).

We must walk by faith, trusting in God to provide for our daily physical and spiritual needs, as well as delivering on His promise of an eternal reward in Heaven (2 Cor. 5:7; 2 Tim. 1:12).

## Becoming Like Children - Matt. 18:3

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from suspicion, malice, cynicism, and ulterior motives. God would have His children to be innocent of sin (1 Cor. 14:20).

### ○ **Forgiveness.**

Sometimes children can get in terrible fights, but within minutes they have made up and go off hand in hand playing with each other. Children don't want enemies. They want to have friends and to play. They, almost instinctually, know how to do this. Instead of harboring resentment and nursing grudges, they forgive and get back to the important thing – playing. God wants His children to show the same willingness to forgive and move on (Col. 3:13).

○ **Growth.** Children grow. Luke says that Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men (Luke 2:52). God expects His children to grow in their knowledge of His will and in the exercise of their talents and abilities (Eph. 5:17; Heb. 5:12-14; Matt. 25:16-18).

We must follow God's word, grow spiritually, respond positively to His discipline, and take the way of escape from temptation that He provides for us (2 Pet. 3:18; 1 Cor. 10:13).

We can leave our Father's house. When we do, we forfeit all rights and privileges as a son (Luke 15:11-24, esp. v. 19), as well as our eternal soul (James 5:19-20). When we sin, we must repent and seek God's forgiveness (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).

## Conclusion

Of all the illustrations used by the Lord and His apostles to describe the meaning of discipleship, perhaps none is more meaningful to us than that of being a child of God. It is not so much a description of our responsibilities as it is a portrait of God's great love for us.

God is our Creator. He is deserving of our reverent fear and faithful obedience. However, God wants to be our loving Father. He wants us accept the place that He offers us in His family, to wear the name of His Son, to live in faith knowing that He loves us and cares for us, to accept His guidance and protection, and to remain faithful so that we can be with Him in Heaven for eternity.

## Questions

1. Who gives us the right to be called children of God (John 1:12)? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How does the Holy Spirit bear witness with our spirit that we are children of God (Rom. 8:16)? \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. In your own words, explain the significance of God adopting you as His child. \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. Who gives the name "Christian" to the disciples (Acts 11:26)? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What are children of God to do in this world (Phil. 2:15)? \_\_\_\_\_  
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6. How can we know that God loves us (Rom. 5:8)? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Of what is John confident (1 John 5:14-15)? \_\_\_\_\_  
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8. What had David never seen (Ps. 37:25)? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Why should we not worry about our daily necessities (Matt. 6:32, 7:11)? \_\_\_\_\_  
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10. Who helps us overcome the world (1 John 4:4, Heb. 13:5-6)? \_\_\_\_\_

11. How does God help us during times of temptation (1 Cor. 10:13)? \_\_\_\_\_  
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12. How does God guide us (Matt. 4:4)? \_\_\_\_\_  
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13. How should we respond to God's chastening (Heb. 12:5-11)? \_\_\_\_\_  
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14. What do faithful children of God stand to inherit (Rev. 21:7)? \_\_\_\_\_

15. How does Peter describe our inheritance (1 Pet. 1:3-4)? \_\_\_\_\_  
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Match the correct Scripture with the corresponding responsibility of being a child of God.

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| ___ To grow                            | a. Matt. 22:36-38 |
| ___ Come out and be separate           | b. 1 Cor. 10:13   |
| ___ Depart from iniquity               | c. 2 Cor. 5:7     |
| ___ Love God                           | d. 2 Cor. 6:17-18 |
| ___ Obey God's commandments            | e. 2 Tim. 2:19    |
| ___ Walk by faith                      | f. 2 Pet. 3:18    |
| ___ Take way of escape from temptation | g. 1 John 1:9     |
| ___ Confess and pray for forgiveness   | h. 1 John 5:3     |