## What it means to be a child of God | 1 John 3:1-10 | 6/24/18

- Introduction
  - As Christians we may not always understand the relationship that we have with God, that it is much more than a legally binding agreement or even a friendship.
  - o The Bible tells us that we are children of God who are born of Him.
  - o Being part of God's family shows just how special and loved we are to Him.
  - This also shows us that by being a child of God that there is a change within us once we have received His Holy Spirit. A heart change where we shift from a life of sinning and lawlessness to one of righteousness.
- Christians are children of God | 1 John 3:1-2
  - Read 1 John 3:1-2
  - Our salvation is founded on God's love for us.
    - When we think of how it is that we are saved, some think of it as solely a "decision" that WE make.
      - While there is a decision involved on our part (if we will believe, trust and follow Him) this isn't the reason why salvation is possible.
    - Salvation is only possible because of the love that God has for us. Without this love it is impossible for us to be a child of God or to receive His Holy Spirit.
    - Because of this love He chose us
      - Ephesians 1:4b-5
        - "...In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,"
      - Because God loved us with a love beyond measure. He chose us be His child, and to live with Him for eternity.
      - He even knew us BEFORE we were born
        - God's love for us was there even before we drew a breadth, our lives were already planned and woven by Him.
        - o Jeremiah 1:5a
          - "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you;..."
        - o Galatians 1:15
          - "But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace,"
    - Christ died for us out of love.
      - Romans 5:8
        - "but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
        - Even though we are undeserving sinners whom do things contrary to the nature of God, He still loved us enough to die for us.
      - For us to be able to be His children He had to make the ultimate sacrifice, to die in our place. This was done out of love, which there is no greater act of love than this.
        - o John 15:13
          - "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."
      - 1 John 4:10

- "In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."
- Reflect on this statement "your salvation is only possible because of God's love for you", and tell me what it means to you.
- o When we receive the Holy Spirt we become His child.
  - Some take our relationship with God as being legalistic.
    - That we simply have a legal binding contract with a "god" whom has agreed not to punish us because of some act or work.
    - With this view God is not seen as loving and certainly not relational.
  - But instead we find that God is a relational being who is loving.
    - God is a relational being because he IS love.
      - o 1 John 4:8
        - "Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love."
  - God's love for us is so strong that He sees us as His children.
    - When we truly believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, when we have true saving faith, it is then that we receive the Holy Spirit and become a child of God.
    - John 1:12
      - "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."
      - How significant! "nor of the will of man, but of God"
    - Romans 8:14
      - "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God."
    - Romans 8:15b-16
      - "...but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry,
        "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,
    - As being a child of God, this means He sees us even beyond anything that we can conceive in a parent/child relationship.
      - o As a parent I know first-hand what it feels like to love your children.
        - It is an unexplainable love that you have immediately upon their birth, in fact that love is there even BEFORE they are born.
        - This love is so strong that you would give and do anything for them.
        - It is a sacrificial love.
      - God's love for us is beyond anything we can imagine, His love for us is more than we can possibly understand.
  - To be a child of God also means to be part of God's FAMILY.
    - If we are His children, then that puts us in the loving family of God consisting not only of God but all Christians.
    - The word "family" resonates with everyone.
      - When used it universally means and implies love.
      - This is understood by a traditional family unit to even teenagers who have found themselves as members in a gang.
    - Family means that we are not alone and that we have others who care, love and will look after us.
    - This is what we all have as being part of God's family.

- By being His children and in His family, He values us and will never forget us.
  - God will never forget us just as He told the Israelites.
    - These verses were directed towards the people of Israel, but this same truth is seen throughout the Bible. God will always remember and be there for us.
    - o Isaiah 49:15-16a
      - "Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands;..."
  - In fact, we are so important to Him that he has counted every hair on our heads.
    - o Luke 12:6-7
      - "Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows."
- What does it mean to you to see God as your heavenly Father?
- How significant is His love for you knowing that you are His child?
- What does being part of the family of God mean to you?
- As God's children we molded in His image and will turn to righteousness. | 1 John 3:3-10
  - o Read 1 John 3:3-10
  - As one who has received His Spirit and has become His child, there will also be a change in our lives.
    - The effect on the Christian who has become a child of God is a changed life.
    - We now have the Holy Spirit living within us and are lives will begin to be purified, to look more and more like our heavenly Father.
    - The Scriptures tell us that the change life will be present and visible in all those who are truly a child of God.
      - 1 John 3:10
        - "By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of god, nor is the one who does not love his brother."
    - Therefore, there will be good fruit produced from the child of God, they will strive to live their life righteously and turn away from their sins.
  - We will begin living our lives for Him, we will begin to purify ourselves.
    - 1 John 3:3
      - "And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure."
    - It is important that we understand **that this purification is a process.** We will not immediately on day one "live perfect". In fact, we never will.
    - However, being a child of God means that we will strive to purify ourselves to live Godly lives to turn away from our habitual sins.
      - 1 John 3:6
        - "No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him."
      - At first glance we might think this to mean that we have to be completely sinless to be a Christian, but we know this is not so.
      - While we will never be sinless until we are transformed into our heavenly bodies, a Christian will turn away from their habitual, unrepentant sinning.

- When you have the Holy Spirit living within you and you sin, you are going to know it.
  - Especially if that sin that is habitual, you will feel the heavy hand of God's conviction.
- If there is no change in your life after being "saved" and you relish in your sins without conviction or care, then one needs to question the genuineness of their confession of faith.
- What does the results of this look like in the life of a Christian?
- We are being transformed to look more like Him.
  - 2 Corinthians 3:18
    - "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another."
  - We know that God is perfect and holy, it is His image that we are being transformed into.
    - Though the final product will not be seen until heaven.
      - o 1 John 3:2b
        - "...and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is."
  - This transformation comes through spiritual maturity.
    - As we grow as Christians we grown in our spiritual maturity.
    - This is the life-long process that Christians go through, with some doing it better than others.
    - God's desire for us is to grow our relationship with Him so that we can look more like Him every day.
- As His children we must be imitators of Him.
  - Ephesians 5:1
    - "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children."
  - The best way that we can transform ourselves to look more like God is to imitate Him.
  - Just as a child imitates their parents (for better or worse) we should imitate our perfect heavenly Father.
  - He has given us clear instructions in the Scriptures and also through His Holy Spirit.
    - This is why prayer and reading the Scriptures are so important.
    - If we want to imitate Him, we need to study His character and every instruction that He left here for us.
    - By doing this we will grow to look more like Him.
- When we live like a child of God we will not look like the world.
  - One key way to differentiate a Christian from the world is with their fruit and how they live their lives.
  - A Christian WILL look different, they will seem to go against the grain and not appear to be of the world.
    - 1 John 3:1b
      - "...The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him."
    - John 17:16
      - o "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.
  - If our lives look no different than the rest of the world then we are not imitating Christ.

- Jesus was the most unique, significant and "different" person that ever lived on the earth.
- He didn't blend in to look like everyone else, He was different.
- He lived a perfect and sinless life and showed love, grace and mercy to everyone.
- This is the life that we are to imitate, the life that we are to live by.
- o What is it that you do in your life to imitate Christ? To grow spiritually and to purify yourself?
- What are the benefits to the Christian who strives to live their life to consistently purify and imitate Christ?