

Children of God John 1.12-13

3 Ways NOT to Become a Child of God

1. Not by birth

- Creation speaks to purpose and care
 - Amazing that God has knit us together the way He has
 - But you didn't ask to be born – how can we think that is a basis for relating to God?
 - Acts 17 – “we are God's offspring” -> “repent!” (v.30)
 - You are not most authentically and truly you until you are rightly related to God – by receiving Him and believing in His name
 - “God made me with these desires, so surely He wants me to follow them”
 - You were made with desires
 - Desires are designed to bring you joy
 - Desires bring joy when submitted to His authority and shaped by His power
 - Desires unchecked bring forth sin and death (James 1)
- Childhood speaks to relationship
 - A watch can be worn by another but a child implies a family

2. Not by lineage

- Identifying with certain people doesn't identify you with God
 - But identifying with a certain Person does – Jesus
 - We must receive Him by believing in His Name
- God makes a new person part of a new people
 - The church is designed by God to be a family
 - Family is important, but there's more to family than genealogy (Luke 14.25-26)
 - Some hear family and say no thanks – baggage could prevent ever joining in
 - Fatherhood – Family – Fights
 - If you need a place to belong no matter your struggles, then church is the right place

3. Not by determination

- Self-reliance and self-help do not make us children of God
 - Self is the common thread and it's always a distancing force in relationships
- Two Expressions
- Prodigal – I'm going to go my own way and God will just have to accept that
 - He will, but He doesn't like it and you won't either

- Pharisee – I’m going to do everything right and God will have to accept me
 - Misunderstanding of God entirely and the Gospel completely
- AIRLINE AISLE – there’s only one way
- You must receive Him by believing in His name

When you are born of God...

You are a child of the King

You are in His family

You are heirs to eternity

You have purpose in trial

You have promises eternal

You have reason for living

You have news worth sharing

You have indwelling power

You have directional leading

You have security

You have acceptance

You have approval

You have significance

You have liberty

You have gifts

You have hope

You have a future

But there’s only one way that happens – receiving Him by believing in His name

- Surrender your life and space to His sovereignty
- Believe He is who He says He is and does what He declares

Admit you are a sinner

Believe Jesus died and rose again for you

Commit your life to Him

Questions for Discussion:

1. When did you put your trust in Christ and become a child of God?
2. Which of the 3 myths about how to become a child of God are you most apt to believe? Which do you think is most prevalent in our culture?
3. Why do you think it’s important to stress that God not only makes a new person but a new people? What does this relational side of Christianity speak to in our culture?
4. Read James 1.12-15. How does James speak about desire? How does that differ from the way our culture speaks about desire?
5. Which are you most naturally inclined toward: the Pharisee or the Prodigal? Why? How does that express itself?