

Are You A Child Of God?

Joe Slater

In the generic sense, all human beings “*are the offspring of God*” (Acts 17:29) because we are made “in the image of God” (Genesis 1:27). But I am asking if you are a child of God in the specific sense of having been born again of water and the Spirit (John 3:3, 5). That is to say, have you believed the gospel and been baptized (Mark 16:16)? If you have, then you are a child of God.

As I have talked to people about their relationship with God, several have told me what fine Christians their parents were, or that “my wife (or husband, as the case may be) is a faithful member of the church.” While I rejoice if such is, indeed, the case, your parents’ relationship with God makes you neither more nor less pleasing to Him. The same is true of your spouse; you can’t go to Heaven in your spouse’s coat pocket!

Someone astutely observed that God has no grandchildren. If your parents were children of God, that’s great! But it doesn’t make you God’s grandchild and thereby secure your salvation. We might add that God has no sons-in-law or daughters-in-law, either. If your spouse is a child of God, you are blessed in numerous ways; but that doesn’t make you God’s son-in-law or daughter-in-law, eligible to receive eternal life without believing and obeying the gospel.

Let me ask again: Are you a child of God? To as many as received Jesus “*He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God*” (John 1:12, 13).

Receiving Jesus, then, is not reciting a prayer or “asking Jesus to come into your heart.” It is believing in Him and being spiritually reborn through baptism into

Christ. In baptism, one dies to sin and comes forth to live in newness of life (Romans 6:4)

As children grow and develop after they are born, so God’s spiritual children must strive to become more and more like Jesus. The apostle John specifies two major areas upon which we are to focus: “*In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother*” (1 John 3:10).

Children of God, then, must practice righteousness (i.e. obey God’s word), and they must love each other.

Are you a child of God?

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CAN YOU IMAGINE?

Can you imagine a time in which Christians have no rights, and are even persecuted?

Can you imagine a time when people from other nations cross over your borders and do unimaginable things to you and your family?

Can you imagine public bathrooms where all manner of lewd and lascivious activities take place?

Can you imagine a time in which the government falls into the hands of the most immoral?

Then you can imagine the First Century, a time in which the church grew like wildfire - and continued until the government and church became intertwined.

Perhaps I should start spreading the Good News as faithfully and boldly as I spread political and cultural news. Immorality and the government cannot stop the church from growing. Only Christians can do that. (Psalm 20:7; 118:8).

Corey Sawyers (Paris, TN)

WINGS OF EAGLES

"But they that wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31).

The first time I saw Isaiah 40:31, I was in the sixth grade. The verse was a handwriting practice assignment given to the class by our teacher, Lois Riggs. She was very religious, but I don’t know which church she attended. We often had Bible verses for handwriting.

I had never been to church, but I had been thinking about God, probably because of the other Bible verses we had for handwriting practice. This verse, though, hit a place in my heart, and it wouldn’t let go of a poor country girl who was searching for something to cling to. I wanted more than anything to learn about God. It wasn’t long after that my grandfather invited me and my sister to attend church with him.

Miss Riggs planted the seeds that grew in me. It didn’t happen in one day, and probably not in a week or a month. But that seed took root and grew, and within a year, I became a Christian.

So many times we try to convert someone, but we become discouraged when we don’t see results quickly. We never know how the seed of God that we implant in their heart is growing.

Many people are like I was. They are hungry for God, and they are yearning for someone to tell them how to find Him. They may not have the resources or the know-how to find God on their own. They must rely on someone to point the way. Let us be the ones to give them wings of eagles so they can learn how to run, and not be weary, and walk, and not faint.

--Donna Richmond Wittlif (Denver, CO)