

**Child of God**  
**Psalm 107:1-9**  
**1 John 3:1-3**

We can live only in relationships. We need each other. A rather crude and cruel experiment was carried out by Emperor Frederick, who ruled the Roman Empire in the thirteenth century. He wanted to know what man's original language was: Hebrew, Greek, or Latin? He decided to isolate a few infants from the sound of the human voice. He reasoned that they would eventually speak the natural tongue of man. Wet nurses who were sworn to absolute silence were obtained, and though it was difficult for them, they abided by the rule. The infants never heard a word -- not a sound from a human voice. Within several months they were all dead.<sup>1</sup>

Faith in Jesus is about relationship. It is not a master—slave relationship but a loving parent—child relationship. Just as a child needs a loving and caring parent to care, protect, and guide him, so too, a Christian needs God for care, protection, and guidance. Depending on the experiences we had growing up, we may not like the idea of being a child of God. Abuse, neglect, loss of a parent, abandonment, and difficult childhoods may leave us with a bad taste toward the idea of being anyone's child. If our childhood was less than caring and loving, then we need to learn what a blessed childhood should be like.

The perfect love of a child is the love of God and Jesus. The people of Israel had been called the children of God for centuries. They grew up under the umbrella of God's love and grace and had the privilege of being born into God's family. For centuries, generation after generation, God covenanted with the people of Israel and together they went through all the aspects of a normal relationship. The commitment that God had to God's people was like a marriage. God's relationship to the people of Israel was faithful and in turn, the people of Israel sought to be faithful to God. This two way relationship was built upon trust, faithfulness, and a relationship that insisted in constant contact. Just as a parent keeps an eye on his or her children, so too, God keeps an eye on His children. When a child needs protection, a parent protects. When a child needs guidance, a parent guides. And when a child needs someone to comfort him, a good parent is there to provide that comfort and care. God is the same with God's children.

Through Christ, God's family is opened up to all those who open up their lives to becoming a child of God. In this sense we are adopted children. Adopted children have all the rights, privileges, and expectations of birth children. Our future is made up of what God has planned for us. It hinges on God's love for us and not on our past or birth family.

The apostle Paul wrote on this more extensively. In Romans 8:16-17a he writes: "...it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ."

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<sup>1</sup> Joe E. Trull. <http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/r/relationships.htm> (accessed October 25, 2011)

We also know from experience, that there are sacrifices that parents make on behalf of their children. Some parents scrape every penny they can find together so that their children can attend college. Some parents let go of free time in order to earn money to support a child with special needs. Other parents sacrifice materialistic things in order to make sure their children are well fed and well clothed. In the same way, God has made many sacrifices for us. The most important sacrifice is that of God's only Son, Jesus. This sacrifice was made in the same manner as any parent who deeply loves their child.

We also know that parent's often protect their children by holding back some information from their children. For example, does a child really need to know all the frustrations you encounter as a parent or is it more important to show your child love no matter what the circumstance? Parents restrict their children from watching movies and shows with questionable content because they want to protect their children from nightmares and gory images that may alter their child's healthy growing. Parents attempt to be honest with their children while at the same time protect them from things that they don't need to know until they are older.

In the same way, we do not know everything that God does. God reveals to us information with God deems it is the right time not necessarily when we think it is the right time. Some things we may never fully understand until we have a chance to ask God in heaven. But as we grow in our relationship with Jesus, and as we mature in our faith, God opens doors of understanding that before we would never have understood.

John even reminds us that our future as God's children has not been fully revealed. He says, "Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is." This is an awesome assurance that by trusting in Jesus, we will one day come to fully understand who he is and how awesome he is. Like a child who grows up to be like his or her parent, as children of God who are faithful, we too will grow up in faith to be like God.

And to do this all we have to do is accept our role as a child of God and continue to be in relationship with God. And as in any relationship, it does take work. But no matter what, just as parents unconditionally love their children, so too God loves each one of us. I will leave you with this:

## Ten Commandments of Human Relations

1. Speak to people. There is nothing as nice as a cheerful word of greeting.
2. Smile at people. It takes seventy-two muscles to frown, only fourteen to smile.
3. Call people by name. Music to anyone's ears is the sound of his/her own name.
4. Be friendly and helpful.
5. Be cordial. Speak and act as if everything you do is genuinely a pleasure, and if it isn't, learn to make it so.
6. Be genuinely interested in people. You can like almost everybody if you try.
7. Be generous with praise, cautious with criticism.
8. Be considerate with the feelings of others. There are usually three sides to a controversy: yours, the other fellow's, and the right one.
9. Be alert to serve. What counts most in life is what we do for others.
10. Add to this a good sense of humor, a big dose of patience, and a dash of humility, and you will be rewarded manifold through life.<sup>2</sup>

May you be blessed as a child of God. Amen.

### **Prayer:**

Everlasting parent,

Thank you for accepting us as your children. Help us to nurture our relationship with you as you are always there ready to be by our side. Guide us to trust in your ways and open our eyes to the blessings that you pour out to us as your children. In Jesus name we trust in you. Amen.

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from the *Bible Tract Bulletin*. <http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/r/relationships.htm> (accessed October 25, 2011)