

Series: *Who Am I?: What it means to be a child of God*

Part 4: Do I really have to obey God?

1 John 5:1-5, John 14:15, Matthew 11:28-30, John 15:9-12 - [Watch online](#)

Summary:

According to Jesus and the biblical writers, some people are children of God and some are not. That sounds horribly exclusive? But is it? And what difference does it really make if someone is a child of God or not?

Discussion Questions:

1. As we finish this series, how would you describe what it means to be a "Child of God?"
2. Jesus said, "If you love me you will keep my commandments." What is your initial reaction to this? How would you explain the relationship between loving Jesus and obeying Jesus?
3. Read 1 Peter 2:9-10. Is there a thought or a word in this passage that grabs your attention? How would you relate this passage to your answer for #1?
4. Are there any thoughts, questions, ideas that you still have about this idea of being children of God?
5. How can your group pray for you?

Main Points:

- The exclusivity of Jesus' invitation creates a tension that can be difficult to resolve.
- Jesus' invitation solves the tensions of our anger, apathy, fear, and pride.
- Obedience does not MAKE someone a child of God... it is the result of already being one.
- Obedience is accepting to make Jesus's priorities your priorities because you love and trust him.
- Obedience is the privilege of a child of God.
- Jesus' command to love is the simplest and most powerful command in the world.
- The invitation to become a child of God is an invitation to accept the life we are all looking for.
- Being a child of God is being who we were always meant to be.

Weekly Challenge:

Accept the invitation to **be** a Child of God

Accept the invitation to **live as** a Child of God

Read: 1 Peter 2:9-10

Pray: God, show me how to show your goodness today.

Transcript:

INTRO: What's the point? What is the point of your life?

Is there one or you just kind of exist and get through each day hoping someday something will be more/get better but so far for the most part every day is really just something to get through?

Listen... There's something better. A better way. An actual real life that also gives life to others. I'm not trying to sell you anything.

It's something Jesus offers to everyone... So let's talk about it together.

WE: Review series...

- Jesus offers a new identity- CoG
- Identity that completely transforms who we are/how we see ourselves and others... a new WE with which to identify
- New identity is based on a new relationship w/ God... no longer fearful slaves but trusting children.

But let's be honest... if there is an offer to be a child of God, that means some accept it and some don't.

So the idea that "Oh God made us so we're all children of God"... isn't true.

Jesus and the biblical writers make it very clear that some people are, right now, children of God and some, right now, aren't.

There's this tension- God loves everyone, but some people aren't actually in the "family of God"

The exclusivity of Jesus' invitation creates a tension that can be difficult to resolve.

This exclusivity can cause a few reactions...

Anger/Rejection- "Well if you don't want me I don't want you. Not fair!" (False premise...stick around)

Apathy- Who cares. Wasn't interested anyway

Fear/Anxiety- For those that really care. "Maybe I'm not what I thought I was... I'm definitely not a perfect Xian. Maybe I'm out?"

Pride- "That's right. I'm in. You're out. Sucks for you."

But the truth is... **Jesus' invitation solves the tensions of our anger, apathy, fear, and pride.**

How does that really change us? What is the difference between those who are CoG's and those who aren't yet?

And how do we KNOW whether we are actually children of God... or not?

GOD: (1 John 5:1-5)

Jesus' BF John gave us an answer... after living w/ Jesus watching him die and rise again spent the rest of his life telling others about who Jesus really was and his invitation to be a child of God...

But after a while some "spiritual people came in saying "Jesus wasn't God. You're wrong. I know what God really wants and it's not this namby pamby greasy grace stuff..."

John writes a letter (1 John) to remind them he's an eyewitness and reminding them of what they already know.

A lot is a repeat of what he wrote about Jesus' teaching in John... Telling them to stay true to it

JF this is what you are... **Not Yet** this is what you are invited to be...

V. 1a That's it. That is the requirement to be a child of God, a new type of human... a human who's full humanity has been restored

And it is given ONLY to those who CHOOSE to believe and trust that Jesus really is the Christ/the Messiah/the chosen one/God in a body who restores our relationship with God and therefore our true humanity.

Not just someone who says they believe...this is an active belief... those who with their lives/actions lean on and depend on Jesus.

And it IS exclusive... some are Children of God and some choose not to be, but...

This is the most inclusive exclusive group there has ever been... Everyone is invited... but you have to choose to accept it.

Like: "You cannot eat this steak unless you come to my restaurant." But the restaurant is next door and all of the food is free... you just have to come in and you can eat it.

Have you made that choice?

If you have... then John says you HAVE become a child of God. It's a done deal.

Just as a child is adopted... the moment the judge issues the final decree of adoption that child is permanently a part of that family.

But how can we be sure we have this identity? What is the proof?

The choice to believe/trust (faith) transforms from the inside out... The proof is what comes out.

V. 1b-2 Can be confusing and circular if we don't go slow and take a good look...

The proof that we love God is in what we do- it's if we love his children.

The proof we love his children is if we love God... by obeying his commands... Huh?

- This is the DOING part of belief.

First... **Obedience does not MAKE someone a child of God... it is the result of already being one.**

- Producing apples doesn't make a tree an apple tree
- It produces apples b/c it IS an apple tree... it's the proof that it's a healthy apple tree. It's what a real apple tree DOES.

It's what Jesus said in **John 14:15 {NASB}** **If you love me you will keep my commandments.**

Ugh, obedience to commandments? "I knew it... you finally sprung your religion trap!"

No listen... what actually is obedience?

Obedience is not checking things off of a do and do not do list... Blind rule following isn't obedience

Obedience is not knowing a lot about God/the bible/ theology... Knowledge is not obedience

Obedience is not agreeing that Jesus was right or that living the Jesus way is best... Agreement is not obedience

Obedience is not feeling really good when you think about Jesus or sing a worship song... Feelings aren't obedience

Actually DOING what Jesus says is obedience. It's a choice to submit to him b/c we trust him...

Obedience is accepting to make Jesus's priorities your priorities b/c you love and trust him.

John is saying that obedience is the proof that someone is a child of God.

If we love God, we obey God.

But not a one time thing... it is a daily in the big and small things...

This IS a big deal. This isn't just something we **add** to our life. This is not an **aspect** of our life.

Being a child of God means centering our lives on Jesus and his teachings, life, death, resurrection.

I know... That sounds heavy. "So we have to become all religious and righteous and basically Ned Flanders-y?"

I agree... that sounds terrible.

And I admit that many Xians have made it seem that way b/c that's, at least how they say, they live and then try to make others (their kids) live that way...

But that's not actually the life of a child of God...

V. 3 Or as Jesus put it... **Matt 11:28-30**

Obedience is the privilege of a Child of God.

What? Ok how is "Obeying the commands of God" a privilege and not burdensome?

What are they? Well it's not really a **they** it's an **it**... one command that encompasses everything else... **John 15:9-12**

Obeying God's commandments isn't a burden in the sense... "Ugh, Ok I HAVE to do this": It's not something that we have to muster up... we just have to allow him to do it through us.. Give us his love for others

And it's not burdensome in the sense... "this life is so depriving/guilt producing/boring"...

It's a command that actually makes life better/fuller/exciting...

Your daily life becomes an experience of God living through and loving through you... You become a vessel/avatar-ish through which God loves those around you.

Jesus' command to love is the simplest and most powerful command in the world

It may at times be demanding and will be difficult but it's the least burdensome thing in the world... especially compared to the alternative.

Think about it... what is a more burdensome life... choosing to love someone like Jesus loves or constantly fighting for yourself/rights/wants, having rivalries and feuds with half the people you know including your own family...

What is more burdensome having a life devoted to sacrificial love or a life consumed by greed/selfishness/hate/anger/fear/and resentment?

Obedying Jesus' command to love really is the best way to live.

It is asking in every situation "What does love look like?"

- But the answer isn't whatever WE think it is... we have Jesus' example to follow.
- How he loved us... gave up all for the good of others... even those who were against him
- He not only gives us his example... for those that choose to be his children he gives us his holy spirit to live in us/control us/empower us to love like him.

So how do we actually love as Jesus loved?

- It's not just "being nice"
- It is a conscious choice/decision... to use our loves to love those he loves...
- Consciously looking for small and large ways to offer those around us what Jesus offers... encouragement/forgiveness/acceptance
- A conscious choice to take the time to look at and plan how we can use our Money, time/energy, prayers, actions... for others
- Letting the HS love others through us

Might still sound heavy... but wait It gets better

V. 4-5 Seems epic.

What does it mean to defeat this evil world?

When Biblical writers use world- system of thoughts/life that does not acknowledge God as King

The death, evil, fear, hatred, selfishness that rules this world.

Physical death, emotional death, relational death.

The wording of the victory here isn't something that CAN happen, it's something that HAS ALREADY happened...

B/c of the choice to trust Jesus, Children of God have defeated those powers through Jesus.

They once ruled CoG, as they do everyone w/o Jesus... but now we overcome b/c we are united to Jesus who did it.

When you realize how much you are loved... then that grounds your entire life and completely transforms how you see and treat others...

Your life becomes a life of love and peace instead of hate and fear... It's the life we all want/looking for... Comes from trusting in crucified/risen Jesus

The invitation to become a child of God is an invitation to accept the life we are all looking for.

YOU: How do we experience this life...

Accept the invitation to be a Child of God

- Maybe been a "Xian" for years or just started checking it out... realize never thought/heard of it this way...
- You are invited to join the most inclusive exclusive family in the universe... choose to trust that Jesus is actually who he said he was... and that he is the one who can restore us to our relationship with God.

Accept the invitation to live as a Child of God

- **Read: 1 Peter 2:9-10**
- **Pray: Jesus, Show me how to show your goodness today.**

As with every family... It starts at home and then spreads out to the world.

Choose to love your sisters and brothers in Christ... commit yourselves to each other.. Someone has to go first.

WE: Because. Children of God are different.

Others won't always understand it or get it.

A child of God doesn't identify with what others identify with.

They don't rely on what others rely on

They don't respond/react the way others do

They don't see the world as others see the world

But this is a difference that everyone is invited to live and experience.

It's different b/c it's better. It changes each day from something to survive to an adventure of endless opportunities to let God change the world through you.

You are invited to be a Child of God now and forever. The invitation is given. The choice to accept is yours.

This is what you've been looking for.

Being a child of God is being who we were always meant to be.