

A Christian is a Son of God

When a person becomes a **believer** in Jesus Christ, he/she is called a **child** of God. It is the neuter noun in the Greek, neither masculine nor feminine. Read John 1:12, Philippians 2:12-15, and 1 John 3:1-2. We understand that this obviously means both men and women—"sons" and "daughters" of faith. The King James Bible erroneously translates these as "sons".

*'But as many received Him, to them He gave the authority (right, privilege) to become **children** (sons and daughters) of God, to those who believe in His name.'* John 1:12.

Paul confirms: We are justified by faith, and we "are all **children** of God **through faith** in Christ Jesus" (see Galatians 3:24-26). Paul also tells us that we become **blameless** children without fault through the "working out" of our salvation with fear and trembling. How is it "worked out"? "For it is **God who works in you both to will and to do FOR** His good pleasure." In this process we are **not to complain or dispute** with God! WHY? Because we are "in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation" in which we **MUST SHINE AS LIGHTS** in the world. (see Philippians 2:12-15). **Being a child of God brings a responsibility.** We live not unto ourselves. We were bought with a price. We are to glorify God in ALL that we do, giving no offence and not seeking our own profit. (See 1 Cor. 10:31-33).

John tells us that in being called **children** of God we should behold what **manner** of love that the Father has bestowed on us. As children of God, what is God's intention for us? What are we to be like? John says that when Christ is revealed "**we shall be like Him**, for we shall see Him as He IS (the essence of His person). (see 1 John 3:1-2). Paul confirms that as children of God we are ALL chosen and called by God to "be **conformed to the image** of His Son" (Romans 8:28-29). In being born again the "image of God" in which **both** men and women were created is restored. (see Genesis 1:27). But again, that 'being conformed' is a life-long work of God in us called SANCTIFICATION.

Sons of God

Though as sons and daughters we are all **children** of God, there are also two great and wonderful mysteries in which all believers are either seen as "male" or "female":

1. All believers are called to be part of God's **BRIDE** – a feminine concept – with the Bridegroom being Christ Jesus.
2. All believers are also called to be **SONS** of God – a masculine designation. There is an important understanding about our relationship with God in this designation as SONS. We call this the doctrine of SONSHIP.

It is counter-intuitive for men to see themselves as a "bride" and women to see themselves as a "son". But it is important for us to understand these relationships. Only God through His Word and the work of the Holy Spirit can bring us into the understanding – light – of these truths.

What is SONSHIP?

- "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called **SONS** of God" (Mt. 5:9).
- "Whoever commits sin is a servant of sin... a servant does not abide in the house forever, but a **SON** abides forever" (John 8:34-35).
- "For as many as are **led** by the Spirit of God, **they** are the **SONS** of God" (Read Romans 8:12-16). The Holy Spirit is the **Spirit of adoption**.
- Hebrews 2:10-11 says that God brings us all as **SONS** to glory by making the captain of our salvation [Christ] perfect through suffering, for both He [Christ] who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified [believers] are **all of one**, for which reason He is not ashamed to call us **brethren**. Note that "sons" and "brethren" are here equivalent terms.
- In Hebrews 12 we are all called **SONS** in regard to the discipline of God. "And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to SONS (Greek is 'sons', not 'children'): 'My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD...'" (Heb. 12:5).
- "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My **SON**." Revelation 21:7. Compare SON, here, to those in verse 8 – unbelievers, cowards, murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, and ALL liars...

What can we obviously SEE from these Scriptures about SONS?

1. Sons of God are peacemakers
2. Sons of God are not slaves/servants of sin
3. Sons of God are led by the Holy Spirit. And Paul says those led by the Spirit will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh (Galatians 5:16) but walk in the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).
4. One is not a Son of God if he/she is not disciplined in God's love. A son of God does not despise God's chastening. If he does, he is illegitimate.

5. Only SONS of God inherit God's kingdom, because sons are **overcomers**. Overcomers are **opposite** in character to unbelievers. Some are cowards, murders, and sexually immoral. But ALL are liars. That condemns us ALL.

Jesus as a Son – the Pattern of our Sonship

John wrote "behold **what MANNER** of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we are called sons..." (1 Jn. 3:1) That "manner" of love is best seen in the love relationship of the Son, Jesus Christ, with His heavenly Father. There is no better place to see this than in **John's gospel**.

- The Son does nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever the Father does the Son also does *in like manner*. (5:19)
- For the Father LOVES the Son and shows Him all things that He Himself does. (5:20)
- Jesus had the authority of His Father to execute judgment because as a Son He fully submitted to His Father's will, even though the Father had granted Him "life in himself" and could have acted by his own will. (5:26-27). This is the essence of the attribute of **MEEKNESS**.
- Jesus, as a Son, did nothing of Himself, but as His Father taught Him, He spoke. (8:28).
- The Father was always WITH His Son – the Son was never alone. WHY? "For I always do those things that PLEASE Him." (8:29). Compare 14:10.
- Jesus as a Son never spoke on His own authority. He KNEW that His Father's word IS **everlasting life**. Therefore He spoke just as the Father told Him to speak. (12:49-50).
- The fact that the Son never speaks on his own authority is evidence that He is in the Father and the Father is in Him. (14:10).
- A son loves his father. The keeping of the father's word is clearly proof of that love. The love of the father in return opens his home to the son. (John 14:23). [Understand the implications of Jesus' words here!]
- Jesus tells us to love as He has loved us (13:34 and 14:12). And He said that He has loved us **as** His Father loved Him (15:9). We are to ABIDE in that love. How? By keeping His Word (15:10) just as He kept His Father's word. If we are not IN HIM, it is not possible. But we abide in Him by BEING a SON. The Father and the Son come and make their home with us because we are now SONS as Jesus was His Father's Son.

Sons of God are peace-makers

When Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers", He says THEY are the true sons of God. Peace-making speaks of the priestly ministry of intercession, mediation and reconciliation. These words should describe our lives as Christians. We **LIVE** to be ministers of reconciliation. Paul writes that the love of Christ **COMPELS** us that we should live no longer for ourselves but for Him who died for us and rose again (see 2 Corinthians 5:14-16). As "new creations" old things are passed away and we have been made new. As we have been reconciled to God, **He has given us the ministry of reconciliation**. We live to tell men that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them. We are called to be ambassadors of this message, to implore people to be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:17-21).

Sons of God are Builders of God's Kingdom

Jesus says that peacemakers are sons because they are building God's kingdom through their priestly ministry of reconciliation. The Hebrew word for "son" actually means "a builder" – of the family. The son carries the father's name. A daughter leaves her father's home and cleaves to her husband, taking his name—her identity is now in her husband's identity. She has become "one flesh" with him. So all believers leave their earthly identity to be married to Jesus Christ and become one with Him, taking HIS identity, His name, as their own, and being conformed to His image they become sons. We are then sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance as His purchased possession (read Ephesians 1:7-12). Again, **we are not our own. We have been bought with a price**. Therefore SONS of God WILL **glorify** God in all that they do.

Sons of God are the Inheritors of the Kingdom

Jesus, as a SON, BEING the brightness of His Father's glory, His perfect likeness and His expressed image, was therefore the appointed heir of all things (Heb. 1:2-3). Inheritance is appointed to SONS. Sons are to be in the image and likeness of their father as Jesus was. We are called to be conformed into Christ's image (Rom. 8:28-29). The Spirit is the deposit of the inheritance to come (Eph. 1:13-14). Paul explains that we – men and women – must become SONS of God **by faith** to inherit the Kingdom. Read Galatians 3:6-9, 13-14, 26-29. [Abraham represents Christ: a son of Abraham = a son of God in Christ].

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Sons of God are Led by the Holy Spirit

Paul makes a clear teaching in both Romans chapter 8 and Galatians chapter 5 that sonship IS life under the leadership and control of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the "Spirit of ADOPTION" (Romans 8:15). If one is not LED by the Spirit, Paul says, he is NOT A SON (Romans 8:13-14). The Spirit then bears witness to our human spirit that we are indeed children (sons and daughters) of God. Why is that? Only by the Spirit can we put to death the deeds of the body and live. Again the issue is in being conformed to Christ's image. To bear Christ's image is to be characterized by Christ's character, which is described by Paul this way [Galatians 5:16-25]:

1. A Lover. 2. Full of joy. 3. A peace-maker. 4. Long-suffering (patient). 5. Kind. 6. Good. 7. Faithful to the Father. 8. MEEK—never argues or debates with God, but submits without hesitation.. And 9. Temperate—passions under the control of the Spirit because we have wilfully crucified them.

Being baptized in and filled with the Holy Spirit is clearly one of the evidences that one is truly a SON of God and therefore a CHILD of God and an heir of God and joint heir with Christ (Romans 8:16-17). But Paul says that ***we are joint-heirs IF we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*** AGAIN, this is speaking of becoming ONE with Christ in everything, even His suffering. We must be one with Christ as Christ was one with His Father (John 17:11).

CONCLUSION: A son, who is a son indeed, is the ultimate work of God, for which Jesus was the pattern. God is intent on "bringing many sons to glory (Hebrews 2:10), which implies daughters as well. ***Sonship is the place of maturity, of an entering into the character and stature of that first pattern Son.***

Sonship is the key to the power and authority of God in the life of a Christian. God will not give His power, glory and authority to men who are still alive to themselves, their careers and their reputations. He will not entrust His glory to any flesh *at all*. He can only entrust His glory to dead men who have no interest in themselves or for themselves. They only desire to glorify the Father. It is precisely here that we have the definition of a biblical son: ***the man who lives his life with only one purpose—the Father's glory, not his own.*** A biblical son will represent and reflect His Father.