

# CHILD OF GOD



DISCOVERING WHO YOU ARE  
& WHERE YOU BELONG

# B1 STUDY | CHILD OF GOD

Discover Who You Are & Where You Belong | 1 John 3:1-3



As you read the introduction, fill in the blanks below.

## BEING A CHILD OF GOD MEANS TO...

1. Be \_\_\_\_\_
2. Be \_\_\_\_\_
3. Be \_\_\_\_\_
4. Be \_\_\_\_\_
5. Be \_\_\_\_\_

## INTRODUCTION

Together, let's picture a mirror and a map. Could we live without them? Most would say we need them— or at the very least we seek the answers they provide us. A mirror shows us a reflection of who we are, and a map points us to where we're going. When we're lost, it can show us the way home. As we move through life, there are all kinds of "mirrors" and "maps" around us, things that attempt to tell us who we are, where we belong, and how to get there. Social Media. Movies. Songs. Family. Friends. Teachers. Career Paths. We desire answers about our identity and belonging, so we start holding up some of these "mirrors" and "maps," asking questions like: Who am I? Where do I belong? But who or what can we trust? Do we decide all on our own? Even our own hearts can deceive us. (Jeremiah 17:9) Who then will tell us the Truth? Our holy, perfect, sinless Heavenly Father will always give us trustworthy answers. He speaks nothing but Truth to us in the Bible. Jesus is the mirror and the map that we need to look to in order to discover who we are and where we belong. His Word says we are Beloved. We are God's children now. In this study, we will let Jesus teach us what it means to be a child of God. 1 John 3:1-3 shows us that being a child of God means to **behold Him and become like Him**. It means to **be loved, be free, and belong**.

## SECTION ONE | BEHOLD HIM

Fill in the blanks by turning (or scrolling!) your Bible to 1 John chapter 3:1 in the English Standard Version (ESV)

\_\_\_\_\_ **what kind of \_\_\_\_\_ the Father has \_\_\_\_\_ to us, that we should be called \_\_\_\_\_, and so we are!**

Each word in this verse is so important if we are ever going to discover who we are and where we belong. What does it mean to “see” the love of God? What do we do with this love that has been “given” to us? And are we really children of God, or is that just a label we conform to believing... but don’t actually live like it’s true? Let’s take a closer look...

### **Being a Child of God Means to Behold Him**

Have you seen the love of God lately? John, the writer of this letter, encourages us to behold–see– an incredible truth: The Creator of the universe calls you his “daughter.” You can call him your Father– a privilege only possible through Jesus (see Ephesians 1:3-14). There is SO much to see when we look at God through this lens. As children of God (and so we are!), we must behold God. To behold God means to observe intently who he is. It is essential that we look up at our Father like young children do. But beholding God requires lots of humility, like a child. The first step is acknowledging that we are not God, we are not in control, we are not the boss, and we don’t make the rules. He is big. We are small. We depend on Him. “Seeing” God, as John calls us to do, means we get to look at him for who he truly is— **a loving Father**— as verse 1 says. John is echoing what Jesus taught His disciples to do. When Jesus was teaching his friends about what God is like to his children, he told a story about a lost son and a loving Father.

LOOK AT THE BOOK | One way we can “behold/see” the kind of loving Father God is to us is to look at our Bibles. Let’s look at the story Jesus tells in Luke 15:11-32. As you read, answer the below questions.

What stood out to you in this passage?

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What does this passage teach you about God? What does it teach you about people?

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### **SECTION TWO | BECOME LIKE HIM**

*Fill in the blanks by turning (or scrolling!) your Bible to 1 John chapter 3:2-3 in the English Standard Version (ESV)*

*Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears, we shall \_\_\_\_\_ because we shall \_\_\_\_\_ as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.*

Now, let's focus on the last part of the verse. When we behold God, we will become like him. Becoming what we behold is a Biblical idea. It's God's idea. Whatever we behold, we become like. Children learn to smile, stick out their tongues, or make silly faces by watching the faces of those around them. Ask any kid what they want to "be" when they grow up, and it's usually the latest superhero or princess they've seen. We never age out of this habit. The ability to be like what we behold is part of God's beautiful design for us. The verse we are studying now says, "We will be like him, for we shall see him." To be children of God is to gradually become like Jesus as we behold him. We are told to "be imitators of God, as beloved children" because we have "put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" (see Ephesians 4:24 and 5:1). When we were brought into the family of God, adopted through Jesus as it says in Ephesians 1:5, God gave us Jesus' spirit to dwell in us. Jesus is the mirror and map that tells us who we are and where we belong. Becoming like Jesus, the most joy-filled person to ever walk the earth, was always God's intention for his children. (see Ephesians 1:4) As God's child, everything Jesus obtained through his life, death, and resurrection is now ours. 1 John 3:2-3 says God longs for us to be pure like Jesus. (Pure is another word for "perfect" or "holy") How is this possible? We are *in Jesus* (this is how a holy God can call sinful people his own!), and *Jesus is in us* (this is how sinners can live pure!) God sees Jesus when he looks at us. And the world can see Jesus when they look at us. We are *always* covered by him. Essentially, we carry the DNA of Jesus everywhere we go to a world that hungers for the joy, compassion, and fulfillment we have found in him.

CONFESS TO ONE ANOTHER | Where have you fallen short of being like Jesus? What attitudes, wrongful actions, or thoughts do you need to admit and receive forgiveness for?

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### SECTION THREE | BE LOVED

I'm afraid we've skipped over two note-worthy words we should go back and focus on. The first is in verse 1: "**given**". The love that the Father has for us is *given*. Not earned. Not worked for. A perfect Father just simply loves his child. In Luke 15, Jesus' story of how God relates to his children shows us an unmerited love. The father in this story had two sons. Both thought they could earn their father's love. One of the sons asked his father, with much disrespect, to give him his inheritance early so he could spend it all irresponsibly on whatever he wanted. Culturally, this meant he was asking to be disowned by his family. When he was out of money and in need, he thought he could *work* his way back into the family. He planned to ask his father, "Treat me as one of your hired servants!" (verse 19) But before he could even *ask* to earn his father's love, his father had already freely given it to him– the father was running out to him and ready to give his son his loving embrace, his time and money to celebrate. He gave his son a lot that day– more inheritance, a feast, a family, and of course, his love. According to verses 28-30, the older brother assumed (similar to the younger) that he had to obey and do good to receive such a gift. Jesus tells this story to kill any misconceptions we have about our heavenly Father's love for us. We tend to have a hard time grasping God's *free*

love for us. God has given us Jesus, who paid the price for us to be reconciled to God and his family. And in Jesus, God has given us His eternal fatherly love. There is nothing we can do to earn it. Simply **be loved by God**. You have nothing to prove, which brings us to the second word to focus on. You'll find it at the very beginning in 1 John 3:2... **Beloved**. This literally means "loved by God." We would do well to let that be the primary name we call ourselves!

TRY SOMETHING NEW | Are there any names you've called yourself or labels you've put on besides "beloved?" Write some of them below. Now mark through them and write the

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#### SECTION FOUR | BE FREE

I hope by now you've let some truth about *who you are* settle into your heart and that your heart is becoming more child-like. If you're honest, would you say you're a "kid at heart"? Do you feel as though you will never truly "grow up?" Would you consider yourself to always seek fun, silly times with friends, dance parties even? Maybe you tend to be a bit more serious, but do you, like all children, long for freedom? Stability? Safety and comfort? I'd pretty much say that, to some degree, we are all kids at heart. The next truth about being a child of God brings that child-like freedom out of us. We have dug deeper into the name this verse has given us—Beloved. Now, let's dig deeper into the name that this verse calls God—Father. God is our Father, and being his children is truly *all* he requires of us. Isn't that freeing?! When God looks at you, he doesn't draw up a "to-do" list and say, "Get to work, and *then* you can play, kids..." No, of course not! Remember the picture Jesus painted of the kind of Father God is to us in Luke 15? He is the kind of Father who *runs to us* to *provide for our needs* so that we can *enjoy time with Him*. Now, yes, being a child of a *holy* God will result in obedience to his ways, purity, and love for Him above other things... but do you want to hear the best part about being a child of God? *You have what it takes*. Remember, Jesus, the Son of God, is *in* you! You can live out of *His* perfection, strength, and obedience. The only requirement is that you *depend on Him*. Child-like freedom from the worries and cares of this world is rooted in dependence on someone stronger and safer—someone like our Father! God's stability gives us the ability to be care-free. Jesus was the most joy-filled person who ever walked this earth... and I think it had something to do with his time spent enjoying each day with his heavenly Father in mind. I think it had something to do with being free from sin and able to be in perfect unity with the BEST Father. Because of Jesus' spirit in us, we, too, can enjoy this child-like freedom.

REMEMBER A TIME WHEN | Share a sweet memory of a time when you felt care-free. What about that time enabled you to feel that way?

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## SECTION FIVE | BELONG

Have you ever worried about where you belong in this world? Have you ever gotten frantic and nervous about choosing the wrong career path or team to be on? Do you often think about your friend group? Perhaps you've moved around a lot, and every time you moved into a new home, you wonder, "Where is my room?" Moving into a new city, state, or even country can have us thinking, "Do I belong here? Or am I just passing through?" On a personal note, every first day of school I had growing up made me nervous about where I would sit for lunch. I felt the pressure to get it right on the first day because it could determine where I would belong for the rest of the year. All that to say, part of the stress, worries, and anxieties we feel come from not knowing where we belong. Alternatively, when we *do* find where we belong, we can feel the sweet child-like freedom and joy our hearts hunger for! Thankfully, our place in this world isn't some mystery "X." And we aren't stuck finding it on our own. Our place of belonging can be discovered in 1 John 3:1-3. I'll let you fill in the blank with your new name...

\_\_\_\_\_, we are \_\_\_\_\_'s children now.

You *belong* to God. Your home is His home. Not only has God given you the "map" to your true home, telling you where you can find it... but he's also given you Jesus, who is "the way," he says (John 14:6). As a child of God, you are not left alone to journey home. Jesus carries you along the way. Where are you headed? To a seat at his table. The King is hosting a feast, and you are more than a guest of honor. You are his *heir*. His own. His daughter. You belong here.

WHEN YOU FORGET | When we forget who we are and where we belong, we step out of our identity as a child of God and into an orphan-like mentality. We forget that everything we need is already ours. Fear of loss causes us to take things into our own hands. Tuck the below prayer away somewhere or post it up where you can see it when you are tempted to forget.

Dear Daughter,

Behold my love. As my child, you have all you need. What you have received in Jesus, no one can take from you. You are fully known and fully loved. Cherished. Made pure. Everything I have made available to you, including my unending love, joy, and peace, is securely yours. My perfect love will cast off your every fear. Return to me. Rest in my love. Be free. This is where you belong. Cease from every effort to earn my love. Simply receive it. Enjoy all that I am and all that I have given you. Child-like freedom is yours.

Forever Yours,  
Your Heavenly Father

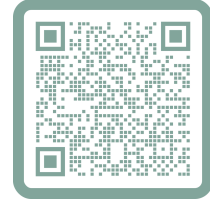
## TAKEAWAY

What are you taking away from this study that you need to remember in the days ahead?  
What's your next brave step?

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Fill in blanks

1. Behold Him
2. Becoming Like Him,
3. Beloved,
4. Be Free,
5. Belong