



FAMILY OF GOD

Why We Need Unity in the Church

When you enter into a relationship with God, you also enter into a relationship with hundreds of millions of other people - the family of God. He calls us the children of God and brothers and sisters in Christ. Though we may disagree, we're called to be unified in His Spirit. In this study, we will learn more about what it means to be a part of the family of God and how we relate to each other.

1 - Sons and Daughters

Read

"I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

- 2 Corinthians 6:18

"In love, he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will..." - Ephesians 1:5

Reflect/Discuss

- What are some characteristics of a good father?
- How has God shown us that he is a good father?

Consider

Jesus made a way for us to be not just followers, but children of God. When we admit that we are sinners, choose to believe in Jesus Christ, and confess Him as our savior, we become part of something much more powerful than a religious organization. We become part of a family - the family of God. The most powerful and holy being, who created all of the heavens and the universe, calls us his sons and daughters.

Children are dependent upon their parents, for life and then for providing for their needs and guidance. As children of God, we can look to God for every need - physical, emotional, and spiritual. He provides for us, His Spirit guides and comforts us, and His Son gives us eternal life and salvation. Children also resemble their parents - in their appearance and behaviors. In the same way, we represent God to the world around us. Our actions, reactions, and decisions are affected by our relationship with a loving Heavenly Father.

Act

- Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help you see God as a loving and faithful Father.
- Make a list of the things that cause you the most worry or stress. Pray and ask God to help you submit those things to Him and trust that your loving Father cares about your concerns.

Go Deeper

- [God as Father](#)

2 - Beloved Children

Read

“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” - Ephesians 5:1-2

“As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.” - Psalm 103:3

Reflect/Discuss

- Have you ever seen a child imitate their parents or loved ones?
- What does it mean to be an imitator of God?

Consider

Have you ever noticed the way that children play? They often imitate their parents - taking care of dolls, pretending to cook food, or dressing in their parents' clothes. It's natural for them to imitate the ones that love and care for them. In the same way, when we understand the goodness of our heavenly Father, we begin to imitate Him. We are able to show others the kind of selfless love and forgiveness that Jesus has shown us.

So how do we go about imitating God? Notice that the verse says that we do this as “beloved children.” The first step to imitating God is understanding that He is a good Father. When we understand the depth of God's love for us it creates peace and joy in our hearts. This peace and joy sustain us in every situation and allow us to love others as the Father does. Whatever we encounter, we should be known as children of a Good Father- full of peace and joy and love.

Act

- The best way to imitate God is to know Him. Spend some time this week reading about God in His word.
- Spend time fellowshiping with other believers. God created us to show His love to others but also to receive His love from others.

Go Deeper

- [Praying to “Our Father”](#)

3 - Brothers and Sisters

Read

“So in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others... Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves... Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.” - Romans 12:5,10 & 15

Reflect/Discuss

- How can we honor one another?
- How can we “rejoice with those who rejoice” and “mourn with those who mourn?”

Consider

One of the most beautiful blessings of salvation is the fact that we get to be a part of the family of God. God knew we would need encouragement and fellowship in this life. Sometimes following Jesus can mean that we are separated from our families, either physically or emotionally. Through the Holy Spirit, God unites believers in Jesus and makes us a family.

Much of the New Testament is instructions to the followers of Jesus to take care of each other and live life together. It is a part of God’s plan for us to share our lives with others. When we share our sufferings with others, it protects us from discouragement and despair. When we share in our rejoicing, it protects us from pride and selfishness. When we are devoted to each other in love, it brings glory to God and draws others to him.

Act

- Ask the Lord to unite you with other believers and look for ways you can be more involved with your local church or join a local church.
- Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help you have empathy and compassion for other believers, especially in their times of need.

Go Deeper

- [How Many Friends Do You Need?](#)

4 - An Important Part of the Family of God

Read

“For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” - Romans 12:4-5

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:10

Reflect/Discuss

- What are your talents, passions, interests, or areas of influence?
- How can you use your gifts to serve the Lord and build up the body of Christ?

Consider

God created you and redeemed you for a reason. He has an important purpose and plan for your life. He created you with specific passions, skills, and interests to influence the people around you. In your family, work, hobbies, and in all you do, you have the opportunity to point others to God. You may feel like you are less important or accomplished than others. But God sees you as his workmanship, like the masterpiece of an artist.

This verse teaches us that we were designed by God. Think about how a carpenter would design and carve a piece of wood. He fashions it into a specific shape to make it useful for a specific purpose. In the same way, God has designed us and used our experiences and even our mistakes to prepare us to make a difference in the world around us. You influence others in a way that no one else can. You are an important part of the family of God.

Act

- Read Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12 to learn more about spiritual gifts.
- Invite someone new to join you at church or a meeting with other believers. Look for ways to share the love of Jesus with people you encounter in your daily routine.

Go Deeper

- [Investing in Others](#)

5 - Unity in Christ

Read

“I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.” - I Corinthians 1:10

Reflect/Discuss

- What topics and issues have you seen bring division in the church?
- Does being a Christian change the way that we disagree with others?

Consider

When we become a part of the family of God we become a part of one body. This means that we are connected by the same Spirit and the same purpose. This can seem difficult when there are so many divisive issues even among believers. This verse is a part of a letter from the apostle Paul to the church in Corinth. He was asking them urgently to not let anything drive them apart. He asks them in the name of Jesus, reminding them of the authority of Jesus above everything that might cause them to disagree. Paul was reminding believers that the desire and commitment to follow Jesus should be more important than any disagreement or division.

Paul describes this unity as being of the same mind and judgement. This does not necessarily mean that we will think the same way about everything. In fact, God created us with different perspectives and personalities that we may all use our gifts to build the Kingdom of God! Instead, it means that we should make decisions, answer questions and judge ideas by the same standard - the word of God. When we disagree or reach different conclusions, we defer to our ultimate goal - spreading the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This common goal unites us above all!

Act

- Pray for the church around the world, as Jesus did in John 17, that the followers of Jesus would be one in Christ and “brought to complete unity.”
- Think about the people in your life and community. Is there anyone who you need to forgive or ask for forgiveness?

Go Deeper

- [Loving What God Loves and Hating What He Hates](#)

It is a privilege to call God our Father. We are beloved children of a compassionate God. He created and designed us with a purpose. Because of his mercy and love we are able to love our brothers and sisters in Christ in perfect unity. This is how we stand out from the world. We are the Family of God.

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