

Freedom IN CHRIST – Child-like

'I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters,' says the Lord (2 Cor 6:17-18) I am "a fellow citizen with God's people and members of God's household" (Eph 2:19). "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." (Jn 1:12) "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" (1 Jn 3:1)

I am a child of God, free to be about my Father's business...living by the Spirit

- Being a follower of Christ, and finding my identity in Him, brings with it eternal blessings
- It is a privilege to be a child of God.
- But just like with my earthly father, I now bear the image of my Heavenly Father, and I carry the name and reputation of my Heavenly Father.
- Our Heavenly Father has adopted us into his family. Now, I have a new name. My own surname is secondary to my primary identification in Jesus. I am a child of God.
- We are: "...being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2 Cor 3:18) such that we have the "fearful responsibility" (2 Cor 5:11) of being "ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us..." (2 Cor 5:20)

There are tremendous privileges that come with bearing His image, and His Spirit and His name:

- Eternity (Jn 3:15-16, 36; Rom 6:23; 1 Jn 5:11-13)
- Forgiveness of sin (Col 1:14; Eph 1:7; 4:32)
- Reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18-20; Rom 5:8-11)
- Salvation (2 Tim 2:10; 1 Tim 1:15; Matt 1:21)
- The grace of God (Eph 1:6; 2 Tim 1:9; 2:1)
- The love of Christ (2 Cor 5:14; Eph 3:19)
- Deliverance (Col 1:13; Acts 26:18)
- The Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13; Gal 3:14; 4:6)
- Access to God in prayer (Jn 16:23-24; Eph 2:18)
- Fruitfulness (Jn 15:4-8; Phil 1:11; Col 1:10)
- Spiritual strength (Rom 15:13; Eph 3:16)
- Joy (Jn 15:11; 17:13; 1 Pet 1:8; Phil 4:4)
- Hope (Col 1:27; 1 Tim 1:1; Titus 2:13)
- Peace with God (Rom 5:1; Col 1:20; Phil 4:7)
- God's wisdom (1 Cor 1:24-25, 30; Eph 1:17)
- A life of service, not in vain (1 Cor 15:58)
- Being about the Father's business (Lk 2:49)

To be about the Father's Business, we freely:

- remember our first love and impetuously desire to know and serve God (Rev 2:1-5)
- practice a spirit of obedience, and freely do the will of our Heavenly Father (Heb 10:5-10)
- take on the form a servant (Phil 2:6-8)
- proclaim the Good News (Lk 4:18-19)
- imitate Jesus (1 Jn 2:6, Eph 5:1, Phil 2:5, Mt 5:48)

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Children inherently imitate – may we be childlike!

Children are remarkably perceptive from the moment they enter the world, they begin to absorb information from their surroundings. Much of what children learn is not formal instruction but from experiencing the behaviours of those around them. Editor of the old Mother Magazine, Peggy O'Mara remarked: "The words you speak to your child become their internal voice". Children instinctively imitate their parents – its natural, almost inevitable! Research suggests that children imitate unconsciously, equipped with an innate ability and trust to mimic behaviours – such can leave a lasting impression. Over time, parents and caregivers become aware that children are always watching, absorbing, and learning from their environment.

Therefore as children of God, we are called to watch our Lord, know the voice of the Spirit, live the way of love, and imitate Christ first and foremost, who we see in Jesus (Jn14:9). The more we surrender ourselves to Jesus, the more we become Christ-like.

Christ About His Father's Business, Taken from Spurgeon – New Park Vol 3, 1857

Christ's life was lived doing His Father's business. You can never find Christ doing something which you should not imitate.

Jesus was water baptised to show us new life, we should imitate. Jesus healed the sick to teach us compassion; rebuking hypocrisy to teach us boldness; enduring temptation to teach us faithfulness. We should imitate.

We can see Jesus forgiving his enemies to teach us the grace of meekness and of patience. We see Jesus giving up his life to teach us how we should surrender ourselves to God, and give up ourselves for the good of others. We ought to imitate.

Imitate Jesus, put on Christ (Romans 3:14)

Put Christ at the wedding; you may imitate him and celebrate! Put Christ at a funeral; you may imitate him—and weep. Put Jesus on the mountain-top; you will see Him in prayer alone, imitate him. Put Jesus in a crowd; he will speak well. Put him with enemies; he will confound them. Put him with friends, and he shall be a friend that sticks closer than a brother. Praise him and cry hosanna, and you shall see him riding upon a colt, humble and lowly. Despise and spit upon him, you shall see him bearing contempt with evenness of spirit. Everywhere you may imitate Christ. He was in everything an example for us to imitate, always at work doing his Father's business.

“I am Jesus” was the answer to Paul when he asked “Who are you Lord” (Acts 9:5). We asked this question too. By humbling ourselves, we are led by the Spirit, imitate the Word made Flesh, *the good and perfect gift coming down to us from the Father of the heavenly lights, who never changes or casts a shifting shadow.* The answer is always more Jesus!

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