

How To Identify A Christian

Part 2

One Who Is Enjoying Life As A Child Of God

Galatians 5:22-23 [NIV] *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”*

One of the fruits of a Spirit-led life is joy.

To look at the life of some Christians you would never suspect that the word joy is even in the Christian Bible.

God’s children who really understand all that our Heavenly Father has given to us will radiate joy through their lives.

What blessings does our Heavenly Father want His children to enjoy?

Enjoy the family freedom.

Romans 8:14-16 [King James] *“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:”*

This passage of scripture describes a special relationship with our Heavenly Father called “*adoption*”.

This must **not** be confused with what we call adoption in the western world.

An adopted child in the western world does **not** have the same nature as his adoptive parents.

God’s children **do** have God’s own nature because they have been born of God’s Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 1:4 [NIV] *“Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.”*

We do **not** enter into God’s family by a western world style adoption but by regeneration.

Romans 12:2 [NIV] *“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

A “*making new*” of our mind which was in the past influenced by this society, now it is “*made new*” by the influence of the Holy Spirit dwelling actively in us.

God’s adoption has to do with the standing in the family.

It simply means that **God treats us as adults**, not as babes, and gives us adult privileges.

For example, a human baby does **not** know it is a baby and certainly does **not** know its own parents.

Even if a baby did know its own father it would **not** be able to converse with him.

We as God's children know we are God's children and know Him and converse with Him as our Father in an intimate way.

For the most part, human children live in bondage and fear of their parents until they are old enough to care for themselves.

But as God's children we are **free from the bondage of sin**, and have no fear, just awe, of our father who is love itself.

In such an **atmosphere of love** we can mature as sons and daughters as we walk through life with our loving Father.

Romans 8:14 [NIV] *"because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God."*

Led by the Holy Spirit.

John 16:13 [NIV] *"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come."*

Guided into all truth by Holy Spirit.

We walk and talk with God. Wow !!

Enjoy the family food

If children are to grow they must have good food.

Our Heavenly Father provides His Word as our spiritual nourishment.

Job 23:12 [NIV] *"I have not departed from the commands of his [God's] lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread."*

God's Word more important than physical food to His children.

Jeremiah 15:16 [NIV] *"When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O LORD God Almighty."*

To devour the food our Heavenly Father provides is a joy in our lives as His children.

God's Word is:-

Bread – Matthew 4:4 [NIV] *"Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"*

Milk – 1 Peter 2:2 [King James] *"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:"*

Meat – Hebrews 5:12 [King James] *"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat."*

Honey – Psalm 119:103 [NIV] *"How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"*

Joshua 1:8 [NIV] *“Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; **meditate on it day and night**, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.”*

As we meditate on God’s Word, the truth is “*digested*” inwardly and we receive strength.

1 Thessalonians 2:7 [Living Bible] *“But we were as gentle among you as a mother [breast] feeding and caring for her own children.”*

When we are babes, we receive the Word from others who have “*digested*” it for us.

Just like a mother who digests solid food and provides it to her baby as milk.

Hebrews 5:11-14 [NIV] *“We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.”*

As we grow spiritually, we learn to feed ourselves and enjoy the full diet of God’s Word. We can enjoy the “*solid food*” as well as the “*milk*”.

Enjoy the family fortune

Galatians 4:22-31 [NIV] *“For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise. These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. For it is written: “Be glad, O barren woman, who bears no children; break forth and cry aloud, you who have no labour pains; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband.” **Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.** At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. But what does the Scripture say? “Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman’s son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman’s son.” Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.”*

When we were born the first time [*“born of the flesh”*], we were born poor slaves like Ishmael. **But when we were born the second time [*“born of the spirit”*], we were born rich sons like Isaac the heir.**

Romans 8:14-17 [King James] *“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: **And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.**”*

As adopted children of God we can claim His wealth and use it for His Glory.

What kind of wealth does the Father share with us?

The riches of His Grace

Ephesians 2:7 [NIV] *“in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.”*

What are these riches specifically?

Acts 20:32 [NIV] *“Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”*

God’s Word, the Christian Bible, is His Grace, an undeserved guide of how to live our lives.

Hebrews 10:29 [NIV] *“How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?”*

The gift of the Holy Spirit to live actively with our “human” spirit is an act of grace, [**Job 32:8; Proverbs 20:27; 1 Corinthians 2:11**].

For the Holy Spirit is the “spirit of grace”.

Hebrews 4:16 [NIV] *“Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”*

Before we accepted the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, God’s throne was a “throne of judgement” to us, but now it is a “throne of grace” where we can “find grace to help us in a time of need.”

Hebrews 4:14-15 [NIV] *“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet was without sin.”*

This is why it is important that all of God’s children study His Word, the Christian Bible, so we get to know all the grace that is available to us through Jesus Christ our now High Priest sitting on the throne of grace at the right hand of the Father.

Ephesians 2:4 [NIV] *“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,”*

Not only do we have riches of God’s Grace but we also have the riches of His Mercy.

There is a difference between grace and mercy.

Mercy – God does **not** give us what we deserve.

Grace – God **does** give us what we don’t deserve.

Spiritual commodities like “grace” and “mercy” may seem rather nebulous to us, especially when it comes to paying our bills.

The promise of grace we should claim is in:-

Philippians 4:19 [NIV] *“And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”*

God does **not** satisfy our “greeds”, but He does supply all our “needs”.

The riches of His wisdom

Romans 11:33 [NIV] *“Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!”*

This wisdom is available to God’s children when we have to make decisions.

James 1:5 [NIV] *“If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.”*

We need this wisdom to rightly apply God’s Word, the Christian Bible, to the situations we will face in life.

The riches of God’s goodness

Romans 2:4 [King James] *“Or despisest thou the **riches of his goodness** and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?”*

The Greek word translated “goodness” is “*chrēstōtēs*” from the root word meaning “usefulness” and “providing of all our needs” – with the connotation of gentleness and kindness.

James 1:17 [NIV] *“**Every good and perfect gift** is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.”*

Our Father is the source of every good and perfect gift.

Psalm 31:19 [NIV] *“**How great is your goodness**, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you bestow in the sight of men on those who take refuge in you.”*

No matter how you look at it, God’s children are rich indeed!

Enjoy the family fellowship.

As children in God’s family we belong to each other and we need each other.

God does **not** want His children to live in isolation.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 [NIV] *“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no-one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”*

This is one reason why Jesus Christ established His Church on earth.

The Church is a living fellowship in which His children can worship Him unitedly, witness of His Grace, and encourage one another in the thing pertaining to eternity.

In the Greek language, the word translated “fellowship” means “to have in common”, and the children of God have much in common.

God’s children share –

The same lifestyle

The same God’s Holy Bible

The same love of Christ

The same concern for the “lost” world

The same desire to glorify God

Hebrews 10:25 [NIV] *“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”*

The first symptoms of a weakening fellowship with the Father is a believer’s carelessness about fellowship with God’s children.

Fellowship means that we are concerned about one another.

In fact the phrase *“one another”* or *“each other”* [NIV] is used nearly fifty times in the New Testament to describe how believers should serve one another.

Love one another:-

John 13:34-35 – John 15:12 – John 15:17 – Romans 13:8 – 1 Thessalonians 3:12 – 1 Thessalonians 4:9

Submit to one another:-

Ephesians 5:21

Encourage one another:-

1 Thessalonians 4:18

Care for one another:-

1 Corinthians 12:25

Forgive one another:-

Ephesians 4:32

Edify one another:-

Romans 14:19 – Romans 15:2

This is just to name a few of the examples of *“one another”*.

Enjoy the family future.

God’s family is the only family that has a future hope, for there is no hope for the wicked sinners in Adam’s family for they are without God in their lives.

Ephesians 2:12 [NIV] *“remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.”*

A life without God in it, that is the indwelling active Holy Spirit in us, is a life that ends in eternal death.

1 Peter 1:3 [NIV] *“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,”*

We have a living hope because of our sharing in the resurrection of our Saviour and elder brother Jesus Christ.

John 14:1-6 [NIV] *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me.”*

Our Heavenly Father is preparing for us a future home with Him.

Revelation 21:1-5 [NIV] *“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”*

This new city which will be our future home is being prepared now in heaven to come down on earth that we may dwell with God for eternity.

Hebrews 11:8-10 [NIV] *“By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.”*

This is the future city that Abraham looked forward to. He was willing to live like *“a stranger in a foreign country”* as he awaited in faith for that city in which to live with his God for eternity.

When you consider the joys that God’s children can experience, and we have only considered a few of them, you wonder two things –

- 1 Why more Christians are not rejoicing in their wonderful position in God’s family
- 2 Why more unsaved people are not anxious to get into the family of God and start enjoying abundant life in Jesus Christ.

Perhaps if the *“born again”* children expressed in their lives the joy and fulfilment they find being a child of God, more people who know them in this world might want to trust Jesus Christ and also be *“born again”*.

How we live is as much a witness as what we may say.