

“Becoming a Child of God”

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Becoming a Child of God - John 1:12 - 123RF Photo - Used under license

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."
(John 1:12-13 NKJV)

Becoming a child of God is both a starting point and a life-long process -- a starting point when a person receives Christ and a process of growth from spiritual infancy to spiritual maturity.

This lesson is the first in a series on "The Children of God."

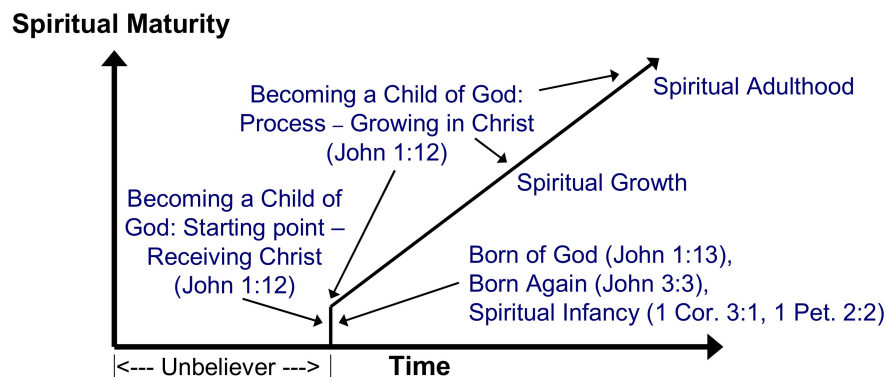
Consider. Have you become a child of God? Are you growing and increasing in spiritual maturity as a child of God?

The Biblical Requirement for Becoming a Child of God Is Receiving Christ

John, Jesus' disciple, wrote "*But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name*" (John 1:12). Receiving [*accepting*] Jesus Christ is the biblical condition for an individual becoming a child of God (Ref. 1, Figure 1 below). Becoming a child of God starts when a person receives Christ. Receiving Jesus Christ individually contrasts with the great mass of people (including the scribes and Pharisees) who have rejected Christ.

The words, "to those who believe in his name," further explain the condition for becoming a child of God. A person receives Jesus by believing he is true - by trusting in, adhering to, and relying on him. By God's grace, a person can become a child of God by believing in Jesus Christ, regardless of that person's demographic or national identity.

Becoming a Child of God - Starting Point and Growth Process



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Figure 1: Becoming a Child of God - Both a Starting Point and a Growth Process

Becoming a Child of God Begins When We Are Born of God

John continues the description of children of God in verse 13, "... who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13). Becoming a child of God requires being born of God, not by the will of man [Greek *anér* -- a *husband*] (Ref. 2).

Although all human beings are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26), not all human beings are children of God in the born again sense described by John. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). John also wrote, "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves the child born of Him" (1 John 5:1).

Becoming a Child of God Also Is a Life-Long Growth Process

When we first receive Christ, we are spiritual infants regardless of our physical age. Becoming a spiritually mature child of God requires growth. In John 1:12, the Greek word for *become* in "*become* children of God" means *to emerge or transition from one condition to another* (Ref. 3). Becoming a child of God requires growing in Christ over time so we transition from spiritual infancy to spiritual maturity (Figure 1). The Apostle Peter wrote, "Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, and like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation" (1 Peter 2:1-2).

Becoming a Child of God Is a Privilege

John writes "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right [*privilege, authority*] to become children of God" (John 1:12, brackets added, Ref. 4). Becoming a child of God is a privilege far more so than being the child of any human being (Ref. 5). Becoming a child of God is God's blessing; it is not something we earn (Ephesians 2:8). Jesus gives this favor, this privilege, to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

Apply. Be sure that you a child of God. Believe in the name of Jesus. Trust him. Have faith in him. Grow to maturity as a child of God. Long for, study, and apply the word of God to your life. Love and grow in your relationship with your heavenly Father. As a child of God, love and serve others in the name of Jesus.

Related Topics

"Characteristics of a Child of God - Part 1" (Matthew 7:16)

"Characteristics of a Child of God - Part 2" (Matthew 5:16)

"Our Adoption as God's Children" (Galatians 4:4-5)

References

1. <https://biblehub.com/greek/2983.htm>
2. <https://biblehub.com/greek/435.htm>
3. <https://biblehub.com/greek/1096.htm>
4. <https://biblehub.com/greek/1849.htm>
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