



DAILY FAITH PRACTICES

Third Sunday of Easter (B) – 1 John 3:1-7

Focus: *Children of God*

word of life

“See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are.” 1 John 3:1 (NRSV)

Read 1 John 3:1-7

Hearing that we are children of God is probably not new, but this passage invites us to dig deeper into the implications of such a relationship.

1. *When someone calls you a child of God, what comes to mind?*
2. *What are the advantages of being children of God?*
3. *What (if any) are the disadvantages?*

On one level, our identity as children of God is established in creation. God created all of us and linked us together because we are God’s created beings. Humans share the same basic needs of air, food, shelter, and such. But on a deeper level, the writer of 1 John sees the love of God in Christ as the bond that forms a specific relationship as children of God.

In the First Letter of John, the reference to being children of God begins with God’s love—the love of a parent. “See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are.” (1 John 3:1 NRSV) It all begins with love—God’s love.

4. *Why is God’s love essential in the claim to be called a child of God?*
5. *How might God’s love reflect on the identity of any who claim to be a child of God?*

We are children of God solely because God calls us and claims us as children. We have done nothing to earn or deserve such a relationship.

The claim of being a child of God is not to be understood in isolation, but the claim is a descriptive term of our communal identity. In reality, we are *children* of God, linked not just to Christ, but to other followers of Christ—who become brothers and sisters through faith in Jesus Christ.

We do not choose our family. God calls, gathers, and empowers *children of God* through the Holy Spirit. That is who we are. Our brothers and sisters come in all kinds of shapes and sizes, speaking a variety of languages. We certainly don’t have the same color of skin or eyes. We are not linked as children of God because of our outward appearance.

6. *When have you experienced being connected with other children of God?*
7. *What reminds you of other children of God not part of your congregation?*

Despite being connected to God, we are not God or have divine abilities. “What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is.” (1 John 3:2b NRSV) God is still at work. We do not yet fully know God.

Just as children need to be cautioned about pending danger, so let us hear the warning, “Little children, let no one deceive you.” (1 John 3:7 NRSV) Instead, let us grow up in the love of God.

word among us

A daughter stood up at her father's funeral to share some memories of her beloved father. Her voice trembled as she reflected on the gift of his love to her. She admitted when she was young, she would cringe when people noted how much their personalities were alike. She laughed at how much those words irritated her.

But in the recent years, as she watched her father fight a lingering illness, she knew those words were a high compliment. She hoped she could be like her father. Even that thought made her smile. Maybe after all these years, she was maturing and growing up as her father had envisioned. With that, she smiled in the midst of her tears; her dad would continue to be with her in their shared values and outlook on life.

1. *How are you like your parents?*
2. *What traits of your parents do you hope to emulate?*
3. *It what ways might you be different?*

God claims us as children. Hopefully, that means we are growing up to be like God as revealed in Jesus Christ. Take a moment to think on times when you reflect God in your actions.

4. *How do you resemble God?*
5. *What traits of God do you hope to have?*

faith practice in daily life

Live among God's faithful people

Out of love, God calls and claims us to be children of God. That is not a claim issued in isolation. We do not have a "single child" syndrome to worry about, but rather our world overflows with brothers and sisters in Christ.

As we affirm our baptism, we promise to live among God's faithful people—our brothers and sisters in Christ. These are not people who necessarily vote the same in an election, root for the same football team, or like the same dessert; but they are ones who are united in and through Jesus Christ.

Living among God's faithful people means being an active part of the Christian community. We share the joys and sorrows of life. We grow in faith, urging each other to claim the identity of being children of God.

6. *How does being part of a Christian community help you to grow in faith?*
7. *Is it possible to be a Christian and not interact with a community of faith? Explain your answer.*
8. *How do you support your brothers and sisters in Christ?*
9. *How might you support your brothers and sisters who you do not know by name?*

Prayer

Gracious God, thank you for claiming us as your children and inspiring us to grow up to be just like Jesus Christ. Amen

last word

Throughout the week,
pray for brothers and sisters in Christ
who struggle to claim their identity as a child of God.