

Bible Study Questions

Like Father, Like Son

READ 1 John 2:28-3:10

1. Are there any things that strike, intrigue, or puzzle you? Discuss ...
2. What is the significance of John calling Christians children of God [2:28; 3:1, 2, 7, 10]?
 - a. Is everyone a child of God?
 - b. How do we become children of God?
 - c. How does John describe those who are not God's children (3:10)?
3. John says that we are already children of God (3:1-2). But he also speaks of what we *will* be in 3:2. What will we be? What will be different to the way we are now? How will this happen?
4. As well as speaking of what we *are* and what we *will be*, John also urges us to *work at* being something ...
 - a. What should we work at being, or doing? [2:28-19; 3:3, 7]
 - b. Why should we work at this?
 - c. What happens if we fail at doing this? [1:7-2:2]
 - d. What is the difference between a Christian who is flawed and weak and sometimes fails to live up to God's expectations of his children, and someone who is not God's child at all (as described in 3:4, 8, 10)?
5. How should we work at being more like our heavenly Father? What tools and resources are available to help us?

6. Read and reflect:

“Although claiming my true identity as a child of God, I still live as though the God to whom I am returning demands an explanation. I still think about his love as conditional and about home as a place I am not yet fully sure of. While walking home, I keep entertaining doubts about whether I will be truly welcome when I get there. As I look at my spiritual journey, my long and fatiguing trip home, I see how full it is of guilt about the past and worries about the future. I realize my failures and know that I have lost the dignity of my sonship, but I am not yet able to fully believe that where my failings are great, ‘grace is always greater.’ Still clinging to my sense of worthlessness, I project for myself a place far below that which belongs to the son.”

- **Henri J.M. Nouwen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming***