

# Message 10 in the Series: Just So You Know

## Message: God's Family Tree

Text: 1 John 3:1-21

A student charged to write an essay, a poet pondering artistic expression, or an author setting before a blank page with pen in hand, all face the daunting task of determining the perfect first words from where they will launch their story. As we open our Bible, we encounter the first words from which the Holy Spirit begins to tell His story (History) of the revelation of God to all mankind: "In the beginning God created the Heavens and the earth." It is on this foundational truth that all other truth is built. In the beginning God created us, mankind, in His image. Man belongs to God. We are all His offspring, in that, we are created by Him.

Woefully, the Bible records the darkest calamity ever to befall humanity. The ominous sin that affected man's estrangement from God. Sin separated man from God, and this separation continues today.

But God so loves us, that He sent His only begotten Son, to suffer the wages of our sin upon Himself. He wants His children reconciled into His family. All men are prodigals.

All have chosen to forsake and leave the father. There is no relationship without fellowship as some claim. However, the love of our Heavenly Father patiently awaits our return to Him. He is not willing that any would perish. He has no desire that any one of His offspring should die in their estrangement from Him. For death makes the estrangement permanent. The second death is eternal separation from God.

God chose one man named, Abraham, to Father a family who would become His chosen people. Through Abraham all the nations of the earth would be blessed. Through the lineage of Abraham, God would plant the seed of His family tree.

**Galatians 4:4** But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law.

**Matthew 1:21** "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

Who are "His people?" Who belongs to the family of God?

**Romans 10:12-13** <sup>(12)</sup> There is no distinction between Jew and Greek or (Gentile); for the same *Lord* is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; <sup>(13)</sup> for "whoever will call on the name of the lord will be saved."

Membership into God's family is available to "Whosoever will." It is through a new birth one is born into the family of God.

Jesus describes two births. One is of the flesh. The other is of the spirit. We readily know our family in the flesh. But concerning the spirit, to whom can our lineage be traced? By what name are we called; what is our family name? What resemblance do we have with our spiritual father? What family traits do we project in our character? John writes concerning the **FAMILY TREE** of God: our Family name; our Family Resemblance; and our Family traits.

## 1. Our Family Name

**1 John 3:1** “See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God.”

Here John reveals by what name we are to be called. If you have become a child of God, please do not claim to hold the name of a sinner. One may say, I’m a sinner saved by grace. When instead they might should say, “I’m a sinner in need of Grace.”

A sinner implies a current relationship status. Jesus has saved His people from their sin. God makes saints out of sinners.

### **Romans 6:1-2 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup> What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?

<sup>2</sup> May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

God’s love changed my name from “a sinner” to “a child of God!” (1 John 3:1) “See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God.”

Different bible translations render John’s words here in different ways:

- What manner of love
- What great love
- What kind of love
- How very much love

God’s love for us is difficult to articulate with words.

His love has made us the brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, His son. As children, we have also become joint heirs with Christ of God’s eternal Kingdom. As God’s children, we bear the resemblance of our Heavenly Father, and as we mature, this resemblance grows greater and stronger.

## 2. Family Resemblance

**1 John 3:2-3 (NASB)** (regarding the eternal future) “It has not appeared yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

<sup>3</sup> And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”

**Righteousness is the spiritual pedigree of God’s children.** It is the tell – tell sign of the family we belong to.

**1 John 3:10** By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God.

As a child of God, we have been born from above. The Spirit of our heavenly Father abides in us. We have become partakers of His divine nature.

We are nurtured and trained by the Holy Spirit and the word of God. This is an ongoing process called sanctification. “Purifying ourselves as He is pure.” (repentance / conversion)

**1 John 3:10** By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

### 3. Family Traits

The most recognizable trait of our Heavenly Father is love, agape love. The love we could not know apart from God.

**1 John 3:11-13** <sup>(11)</sup> For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; <sup>(12)</sup> not as Cain, *who* was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brothers were righteous. <sup>(13)</sup> Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you.

**There is no familiarity between the children of God and the children of the devil. Our resemblance to our heavenly provokes hatred from the world.**

**1 John 3:13** Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you.

True love is expressed through action! What does righteousness say?

**Matthew 5:43-48** <sup>(43)</sup> "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' <sup>(44)</sup> "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>(45)</sup> so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous. <sup>(46)</sup> "For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>(47)</sup> "If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing *than others*? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? <sup>(48)</sup> "Therefore, you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

**1 John 3:17-19** <sup>(17)</sup> But whoever has the world's goods, and sees **his brother** in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? <sup>(18)</sup> Little children let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

<sup>(19)</sup> We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him

**Righteousness gives assurance** - The operation of God's righteousness through our actions, and the abiding of God's love in our hearts, gives us assurance and confidence before God. It is this confidence that undergirds our faith and preserves our hope.

The eternal future of God's Children:

**Revelation 21:1-7** <sup>(1)</sup> Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea. <sup>(2)</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>(3)</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, <sup>(4)</sup> and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." <sup>(5)</sup> And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He *said*, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." <sup>(6)</sup> Then He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. <sup>(7)</sup> "He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.

The eternal future apart from God:

**Revelation 20:11-15** <sup>(11)</sup> I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. <sup>(12)</sup> And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which

is *the book* of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. <sup>(13)</sup> And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one *of them* according to their deeds. <sup>(14)</sup> Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. <sup>(15)</sup> And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.