

INTRODUCTION

Like Father, like son. Kids often do what they see their parents doing. That's not always a good thing. USA Today reported last April about a story where a 3-year-old boy saw his dad working on his iPad at home. So the toddler picked it up and tried to use it when his dad was at work. It was passcode protected. The little boy entered the wrong passcode. But he was persistent and he kept trying. By the time his dad returned home the iPad was locked out for over 25 million minutes – that's 50 years! The man tweeted out about it for solutions. One person said he should try to reboot the toddler. Eventually Apple provided a fix.

Like Father, like son. I grew up eating my breakfast the same way my dad did. Every morning, my mother would cook us bacon, then she'd cook us two fried eggs over easy fried in the bacon grease. And we'd have grits and toast. We would crumble up the bacon and then mix it in with the eggs and grits until we had like a breakfast goulash. And when Cindy and I go out to breakfast, I still like to order eggs, grits, and bacon and mix it up like that.

When we first started dating and Cindy saw me eat breakfast that way she asked why I mixed everything up. It's because my dad did it. But I didn't know why he did it, so I asked him. "Dad why do you mix up your eggs, bacon, and grits into a mush?" He said, "I eat it that way because that's the way my dad ate breakfast. Of course, he didn't have any teeth." Like Father, like son.

Speaking of Fathers, there are a lot of people today who believe in what's called the universal Fatherhood of God. They claim that every human being is a child of God. What do you think?

I'm going to make a statement, and I want you to decide whether you think it's true or false. Don't answer out loud, just write true or false on your outline. Here's the statement: Every person is a child of God. Is that statement true or false? I believe 90% of people would write "True" in that blank, but the answer, according to the Bible, is "FALSE."

The Universal Fatherhood of God is a very popular belief. In 1997 Country singer Alan Jackson recorded a song written by Bobby Braddock. He sang, "Here comes a Baptist, here comes a Jew; There goes a Mormon and a Muslim too. I see a Buddhist and a Hindu; I see a Catholic and I see you. We're all God's children. We're all God's children. We're all God's children. Why can't we be one big happy family." That sounds nice, but everyone isn't God's child according to the Bible. According to the words of Jesus, there are two families and there are two fathers. In our passage today, the word "father" appears seven times. Let's read beginning in John 8:39. "Our father is Abraham," they replied. "If you were Abraham's children," Jesus told them, "you would do what Abraham did. But now you are trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. You're doing what your father does."

"We weren't born of sexual immorality," they said. "We have one Father: God."

Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, because I came from God and I am here. For I didn't come on my own, but he sent me. Why don't you understand what I say? Because you cannot listen to my word. You are of your father the devil, and you want to carry

out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he speaks from his own nature, because he is a liar and the father of lies. Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. Who among you can convict me of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? The one who is from God listens to God's words. This is why you don't listen, because you are not from God."

In 2002 Toby Keith sang a song, "Who's your daddy?" This whole debate between Jesus and the Pharisees was about the same topic. "Who's your daddy?" The Jewish mafia – the religious leaders said. God is our Father and Abraham is our Father. Jesus said, "Nope. Wrong on both accounts. Your dad is the devil, and that's why you're acting like the devil. Like Father, like son."

So are you a child of God or a child of the devil? Here's the sermon in a sentence: God's children reflect the nature of their Father; and the devil's children reflect the nature of their father. Let's talk about how you can spot a child of the devil and tell them apart from a child of God.

I. A CHILD OF THE DEVIL DOESN'T KNOW JESUS.

Jesus said, "You are of your father the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires." (John 8:44) There are people who are Satan worshippers today, and they wouldn't object to being called a child of the devil. But anyone who doesn't know Jesus is a child of the devil – even if they don't even believe in the devil or God.

Jesus called these religious leaders children of the devil. Outwardly, they wore all the trappings of a respectable religion, but you can see the evil within them by what they said to Jesus.

They heckled Jesus with a personal insult. They mockingly said, "WE weren't born of sexual immorality." The Jewish leaders knew Mary was pregnant before she and Joseph were married. Of course, they didn't believe in the idea of a virgin birth. So by this time an ugly rumor had been circulating about Jesus – that He was born as a result of sexual immorality. They were repeating the untrue gossip that Jesus was born as a result of a sexual encounter between Mary and a Roman soldier. 250 years later, when the Jewish Rabbis were still attacking Jesus and His followers, they wrote this rumor down in their Jerusalem Talmud and even provided a name of a Roman soldier. In the following verses, they are going to insult Jesus by calling Him a demon-possessed Samaritan.

Jesus said you can spot a child of the devil because they are carrying out the desires of the devil. In these few verses Jesus says more about Satan than in any other place in the four gospel accounts. In these verses teaches taught that Satan's motive is to destroy, and his method it to use deception.

A. Satan destroys. "He was a murderer from the beginning."

The first murder in the Bible was when Cain killed his brother Abel. Satan was there tempting Cain to sin. In our sophisticated age of science, some consider it old fashioned to believe in a personal devil. But Jesus spoke of Satan as a real, malevolent being called Satan. Satan doesn't carry a pitch-fork. He doesn't have horns and wear a red outfit. He's never been in hell – although that will be his final prison. The Bible says that Satan is a master of disguise – he often appears as an angel of light.

Satan and his organized, demonized army are still trying to destroy. The devil wants to destroy every marriage and every family. He wants to destroy the unity of every church. If he could he would destroy your peace of mind.

In John 10:10, Jesus said that Satan came to "kill, steal, and destroy." Wherever you see killing, stealing, and destroying going on, you can know that those acts have the devil's fingerprints all over them.

The huge debate today is what to do about the rise of violence in our society. We are averaging over one mass shooting a day in America. Some argue it is a mental illness issue. Others argue that it is a gun control issue. Both of those are legitimate concerns, but we also must admit that the presence of evil in the world has a source – and it is Satan.

Satan can't take all the blame. The Bible says we sin when we are lured away by our own desires.

We're praying for a spiritual awakening so that God will heal our land. In 1904, there was a great revival in Wales. Over 100,000 people came to Christ over a short period of time. But the effects of the revival on their society should be noted. The crime rate sank to almost zero. The policemen spent most of their time escorting people to church meetings. Profanity almost disappeared. The pit-ponies in the coal mines had to be retrained because they only responded to crude profanity commands.

When revival happens, it doesn't just affect the churches, it affects the society where it happens. When God sends revival to our land, crime rates will sink and mass shootings will become rare again.

B. Satan deceives.

His method is the lie. Jesus said, "When he tells a lie, he speaks from his own nature, because he is a liar and the father of lies." Satan isn't God. He's not all-knowing. But he is smart. He is subtle and shrewd. Instead of trying to tell you that there is no God, he lies to you that you can be your own God. That's what he told Eve in the Garden of Eden.

The first recorded words of the devil are found in Genesis 3:1. He asked Eve a question. "Did God REALLY say you can't eat from ANY tree in the Garden?" That's not what God had said. So we see from the first that the devil tries to twist God's words. And the devil always puts a question mark about the statements of God.

Eve responded, "We can eat the fruit of all the trees in the garden except one. If we eat it, God said we will die."

So now comes the first lie. Satan says, "No! You won't die! In fact if you eat it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God!"

And that's one of the lies Satan is still offering. He has convinced millions of people that they don't need God. Instead, they can be their own gods.

Satan is an expert at lying. He has centuries of experience. According to my friend, Tony Evans, here are Satan's six biggest lies: (1) There is no Satan; (2) God is holding out on you. (3) God's Word can't be trusted. (4) You can sin with no consequences. (5) If it feels good, do it! (6) You can be like God.

The Bible says in James 4:7 that when we resist the devil, he will flee from you. Don't try to resist the devil in your own strength. You can only resist Satan through the power of Christ who lives in you. I heard a lady say once, "When the devil comes knocking at the door of my heart. I just send Jesus to answer the door. And the devil says, "Oops, I must be at the wrong address."

TAKE-AWAY TRUTH: A false child of God thinks God accepts them because of their religion.

These Jewish leaders weren't atheists. They weren't criminals. They were deeply religious people. They believed with all their hearts that they were following God. They faithfully practiced their religion down to the tiniest detail. But they were blind to the truth that they were children of the devil and thereby agents of evil. They were laying plans at that very moment as to how they were going to kill the only Son of God. Their religion blinded them to their sinful condition.

The Apostle Paul was this way once. In Philippians 3. Paul lists his resume of his Jewish pedigree. He says, "I was circumcised the eighth day; of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; regarding the law, a Pharisee; regarding zeal, persecuting the church, regarding the righteousness that is in the law, blameless." (Philippians 3:5-6)

But he went on to say that all these things I thought would get me into heaven, I now realize that they are nothing – they are worthless than dung – that's the word he used. These religious qualifications are worthless when compared to the priceless gain of knowing Jesus Christ.

And I am convinced there are millions of people alive today who think that because they practice religious rituals and follow religious rules that this will qualify them to earn access to Heaven.

Remember, there are two fathers and two families. How can you recognize a true child of God?

II. A CHILD OF GOD KNOWS JESUS.

There are two fathers and two families. The Heavenly Father has many children. Those of us who know Jesus was part of God's family. In John 1 we are told HOW we become a child of God. "He (Jesus) came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, he gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in his name." (John 1:11-12)

There is a difference in just believing in Jesus and truly receiving Jesus. You can believe in Jesus mentally, but still not have received Jesus to dwell in your heart by faith. You can only enter God's family by being born again. Just as certain people have physical birthmarks, there are at least two spiritual birthmarks of a child of God. Take a moment to examine your life and see if these two birthmarks are present.

A. Birthmark 1: A child of God loves Jesus.

Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, because I came from God and I am here." (John 8:42) One of the glaring reasons why these Jewish leaders weren't children of God is because they didn't love Jesus. They were plotting to kill Him.

After the resurrection the disciples returned to Galilee and they had been fishing all night on the Lake. Around sunrise Jesus showed up and they had breakfast on the shore. Jesus put Simon Peter on the spot and asked him, "Peter do you love me more than these?" Just a few nights earlier on the night before the cross Jesus had predicted that everyone would leave him. Peter had boasted, "Lord, these others may leave you, but I won't. I'll die for you if I have to!" And Jesus had said, "Pete, before the rooster crows in the morning, you'll deny me three times." "Not me, Lord!"

And now here is Jesus face to face with Peter. During that breakfast He will ask Peter three times. "Simon, do you love me? Simon do you love me?" Each time Peter said, "Yes, Lord I love you." And after each reply Jesus said, "Feed my sheep." Jesus didn't ask Peter, "Do you love sheep?" He asked him, "Do you love me?"

Jesus is asking each one of us today, "Do you love me?" Can you honestly say to Jesus, "Lord you know all things. You know I love you."

B. Birthmark 2: A child of God listens and obeys Jesus.

"The one who is from God listens to God's words. This is why you don't listen, because you are not from God." (John 8:47)

Ephesians 6:1 says, "Children obey your parents in the Lord for this is right." A desire to obey God is a sure sign that you are a child of God.

I was in a doctor's waiting room this past week. There were two little boys there one 4 and one 11. Their mother had to step out to take a phone call. The younger brother got mad because the older brother had turned off an iPad he was playing on. The younger one started hitting and kicking the older one. The older boy behaved and didn't fight back. People were starting to look so I said, "Hey there, little guy, you need to behave and stop hitting on your brother." That kid looked at me like, "Who are you? You're not my daddy." And he kept kicking away. About that time, their mom came in and called his name and said, "Stop that right now." And he obeyed her immediately.

When God is your father, you will listen to His voice and you will obey what He tells us to do in His written record in the Bible.

TAKE-AWAY TRUTH: A true child of God knows they are accepted by God because of His great love for them.

A child of God has been born again into God's family. He isn't depending on religious activity to be accepted by God. They understand that salvation is completely through the grace and mercy of God. It is a gift that we receive – not a reward that we can earn. And once you are aware of God's great love for you, it gives you an assurance so that you can go through life with the knowledge that God is your Father and you are His child.

"See what great love the Father has given us that we should be called God's children—and we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it didn't know him." (1 John 3:1) Nobody is automatically born into God's family. You and I must be born-again into God's family.

CONCLUSION

Like Father like son. Does your life reflect the loving, gracious, merciful life of your Heavenly Father? Or are in the wrong family?

True story. Years ago a pastor and his wife were on vacation near Knoxville, Tennessee. They had stopped at a small café for lunch. As they were waiting on their food they noticed a distinguished looking older gentleman stopping to speak to the other diners. The pastor whispered to his wife. "I hope he doesn't come over here." But sure enough he came over and said, "Hello, where are you folks from?"

"From Oklahoma." He said, "Well, it's great to have you in Tennessee. What do you do for a living?"

The pastor said, "I'm a pastor of a Baptist Church taking a few days of vacation with my wife. He hoped the old man might take the hint.

Instead the old gentleman said, "Oh, you're a pastor! Do I have a story for you." As he pulled a chair to join them, the pastor thought, "Just what I need. Another preacher story."

The old man pointed through the window. Do you see that mountain over there? Not far from there a boy grew up who was born to an unwed mother. He had a hard time growing up because every place he went, people would ask him, "Hey, boy, where's your daddy?" The kids were the worst. So he would avoid going to recess or lunch at school to avoid them.

That boy went to a little church because he loved the music and the Bible stories. But he would always slip in late and leave before the benediction was over so that nobody could ask him about his daddy.

When that boy was 12 years old a new preacher came to the church. And to the boy's surprise, he didn't give a benediction. He just walked to the back door. The boy was caught in the crowd who were filing out shaking hands with the new preacher. When the boy reached the preacher, he held out his hand to shake. The new preacher didn't know anything about the boy, so he said, "Son, who's your daddy?" The church got deathly quiet and all eyes were on the boy, just adding to his embarrassment. The new preacher sensed something was going on through discernment that only the Holy Spirit can give.

Then the preacher said, "Wait a minute. I know who you are. I see the resemblance now. You are a child of God." Then he patted him on the head and said, "Young man, you have a great inheritance. Now go out there and claim it."

Hearing that, the young man straightened his shoulders, smiled for the first time in a long time, and walked out. His life changed that day. After that whenever anyone asked him, "Who's your daddy?" He would smile and say, "I'm a child of God."

The old man got up from the table and said, "Isn't that a great story?" The pastor felt bad about how he had been thinking toward the man and said, "Sir, that is one of the greatest stories I've ever heard." As the old man walked away, he turned back and said with a smile, "You know, if that new preacher hadn't told me I was a child of God I might not ever have amounted to anything. So, pastor, keep on encouraging people."

The pastor and his wife called the server over and asked her if she knew who that man was. The server said, "Sure. Everybody knows him. That's Ben Hooper. He's the former governor of Tennessee."

I have a message for every child of God: You have a great inheritance. Now go out and claim it!"

OUTLINE

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"See what great love the Father has given us that we should be called God's children—and we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it didn't know him." *1 John 3:1*

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For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes



*David O. Dykes, Pastor
Green Acres Baptist Church
Tyler, Texas*
