

Study Guide: Family of God

Overview

This message launches a series on family by focusing on what it means to belong to the family of God. Membership is based on what God has done through the blood of Jesus (not our religious activity). Three practical metrics help evaluate healthy family membership: improving (not perfect), loving (not all-inclusive), and producing (not just consuming).

Main Points

- **Identity comes from God's action:** We are children of God (1 John 3:1), a chosen race and holy nation (1 Peter 2:9-10), redeemed by the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:18-19), and heirs with Christ (Romans 8:16-17).
- **Improving, but not perfect:** Growth and holiness matter more than flawlessness. Forget the past, press forward (Philippians 3:12-14), pursue holiness, and run the race looking to Jesus (Hebrews 12:1-2; Proverbs 4:18).
- **Loving, but not all-inclusive:** God's love is for everyone and nothing can separate us from it (Romans 8:38-39), yet belonging requires a personal choice to follow Jesus on the narrow road (Matthew 7:13-14; John 14:6). God does not force anyone into the family.
- **Producing, not just consuming:** True family members bear fruit. Unfruitful lives (like the barren fig tree) show no real belonging (Mark 11; John 15:2, 5-6; James 1:22-25).

Reflection Questions

- Do I primarily define being in God's family by what I do, or by what God has done for me?
- In what specific area of my life am I currently improving in closeness to God or holiness?
- Am I walking the narrow road of self-denial and Spirit-led living, or the broad road of comfort?
- What fruit is evident in my life that blesses others and points them toward God?

Application

- Examine your past, present, and future: release anchors from yesterday, pursue present holiness through the Spirit, and press toward the prize.
- Make (or reaffirm) the choice to belong: confess Jesus as Lord, repent, and receive salvation.
- Move from consumer to producer: look for one concrete way this week to pour out what God has poured into you so others encounter Him.
- Daily check: Am I better today than yesterday in resisting temptation and carrying my cross?

Group Discussion Prompts

1. Which of the three metrics (improving, loving/exclusive, producing) challenges you most right now, and why?

2. How does understanding that belonging starts with God's love and the blood of Jesus free you from performance-based Christianity?
3. Share an example of someone whose life moved from "looking the part" to actually bearing fruit. What changed?
4. What practical step can our group take together this month to help one another improve and produce for the Kingdom?