



Links Players

2 WHO AM I?: CHILDREN OF GOD

Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God. (John 1:12-13, NIV)

WHEN IT COMES TO MY WEEKLY GAME AT HOME, I try to work my way into being able to play on a weekday. The rounds are a bit quicker, with the course less crowded. One of my local partners is like me. If he gets his work done, golf fits in on Friday afternoon. It feels like a reward we have earned.

But weekday golf often means we miss one of the game’s little pleasures—and I do mean “little” most literally. When I played on a weekend recently, I noticed quite a few micro-golfers out with mom or dad or grandma. They might have just one club cut to their size, and they’d run to keep up even in the limited confines of the practice area, but man, were they happy! I know there are days when I could use doses of the joy and vigor they bring with them.

Jesus said we have much to learn from children when it comes to faith. It’s their example we should be following when it comes to believing God (Luke 18:17). Do you ever wonder what he meant? Perhaps this: Children, with their fears and insecurities laid bare, instinctively look for the one who will protect them, comfort them, assure them, guide them, and even save them. But in adulthood, most of us have killed the very premise of such faith. We have long practiced the masking of our fears and the hiding of our insecurities, and in so doing, we make ourselves our own lord and savior. It sounds like this: “I’ve gotten myself into this mess; I’ll just have to get myself out of it.”

Coming off our study last week about being created by God, let me assert that you were not made for surviving on your own. Even before Adam’s fall into sin, he knew he needed God. Once that fall came, his need became desperate. He had gotten himself into the predicament of all predicaments, and he got us into it too. Our sin cuts us off from our Creator and Father. We become wandering children, estranged from his care. We need a Savior.

The Savior, of course, is Jesus Christ. And John’s gospel lays out the way we can, as prodigals, come home. We receive the life, the light, the Word; we receive Jesus, believing on his name—that is, making our case before God on the basis of who Jesus is and what he has done. In this way, we become children of God not just in this life but in the life to come, the life that is eternal.

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2019 Links Players International. An introductory video for this study is available here: <https://youtu.be/pY4ovqQITfs>.

Opening questions Did you play the game as a child? If so, are there ideas or attitudes about the game you have maintained through the years?

READING John 3:1-8; John 8:31-41; John 8:42-47

Born again (John 3)

Compare this passage with John 1:12-13. What strikes you about the idea of new birth in Christ? Do you recognize places in your life where the solution is to “start over”? Do you trust Christ in helping you do this?

Proper lineage (John 8:31-41)

According to this discussion, what lineage matters spiritually speaking? How do you shed pride in religious or familial connections and come to place your stock in the Son instead?

Children of the devil (John 8:42-47)

What stark contrast is painted in this passage? What is the vital relationship between Christ and God? In what ways does this passage increase your desire to live as a true child of God?
