



See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

1 John 3:1

What God calls you

What you are called by other people matters. People who know you call you by your name because they know you and who you are. Those who are closest to you might even call you by a nickname because they know you deeply. That nickname is a sign of affection. Others may call you by hurtful and hateful names. They describe you with words meant to tear down and demean.

Which words and names do you remember more? We tend to remember the hurtful things more than the helpful, encouraging things. We tend to remember how people tear us down rather than how people build us up.

Take a moment to look at your own actions too. You know how good it feels to have people call you by endearing names. You know what it's like to be called by names that hurt. Yet how easy do you find it to call others by cruel and unkind names?

There is a name that you don't want. Nobody wants it. But it is an accurate description of all people: *sinner*. This is a name that you've earned because of your behavior.

But while we were still sinners (Romans 5:8), God demonstrated his great love for you. He calls you by a different name: "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" You are God's child. How? God in his great love for you sent his Son, Jesus, to make sinners into his children. The Son of God loves you so much that he took all the hurtful names you've been called and all the unkind names you've called others, and he died on a cross to wipe them all away.

Child of God is who you are now! Child of God is your identity now, always, and forever.

So, when you hurt because of what others have called you, remember your identity in Christ. You are God's child. He loves you infinitely more than the best earthly father ever could, more than you can even begin to imagine. He helps you, provides for you, strengthens and upholds you.

When you think of your sins and are weighed down by guilt, remember your identity in Christ. Your sin is washed away in Jesus' blood. You are his forever. Child of God is who you are! Now go and live like the child of God that you are.

Prayer: Gracious Father, when I hurt because of the words and actions of others, show me in your Word that no matter what others say, you love and treasure me as your own child. When I hurt others, help me to recognize it and turn to you for forgiveness. Strengthen me to move forward as your child, seeking to show your great love for me to others. Amen.