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# Kingdom Maturity

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# Kingdom Maturity

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God desires kingdom maturity for all His children.

He doesn't just want us to be secure knowing our sins have been forgiven and that we will spend eternity with Him in heaven. He also wants us to grow up in Christ while following Him during our time on earth.

## Two Terms

The New Testament uses the terms “children of God” and “sons of God” to explain this goal of maturity.

“Children of God” identifies our new family relationship resulting from spiritual birth. “Sons of God” identifies our family standing based on adoption and maturity. (“Sons” is not focused on gender but emphasizes spiritual growth.)

Here are the Greek words used in the New Testament:

children — τέκνα (*tekna*)

sons — υἱοί (*huioi*)

Unfortunately, some English Bible translations use “children” even though the Greek word is υἱοί (*huioi*) and therefore misrepresent the intended distinction. And, the Old Testament uses “sons of God” to refer to a variety of supernatural spiritual beings, thereby adding to the confusion.

## Children of God

First, consider some “children of God” passages in the New Testament.

In the Gospel of John, the apostle writes:

“But to all who have received him—those who believe in his name—he has given the right to become God’s children.” —John 1:12, NET

We become “children of God” through spiritual birth when we receive Christ and believe in His name. Receive and believe = spiritual birth.

Paul admonishes the Ephesians:

“Therefore, be imitators of God as dearly loved children...” —Ephesians 5:1, NET

“Children of God” are to imitate their heavenly Father, just like all children mimic the speech and behavior of their earthly parents.

Paul admonishes the Philippians:

“Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may be blameless and pure, children of God without blemish...” —Philippians 2:15, NET

Here Paul instructs his spiritual children, like any parent would exhort their earthly children, not to grumble or argue.

## **Sons of God**

Now, let’s look at some Bible passages that mention “sons of God.”

In Romans, 8:14, the apostle Paul explains that “sons of God” are those believers who are led by the spirit of God.

“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God.” —Romans 8:14, NET

Believers who follow the leading of the Holy Spirit are walking in the Spirit and on their way to becoming a Son of God.

Jesus explained that “sons of God” love their enemies and do good. They lend and expect nothing back.

“But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to ungrateful and evil people.” —Luke 6:35, NET

Jesus further explains that “sons of God” work to facilitate peace between others, as well as encourage people to seek peace with God.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” —Matthew 5:9, ESV

## **Comparing Child and Son**

As you look at the following chart, notice the maturity differences between “children of God” and “sons of God.”

<b>Children of God</b>	<b>Sons of God</b>
John 1:12 Become children by receiving Christ	Romans 8:14 Become sons by following the Spirit
Philippians 2:15 Children are not to grumble or argue	Matthew 5:9 Sons are peacemakers
Ephesians 5:1 Children Imitate their heavenly Father	Galatians 5:22 Sons reflect the character of Christ

Being born into a family does not necessarily mean you will follow your parents obediently.

Children grumble and argue when they don't get what they want, but the mature son intervenes to bring peace.

Children copy the behavior of their parents, but as they grow and mature they reflect the character qualities of their parents.

### **Sons by Faith**

In Galatians 3:26, Paul states that all believers are sons of God through faith.

“For in Christ Jesus, you are all sons of God through faith.” —Galatians 3:26, NET

So what does that mean? The term sonship identifies the relationship between believers and God as His children. But it is more than just adoption. It also suggests a deep connection and implied inheritance.

When we are born again as spiritual children, God adopts us as sons into His eternal family. However, He expects us to grow, mature, and become all that He intended us to be. He desires to proudly call us His obedient sons, entrusted with great responsibilities and a special eternal inheritance.

Consider this: A father can introduce his five-year-old boy as his child or his son. However, what if a father introduces his 25-year-old son as his child rather than as his son? What does that imply? Many young men may be physically mature, but they have not fully developed emotionally or in their character. As a result, it would be unwise to rely on them for critical responsibilities or to entrust them with an inheritance they might squander.

## **Maturity Changes Interactions**

Let's consider another example: a father building a treehouse with his eight-year-old son. The father will make sure to keep the son away from dangerous power tools to prevent any injuries. Additionally, he will supervise the entire construction process, ensuring that all the boards are properly secured together.

Twenty years later, the son is now working in his father's construction company, building houses. Due to the son's maturity and responsibility, his father has entrusted him with significant responsibilities to oversee the project and manage the work of others.

God desires that we grow into the obedient, mature, responsible people He created us to be. He will be rejoicing that we will accomplish the good works He created us for. Then, we will also reflect Christ's character qualities in our daily lives.

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