1 John 3:1-3 New International Version

3 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. **2** Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears,[a] we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. **3** All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

November 1, 2026
1 John 3:1–3

The Children of God

The First Epistle of John was written by John, the apostle of Jesus Christ, and was composed sometime around A.D. 100. John addressed his letter to a group of churches where false prophets and teachers were present and where some denied the divinity of Jesus. The faithful people were deeply disturbed by their teachings. John's letter encourages believers.

Our epistle reading begins by saying, "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are."

This passage tells us about our identity as children of God. We are the children of God. We became sons and daughters of God at the time of our baptism. Through baptism, we are connected to the body of Christ, the Church, and the Lord pours out His Spirit upon us, making us children of God.

At the time of Jesus' baptism, the heavens opened, the Holy Spirit came down upon Him like a dove, and a voice from heaven said, "You are my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." This is echoed in every baptism. Therefore, baptism is important. Being a child of God is a privilege.

In Jewish tradition, a rabbi would often address the congregation gathered in the synagogue as "my children." Age was not a consideration. You could be nine or ninety-nine, or any age in between. All people are God's children. God is our Father.

Romans 8:15 says, "…you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.'" "Abba" is an Aramaic word, from the language Jesus spoke, that means "Father."

The nature of our heavenly Father is love. The apostle John says, "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us." God's love is limitless and eternal. His love is lavished upon us. God does not allocate His love to us based on a budget. He does not ration His affection according to our performance; rather, He lavishes His love upon us so that we may be called children of God.

Once, a mother asked her little child, "Show me how much you love me. This much?" "No." "This much?" "No." The little child stretched his arms as wide as possible and said, "This much!"

How much does our heavenly Father love us? God's love is unconditional and limitless. He lavishes His love upon us. His love is powerful. Love changes us.

The book titled *Mistreated*, written by Ron Lee Davis, tells the story of two boys who served as altar boys on different continents during the same period. One boy was mistreated by the priest, while the other was shown love.

An altar boy was assisting his priest during Mass in Eastern Europe. He accidentally spilled some wine from the chalice onto the floor. Suddenly, the priest slapped the boy in the face and said, "You fool! Leave the altar now. Your service is no longer needed here." The boy left the altar, grew up, and became an atheist and a communist leader in Yugoslavia. His name was Josip Broz Tito. His presidency lasted from 1953 to 1980.

On the other side of the world, in Illinois, a similar incident happened at an altar. An altar boy was assisting the priest during Communion when he accidentally spilled some wine from the chalice onto the floor. The priest responded, "That's okay, son. We all make mistakes and have accidents in life. I know you will be more careful and do better next time. You will be a fine priest of God someday."

This altar boy grew up to become one of the most beloved bishops in the Roman Catholic tradition. His name was Bishop Fulton J. Sheen. Love is powerful. Love changes the direction of a life. Mistreatment can have a negative impact on a person's life.

Some of you may have experienced mistreatment at some point in your lives. It could have come from an employer, spouse, parent, teacher, or someone else with whom you have a relationship. Positive encouragement always helps another person become better. It helps rebuild broken self-esteem and allows people to let go of resentment and bitterness. Love and forgiveness help a person become more positive.

The apostle John says, "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!"

St. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13 that achievements pass away, but love remains.

Look at the cross of Jesus. His love was not measured; it was lavished upon us. You and I are heirs of the King of the universe. Jesus' love is sacrificial love.

Dear people of God,

We are God's children, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him. This gives us hope in life.

As children of God, we are called to live as Christ lived, walking in the light of God. God abides with us. We live in fellowship with Christ, and He is with us. Let us continue to walk in the light of Christ. Amen.