

## The God Who Is & His Children!

John 1:1-13

How many of us actually made a New Year's resolution this year?

We are a week into the new year. How are those resolutions going?

What do you think are the most popular New Year's resolutions of 2023?

Most New Year's resolutions start off with, "I want to..."

They're all about the changes/transformation we want to see in our own lives!

But what if our lives are not our own? What if we "belong body and soul" to another? How might that change how we live & make New Year's resolutions?

We love the 1<sup>st</sup> question & answer of the Heidelberg Catechism, because we are all for "comfort", "belonging", "God watching over us", "Jesus setting us free" ... But what about the phrase, "I am not my own..."

What gets stirred up in you when you hear that as a follower of Jesus, your life does not belong to you? Does that comfort you, or stir up something else?

And what about our identity as a "child of God"? We just read that is who we are in John 1, we also sang about that in our last song, but what does it truly mean when we make that claim? And what are the implications of it?

I'll share where my mind naturally goes when I think of this as my identity:

- To the helpless infant child that requires all their needs to be cared for!
- To the crying teenager that just needs to hear "it's going to be ok!"
- To the adult child that only needs encouragement/advice from a parent!

My mind doesn't naturally go to other realities of the parent/child relationship:

- To the 3yr old child that needs discipline, & the word "NO" in their life!
- To the teenage child that needs to start contributing around the house!
- To the hard parental statements like: "You'll always be my child, but if you choose this path, you will not have my blessing!"

The parent/child relationship is not always what we would like it to be! And the same is true in our parent/child relationship with God!

We often have rose colored glasses through which we choose to see & respond to God in our lives as our Father, our authority, & the One to whom we belong!

But we must remember that God does not exist for us, we exist for Him!

Let me share 2 of the most impacting statements that my parents ever said to me growing up, in reference to my relationship with them. These also impacted my view of God & my relationship to Him as my heavenly parent!

1) "I'm not your friend, I'm your father!"

I did not like that statement as a child growing up! Why?

Because it was usually spoken when I was trying to get my way, and when I was trying to be the one in charge of my own life!

I'm thankful now that my stepfather helped me understand my place, and his, in this parent/child relationship!

2) "You owe me your life!"

This was usually spoken when I was asking for things that I thought I was entitled to, or trying to repay something I could never actually repay!

My parents loved me more than I deserved, and nothing I could do could ever repay them for all they have done (and still do) for me! This statement was my mom's way of reminding me of that fact!

As children of God, we need to be reminded that God is more than our friend! He is God, our Creator & sustainer, our Savior & Lord! We owe Him our allegiance, & our obedience, for who He is, not just for what He can give.

We truly do owe God our entire lives, even though there is nothing we could ever do to repay all that He has done, & all that He is, for us!

But what if we started by changing our New Year's resolutions to be more about God's desires than our own? "God what change do you want to see?"

God wants more than just our acknowledgment of His existence! He wants more than just to be an impersonal force in our lives! He wants to be more than just a heavenly vending machine giving us what we want!

And this is where Jesus comes in! Jesus is God's transformative work in the lives of His people, in the past, the present & in the future!

We are going to spend the next several months looking at how the "love of Jesus has/is transforming lives, in the gospel of John, & in our lives today! All that He is makes possible all that He created us & redeemed us to be!

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