

How Am I Related to God's Family?

¹⁷ And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For **through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.** ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and **members of the household of God,** ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, **Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,** ²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, **grows into a holy temple in the Lord.** ²² In him **you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.** Ephesians 2:17–22 (ESV)

What does it mean to be a member of God's household? Slaves were members of households. In fact, in AD 61, about 30 years after Jesus' death and resurrection, a case came before the Roman Senate. A slave had killed his master, Pedanius Secundus. The question the Senate needed to decide was whether the entire household of slaves should be considered liable, or just the one slave who had killed the master. Because the Roman Senate was fearful of slave uprisings they decided that all the slaves in the household should be executed. This would cause other slaves in other households to be less tempted to follow this example, of a slave killing his master. All 400 slaves of Pedanius Secundus were executed. So, being the member of a household doesn't necessarily mean you've got it made.

Look at the passage though. What do we see that would lead us to believe that being a member of God's household could never mean what it meant to be a member of the household of Pedanius Secundus?

What does it mean? Let's look at the different steps of becoming a part of God's household. Fathers don't make up an entire household all by themselves. What is the ideal family like? In other words, what is God's family and God's household like?

After Creation, Before Sin – Maybe part of God's household

Before he sinned, what was Adam's relationship to God?

³⁸ the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of **Adam, the son of God.** Luke 3:38 (ESV)

²⁶ Then God said, "**Let us make man in our image,** after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:26–27 (ESV)

¹ This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. ² Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created. ³ **When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image,** and named him Seth. Genesis 5:1–3 (ESV)

²⁸ for " 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, " 'For we are indeed his offspring.'

²⁹ **Being then God's offspring,** we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. Acts 17:28–29 (ESV)

After Creation, After Sin – Definitely not part of God’s household, kicked out

What happened to the relationship between God and human beings after sin?

¹⁷ And to Adam he said, “**Because you** have listened to the voice of your wife and **have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you**; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; ¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ **By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground**, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” Genesis 3:17–19 (ESV)

²² Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—” ²³ therefore **the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken**. ²⁴ He **drove out the man**, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life. Genesis 3:22–24 (ESV)

¹⁸ Therefore, as **one trespass led to condemnation for all men**, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.

¹⁹ For as **by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners**, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous. Romans 5:18–19 (ESV)

¹ And **you were dead in the trespasses and sins** ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. Ephesians 2:1–3 (ESV)

After Creation, Waiting for Messiah – There’s hope of a closer relationship of some kind

After Adam sinned, before Christ came, God did not give up on dwelling among His people. It was not as intimate as it had been with Adam. How did God dwell among His people?

¹¹ For **the life of the flesh is in the blood**, and I have given it for you **on the altar to make atonement for your souls**, for it is the **blood that makes atonement** by the life. Leviticus 17:11 (ESV)

²⁶ And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁷ “Now on the tenth day of this seventh month is the **Day of Atonement**. It shall be for you a time of holy convocation, and you shall afflict yourselves and present a food offering to the LORD. ²⁸ And you shall not do any work on that very day, for it is a **Day of Atonement**, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God. Leviticus 23:26–28 (ESV)

⁸ And let them **make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst**. ⁹ Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it. Exodus 25:8–9 (ESV)

² and the LORD said to Moses, “**Tell Aaron your brother not to come** at any time into the Holy Place **inside the veil**, before the mercy seat that is on the ark, **so that he may not die**. For I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat. ³ **But in this way Aaron shall come into the Holy Place: with a bull** from the herd **for a sin offering** and **a ram for a burnt offering**. ... ⁶ “Aaron shall **offer the bull as a sin offering for himself** and shall make atonement for himself and for his house. ⁷ Then he shall take the **two goats** and set them before the LORD at the entrance of the tent of meeting. ... ¹⁴ And **he shall take some of the blood of the bull** and **sprinkle it with his finger on the front of the mercy seat on the east side, and in front of the mercy seat** he shall **sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times**. ¹⁵ “Then he shall **kill the goat of the sin offering that is for the people** and **bring its blood inside the veil** and **do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, sprinkling it over the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat**. ¹⁶ Thus he shall make

atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleannesses of the people of Israel and because of their transgressions, all their sins. And so he shall do for the tent of meeting, which dwells with them in the midst of their uncleannesses. Leviticus 16:1–16 (ESV)

¹ For since **the law has but a shadow of the good things to come** instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. ² Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? ³ But **in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.** ⁴ For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Hebrews 10:1–4 (ESV)

⁶ These preparations having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties, ⁷ but into the second **only the high priest goes, and he but once a year,** and not without **taking blood,** which he **offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people.** ⁸ By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing ⁹ (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and **sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper,** ¹⁰ but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation. ¹¹ But **when Christ appeared as a high priest** of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) ¹² he **entered once for all into the holy places,** not by means of the blood of goats and calves but **by means of his own blood,** thus **securing an eternal redemption.** ¹³ For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, **purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.** Hebrews 9:6–14 (ESV)

After Christ Died on the Cross, After Believing in Jesus – More than a member of the household, much more.

¹² But **to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,** ¹³ who were **born,** not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of **the will of man,** but of **God.** John 1:12–13 (ESV)

²⁶ for **in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.** Galatians 3:26 (ESV)

¹ **Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God,** and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. 1 John 5:1 (ESV)

⁴ But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. ⁶ And **because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”** ⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. Galatians 4:4–7 (ESV)

⁵ he **predestined us for adoption** to himself , according to the purpose of his will, Ephesians 1:5 (ESV)

¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” ¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. Romans 8:14–17 (ESV)

¹ See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ² Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. 1 John 3:1–2 (ESV)

In What Sense Am I a Member of God’s Household?

Who comes running in this story?

¹¹ And he said, “There was a man who had two sons. ¹² And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.’ And he divided his property between them. ¹³ Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. ¹⁴ And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ “But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! ¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.”’ ²⁰ And **he arose and came to his father.** But while he was still a long way off, **his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.** ²¹ And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ ²² But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. ²³ And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. ²⁴ For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.

²⁵ “Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. ²⁷ And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.’ ²⁸ But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, ²⁹ but he answered his father, ‘Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!’ ³¹ And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’” Luke 15:11–32 (ESV)

What is your Heavenly Father like toward you?

How can you follow His example of being a father?