

» Diagram **Orphans or children of God?**

Read through the characteristics of an “orphan” in the left column below. Check off the tendencies you recognize in yourself and underline words or phrases that most apply to you.

In the right-hand column are the Son/Daughter counterparts to each Orphan characteristic. Use the Son/Daughter descriptions as goals to reach for during the course and beyond.

### The Orphan

I will not leave you as orphans...  
(John 14:18)

- Feels alone. Lacks a vital daily intimacy with God. Is full of self-concern.
- Anxious over felt needs: relationships, money, health. “I’m all alone and nobody cares. I’m not a happy camper.”
- Lives on a succeed/fail basis. Needs to “look good” and “be right.” Is performance-oriented.
- Feels condemned, guilty, and unworthy before God and others.
- Has little faith, lots of fear, lots of faith in himself: “I’ve got to fix it.”
- Labors under a sense of unlimited obligation. Tries too hard to please. Burns out.
- Rebellious. Resists authority. Heart is hard. Is not easily teachable.
- Defensive. Can’t listen well. Bristles at the charge of being self-righteous (thus proving the point).
- Needs to be right, safe, secure. Unwilling to fail. Unable to tolerate criticism. Can only “handle” praise.
- Excessively self-confident or self-loathing. Discouraged, defeated. Lacks spiritual power.
- Tends toward an “I can do it myself!” attitude. Is strong-willed, driven.
- Unbelieving effort. Relies only on his gifts to get by in ministry.

### The Child of God

But he has given us the Spirit of sonship and by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father!’  
(Rom 8:15)

- Has a growing assurance that “God is really *my* loving heavenly Father.”
- Trusts the Father and has a growing confidence in his loving care. Is being freed up from worry.
- Learning to live in daily, conscious, partnership with God. Is not fearful.
- Feels loved, forgiven, and totally accepted because Christ’s merit really clothes him.
- Has a daily *working trust* in God’s sovereign plan for her life as loving, wise, and best. Believes God is good.
- Prayer is the first resort: “I’m going to ask my Daddy first.” Cries “Abba, Father!”
- Has strength to be submissive. Has a soft (broken and contrite) heart. Is teachable.
- Open to criticism since she *consciously* stands in *Christ’s* perfection, not her own. Is able to examine her unbelief.
- Able to take risks and even fail, since his righteousness is in Christ. Needs no “record” to boast in, protect, or defend.
- Confident in Christ and encouraged because of the Holy Spirit’s work in her.
- “I can do all things through *Christ* who gives me strength!”
- Trusting *less* in self and more in the Holy Spirit—a daily, conscious, reliance.

» Diagram **Orphans or children of God?** continued

### The Orphan

I will not leave you as orphans...  
(John 14:18)

- Tends to be ungrateful. Is complaining, bitter. Has a critical spirit. Tears down others.
- Tends to point out what is wrong. Is often dissatisfied about something.
- Gossips (confesses *other people's* sins). Needs to criticize others to feel right. Has the “gift of discernment.”
- Tends to compare himself with others—leading either to pride or depression.
- Feels powerless to defeat the flesh. Has no heart-victory over pet sins, yet has lost her sense of being a “big sinner.”
- Relatively prayerless. Prayer is a last resort. Prays sometimes in public, seldom in private.
- The Bible’s promises of spiritual power and joy mock him. “What has happened to all your joy?”
- Boasts. Points out her own accomplishments for fear that someone might overlook them.
- Concerned about building a record of deeds that needs noticing and defending.
- Wishes people would see things her way. Needs to be in *control* of situations and other people.
- Looks for satisfaction in positions, possessions, or pacifiers (idols). Something other than Jesus makes him feel worthy, worthwhile, or justified.
- Lacks passion to share the gospel, since her Christian life is not really good news. Tends to be motivated by obligation or duty, not love.

### The Child of God

But he has given us the Spirit of sonship and by him we cry, “Abba, Father!”  
(Rom 8:15)

- Relies on the Holy Spirit to guide the tongue. Praises, edifies, gives thanks, encourages.
- Not blind to wrong, but chooses instead to focus on what is good and lovely.
- Is able to freely confess his faults to others. Is finding that he is often wrong. Is eager to grow.
- Stands confidently in Christ. His self-worth comes from Jesus’ righteousness, not his own.
- As she rests in Christ, she is seeing more and more victory over the flesh. She sees herself as a “big sinner.”
- Prayer is a vital part of the day, not confined to a quiet-time. Loves to talk to the Father.
- God’s promises of power and joy are beginning to describe him.
- Finds that Jesus is more and more the subject of her conversation. She boasts in her weaknesses.
- Christ’s righteousness is his “record” so he stands complete in him.
- Becoming Christ-controlled. Loves others in power of the Spirit, not in strength of her sinful nature.
- Christ is his meat and drink. God truly satisfies his soul. “[A]nd having him, I desire nothing on earth.”
- Has a desire to see the lost come to know Jesus the way she does. Shares the gospel, even when not under the outward pressure of a program.