



Lesson 12: Adoption

The Bible contains various pictures of what our salvation is like. The term “adoption” is found in five places in the New Testament:

Romans 8:15, 23; 9:4 (used of Israel)

Galatians 4:5

Ephesians 1:5.

The term translated **adoption** is the Greek word *huiiothesia* meaning to be set forth as *an adult son – son placing*. The word does not bear the meaning of our contemporary concept of adopting children.

Adoption in the Greek culture of Paul’s day was commonly done by a wealthy couple who had no heirs. They would pick someone who was even an adult to be their heir. A time would be chosen and all the household slaves, guests, and other family members would gather in a public place and the father would publicly announce who the heir would be.

If the heir grew up in the house as a minor, and now was going to graduate to adulthood with adult responsibilities and privileges, he would be clothed at the public announcement with the *toga virilis: robe of adulthood*, (i. e. see TDNT, Volume VIII, p. 399).

We will look at this ceremony closer in Galatians 4:1-7.

REGENERATION emphasizes that the one who believes in Jesus Christ has been given life from above and possesses eternal life.

John 1:12, 13; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 3:1-3, 9; 5:12-13;

Ephesians 2:1, 5.

JUSTIFICATION shows the judicial dealings of God with our sins as children of rebellion; Eph. 2:1-3; John 8:44. In God’s courtroom we entered as guilty, but because of the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ through faith in Him we have been declared, “**Not guilty—no condemnation – all charges paid for and a righteous standing granted.**”

ADOPTION emphasizes the privileges of being in the divine family. *Adult son placing* teaches us that we have a face to face relationship with God the Father and are not under the tutorship of the law, legalism, or ceremonialism; Colossians 2:15-23; Galatians 4:1-7.

God’s life has been given to us: _____.

God has judged us for our sins and declared us right in His eyes because of Christ’s righteousness being imputed to us: _____.

After going to court to face God as our Judge, God declares that He has not only put Christ’s righteousness to our credit but He wants to have us permanently in His family with all the adult privileges of an heir. In His house He wants to be called “Abba, Father.” This was the most intimate child-father language found in the Aramaic language—this phrase is Aramaic not Greek.

We are in God’s house and given the status of adult sons: _____.

Consider the five passages that mention *adult son placing*:

1. Romans 8:15

Those the Spirit of God is leading; 8:14, are being treated as adult sons; 8:15. Consider the distinction being made: slavery vs. sonship.

A household in the Greek world at this time would have slaves, little children, and adults. Little children were under the guidance of the slave mentors but not the adult sons.

Sons cry out, “Abba, Father.” Sons deal with the Father and only tell slaves what to do but the slaves do not have fellowship with the sons as heirs; 8:16.

2. **Romans 8:23**

Christians live in a “groaning” world. Creation is groaning, Christians are groaning, and the Spirit is groaning. The groaning of creation and Christians is for the new order when all aspects of a fallen world will be removed.

Our sonship and adult privileges are certain before God, but their full manifestation are in the future. Part of the Christian’s hope is the *glorification* promised in Romans 8:28-30 and this will include the *redemption* or *complete unloosing of our body* from every aspect of sin in a fallen world.

This is our *hope* in a future day. This change in us will take place when Jesus Christ comes back for His own; Titus 2:11-13; 1 Thess. 4:13-18.

3. **Romans 9:4**

Of all the nations of the earth only Israel has been called a son and treated with fatherly care by God. No other nation or people were ever given so much by God than the seed of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob.

4. **Ephesians 1:5**

From eternity God’s plan was to save sinners through the sacrifice of His Son and to make them sons out of infinite grace. God the Father is asked by Jesus Christ to treat his followers like the Father has treated him.

“Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.” John 14:21 ESV

“The Father loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.” John 16:27 ESV

“I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.” John 17:26 ESV

5. Galatians 4:1-7

What is 3:21-29 talking about?

How _____ has treated us compared to how we are now treated under _____.

Law: a slave tutor and we the children being bossed by it.

Grace: a son clothed in the Son’s robe and we are treated as sons.

4:1-7 Custom of the Day: slaves would train the children.

- At the right time God the Son came to make us sons
- Those who were under the law—Israel primarily—have been liberated by the Son from being treated like minors.
- The Holy Spirit is crying out from us, “You are a son---call upon God as ‘Abba, Father.’”
- No one in God’s family is treated poorly by the Father.
- In Christ we are “sons” and “heirs” and not minors or slaves.

Definition of Adoption:

Adoption: is our being placed in the family of God with all the rights and privileges of an adult heir. No matter what stage of the Christian life one may be in he is still afforded the privileges of an adult son.

God has appointed no one over His children but the Holy Spirit and the eldest brother of the family, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 2:10-13).

The Father trains His children out of love (Hebrews 12:5-13). God the Holy Spirit keeps reminding us of the privilege of being in the divine family and the right to call the God of fire, judgment, and righteousness “Abba, Father.”

Compare Your Family of Origin With the Family of the New Birth:

Unhealthy Family

1. Distrust
2. No peace/constant conflict
3. Blame
4. Reminded of failure
5. Performance driven
6. Stuff feelings and emotions
7. Anger/confrontation without
resolution
8. Father is dominating
9. Abuse
10. Conditionally loved

God’s Family

Next Lesson:

Wednesday, April 15th – Lesson 13 – Union with Christ



Break Out Session – Lesson 12

Group Discussion Background

In each of our break out sessions we will probe three aspects of the truths presented during each class through a series of discussion questions as described below.

WHAT: What is the key informational content?

SO WHAT: What is the implication of this information? Or said another way, why is the truth of this information important?

WHAT NOW: How will you apply this truth or what will you do now that you know this truth?

Our goal for these classes is not simply to increase our knowledge, but for lives to be transformed by truth. (Romans 12:2)

Discussion Questions: (25 minutes)

Ask the group at least 2-3 of the following questions and allow the group to thoroughly explore and discuss.

1. In hearing the teaching and doing the homework related to adoption, was there anything you heard or studied that created a question in your mind or was difficult to understand?
2. What is meant by our being adopted and what rights or privileges do we have because we are adopted? (Romans 8:14-16; 8:23; Galatians 4:1-7)
3. Were there any key insights you observed about adoption and what God has done for us? How is adoption into God's family different from being born again or born of God?
4. Anyone who through faith in Christ has been justified (declared just or not guilty by God in the court of Heaven and been given the free gift of Christ's righteousness), God says he has also adopted. Have you been adopted or is there any reason you are not living as a family member with all the adult privileges of an heir?

Time to Care – Share – Bear (15 minutes)

During this time, the group is encouraged to share in each other's lives and demonstrate care for one another by bearing one another up through prayer.

Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

Answer any remaining questions and clarify the homework for the following week.



Lesson 12 Homework

1. Read Grudem, pgs. 204-214.
2. Read Ephesians and write down everything you see that we have because of being "in Christ."
3. Romans 6:1-13 describes our union with Jesus Christ. Please write out what is true of you because of your union with Christ.
4. 1 Corinthians 12:13-30 describes another aspect of being in Christ. How are you viewed by God in this chapter?
5. Be prepared to discuss Question #1, Grudem, p. 212. Before reading this chapter, had you thought of yourself as being united with Christ from the point of God's choosing you before the foundation of the world to the point of going to be with him in heaven forever? How does this idea change the way you think of yourself and your own life? How does it affect the way you think of difficulties that you may be experiencing at this time? In what ways can the ideas of having died with Christ and having been raised with him be an encouragement in your present efforts to overcome sin that remains in your life?