

## Chapter 37 - Adoption (Membership in God's Family)

- I. Introduction.
- A. Study today – Chapter 37 – Adoption - Membership in God's Family.
  - B. Just completed chapter 36 - Justification - our legal standing before God, will follow up next month with chapter 38 - Sanctification.
  - C. The scriptures and discussion today are centered on adoption and being children of God. These imply a close personal relationship. Before we discuss adoption, I want us to get some pictures in our minds.
    - 1. **What are the types of images in which you see a child in a special relationship with a father?** Examples:
      - a. Father walking with a child on his shoulders.
      - b. Father catching a child jumping, either into the water, or from steps.
      - c. A father and child walking together in a playground.
      - d. A father and child laughing and giggling together.
      - e. A father and child building a castle in the sand.
      - f. A father holding a child because the child is being shy or the child hurt himself/herself.
      - g. A father chasing his child as the child tries to run away.
    - 2. **What are the types of words to describe a father like that?** Protective, loving, fun, caring, strong, available!!
    - 3. **Did you have a father like that when you were growing up?**
      - a. The questions I asked were primarily based on our culture and in our context of our perceptions of fathers.
      - b. There are a number of relationships that we have in life, that affect how we live life: our father and mother, other family members, friends, spouse, then others. The type of father we have or had or did not have affects a lot of other relationships, for good and bad, including our relationship with God as our Father.
      - c. We see how this fits in with our Systematic Theology. Our perceptions of God as Father, affects how we live in relationship with him and others.
- II. Adoption Defined.
- A. Wayne Grudem defines adoption in Chapter 37, page 736 as “an act of God whereby he makes us members of his family.” Adoption is the process, being sons and daughters of God is the result. The scriptures will cover both aspects.
  - B. Let's look at scriptures related to adoption and the process.
    - 1. **Eph. 1:5-6 - In love, he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will - to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.** (Word son will be used in

reference to sons and daughters.) Lets look at some of the process of adoption:

- a. **Eph. 1:4 For he chose us in him** (Christ) - personal selection.
  - b. **Eph. 1:5 he predestined us to be adopted ... through Jesus Christ** - purpose, not random.
  - c. **Eph. 1:7 In him we have redemption through his blood** - payment.
  - d. **Eph. 1:9 And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ.** God is actually pleased about this.
  - e. **Eph. 1:13-14 Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance, until the redemption of those who are God's possession - to the praise of his glory.**
    - (1). Seal - to identify us as God's possession. There is also a time until the redemption is complete.
  - f. All of this process is done in Christ. There is purpose, choosing, payment, desire, and a sealing of the action.
  - g. We do know that there are processes for adoption within the culture we live in. We will actually look at it in some ways from the practice in ancient Rome in a little while.
2. Another scripture: **Romans 8:23 - We ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.**
    - a. Reference to the Spirit is similar to Eph. 1:13-14.
    - b. **Is our adoption complete yet?** No - Wayne Grudem speaks of the future full redemption, complete adoption.
  3. One other reference to the word adoption is **Romans 9:4 - about the people of Israel, theirs is the adoption as sons...** This is not new, we can read throughout the Old Testament about God and his children and people Israel.

### III. Adoption Defined.

- A. To get some insight into Paul's perspective of adoption, I looked up how adoption might be perceived historically.
- B. Ancient Rome - desire for male heirs - specifically in senatorial class. It is also used to cement ties between families and to provide a successor to not only preserve a family line but for political/ruler succession.
  1. Adoption was also a way to have someone to have a caregiver for one's old age.
  2. Adopted children could retain rights of both families: the original and the adopted.
  3. Males were adopted because of carrying on a family line.

4. The strongest/healthiest and those with abilities were adopted, one Roman example was Caesar Augustus - who made the decree about the taxes that sent Joseph and Mary to Jerusalem.
    - a. People died at earlier ages compared to today.
    - b. Life expectancy of adult male was 22 years old. 1/3 children died by age of 10.
  5. Adoption was more common with those who were well off.
  6. Orphaned and abandoned children were more likely to become slaves than adopted in Rome.
- C. Contrast with God.
1. We don't retain rights of both families - in our Systematic theology book, **who is the father of those who do not believe in God?** Children of the devil!
  2. God doesn't look to only adopt those who are beneficial to him.  
**Who does God adopt?**
  3. God doesn't only adopt the strong.
  4. God doesn't only adopt males; he has sons and daughters.
- D. Are there any scriptural examples that give us an example of adoption?  
Two major ones:
1. Moses - Exodus 2:10. What position did he have? He became a son of Pharaoh's daughter.
  2. Esther - Esther 2:7, 2:15.
    - a. Esther was adopted by Mordecai, her uncle. Other translations say "taken her for his daughter".

#### IV. Sons And Daughters.

- A. Scriptures - we read about adoption, now some scriptures of the results.
1. **John 1:12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God - children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision, or a husband's will, but born of God.**
  2. **Gal. 3:26 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.**
  3. **I John 3:1 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!**
  4. **Gal. 4:4-7 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba Father." So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.**
  5. **Romans 8:14-17 because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear; but you received the Spirit of**

sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs - heirs of God and coheirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

6. **II Cor. 6:18** - I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters. (Reference to **II Sam. 7:14**, God speaking to David about Solomon - I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul...)

B. Questions:

1. How do we act as children to the Father?
2. Do we really think that God finds pleasure in our presence? If I sit by myself to seek God, think about him, how do I know if God enjoys it (remember the earlier pictures of a father and his child)?
3. How did Jesus act as a son to his Father?
4. How does God show himself to be our Father?

C. Benefits of Being God’s Children.

1. We read scripture about being able to call God - Abba Father.
2. We pray to him as a Father - **Matt. 6:9 Our Father, who is in heaven**. Later in chapter 6 it says that our heavenly Father knows we need to eat, to drink, and to have things to wear and he will give them to us.
3. **Psalm 103:13-14 As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.**
  - a. Does that help us to know that God understands how frail we are?
4. **Matt. 7:11 If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father give good gifts to those who ask him!**
  - a. Do little kids ask a lot from their fathers? Are we afraid to ask God our Father for things?
  - b. In a parallel passage in **Luke 11**, it says **how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him**. We know we receive the Holy Spirit from God. We also know the Holy Spirit helps in how to ask God for things.

D. God’s Discipline.

1. We read about Solomon being disciplined as God’s son.
2. **Heb 12:5-9 And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves,**

and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son. (Reference to Proverbs 3:11-12) Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. (Think of Israelites going to the Promised Land.) For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons.

- a. Notice words like everyone. No one gets away from discipline. I don't know if I like this, depending on how I was "disciplined" or maybe abused by my father.
  - b. **Do you view God as a strict disciplinarian and we can't have any fun? Does that take away your understanding of him as a Father?**
- E. **Do we get better treatment than those who are not God's children?**
1. Yes!
    - a. **Eph. 2:3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.** We're not objects of wrath anymore.
    - b. Those who are not children of God, but their father is the devil - **John 8:42-44.** They will carry out their father's desire - what is that desire: **John 10:10** the thief only comes to kill, steal, and destroy.
- F. How do you feel about being God's child now? Do you think that God, your Father, really likes you?

V. Relationship With Others.

- A. Now that we understand the privilege of adoption and having the full stature of being a son or daughter of God, what about the rest of the family, our brothers and sisters? Have they received the same?
- B. **I John: 4:7-8 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God because God is love.**
- C. **Gal. 6:10 Do good, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.**
- D. Examples:
  1. After Pentecost, see the impact in Jerusalem for the believers: **Acts 2:44-46 All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need... They broke bread together in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts...**
  2. **Acts 16:11-15** read about Lydia and the members of her household listening to Paul, responding, being baptized, then saying **"If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house."**

- E. Questions.
1. **How well do we relate with our brothers and sisters in the family?**
  2. **Do we only respond to those in our local church?**
  3. **Has God adopted them and called them sons and daughters also?**
  4. **How about believers from other countries - are they adopted the same way?**
- F. We should not sin against God's children if we do believe in his adoption of us. We also do not sin against those who could be his children, because we don't want anything to hinder their coming into that relationship.
- G. **Phil. 2:14-15 Do everything without complaining or arguing so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God, without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe.** We walk as God's children in the world around us.