

Adoption: Children of God

Romans 8: 14-17

Leslie Lynch King Jr. was born July 14, 1913 in Omaha, Nebraska. Shortly after his birth, his mother fled their home with young Leslie due to an abusive husband. She moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan and eventually married a successful paint salesman. Her husband adopted young Leslie, effectively altering the course of his life. Leslie took the oath of office as President of the United States on August 9, 1974. History does not remember Leslie Lynch King Jr., but they do remember Gerald R. Ford Jr. The salesman in Grand Rapids was Gerald Ford, and he gave his adoptive son his name.

Clearly the practice of adoption can have a tremendous impact on the life of an individual. One who was not born into a particular family is received by that family, given a new name, and a new life. As we continue our series, *Understanding Christianity*, I want to conclude with the doctrine of adoption. Like those adopted into families today, every believer has been adopted into the family of God, given a new name, and a glorious new life. Those once separated by sin are now received as children of God, with all the rights and privileges associated with being a part of the family.

As we conclude our study, I want to consider the [benefits](#) associated with being part of God's family as we discuss: [Adoption – Children of God](#).

I. A Guaranteed Family (14-15) – Once one is saved, they are placed within the family of God. Notice the benefits this new family guarantees.

A. Our Association (14) – [For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God](#). We will deal with the wondrous benefits of being a child of God in a moment; but as I considered this statement, I was reminded of the multitude within the family of God. [For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God](#). Everyone who comes to saving faith in Christ is placed within the family. Every believer shares in the family. We are all God's children! Isn't it good to know that we have the support and love of all our brothers and sisters in Christ?

- There is another great benefit that we must not miss. Being born in the flesh, we are all born into a particular family. I was born into the Benfield family. However, regardless of the particular family we were born into, we were all born into the family of Adam. We were all born with a sin nature, and became part of the great number separated from God. Through grace by faith, we have been placed within the family of God. I am still a Benfield by birth, but I am a child

of God by the new-birth. I am no longer associated with those apart from Christ, but I have been brought into His glorious family!

B. Our Adoption (15b) – *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.* Paul speaks of the miraculous transformation that takes place the moment we are saved. We receive the Spirit of adoption. This literally means those who are in Christ have been “*placed as a son.*” Being in Christ makes us children of the living God!

▪ I want to take a moment to consider the significance of adoption. In Roman culture, adoption was a very serious matter, not to be entered lightly. There were three significant truths relating to every adoption:

1. The adopted son was adopted permanently. He could not be adopted today and disinherited tomorrow. He became a son of the father—forever. He was eternally secure as a son.
2. The adopted son immediately had all the rights of a legitimate son in the new family.
3. The adopted son completely lost all rights in his old family. The adopted son was looked upon as a *new person* — so new that old debts and obligations connected with his former family were cancelled out and abolished as if they never existed.ⁱ

Isn't that a beautiful picture? In fact it perfectly illustrates our adoption in God's family. Our adoption allows us the benefit of nearness to the Father. We have the privilege of calling Him Abba, Father. This is a term of endearment that literally means “Daddy!”

C. Our Liberation (15a) – *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear.* While living in sin, apart from Christ, we dwelt in fear and hopelessness. We did not enjoy peace and security in our hearts. We had no assurance of the future and felt the guilt and condemnation of sin. We were bound by the lusts of the flesh and were unable to live in a way that pleased God. Once we were saved and placed within the family, all fear was removed as we were released from the bondage of sin. We no longer fear approaching God, but enjoy a closeness that allows us intimacy with Him that was not there before!

▪ Isn't it good to know we have such a privilege with the Lord? When a family is filled with love as it should be, children do not fear their father. In fact they take comfort in his presence.

They find security in his strength and know they can call on him at any time for any reason. This is what we now have in God the Father through Christ the Son.

II. A Gracious Fellowship (16) – We also have the benefit of fellowship with the Spirit. Consider:

A. The Communion (16a) – **The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.** This is a gracious benefit we may not consider often, but it is a genuine blessing. There are times when we stumble and fall even after salvation. There are even times when we may doubt if we are truly saved. Those times of failure and doubt would be devastating and even debilitating if it were not for the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit. In times of doubt and failure, the Spirit assures us of our salvation. He provides the comfort and guidance we need to press on in the journey. He leads us toward the things of God and confirms the Word in our hearts! It would be a difficult journey if we did not have the Spirit within to comfort, guide, and even convict. **John 16:13 – Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.**

B. The Confirmation (16b) – **The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.** This goes hand in hand with the communion we have with the Spirit. He is the constant in our lives when everything else continually changes. He affords the peace we need to continue for the Lord. He provides the faith we need to look beyond present difficulties to an eternal future. When doubts do creep in, He reminds us that we belong to the Lord. He is that still small voice that offers guidance when we face a crossroads, the courage when we face adversity, and the joy when we worship. We cannot begin to comprehend all we have in the Spirit, but He continually confirms our place within the family of God.

III. A Glorious Future (17) – As Paul concludes his words of praise for being placed within the family of God, he rejoices for the promising future every believer possesses. Our blessing in the Lord is not limited to this moment or this life. There is far more ahead! Consider:

A. Our Identity (17a) – **And if children, then heirs.** The Spirit bears witness that we are the children of God, and if we are children, then we too are heirs. We all know that an heir is promised a portion of the inheritance. An heir is a beneficiary to the estate. We are not just placed within the family and forgotten, we are identified as heirs of God.

- Often people struggle in this life simply trying to make ends meet. Many times the money runs out before the month does. People have to live according to their means, or at least they should. I don't know any of us who have lived a life of luxury and excess, although I am sure others around the world would choose to differ. However, we are heirs of God. Our Father owns it all. There is no shortage in His vast supply, regardless of the need. Heaven will exceed anything we can possibly imagine. Our Father is more than able to provide all that we could ever need. [Phil.4:19 – But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.](#) [1 Cor.2:9 – But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.](#)

B. Our Inheritance (17a) – [And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.](#) We are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. We have heard that many times I am sure, but do we really comprehend what that means. A joint-heir has an equal share with the other heir or heirs. The estate is divided equally between the heirs. The portion allotted for one, is allotted for all. We are viewed by the Father just as He views Christ the Son. We will enjoy the splendor and bounty of heaven just as Christ does.

- I want to clarify, lest some would accuse me of heresy. This does not imply that we will possess the deity of Christ or share in His glory, but it does reveal the great love the Father has for all His children. We will be received of the Father just as Christ the Son is received. [1 John 3:2 – Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.](#)

C. Our Immortality (17b) – [if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.](#) Here we discover a reminder of the eternal state in heaven. Those who suffer with Christ, enduring the ridicule of the world and the adversity it brings, we will be glorified with Christ. Our lives are filled with heartache and pain. Many suffer horrible persecution for their faith, but this life will not last forever. We will eventually lay aside this tabernacle of flesh in which we dwell and when the Lord returns for the church, we will be resurrected unto Him bearing a new, glorified body. [1 Cor.15:51-54 – Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,](#) ^[52] [In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.](#) ^[53] [For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.](#) ^[54] [So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.](#)

Conclusion: Clearly being a child of God has benefits beyond imagination. We are adopted into the family with full and equal rights, never to be disinherited. Through our relationship with Christ we are promised eternal life with Him in heaven. We now enjoy the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit as we make our journey toward the promised inheritance. Are you part of the family of God, graciously adopted as one of His children? If so, rejoice in the promised you have received. If not I urge you to come in repentance and faith. The family of God is large, but there is always room for more!

ⁱ The Sermon Notebook - The Sermon Notebook – Romans.