

God's Adoptive Children

Discussion Questions:

1. How would you react if Donald Trump said to you "You're hired, if you signed a life time contract to work with me?"
2. What could you learn about a parent by observing their children?

"These two concepts [propitiation and adoption], indeed, link together; were I asked to focus the New Testament message in three words, my proposal would be *adoption through propitiation*, and I do not expect ever to meet a richer or more pregnant summary of the gospel than that." (Knowing God, p. 214)

The Gospel is the reason we call God Abba!

God desires a relationship that is more deep and intimate than a Creator to his created or a Master to his servant. God's adoption of us brings the relationship into a deeper level s where we can approach God not only as our Creator and King but also as Father.

^[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)

1. J.I. Packer called adoption the highest blessing God can give us in a relationship, even higher than justification. He is not trying to diminish the fundamental and essential blessing of justification because it is the heart of the gospel. However, J.I. Packer points out, that an intimate relationship with the sinner is not necessary for the judge to pardon the sinner.

"Justification is a *forensic* idea, conceived in terms of *law*, and viewing God as *judge*... justification does not of itself imply any intimate or deep relationship with God the judge. In idea, at any rate, you could have the reality of justification without any close fellowship with God resulting." (Knowing God, p. 207)

2. It is through God's lovingkindness that he chose to adopt us with no merit from our own. We become more than pardoned criminals, but as children belonging to his kingdom. This raises our status from the lowly pardoned to precious family. We have an identity and security knowing that we are forever in God house. God's blessing of adoption allows us to boldly approach and call God "Abba".

“Adoption is a family idea, conceived in terms of love, and viewing God as father. In adoption, God takes us into his family and fellowship – he establishes us as his children and heirs. Closeness, affection and generosity are at the heart of the relationship. **To be right with God the Judge is a great thing, but to be loved and cared for by God the Father is a greater.**” (Knowing God, p. 207)

^[15] No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. ^[16] You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. (John 15:15-16 ESV)

"First, the family relationship must be an abiding one, lasting forever. Perfect parents do not cast off their children. Christians may act the prodigal, but God will not cease to act the prodigal's father. Second, God will go out of his way to make his children feel his love for them and know their privilege and security as members of his family. Adoptive children need assurance that they belong, and a perfect parent will not withhold it." (Knowing God, p. 225)

^[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)

We are to live with a family resemblance to God’s family.

Christian life in context of God’s family means that we will be more Christ-like the more we develop our relationship with God. Our lives will gradually reflect and glorify God as we strive to obey and please God.

1. Our lives will be governed on more than just rules and moral codes. We will be guided by general principles, directions and goals for Christian conduct. These instructions share the desires and character of who God is and how we are to emulate them.

“Often called the charter [Sermon on the Mount] of God’s kingdom, this sermon could equally be described as the royal family code, for the thought of the disciple’s sonship to God is basic to all the main issues of Christian obedience with which the Sermon deals.” (Knowing God, p. 120)

2. A few ways our lives changes when we acknowledge our adoptive status in God’s family:

We can pray boldly and personally with God. We need not pray stoically or in an impersonal manner with God. We are assured that even when we cannot find the words we have an intercessor for our prayers and they will be heard.

[26] Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. [27] And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. (Romans 8:26-27 ESV)

The assurance of our place in God's family gives us freedom to live faithfully and taking risks for God no matter the outcome. We know that God will watch over our lives with our good in mind. God wants us to trust and obey him and not worry.

[28] And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28 ESV)

We know God's hope is true because God planned all this even before creation that we were to be adopted into His family:

[29] For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. [30] And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. (Romans 8:29-30 ESV)

Conclusion

“Do I, as a Christian, understand myself? Do I know my own real identity? My own real destiny? I am a child of God. God is my Father; heaven is my home; everyday is one day nearer. My Savior is my brother; every Christian is my brother too.... This is the Christian's secret of a Christian life, and these are aspects of the situation that really matter.” (Knowing God, p. 228)

Is there a family resemblance in our Christian lives with God?