

“Identity in Christ: Children of God” (Romans 8:12-17)

Verses to Remember: “For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God” (Romans 8:15-16).

Are we born as children of God?

- In the sense of being in relationship with God and being a part of his family, the answer is no. We were, in our fallen nature, born as children of wrath (Eph 2:1-3 cf. 1 John 3:10).
- In the sense of being made by God and coming forth from him, the answer is yes (cf. Acts 17:28-29). All humans, from the womb, are made in the image of God (cf. James 3:9).
- So, we are made in God’s image, but we are born separated from him as children of wrath. God wants to adopt us into his family, but we need to choose to accept that offer. We need to believe in Jesus to become children of God (John 1:12).

What does a good Father look like, and how are we to respond as children?

1. He is always ready to be there.

- We see the heart of the Good Father in the story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11:32). The Good Father is waiting for the son to return and he runs to him as soon as he sees him in the distance.

2. He is always there through the Holy Spirit.

- The Holy Spirit is referred to as the Spirit of adoption (Rom 8:15). Jesus promised his disciples that he would not leave them as orphans, but rather would send the Spirit (John 14:16-18).

3. He is our Comforter.

- The “Helper” (Greek: *paraclete*) means Comforter. We can call out to him “Abba! Father!” (Rom 8:15 cf. Mark 14:36).

4. He is our example to follow.

- Like Father like son – that’s the goal (1 John 3:1-2; Eph 5:1-3).

5. He entrusts us to carry his name.

- Children carry their parents’ name and reflect on them (cf. Phil 2:14-16).

6. He provides loving discipline

- He disciplines us to lead us toward holiness (Heb 12:7-11). If we sense discipline, we should ask ourselves if there’s something we’re doing that we need to change.

7. He makes his children heirs.

- As his children we are co-heirs with Christ (Rom 8:16-17 cf. Matt 25:34).