

## Adoption to Sonship

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Romans 8:12-25

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*12 Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation-but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. 13 For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. 14 For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. 15 The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. 17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs-heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

*18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. 19 For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. 22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of*

*childbirth right up to the present time. 23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? 25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.*

I know that when we went through the adoption process with Daniel, it became difficult at times. It required being very patient. It required other factors to come into place. They had to remove the rights to any potential fathers and the like. It was lengthy. We had to pick a lawyer. It took a year simply because there were no birth parents to return to. Although after a year, we could complete the adoption process, it is not always that easy for everyone else. It may take many years for some people because they have more hoops to jump through than we did. As complicated as it can be, the reward makes it worth it in the end.

Adopting Daniel was certainly special and took time, however, I am very glad that being adopted by God is so much simpler. It only requires that we seek Him and allow Him control of our lives. We must deny ourselves and seek His glory and not our own pleasure. We recognize that we are sinners in need of a Savior. We need to be aware that we were born into a broken world and strive for perfection so that we can be reborn in a perfect world when we leave this world behind. It's not

complicated. We give up earthly desires and seek the desires of Him who Created us. That's really it.

Let's go into more detail by revisiting our verses for today.

Let's start by turning back to verse 12. ***12 Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation-but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it.*** Let's highlight that section that says "not to the flesh" for a moment. When we live by the flesh, we may seem happy for a while, but eventually that happiness runs out. Those who desire multiple sex partners will eventually have nothing else they can think of. Not to mention any diseases that may come along. Those who live by sweets will eventually have to deal with the diabetes that comes along and the weight which puts a strain on the heart to continue pumping blood to the rest of the body. Those who seek to sleep practically nonstop will find that they are more tired the more that they sleep. Those who live by money will never be satisfied with the amount of money in their bank account. Everything has a price and living by the flesh really is more expensive than living by the ways of God. It costs more physically, mentally, emotionally, and financially. Most importantly, it costs more spiritually due to the result of not being able to take any of that with us and wishing we had given it up when we are damned to hell with an eternity of suffering for having rejected Him on this earth when we enter the next life. I don't know about you, but I find the dangers associated with living by the flesh simply not

worth it. I would rather be adopted by my Father who knows me and loves me.

***Verse 13. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.*** In this verse, it is important to notice that living by the flesh leads to death. I think that we can understand that concept because we grasp that life without Him leads to eternity of suffering in the afterlife. I don't think that I need to stress that anymore. However, if we will receive death just as Adam and Eve did when they ate the forbidden fruit, then we must also be able to have the opposite of that. The Holy Spirit is the helper that will guide us on how to follow the ways of God. We need that because we can't live this life by our own wants and desires because that will lead us nowhere. The Holy Spirit can call us out when we have sinned or have simply slid away from Him to nudge us in the correct direction. We need that to truly understand the importance of life. We were created in this life to worship our Creator. We are not slaves like some interpret us to be, but rather we are created beings who love our Creator so much that we desire to follow His ways because we understand that they are so much better than our ways. Our ways may provide happiness, but His ways provide eternal joy.

Why do we find ourselves wanting to live by the flesh anyway. Sure, it gives pleasure, but I think that it goes deeper than that. I think that when we feel like our flesh has provided for us, then we feel as though we are indebted to it. We want to make it

happy because it can make us feel happy. The reality is, as my commentary says, “nothing is owed to the flesh.”<sup>1</sup> We don’t have to give in to it simply because it makes us feel good. We have no reason to give in to it because it will not provide anything long-term. It is essentially like an abusive relationship. Our flesh makes us feel as though nothing or no one else will love us the way that it does. That is true in a sense. However, our flesh doesn’t love us, it just tricks us into loving it. It has lust for us and nothing more. It cares about us only long enough to get us to do what it wants, and then it could care less. However, as we know with abusive relationships, tell someone that you love them enough, you can trick them into believing it. Our flesh tricks us into believing that there is a genuine relationship there, but there is nothing real worth living with. We need to learn how to leave that relationship behind and join the real relationship with God.

We are adopted into sonship because God loves us for us. God desires the best for us. God doesn’t abuse us. God doesn’t lie to us. God doesn’t promise us things that He can’t deliver on. God doesn’t need to trick us. He allows us to choose. He shows what He has to offer, but He allows us to decide if we want it. He doesn’t try to convince us that no one else will ever love us. He does tell us that there is no one who can love us the way that we deserve. There is no one else who sees the hidden values that exist in us.<sup>i</sup> He sees the good that exists and wants it to

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<sup>1</sup> The Complete Biblical Library

simply increase because He knows that we can be so much more. He wants to lift us up. Abusive partners simply want to hold us down. I don't know about you, but I would like to leave my abusive relationship with the flesh that I have endured for far too long. I have more worth than that. You do too!

***Verses 14 and 15. 14 For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. 15 The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."*** There has been much conversation that has been stated that since God created us all, then we are all God's children. In one sense, this is kind of true, however, we are not fully adopted into sonship simply by being created. Our text tells us that we are only a child of God if we are led by the Holy Spirit. We can only be led by the Holy Spirit if we have a relationship with God. We can only have a relationship with God by having asked His Son into our hearts and to reign in our lives. We can only ask the Son into our hearts and to reign in our lives if we recognize that we are sinners in need of a Savior. We acknowledge that God can accept us right now, but with a real encounter with Him, we will slowly change over time attempting to be holier every single day. If we never change, then we need to ask ourselves if we ever really had a true encounter with God.

We serve God because we love Him. "Servants obey because they are subject to rules; sons of God obey because they are led

by the Spirit into a clear realization that the Father's will is the best possible way.”<sup>ii</sup> I am not afraid to say that I am not perfect. I am not afraid to say that I don't know everything. I am not afraid to say that the idea that someone was willing to die for my sins and return from the dead is not something that can go over my head. I can't fathom the idea that this was something that someone was willing to do for me.

For an unbeliever, this may be all that it takes to turn them away from God. They believe that there is not a single person alive who is willing to put others above themselves at all costs, so that must mean that the idea of Jesus is simply a lie. However, that doesn't stop some of them from crying out to Him when they hit rock bottom. “Unbelievers may call on God in times of calamity, but only a son can truly pray, ‘Our Father.’” Anyone can cry out, but only those who believe that He will do something will actually see the results. Others will simply be blind to it and state that God must simply not care. Being adopted into Sonship is the greatest thing because we know that God is there no matter if we see Him or don't see Him at work. We can trust in Him because He will never fail us though we will fail Him at times.

***Verse 16. The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.*** My commentary is very critical of the way that people like to claim that we are all God's children. This is what it had to say, “The liberals' teaching of the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God is a doctrine that is foreign to

Scripture (John 8:44; 1 John 3:10).” Let’s turn to those verses before I state anything. ***John 8:44. You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. 1 John 3:10. This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God’s child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother or sister.*** So the commentator has the feeling that anyone who just preaches that we are perfect as we are and don’t need to improve or become more holy that they are simply from the devil and not God. They will deceive others into believing that they are following God when they are really following the devil. It is easy to be deceived. When you live by the flesh, then Satan has a hold of you. When you are adopted into sonship, then the Father above has a hold of you and will never let you go.

***Verse 17. Now if we are children-then we are heirs-heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*** Life will not be easy. We will have much to sacrifice in order to follow after Him. If we are willing to give up the things that hold us prisoner here, then we will receive mighty awards. We can try to think in terms of earthly treasures, but none of them will measure up to what we will gain. The commentator says,

“To wear the crown, we must share the Cross.” If we want to have those rewards that we will share with Jesus, then we need to be willing to endure the sufferings that this life will throw our way.

***Verse 18. I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.*** Have you ever heard a statement like, “She hates him more than she likes this other person.”? There may be things that will have to endure in this world that may bring us down low, but the highs that we will receive are not even comparable. We will be raised so high that those lows will seem like they never even existed.

The commentary describes it like a sandwich. “Begins with glory and ends with glory in between deals with suffering.” We will come from a place of glory because we were created by the Father, we will endure suffering in this world, but being adopted into Sonship, we will be able to return to glory again.

***Verses 19-21. 19 For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.*** When I read this, I find myself thinking of Job who endured much suffering, but was still brought into glory because he continued to follow God even when he didn’t understand. By the end of his story, it worked out so much better for him. He was blessed beyond

what we could imagine, and I only wish I could retain half the faith that Job managed to have despite everything going on. When we get adopted into sonship, All those worries about this life can simply dissipate because they are nothing compared to what we will gain. Some day our bodies will die here in a physical sense. We will have people put a funeral together for us. We will leave this broken body behind and receive our new bodies that will never break. If we follow the creator then we will be “delivered from corruption, decay, and ruin.”

***Verses 22-25. 22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? 25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.***

Ladies who have given birth, do you find that time of pain super joyful? I would imagine not. I know that Sarah was in pain and couldn't wait for it to be over. She was in labor for almost 24 hours. After all that time, we wound up having to do a C-section. Her recovery was super difficult. She could hardly stay awake. I can't imagine what a natural birth would do to you. However, as much as you strive to have that time done, the earth seeks ever more to be rejoined with its Creator. We anticipate the return of Jesus to help us leave this awful world behind.

Every day I seek the end of the lies and destruction happening here. Every day I have to be patient and wait upon Jesus to make His move because He is in control and I am not. We are hopeful as we await this day. We are hopeful that we will be accepted and received without delay. We have hope to hear those beautiful words, “Well done my good and faithful servant.” People may say that we believe in a fairy tale. They say that since we can’t see God that He must not be real. However, we have hope in things we can’t see because we feel the evidence of His existence. “Those saved by faith find themselves rejoicing in hope.”

Will you be among those who are adopted? Will you find yourself gathering at the throne because your faith was strong enough to endure this terrible world? Will you be known by your fruits of spreading the love of Jesus with others, not because you have to earn your way to heaven, but rather, because in your appreciation of already being accepted, you simply desire others to be there too? If you are among those who will be counted, then give God a praise offering and a strong shout of “Hallelujah!”