

When you consider the inheritance you receive as a child of God, what things come to mind the you will inherit? What do you consider the greatest gift of a child of God?

Being adopted into God's family grants us access to God our Father. Romans 8:15 and Galatians 4:6 both refer to God as our Abba Father. This term defined as "'Abba' is the word framed by the lips of infants and betokens unreasoning trust; 'father' expresses an intelligent apprehension of the relationship. The two together express the love and intelligent confidence of the child."¹

¹*Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*

Paul is telling us that we can both love God as our daddy and have confidence in our relationship as His child. It really comes back to the relationship God wants to have with us.

Think about the ways God has demonstrated His love for you. Are there particular times you've seen His love demonstrated in a fatherly way?

Regeneration- You must be born again

Adoption into the family of God gives us a brand-new life as co-heirs with Jesus. We are regenerated into someone new and different from what we once were. We were members of the kingdom of this earth, now we belong to the kingdom of God.

John 1:12-13 NLT - 12 But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. 13 They are reborn--not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.

Jesus told Nicodemus we must be born again to see the kingdom of God. Clearly there is a significant change that occurs when we place our faith in Jesus. That change is symbolized in baptism when we are submerged beneath the water, signifying that we put to death our old nature, and emerge into a new life through the power of Jesus.

When you consider the person you were before becoming a Christian and the person you are now, what are the most significant changes that occurred?

Don't lose sight of your new identity. Allow God to remind you of who you are in His eyes; a new creation, a righteous child of the King.

“Justification, Regeneration, and Adoption”

Deeply Rooted week #5

INTRODUCTION

What would it be like to stand before God's throne, unafraid and unashamed, loved and accepted by the Father? This is the gift of God to us – justification, as if we never sinned, and regeneration as a new creation; a born-again child of God, adopted into His family.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH – JUSTIFICATION, REGENERATION, AND ADOPTION

We believe that justification is the gracious and judicial act of God by which He grants full pardon of all guilt and complete release from the penalty of sins committed, and acceptance as righteous, to all who believe on Jesus Christ and receive Him as Lord and Savior. We believe that regeneration, or the new birth, is that gracious work of God whereby the moral nature of the repentant believer is spiritually quickened and given a distinctively spiritual life, capable of faith, love, and obedience. We believe that adoption is that gracious act of God by which the justified and regenerated believer is constituted a child of God. We believe that justification, regeneration, and adoption are simultaneous in the experience of seekers after God and are received by faith, preceded by repentance; and that to this work and state of grace the Holy Spirit bears witness.

MEMORY VERSES

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 NLT - 17 This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! 18 And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. 19 For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. 20 So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" 21 For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

MEDITATE ON GOD'S WORD

We read the bible to be formed and transformed, not merely to gather information. Reading of the scripture in this way requires unhurried time and an open heart. Only God's Spirit can fully interpret God's Word, and as you meditate on His Word in *the memory verse* above the Spirit has the opportunity to give you personal insight. We can break it down into four parts:

- reading - This is a reflective, gently paced, one-bite-at-a-time kind of reading. As you read, ask God, "What are you saying to me just now?"
- meditate- Let's be clear, this is not an Eastern religious practice, it is our taking time to reflect on the passage and repeat it in our minds, and throughout our day. Speak it out loud, find ways to incorporate it into the thoughts, feelings and experiences of your life
- pray – a natural product of meditating on God's Word will be to communicate with God. As we find God addressing us directly through His Word, our hearts cry out to Him. Perhaps we feel joy and gratitude, or repentance and pain. But as God's Word penetrates our lives, our response will be heartfelt prayer.
- Rest – as a result of spending time reading, meditating and praying through God's Word, you can come to a place of sabbath-time rest in God's presence. Simply receive from Him by being with and near to Him.

Share with the group what God has shown you in this week's passage.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS –

Justification - "Just as if" we had never sinned

Galatians 2:16 NLT - 16 Yet we know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law. And we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be made right with God because of our faith in Christ, not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law."

We have learned that it was Christ's atoning sacrifice that paid the debt for our sin and restored our relationship with God which was broken by sin. Galatians 2:16 says when we place our faith in Jesus we are justified before God. Just what does that mean? Because of Christ's payment, and our acceptance of that gift of atonement, God declares us guiltless and acceptable; just as if we had never sinned.

For many of us, accepting a free gift is difficult. We want to earn what we receive. But what does Galatians 2:16 tell us about our efforts to earn forgiveness by keeping the law (commandments) of God? How do you feel about receiving a free gift? If keeping the commandments doesn't justify us, how should we view them, or why should we follow them?

Adoption – Sons and Daughters of God

In God's eyes justification and adoption happen simultaneously but we may experience them differently.

Romans 8:15 NLT - 15 So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father."

Galatians 4:5-7 NLT - 5 God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children. 6 And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, "Abba, Father." 7 Now you are no longer a slave but God's own child. And since you are his child, God has made you his heir.

In the story of the prodigal son, the prodigal turns away from the father and lives like a slave. But he is still a son and an heir. When we accept God's forgiveness, we may believe we are forgiven, but do we know that God loves and enjoys us as His children?