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I AM A CHILD OF THE KING



What comes to mind when you hear the word "royalty"?

QUESTION #1

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Jesus makes us full members of His family.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Most people on planet earth will work their entire lives and never make a million dollars. But Prince George Alexander Louis was worth millions the day he was born.

Prince George is part of the British royal family. As the son of Prince William and Kate Middleton, he's currently third in line to the throne. His great-grandmother, Queen Elizabeth II, is reportedly worth more than \$450 million; as the nation's reigning monarch, receives an annual payment close to \$13 million. Prince George is in line for all this wealth and privilege.

When we hear stories like this, our tendency is to roll our eyes and think: *Who deserves that kind of privilege and wealth? He hasn't earned a single dime of what he's been given!*

That may be true—but the same could be said of any who follow Jesus. When we come to Christ, we're given an incredible inheritance! And, as we'll see in this session, we've done absolutely nothing to earn it or deserve it.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Galatians 4:1-3

¹ I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, ² but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. ³ In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.

At the time Paul wrote his Letter to the Galatians, he was living in a world where it was common for wealthier families to have servants in their home. When the master's wife had a baby boy, the servants would take care of that child, tending to the master's son along with their own children. The master's child was expected to obey the servants and follow their instructions just like the other children.

In contrast to Jewish custom, people in the Roman culture didn't consider a boy to be a man at a specific age. Even though a young boy was a master's son, he didn't receive the same perks as his father until his father decided the boy was ready to be a man. Only then would the child gain the full position of sonship and be treated as a full part of the family. But this step never happened until the father initiated it.

The same is true for us as we relate to God: "In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world." Speaking to his fellow Jews, Paul used "the elementary principles" to describe the basic tenets of the law. The children of Israel were living their lives with no greater purpose than to follow the rules and regulations they were told to follow. Living under the law was like living as underage sons who had yet to be brought into their full rights as members of God's family.

At one time, none of us knew what full-blown sonship with God looked like. Before Christ made it possible for humanity to have a fully developed relationship with the Father, we were all on the outside looking in. But we now have the opportunity in Christ to step into complete sonship and experience abundant life.

What milestones helped you realize you were no longer a child?

QUESTION #2

Galatians 4:4-5

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.

I called it the “Man-Up Challenge.” If my 10-year-old son completed several challenges, he would receive his own “Man Card.” That card would entitle him to several new privileges: 1) an additional hour before he had to go to bed; 2) thirty additional minutes each day when he could play video games; 3) the right to spend the night at his friend’s house; and 4) one “no shower” pass per week. (I’m pretty sure the last one was his favorite.)

My son wanted the benefits right away, but he had to complete certain things first. He memorized 1 Corinthians 13:11: “When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.” We did daily Bible studies together, which included journaling and him explaining to me what God was teaching him. He went through physical, mental, and spiritual challenges. After about a month, I knew it was time to give my son his very own personalized Man Card.

When God the Father decided it was time, He made it possible for us to take off our slave clothes, leave the nursery, and step into full-blown sonship as part of His family. It was in that moment that “God sent forth his Son.” He did so for two reasons:

- ▶ **To redeem those under the law.** The law had not made anyone a son of God. Following rules and regulations might have made some Israelites more pious, but it never made them a part of God’s family—it never could.
- ▶ **To adopt us into His family.** The word translated “adoption” might have described the Roman custom of bringing a young boy into the new level of sonship, but it generally referred to bringing someone outside the family into the family.



So, when Paul wrote that believers are adopted into sonship, he was saying we've been placed into the family of God—and that the only thing that made it possible was the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, the Son of God. It's only because of Jesus that we can be placed in the family of God.

Don't miss the truth that God has always wanted us to be a part of His family. "He predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will" (Eph. 1:5). A time never existed when God didn't want us in His family. He's loved us from the beginning, and it brings Him great pleasure each and every time He welcomes home a new son or a new daughter.

What are the implications of being adopted into God's family?

QUESTION #3

Galatians 4:6-7

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.

Benefits come with being in a family. My dad was a pastor, and growing up in a pastor's home did carry some challenges. But I also experienced a lot of blessings and benefits.

If you're a child of God and have been adopted into His family, you receive many benefits. The greatest benefit is the gift of the Holy Spirit in our lives: "Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'" God Himself lives in us!

What are the benefits we enjoy as part of God's family?

QUESTION #4

Paul wrote this same truth to the church in Rome: “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!’ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (Rom. 8:15-16).

If you’ve been saved by Christ, you’ve also been empowered by God. He’s given you the Holy Spirit and He says the Holy Spirit will lead you to cry out, “Abba! Father!” That word *Abba* conveys an intimate relationship; it’s similar to what a child today expresses when he calls his father “Daddy!”

If a small child is alone and falls and skins his knee, he may cry, but he’ll do what he can to cope with the pain on his own. He’ll have to rely on his own willpower and strength to get up, dust himself off, and start playing again.

But if the child’s father is present, he typically will respond quite differently. In that moment, his first reaction as tears fall from his face is to put his hands in the air and cry out, “Daddy! Pick me up!” He knows he has a father who loves him and is ready to help. The father’s actions and presence comfort the child and give him the strength to get up and move on from the incident.

The Holy Spirit gives us that assurance in every part of our lives. He is ever-present in the lives of His children. He tells us we’re no longer slaves. Since we’ve been adopted into the family of God, He entitles us to privileges and blessings we didn’t have before.

As Paul wrote in his letter to the Ephesians: “In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory” (Eph. 1:13-14).

Children of God: rejoice! We are members of God’s family. We’ve been blessed with God’s own Spirit. And we live with the promise of an inheritance that is far greater than anything we can imagine.

How can we more fully rely on the Holy Spirit’s influence in our lives? In our group?

QUESTION #5

LIVE IT OUT

Consider taking one or more of these steps this week as a response to your inclusion in God's family:

- ▶ **Pray as a child.** As you pray this week, recognize that God is a loving Father who is ever-present in your life. Thank Him for demonstrating that love through Jesus and making it possible for you to be adopted into His family.
- ▶ **Memorize.** Memorize Galatians 4:7: "So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God."
- ▶ **Share.** Ask the Lord to put you in front of someone this week who needs to be encouraged by the truth in this passage. Many people attempt to get to God on their own; they need someone to tell them about the hope (and adoption) made possible by Jesus.

You may not be a prince or a princess in the eyes of our world—not officially, anyway. But if you know Jesus as your Savior, you've been adopted into His family. You're a child of the King.

My thoughts



Share with others how you will live out this study: **#BSFLmore**