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Adopted as Sons

Galatians 4:17

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1. Who is *doing* this adoption? The _____ adopts.
(Gal. 4:4, 4:6; Eph. 1:3-5)

2. *Who* does the Father adopt? The Father adopts _____
_____.
(Gal. 3:22, 23; 4:2, 3, 8; Eph. 2:1-3)

3. What does the Father's adoption _____ ?

A. God made you His son. (Gal. 4:5-9)

B. What about _____ of God?
(Gal. 3:28; see also 2 Cor. 6:18)

C. Doesn't the Father already have a Son? John 15:9; 17:23

4. _____ did the Father adopt us? "In the fullness of time."

And from _____. (Eph. 1:5-6)

5. _____ did the Father adopt us?

A. Heirless fathers appointing an heir; NOT fatherless children gaining a parent.

B. God adopted because He loved us. (Eph. 1:5-6)

6. What was the _____ of our adoption?

God paid a _____ cost for our adoption.

A. Born of Mary:

B. Born under the Law:

How should we respond to the privileges of adoption?

1. Turn

2. Tell

3. Reflect

4. Display

What does the Father give His adopted sons? (What do we get out of it?)

- 1. Loved as THE Son:** God the Father treats believers as his own Son—Jesus Christ. Having been adopted, they receive the riches of his love, protection, provision and discipline. He is not a distant *paterfamilias* benefactor, interested only in securing his legacy. He knows every single need of every single child and provides their needs as he wills (Mt 7:25-32). He is approachable and sensitive, knowing what good things to give those who ask (Mt 7:11). The Father delights to give his adopted children “the kingdom” (Lk 12:32). Conversely, if you are NOT an adopted son..., you do not yet experience this love!
- 2. Freedom:** Adopted sons of God are freed from several dimensions of former debts and obligations. They are freed, for example, from being: *under* sin (Gal 3:22), *under* the law (Gal 3:23), *under* guardians and masters (Gal 4:2), *enslaved* to the world’s elementary principles (Gal 4:3), *enslaved* to false gods (Gal 4:8). You are free. Conversely, if you are *not* an adopted son, you remain under sin and the law, enslaved to the false gods and the world’s principles.
- 3. Disciplined:** As an adopted son of the Father, you receive *loving, purposeful discipline* when you stray into sin or idolatry. For “what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, ...then you are illegitimate children and not sons” (Heb 12:7-8). Christians know that the Father “disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness” (Heb 12:10). But if you are not an adopted son, you do not receive this loving discipline! Thank God for his loving discipline!
- 4. Indwelling:** The Holy Spirit *permanently* indwells all of God’s adopted sons, who are empowered by the Spirit to forsake sin and walk in obedience to God’s commands. “...if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God” (see all of Rom 8:9-15). Conversely, if you are NOT an adopted son of God, you don’t have the Holy Spirit.
- 5. Direct Access:** The Holy Spirit’s indwelling affords direct relationship with and access to the Father. Adopted children even address the Father *personally*, calling him, “Abba, Father.” In Gal 4:6, it is *the Spirit within us* who cries out to the Father, while in Rom 8:15, *we ourselves* cry out to him by the indwelling Spirit. Christians have intimate access to the Father in a manner similar to Jesus, who also cried out, “Abba, Father” in the garden of Gethsemane (Mk 14:36). Why not “cry out” to Him now, and ask Him for greater understanding of His love?
- 6. Assurance:** Adopted sons are *assured* by the Holy Spirit that they *belong* to the Father. The Spirit himself bears witness in our hearts that our relationship and standing with the Father is secure and true. A Christian’s assurance of faith comes from the indwelling Spirit of holiness.
- 7. Community:** God’s adopted children live in *community*. They are not singletons or alone. They are part of a vast and diverse family, with whom they share Spirit-derived unity and fellowship. Adopted sons are made *one* new man, *one* body, *one* church. We were not predestined to be Jew or Gentile, but to be sons of the Father. There is no longer a Jewish priority or Gentile distinction (Eph 2) but all find *equal* footing before God based on the righteousness accorded by faith in Jesus Christ. So... do you enjoy the diversity of God’s redeemed community? What do you value in the Christians who come from other backgrounds?
- 8. Future Inheritance:** Divinely adopted sons are *guaranteed* the future inheritance of eternal life with God. The inheritance likely refers to the eschatological Kingdom of God (Gal 5:21, “inherit”) where we live with God forever. We will live with God forever and he will dwell with us forever (“Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man... ‘I will be his God and he will be my son,’” Rev 21:3-8). God’s adoptive sons are thus *guaranteed heirs* of a coming inheritance. The Holy Spirit is himself the seal and security of that eternal inheritance. Spend some time today reflecting on your future life with God, for that is your true home.
- 9. A Glorified Body:** God’s adopted children will receive a glorified body, called “the redemption of the body” in Rom 8:22-3. Note that the adoption has already taken place: legal status has been conferred, relationship initiated and enjoyed. Yet still more benefits remain to be experienced when God gives all his adopted a new, glorified body. This future adoptive finale anticipates a full-bodied existence apart from sin and all of its affects. Do you long for your glorified, redeemed body? Our Father’s future plans for us unequivocally include this: think about what a future sin-less, embodied life with God might be like.

For a discussion on the interplay of adoption and assurance, see chapter 10 of Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Whole Christ: Legalism, Antinomianism, and Gospel Assurance--Why the Marrow Controversy Still Matters* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2016).