

## ADOPTION IN THE ORDER OF SALVATION

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### Reminder of Application

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- For John Murray, the **accomplishment** of redemption is what Jesus finished on the cross to save his people, while the **application** is the Holy Spirit personally giving those specific benefits to a believer in time. It is the process of being **united to Christ** so that his perfect record and life-changing power actually become yours.<sup>1</sup>
- It's important to remember that we are in the *application of redemption*. In other words, you and I have been given the gift of salvation, but there's so much more than just being saved.
- Certainly, no less, but from that gift, because of our union with Christ, we have more than we can possibly comprehend in this lifetime.
- The point is that we have not been saved through our adoption or even because of our adoption.
- It is because we are saved that we are now adopted by God the Father *and* have all the rights and privileges of being in His family.
- What is the sequence of the application of our salvation? By way of review<sup>2</sup>:
  - **Calling & Regeneration**: God "calls" you and "switches the lights on" in your heart so you can finally see the truth.
  - **Faith & Repentance**: This is your response—trusting Jesus and turning away from your old self.
  - **Justification**: God legally declares you "not guilty" because of Jesus' record.
  - **Adoption**: God doesn't just clear your record; He brings you into His family as a son or daughter.
  - **Sanctification**: The lifelong process of God's Spirit making you more like Jesus in your daily life.
  - **Glorification**: The final step—getting a new body and living with God forever in a perfect world.
- Remember, these all stem or come from God because we are in Christ.
- The Puritans called the application of redemption “the Holy Spirit taking the things of Christ and making them ours personally.”
- All we have in this life and all that we look forward to in the next is because we are in Christ.
- **Philippians 4:19** “And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

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<sup>1</sup> Paraphrase from Murray's *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied*

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

## Introduction to Adoption

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- “While it may seem impossible to improve on such gifts as regeneration, conversion, union, and justification, the Word of God speaks of yet another spiritual blessing in the application of redemption: the Father’s adoption of believers as his children.”<sup>3</sup>
- “Adoption has to do with the believer’s *relationship* to God as Father whereas justification has to do with the believer’s standing before God’s law. Adoption is a judicial or declarative act of God, and this may be why it is confused with justification. However, adoption and justification differ in the results to the believer. Justification secures *righteousness*; adoption secures *sonship/heirship*.”<sup>4</sup>
- So our adoption is not our being justified before God (our justification) nor is it our being made new before God (regeneration or born again).
- While the New Testament never separates someone who is justified from their adoption, “in human terms it is quite possible to imagine a man being justified without the remotest thought of his being adopted.”<sup>5</sup>
- Just because we have been declared just before God does not commit Him to then take us home with Him, call us His sons and give us an inheritance.
  - “Adoption, however, is an even greater blessing than justification...justification gives people a title to heaven, but ‘adoption adds to it excellence and dignity. Adoption elevates the status of God’s people beyond justification, for adoption grants them greater intimacy with God and higher privilege in his kingdom.”<sup>6</sup>
- The teaching of adoption has fallen flat over the past decades because we either don’t fully understand what that means or we think that we are owed it because of our justification.
- Not only does the Bible talk about our adoption and justification in separate terms, but it also separates our regeneration from our adoption.
- While we have a new nature, it is only because of this new nature that we can now be called sons of God.
- **1 John 3:1** “See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are...”
- We are called children of God, not because we have been born again, but because God has adopted us into His own family.
- Without our new nature, we would not be able to be adopted by God.

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<sup>3</sup> MacArthur and Mayhue, eds., *Biblical Doctrine*, 624.

<sup>4</sup> Rolland McCune, *A Systematic Theology of Biblical Christianity*, vol. 3 (Allen Park, MI: Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010), 113.

<sup>5</sup> Ferguson, *The Christian Life*, 87.

<sup>6</sup> Joel Beeke, *Reformed Systematic Theology*, vol. 3, 607.

- **2 Peter 1:4** “For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.”
- It is from our union with Christ that the full sphere of our salvation can be understood. We were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. We were then saved in Christ and we now live in Christ. We were justified because we are in Christ and have a new nature through Christ.
- **Ephesians 1:4-5** “...just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love {5} He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will...”
- “Rather the different terminology Scripture uses is intended to enlarge our understanding of the multi-coloured grace of God (1 Pet. 4:10). When the light of the gospel passes through the prism of biblical language we find that it is broken up into many constituent parts, each with its own beauty and glory. Adoption emphasizes an element in our relationship with God which is not present in justification.”<sup>7</sup>
- “Understanding adoption should mean that our own sense of the great goodness and love of God is immeasurably enriched.”<sup>8</sup>
- When we fully know and understand the kindness of God beyond our salvation, we get a glimpse (albeit an imperfect one) of the depths of the riches of God’s favor towards His people.
- “Adoption grants to believers in Christ a high status beyond comparison, and few have meditated as deeply as the topic deserves.”<sup>9</sup>
- Our adoption into the God’s family brings about more than we can ever imagine, but yet it is something that we narrowly understand and possibly have never considered.
- William Perkins on adoption, “...such rebels to be made the sons of God – it is a wonderful privilege and prerogative, and no dignity like unto it.”<sup>10</sup>
- Thomas Watson, upon his reflection on our sinful nature and acts of sinfulness concluded, “it were much for God to take a clod of dust, and make it a star; it is more for him to take a piece of clay and sin, and adopt it for his heir.”<sup>11</sup>
- As we study this amazing teaching and truth about who we are, never forget where we came from.
- While we are never going to fully understand what this means, to be in the family of God, this side of eternity, we can “find some sips of living water” that can refresh our souls and encourage our hearts.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Joel Beeke, *Reformed Systematic Theology*, vol. 3, 578.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

## THE MEANING OF ADOPTION

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- God did not adopt us because of something deficient in Him. He was not waiting for us to be born so that He could bring us to Him and somehow feel whole.
- God was not in need of a family; He was not lonely nor was He trying to fill in any gaps.
- “Vain imaginations do easily infest us; tinder will not sooner take fire than our natures kindle into wrong notions of the Divine Majesty. We are very apt to fashion a god like ourselves... Though we cannot comprehend him as he is, we must be careful not to fancy him to be what he is not.”<sup>12</sup>
- While humanly speaking, adoption depends much upon the child that is being adopted.
  - The parents go to an agency or home and look at the potential kids.
  - There may also be a desire to adopt an unborn child for various reasons.
  - The future parents have a sense that they are not whole, and they then look for a child or children to adopt.
- This is not how adoption works with God.
  - We are adopted, not on any merit in ourselves, but fully by the mercy of God.
- You cannot earn a place in God’s family any more than you can earn your own salvation.
- “The New Testament builds on this blessing of human adoption by using it as an analogy to describe God’s fatherly love for us. We were spiritual orphans under the cruel oppression of sin and Satan.”<sup>13</sup>
- While human adoption is precious in both the worlds and God’s eyes, it merely scratches the surface of what it means for you and me to come into the family of God.
- It is a good place for our minds to start thinking about this great subject, but we can’t rest there if we want to know the heart of God for His people and our new and very special relationship with Him.
- “Adoption means to be placed as an adult son of God and given all the rights and privileges of a son. It is a legal or judicial position and is not an experience. It is the bestowal of a status or standing with God—a relationship. As well, in adoption God becomes the *Father* of believers, in the redemptive sense (vis-à-vis creation fatherhood, for example). Believers become sons of the first person of the Trinity.”<sup>14</sup>
- When speaking of adoption, it’s been said that God does not have grandsons, only sons. In other words, when one is brought into the kingdom of God, they have the same status as everyone else in Christ.

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<sup>12</sup> Stephen Charnock, *The Existence and Attributes of God*, 197.

<sup>13</sup> John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 625.

<sup>14</sup> McCune, 115.

## Adoption in the world of the Apostle Paul

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- Knowing some of the background to the world that Paul was writing to is helpful and can bring some illumination to what he tells the churches.
- The original Greek word for adoption in the New Testament literally means *adoption as sons*.
- “The word is found only in the Letters of Paul in the NT (see also Rom. 8:15, 23; 9:4; Eph. 1:5) and never in the LXX. It has a distinctly Greco-Roman flavor and undoubtedly alludes to the Greek and/or Roman practice of adoption, which stresses the legal rights and privileges that are conferred on the man who is adopted. Paul therefore uses this word to highlight the status enjoyed by believers, heirs of all that God has promised his own people.”<sup>15</sup>
- The idea of adoption is taken from Roman custom where, in a legal ceremony, the adopted son was given all the rights of a natural-born son.
- Adoption was not common in Jewish culture or in the Old Testament.
  - “The law of Moses contains no provision for adoption, perhaps because the need for an heir was often met either by polygamy (cf. 1 Sam. 1:1-8) or levirate marriage (Deut. 25:5-10).”<sup>16</sup>
  - “Although the legal practice of adoption has no real precedent in the OT or Judaism, the concept of being God’s son, or sons, is deeply rooted in the OT. In Exod. 4:22 God claims that “Israel is my firstborn son” (see also, e.g., Jer. 31:20). Paul himself, significantly, uses the word υιοθεσία to describe the status of the people of Israel (Rom. 9:4); and in 2 Cor. 6:18 he elaborates the promise of God about a Davidic descendant in 2 Sam. 7:14—“I will be his father, and he will be my son”—in terms of all Christians: “I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty”.<sup>17</sup>
  - **Some examples of “adoption” in the Old Testament:**
  - **Esther 2:7** “He was bringing up Hadassah, that is Esther, his uncle's daughter, for she had no father or mother. Now the young lady was beautiful of form and face, and when her father and her mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.”
  - **Exodus 2:10** “The child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. And she named him Moses, and said, ‘Because I drew him out of the water.’”
  - **2 Samuel 9:13** “So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, for he ate at the king's table regularly. Now he was lame in both feet.”

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<sup>15</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 267–268.

<sup>16</sup> Beeke, 579.

<sup>17</sup> Moo, *Galatians*, 268.

- While not common in the Jewish culture, adoption was common in the Roman Empire.<sup>18</sup>
- The adopted sons were often chosen to deliberately by his adoptive father to perpetuate his name and inherit his estate.
- In that sense, the adopted son was in no way inferior to a son born in the ordinary way...in fact, in many cases the adopted son sometimes had greater prestige and privilege than the natural children.
- Under Roman rule, if a father was disappointed in his natural son's skill or character, he would search diligently for a boy available for adoption who demonstrated the qualities he desired.
- If the boy proved himself worthy, the father would take the necessary legal steps for adoption.
- Adopted sons enjoyed the same privileges as natural born sons....and at death of the father, the adopted son would often inherit the estate.
- **In this ceremony or transaction, four things happened<sup>19</sup>:**
  - **Loss of Old Rights, Gain of New:** An adopted person was legally transferred from the power of their biological father to that of their new father. They completely lost all claims to their birth family and immediately gained all the rights of a fully legitimate, natural-born son in the new one.
  - **Legal Heirship:** The adopted son became a legal heir to the new father's estate. Even if there were already biological children in the family, the adopted son became a "joint-heir" with equal rights to the inheritance.
  - **Cancellation of the Past:** In the eyes of Roman law, the adopted person was a brand-new individual. This was so absolute that all previous debts and legal obligations were formally canceled and wiped away as if they had never existed.
  - **Literal and Absolute Status:** Adoption was not a second-class status. Once the legal ceremony (which often involved a symbolic "sale" and a magistrate's decree) was complete, the person was literally and absolutely the son of the new father. *Interestingly, while a Roman father could legally disown a biological son, many scholars note that it was nearly impossible to disown an adopted son because the adoption was a deliberate, irreversible legal choice.*

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<sup>18</sup> Following was taken from various historical sources.

<sup>19</sup> These four points are adapted from, what scholars call *Roman Adoption Law*.

## BIBLE VERSES ABOUT OUR ADOPTION

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- With the Roman Adoption Law in mind, there are two places that Paul uses this thought to explain what our new status is in Christ as those who are now adopted sons of God.
- **Romans 8:14-17** “For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. {15} 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!" {16} The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, {17} and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.”
  - “This is one of the richest and most beautiful passages in all of Scripture. Using the figure of adoption, Paul explains the believer’s intimate and permanent relationship to God as a beloved child.”<sup>20</sup>
  - While we are going to look at all the benefits and blessings of being adopted, there are several things to take note of here from Paul.
  - We can know that we are children of God when we are truly led by the Spirit of God.
    - This is not through visions, promptings or other subjective feelings. This is through God ordained sanctification. The Spirit of God is going to lead us when we are reading His Word, praying, having fellowship with other believers, etc.
    - God’s Spirit always leads us into holiness.
    - There are times that God uses our circumstances to lead us, but we must be careful looking into such cases.
    - We know that we have the Spirit of God when our desire (albeit not *all the time*) is to be obedient and responsive to His leading.
    - If one is indifferent to the things of God, they may not be in the family of God. This doesn’t mean believer don’t have doubt from time to time, and somehow leave God’s family.
    - God, our Father, wants us to be sure that we are in His family and goes to great lengths to make sure we know where we stand with Him.
  - Not only are we now lead by the Spirit, but we also are not slaves who fear but adopted sons who can cry out to the heavenly Father.
    - “The term adoption is filled with the ideas of love, grace, compassion and intimate relationship.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Commentary Romans 1-8*, 429.

<sup>21</sup> John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Commentary Romans 1-8*, 435.

- When we cry out Abba (an informal Aramaic term...like Pappa or Daddy), there is a complete lack of fear or anxiety when we go to God’s throne.
  - Then, for further assurance of our new status as children of God, Paul writes that the Spirit bears witness with our spirit of our new status.
    - Paul is referring to the fruit of the Spirit...not some mystical voice or other feeling that we can conjure up in our minds.
    - The Holy Spirit lives in us and one of His ministries to us is to provide this inner witness, this solid confidence that we are children of God.
    - “These three areas of the Spirit’s inner testimony are particularly helpful because they play a vital role in assurance. If you want to grow in the certainty of your conversion, the place to start is with your submission to the lordship of Christ, your appreciation of the character of God, and your separation from your old life of sin. If you see fruit in these areas you can be confident that the Spirit is at work in your heart and that you are truly saved.”<sup>22</sup>
  - Finally, we are children of God, so we also look forward to the inheritance that awaits us.
    - We have more waiting for us than we can ever imagine in heaven.
    - Our inheritance is secure and as Paul wrote, we also are fellow heirs with Christ.
    - Our inheritance is as real today as it will be in the future. We can live knowing that what we have here on earth pales in comparison since we are children of God.
- **Galatians 4:4-7** “But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, {5} so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. {6} Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" {7} Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.”
  - Notice the connection between our redemption and becoming sons of God.
  - Look at the purpose for God sending forth His Son. It was for redemption but also for those whom are in Christ to receive their adoption.
  - “If redemption implies a basically negative background—we are redeemed *from* the curse of the law, *from* the slave market of sin, *from* the clutches of the hostile elemental spirits—Paul went on to show the positive purpose for Christ’s sacrificial suffering and death. The Son of God was born of woman and put under the law in order to redeem us from the law so that we might receive “the full rights of sons.” The Greek word translated “full rights of sons” in the NIV is *huiothesia*, literally “adoption.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> <https://expositors.org/inner-testimony-of-the-spirit/>

<sup>23</sup> Timothy George, *Galatians*, vol. 30, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 304.

- Notice the same language from Romans regarding the Spirit that was sent forth in our hearts.
- He cries out Abba! Father! thus showing that we are no longer slaves but we are sons.
- Both of these passages are rooted in the Romans understanding of adoption.
  - Christians have lost their rights to their old life but have now gained a new identity as a son.
  - Christians, as sons, are now joint heirs with the right to an inheritance.
  - Christians are now brand-new people, new creations with a new Father.
  - Christians now have a new and absolute status before God the Father...it can't change.

### **Our adoption was guaranteed or established for us in the past**

- **Ephesians 1:5** “He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will...”
- When you and I believe in Jesus, when we respond to the gospel call with confession and repentance, all of our benefits are realized in our life.
- They have always been there but not active until we believe in Jesus for our salvation.
- God knew you before the foundations of the world were set in place. He had set His loving kindness upon you.

### **Our adoption is real for God's people in the present**

- **John 1:12-13** “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”
- How is one given the right to become a child of God?
  - Notice the 3 negatives that John uses to make sure we can only point to God:
    - Those who were born...not of blood, not from the flesh, not from the will of man.
    - In other words, it was not because of our physical birth, not because we naturally desired it, and not because we made a willful choice.
  - Our adoption came from God Himself as we were born again through Christ.
- **Galatians 3:26** “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.”
- **Hebrews 2:11-12** “For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, {12} saying, ‘I WILL PROCLAIM YOUR NAME TO MY BRETHREN, IN THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATION I WILL SING YOUR PRAISE.’”

- “Because of this solidarity between the Son and the “many sons,” the author stated that “Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers,” which is an affirmation by negating the opposite—he is proud to call them brothers. Not only are all believers a “band of brothers,” but they are also brothers of Christ.”<sup>24</sup>
- **1 John 3:1** “See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.”
- Notice the family language, we are now all sons through Christ.
- We are, as it was said, *a band of brothers*. We are all adopted into the family of God through Christ.
- “The concept of adoption is familiar to us because it remains common in today’s world, and it is a rare case when the story of any particular adoption fails to warm the heart. Eager to love and care for a child they have never met and who can do nothing to repay them, parents fill out stacks of paperwork, incur significant expenses, and often travel thousands of miles in order to welcome a little boy or girl into their family. After months and sometimes years of preparation, everything changes in a moment when the judge legally declares the child to be a member of his new family, with all the requisite rights and privileges. In many cases, if adopted children had remained in an orphanage or in the care of abusive and neglectful birth parents, the outcome would likely have been tragic. But through the intervention of a compassionate benefactor, adopted children are welcomed into the loving home of a new family eager to provide protection, instruction, and the hope of a future.”<sup>25</sup>

### **Our adoption will come to the ultimate realization in the future**

- **Romans 8:19-23** “For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. {20} For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope {21} that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. {22} For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. {23} And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.”
- We are already adopted into God’s family. We have all the rights and privileges that any of His sons have. That is never going to change.
- But we also have something to look forward to in our adoption.
- The transformation of our decaying earthly bodies and the reception of our new, glorified bodies.
- As sons, we know that we will one day have a new and fully improved body that is not subject to all the sin and chaos that is in this world.

<sup>24</sup> David L. Allen, *Hebrews*, NAC (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2010), 216.

<sup>25</sup> John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, eds., *Biblical Doctrine*, 624–625.

- But until then, we groan as we wait.
- Our adoption means that we have this true freedom from this body. It is merely a temporary holding place until we receive our new bodies.
- It is in this way we can say that our adoption, through our new bodies, truly does take us into heaven and all throughout eternity.

## ADOPTION IN REAL LIFE

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### The Benefits, Evidences, and Responsibilities of Our Adoption<sup>26</sup>

- **We now have a new status.**
  - We are no longer children of the devil but now sons of God.
  - We are no longer sons of disobedience or children of wrath.
  - With our new status as sons of God, comes the responsibility of treating other believers how God, our common Father, treats us.
  - As we become more and more like our heavenly father, we are then able to show those same character traits to our brethren in Christ.
- **We now have a new sense of God’s care towards us.**
  - “With the Father, however, there are the love and goodwill that we so much need and desire. He is ours and we are his, and he through adoption extends to us all the benefits his measureless love can bestow.”<sup>27</sup>
  - Jesus said in **Matthew 6:8** “So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.”
    - “The Greek “Father” (*pater*) probably translates the Aramaic *Abba*. Use of this intimate term for God (almost equivalent to the English “Daddy”) was virtually unparalleled in first-century Judaism. Christians should consider God as accessible as the most loving human parent.”<sup>28</sup>
  - As Ferguson says, “we meditate too little on the profound truth expressed so simply by Jesus.”
  - We don’t have to badger God with our prayers or think that He is withholding something from us because He is against us.
  - God knows *exactly what we need and exactly when we need it*.

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<sup>26</sup> List taken and modified from Ferguson’s *The Christian Life*, 94-95.

<sup>27</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 895.

<sup>28</sup> Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, vol. 22, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 119.

- Thomas Boston said, “When God delays his blessings, it is that they may come at last with a fuller stream and upon a more prepared heart.”<sup>29</sup>
- When we don’t think that God is “answering” our prayer, it is not that He doesn’t love us or care for us, it is because He knows what we need and when we need it.
- If we come to Him as a loving Father, we can trust that He will always do what is best for us; even when we don’t understand.
- Hear Peter’s words in **1 Peter 5:7** “...casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.”
- God wants our anxieties to be cast upon Him...in fact, this is our responsibility as sons of God.
- When we sit with anxious hearts we are not able to live as He desires us to do.
- Our anxious hearts have a focus on self and not on God.
- If we keep our eyes on God, remembering that He cares for us, we can “cast” our anxieties upon Him and keep living according to our new status as sons.
- **We now have a new sense of our future destiny.**
  - Ferguson says, “Our ultimate privilege lies in the future, for although we already experience our inheritance as joint-heirs with Christ, there is more yet to come!”
  - **1 John 3:2-3** “Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. {3} And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”
  - Our hope of adoption, fixed on our heavenly father, is motivation for keeping ourselves pure.
  - One day, when we stand before God and fully known as His children, we are going to be like Him and see Him as He is.
- **We now receive God’s loving discipline.**
  - **Hebrews 12:7-8, 11** “It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? {8} But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. ... {11} All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.”
  - “When we depart from God’s will and engage in sinful thoughts and actions, he will providentially order various hardships and afflictions in our lives to warn us of sin’s consequences, to lead us to repentance, and to cultivate greater spiritual maturity in us.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Andrew Thomson, *Thomas Boston, His life and Times*, 29.

<sup>30</sup> John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, eds., *Biblical Doctrine*, 629.

- No longer under wrath (1 Thess 1:10; 5:9) nor condemnation (Rom 8:1), we now are under God's loving discipline that leads us back to walking in righteousness.
- **We now have liberty**
  - "There also is liberty for the children of God. The child of God is not a slave who obeys out of a sense of bondage or compulsion. Slaves live in fear of the consequences should they fail to carry out their obligations."<sup>31</sup>
  - We now, as sons of God, live according to faith in Christ, we no longer are held captive to the law and all its requirements.
  - **Galatians 5:13** "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another."
  - We now have a true freedom in Christ. But we are now free to serve one another, not live according to what our sinful desires dictate.

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<sup>31</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 893.