

11. Understanding Our Relationship as Children of God

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn the purpose of the law. We saw that the purpose of the law was to be our tutor to bring us to Christ. However, we also saw that once we come to Christ, we are no longer under the law. We entered into a new relationship when we placed our faith in Christ. In our topic today, we will be learning to understand our new relationship as the children of God.

In our last topic, we looked at Galatians 3:24-25 along with many other verses. Those two verses say, “Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.” We want to help our children learn how to explain to those with whom they share the Gospel that when individuals come to Christ by faith, it changes their relationship with God. Many people do not really understand how this change affects their entire lives and this makes it difficult for them to grow in their spiritual lives.

In Galatians 3:26, we read, “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.” We need to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to others all that it means to be children of God. John 1:12-13 says, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, 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.” The word that is translated “right” means *the privilege of becoming the children of God*. These verses also explain the process by which each person has received spiritual birth. This was not a birth by blood. It was not a birth based on the will of the flesh. It was not a birth based on the will of any person. Instead, spiritual birth is a birth that is based on the will of God.

It is important to help every new Christian understand that he or she has become a Christian because of the will of God. Romans 8:14-15 says, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’ Here, we see that God brought us into His family by adoption. This means that we can have all of the freedom in a family that belongs to each child in that family. God gives each new Christian all of the privileges that go along with being a part of the family of God.

Romans 8:16-17 goes on to say, “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.” Here, we see that the Holy Spirit gives testimony of the fact that we have become the children of God. Many people grow up in life feeling that they have been rejected by one or both parents. Here, we see that the Holy Spirit testifies to the human spirit of each person that becomes a Christian that they are now a part of the family of God.

In addition to becoming a part of the family of God, God wants us to understand what that means as far as our future inheritance is concerned. As a child of God, we have become an heir of God. This means that we will share all that belongs to God. This verse also says that we become a joint

heir with Christ. Here on this earth that may mean sharing some of the sufferings of Christ because of the fact that many people reject Christ and persecute those who follow Him. However, our time on this earth is just like a moment compared to eternity. When the Lord completes our life on this earth and calls us to heaven, we see that we will share with Christ for all eternity all of the things that the Father has given to Christ.

Galatians 3:27 gives us another wonderful promise about what it means to be children of God. That verse says, “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” The word “baptize” was used to speak of dyeing a piece of cloth. If a person took a piece of white cloth and dipped it into a bowl of blue dye, the cloth came out of that dye with a new identity because it was now a piece of blue cloth. In the same way, we want to help our children learn to explain to others that at the moment they become a Christian, they are given a new identity. We have been baptized into Christ and that has given us a new identity. This new identity means that we have been given a new nature and that new nature has a desire to do what is good and pleasing to Christ. As we yield our human spirit to the Holy Spirit, we also have the power to do those things that are good and pleasing to Christ.

The word that is translated “put on” means *to put on clothing or to clothe one’s self*. We want to help our children learn how to explain what it means that we have put on Christ. Galatians 2:20 says, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” “To be crucified with Christ” means *to be fully identified with Christ and share His identity*. The word “Christian” actually means *little Christ* and was first used in an effort to mock the early Christians. In fact, to be called a little Christ is a great compliment because it means that people now identify us with Christ.

Galatians 3:28 goes on to tell us another thing that happens in our lives at the moment that we repent and place our faith in Christ. That verse says, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Here, we see that becoming part of the family of God has removed all racial distinctions. Ephesians 2:13-16 says, “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.” Here, we see that both Jews and Gentiles become one in Christ.

Then, Philemon 1:15-17 says, “For perhaps he departed for a while for this *purpose*, that you might receive him forever, no longer as a slave but more than a slave—a beloved brother, especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. If then you count me as a partner, receive him as *you would* me.” In Christ, we are no longer slaves and masters. Instead, we have become beloved brothers and sisters. We have become partners in ministry.

We also see that we are no longer male and female. Ephesians 5:21 says, “Submitting to one another in the fear of God.” Then, verses 22-24 say that wives are to model this submission in the same way that the church is subject to Christ. Verses 25-33 go on to tell us how husbands are to model this submission. Ephesians 5:25-29 says, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord *does* the church.” Here, we see that as children of God both husbands and wives are to practice submission to one another.

Here, we see that all of our relationships are changed because of the fact that we have become the children of God. There has also been a change in our relationship with God. Galatians 3:29 says, “And if you *are* Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” In this verse, we see that we want to help our children learn how to explain to new Christians the spiritual blessings that are a part of placing their faith in Christ. Here, we see that Christians become spiritual descendants of Abraham and can look forward to sharing the blessings that the Lord gave to Abraham.

Hebrews 11:8-10 helps us to understand the spiritual blessings that Abraham received. Those verses say, “By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.” Even though God took Abraham to the land of promise, that was not the land that Abraham was seeking. In fact, we see that the land of promise was like a foreign country to Abraham. Instead, the real place that Abraham looked for was, “The city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” In the same way, we want to help our children learn to explain to others who become Christians the value of the spiritual reward that we seek that will last for all eternity.

When we became the children of God by repentance and faith in Christ, we entered a new relationship that is eternal. We became the children of God and have received an eternal inheritance. Just as we have received this eternal inheritance, we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to explain to others how they can also share in this eternal inheritance. Truly, we can look forward to great blessing along with our children. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your physical and spiritual children grow in their understanding of what it means to be the children of God.