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I Am a Child of the King



What comes to mind when you hear the word “royalty”?

QUESTION 1

#BSFLmore

Jesus makes us full members of His family.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Most people will work their entire lives and never make millions of dollars, but Prince George Alexander Louis had a potential worth of millions on the day he was born. Prince George of Cambridge is part of the British royal family; as the son of Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, and the Duchess of Cambridge Kate Middleton, he is currently third in line to the throne in the United Kingdom. His great-grandmother, Queen Elizabeth II, is reportedly worth more than \$450 million, and as reigning monarch, she receives an annual payment close to \$13 million. Prince George is in line for all of 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!*

True—but the same could be said of us. When we come to Christ, we are given an incredible inheritance! And we did nothing to earn it or deserve it.

WHAT DOES **THE BIBLE** SAY?

Galatians 4:1-3 (CSB)

¹ Now I say that as long as the heir is a child, he differs in no way from a slave, though he is the owner of everything. ² Instead, he is under guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. ³ In the same way we also, when we were children, were in slavery under the elements of the world.

When 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. Some servants tended the garden while others worked in the kitchen and prepared the meals. Some servants labored outside with the livestock while others were assigned to watch over the children.

When the master's wife had a baby boy, the servants would take care of that child. The servants would tend to the master's child along with their own children. The master's child was expected to obey the servants and follow their instructions just like the other children did.

In contrast to Jewish custom, people in the Roman culture did not consider a boy to be a man at some specific age. Even though a young boy was the master's son, he didn't receive the perks associated with being an heir until his father decided that his boy was mature and ready to be a man. Then he would bring his son into the full position of sonship. But this step did not happen until the father initiated it.

As we relate to God, the same is true of us. "In the same way we also, when we were children, were in slavery under the elements of the world" (v. 3). Paul was speaking to those who shared his Jewish heritage. "The elements" likely referred to the basic principles of the Jewish law that directed many of their religious experiences. 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 the family.

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

QUESTION 2

At one time, none of us knew what full-blown sonship with God the Father looked like. Before Christ made it possible for humanity to have a fully developed relationship with God, we were all on the outside looking in. But we have the opportunity in Christ to step into complete sonship and experience abundant life. When we come to the Father through Christ, He brings us into His family even as this father did with his son.

Galatians 4:4-5 (CSB)

⁴ When the time came to completion, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

When my son became ten years old, I gave him a series of challenges and assured him that, if he accomplished the given assignments, he would be rewarded greatly. Like any other competitive ten-year-old boy, he said he was up to the challenge.

I called it the “Man-Up Challenge.” If he completed the challenges, my son would receive his own “Man Card.” That card would entitle him to several privileges he had yet to experience:

- » an additional hour before he had to go to bed;
- » thirty additional minutes each day when he could play video games or peruse his iPad®; and,
- » 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 put aside childish things.” We did daily Bible studies together, which included his explaining to me what God was teaching him and journaling this part of his journey. 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.

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

QUESTION 3

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 a part of His family. It was in that moment that "God sent His Son" (v. 4). He did so for two reasons.

- » **God sent His Son to redeem those under the law.** The people had been under the law up to this point, but the law had not made anyone a son of God. Following rules and regulations might have made people more pious, but it never made them a part of God's family—and it never could.
- » **God sent His Son to adopt us into His family.** In the original Greek, the word "adoption" literally means "to place as a son." While the word might be used to describe the Roman custom of bringing a young boy into the new level of sonship, 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 that we have been placed into the family of God and the only thing that has made that 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.

God has always wanted us to be a part of His family! He's loved us from the beginning, and it brings Him great pleasure each and every time He welcomes a new son or a new daughter into His family.



Galatians 4:6-7 (CSB)

⁶ And because you are sons, God 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 God has made you an heir.

Benefits come with being in a family. If you are 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 sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba, Father!'" (v. 6). God Himself lives in us!

If you've been saved by Christ, you've also been empowered by God and given the privilege of coming into a relationship with God the Father. He's given you the Holy Spirit and He says the Holy Spirit will lead you to cry out, "Abba, Father!" (v. 6). That word *Abba* conveys an intimate relationship, as 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 will do what he can to cope with the pain on his own. He will 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 kind of assurance. He is ever-present in the lives of His children. He tells us we are no longer slaves. Since we have been adopted into the family of God, He entitles us to privileges and blessings we didn't have before. "In him you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed. The Holy Spirit is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of the possession, to the praise of his glory" (Ephesians 1:13-14).

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

QUESTION 4

What are some ways we can rely on the Holy Spirit in our daily lives? In our group?

QUESTION 5

"See what great love the Father has given us that we should be called God's children—and we are!"

1 JOHN 3:1

WE ARE FAMILY



In a recent conversation, a friend admitted that he sees Christianity as primarily about following a list of rules. He's not a Christ-follower and he doesn't fully understand why you are one.

Based on today's study, how could you respond with truth from God's Word?

Which benefits of being a part of God's family would you share with him?

LIVE IT OUT

Jesus makes us full members of His family. How will your life point to this truth?

- » **Pray.** God is a loving Father who promises to be ever-present. Thank Him for demonstrating that love through Jesus and for making it possible for you to be adopted into His family.
- » **Share.** Who in your life needs to be encouraged by the truth in this passage? Many people are still attempting to get to God on their own, and they need someone to tell them about the hope found in Jesus.
- » **Act.** Consider how you and your group can actively share the gospel with those who have never heard. Check out OneLifeMatters.org/projects. These mission opportunities seek to serve others in Jesus' name and to demonstrate God's gracious love in their work. Pray for those who will see this testimony and respond to the invitation to know Christ and be a part of His family.

We don't have to be born into a royal family to enjoy an incredible inheritance. Christ made it possible for us to become a part of God's family. **Those who trust Christ are no longer on the outside looking in; they are His children.**



My thoughts