

IF WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD

Galatians 4:4-5

INTRODUCTION:

- A. ILLUSTRATION: Ian Lewis of Lancashire, England did research on his family history...only to find out he was adopted. (See illustration below).
- B. Adoption is a wonderful concept:
 - 1. "To take into one's family through legal means and raise as one's own child."
(*The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language*).
 - 2. Usually it is the process of homeless children finding a home with childless parents.
 - 3. Unwed mothers often give up their children as an alternative to abortion.
 - 4. The AGAPE organization helps in these processes.
- C. *SPIRITUAL* adoption is also a most wonderful concept.
- D. We become children of God through the process of *SPIRITUAL ADOPTION*:
 - 1. "The act of taking voluntarily a child of other parents as one's child; *in a theological sense, the act of God's grace by which sinful people are brought into his redeemed family.*" (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary).
 - 2. The Greek word translated adoption *occurs five times in the NT*. It literally means "*placing as a son.*" (Figuratively, Christian sonship in respect to God).
- E. Jesus came that we might be redeemed and ***receive the adoption of sons,***
Galatians 4:4-5.
- F. After this spiritual adoption, we become the sons of God, and today we notice some characteristics of God's child:

I. IF WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD, THERE MUST HAVE BEEN A SPIRITUAL BIRTH.

- A. Jesus told Nicodemus, "Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."
John 3:3.
- B. "Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever." ***1 Peter 1:23.***
- C. "But as many as received Him, to them *He gave the right to become children of God,* to those who believe in His name." ***John 1:12.***
- D. HOW and WHEN does this spiritual birth take place? "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." **Galatians 3:26-27.**

II. IF WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD, THERE SHOULD BE A FAMILY RESEMBLANCE.

- A. People can look at me and tell that I am a Phillips. Many say the same things about my sons.
- B. We cannot be children of God without it being evident.
 - 1. "Having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation." **1 Peter 2:11-12.**
 - 2. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John ... they realized that they had been with Jesus." **Acts 4:13.**
 - 3. "Beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image." **2 Corinthians 3:18.**
 - a. When we look upon the Lord, as in worship to Him, we become more like Him.
 - b. This is how we are to "be transformed," (Rom 12:2).
- C. It should be our desire to be more like God every day, so others can see it in us.

III. IF WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD, THERE SHOULD BE CONCERN FOR OTHER MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY.

- A. Isn't it *usually* that way in physical families? "As I have loved you, that you also love one another." **John 13:34-35.**
- B. Paul's instructions to the Corinthians, **1 Corinthians 12:25-26.**
 - 1. Members should have the same care for one another, **v.25.**
 - 2. If one member suffers, all suffer; if one rejoices, all rejoice, **v.26.** (You can't do those things unless you care about one another.)
- C. It is distressing to see a divided family. It is a shame to see division in the family of God.

IV. IF WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD, THERE SHOULD BE A DEVOTION TO THE FATHER'S INTERESTS.

- A. We don't expect *strangers* or *outsiders* to be as interested in our earthly family's affairs.
- B. In God's family, faithful children should be interested in every effort to promote the Father's "business."
- C. Jesus was always ready to do God's will and take care of His business:
 - 1. "Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" **Luke 2:49.**
 - 2. "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work." **John 4:34.**
 - 3. "I have finished the work which You have given Me to do." **John 17:4.**
- D. Jesus was anxious to do the will of the Father. We should be the same way.

V. IF WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD, WE ARE GOING HOME SOMEDAY.

- A. A *HOMECOMING* is a wonderful experience, especially if one lives a distance away.
- B. If we are faithful children of God, there will be a welcome for us.
 - 1. We are strangers and pilgrims, *Hebrews 11:13*.
 - 2. "I go and prepare a place for you," *John 14:1-2*.
 - 3. "I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." *John 14:3*.
- C. There will be a grand welcome awaiting us.
 - 1. What if you see family you haven't seen for a long time? How do you react?
 - 2. The father ran to meet the *PRODIGAL SON*, hugged and kissed him, (Luke 15).
 - 3. "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." *Matthew 25:34*.

CONCLUSION:

- A. If it were not for God's provision of spiritual adoption, we would have no opportunity to become His child.
- B. Thank God that we DO have that opportunity TODAY.
- C. Are you a child of God? Do you need to become one today?

ILLUSTRATION: The following was reported by WESTERN MORNING NEWS in 1994:

Ian Lewis, 43, of Standish, Lancashire, England, was interested in finding out about his family. He spent 30 years tracing his family tree back to the seventeenth century. He traveled all over Britain, talked to 2,000 relatives and planned to write a book about how his great-grandfather left to seek his fortune in Russia and how his grandfather was expelled after the Revolution. Then he found out he had been adopted when he was a month old and his real name was David Thornton. He resolved to start his family research all over again.

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