

The Way of the Lord

12. Your Relationship With Your Father (Part 3)

If you've accepted your Father's gift in Christ to live in Covenant union with Him as His child, you need to know your responsibilities and privileges in this Father/child relationship. Most sincere and loving fathers have goals for their children. And this is all the more so with your heavenly Father.

But before we get into our Father's goals and how He accomplishes these in and through you, we want to help you understand the *nature* of His relationship with you. Scripture assures us that when we turn *from* our sin and turn *to* our Father through trust in Jesus, we're *adopted* into His family. Adoption is legally choosing someone else's child and bringing him or her up as your *own*. In Christ, God *adopts* you as His own child. He proclaims His *spiritual parenthood* of you: "*I will be a Father to you, and you will be My sons and daughters,' says the Lord Almighty*" (2 Corinthians 6:18).

You once belonged to Satan—but not any more! If you desire to live in Covenant union with your heavenly Father, then you have a whole new *family*, with different family *values* to learn to live by. Think about it. Your heavenly Father knew you *before* you were ever conceived. You were born with a sin nature and most likely with demonic strongholds from your parents, and He *still* wanted you as His child.

But in order for you to *become* His child, you needed to respond to His grace in Jesus so you could live in Covenant union with Him. The moment you were born again, you were adopted into a new family—a family of *everyone* who has ever trusted Jesus as their Savior and Lord! Let's paraphrase Ephesians 1:4,5 to personalize it for you: "*For He chose YOU in Christ before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined YOU to be adopted as His child through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will.*"

Mike and I especially understand the love that surrounds adopting someone because we adopted our *own* son when he was two years old. It didn't matter that someone else had brought him into the world—he was now *our* beloved child! This is how your heavenly Father feels about *you*. YOU have become His beloved child because of your love and trust in Jesus as your Lord.

That *trust* means not only has Father accepted the sacrifice of Jesus for your sins. You also realize in your heart that *you can't do anything* that could ever pay the penalty your own sins deserve. And you know you can *trust* Him and His ways of changing you to become more like your glorious older brother, Jesus. His Spirit at work in you empowers you to *keep* being transformed: "*For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers*" (Romans 8:29).

So if you've embraced the biblical stipulations of His Covenant, then you've been *adopted* into a glorious new family. You have a heavenly Father, and a Brother Who is King and Lord of ALL! Our Lord Jesus came to earth to fulfill His Father's loving purposes. One of those purposes was to reconcile *you* to Him. And, as His adopted child, our Father has purposes for *you* as well. Embracing your heavenly Father's Covenant starts you on a pilgrimage of transformation through His Spirit in you. Father wants you to grow more and more like His Son Jesus in love and character. He also plans for you to fulfill purposes which He has prepared in advance for you to accomplish. As

the Father's child, you'll find this is a lifelong journey of change: "*And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, Who is the Spirit*" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

So from long before you embraced your Father's Covenant, He had already set up how He intends to help you become like His Son, Jesus. This is where you parents, especially you fathers and grandfathers, need to help your families the most. The Bible calls for fathers, and grandfathers too, to lead in the spiritual development of your family. Your HOME is your Father's primary place for you to do this, not some religious program or activity.

Keep in mind that your children are quick to transfer whatever emotions they have for *you* onto their heavenly Father. If you've neglected your God-given responsibility to them or have treated your kids badly, they probably *distrust* you. And that means they won't easily trust the Father in heaven either. If you've been a *barrier* to your children encountering Jesus or becoming more like Him and doing His will, then please, REPENT!

Every man needs the heart of the patriarch Abraham, who was called God's *friend* (James 2:23). Our Father in heaven uses Abraham as an earthly role model for *all* fathers: "*For I have chosen [Abraham], so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the WAY of the LORD by doing what is right and just*" (Genesis 18:19).

Our heavenly Father told us to call what He's restoring today "The HEBRAIC Restoration", a restoration that points back to Abraham, the first Hebrew recorded in the Bible. Abraham's life is one of transformation. The word "Hebrew" means "a wanderer", someone who goes to "the other side." What's behind this definition?

First, Abraham was a *stranger* "from the other side." He was born east of Canaan in Ur of the Chaldees, and came from the 'other side' of the Jordan River. Second, Abraham *left* the pagan religious practices of his ancestors in order to embrace the One True God in obedient trust. Wherever God led him and whatever God asked of him, Abraham willingly obeyed. Third, in Abraham's relationship with the One True God, he stood "on the other side" *in opposition* to the entire pagan world. His trust in God and his adamant refusal to disobey Him set Abraham at odds with the rest of humanity.

The Bible declares that *everyone* who embraces our Father's covenant in Jesus receives Abraham as their spiritual father (Romans 4:16). The entire pagan world stood against Abraham and his God, so is it any wonder that Jesus warns *us* ahead of time, "*All men will hate you because of Me*" (Luke 21:17)?

For *all* of us, but especially for you men, old or young, Abraham's way of life, his obedient trust, must become yours as well. The Patriarch chose a way of life that reflected a living relationship with his God, a *trust* in God that others could see through his words and his life choices. This is the kind of relationship with your heavenly Father that *you* are called to if you're intent on living the way of the Lord, and training your family to do the same.

For Further Study:

- Lifebyte 37. *Extending The Kingdom: The People Movement Approach* (Part 1)
- Lifebyte 38. *Extending The Kingdom: The People Movement Approach* (Part 2)

Each is a free download on our website: <restorationministries.org>