

Leader's Guide

LESSON 12

Dr. Jerry Nelson

In response to the sermon on November 25.

Romans 8:14-17 **Adoption - A Child of God**

Key Points

It is good to belong to a family! Not only do we receive the rich rewards of the relationships, we also enjoy certain privileges that only belong to immediate family members. One of those benefits is a future inheritance. In these few short verses we will discover:

- The leading of the Spirit as evidence of our family relationship
- Adoption: we are God's children
- The close relationship that is ours as children (Abba Father)
- Inheritance: we are already heirs

Families enjoy close relational bonds that confirm the familial ties in a thousand ways, most of which are intuitive. So it is with the Spirit. There is an "inner testimony to our relationship with Christ" that confirms our adoption and sense of belonging to God and the family of God. As believers, we would do well to cultivate an awareness of the work of the Spirit within us—his continual leading, confirmation, conviction, comfort and guidance—for in these things our relationship with him is confirmed.

Thoughts as You Lead

- Many of the people in your group may be able to relate to the wonderful benefits of close, healthy family relationships. If so, take time to talk about what that has meant to them, and bridge the conversations to the love of God and the benefits we have as adopted children.

- Some of the people in your group may not have not experienced a healthy family environment. For them, it may be more difficult to understand and embrace all that adoption (into the family of God) means. It will be especially important to help them understand that the benefits are sure, they are real, and they already possess them.
- What does it mean to be led by the Spirit? What transpires within us, and how do we know if it is the Spirit, or us? It might be helpful to share stories of what it means to have the Spirit testify with our spirit. It is through this means that the Spirit within us confirms our adoption, our belonging. What a wonderful confirmation of our relationship with God!

Discussion Questions

1. "...those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God."(8:14) In the context of 8:1-13 (see also 8:15) does Paul desire us to doubt our relationship to God or is he affirming it? Why or why not?
2. Contrast "a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear" with "the Spirit of sonship." (8:15) From the scriptural context and from your own experiences what do each look and feel like?
3. If you are adopted into God's family, it implies you formerly belonged to another family. What was that family and what were the benefits and liabilities of belonging to it?
4. Describe what "Abba Father" means to you. How can this be personal and even intimate without being irreverent?
5. In what ways does the Holy Spirit testify to us (to you) that we (you) are God's child (8:16)?
6. Since, as children of God, we are "heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ," (8:17) what does Scripture teach that you will inherit here and now on earth? In eternity?
7. What does it mean to "share in Christ's sufferings" and in what ways are you choosing to do so?