

The Family of God

When you think of family, what do you think of? I think of brothers and sisters, mom and dad, grandma and grandpa, aunts and uncles, lots of cousins. Today we are talking about the Family of God.

Introduction

When I think of family I think of people who share a common heritage and typically have a common outlook on life. I also think of people who share with one another freely and stand together against any threat or difficult circumstance.

Family was very important when I was growing up. Just about every Saturday we would visit all of the aunts, uncles, and cousins on one side of the family; and just about every major holiday the whole other side of the family would get together for a huge picnic or dinner with games and all sorts of fun.

My grandparents had this huge house they raised their 7 kids in. Once most of their kids were grown, they started taking in foster kids. Those foster kids were every bit a part of the family as the rest of us. There was even talk about adopting some of them. Once adopted they would be a real permanent member of the family and share the family name.

It is important to be part of a family. Family knows your imperfections and helps you overcome them with love without condemnation. It stands beside you and celebrates with your successes and laments with your losses. Family is family and nothing breaks the bonds of family.

Before we continue, we want to say, not all families are this ideal. Most families have their issues, some issues are bigger than others. If you're part of a family that has some severe issues, we're sorry and would love to help you through that. Feel free to contact us. Maybe we can help.

Church Family Is

Being a part of the church is being part of a family also; a family that stands together, lives together and plays together, warts and all.

Let's read John 1:12-13.

John 1:12-13

(12) Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-- (13) children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

When you are family, not only do you carry the family name but there is an ancestry. There is an inheritance that is passed from one generation to the next. There are rights and responsibilities that go with being a part of a family. Being a part of the family of God is no different.

John is sharing with us exactly what Jesus did by giving up his life on the cross. When we accept the precious gift that he offers, everlasting life, by saying, "Yes!" to his call, we become children of God. We are adopted into the family of God. We take the name, we receive a place at the table, we get to celebrate and share with the rest of the family, and we get to share in the inheritance.



The question is, are you wandering the streets as an orphan, are you a foster child living with someone's family but not a real part of it yet, or have you been adopted in? What do we mean by that? Let's look at the three.

Orphans

Orphans are without family. They are alone in the world and often wandering aimlessly. They have little to no purpose other than their daily survival. It's them against the world.

We see pictures of orphans in the news, and depending on where you live, you may see orphans roaming the streets. They're begging for food, looking for shelter. They have no one to look out for and no one to look out for them. They are alone.

We are all born spiritual orphans because of sin and are separated from God and wandering through life aimlessly. We are concerned with our daily needs and ourselves and have little time for anyone or anything else.

In life, there are people who build orphanages. We have a friend who has built an orphanage in Haiti and runs it through donations from different churches here in America and Canada. We don't see orphans wandering the streets much here in America, but it does happen. Often law enforcement is involved in bringing orphans and runaways in and placing them in foster homes.

Spiritual Orphans

Spiritually, the same thing is happening. Someone comes along and sees a person wandering through life aimlessly. They invite them in to be part of their group or church.

Maybe it's an invitation to an outreach event or retreat. Maybe it's an invitation to come to their home for a meal. In any case, the orphan, the lost soul, is invited in to spend time with the family of God. The wanderer becomes like a foster child in the family of God.

Foster Children

When an orphan becomes a foster child in a foster home there are many advantages. They are now safe and now have a real bed and don't have to scrounge for food. They start to see there is more to life than just each day's needs for survival.

They're not part of the family, but they receive some of the benefits. They receive protection and provision and they receive lots of love and understanding, but there's nothing permanent about it.

Spiritual Foster Children

Spiritually, when we enter into a church and start to spend time with God's people, the same thing is happening. You're like a spiritual foster child. That group or church is going to give you some protection. They're going to love you and help you see beyond your daily survival.

They're going to give you a safe place to rest and let your guard down a bit. Though there is nothing permanent and there is no inheritance or guarantee of staying, you enjoy the rest and provision.



Adoption

Sometimes when a child is in a foster home and there is no hope to return to their family, or there is no family to return to, their hope is in someone adopting them. Sometimes, it is the foster families themselves that adopt these children.

Spiritual Adoption

Spiritually, that happens too. We need to be looking at getting each person who is a spiritual foster child in the family of God adopted into the family somewhere. It may not be with your group or church. Maybe, it's back with the group or church they grew up in, or maybe it's the group or church down the street. At any rate, it is important for them to say yes to Jesus' call and become children of God.

John 1:12 says it so well, "Those who receive Jesus and believe in his name have the right to become children of God."

As a child of God, you have a right to take on the name of the family. You are the son or daughter of the King! You are princes and princesses in the kingdom of God! And, just like in a natural family, you have brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, and lots of cousins, all of whom will stand alongside you because you are part of the family.

Adoption Changes You

The changes that take place in you when you become a member of the family of God are great, too! Ephesians 2:19-22 says:

Ephesians 2:19-22

(19) Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, (20) built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. (21) In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. (22) And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

We are being built together into one church with Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone. We are members of God's household and have the Creator of the universe as our father and his son, our savior, as a brother. It doesn't get any better than that.

Family Issues

Families have their issues. They have arguments and disagree on things. Every now and then I'll be working on a project and I'll hear our children in the other room arguing about something and I'll have to go in and be dad and solve it for them.

God's family is no different. There are arguments sometimes. There are disagreements and hurts sometimes. But we have to know and believe that God will step in when needed and solve the issue when we can't solve it ourselves.

Friends, we want to welcome you into the family of God. We want to encourage you to be part of a group of believers who love Jesus and serve God with their whole hearts. We want to encourage you to



invite others into your group and help them become members of the family and to live up to the family name, which is “Christian”, representing the family well.

Always be ready to invite in another stranger who is wandering and needs the love, grace, mercy, and forgiveness of Jesus. We are one big family. There are lots and lots of cousins, aunts and uncles, and brothers and sisters.

Conclusion

If you’re ready to be adopted in, I want to invite you to say yes to Jesus right now. Jesus is calling you, and you hear His still small voice in your heart.

It is as simple as saying, “Yes, Jesus. I am yours. I ask for your forgiveness and I give my life to you.”

When you say that to Jesus sincerely, you are adopted into the family! But don’t keep wandering after that. Become a part of a group of believers who you can stand with and will stand with you.

And, please let us know. Click the “I Said Yes” link at the top of any of our web pages to let us know you joined the family of God.

