



Part 2: God's Presence for Adoption

Galatians 3:26 – 4:7

The Holy Spirit enables us to experience God's love as His children.

I. God's Empowering Presence

“The Lord replied, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.’ Then Moses said to him, “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? **What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?”** Exodus 33:14-16

The Holy Spirit is the way God is present with His people now.
We are saved for God's Presence.

The Holy Spirit enables us to experience God's love as His children.

II. The Reality of Family

We learn in Genesis 1-2 that God has ordained the human family of a father and mother as the primary place of love, belonging, identity and nurture for children.

We learn from Genesis 3 and our experience that all families are affected by sin and brokenness. No one's experience of love in their family of origin is perfect or complete.

When we are not loved well, we receive all kinds of wounds that affect our identity and our ability to receive and give love. Two extremes of dysfunctional families can lead to two different broken identities.

The family marked by perfectionism or performance usually leads to a child growing up with the identity of a slave or servant rather than a beloved child. They learn that love is conditional.

The family marked by absence or abandonment usually leads to a child growing up with the identity of an orphan. They learn they are on their own...don't get too close to anyone or depend on anyone. Neither is God's design for the family.

The very last promise in the Old Testament is at the end of the prophet Malachi, and it is instructive in the way God intends to recover and renew His design and purpose for our human families.

"See, I will send the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful Day the Lord comes. He will **return the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers**; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse." Malachi 4:5-6

III. A New Identity

- A. The Gospel is a Father Movement (John 1:12-13; 14:23; 17:25-26)

The ultimate gift of the Gospel is a restored love relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ.

"Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to **become children of God** – children born not of natural descent, nor of a human decision or a husband's will, but born of God." John 1:12-13

"For in the truest sense, the fall into sin was a fall out of relationship. It was the fall out of our secure place of belonging with God and into self-absorbed isolation and inner emptiness." – Sandra Wilson, *Into Abba's Arms*

- B. A New Identity as the Father's Children (Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 3:36 – 4:7)

"You are all **sons and daughters of God through faith in Jesus Christ**, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourself with Christ." Galatians 3:26

"...a father means somebody who is able to regulate the life of his children from a center outside themselves, to pull them towards wholeness, to

accustom them to obedience and so offer them security.” – Thomas Smail, *The Forgotten Father*

IV. A New Experience of Love (Romans 5:5; 8:14-17; Galatians 4:6)

We need the truth of God’s Word to reveal to us the truth about ourselves. But we also need the Holy Spirit to help us experience that new identity.

“Because you are sons and daughters, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, ‘Abba, Father.’ So you are no longer a slave, but a son or daughter...” Galatians 4:6

“For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption. And by Him we cry ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirits that we are God’s children.” Romans 8:15-16

“It is the work of the Holy Spirit to cry Abba, Father at precisely these deep places of our hearts and spirits, there to begin to transform us and set us free, and bit by bit bring us out of the neglect or tyranny of the fatherhood we remember, into the sure love and liberating obedience of the God and Father of Jesus.” – Thomas Smail, *The Forgotten Father*

Pastoral Counsel:

1. Pray Ephesians 3:14-19.
2. Ask the Father to reveal to you what you really believe about Him. Journal what comes to your mind.
3. Ask the Spirit to reveal to you anything that is hindering your experience of God’s love in Christ. Unconfessed sin? Are there lies you believe about the Father? What is the source of those lies?
4. Seek the ministry of other Christians to help you, i.e. counseling, inner healing prayer ministry (see resources below).
5. Meditate/pray scriptures about God’s love for you.

V. Ask the Father (Luke 11:9-13; Romans 5:5)

“You are the son [daughter] of a kind, strong, and engaged Father, a Father wise enough to guide you in the Way, generous enough to provide for your journey, offering to walk with you every step. This is perhaps the hardest thing for us to believe – really believe, down deep in our hearts, so that it changes us forever, changes the way we approach each day.” – John Eldredge, *Fathered by God*

“Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy. Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy. Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy. Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy. Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy. Amen.” – Augustine

Resources:

1. Good counseling referral or Healing Presence prayer ministry (Jasona Brown: jbrown@greenwoodcc.com)
2. “The Four Streams” podcast by John Eldredge (Ransomed Heart Ministries)
3. *Into Abba’s Arms* by Sandra Wilson
4. *Fathered by God* by John Eldredge
5. *Stone by Stone* by Jasona Brown

Discussion Questions:

1. Read Romans 5:1-5. How does Paul connect our hope in God the Father with the Holy Spirit?
2. Read Romans 8:9-16 and Galatians 4:6-7. What does Paul say the Holy Spirit does in our hearts?
3. Doug made the analogy that we can be told a donut is sweet, but we must taste it to experience its sweetness. Have you had the experience Paul describes in Romans 8:9-16 and Galatians 4:6-7 between intellectually knowing God’s love and experiencing God’s love?
4. How does an experience of God’s love fuel your hope in God as Paul says in Romans 5:5?
5. Here’s an experiment for those willing: practice listening prayer over each other and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal anything hindering one’s experience of God’s love. Pray for that person according to anything the Spirit may reveal.