

Week 1 - We Are Family

Key Scriptures

John 1:12 - Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God

Galatians 3:26 - So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.

1 John 3:1a - See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

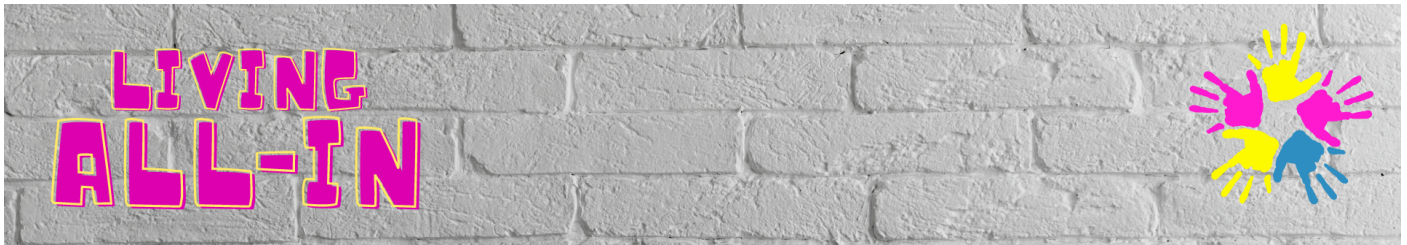
Romans 8:14-17 - For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Ephesians 4:1-7 - As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.



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Introduction

There are three ways to become part of a family. One is by marriage, which is the imagery used to describe the relationship between Jesus and the Church (Eph. 5:27). The other two are by birth and by adoption. We have all been born, physically. But in conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus says we must be 'born again' (John 3) - born of water and the spirit. And Romans 8 says that we are adopted into God's family. It's possible for children to be described as 'unplanned' but there are no unplanned adoptions. In the times Paul is writing to the Church in Rome, it was possible for a natural born child to lose their inheritance, but an adopted child could not.

Children of God

- 1) Are we all children of God from the moment of conception, or birth?
- 2) Galatians 3:26 suggests that something is required of us before we are children of God. What is it?
- 3) John 1:12 says that we are granted the 'right to become children of God', but that we need to own it, we need to take hold of it.
- 4) What are the prerequisites required before we're considered a child of God according to John?

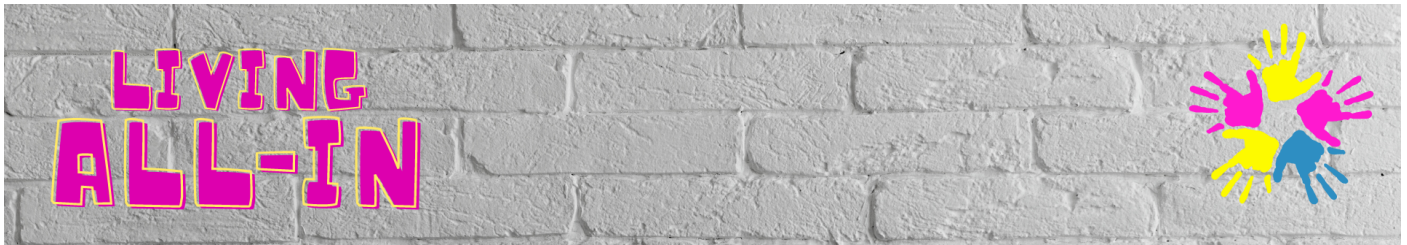
Romans 8 describes children of God as 'those who are led by the Spirit', and it is receiving the Spirit which brought about adoption to sonship, and it is the Spirit who testifies that we are God's children; we are led by the Spirit, we receive the Spirit who facilitates our adoption into God's family, and then testifies to our new identity as children of God.

"Adoption is the visible Gospel." - John Piper



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We Are Family

As children of God and part of His family, we are described as 'heirs of God' and 'co-heirs of Christ' (Romans 8:17). We stand to inherit the fullness of God's promises, and the full revelation of Christ's glory. Although we cannot lose our inheritance as adopted children, v17 says we must also suffer with Christ to see/receive/share in His Glory.

We must hold together as God's family whatever suffering/difficulty comes, but we know that family life is rarely easy,

5) What does Eph. 4:1-3 help us with the challenge of holding together as one family when difficulties & differences arise?

6) What difficulties & differences can arise in the life of your:

a) blood family

b) Church family

7) What encouragement do you find in v7?

8) Why might it be more important to think of the Church as a family rather than a fellowship?

*"Church is not something you go to,
it's a family you belong to" - Anon.*

*"It is much easier to walk away from Church
than from family" - Anon.*



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