

## **Adopted By God**

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Friday night, many of us joined in a celebration of Clint and Cori Hambric's adoption of Cadi Lynne Hambric. Cadi is an answer to many prayers and is a blessing to Clint and Cori just as Clint and Cori will be a blessing to Cadi.

Even though Cadi is not their biological child, they will most certainly treat her as if she is. She is also recognized legally as being their child; Cadi will have the same privileges and status as if she were Clint and Cori's flesh and blood.

Adoption in the Greco-Roman world was common in the 1st century, though the purpose was usually quite different. Rarely did adoption take place because of compassion for an unwanted or orphaned child. The motivations for adoption were usually more rooted in socio-economic benefits. Even adults could choose to be adopted and would often seek out adoption to better their status. Those with no heirs would seek out others (even adults) to become their adopted child so they could continue their lineage and legacy.

Regardless of the motivation then compared to now, the result was the same – someone who was not a biological child would be granted all the benefits and privileges of being a child and being part of a particular family.

It is this well-known practice that Paul alludes to in Romans 8 when he speaks of us being adopted by God. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together" (Rom. 8:14-17).

We have become his children, and he has become our Father. But what makes this metaphor even more striking is that our former condition wasn't just some ordinary child. Rather, in the context of the previous chapters and even in chapter 8, we are said to have been slaves. We were in bondage to sin, but Christ set us free, allowing us to then become sons of God. And also just as striking is that we're not being adopted by just some ordinary family. Rather, it's the God of the universe that is taking us on as his children! Our status has gone from one of a slave to the son of the Most High!

While adoption in the Greco-Roman world may not have had love as the primary motivation, that's certainly not the case with God's adoption for us. Love is most definitely his primary motivation. He saw our condition, he felt compassion for us, knowing that we were slaves to sin with no hope of being set free, and he took the necessary steps to free us from that bondage and make us part of his family.

Because we're part of God's family, we have special status. We have his protection and his blessings. We have access to all the promises. We receive an inheritance. This inheritance is, of

course, not a physical, monetary inheritance. In fact, the passage states that God himself is our inheritance! It's the blessing of being with God, Jesus our elder brother (with whom we are joint-heirs), and the rest of the family of God. It's the blessing of bliss and love and fellowship and rest and peace for all eternity. We even have a small foretaste of that while here on earth through our spiritual family – the church.

Knowing God's great love for us and realizing where we were and where we are now – shouldn't we be forever grateful and seek to please our Father in all that we do? Instead of living for ourselves, shouldn't we be living for him? Why would we want to jeopardize our inheritance by not obeying our gracious Father?

Since we're the sons and daughters of God, then let's make sure we're living up to the family name!