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## GOD MAKES HIS PEOPLE HIS CHILDREN

*“When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son...  
so that we might receive adoption as sons.” (Galatians 4:4-5)*

**Paul teaches that the gift of justification (i.e.; present acceptance by God as the world’s judge) brings with it the status of sonship by adoption (i.e., permanent intimacy with God as one’s heavenly Father, Galatians 3:26; 4:4-7). In Paul’s world, adoption was ordinarily of young adult males of good character to become heirs and maintain the family name of the childless rich. Paul, however, proclaims God’s gracious adoption of persons of bad character to become “heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:17).**

**Justification is the basic blessing on which adoption is founded; adoption is the crowning blessing, to which justification clears the way. Adopted status belongs to all who receive Christ (John 1:12). The adopted status of believers means that in and through Christ, God loves them as he loves his only begotten Son and will share with them all the glory that is Christ’s now (Romans 8:17, 38-39). Here and now, believers are under God’s fatherly care and discipline (Matthew 6:26; Hebrews 12:5-11) and are directed, especially by Jesus to live their whole lives in light of the knowledge that God is their Father in heaven. They are to pray to him as such (Matthew 6:5-13), imitate him as such (Matthew 5:44-48; 6:12, 14-15; 18:21-35; Ephesians 4:32-5:2), and trust him as such (Matthew 6:25-34), thus expressing the filial instinct that the Holy Spirit has implanted in them (Romans 8:15-17; Galatians 4:6)**

**Adoption and regeneration accompany each other as two aspects of the salvation that Christ brings (John 1:12-13), but they are to be distinguished. Adoption is the bestowal of a relationship while regeneration is the transformation of our moral nature. Yet the link is evident; God wants his children, whom he loves, to bear his character, and he takes action accordingly. AMEN.**

**By Dr. J. I. Packer**

*“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” Matthew 28:18 – 20*

