



Within - Week 4

Speaker: Pastor Raúl Latoni

Introduction

[Reader: Group Reader]

This week's message shows us through Scripture that the Holy Spirit brings us into the family of God and assures us of our place there. We will examine four ways the Holy Spirit works in our coming into and abiding as part of this family.

Let's open in prayer. [Leader prays]

Here are the opening questions:

- What does belonging to a family mean to you?
- In particular, what do you think children should be able to expect from their parents?

[Reader: Person with the most siblings]

God's children know they're part of His family. They don't rely on emotions, but on the unchanging truth of the Word of God. We are His and He is ours.

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This week's lesson will examine many Bible verses, but the central passage is found in **Romans 8: 14–17**:

14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"

16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

- Why do you think these verses point out that we are *adopted* into God's family?
- These verses also say that we are heirs. What is that important?

[**Reader:** Person with the oldest living parent]

1. Let's first look at Scriptures that explain how the Holy Spirit brings us into God's family.

Romans 8:9 tells us that ***only with the Spirit of Christ*** do we belong to God's family:

You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

Ephesians 1:13 tells us we're *sealed* with the Holy Spirit when we hear and believe the gospel:

In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit...

1 Corinthians 12:13 says we're *baptized* into God's family:

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves[a] or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

2 Corinthians 5:17 says that we are *new creations* in Christ:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.[a] The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Look at the italicized words introducing each of the above verses and compare them with what the verse says. (See list below.) In light of these verses, what do these words mean to you? Has God's spirit confirmed this in your life?

- only with the Spirit of Christ
- sealed
- baptized
- new creations

[**Reader:** Person who lives closest to one or both parents]

1 John, Chapters 3 and 5 talk extensively about being in God's family. Take time to read those chapters on your own.

But for now, consider **1 John 5:1**:

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him.

Also consider **Titus 3:5**:

He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit ...

- Read **1 John 5:1**. We often hear that everyone is a child of God. Is this true? Why or why not?
- What does it mean to believe "Jesus is the Christ"?
- Sometimes people feel that they must prove themselves worthy of entering God's family by living good lives. What does **Titus 3:5** say about this?

[**Reader:** Person with the shortest last name]

2. When we are in God's family, the Holy Spirit grants a supernatural ability to be led by God. Here, as evidenced by Scripture, are some of the many ways the Spirit works this ability in us:

The Spirit gives us ability to recognize God's voice:
My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. **John 10:27**

The Spirit continues to give us direction as we obey God:
Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." **John 14:21**

The Spirit shares wisdom freely:

No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. **John 15:15**

The Spirit reveals things we would not have learned on our own:

But, as it is written,

"What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the heart of man imagined,
what God has prepared for those who love him"—

these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. **1 Corinthians 2:9–10**

The spirit gives inner wisdom.

Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being,
and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. **Psalms 51:6**

The spirit amplifies our ability to hear and obey God.

Do not be conformed to this world,^[a] but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. **Romans 12:2** (ESV)

The spirit empowers us to lead an abundant life:

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. **John 10:10** (ESV)

- Which of these verses in particular speaks to you? Why?
- Can you relay an experience in which you felt the Spirit's supernatural leading?
- How do you know when God's Spirit is speaking to you?
- How does God's Spirit affirm His presence in your life?

[**Reader:** Person with the longest last name]

Two of the methods the Holy Spirit leads us are:

1. By bringing Scripture to memory
2. Through inner promptings

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- Can you tell of a time you made a decision based on Scripture?
- Have you ever felt inclined to perform a selfless act that isn't specifically required by the Bible? Did you think of this as the Spirit's leading?
- Why is it important to recognize whether the Spirit is leading when we feel an urge to perform a selfless act?

[**Reader:** Person who lived in the most cities with at least one family member]

3. The Holy Spirit engenders a spirit of nearness and love in our adoption into the family of God.

One manifestation of this love is the removal of the fear of sin and death, as expressed in **John 4:18**:

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

1 Corinthians 6:17 talks about our nearness to God:

But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.

Scripture also teaches that when we are in God's family, we have full rights and privileges, but because of our nearness to God, we can grieve the Holy

Spirit with the things we do. God doesn't spoil his children—He disciplines them. When this happens, we won't feel near to God, as expressed in **Isaiah 59:2**:

but your iniquities have made a separation
between you and your God,
and your sins have hidden his face from you
so that he does not hear.

We can, however, regain closeness to God, as shown in **1 John 1:9**:
If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- How does God's discipline of His children differ from His judgment of those who are not His children?
- Why is it important for God's children to recognize when they sin and ask God for forgiveness?

[**Reader:** Person who most recently spent time with a family member who doesn't with them]

4. The Holy Spirit gives us supernatural assurance that we are children of God.

Our assurance of belonging to God's family comes through Scripture, which is Spirit inspired. An example is **1 John 1:9**:

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

James 4:5 tells us that our assurance also comes through the Holy Spirit's working in our human spirit as an inner witness:

Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"?

As already discussed, this inner witness helps us identify hardship as discipline rather than punishment or judgment. It also indicates that God's children live by inner conviction, not by current trend or opinions. Instead we can say, "God said it and that settles it: I am His and He is mine. God's children are co-heirs with Christ in God's Kingdom."

- Have you ever wondered whether you were truly part of God's family?
- Scripturally speaking, how can you know you are in God's family? See Romans 8: 14–17 or refer to another Scripture.

[**Reader:** Group leader]

Karl Barth, one of the greatest theologians of the 20th century, was once asked to summarize the greatest theological truth.

This was his answer:

“Jesus love me. This I know, for the Bible tells me so?”

Many people feel **John 3:16** summarizes God's loving plan:

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

- According to this verse, how do we become part of God's family?
- What does it mean to believe in God's son?

Application: If you're in doubt about whether you're a part of God's family, talk about it with a Christian you trust. Let's all remember that assurance of being in God's family comes not through trendy viewpoints or opinions of others or emotions, but through Scripture and the inner witness of the Holy Spirit. With this assurance, how can we draw on the power and privileges we enjoy as God's children?