

# Sons and Daughters

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**Q.** What is adoption?

**A.** Adoption is the act of God's free grace by which we become His sons with all the rights and privileges of being His.

(Westminster Shorter Catechism Q&A #34)

“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us,  
that we should be called children of God!”

(1 John 3:1)

A few days ago our catechism introduced us to three of the most important words in the Bible that we hardly ever use (*see WSC #32*). These words are: justification, spiritual adoption and sanctification. Understanding these three words are vital to our Christian life and spiritual growth. Today we will be taking a look at the second of those three words: ADOPTION.

The concept of adoption is one that is very significant in my own life, in that I have three adopted siblings who are a part of my family. When I was beginning my sophomore year of college my parents decided to adopt three of the greatest kids in the entire world, making our family a little larger and a lot richer in joy and love! When my brother and sisters were adopted into our family there were two primary transformations that took place in their lives. First of all, the moment they were adopted they became sons and daughters of my parents. They received a new identity. No longer were they under the custody of the adoption agency, the state or the county. The moment they were adopted they were transferred to the custody and care of a brand new family unit. It was in that moment that they received a brand new name. A name that identified them as belonging to my parents.

Not only did my adopted siblings receive a brand new name, they also received all the privileges and prerogatives that come with being a part of a family. In other words, at the moment of adoption, my brother and sisters became heirs of all my parents' estate. They were granted all the rights pertaining to a legal child of my parents and are co-inheritors of all that my parents will one day leave behind.

It's with all this in mind that we come to today's catechism question which asks, “*What is adoption?*”. Here the Westminster Divines are not referring to earthy adoption, but to what is known as *spiritual* adoption. You see, while every person on this planet is a creation of God, not everyone is a child of God. The Bible teaches that in order to become a child of God, we must be adopted by God into His family through faith in Jesus Christ. In the book of Romans, the Apostle Paul writes, “*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'" (Romans 8:14-15).*

When someone places true faith in Jesus, they are adopted into God's family. And just as in earthly adoption, God's children receive certain privileges and prerogatives that come with being his adopted children. First of all, our catechism tells us that when we are adopted into God's family, *"we become His sons..."*. In other words, the moment that you were saved, you received a brand new name. You received a brand new title. You now bear the name of your Heavenly Father. You are a *"Christian"*, that is, you are a member of Christ's family<sup>1</sup>!

And not only do believers in Christ receive a brand new name when they are adopted by God, they also receive *"all the rights and privileges of being His"*. As Romans 8:16-17 tells us, *"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 you are an adopted child of God, you are an heir of God's kingdom. Whatever belongs to God also belongs to you. As children of God we have an enormous blessing and inheritance to look forward to! The Apostle Paul goes on to say, *"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God."*

My friends, if you are a true believer in Christ, you are no longer merely one of God's creations...you are one of God's adopted children. Meditate on this amazing truth today, crying out with the Apostle John, *"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!"* (1 John 3:1).

## Dig Even Deeper into God's Word!

John 1:12-13

Romans 8:17

1 John 3:1

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<sup>1</sup> See Heidelberg Catechism Q&A #32