

SESSION 7

Indwelt

ROMANS 8:14-27

THOSE WHO TRUST JESUS ARE INDWELT BY THE HOLY SPIRIT
WHEN THEY ARE ADOPTED INTO THE FAMILY OF GOD.



A happy family always makes space for everyone. During holiday gatherings, the house might feel packed, but no one worries about being left out at bedtime. Beds fill up fast, and cozy spots on the floor become welcoming places to sleep. Come breakfast, there's plenty for all—because the kitchen never runs out of pancakes.

*WHEN YOU PICTURE A HAPPY FAMILY, WHOSE FAMILY DO YOU THINK OF?
HOW DOES BEING A PART OF GOD'S FAMILY SHAPE YOUR SENSE OF BELONGING?*

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

In chapters 1–4, Paul addressed the universal sinfulness of humanity. In chapters 5–6, he shifted to emphasize Jesus's work in providing salvation for sinners. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus opened the way to a new life. Those who die to sin through Him are raised to walk in a transformed life. Yet, overcoming sin is not as simple as flipping a switch. In chapter 7, Paul lamented his struggle—how easily he did what he should not and failed to do what he should. In anguish, he cried out for deliverance, then answered with a triumphant declaration, “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (Rom. 7:25).

This victory cry leads into Romans 8, where Paul explained how the Holy Spirit enables believers to live a victorious Christian life. He began by contrasting life under the law with life in the Spirit (8:1-11). The law exposes sin in the flesh, but the indwelling Spirit empowers believers to live out their new life in Christ.

In verses 12-17, Paul used the image of adoption to highlight the believer's secure

relationship with God. Living by the Spirit rather than the flesh proves that one is truly God's child—a relationship marked by intimacy and guaranteed inheritance. Those who belong to God by faith are “heirs of God and coheirs with Christ” (8:17).

Paul then focused on freedom in the Spirit (8:18-30). Believers receive the Holy Spirit as the firstfruits of their adoption into God's family. Through the Spirit's presence, Christians live with hope, anticipating the full redemption at Christ's return. Positionally, believers already belong to God's redeemed family, even as they battle the flesh in this life. Practically, the Spirit empowers them to resist sin and live according to God's will.

In 8:31-39, Paul returned to the theme of freedom from condemnation. Because Jesus paid the penalty for sin, believers stand before God without accusation. God's love in Christ guarantees that nothing can separate us from Him. Since Jesus died and was raised for our justification, we can live now with confidence in His love and life.



14 For all those **led by God's Spirit**^A are God's sons. **15** For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. Instead, you received the **Spirit of adoption**,^B by whom we cry out, "**Abba**,^C Father!" **16** The Spirit himself **testifies together**^D with our spirit that we are God's children, **17** and if children, also **heirs**^E—heirs of God and coheirs with Christ—if indeed we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him. **18** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us. **19** For the **creation eagerly waits**^F with anticipation for God's sons to be revealed. **20** For the creation was subjected to futility—not willingly, but because of him who subjected it—in the hope **21** that the creation itself will also be set free from the **bondage to decay**^G into the glorious freedom of God's children. **22** For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together with **labor pains**^H until now. **23** Not only that, but we ourselves who have the Spirit as the firstfruits—we also groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. **24** Now in this hope we were saved, but hope that is seen is not hope, because who hopes for what he sees? **25** Now if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with patience. **26** In the same way the Spirit also helps us in our weakness, because we do not know what to pray for as we should, but **the Spirit himself intercedes**^I for us with inexpressible groanings. **27** And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because he intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

A. Following the Spirit's guidance. This is an indication of a genuine relationship with Christ.

B. Rather than slaves, God adopts believers into His family. Through the Spirit, they enjoy the full rights of sons and daughters.

C. An Aramaic term that reflects an intimate cry to God, showing a close, trusting relationship like a child with a loving parent.

D. The Holy Spirit confirms that believers are true children of the Father.

E. As God's children, Christ followers share fully in the inheritance of the Son. Ultimately, this includes eternal life in the glory of God.

F. Like us, the created order suffers the effects of sin. But when God frees His children, creation also will be freed from the impact of sin.

G. Jesus will reverse the curse of Genesis 3. The broken state of sin will be replaced by freedom.

H. Just as a woman's pain in labor is not without hope, our groaning in the present age points us to eternity and our ultimate redemption (see v. 23).

I. The Holy Spirit prays for believers. His prayers are effective because they align with the will of the Father.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Relationship

(Rom. 8:14-17)

Believers can confidently approach God as Father.

- According to these verses, what are some key differences between a believer and an unbeliever?
- How does calling God “Abba, Father” impact your understanding of prayer and intimacy with Him?

2. Hope

(Rom. 8:18-25)

The indwelling of the Spirit and the promise of what is yet to come motivates believers to live with hope.

- How does the hope expressed in these verses help you in times of adversity?

3. Help

(Rom. 8:26-27)

Believers can be assured that the Holy Spirit is interceding to the Father for them.

- When was the last time you didn't know what to pray? What practical difference does it make knowing that the Holy Spirit intercedes for you?
- How does knowing that God understands both your heart and the Spirit's intercession give you peace?

Apply the Text

- What difference should it make in your daily life to know you belong to God's family? Specifically, how should it affect the way you relate to others this week?
- What practical step can you take to rely more fully on the Spirit rather than your own strength?

KEY DOCTRINE:

Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. (See 2 Corinthians 4:17; Revelation 21:1.)

BIBLE SKILL:

Use a Bible dictionary to learn more about the Holy Spirit.

Use a Bible dictionary to learn more about what the Bible teaches about the Holy Spirit. Reflect on these questions: How did the Holy Spirit's work differ in the Old and New Testaments? What kind of work does the Holy Spirit do in the life of a believer in the New Testament? Note any findings about the Holy Spirit that were new for you.



Explore the Bible Prayer Guide

Scan here for a weekly prayer guide based on this quarter's Bible passages.



TALK IT OUT

Focus on Romans 8:15. Recall a time when knowing you belonged made a meaningful difference in how you felt or acted.

Paul contrasted two identities: living as a slave, driven by fear and insecurity, and living as a child who belongs to God. He explained that life in Christ is not marked by fear or spiritual slavery, but by adoption into God's family through the Holy Spirit. God's Spirit assures us of our new identity and freedom in Christ.

What does the word “adoption” suggest about belonging and identity in God’s family?

Spiritual adoption means more than forgiveness—it means belonging. We are not merely rescued from sin; we are welcomed into God’s family with full rights and privileges. Knowing we are God’s children helps us move from fear to confidence in our relationship with God. We obey God not out of fear, but out of love and security. The Spirit’s work is to continually remind us who we are and to whom we belong.

How should understanding our shared adoption into God's family shape the way we relate to other believers?

Read Romans 8:15 in different Bible translations, then put the verse into your own words.

Prayer Requests / Notes

DAILY EXPLORATION



Day 1: Romans 8:14-15

Note the contrast between the spirit of fear and the Spirit of adoption.

The blessings of salvation include the indwelling of God's Spirit. Paul reminded the Romans that believers are led by God's Spirit. We are not free to live as we please. We follow the Spirit's direction and guidance. Following the Spirit is not simply a matter of obedience. It is also a matter of identification. We know we are "God's sons" because we walk with the Spirit.

Paul contrasted the difference between two spirits. A "spirit of slavery" is marked by the fear of being punished. In contrast, "the Spirit of adoption" does not deal in fear. The Holy Spirit assures believers that God has adopted them into His family. The difference between a slave and a child was significant.

The word *Abba* is a term of endearment similar to "daddy" in English. It is the language of a child running into the arms of a loving father. We once ran from Him in fear and guilt. Now we run to Him with the assurance that we are His children.

Paul wanted the Roman believers to grasp the depth of what it means to be God's children. They were invited to relate to Him as their "Abba, Father." Just as Jesus approached God with intimate confidence, believers—adopted into His family—have every right to cry out with the same closeness: "Abba, Father" (Mark 14:36)!

Where do you notice fear shaping your actions?



Day 2: Romans 8:16-17

Reflect on the implications of being an heir of God.

Paul taught that the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence works alongside our own spirit to affirm "that we are God's children." At times, believers who falter may wrestle with doubts about their salvation. In those moments, the Spirit serves as a decisive witness to their place in God's family. Though the enemy may try to plant seeds of doubt, the Spirit's confirmation settles the matter. Fear is removed, and the truth stands firm: this believer belongs to God.

Paul noted that we are "heirs of God" and "coheirs with Christ." As members of God's family, we have access to all of God's riches. Paul was not proclaiming a prosperity gospel here—he was stating that God's resources are enough to meet our every need.

Paul also reminded the Romans that being coheirs with Christ can involve suffering with Him in this life. This statement echoes Jesus's warning to His disciples that they could expect to experience suffering because of the gospel—just as Jesus did (see John 15:18-21). However, if we suffer with Christ on account of our faith, we can be sure that we will ultimately be "glorified with him." Any struggles in this life cannot compare to the blessings of eternity.

How does being an "heir of God" change how you view your present circumstances?



Day 3: Romans 8:18-22

Pay attention to the contrast between the temporal and the eternal.

When Paul wrote of “the sufferings of this present time,” he was drawing from his own experience. He had endured ridicule, beatings, imprisonment, and even a near-death encounter. Paul faced hardships most of us can hardly imagine, yet he called them “light affliction” (2 Cor. 4:17). He refused to focus on suffering—his eyes were fixed on the glory that awaited him. Paul knew his trials for the sake of the gospel were nothing compared to the glory that will one day be revealed.

As God’s children, we share that same hope. We look forward to the glory to come—and creation longs for it too. A day is coming when Christ will restore all things in a new heaven and new earth. Using vivid personification, Paul pictured creation straining with anticipation for that moment. Just as sin corrupted the entire universe, Christ’s return will bring complete renewal. God will recreate everything according to His original design, and creation’s beauty will reflect His purity and glorify Him.

Paul emphasized that creation lives in hope. Redemption extends beyond humanity. As believers are freed from corruption through Christ, so creation will be liberated from decay. To illustrate, Paul used the image of childbirth. Creation groans under the weight of sin like a woman in labor, longing for delivery. These “labor pains” signal that renewal is near. When the time of suffering ends, creation will be reborn—restored to its intended glory.

Where do you see evidence of creation “groaning”?



Day 4: Romans 8:23-25

Underline each occurrence of the word “hope” in these verses.

Until that day when God restores His creation, believers can depend on the Holy Spirit to produce “firstfruits.” This word picture depicts a bountiful harvest of fruit. It points to the beginning of a relationship with God that will be fulfilled completely one day. That’s when believers will experience the complete joy of their “adoption” and the “redemption” of their bodies.

This inspiring picture of hope encourages us. Our hope came alive when He saved us. Our salvation includes the adventure of growing from spiritual infancy to maturity in our walk with Him. Along the way, our hope matures as well. We can agree with Paul that our hope prompts us to look forward to what awaits us. Our hope in Him will not allow us to be satisfied only with what we can see and experience right now. Granted, we have been given a few glimpses of what will happen one day yet to come, but not the complete picture. We’re eager as we wait to see what awaits us then. But we also have patience because our hope settles us.

How does the hope expressed in these verses help you in times of adversity?



Day 5: Romans 8:26-27

Note the ways the Holy Spirit helps us.

Paul emphasized that the Holy Spirit works to strengthen our hope in Christ. Put simply, the Spirit “helps us.” As we anticipate the day that is still to come, we hold fast to the truth of our eternal inheritance as God’s children. The blessings awaiting us are beyond anything we can imagine. Yet we can be confident of that inheritance because the Holy Spirit lives within us. His presence now is the guarantee—the down payment—of what is to come.

We can be especially thankful for His help in “our weakness.” Weakness often shows up as confusion or uncertainty that leads to frustration. In those times, even knowing “what to pray for” can feel overwhelming. The Spirit intercedes for us when words fail. He carries our burdens to God when we cannot express them ourselves.

The Spirit “intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.” Ultimately, God’s will is what matters most. As believers, we can find hope in knowing that God’s will is accomplished in our lives—even when we are weak and unsure how to pray. This is the context of the promise in Romans 8:28: “We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.” God may not always answer our prayers in the way we expect, but He answers according to His perfect will, which is always for our good.

How are you most aware of your weakness right now?

In what ways does knowing the Spirit assists you in your weakness reshape how you pray?

APPLY THE TEXT

What effect does your personal relationship with God as your Father have on the durability of your hope? How much do you depend on the Holy Spirit to help you when you pray?

JOURNAL

