

## THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION . . . THE NATURAL SPEAKS OF THE SPIRITUAL

The topic of “adoption” has been up front for us lately, and especially because a dear friend of ours recently adopted a precious nine-year-old girl—who is also going to be our godchild. As we have been reflecting on this very special event, the Father has been showing us more about how this parallels our own spiritual adoption . . . especially as it relates to emotional healing.

### THE POWER OF BEING ADOPTED BY GOD

In Romans 8:15 Paul states the following: The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your **adoption to sonship**. And by him we cry, “*Abba*, Father.” NIV (Emphasis added). Paul is essentially saying here that when we give our hearts to God through believing in His Son, Jesus, we—through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit—are placed (or adopted) into His family. The NIV footnote for this Scripture states the following: “The Greek word for *adoption to sonship* is a term referring to the full legal standing of an adopted male heir in Roman culture.” Although the example makes reference to an “adopted male,” we know that the term “sonship” here refers to both male *and* female. And just as a child is legally adopted into a family for life, we, as believers, have been adopted into the family of God for eternity.

### NATURAL ADOPTION AND THE HEALING OF PAST HURTS

When a young child is adopted, there are unique issues and often serious emotional wounds to consider that stem from a history of rejection, abandonment, neglect and abuse. The parent(s) of the newly adopted child must understand that these wounds will not miraculously go away just because the child is given a new name and enters into a loving and supportive family. It would be naïve to believe otherwise. The adopting parent(s) must provide ways for these deeper wounds to be healed, which may include therapy and inner healing prayer for the child and an emphasis on restoring a sense of security and belonging through a variety of loving actions (including physical touch and verbal affirmation).

### SPIRITUAL ADOPTION AND THE HEALING OF PAST HURTS

There is a belief of many Christians that when we place our faith in Jesus that the emotional wounds from our past are automatically healed . . . that one is a “new creation” and “all things are made new.” In terms of our past sins and our new standing in Christ—completely forgiven, accepted, and saved for all eternity—we say YES! But to say that our pre-salvation (or, in other words, our “pre-adoption”) wounds are automatically and completely healed would be equivalent to saying that a child’s past wounds are completely erased or healed when legal adoption occurs. This would be nice to wish for but it’s not reality. As we have worked with hundreds of Bible-believing Christians over the years, we have seen the Father go back and heal these men and women from their “pre-adoption” emotional wounds and by doing that “. . . restore or replace . . . the years that the locust has eaten . . .” (Joel 2:25 AMP).

### FULLY ACCEPTING OURSELVES AND OUR PAST

Mike Mason, in his very special book, *The Mystery of Children*, shares a story in his chapter entitled “The Child Within” about what God showed him about the need to love, accept and embrace ourselves fully.

About a month before I became a Christian, toward dawn on August 11 of my thirtieth year . . . I had a vivid hypnopompic vision. I saw myself just as if I were outside myself and observing me across a room. As I began walking toward myself, I felt the two of us were going to merge into one. What a glorious sensation that would be—to step right into myself!

But instead, as I drew close to my double, the other me began to grow younger, in a rapid succession of stages, until eventually I was standing before myself just as I had been at the age of six. Seeing myself so cute and innocent, with all the charming attractiveness of youth, I experienced an enormous nostalgia for my lost childhood and an overwhelming desire to kiss and embrace myself.

But at this point—alas!—the little boy turned away from me, obviously repulsed. He wanted nothing to do with me. Knowing that I was loathsome to myself, I wept bitterly.

Mike goes on to share that if we are to “come as children” as Jesus emphasized, we must not ignore or even worse reject parts of ourselves that are important to God. In our experience in working with clients, ignoring or rejecting these younger parts that hold hurts, fears and shame will hinder our ability to fully receive and give love—to God and to others. And thus, it would only be wise that we allow these younger parts of ourselves to fully experience the healing love of the Father. In doing so, we allow our *pre-adoption* years to be restored, such that our *post-adoption* years can be lived out in greater fullness.

#### PRAYER

Please pray with us . . . Father, thank You for adopting me into Your family—for today and forever. Thank You for changing me and giving me a new heart. Yet I know that You desire to heal and restore all of me—including the years prior to when I said yes to Your Son, Jesus. Help me to see this “adoption” from the perspective of my past, my present, and my future. I want to be fully free to love You, myself and others and fulfill the destiny You have for me.

From the Father's Heart,

Jerry and Denise Basel