

Series: *Who Am I?: What it means to be a child of God*

Part 3: How can I enjoy God?

Romans 8:14-17 - [Watch online](#)

### Summary:

The idea that God is our “Father” can bring a huge mix of emotions, thoughts, and reactions. Often, trying to understand our relationship with God can be overwhelmingly complex. But Jesus came to redefine our view of God. He showed a better and simpler way to experience who God is.

### Discussion Questions:

1. What thoughts and/or feelings come up when thinking about God being our father?
2. Jon said, “Jesus completely redefines our view and experience of God.” Do you think that’s the case? If so, have you experienced this in your journey?
3. Read Romans 8:14-17 again. What stands out to you the most?
4. Why do you think suffering is a necessary part of being a child of God?
5. How can your group pray for you this week?

### Main Points:

- Trying to understand our relationship with God can be overwhelmingly complex.
- Jesus completely redefines our view and experience of God.
- Religion preys on our natural inclination toward fear.
- Being a child of God is being able to be free from fear.
- Children of God exchange the fear of a servant for the faith of a daughter or son.
- Children of God give up the life they think they want for the full life Jesus offers.
- Children of God are free to simply enjoy the love of their Heavenly Father.

### Weekly Challenge:

Read: Romans 8:31-39.

Pray: Father, help me trust your love for me and live in it today.

Try it.

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### Transcript:

**INTRO:** When I say... GOD, what thoughts, emotions, memories?... such a loaded 3 letters.

For many- Acceptance / Peace / Comfort/

Others- Guilt/ Fear/ Anger / Rejection/ Annoyance

Often a mix of all of it...

Is that what God really intended for us? Is there a way to know and experience who God really is?

Jesus said there was... So let’s talk about it together.

**WE:** Another word that brings many of the same feelings... FATHER.

For some good memories of own father... support/love/security/things you would do/still do together... [me]

For others it's not all rosy and happy... fear/ abandonment / pressure / not able to measure up

Again often a mixture of both. Relationships are complicated. Even more so parent/child relationships.

Now combine both of these ideas... that God is our Heavenly Father...

**Trying to understand our relationship with God can be overwhelmingly complex.**

For many a relationship with God seems even more complicated than their relationships with their families.

**GOD:** Apostle Paul had a complicated relationship with God-

Devoted his life to learning, memorizing, obeying, and teaching others to obey God's laws...

So much so that when a new cult arose claiming an executed peasant was actually God.. he took it upon himself to hunt these followers down and have them imprisoned and killed.

But then he actually met this peasant and realized Jesus really was the resurrected God of the universe in a body. Completely changed his view of who God is and what he wants for us.

In masterpiece he explains how **Jesus completely redefines our view and experience of God.**

**V. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.-** Led by the Spirit? (Goes back to rest of Chpt. 8)

Complete change of identity... actions/choices/preferences/passions, what we mourn and what we celebrate

Becoming more and more like Jesus as God's Spirit transforms us from the inside out...

We are changed b/c our relationship w/ God has been completely transformed

**V 15a So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves.**

Fear is a powerful/enslaving motivator, and **Religion preys on our natural inclination toward fear.**

It can tap into our fear and anxiety for an uncertain future / Sense of dread of losing what we hold dear / Fear of judgment

So many religions make their worshippers fearful slaves to the deities/spiritual forces

- Have beg/cower to not offend them
- Superstitions to ward off evil things that can happen to us
- HK Buddhist temple Bank of Hell credit cards/cigarettes to burn on altars

- Fear their ancestors would give bad luck if they weren't honored and sacrificed to.
- Why shamans/medicine men to ward of evil spirits... sacrifices at shrines

Maybe more subtle "modern" ... Make sure the *universe* isn't against us... do good things/send positive thoughts... so karma doesn't get us.

Or maybe we disguise it w/ Xianity... How you might have first been introduced to Xianity/God... God is angry at you for all your sin...

But feel really bad and do a bunch of good things... say all these prayers, light these candles, give more money so hopefully he's not mad anymore so you might be able to avoid going to hell...but can never be fully certain.

Paul is saying if you are a child of God what you have is so much better, so much more powerful...

**V. 15b** Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children.

As John said... perfect love expels all fear. [1 John 4:18] **Being a child of God is being able to be free from fear.**

Instead of being chained to/motivated by fear... and those superstitions we anxiously allow to control us

...A Child of God is given the actual Spirit of God to live in them... and are freed from being controlled by fear

Being a child of God is completely different from what we think of as religion.

[Have] Received- the moment someone chooses to trust Jesus as their God and King... they receive the HS... enslavement ends and freedom in the family of God begins... done deal.

Paul uses the word adoption on purpose... It conveys the idea that God chooses us as His OWN children.

1st cent Rom adoption- Deliberately chosen by the adoptive father to carry on his name and inherit his estate... as binding and equal as a naturally born son.

Famous EX: Gaius Octavius adoptive son of Julius Caesar, who became Caesar Augustus

- Received name, status, rights/freedoms, wealth
- When Julius deified became "son of the god"

Paul saying that God adopts JF's as his children is huge.

- No religion has this.

God choosing/accepting anyone who wants it to be not just half/step children- full members of the family and partakers of all the privileges of belonging to the family... w/o having earn or do anything to deserve it.

Maybe you're thinking... "OK, But he's God and we're not so there's still this separation right... he still keeps his distance b/c He's so holy and great, and we're so sinful, right? Like we need to keep a reverent emotional distance from God, right"

Really? Check this out... doesn't really get better than this...

### **V. 15c** Now we call him, “Abba, Father.”

Now- This is new. The relationship has fundamentally changed.

Call = “Cry” = Delight, excitement

Abba- Interesting word. Hebrew word for Father but different... some said like “Daddy” weird to me.

Was always hard for me to really grasp

Tahoe ropes course [PIC?]- kids excitedly running next to the father... “Abba! *Something something something*”

It was an Israeli family. “Abba” was just what these kids called their Dad as they were enjoying this awesome experience together.

Just as my kids and I and my dad had just been doing...

- Comfortable/Respect/Love/Freedom

Those were the only people on earth who could call that man Abba. B/c they were HIS kids.

Jesus called His Father, Abba. And taught his followers to do the same. [Mark 14:36]

- Continued to be used throughout early church... in memory of Jesus’ distinct and meaningful way of relating to God

So instead of “Oh Heavenly Father turn your holy ear to my pitiful voice...”

Now- “Dad! Did you see that? Thank you! I’m really struggling with... Ok Dad, I’ll trust you and do what you say”

When we pray... we're not begging deity to notice. But asking/trusting dad to take care of it.

My example: My fear about church money

- Dad, please take care of this.

### **Children of God exchange the fear of a servant for the faith of a daughter or son.**

But how can we be sure we have this relationship?

### **V. 16** For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God’s children.

You can be told something over and over but until you feel it you don’t fully experience it. God knows this.

When choose allegiance to Jesus, in some way the HS of God works with our own inner emotions and affirms we are children of God.

HS isn't just part of making us CoG he makes us aware/affirms that we are... By giving proof in our hearts as we enjoy calling out to him

Affirm: Assurance: Feeling secure

A lot of us tend to view God/Jesus through an intellectual lens. If we study/know the right stuff we'll experience the life Jesus offers.

Nothing wrong with study and knowing more... but that's only part of it.

We can Know it AND feel it.

- Not just agreeing to a fact but enjoying and experiencing.
- Affects the deepest parts of our being
- If Being a Child of God doesn't make you feel free/peaceful/joyful- maybe something isn't right

But there's even more!

**V. 17a** And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory.

Just as Octavius inherited Caesar's power/wealth/etc... CoG's have an inheritance.

Jesus shares the glory he earned with life/death/resurrection w/ us.

We are heirs of God through Jesus... b/c we belong to Jesus

Inheritance= future and now... Life in its fullest and final sense (truly human now and forever)

To be a child of God means we get to enjoy the benefits of being an heir of God now while we look to the future for our full everlasting inheritance.

But there's a catch-

**V. 17b** But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering. Wait, what? What kind of suffering?

Suffering is a necessary aspect of being a Child of God... it's part of the family tradition.

Daily struggles/tensions/persecutions that are part of the life of those who follow the one who who suffered for us.

It's more than just "whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger..."

No! This suffering is the natural outcome of living for a different king... It's not people not liking you b/c you're an obnoxious religious jerk.

John 15... Since they hate me they will hate you...

CoG's live a different life w/ different priorities/motivations/allegiances and they give up (by choice) comforts/luxuries/rights/privileges in order to experience the full life Jesus offers.

Things that don't last anyway.

**Children of God give up the life they think they want for the full life Jesus offers.**

Not all happy pappy. No, it's Real life... but full life.... Having, in Jesus, this glory/peace/joy now and forever.

JF QUESTION: What have you had to suffer b/c you are a child of God? How have you shifted your life as a result of following Jesus?

No suffering? Might need to rethink what you think following Jesus is about... have you actually been following him?

**YOU:**

If not Jf... this is what is offered to you. Yes the suffering but also full adoption as a Child of God. Assurance & peace... freedom from control of fear.

Full Acceptance- Loved for who you are. Access to God just as kids have access to their loving parents.

Full life now and forever. Jesus- I came to give life/abundantly. And he invites you.

**Invitation:** Can be yours.

Jesus- "Come to me all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."

This relationship w/ God available to anyone who wants it. You just have to say yes, Jesus, you're my King.

For JF...

This is your reality but so often we don't realize/understand/accept what we have.

You have been reborn to privilege as a child of the King.

- But we choose to act like and live like scared servants.

Be who you are! A beloved child of the king of the universe.

**Read: Romans 8:31-39.**

- Asked you to read this few times before. But do it with this idea of Child/Father relationship.

**Pray: Father help me trust your love for me and live in it today.**

**Try it.**

**WE:** Whether you had a great dad, a terrible dad, or no dad you do have a heavenly father who wants to show you what love truly is.

A heavenly father who offers to adopt you into his forever family just as you are right now.

He's just asking that you trust him and his love for you. And enjoy being his child. It doesn't have to be that complicated.

**Children of God are free to simply enjoy the love of their Heavenly Father.**