

# The Family of God

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## INTRODUCTION

Paul's writing to the church at Ephesus says, "For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named "(Ephesians 3:14, 15).

A kindred expression is found in 1 Timothy 3:15 says, "That you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

Again in Ephesians 2:19 Paul writes "Now, therefore , you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God, and have been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone."

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## 1. CHARACTERISTICS OF A FAMILY.

**A** Each family has a name. This is the way we identify each other. If I want to call you on the phone I look up your name in the directory and identify you by your name. Such is the case of the family God. The child of God is identified by his name.

Our name is Christian. This name identifies us and sets us apart from all others outside of the family of God. In Acts 11:26 we find that the disciples "Were called Christians first in Antioch." Therefore this name has been the official name of God's family name from the very beginning of Christianity.

**B** Those outside of the family are not a part of the family. To be outside of the family of God is a serious matter or we are then outside the place where salvation can be found. Paul declares, "Christ is the head of the church and he is the savior of the body" (Ephesians 5:23).

Also we should consider that sometimes a child willfully leaves his family as the prodigal son did his family. We too can become prodigals

**C** There are many blessings to be found with a family. There is security, protection, guidance, training, etc.

Those who are outside God's family cannot enjoy the many spiritual blessings God has provided for those in His family writes in **Ephesians 1:3** "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ."

**D** The family is a unit. This is one reason why the family is so vital to the existence of civilization. The family is the building blocks of a nation. All civilizations are built on units of families. As the family goes so goes the nation. It is the most basic unity of society. This is also true of the family of God. We are a unit.

When we all function as unity we all prosper. Paul commands, "Fulfill my joy by being likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem another better than himself" (Philippians 2:3, 4).

**E** Usually a father leaves in inheritance to the members of his family. Thus we have an inheritance. This is true of the family of God. We too have an inheritance.

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, come you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34). No earthly inheritance can begin to compare with what we will receive in heaven.

### 2. THERE ARE THREE BASIC RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE FAMILY.

**A** First, there is the parent-child relationship. This is a very tender and important relationship. Our first impressions in this world comes from our parents. In today's world we see so many abandoned children by parents who never give their children quality time during their waking hours.

**Romans 8:16, 17** "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 indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together."

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Our relationship with our Heavenly Father is very special. He has promised he will never leave us or forsake us. He has promised to be with us even unto the end of time. We can depend upon his love and tender care for His children.

Children usually have some of looks and characteristics of their parents. **1 John 3:1, 2** "Behold, now we are children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." We are also told that we can "partake of His divine nature."

What a thrilling thought that we will be like Him.

**Matthew 7:11:** "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!" God wants us to express desires and wants.

He has many blessings to bestow on us just for the asking. However when we ask we must never doubt. Doubt and unbelief will render our prayers useless.

**B** There is the child-child relationship. Children must learn at an early age to respect each member of the family. They have to learn how to cooperate, share and help one another.

Speaking of God's spiritual family Paul wrote, "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem another better than himself" (Philippians 2:3).

Respect in God's family for the rights of others is basic to a happy family. When members become self-centered demanding their way there will always be trouble.

**C** Finally there is the family-community relationship. The community will never rise above the families that live in that community. The family of God can greatly influence the community.

We have opportunities to care for the poor and downtrodden. We often have the opportunity lead a community by good example. We can let our light shine in such a way that people sit up and take notice.

Galatians 6:10: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

We are the salt of the earth. Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men."

The contrast is so great between the world and waling in the light with the Lord. We can be a great influence on others.

We are also the light of the world. Matthew 5:14 "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden." Our light cannot be hidden.

In a world that is so plunged in darkness many would welcome the light we have to share with them. 'God is light and in him is no darkness'

The world so desperately needs this light today.

### 3. HOW WE COME INTO THIS FAMILY.

A There are two ways one may come into a family. One is by adoption the other by birth.

B Both of these terms are used in discussing entrance into the family of God.

Galatians 4:5-7 "To redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father. Therefore you are no longer a servant but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

Ephesians 1:5 Paul says, "Having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will."

John 3:5 "Jesus said, most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

C One becomes a new born babe in the kingdom. 1 Peter 2:2 says, "As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby."

### CONCLUSION

Would you not like to be born into this great family of God now? There will never be a better time or opportunity

God wants you as His child. But you must be willing to let Him adopt you into His family.