

## Thinking Like Sons!

By Todd Bentley

"See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is" (1 John 3:1-2 NAS).

What a high relationship is that of a son, and what privileges it brings! What care and tenderness the son expects from his Father, and what love the Father feels towards the son.

In fulfillment of Christ's prayer, "I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them" (see John 17:26 KJV). "The Spirit is given to His redeemed to signify the sameness of the Father's love unto His Son and unto His sons. Thus, the inhabitation of the Spirit in the Christian is both the surest sign of God's fatherly love and the proof of his adoption." - A.W. Pink

We need to think like sons. We are joint heirs with Christ. Because we are sons, we have the Spirit of His Son assuring us of our salvation and royal inheritance (see Galatians 4:6-7).

I love the way that The Message Bible interprets Galatians 4:7: "Doesn't that privilege of intimate conversation with God make it plain that you are not a slave, but a child? And if you are a child, you're also an heir, with complete access to the inheritance."

Think about being a son, which means to occupy a place in God's family in which He loves us just as much as He loves His only begotten Son. It means we have a place in God's family just as eternal and secure as His only begotten Son.

Before we can fully understand our rights and privileges as adopted sons and daughters of God, let's take a look again at what true adoption was in Roman times when Paul used the word.

### Roman Adoption

Under Roman law a child could not possess anything, and any inheritance willed to him or a gift given to him became the property of the father. So it was a serious step to take a child out of one family and put him another. The ritual of adoption must have been very impressive. It was carried out by a symbolic sale in which copper and scales were used.

Twice, the real father "sold" his son, and twice he bought him back. Finally, he sold him a third time and at the third sale, he did not buy him back. After this, the adopting father had to go the praetor, one of the principal Roman magistrates, and plead the case for the adoption. And only after all this had been gone through was the adoption complete. But when the adoption was complete, it was complete indeed. The person who had been adopted had all the rights of a legitimate son in his new family and completely lost all rights in his old family. Furthermore, all of his old debts were considered paid-he was a new person.

We don't live like peasants when we know His love. A child of the kingdom does not live as a slave of the world. We now respond to God in love as a Father, not a Master. We want to be like Him because He loves us, not out of fear of judgment. We are friends of God, not servants.

Our motive for ministry as sons is never selfish-ambition, competition, and pride. A son has the nature of his Father, a servant and slave do not. Servants have no future and obey out of fear not love. Sons are rich and servants are poor. Sons have Fathers where servants have masters. God calls us friends.

"No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you" (John 15:15 NAS).

Sonship means we move out of the resting assurance that our Father is pleased with us. A true revelation of the idea of spiritual adoption is that God chose, purchased, and predestined us in His love to be a son. This is the key to being accepted and secure in our identity. We are sons.

### Friends and Sons

A servant doesn't know his Master's will and has to be told what to do. He relates to God on the basis of what he does. If he does well, he thinks God loves him more. Someone who thinks like a slave will take liberty from serving. A son finds liberty in serving. A son relates to God on the basis of the Father's love first shown to him (see 1 John 4:19). A servant waits on God. A son does what he sees his Father doing (see John 5:19). The Bible goes on to say,

"For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does" (see John 5:20 NKJV).

A servant does not know what his Master is doing, but friendship and intimacy is key to seeing what the Father does. A revelation of the depth of the Father's love is key to receiving revelation of His purpose and will. We do the works of the Father as sons, not because we have to but because we want to. As true sons of the Father, we must be able to say to the world, "Watch my life. Listen to what I say. See the works I do. It's all about my Father."

We see clearly from the Gospel of John that Jesus was moved by His intimacy with the Father. If we wish to understand what motivated and guided Jesus day by day, then we must examine the intimate relationship He had with our heavenly Father. To that end, consider the following texts (all from the Holman Christian Standard Bible) from John (emphasis added). We too can think and act like sons.

"The Son is not able to do anything on His own, but only what He sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, the Son also does these things in the same way" (John 5:19).

"I can do nothing on My own. I judge only as I hear, and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me" (John 5:30).

"My teaching isn't Mine but is from the One who sent Me" (John 7:16).

"And if I do judge, My judgment is true, because I am not alone, but I and the Father who sent Me judge together" (John 8:16).

"...what I have heard from Him-these things I tell the world" (John 8:26).

"But just as the Father taught Me, I say these things. The One who sent Me is with Me. He has not left Me alone, because I always do what pleases Him" (John 8:28-29).

"I speak what I have seen in the presence of the Father" (John 8:38).

"...the truth that I heard from God" (John 8:40).

"For I have not spoken on My own, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a command as to what I should say and what I should speak. I know that His command is eternal life. So the things that I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me" (John 12:49-50).

"The words I speak to you I do not speak on My own. The Father who lives in Me does His works" (John 14:10).

"The word that you hear is not Mine but is from the Father who sent Me" (John 14:24).

Jesus was operating out of a close, intimate relationship with the Father. The words He spoke, the miracles He performed, and the places He went were not random, but were ordained by heaven.

### Suffering As Sons

Look at the last phrase of Romans 8:17:

"if indeed we share in His sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory" (NIV).

"Afflictions are light when compared with what we really deserve. They are light when compared with the sufferings of the Lord Jesus. But perhaps their real lightness is best seen by comparing them with the weight of glory that is awaiting us." - A.W. Pink

God is making us mature sons. Sonship is properly speaking the pinnacle of human nature and the full expression of the image of God, with which we have been endowed. Jesus, as the Son of the Father, is thus truly and fully what a human being was created to be. Our sonship will be nothing other than full conformity to His image!

In Him,

Todd Bentley

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