

i-design – Family of God

Mini Series – 3 Images of the Church

Body:

- connected, dependant, one – under Christ the head

Bride:

- chosen by Jesus
- seen as: holy, clean, radiant, perfect, blameless
- covenanted – pledged, promised, belonging to

Family of God:

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1. Adopted Sons & Daughters

- Eph. 1:4-6 *“For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.”*
- Gal 4:5-7 *“redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father”. So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.”*

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Several observations about adoption:

a) chosen

- sought out, picked, invited, accepted

b) given full family benefits

- heirs, brothers & sisters
- privileges that come with the family relationship

c) given the family name

- child of God – ability to affect the reputation
- with rights come responsibilities

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2. Now Have a Father

- Psalm 68:5-6 *“A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families, he leads forth the prisoners with singing; but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.”*
- 1 Thess 1:2-4 *“We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

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- Eph 3. 14-19 *“For this reason I kneel before the **Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name.** I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God”*

- Father has authority, proven relationship, role

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- Father disciplines those He loves:

- Heb. 12:9-11 *“If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”*

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3. Clear Design for Family Relationships

- Col. 3:12-17 *“Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”*

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a) Encourage One Another

- build up, spur on, comfort, strengthen, help
- teach and admonish one another

- Heb. 10:23-25 *“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”*

- family who encourages one another

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b) Serve One Another

- clothe yourself with: compassion, kindness, humility
gentleness, patience
- let the peace of Christ rule – be thankful!
- bear with one another
- Galatians 6:9-10 *“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”*

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c) Correct Gently

- every family will have squabbles and differences
- clear design for dealing with one another
- when you are wronged – *“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.” Matthew 18:15-16*

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- when correction is necessary – Gal. 6:1-2 *“Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”*

- when forgiveness is required - *“Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you”*

- clear there will be family squabbles – also clear what the Father expects from us towards one another, weaker brothers, those who wander, those who offend etc.

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c) Love will Be the Defining Factor

- Jesus said *“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends”* *“This is my command: Love each other.”* John 15:11-12,17

- Gal. 5:13-15 *“You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.”*

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- Eph 4:2ff *“I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called— one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”*

- God loved us – plan to redeem us
- Jesus evidence that Love – effected the redemption
- Calls us to evidence that same love towards one another

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So What

1. Full Adoption Means

- chosen and accepted
- full rights come with full responsibilities
- our lives now reflect on the family name

2. Our Father has Clearly Given Family Guidelines

- roles, authority, defining characteristics,
- our treatment of each other, our world, our reflection of the family
- He has the authority to do this

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3. How's Our Family Doing?

a) encouraging – building up, meeting together

b) serving one another – using the gifts, sharing our resources, putting others first, kindness, compassion, humility

c) Forgiving & Gently Correcting – following the example of Christ in our relationships with one another

d) Love – the Lord our God with all our hearts, soul, mind and strength, - others as ourselves, loving by God's design and standard.