

Through the Spirit we call God our Father.

Imagine being born into a very poor family that is also dysfunctional. A family with no hope, no future and that does not care for you. Now imagine that a kind and wealthy man comes to you and offers to take you into his home and family as his own child. He offers you everything you desperately need, free of charge. All you have to do is believe that his offer is real and agree to it. It does sound like a fairy tale, but this is exactly what happens when we trust God's promises and we place our faith in Jesus Christ as our living Lord.

As Paul continues with Romans 8, he moves deeper into the wonder, the miracle and the joy of the freedom we have in Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit in us. He assures us that every saved person becomes part of God's family and enjoys all the privileges of his own natural Son, Jesus our Lord.

We read these comforting words in Romans 8: 14 - 15: *Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons (or children) of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."*

According to Paul we became the children of God. We know this because we are led by the Holy Spirit. We have a new family. God is our Father. Jesus is our friend, king and Lord. The Spirit provides us with a sense of "sonship" by gracefully working in our inner consciousness.

Paul tells us that when we are part of God's family, through faith, the Spirit helps us to act like God's family. If a person in faith accepts the offer to be a child of God, he soon develops traits that are common to the Father's family. Every child of God has the Holy Spirit living within him, and the Spirit makes God's presence known in us as we walk with God every day.

We have a new Father. We are not slaves of sin who fear punishment, but we now call God by the intimate, personal name which is Father, or even the less formal word, "Abba" that translates to "Daddy".

When we came to Jesus, we were taken out of Adam's family which is cursed and damned, and adopted into the family of Jesus which is free to serve a loving heavenly Father.

Praise the Lord! We have a new family and a new Father!

Which means that we own a new freedom. No more forced labour for Satan or the tyranny of our own weakness. Our minds have been changed by the Spirit to love and serve God above all. As a result of our relationship with God, we are able to call him Father. Abba!

The message of these verses is one of intimacy and dependence on God, and one of a complete lack of fear. Yes, there must be respect and reverence, because our heavenly Father who cares for us and leads us by his Spirit, is the almighty, most holy God. The wonder is so much greater, when we remember God's glory when we come to him as a child comes to a loving Father.