

GOD'S FAMILY LIVES IN HOPE

YEAR: UNITE / FOCUS: I AM PART OF A FAMILY
SERIES: GOD IS FATHER — I AM ADOPTED

BIG TRUTH: GOD'S FAMILY LIVES IN HOPE

Psalm 146:5; Colossians 1:27; Hebrews 6:18-19; Titus 2:11-13

BIBLE VERSE: ROMANS 8:23-25

"For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in pains of childbirth until now. And not only creation, but we ourselves, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience."

BIG IDEAS

- God's children long for future adoption.
- God's children depend on the Spirit.
- God's children trust God's perfect plan.

BIBLE PASSAGE: ROMANS 8:18-30

UNITE - I AM PART OF A FAMILY

The Unite Year is an exploration of what it means to be united in Christ as the family of God (Romans 12:5). When we are saved, we are given a spirit of adoption as sons (Romans 8:15-16), are made a child of God, and we are also saved into a family- the Church. The Unite Year explores how we are to live as a part of a family, and to live in light of our calling as servants and disciples of Christ. We use our gifts to build up the church as we pursue unity, humility, and gentleness with our brothers and sisters in Christ (Ephesians 4:1-2).

SERIES AIMS



Every student should know that...

- Family exists for God.
- Their heart was bought with a price.
- God is building His family through adoption.



Every student should feel...

- Broken over the ways that sin has fractured their family and the family of God.
- Hope that one day, their adoption as sons and daughters of God will be fully realized



Every student should strive to...

- Memorize Romans 8.
- Do one new thing each week to honor their parents or siblings.
- Find one new way to love and serve their church family.



Every student should want...

- To glorify God in their families.
- To see their family, and the church family, as gifts from God.
- To share the truth that Jesus made our adoption possible with someone

GUIDES AND WORKOUTS

The Guide provides a commentary page on each week's Bible verse and on each Big Idea that unpacks the Big Truth. Each week also includes a Student Workout as a resource to help the student pursue spiritual disciplines on their own. Additionally, each week has a Family Workout that helps equip parents and guardians to have spiritual conversations with their student.

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Believers long for eternity.

“For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in pains of childbirth until now. And not only creation, but we ourselves, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons,”

- Since sin entered the world, all of creation has suffered. Even the physical world suffers from the effects of sin. Those who are followers of Christ have a hope because of their eternity. God promised to make all things new one day and this is the hope that believers have.
- Because of this hope, believers long for that eternity. There is something inside of a believer that desires their eternal home when their adoption into God's family is complete. This future completed adoption involves all of God's children from all over the world joining together as one family for all of eternity.

Believers hope in the unseen.

“But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience”

- Believers live in a place of having already been adopted into God's family, but not yet having that adoption finalized. Because Jesus has not returned to gather God's children together, every believer still on the earth lives in that in-between place. We are here on earth, but our home is in heaven with God our Father.
- Because of this truth, our hope is in the unseen. We hope in a future that we have not seen, nor can we see it now. We hope in a God we have not seen in the flesh, but trust exists in our belief and hope that Jesus will return one day. This hope is not in things that are seen physically here on earth, but in the reminder that God's Word is true and He keeps His promises.

Believers wait patiently for eternity.

“For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.”

- Living in the in-between place can produce an anxiousness in believers. As the things of this world become darker and more sinful, we will desire even more to be with God our Father. Though this is true, believers are called to wait for their eternal home with patience. This doesn't mean they do not long for it, but they remain steadfast in the meantime, knowing that the Father will call them home one day.

BIG IDEA #1: GOD'S CHILDREN LONG FOR FUTURE ADOPTION.¹**[THIS]**

Believers are not citizens of this earth. When we are redeemed by God and adopted into His family, we are no longer citizens of this earth. Instead, our citizenship is in heaven. Eternity is in the heart of every person, but believers know and understand what their eternity will be. The knowledge of their current adoption into God's family and that their future will be eternity with their heavenly Father produces a longing in their heart for that future. The longer we live on this earth the more we will understand the brokenness of it, and we will desire to be at home with the Father. Our perspective changes when we are adopted into God's family and we no longer find satisfaction in the things of the world. We long for the revealing of Christ as our true King and Ruler. We desire a life that is not marred by sin and the effects of it.

[THEREFORE]

Why is it not inconsistent for believers to be content in Jesus today while at the same time longing for "adoption as sons"?

Future adoption means that one day we will be joined together with other believers in eternity. Time as we know it will be no more and we will live forever in the new earth. All things will be perfect when there is no more sin and no more sorrow as Revelation 21:4 tells us. Titus 2:13 and Isaiah 25:8 help us remember that our hope is eternity. When we experience the brokenness of this world, we will long for our eternal home.

What produces a longing inside of you for future adoption?

1 John 2:17 reminds us that the world is passing away with its futility. When we see the sinfulness of the world, we long for our future adoption. Also, the more we love Jesus, the more we long to be with Him forever.

[THIS]

Our longing for our future home requires patience. We do not know the day or the hour that God will return to take us home. We live now in a particular place of already having received adoption, yet still waiting for the fulfillment of that adoption. This requires patience because the world becomes increasingly darker and more broken. Because longing for anything produces an anxiousness and great desire to receive the thing we're longing for, we can grow impatient. As believers, we must choose patience, knowing that Jesus came before us practicing perfect patience. Even Creation groans and longs for the fulfillment of God's promises. We wait patiently, walking in obedience to God because we trust His plan and promises. We know God is going to do what He says He's going to do. We live in hope because we trust Him and wait patiently for Him.

[THEREFORE]

Why is it hard for us to pursue patience in our daily pursuit of Jesus?

When our eyes are focused on the world and our circumstances, it can be hard to wait patiently for our eternal home. Galatians 6:9 and Psalm 37:7-9 remind us of some of the challenges we may face to waiting patiently for Christ's return. We have to overcome the distractions of this world and focus our minds on God.

How can you discipline yourself to long for and wait patiently for your future with Christ?

Putting on the fruit of the Spirit as listed in Galatians 5:22-23 helps us wait patiently for our future with Christ. As we rely upon the Spirit, we will be able wait patiently for our future adoption.

1. Ecclesiastes 3:11: *Eternity has been placed in our hearts and we desire to know it and to live it.*

BIG IDEA #2: GOD'S CHILDREN DEPEND ON THE SPIRIT.²**[THIS]**

Believers are redeemed by God for a purpose. Believers are not redeemed just for the sake of being saved from a sin debt owed. Every believer is redeemed for God. God rescues us and makes us His children for His glory. He gives His Spirit to every believer to guide and help them. God sustains all life and every person is dependent upon God as the Sustainer of their life. God's children are aware of their dependence upon Him because it is His Spirit that seals them and holds them fast in the hand of God. God places His Spirit inside of believers as His mark upon them. His children depend upon the Spirit's help and work to live for God. It is through the help of the Spirit that God's people can know Him and grow in their understanding of who He is and who they are. Without the Spirit, they cannot understand their need for God or the salvation they can have through Jesus. The Spirit illuminates God's truth to them and enables them to understand His Word.

[THEREFORE]**How has the Spirit helped you understand and know God in a greater way?**

We are dependent upon the Holy Spirit to help us understand God and to know Him. It is through the Spirit that we understand Scripture and it is in the Spirit that we pray to God. John 14:26, Nehemiah 9:20, and Matthew 10:19-20 all show us the help that the Spirit gives God's children.

What is the difference between believing in the Spirit and depending on the Spirit?

Isaiah 11:1-5 helps us understand what it means to depend upon the Spirit. This is different than believing in Him. Depending upon Him means that we do not trust in ourselves in any way, but go to the Spirit through prayer and study of God's Word to discern what is right and best.

[THIS]

Because the Spirit is the way we can understand God's Word, He is also the way we are able to obey God. Every believer is commanded to live a life of obedience to God. We need the help of the Holy Spirit to even know how to obey God. God has chosen to use His Spirit to guide His people and to teach them how to obey Him. This means that we all rely upon God's Spirit to exhibit the fruit of the Spirit and to grow into Christ-likeness. With the Spirit's help, we can live for God and obey His commands. When we disobey God, it His Spirit who corrects us and convicts us. We depend upon the Spirit for guidance and help in worshiping God.

[THEREFORE]**What challenges keep you from acknowledging your dependence upon the Spirit as your guide and helper?**

Our pride and self-reliance can keep us from realizing just how much we depend upon the Spirit. When we try to use our own power to accomplish God's purpose for our lives, we fail to submit to the Spirit. 1 Thessalonians 5:19 reminds us that we all live in danger of quenching the Spirit when we do not acknowledge Him.

How can you more intentionally live with an awareness of your dependence upon God's Spirit?

The more we're aware of God and His power and right to rule over us, the more we will live aware of our need of His Spirit. Proverbs 3:5-6 reminds us that we should acknowledge God in every part of our lives.

2. 2 Corinthians 1:22: *The Holy Spirit seals us as God's people.*

BIG IDEA #3: GOD'S CHILDREN TRUST GOD'S PERFECT PLAN.³**[THIS]**

Navigating life on earth can be challenging for God's children. Because His children are set apart, they face the ridicule and persecution of the world. Because this earth isn't a believer's true home, we can often feel out of place. The truth that our home is in eternity and it is perfect can leave us unhappy here on earth. We often don't even know how we ought to pray or what to pray. The difficulties in our lives brought on by the sinfulness of this world can leave us with doubt if we aren't careful. The struggles that are part of living in a broken world can leave us with questions for God. Though we may feel these things in our flesh, God's children know the Father and trust His plan for their lives. Even in the midst of dark times, God's children can trust Him because His Spirit lives within them.

[THEREFORE]**How have you struggled to trust God's plan for your life?**

Psalm 119:105 serves to remind us of the value of God's Word and how it can illuminate our path in life. James 1:5 also reminds us that when we lack wisdom, we can ask God for it and He will give it. Often, we lack the wisdom to know what God is doing. When we ask for it, He will give it and we can trust His plan for our lives.

God's plan for a Jesus follower is simultaneously known and unknown. What does God's Word tell us that He has planned our lives (clear commands and purposes)?

Psalm 19:7 and 119:98 show us that God's Word is our source of wisdom. We live for His glory, share the gospel, and pursue holiness. As we do this, we understand His complete plan more and more.

[THIS]

God's children trust the Father because they know Him as the Father. He provides for His children and gives them good gifts. God always keeps His Word. His children know this because they grow in their relationship with Him. God works in the lives of His children to reveal Himself and it is through this daily relationship with God that increases a believer's trust in His plan. God's children live in hope, not because of their current circumstances, but because they know who God is. Even when His children do not understand their current situation, they can trust God because they know Him. Knowing God means understanding that He is perfect in every way and because He is perfect, all of His plans for us are perfect.

[THEREFORE]**What are some of the things the world tells us to trust in instead of God?**

The world tells us to trust ourselves and our own hearts, yet we know, as God's children, that our hearts are broken and deceitful. Proverbs 20:24 and Proverbs 21:2 show us that we may think we know the best plan, but we really don't understand what is best. Only God knows the best for everyone.

How does being a part of the local body of believers help you trust God's plan?

All of God's children are part of His family. We can grow in our trust of God's perfect plan and live in hope when we live life with one another. John 1:12, Romans 12:5, and Ephesians 2:19-22 remind us that all of God's children are connected and we can encourage one another to trust God's perfect plan. As a body of believers, we live in hope because we collectively trust God's perfect plan for His people.

3. *Ephesians 2:10: God redeems His people to fulfill His perfect plan for their lives.*