



## ADOPTED AND SECURE

BY DANNY HEDGEPEETH

me thought of a courtroom makes me smile. Let me explain. My daughter adopted our first grandson. When he was 6 months old, he was taken to family court to be declared legally adopted. Our daughter decided to have an adoption party and invited family members to be with them in court.

We arrived at the courthouse, happy. Our grandson smiled while our son-in-law held him. It surprised us that the judge had a stern look

on his face. solemnly, the judge read the case file. He then turned to my son-in-law and asked, "Is there any reason or circumstance that would ever cause you to consider giving your son back? Adoption is forever."

My son-in-law had a shocked look on his face. After a few seconds, he loudly proclaimed, "No, sir!" The judge asked the same question to my daughter. Her reply was timid, but strong. "Never."

The judge's face immediately broke into a pleasant smile. He addressed my 6-month-old grandson as if no one else was in the courtroom. "Jase, this brings me more joy than anything else I do as a judge. You have a family who loves you. They will always love you. Jase, you are very blessed. From this day forward, you legally belong to your new family!" We all applauded and cried. The judge came down from the bench and made pictures with our family. We went home and celebrated.

The judge's declaration of adoption meant our grandson would have the security of knowing he had a family who would love him. The relationship between child/parent/grandparent would never be broken. No circumstance or challenge could undo the adoption.

This story of my grandson's adoption mirrors what the apostle Paul wrote to the followers of Christ in the city of Rome. "For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. Instead, you received the Spirit of *adoption*, by whom we cry out, "Abba," Father!" (Rom. 8:15). The church at Rome fully understood these words. Some Roman Christ-followers had been a part of the "in crowd" close to the seat of political power. Now

because of their Christian faith, some were being held at a distance politically and socially. Others in Rome were actual slaves belonging to another human being.

This verse is very clear. If the Holy Spirit lives in you, He will not lead you to live fearfully as an abandoned child or slave with an unsecured future. Your Father has made you part of His eternal family by formally adopting you. Your adoption is based upon what Jesus Christ has done for you at the cross. Your sins have been forgiven; you are a secure and loved child of God.

I am thankful that the love in my heart for my grandson is no different from my love for our biological grandchild. No matter what happens in Jase's life, he will always be secure in the fact that his grandparents love him. My wife and I don't view our grandson as adopted; he's just family.

Our heavenly Father loved us enough to adopt us into our eternal family through Jesus' death and resurrection. He has adopted us into an eternal family that will never diminish. Celebrate the fact that you have a heavenly Father who has adopted you and will never give you away.

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