



In the studies 'Discipleship (1)'¹ and '(2)'² we explained that Jesus expects people who are converted by faith in Him to put their life under His authority and become His **disciples**. John calls this: **becoming a child of God** at the beginning of his Gospel.

Adoption into God's family.

John writes:

- *Yet to **all who did receive him (Jesus)**, to those who believed in his name, he gave the **right (literally: the right to choose) to become children of God** - children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but **born of God (better: begotten = conversion³)**. (John 1:12-13)*

John writes that whoever who has accepted Jesus **is not automatically** a child of God. Whoever has been converted and regenerated to new spiritual life by God, has obtained the **right to choose to become** a child of God.

Paul writes:

- *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 for adoption to sonship** through Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 1:4-5)*

He says that those who believe in Jesus Christ **are predestined** by God **for adoption**.

According to Paul, someone who comes to believe in Jesus Christ and is converted **is not a child of God**, but is **predestined** to become eligible **for adoption**.

God does not adopt children just like that.

He expects children to honour their parents. Put otherwise: among other things to accept the authority of their parents by accepting the rules they make for the family.

Thus God expects whoever is converted and believes in Jesus to follow Him as a disciple.

Through this decision God renews the heart of the believer who has become a disciple, as is explained in the studies about discipleship.

God puts His laws in the disciple's heart through the working of the Holy Spirit, so that he will live according to His will, from the heart.

The disciple receives '**the Spirit of sonship**' when God renews the disciple's heart by pouring His love out into it, through the working of the Holy Spirit.

As Paul writes:

- *For those who are led **by the Spirit of God** are the **children of God** ... the Spirit you received brought about your **adoption to sonship**. And by him we cry, "**Abba, Father**". (Romans 8:14-15)*

1 Study: Discipleship (1).

2 Study: Discipleship (2).

3 Study: Conversion.



The believer who chooses to be a disciple of Jesus, chooses consciously to want to live according to the will of God, and is adopted by Him as a child.

(Remark: the Greek text speaks of 'sons' and 'adoption as sons', whereby it can be accepted that God makes no distinction between sons and daughters. Both have the same rights, as children in the family of God.)

Anyone who lives as a disciple of Jesus and, as a result, as a child adopted by God, lives under the protection and the good care of God as the perfect Father, who knows what His children need.

A fine illustration of this is elaborated upon in the study about the law on slavery from the Old Testament.⁴

The Hebrew man who sells himself as a slave and decides to continue to serve the master for the whole of his life, because he loves his master (God) and his family (the church).

Growing up in God's family.

Whoever is adopted by God still has a lot to learn at first about the customs in God's family.

Paul remarks:

- *As long as an heir is **underage**, he is no different from a slave, although he **owns the whole estate**. The heir is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father.*
(Galatians 4:1-3)

As long as a child is underage it has no rights and must do only as he or her is told.

As Paul writes, a child only gets the inheritance at its disposal from the moment the father stipulated beforehand. This is the moment when the child has come of age and is capable of managing the inheritance.

It is of extreme importance in this respect that the child, during its upbringing, has submitted to the rules the father stipulated for his family.

Thus must each child also make the rules of the family of God his own and discover how to behave as a child of the Heavenly Father.

This is how they learn to trust Him and grow up to adulthood.

Discovering what the Bible teaches in this respect is of crucial importance.

Jesus promises extra power.

In the study '**Conversion**' we explain that a person regenerated to spiritual life lives in a relationship with **God** once again by faith in Jesus Christ.

In the studies about discipleship we explain that the believer, as a **disciple of Jesus Christ**, lives in an open relationship with Him.

⁴ Study: Conversion and discipleship the Old Testament.



The disciple will only experience **the full power of the Triune God** by living in a relationship with **the Holy Spirit**, the third Person of the **Divine Trinity**⁵, as well.

As Jesus promises:

- *You will receive **power** when **the Holy Spirit comes on (over) you**; and you will be my witnesses ... to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8)*

This is explained in the study about the baptism (the immersion) in the Holy Spirit⁶.

See also the study 'John 3:3-5 - Conversion and discipleship'⁷.

5 Study: Spirit, soul and body - and the power of trinity.

6 Study: The Holy Spirit.

7 Study: John 3:3-5 - Conversion and discipleship.