

Title: Together for Good— Spirit of Adoption // **Scripture:** Romans 8:15-17

ARRIVAL / SOCIAL TIME *15-20 minutes*

Spend the first 15 minutes or so of your time together catching up and socializing with one another. Also find time to catch up together on how the assignments from last week turned out.

SERMON REVIEW *5-10 minutes*

Our special speaker Wayne Naugle, Director of Families 4 Families, shared about foster care, adoption, and Romans 8:15-17. The word orphan refers to someone without a guide, one who is fatherless. Without protection or voice, orphans and widows are more vulnerable to Satan's attacks (1 Peter 5:8). We see this today in the extreme numbers of fatherless youth who have become homeless, runaways, high school dropouts, single parents, enslaved to addictions, and suicidal. Because the purpose of fostering and adoption is ultimately about the gospel, God's people must take the lead in becoming—and supporting—"fathers to the fatherless" (Isaiah 1:17).

Brokenness in families is nothing new: Since the first family in Genesis, Cain's wife was the first widow to be a single mom, and Adam and Eve were the first grandparents to help raise their grandchildren. Romans 8:15-17 reminds us that as children of God, we are free from bondage of sin and led by the Spirit. Our union with Christ means that we are co-heirs sharing his suffering and freedom. We have been adopted because God loves us, not because we earned it or must do anything to keep it. Therefore, we have leading roles to play in family stories of redemption and restoration.

THE MAIN THOUGHT *keep this in mind as you facilitate discussion*

We have not received a spirit that makes us a slave to fear; we have received a spirit of adoption.

SEE IT – Questions *10-15 minutes*

Picture (What is the story saying?): What does it mean to be an heir of God and co-heirs with Christ? How does God draw us into His family?

Mirror (Where am I in the story?): Have you given your life to Christ? What does it mean when God has done all the work to make you an heir and there is nothing that is required of you to keep that title? Where are you still operating with a spirit of fear? Where in your life do you feel the freedom to cry, "Abba Father"?

Window (How does the story change how I see those around me?): Paul says, "Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory." How do we reflect the same heart into the world that desperately needs Him?

BE IT – Practice *15 minutes*

Change UP – Exercise *5 minutes*

Queue up the song, "No Longer Slaves" by Brian Johnson, and meditate quietly on the lyrics.

Change IN – Group Activity *5 minutes*

What does it mean to be "no longer be a slave to fear"? Share what being a child of God means to you personally. Fostering and adoption are just one way we can live out being co-heirs with Christ. What else is God stirring in your heart to be or do?

Change OUT – Life Application Assignment *5 minutes*

If fostering and adoption are not a part of your story, how can you help others who are called into those roles? As a group, is there anyone who is already fostering or thinking of doing so? How could you, as a community, come around that family to support them—meals, respite care, errands, prayer?

CLOSING PRAYER *5 minutes* May you see God clearly, hear His calling clearly, and may He help you fulfill that calling in faithfulness, trusting no matter how bleak things may appear, we trust the God who raises the dead.