

GOD'S FAMILY

by
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In a fit of anger, my 15 year old daughter, Lisa, ran her hand down the hail wall, knocking family pictures to the floor. She screamed at me, "I don't belong in this family. I hate you all" On my hands and knees, I picked up broken glass, bent frames pictures of parents and grandparents and even pictures of Lisa and her brother. Tears mixed with glass as I wondered where she had gone and why she didn't think she belonged.

Both Lisa and her brother are adopted - "chosen" - we told them. We wanted children and God placed them in our family as a result of prayer and planning. Somehow, Lisa didn't believe that.

If we believe and receive Jesus as Savior, He gives us the right to be children of God. (John 1:i2 Romans 8:14-16, **"For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God You should behave like God's very own children, adopted into his family calling him ' dear Father' For His Holy Spirit speaks to us deep in our hearts and tells us that we are God's children"** New Living Translation.

This is God's declaration of who we are -- His children -- members of His family. Yet many Christians have trouble really knowing that and living as joint-heirs of God's Beloved Son. Our picture hangs on the wall of God's heart. We belong there.

Recently, Lisa and I spent a day "cropping This is the 21st century "quilting bee." Women sat at long wide tables busily arranging photographs in Memory Albums. Some of the pictures require "cropping" -- cut ting off irrelevant backgrounds or shaping the photo to fit into a colorful frame. As we worked, making memories, we talked about memories.

Lisa had asked me to bring pictures of "family" She wanted black and white photos (that's all there were 40- 50 years ago) of Chuck's and my families -- our childhood shapshots and pictures of grandparents, aunts and cousins. Eagerly she sorted them into groups, asking me about each one -- who and when and why. She was learning about her adoptive family. She belongs!!

That night I lay in bed with tears running down on the pillow. This time they were tears of joy as I

remembered the wonderful work of restoration that God has done in our family. He truly has **"restored the years the locust has eaten."** Joel 2:25.

We live in perilous times -- full of heartache, turbulence, trouble and pain. Families are being torn apart due to lusts of the flesh, pride, abuse and self-centeredness. How many children feel pulled apart by divorce or overworked parents pursue their own pleasures? 2 Timothy 3:2 says that in these last days children will be rebellious and parents will seek pleasure rather than God. Often this is a result of not belonging -- not having "family."

Hebrews 10:19-25 says that as believers who can enter the Holy of Holies through the blood of our High Priest, we can be assured that we belong in God's family. We need to hold fast to that belief because God is faithful to keep us. We are also and to fellowship with other "family members," especially in these stressful times as we look to the soon return of our Lord. He is coming for His Bride (God's children) to take us to our Father. Praise God for His Family! admonished to encourage one another