

***D*ynamic Worship *N*ew Insights *A*ppplied Knowledge**

The DNA of FlagNaz is relatively simple (see above). We believe there is a collective wisdom rising up out of our shared experiences and interaction.

Inspiration lasts for the moment. Application a lifetime...

★Write down one new insight you received today...

★Thinking...

- In what ways could an *Adopted* child disrupt my life and family dynamics?
- What would I do to manage this adjustment?
- Have you received *Entire Sanctification*? If so, how has that changed your life?
- As one who was *Adopted* into the family of God, what adjustments were required of me?
- How did the *Church*, the family of God, adjust as they accepted me into the family?
- What is the significance of ceremonies as they relate to permanent changes in life and community?

★Applying...

- List the ways in which God's *Adoption* is tangible in your life.
- Consider any ways in which the adjustment is not complete.
- List ways you can further participate in the life of the *Church* as a full member of God's family.
- Commit to participate in God's family in one new way beginning this summer.

★Praying...

- Pray thanks to God for specific ways in which His *Adoption* has changed your life by making you a full member of His family.
- Pray over how God invites you to participate more fully in His *Church*.

FlagNaz

Be Healed and Thrive

July 3rd, 2022

Nazarene Faith – Part 3

Adoption Into the Kingdom

Eph 1:5 – He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will.

I) The Adoption Process...

There are children who need *Adoptive* parents. People with the capacity and willingness to receive children as their own despite partially unknown, often dark backgrounds. These people take the risk of upsetting their homes and disrupting family culture for the sake of love. This love is first modeled by God, who chooses to *Adopt* everyone who believes and repents.

◆**Getting ready to move in:** There is a lot to be done before an *Adopted* child moves into the home. Part of that is preparing the home, family, and meeting state requirements. As important is communicating to the *Adopted* child who they will be and the nature of their new environment. *You are safe here. This is your home. You can choose to live well.* God does the same for us. When we accept the offer of salvation, He performs three acts of grace instantly: He *Justifies*, *Regenerates*, and *Adopts* us.

◆**Justification:** By the blood of Jesus, “He grants full pardon of all guilt and complete release from the penalty of sins committed.”

◆**Regeneration:** Our spiritual wound is *healed*, and we are “given a distinctively spiritual life, capable of faith, love, and obedience.”

◆**Adoption:** God *Adopts* us and we are “constituted a child of God.”

◆**Scripture references:** Luke 18:14; John 1:12-13; 3:3-8; 5:24; Acts 13:39; Rom 1:17; 3:21-26, 28; 4:5-9, 17-25; 5:1, 16-19; 6:4; 7:6; 8:1, 15-17; 1 Cor 1:30; 6:11; 2 Cor 5:17-21; Gal 2:16-21; 3:1-14, 26; 4:4-7; Eph 1:6-7; 2:1, 4-5; Php 3:3-9; Col 2:13; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 1:9; 3:1-2, 9; 4:7; 5:1, 9-13, 18.

II) Growing Up...

The move from an *unhealthy* environment to a *healthy* one requires a lot of change. Unlearning *unwell* ways of anger and fear. Learning *healthy* ways of love and compassion. *Adoptive* parents invest time, energy, and patience into *Adopted* children as they work through this growth process. God makes similar investments in us as we grow in Christ.

♦ **Unlearning bad habits:** *Adopted* children often struggle to embrace *healthy ways* as they struggle with the inner impulse to act inappropriately. Old fears and desires persist as they try to force themselves to conform to their new environment. The infractions may grow less severe and frequent over time, but the struggle remains. Until, hopefully, one day it is gone. The child has fully embraced their *Adopted* home and accepted their position as a full member of the family. Christians undergo such a transformation. Upon *Adoption* we begin trying to live out *Repentance*, and it is a lot of work. We continue to battle Original Sin, that persistent impulse to live our way. The Holy Spirit strengthens us to grow in ability to live *healthy ways*, until one day He frees us entirely from Original Sin. Our Articles of Faith call this *Entire Sanctification*.

♦ **Entire Sanctification:** The gracious work of the Holy Spirit “by which believers are made free from original sin, or depravity, and brought into a state of entire devotement to God.” We also believe “there is a marked distinction between a pure heart and a mature character,” meaning growth is a lifelong journey.

♦ **Scripture references:** Jer 31:31-34; Ezk 36:25-27; Mal 3:2-3; Mt 3:11-12; Luke 3:16-17; John 7:37-39; 14:15-23; 17:6-20; Acts 1:5; 2:1-4; 15:8-9; Rom 6:11-13, 19; 8:1-4, 8-14; 12:1-2; 2 Cor 6:14-7:1; Gal 2:20; 5:16-25; Eph 3:14-21; 5:17-18, 25-27; Php 3:10-15; Col 3:1-17; 1 Th 5:23-24; Heb 4:9-11; 10:10-17; 12:1-2; 13:12; 1 John 1:7, 9.

III) Becoming One with the Family...

Life is irrevocably altered for the entire family when one is *Adopted*. Husband and wife are father and mother. Son and daughter are brother and sister. Aunts, uncles, grandparents all have a new relation. This takes building a relationship, knowing the *Adopted* child, learning how to love them and receive love from them. When God *Adopts* us, we too have a new family with whom to fit in.

♦ **The Church:** Fitting into a family is complicated. The rhythm of life, behavior expectations, cultural norms and values... *Adoption* is much more than having new parents to provide food and shelter. It is a different way of life. Nazarenes “believe in the Church, the community that confesses Jesus Christ as Lord, the covenant people of God made new in Christ, the Body of Christ called together by the Holy Spirit through the Word.” Our ability to *thrive* as Jesus followers is greatly enhanced by joining the family, His Body. By accepting *Adoption*, we are called to be unified in the Spirit, worship together, minister to the Gospel, and support each other’s spiritual journey.

♦ **Its Mission:** Some families exist almost by accident. Their purpose seems to be to raise kids into adults and expel them into the world. After that, hope the kids make it and plan for a leisurely retirement. Not *Adoptive* families. These understand they exist to nurture their communities with love. To

share their resources and capacity to care for others. To improve society by serving those in desperate, essential need. God’s family, the *Church*, is such a family. We believe the “mission of the Church in the world is to share in the redemptive and reconciling ministry of Christ in the power of the Spirit. The *Church* fulfills its mission by making disciples through evangelism, education, showing compassion, working for justice, and bearing witness to the kingdom of God.” We are not *Adopted* into a passive family, but a purposeful one.

♦ **Scripture references:** Ex 19:3; Jer 31:33; Mt 8:11; 10:7; 16:13-19, 24; 18:15-20; 28:19-20; John 17:14-26; 20:21-23; Acts 1:7-8; 2:32-47; 6:1-2; 13:1; 14:23; Rom 2:28-29; 4:16; 10:9-15; 11:13-32; 12:1-8; 15:1-3; 1 Cor 3:5-9; 7:17; 11:1, 17-33; 12:3, 12-31; 14:26-40; 2 Cor 5:11-6:1; Gal 5:6, 13-14; 6:1-5, 15; Eph 4:1-17; 5:25-27; Php 2:1-16; 1 Th 4:1-12; 1 Tim 4:13; Heb 10:19-25; 1 Peter 1:1-2, 13; 2:4-12, 21; 4:1-2, 10-11; 1 John 4:17; Jude 24; Rev 5:9-10.

IV) The Adoption Ceremony...

Many *Adoptive* families perform a ceremony to celebrate the significance and permanence of the event. The process may begin with fostering a child, being monitored while caring for it, and completing any imposed qualifying requirements. In the end, the moment of confirmation is remarkable and worthy of proclaiming to the community. Isn’t it wonderful to know we are *Adopted* by a joyful God who delights in celebration?

♦ **The Baptism ceremony:** The *Adoption* ceremony is an occasion of joy and meaning. Through it, the parents declare to the child, the rest of the family, and their community that this child is now one of theirs with full rights and privileges. Often it takes the form of a party with cake, balloons, streamers, cards and gifts all intended to signify the *Adopted* child as specially chosen to join the family. It is an event commemorating a deeper, permanent reality. We believe *Baptism* provides this function in the Kingdom of God, “a sacrament signifying acceptance of the benefits of the atonement and incorporation into the Body of Christ.” It is also the *Adopted* child’s willing commitment “indicating their full purpose of obedience in holiness and righteousness.” We accept *Baptism* of infants and morally innocents, indicating the commitment of the *Church* to train them in Christian ways.

♦ **The Baptism reality:** The *Adoption* ceremony indicates a new reality. From then on, the reformed family is committed to being one, living in love together. So it is with Christian *Baptism*. The event signifies an inner reality that necessitates the believer’s pursuit of obedience and holiness. For infants and morally innocents, it requires that the *Church* “shall give assurance of Christian training.”

♦ **Scripture references:** Mt 3:1-7; 28:16-20; Acts 2:37-41; 8:35-39; 10:44-48; 16:29-34; 19:1-6; Rom 6:3-4; Gal 3:26-28; Col 2:12; 1 Peter 3:18-22.