

**Nov 13 – Leader’s Guide**  
**Romans 8:12–27—“Children of God”—Dr John Oakes**

The Bible offers many descriptions of what it means to be a Christian, who has turned to Christ in repentance and faith and accepted him as Saviour and Lord. One of the most powerful is “children of God” or members of God’s family. It may take a lifetime to grasp the full implications, especially when we take account of the cosmic understanding of salvation and redemption which the apostle Paul presents in Romans 8:12–27.

(The following questions are intended to facilitate open-ended discussion. The passages in italics will hopefully be helpful and are from the sermon itself.)

1. What does it mean to be “children of God” (v. 14) and how can we know that we are?

*Although we are all, in a sense, God's creations, God is obviously not our natural Father. The Greek word for "sonship" in verse 15 can also be translated "adoption," and the biblical idea is that as Christians, we are adopted into God's family through faith in Christ.*

*So what today’s reading reminds us is that those with faith in Christ are all God's children, and as such, we enjoy all the blessings and privileges which that involves. More than this, verse 17 says, "if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ."*

2. How are we adopted heirs of God and what is our inheritance with Christ?

*While adopted status is still sometimes thought of as somehow inferior today, we would be wrong to read that into Paul's language. In the contemporary Roman society which he was addressing, an adopted son had all the rights and entitlements of a natural-born one. He was even deemed special because he had been chosen. We have likewise been chosen by God and we are guaranteed that God has a glorious inheritance for us to look forward to in heaven.*

3. How has creation fallen/been “subjected to futility” (v. 20)? What are the consequences and what part has humanity played in them?

*“The creation was subjected to futility [or “enslaved to malignant powers,” as F.F. Bruce puts it, at the Fall],” Paul writes in verses 20–21. “not of its own will but by the will of [God] who subjected it in hope.” And we can all see plenty of evidence of the impact of the Fall on and of the created order, especially in how neglectful and abusive human stewardship has led to the degradation and pollution of the environment.*

4. In what sense do we “groan inwardly as we wait for our adoption as ‘sons and daughters’ of God, the redemption of our bodies” (v. 23)?

*What Paul is looking forward to here is the full and final redemption of humanity at the end of time when the dead will be raised physically at Christ's return to judge the world and the faithful will receive new resurrection bodies for all eternity. That's*

*what he means, I think, when he refers to “the redemption of our bodies” as a future prospect, for which we hope, but which we cannot see. In the meantime, we long for the complete realization of our salvation and not just physically.*

5. How does the Holy Spirit “intercede for the saints” (v. 27)? How do we experience this in our own lives?

*By the power of the Holy Spirit, our prayers to God are assisted by God. They can even come from God. Many who have sat alone or in a prayer meeting, desperate to pray, but not knowing quite how we should, will know the personal truth of how “the Spirit [can] himself intercede for us with sighs too deep for words.”*