

# 2:42LifeGroups

GROWING TOGETHER IN THE GOSPEL

## Life Group Study Guide

Abba! Father!

### Introduction and Review

In Romans 8:14-17, we come to one of the most precious assurances of our relationship with God—the work of God’s Spirit by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”.

It is important to understand how these verses fit with the rest of the chapter. In the first section of Romans 8, Paul has been showing why there is *no condemnation* for those in Christ Jesus: it is because the Spirit indwells us, setting us free from sin and death and giving us *new life* (8:1-8). The indwelling Spirit guarantees that we will have eternal life (8:9-11) and that we are under no obligation to obey sin (8:12-13).

But this new life in the Spirit points to *another* reality, *another* assurance of our relationship with God—we are adopted as God’s children. But how do we know this? On an objective level, we know this because God declares it to be so in his Word. But on a personal, experiential level, we know it because the Spirit speaks directly to our hearts: “You have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (8:15-16).

The central focus of our message is that ***as children of God, we have assurance and an inheritance.***

### Discussion & Application

1. In 8:15, Paul presents a *contrast* to the assurance that we enjoy in the Holy Spirit. Here’s the contrast: “You did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear.” Compare this verse with 5:20-23. With this in mind, what were we enslaved *to*? What were we afraid *of*? How does fear affect relationships? How would this kind of negative fear impact our motivation to love and obey God?
2. Paul says that “Abba! Father!” is something we *cry*. The word means to shout from the heart something we feel passionate about. It might not even involve words (See Matthew 14:26, 30; 20:30-31; 27:50; Galatians 4:6). What does this tell us about our cry to God as our Father?
3. What kinds of things come into our lives that tend to make us forget, or make us feel unworthy to cry, “Abba! Father!”? In what circumstances are we most eager to cry, “Abba! Father!”

4. In verse 17, Paul explains the *inference* of being a child of God: “If children, then heirs.” Perhaps the most astounding thing about this passage is the promise that we are *heirs of God*. This means that *God himself* is our inheritance! This means that as a believer, I can call God *my God*! What aspects of God’s character makes this truth so comforting? For ideas, see Psalm 16:11; 18:1-3.
  
5. Suppose you are counseling a believer who struggles with feeling distant from God? How would you use this passage to encourage him or her?