



Grandma Pha loves caring for her grandson while his mother works in a factory. With training from World Vision's Grandmother Inclusive Approach in Cambodia, she and other grandmothers who serve as primary caregivers in their households have learned how to take even better care of their grandchildren through handwashing and preparing nutritious meals—while also receiving support to better care for themselves.

4 promises to encourage God's children

By Elisabeth Rickard

✝ GOD'S PROMISES TO HIS PEOPLE throughout the Bible can be anchors when our hearts and minds become busy and burdened. As you meditate on these four promises from our Father to His children, may they remind you of the beautiful realities that are yours in Christ. Let God's words from Romans 8 assure your heart of His unfailing promises to you, no matter your season or circumstances.

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. 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. —Romans 8:14–17

PROMISE #1

We belong to God's family

Notice how group-oriented these verses are. Just before this passage, in verse 12, Paul addresses the Roman Christians as “brothers and sisters.” We aren’t brought into God’s family to live isolated or individualistic lives of faith, but ones of mutual growth and edifying belief. God created humans for dynamic connection and relationship, and these are fulfilled and lived out most beautifully within the context of His kingdom family—His Church. In these relationships, we get to continually remind each other of our belonging to God’s family and of His Spirit-guided purposes for our lives.

In a culture that competes with God’s truth for our constant attention, it’s easy to forget our foundational identity as God’s beloved children, isn’t it? That’s why our grounding in the Word and ongoing affirmation of each other are so life-giving and important! Let’s keep encouraging our brothers and sisters: We are children of God, redeemed by Jesus, brought into a new and unshakeable status as citizens of God’s kingdom, on mission together for that kingdom.

REFLECT

What’s one way you can press deeper into the community of God’s people to emphasize our shared belonging?

PROMISE #2

We are freed by Christ from fear

Particularly in times like ours, when anxiety and depression rates are skyrocketing, this is a vital promise to cling to. Fear in its many forms can be a strong voice in our hearts and minds, one that wants to have the first and last word. But in Jesus, we know there’s hope for a different way to live. When He invites us into His family, Jesus releases us from all our sins and fears.

Just a few verses later in Romans 8, Paul lists many fear-inducing scenarios the world can bring our way, but then tells us, “In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (v. 37). All these things. There’s no situation where Jesus’ love for us isn’t stronger than our fear. This love changes everything, and it’s something we need to remind ourselves and each other of constantly.

Though we know our freedom in Christ, we’re still called to “encourage one another daily ... so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness” (Hebrews 3:13). Even in the darkest situations, fear won’t have the last word when God’s people speak truth to each other.

REFLECT

Who has God placed around you who can remind you of your freedom in Christ when fear threatens to overtake your mind and heart?

PROMISE #3

We are known by God's Spirit

Being seen and known by someone is powerful. And when that someone speaks God’s truth into our lives, it can be a catalyst for our growth. Consider, then, the beauty of the promise in verse 16 that God’s own Spirit communicates with our spirits—our deepest places—and reminds us of our identity in Jesus. What could be more life-giving?

The Spirit works through God’s people to affirm truth and call us into our full potential as image bearers of our Creator. The Spirit’s role as comforter, counselor, and intercessor is evident when others walk with us through trials or joys and allow the Spirit to speak truth to us through them. As He reminds us of the new reality Jesus gives us, we can build up God’s Church by reminding others.

REFLECT

How does being seen and known by the Spirit prompt you to encourage others to live into who God created them to be?

PROMISE #4

We will inherit God's kingdom

The NIV footnotes for Romans 8:15 have a helpful explanation of the unfamiliar word “sonship”: “The Greek word for adoption to sonship is a term referring to the full legal standing of an adopted male heir in Roman culture.” God is saying through Paul that, in Jesus, each member of His new family—sons and daughters alike—is given full rights to all that God has made. What a glorious reality!

But our inheritance doesn’t stop with receiving—we’re called to expand God’s kingdom. Our transformation into God’s beloved children motivates us to join His mission of restoring what is broken in the world and our lives. Imagine if we saw all our brothers and sisters in the Church as God sees us: co-heirs with Jesus Christ. Being co-heirs of God’s kingdom shouldn’t leave any room for division or disunity within the family of God. When we treat people as God’s beloved children, we invite them to live into their God-given dignity while displaying His miraculous love to the world.

REFLECT

How would viewing all fellow believers as your co-heirs of God’s kingdom in Christ transform your relationships, both in your local church and in the global one? 