

Do I Belong? Reassuring Kids Adopted from Foster Care

What Does the Bible Say about Adoption?

By Carey Koenig, Reid Koenig, and Halley Koenig

There are more than four hundred thousand children in foster care today, and you were once one of those kids. For whatever reason, your birth parents or guardians were unable to care for you, even though they love you. Children like you are sometimes removed from their homes so that these caregivers can receive help and so that you can be safe and taken care of the way you deserve to be. Many caregivers do get the help they need, and the children are able to return to their families. But other times the kids remain in the foster care system until they are adopted into a forever family.

Now that you're out of the foster care system and have been adopted, your life is different, right? You and your family love each other, but you might also disagree sometimes. Some days are good, and some days are rough.

Depending on your situation and how old you were when you were adopted, you might still have some bad memories from the past. And those experiences might still affect you. You probably have questions and even confused feelings about your birth family, your time in foster care, and even your family now.

Having questions about these things isn't wrong. Not at all. Whether you've been a part of your forever family for a few weeks or several years, it's completely natural to sometimes wonder: *Do I belong?*

Our book, *Do I Belong?* (<https://store.focusonthefamily.com/do-i-belong/>), is based on our experiences building a family through adoption and looking for answers to our questions. We want to share with others what we've learned. We talked to some pretty smart grown-ups who have studied adoption and foster care for a long time. We also talked to different kids just like you who were adopted from foster care. We wanted to hear about what they went through and the questions they have. We'll answer several of those questions. We've also included questions that you can talk about with your parents. Or you can write down your answers in a journal.

Kids who were adopted from foster care are amazing and have awesome stories to tell. So do you. We hope you recognize the things that make you amazing and special. We want you to see God's plan for your life and how your adoption experience can help others see how much God loves them, too.

We want you to know that you aren't alone—and you never were. The Lord has always been with you, even during your worst times. God brought you out of those bad places, and if you have accepted His love, He has adopted you into His family, just like your parents did.

The Bible says that God is a father to orphans and gives lonely people families (see Psalm 68:5-6). Even before you were born, God loved you. And if you trust in Jesus, you can be sure that God chose to adopt you as one of His own children (see Ephesians 1:4-5). You belong to your forever family, and you belong to Him.

Our prayer is that you will thank God for creating adoption and creating you. We also pray that you'll be ready and excited to share your story with others about what God has done in your life.

In the book of Matthew, Jesus said,

“You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.”

MATTHEW 5:14-16 (MSG)

You can shine your light for others.

Our Story

Reid

Hi, my name is Reid. I was adopted as soon as I was born, so I don't really know what it's like not to be adopted. I was adopted because my birth parents were never married. My birth mother is from South Carolina, but my birth father is from Mexico and was living in the United States only for a little while. Patty and Miguel knew that making a plan for my adoption was better than having me live with just one of them. I'm glad I got to see Miguel a few times before he went back to Mexico, and I still get to visit with Patty a lot. I'm glad I was adopted, but sometimes I still wonder what it would be like if I wasn't.

I help write this with my mother and my sister to tell kids that adoption isn't a bad thing. It's all part of God's amazing plan!

Halley

Hi, I'm Halley, Reid's younger sister. My birth mom, Suzie, was seventeen when she had me. She wasn't married and was still in school. She knew it would be hard to raise me, so she made an adoption plan. I've met Suzie, but I've never met my birth dad. Sometimes I wonder what it would be like if I wasn't adopted. I wonder if the times kids have made fun of me wouldn't have happened. But I like being adopted because I can feel special, and I love my mom, dad, brothers, and our family dog very much.

I helped write this because I want kids who were adopted to know they're special and different in a good way. Hopefully, kids who were adopted will also show this to their friends or anyone who has any questions about adoption.

Carey

Hi, I'm Carey. I'm the proud mom of Reid, Halley, and their younger brother, Benjamin. Reid, Halley, and Ben don't look anything like their dad (Kurt) or me. I often forget that these wonderful kids didn't come from my body, but as a family, we also realize that when the outside world looks at us, here's what they see:

- Dad: brown hair, blue eyes, white skin
- Mom: blonde hair, green eyes, white skin
- Reid: black hair, dark eyes, light- brown skin
- Halley: light-brown hair, hazel eyes, white skin
- Ben: brown hair, brown eyes, dark- brown skin

Even though we look different on the outside, on the inside we're a regular family. We love as a family; we disagree as a family; we behave as a family. We have a lot of the same likes, dislikes, character traits, and habits—both good and bad!

Reid, Halley, and I decided to write this together because we couldn't find anything like it already. Reid and Halley had some questions and thought they probably weren't the only ones who had them. This is for you and for anyone else who was adopted and has some questions. It's also for family members and friends who weren't adopted—the people you think might like to know a little more about what makes your story so special.

Our Family

My husband, Kurt, and I wanted to be parents very, very badly. We got married and then started trying to have a baby biologically. Many months later I still wasn't pregnant, so Kurt and I went to the doctor, who told us we wouldn't be able to have a baby. This news made us sad. We were confused because we thought God wanted us to become parents, and we didn't know anything about adoption yet. But once we started learning about adoption, we thought it was an awesome way to have a family.

We followed the steps for adopting a child, and it took a while before we got a phone call. Finally our friend at the adoption agency told us, “There’s a woman here who would like to meet you. She’s going to have a little boy soon, and she wants you to be his mom and dad.”

That baby boy was Reid. Kurt and I later adopted a girl, Halley, and another boy named Benjamin. We got to know Benjamin’s birth mother and his biological half brother, Anthony. The boys’ birth mother struggled with drugs when Ben was three years old, and Anthony came to live with us as a temporary foster care placement. After close to a year, their mother got better, and he was able to live with her again.

That’s how foster care is supposed to work. Foster families care for children while their parents or caregivers get the help they need to take care of their kids the right way. The goal of foster care is to eventually return children to their families. But sometimes it doesn’t work out that way, and the courts make the decision to give these kids the chance to be adopted by a forever family.

Kurt and I knew adoption would be a life-changing experience, even though it wouldn’t always be easy. But we never could have guessed how truly incredible it is. We know that adoption has its challenges. In our situation, we still get to see Reid’s, Halley’s, and Ben’s birth mothers. In some ways, it’s like we’re all part of a big family who loves each other very much.

We thank the Lord for creating adoption!

So, What Does the Bible Say About Adoption?

The Bible has lots of verses about God’s children being adopted into His family. John 1:12 says, “Some people did accept [Jesus] and did believe in his name. He gave them the right to become children of God.” When you ask Jesus to live in your heart, at that very moment you are adopted into God’s family.

Does that mean God didn’t love you before that moment? No way! God loves you so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, to die for your sins. He loves all of us so much that He lets us choose whether we want to be in His family. As soon as you pray, *Yes, Jesus, thank You for dying for me and saving me. Please come into my heart and be with me forever*, you’re adopted. If you receive God’s gift of love to you, then you are part of His family!

The Lord has plenty to say about adoption and caring for children without families. You can look it up for yourself and see how many times the Bible talks about these things. Here are some verses you can read:

- “My father and mother may desert me, but the LORD will accept me” (Psalm 27:10).
- “God is in his holy temple. He is a father to children whose fathers have died. He takes care of women whose husbands have died. God gives lonely people a family” (Psalm 68:5-6).

- “The LORD watches over the outsiders who live in our land. He takes good care of children whose fathers have died” (Psalm 146:9).
- “Anyone who welcomes a little child like this one in my name welcomes me” (Matthew 18:5).
- “I will not leave you like children who don’t have parents. I will come to you” (John 14:18).
- “God sent his Son. A woman gave birth to him. He was born under the authority of the law. He came to set free those who were under the authority of the law. He wanted us to be adopted as children with all the rights children have” (Galatians 4:4-5).
- “God chose us to belong to Christ before the world was created. He chose us to be holy and without blame in his eyes. He loved us. So he decided long ago to adopt us. He adopted us as his children with all the rights children have. He did it because of what Jesus Christ has done” (Ephesians 1:4-5).
- “Here are the beliefs and way of life that God our Father accepts as pure and without fault. When widows are in trouble, take care of them. Do the same for children who have no parents” (James 1:27).
- “See what amazing love the Father has given us! Because of it, we are called children of God” (1 John 3:1).

Those are just a few of the times that the Bible mentions caring for children without families of their own. Adoption must be pretty important to God!

Questions to Think About

1. What does it mean to be adopted into God’s family?
2. Have you prayed and asked God to adopt you into His family?
3. How does it feel to be God’s child?
4. What is one of your favorite verses about adoption?

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