

Adoption upholds the scriptural emphasis on the role of the father.

*This is the third in a series of six articles PPL will be posting to highlight Adoption Month in November. The series is reprinted from “Partakers of the Grace: Biblical Foundations for Adoption,” written by June Ring and published by PPL in 1997.*

### **Separate and Distinct**

Although we have seen the importance of two parents, the father’s role as illustrated in the Scriptures is separate and distinct from the mother’s. The Bible speaks of the father as a man of compassion, a teacher at home, and a man to be honored by his children. Proverbs especially elaborates on these important roles a father can and should play in the lives of his children.

God chose to relate to *us* as Father. Our earthly fathers are important in modeling or being images of God as Father.

### **Joseph Adopted Jesus**

God also assured that Jesus would have a father in Joseph. Perhaps the most profound example of covenantal adoption in the Scriptures is Joseph’s parenting of Jesus. Joseph clearly fulfilled the spirit of adoption by being willing to marry his betrothed who was with child that was not his. He assumed the role of Jesus’ father for all intents and purposes. It should not surprise us that God provided Jesus with an earthly father, consistent with His plan for marriage and parenthood.

The lineage of Jesus, as prophesied in the Old Testament, is fulfilled through Joseph (see Matthew 1:1-17). Joseph is fully and completely Jesus’ earthly father—participating in his naming, protecting him from danger by traveling to Egypt, teaching him a trade and presenting him at the temple.

### **Biblical Model Lost?**

Much in today’s society conflicts with the biblical model. We have denigrated and downplayed the importance of the father to the point of causing a major shift in our societal structure. For many women and children the father—who traditionally would

have provided for them—has been replaced by our government. Estimates place the current number of fatherless children in the United States at 19 million, and the statistics regarding those children are grim:

- Half of fatherless families live below the poverty line.
- Adolescents of fatherless families are more likely to be sexually active, and daughters are more likely to become single-parent mothers.
- Adolescents in fatherless families are more likely to commit delinquent acts.
- Young adults who grew up in fatherless families were more likely to drop out of high school, divorce, and engage in drug and alcohol use.<sup>1</sup>

Christians can emphasize the importance of the father by encouraging his inclusion in counseling, no matter what the outcome of the pregnancy may be. It is important to note that many women choose adoption because they see the father as vital for their child.

*The forgotten contributor to the two-parent team is the father. Kids gain confidence, self-esteem and the drive to be successful in life from their father. Without a father children are more susceptible to peer pressure, substance abuse and a whole host of social problems. It is not far reaching to say that a child's perception of God is often affected through his relationship with his father. A good father helps model to us and for us the love, discipline and sacrifice that God imparts to us as his children.*

*A young woman—and young man—making an adoption plan can and should feel good about providing that vital part of the parenting team to their child that they may not be able to provide—a permanent, stable, capable and loving father.*

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<sup>1</sup> Tom Hess, "Recruiting Fathers to Heal a Nation," *Focus on the Family Citizen* (October 1993), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Phone interview with Ken Canfield, October 1993