



Adoption: What Joseph of Nazareth Can Teach Us about This Countercultural Choice

Russell D. Moore

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Joseph of Nazareth was a good and honorable man. The adoptive father of Jesus, he stood by his wife and raised her son—even when it appeared that she had betrayed him. Such is the love of adoption. But this love stands in stark contrast to what we see in our world today: on-demand abortion, unreported abuse, and widespread neglect.

Adapted from Russell Moore's influential book *Adopted for Life: The Priority of Adoption for Christian Families and Churches*, this short volume calls Christians to seriously consider adoption for their own families and thus take a stand for children—born and unborn.

Adoption: What Joseph of Nazareth Can Teach Us about This Countercultural Choice Details

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Lexi Zuo says

Loved this book so much!!! A short, simple, but beautifully Biblical encouragement to remember the fatherless around the world!

Jacob Stevens says

I absolutely loved this short book that briefly examines the theology of adoption that permeates the entire Bible but especially in the story of Joseph, the adoptive father of the Messiah. One of the great principles that this book teaches is that supporting adoption does not mean that someone has to actually adopt a young child. It's about creating a culture among our churches that values all life and creates a safe place where pregnancies that occur in crisis situations can be supported in a way that avoids the snuffing out of the unborn life. I can't recommend this book enough.

David Bronson says

Moore's on point once again. I love the use of Joseph's example a springboard for this topic (he might be my favorite under-examined biblical figure). Beautifully done, and doxological, too.

Anya says

2.5/5

I appreciate what the author is trying to say, but I had some issues with the way the book flowed. Maybe I'll try giving it another read later on.

Calvinist Batman says

This book has a simple premise: to explain why adoption is something from the Christian worldview and scriptures and to show *why* it is counter-cultural. It's not a help guide to adopt and neither is it supposed to be. It's a wake-up call, a reminder, to the church that as we have been adopted so should we adopt as the Lord enables and leads.

Michael Boling says

I humbly admit I have a bit of a bias when it comes to reading a book on the subject of adoption. You see my wife and I made the decision to adopt our daughter a little over three years ago despite the concerns posed by many, the questions we had about taking a pre-teen into our home to be our daughter, financial worries about the cost of the adoption process, among many other issues we wrestled with. One thing is certain and that is we were confident God had called us to adopt. Looking back, it was one of the best decisions of our life.

Adoption is not an easy road to walk and not everyone is called to take a child into their home to be theirs. With that said, all believers are called by God to be involved in taking care of the orphans and the fatherless. Russell Moore, in his helpful little book called *Adoption: What Joseph of Nazareth Can Teach Us About This Countercultural Choice*, drives home the importance of helping those in need in a way that will assuredly be a kick in the pants for some and a source of reassurance for others that have become engaged in this importance issue.

Moore uses Joseph the earthly father of Jesus as the example of what someone might face who adopts or dares to go against the cultural tide to care for the plethora of children who need a home. He notes the actions of Joseph often take a back seat when we examine the birth of Jesus. This is unfortunate because we can learn quite a bit from how Joseph followed the leading of God and stepped in as the adopted father of Jesus. Moore aptly comments, “Joseph’s fatherhood is significant for us precisely because of the way the gospel anchors it to the fatherhood of God himself.” He goes on to rightly note, “Joseph is unique in one sense. He is called to provide for and protect the Christ of God. But in other ways Joseph is not unique at all. All of us, as followers of Christ, are called to protect children.”

The Church and her leaders often write and speak on the need to evangelize. With that said, we often forget that reaching out to those in need is a function of evangelism and sharing the gospel, be that the unwed teenage mother who is scared to death and feels the only option is an abortion, whether that is an abused child who needs a loving place and parents who will care and protect, or whether that means financially supporting organizations around the world that reach out to children who sit in orphanages waiting for someone to lend them a loving hand and a permanent home. Moore drives this reality home throughout this book and I truly hope the reader will pick up on that urgent message and will in turn help transform the lives of these children in the manner God has called them.

We live in a culture that believes children are a burden and a drag on our ability to enjoy life to the fullest. When children get in the way, they are discarded. This societal thought process is antithetical to what we find in Scripture, namely God’s continued call to His people to care for the orphans and fatherless. As Moore has demonstrated through the life of Joseph and his care for our Savior, reaching out sometimes comes at a financial, emotional, and even relational cost to those who answers God’s call. In the end however, doing the work God has called us, whether that is adopting a child or helping those who God has called to take such a step is what the gospel is all about.

I truly enjoyed this small yet helpful book by Dr. Moore. It definitely a must read and I encourage those who do take the time to read it to look for ways to share the love of God with children who so desperately need help and hope. If your church is not engaged in helping the innocent, speak with your pastor and church leaders about ways to get involved as a local community of believers. If God has not called you to adopt, then reach out financially in whatever way possible to help those who are setting aside the comforts of life to help a child. God has called all of us to this mission and Dr. Moore has provided a call to action. Will you answer the call? I trust you will and those who read this book will be motivated to do so.

I received this book for free from Crossway Books and the opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission’s 16 CFR, Part 255 : “Guides Concerning

the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising.”

Brandon Stiver says

Good booklet that had a lot of information and viewpoints that I hadn't heard yet. Russell Moore is of course among the leaders in Christian adoption/orphan care ministry and this was my first time reading him myself. I know I'll do so again. The theme of Joseph is compelling and ties the chapters together however loosely. You never really stop to think about Jesus Himself being adopted and what that would have meant for Joseph, but it was a critical part to God's overall plan. The subtitle for the book is very telling and apropos. Having just finished our own adoption process of our son Moses, I realize more than ever just how countercultural adoption really is and yet even more so how important it is for Christians to pursue. We are supposed to be countercultural. Moore also underscores the ties between adoption and the abortion crisis in the world which is timely as so much is currently swirling around Planned Parenthood in the states right now. I got this book for free on Amazon and it was well worth the read. Being as it was so short, I'll probably read it through again in the near future.

Samuel Bierig says

What a great read! Very inciteful stuff from Moore here.

Josh says

Crossway is releasing a new booklet by Russell Moore based on his book, *Adopted for Life*. In it, Moore makes the same case that he does in his earlier work but presents it in 60 pages as opposed to a couple of hundred, making this important work on this important topic that much more accessible.

Moore does a great job of giving a reasoned and forceful plea for Christians to care for the fatherless. Moore is not naïve enough to believe that everyone is called or capable of adoption, but he definitely encourages all believers to follow the mandate of Scripture in making the care for orphans a priority in our ministries and in our lives.

Moore presents a forceful case that rightly appeals to the heart of the reader. However, to his credit and to the great benefit of the reader and the cause, Moore does not stoop to guilt-trip or manipulation. He encourages, he pleads, he reasons from Scripture, he educates, he leads by example, and he pours out his heart. And the result is a challenging, encouraging, and convicting little booklet that will, hopefully, find its way into the hands of many people who will be prompted to make a difference in the lives of those who are most vulnerable, most fragile, and most in need.

I received a review copy of this book.

Sarah says

interesting take, but the author persists with the assumption that the opposite of adoption is abortion

Mary Wilson says

This book was not at all what I expected. I read from another review that this is supposed to be an excerpt from a larger book and after reading this, I don't know if I could read the whole book. I was drawn to this booklet thinking it would speak more of Joseph's role in the adoption of Jesus, however it turned out to be a booklet filled with the author's very opinionated views on abortion, Planned Parenthood and adoption on the church. I have not come away feeling a need to adopt, but wondering how the non-Christian may react to these views.

Ryan says

Bought Moore's larger Adopted For Life book and picked this up as an impulse buy at the same time. Haven't read the larger book yet but this one was excellent. Seems like a very good primer on God's attitude to adoption. With a large focus on Joseph. Would highly recommend.

Tom Robson says

Really helpful on the theme and practice of adoption.

Brian Pinson says

I love reading what Mr Moore says about adoption because he is pretty much a subject matter expert. The book is interesting in that it did make me think of Joseph in a new way and what challenges and joys he likely had.

Ryan says

This was a short but really good book. Originally chapter 3 in Moore's larger book Adopted for Life, it is a great primer for the subject of creating an adoption culture within our families and within our churches. At only 64 pages, this little booklet packs a punch, causing the reader to reflect on the forgotten half of the virgin birth, namely, Joseph's adoption of Jesus. Moore argues that not every person in the church is called to have six kids, nor is every family called to adopt, but that doesn't mean that as Christians we don't have a stake in this issue. Moore writes, "Not every believer will stand praying outside an abortion clinic. Not every believer will take a pregnant teenager into his or her guest bedroom. Not every believer is called to adopt children. But every believer is called to recognize Jesus in the face of his little brothers and sisters when he

decides to show up in their lives, even if it interrupts everything else."

Yes, adoption is countercultural in our society today, but it is a form of spiritual warfare that needs to be engaged in by many more people in the church today. Every person is created in the image of God and deserves to be loved and treated with dignity and respect. If they are unloved by their bio parents, then it is up to us to fill in that gap and demonstrate the gospel in tangible action to love what others have called unlovable. Moore again writes, "Think of how odd it must seem to American secularists to see Christians adopting a baby whose body trembles with an addiction to the cocaine her mother sent through her bloodstream before birth. Think of the kind of credibility such action lends to the proclamation of our gospel." And to this I say, "Amen."
