

A. CHILD OF GOD

- Believers under the New Covenant are invited to approach the Lord with confidence based on the perfect righteousness of Jesus that is theirs in their union with Him.
- Our God is not distant. He has made His top priority clear: Hosea 6:6 NLT—I want you to know Me more than I want burnt offerings.
- We have also received a New Identity: Rom 8:14-17 NLT-- For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.¹⁵ So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father."¹⁶ For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. ¹⁷ And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.
- Our most basic identity is being a child of God with our default approach as little children (*tecknon*), looking to Him for everything. (Romans 8:15-16)
- It is the hope of all parents that their child will grow up wise and strong. In the same way, God desires mature children (*huios*) who become effective in His Kingdom: Luke 10:16-21 NLT-- Then he said to the disciples, "Anyone who accepts your message is also accepting me. And anyone who rejects you is rejecting me. And anyone who rejects me is rejecting God, who sent me."¹⁷ When the seventy-two disciples returned, they joyfully reported to him, "Lord, even the demons obey us when we use your name!"¹⁸ "Yes," he told them, "I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning!"¹⁹ Look, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you. ²⁰ But don't rejoice because evil spirits obey you; rejoice because your names are registered in heaven."²¹ At that same time Jesus was filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit, and he said, "O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for hiding these things from those who think themselves wise and clever, and for revealing them to the childlike. Yes, Father, it pleased you to do it this way.
- So we see from the words of Jesus that we are called to always maintain a heart of childlike dependence and faith as we move into doing our Father's business!
- Secondly, we see the hierarchy of God's purpose for His children – that they would rejoice God's work in their lives more than their works for Him!
- LISTENING EXERCISE:
In what situations do you find yourself most able to take the approach of a little child in your relationship with the Lord?

Are you aware of any particular aspects of your life as a believer where you tend to prefer operating independently of God?

- Insights:

B. POWER & AUTHORITY

- The mature child of God has been entrusted with God's power and authority:
 - Power—strength, might, ability (Strong's G1411)
 - Authority—influence, jurisdiction, liberty, power, strength, rights (Strong's G1849)
- Our power is derived from the indwelling Spirit of God. It is the same power that raised Jesus from the dead! (Romans 8:11)
- This power is given to us so that we are now able to overcome sin and obey the Lord. We need His power to do effective Kingdom work: Acts 1:8 NLT--But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere
- We see Jesus explaining to the 72 in Luke 10 that they are to operate in His authority as they go forth on Kingdom missions and encounter resistance.
- [ABOUT VERSE 19: "*Christ entrusts them with greater power, an offensive power, power to tread on serpents and scorpions, devils and malignant spirits, the old serpent: "You shall bruise their heads in My name," according to the first promise. (Gen 3:15)(M. Henry)*"]
- The delegated authority of Jesus enables us to effectively execute His plans. It takes this spiritual authority to carry on His ministry: Mt 28:18-20 NLT--Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
- This new power and authority are delegated to us so that we might live as children of God here on earth in the same way that Jesus did as a human being.
- Notice the progression of the Scriptures listed below. They provide a template of sorts for us as we seek to appropriately harness the power and authority of God:
 1. Humble: Phil 2:5-7 JBP-- Let Christ himself be your example as to what your attitude should be. For he, who had always been God by nature, did not cling to his prerogatives as God's equal, but stripped himself of all privilege by consenting to be a slave by nature and being born as mortal man. And, having become man, he humbled himself by living a life of utter obedience,
 2. Dependent: Jn 5:19 NLT-- Jesus explained, "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does."
 3. Weak: Heb 2:14 NLT-- Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death.
 4. Fulfilling Kingdom Purpose: Heb 8:1 NLT-- We have a High Priest who sat down in the place of honor beside the throne of the majestic God in heaven.
- Jesus' life demonstrated how we must hold both attitudes -- the posture of a little child while possessing mature faith to live out the Father's purpose for our lives.
- Insights:

C. VITAL UNION

- Jesus explains how we access His delegated power and authority in the parable of the vine: John 15:4-9 AMP-- Remain in Me, and I [will remain] in you. Just as no branch can bear fruit by itself without remaining in the vine, neither can you [bear fruit, producing evidence of your faith] unless you remain in Me. ⁵ I am the Vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in Me and I in him bears much fruit, for [otherwise] apart from Me [that is, cut off from vital union with Me] you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not remain in Me, he is thrown out like a [broken off] branch, and withers *and* dies; and they gather such branches and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ If you remain in Me and My words remain in you [that is, if we are vitally united and My message lives in your heart], ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified *and* honored by this, when you bear much fruit, and prove yourselves to be My [true] disciples. ⁹ I have loved you just as the Father has loved Me; remain in My love [and do not doubt My love for you].
- We must fully grasp the idea that we cannot accomplish anything of eternal value apart from our consistent, close relationship with Jesus. (Vv. 4-5)
- Any works that we attempt apart from our union with the Lord won't last: 1 Cor 3:13 NLT-- On the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person's work has any value.
- Jesus gave us 4 ways to cultivate an abiding relationship that produces lasting fruit:
 1. Living in Vital Union
 - Be mindful throughout your days that Christ lives in you!
 - Gal 2:19-20 MSG--I tried keeping rules and working my head off to please God, and it didn't work. So I quit being a "law man" so that I could be *God's* man. Christ's life showed me how, and enabled me to do it. I identified myself completely with him. Indeed, I have been crucified with Christ. My ego is no longer central. It is no longer important that I appear righteous before you or have your good opinion, and I am no longer driven to impress God. Christ lives in me. The life you see me living is not "mine," but it is lived by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
 2. Taking His Word to Heart
 - Spend focused time allowing the Spirit of God to apply Scripture to your heart.
 - Jer 31:33 NLT--This is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel after those days," says the Lord. "I will put my instructions deep within them, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.
 - Mt 11:15 AMP--He who has ears to hear, let him hear *and* heed My words.
 3. Prayer
 - Talk to God! Tell Him what's on your heart and leave time and space to listen to Him.
 - John 14:13—Whatever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.
 - 1 Jn 5:14-15--Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.
 4. Recognizing and Receiving God's Love for You
 - Eph 3:17-18 NIV--I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ
 - Rom 8:38 NLT--And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love.

- As you grow in our personal relationship with the Lord, not only do you receive the New Wine of knowing Him more, you begin to see fruit emerging in your life.
- The Spirit will guide you into the works that God has prepared for you: Eph 2:10—For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.
- Insights:

D. PERSONAL APPLICATION

- ONE THING

The One Thing that I'd like to take away from today's class and believe God to accomplish in my life is:

- PONDER THE TRUTH

Which verse or principle stood out to you this week? Write it below taking some time to review it often. Be still in God's presence, alert for new insights. Record them here.

- PROCESSING THE TRUTH

Ask the Holy Spirit for help with remaining in Him. *Where is your greatest opportunity for growth from the 4 ways mentioned (vital union, the Word, prayer, or receiving His love)?*

Use these steps to guide you as you bring any issues before the Lord in healing prayer (see the bookmark for more specifics and/or call on your group leader for help):

- 1) Emotions around this issue
- 2) HS-led memory or picture
- 3) Message you believed then
- 4) What is God's truth about you and this issue?