

Doctrinal Summary of
Prayer: The Believer's Right in Christ

In Ephesians 1:5, Paul identifies the believer has the right to pray through his position in Christ Jesus.

"He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,"

The words "adoption as sons" are translated from the Koine Greek word υιοθεσίαν ("hui-o-the-si-ahn") which more literally means, "placement of a son as an adult member of family and society wherein he receives all the rights and privileges of adulthood, based on response." It refers to a rite of passage ceremony wherein a minor, whether a biological son or adopted son, was formally recognized to be an adult within society. The ceremony included the removal of the *toga praetexta* (robe worn by children) for the *toga virilis* (robe worn by adults). It was the official acceptance of a minor into adulthood. As a part of his new adulthood, the former minor would receive five specific rights:

1. The right to go to war to fight for family and country.
2. The right to take a wife.
3. The right to utilize the family's resources for commerce.
4. The right to a portion of his inheritance.
5. The right to vote and have a say in family and political affairs.

Each of these rights belong to the believer in Christ as a result of God placing him as an adult in His family and kingdom. The fifth right, the right to vote and have a say in family and political affairs, allows the believer to converse with God and voice his desires, wants, needs, and opinions to God regarding his role as a son and as a member of God's kingdom. Prayer is the means by which the believer voices those desires, wants, needs, and opinions to God. Thus, by virtue of being an adult in the family and kingdom of God, the believer has the right to pray to God and let his requests be made known to God concerning family and kingdom affairs. Because of this right given to him in his position in Christ, the believer can approach God's throne and boldly speak his requests to the God of the Universe. According to Hebrews 4:16, it is the throne of God that the believer is to go to with his needs.

"Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

The word "confidence" is translated from the Koine Greek word παρρησίας ("par-rae-si-ahs") which more literally means, "courage to speak openly and boldly because of one's confidence in his standing or position, based on response." It identifies an individual that has the ability and confidence to speak freely with another. He has no fear of reprisal or rejection when he speaks because he has confidence in his standing with the one to whom he speaks. His position and standing are solid enough to afford him the confidence he needs in order to voice his desires, wants, needs, and opinions. The believer's standing and position before God is as a righteous individual because of his position in Christ. His right to approach God's throne with his requests is the result of having been granted full adult rights in God's family and kingdom. Thus, prayer is the believer's right because of his position in Christ wherein he finds the courage to speak openly and boldly to the God of the Universe because he is righteous as a result of trusting Christ as his personal Savior. Though prayer is a right, there is a proper manner of expression to that right. This proper manner must be taught to the believer so that he exercises his right appropriately.