

# The Doctrine of Adoption

## Class Outline

- July 6      Section 1: The Significance of the Doctrine  
                 Section 2: A Biblical-Theological Overview of Adoption in Scripture
- July 13     Section 3: A Survey of Key Texts on Adoption  
                 Section 4: The Transforming Power of Adoption
- July 20     Section 5: The Spirit of Adoption  
                 Section 6: Changed Relationships through Adoption
- July 27     Section 7: Adoption and Christian Parenting  
                 Section 8: A Biblical Case-study on Adoption: the Prodigal Son

## Bibliography

1. Beeke, Joel. *Heirs with Christ: the Puritans on Adoption*, Reformation Heritage, 2008.
2. Burke, Trevor J. *Adopted into God's Family: Exploring a Pauline Metaphor*, Intervarsity, 1988
3. Ferguson, Sinclair. *Children of the Living God*, Navpress, 1987.
4. Packer, J.I. *Sons of God*, Chapter 19: Knowing God,
5. Peterson, Robert A. *Adopted by God: From Wayward Sinners to Cherished Children*, Presbyterian and Reformed, 2001.

# The Doctrine of Adoption

## The Significance of the Doctrine

You sum up the whole of the New Testament religion if you describe it as the knowledge of God as one's holy Father. If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God's child, and having God as his Father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all. *Our understanding of Christianity cannot be better than our grasp of adoption.*

--J.I. Packer

- A. The pre-eminence of the doctrine
  - 1. The fullest, richest picture of God's purpose
  - 2. The goal of redemption
  - 3. God as Father - the most appropriate and redemptively complete title
    - Other great titles for God?
    - "Father" captures all that is essential in who God is and what he has accomplished.
    - Clarifies who we are
    - Adoption speaks to *how* we became sons of the Father
  - 4. The priority of relationship
- B. The distinctiveness of the doctrine
  - 1. Distinct from Justification
  - 2. Distinct from regeneration
  - 3. The fulfillment of predestination (Eph 1:5)

*John Piper – "Adoption is greater than the universe."*

- C. The basis for our life

*Identity \* Conduct \* Confidence \* Prayer \* Parenting \* Purpose*

# The Doctrine of Adoption

## Application Questions

1. How significant has the doctrine of adoption been in your life? Has it been the controlling thought? If not, what has?
2. Meditate on Ephesians 1:3-6.
  - a. What is the relationship between “every spiritual blessing” and adoption?
  - b. What is the impact of God’s predestinating us to adoption “before the foundation of the world”?
  - c. Election and predestination result in holiness, blamelessness and adoption. What is the relationship between holiness, blamelessness and adoption?
  - d. What is the purpose and end result of adoption?
  - e. How does adoption give definition to grace?
3. What are some changes that you might make in your daily life on account of gaining a clearer appreciation of your relationship to God as his precious and beloved adopted child?
  - a. In your prayer life?
  - b. In your confidence, joy and contentment?
  - c. In your relationships with others?
4. Do the words closeness, affection, and generosity describe your perception of God and your experience of God?
5. Are you more aware of your sin than you are of the adopting grace of God?