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A Letter to Dear Children, Part 18

The Confidence We Have

Text: 1 John 5:14-17

Note John’s frequent statements regarding assurance. Sixteen times in this epistle and once each in second and third John, John writes about knowing. His goal is that these dear spiritual children of his *know* where they stand with God. There is a difference between confidence and arrogance. Earlier in the writing, John’s emphasis is on assurance of *salvation*. Here, it is assurance in *prayer*. Verse 14 addresses both generality and specificity in the same sentence

A. We may ask anything- general

B. According to His will- specific

John is assuming that as these spiritual children of his mature in their faith, they will only pray in accordance with the will of the God who is sovereign (cf. Psalm 37:4). This is not a blank check, a carte blanche, issued to anyone who prays. See the same principle in John’s gospel (John 14:13, 14; 15:7, 16; 16:23, 24, 26). *Answers* to prayer are predicated on a certain *posture* in prayer. We make a grave error when we expect that God will do anything we ask if we ask in faith or ask in His name.

Don’t miss this simple statement: He *hears* us (1 Peter 3:12; Jeremiah 29:12).

1. Personal prayer- we take God seriously as we live out our faith (15).
2. Intercessory prayer- we take the faith of our colleagues just as seriously as we observe their lives (16). Intercessory prayer can get messy. We, as we aim to pray for another, can sound like we are *prying* rather than *praying*. We might ask personal, seemingly invasive questions. We might sound like we’re on an expedition to get some dirt on another person.

**Closing**

For John, confidence is very important (2:28; 3:21; 4:17). It is also important for you and for me. In June 2014, John Brandon, a contributing editor for Inc. magazine, published an article titled,

10 Words People Who Lack Confidence Always Use.

The words are: might, won’t, usually, suspect, impossible, worried, confused, need, quandary and likely.

Beloved, I’d like to offer 10 words people who *have* confidence always use.

Trust, shall, will, believe, faith, vision, Spirit, eternal, praise and surely.

Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives and we who have confidence shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Amen