

(1-2) Sonship Orientation

We are now ready to begin the study of our sonship. This first part we are calling our sonship orientation, for it is here that we get the basics presented to us regarding our position as adopted sons of our heavenly Father.

Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

For a while now we have been studying sanctification and onship is part of your sanctification. In fact, you could say it is the capstone of your sanctified life. As such, the fact that God has made us “sons of God” is the 3rd and final component of our sanctification:

- 1) You are dead to sin
- 2) You are alive unto God
- 3) You are a son of God

The living out of your life as a son of God we are going to refer to as your “sonship.” I use the “ship” suffix simply because it is the English suffix that denotes the existing state or condition of whatever is expressed by the noun to which it is attached: son-ship.

It is not a surprise for most saved people to hear that they are a “son of God.” Also, there are a great many people who understand that when they received Christ that they were “adopted.” But what is not commonly understood is the deep significance of our “adoption” and “sonship.” It is also not commonly understood that your heavenly Father has developed an entire curriculum to educate us as His sons and He has written in His word. God does not need some preacher to decide how to construct such a curriculum, for He has already determined its arrangement and the order in which its elements should be presented. That is to say, there is a “sense and sequence” to the curriculum and it is written in the word of God in the very order that it is to be learned.

The study of sonship is going to be the thing that many saved people have been looking for since they received Christ as their Savior; how to live for God successfully. It seems as though every few months another book comes out, offering the “key” to “successful Christian living.” It may be in the form of a “10-step” program or it may revolve around a verse like “the prayer of Jabez.” It may be some kind of course; Christian counseling courses, theology courses, discipleship courses, family living courses, etc. Many of them are very clever—most, today, are very entertaining! They are often accompanied by books and charts and tapes and graphs of all sorts; circles, gates, spheres and all kinds of really ingenious stuff. The problem is, while they may use various verses from the Bible, the system, the sequence, what is basic and what is advance is determined by men.

Even the issue of having a “Basics Course” is fraught with these same kinds of problems—the major problem being, that a MAN and his human wisdom figures out what is “basic” and what is not—and then he figures out what order those basic things are taught in—as if God never did give this any thought of His own and just left it up to “great men of God” to figure all this out.

(1-2) Sonship Orientation

My point is that if any of these were actually producing everything that was needed, there would be no need for the next, newest, breakthrough teaching. And while all of these may be put forward with the best of intentions, they are not what your heavenly Father holds out for a justified person in the dispensation of grace. He wants to educate you in your sonship.

So, if you are one of those who knows that you are saved and you have that firmly settled in your mind and you are wondering, “what next,” then sonship is the answer you have been looking for. And I can say this with confidence because a man didn’t write the curriculum, a man didn’t organize it and a man is not who decided what was important and what wasn’t. In sonship, it is God who decides all of that.

Sonship has a curriculum devised by God and set down in writing, in His word, in the order in which He wants it to be learned, whereby He is going to impart and instill and install His very own character in His son or daughter so that His son will think the way He Himself thinks; and so that His son will live the way He Himself lives; and so that His son will then enter into laboring with His Father in all that His Father is doing in all His Father’s business.

Sonship education and edification is a grand honor and privilege of God’s grace in this dispensation of gentile grace in which we live. We need to recognize it as the grand privilege that it is! Unfortunately, because of the efforts of Satan’s policy of evil to keep this from getting into the hands of believers, only a handful of believers are ever going to hear what you are about to hear and fewer still are going to be educated properly and edified the way you are about to be.

You should know that if the Adversary fights to keep the mystery a mystery (and he does) and if he fights to keep saints from ‘rightly dividing the word of truth’ (and he does) and if he fights even harder to keep saints from recognizing the Bible’s final authority and its sense & sequence (and he does) then he will fight his hardest to keep saints from ever being properly educated and edified as sons of God.

The Basic Background to Sonship:

The apostle Paul now in Romans 8 brings up for the very first time the issue of us being “the sons of God.” From now on we’re going to be talking a lot about being sons of God, but I want to just say something in connection with that phraseology. When I refer to being sons of God, I want you to know that that phrase includes the ladies. That is, even though you ladies are properly referred to as ‘daughters,’ when you take the concept of both men and women and you want to talk about them as one group of individuals in regard to them being sons and daughters, in order for you to not have to say ‘sons and daughters’ all the time, you can refer to the whole category as simply “sons.”

It’s much like the generic use of the word “men” or “man” or “mankind,” which includes both men and women.

Next, I want you to notice something very special about that term “son” or the phrase “sons of God” because the truth of the matter is, Paul is not talking about us being sons of God in any old way; he’s talking about it

(1-2) Sonship Orientation

in a very specialized way.

When we think about being sons of God, most folks commonly don't think about it the way Paul is using that expression in Romans 8:14.

The truth of the matter is that the Bible uses the word "son" in many different ways and not every time the word son being used in the Bible is it being used to talk about the same thing.

For example "son" is used to describe:

- 1) A Paternal/Genetic Son—Gen. 4:17 (1st use); II Sam. 19:4; Acts 16:1
- 2) The 2nd Member of the Godhead; the Son of God; the Lord Jesus Christ Himself—Mat. 11:27; 16:16; Luke 19:10
- 3) A son in the faith—(Timothy & Titus) I Tim. 1:2; Titus 1:4

Most folks, when they think about being "sons" of God, only have an understanding of being referred to as 'a son of God' in connection with something that was said in the Bible. And the passage that most people think of is John 1:12.

John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name:

Because of this passage, most believers only think of themselves as God's sons in the sense of, or in connection with belonging to the FAMILY OF GOD. What this passage is referring to is to those members of the remnant who responded positively to the ministry of the Christ, and the kingdom gospel He presented to them and they became believers in Christ and were justified unto eternal life. It's a passage that has the basic issue of REGENERATION in view! These people (the remnant of Israel) are in the family of God; they're CHILDREN of God through regeneration.

So, that gives us another use of the word "son:"

- 4) A Regenerated Son—John 1:11-13

But that is not the way Paul is using "sons" in Romans 8. Because of the change in terminology, we are made to understand that Paul is making a distinction between "sons" and "children." Take a look at these verses.

Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the **sons** of God.

Romans 8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the **children** of God:

So let's be clear about this; the apostle Paul does not consider "sons" and "children" as being the same thing. This distinction shows up in that we, in this dispensation of grace, are not only children of God (by being regenerated and members of the family of God,) but we're something more than that: we're sons of God by means of a specialized process.

(1-2) Sonship Orientation

The way the apostle Paul uses the word son here in Romans 8:14 is different than the way you find it in most other places in the Bible. Unfortunately, when most people read what Paul says about us being sons of God, (either in Romans 8 or in Galatians 4) what most often comes to their minds is that passage in John 1:12. What you need to recognize is that God does indeed refer to you as a “son” in the Bible, but there is a very special issue in connection with it that sets it apart from anything else, and every other category of son that exists in the Bible.

Here in Romans 8:14, Paul brings up the issue of us being “the sons of God,” but as he does it, he makes it clear that it is a very special category of sons, not only because he distinguishes it from being a child of regeneration, but also because he attaches one very specialized issue on it that sets it apart from all other aspects of being sons in God’s word. And it is a dispensational issue!

Notice that special issue of how you got this sonship status:

Romans 8:15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but **ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.**

The sonship Paul is speaking about in Romans 8 is a sonship status we received by means of ADOPTION; we are adopted sons of God!

It is important for you to have an appreciation for what it means to be a son of God within this present dispensation of grace. You need to understand the fantastic liberty you have from the flesh and from

a system that appeals to your flesh. You need to appreciate how God deals with you and treats you as a son, an adult son, an adult adopted son, in this dispensation of Gentile grace!

And that is the 5th way that the word “son” is used in the Bible:

5) ADOPTED SONS OF GOD—Rom. 8:14-15; Gal. 4:5

It is necessary for you to realize that sonship is not merely the issue of being a member of the ‘family of God!’ Along with that, you’ve got to appreciate that the Father has 2 ways of dealing

with His heir: 1) as a child and 2) as a son—an adopted son!

Not only is their inheritance different, but the Father is going to deal with those 2 “heirs” very differently. This is good time for us to examine a few of the differences between “children” and “sons.”

Firstly, children have RESTRICTIONS placed on them while sons have

LIBERTY! When your Heavenly Father deals with you today as

“sons,” He is no longer dealing with you and treating you as a child, but He is dealing with you as an ADULT son.

- And when the Father treated His heirs as children, He did so under the law—under the tutor & governor system of the law.

- And that means that God has 2 basic systems of operation in dealing

(1-2) Sonship Orientation

with His heirs:

- 1) Children—in “time past” under the law with its system of tutors and governors.
- 2) Adult ADOPTED Sons—in this “but now” dispensation of grace in which we live—with freedom and liberty through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (i.e., by means of walking after the Spirit, minding the things of the Spirit, being in the capacity of the Spirit, and all that you’ve learned so far in the doctrine of your godly sanctified position in Christ!)

Our heavenly Father utilizes a specialized and unique method in making us His sons, which the Scripture refers to as “adoption.” We not only see this term here in Romans 8:15, but we will run into the term again later on in the book of Galatians. Normally, I would not “jump you ahead” of where we are in the curriculum, but I want to show you this verse for a couple of reasons. Firstly, just to demonstrate that “adoption” is a Bible doctrine that we will continue to encounter and secondly, the verse in Galatians shows us that the primary reason that God sent His Son to redeem us is so that He could adopt us as His sons.

Galatians 4:4 But when the fulness of the time was come, **God sent forth his Son**, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, **that we might receive the adoption of sons.**

Now you are beginning to get an idea of just how important this issue of “adoption” is to our heavenly Father. And if it is that important to him, then it ought to be important to you too.

Now let’s talk about what the Bible is referring to when it brings up our adoption. Biblical adoption is not the same thing that we think of today when we talk about adoption. Today, when we talk about adoption, we refer to the process whereby we bring into our family a child that was born to someone else. For some reason (death, inability to care for the child, etc.) the child is given up by the birth parents and the child is then brought into another family through the court system.

I have heard preachers teach that we are all “orphans,” so God has adopted us. But that is not what the Bible is driving at when it speaks of our adoption. That is an attempt to make biblical adoption match up with adoption as we practice in our western culture. The truth of the matter is that Bible-style adoption is very different from what we call adoption today.

When I talk about “Bible-style” adoption, I am referring to adoption as it was understood and practiced by the Greeks and the Hebrew people. Adoption itself was different, the basis behind adoption was different and the “who” involved in adoption could be very different. Adoption today is for a child outside of our family and the motivation for adoption is often pity or love for some orphaned, unfortunate child. And while it may not be the only factor in today’s adoptions, there certainly is quite a bit of emotion involved in the process.

The Adoption that Paul refers to is different. It usually does not involve a child from another family and it is not because a child has lost his parents and although there may be some “emotions” involved, that is far from the primary thought and feeling involved in the process.

Biblically, adoption was for the natural-born children of a family. That is, a Father would adopt His natural son or daughter. And this was not unusual, but rather, it was the rule. The primary

(1-2) Sonship Orientation

motivation for adoption was not pit or some strong emotion of rescue, but it had in mind the welfare of the family's name and the family's business. It is true that on occasion, a man might adopt a son or daughter outside of his own natural children. It may be that he had no children of his own. There is another circumstance that may arise that would have a man adopting someone other than his natural children, but we will discuss that a little later.

If it turns out that a child from outside the family was adopted, it put that adopted son or daughter into a position of legally having the same rights, privileges and liberties as the father's natural son.

But, as was said, this biblical style adoption was done for the sake of the father's name, and/or the father's business.

In adoption, the father would be looking for some specific traits in the son or daughter he would adopt. The father did not just want a son that would be able to carry on the family business, but one that would carry on that business with the same commitment and dedication that he had. The father would want a son that possessed his wisdom and way of thinking. In other words, the father wanted a son who would carry on the business exactly as the father himself would.

To accomplish this adoption, the father would look over his sons, and if he found one that was willing and able to be educated in his father's business, then the father would adopt that son and begin personally teaching all about his business. He would teach the son the way he (the father) thought, and pass on all his wisdom and experience to his son. This was so that his son would take on his father's thinking, and living, and then as he labored in his father's business, all of his dealings were as if it were the father, himself who was engaged in the business. It would really be, "Like father, like son!"

But sometimes the father would look over his own, natural born sons, and still not be able to find one with the desire, the drive, and the ability to be educated properly as his son. In that case, the father could look outside the family and find a child that would fit the bill (so to speak), and he would then adopt a child that was not natural born. The father would take that son (or daughter) and begin to educate them so they could enter into laboring with father in all his business.

This was done so that the integrity and the success and the character of the father and the father's business could be successfully passed on from generation to generation. It was a way to not only keep the integrity of the father's name and the father's business strong, but to insure that it would continue getting even stronger and more powerful as time went on. In other words, it was a way to ensure the father's business against corruption, weakness, attack and ultimately, failure!

In the Greco-Roman world, an unadopted child differed very little, oftentimes, from a slave. But when adoption took place, the change was dramatic! The adoption procedure was usually a pretty formal affair with a lot of symbolic tradition contained in it. It usually involved the child exchanging his clothing; the toga of his youth was taken off and he had put on him the toga virilis (the toga of his adulthood.)

(1-2) Sonship Orientation

The adopted son would receive his father's ring, which gave him the same authority over his father's business, holdings and money and it gave him the same powerful stature as his father in the eyes of his country. (Remember this had to be done, even with a natural-born son!)

The result of all this ceremony of adoption was that the son would now enjoy all the rights, the honor, the privileges and liberty as the father. But perhaps one of the most striking aspect of being an adopted son

in the ancient world had to do with the position that the son had only through being adopted; that is, (and this is critical), an adopted son had a far stronger position than a natural-born child.

He had a permanently fixed, powerfully strong legal standing that was greater than any naturally-born son or heir that hadn't been adopted! That was very important when it came to dealing with estates, wills, contracts and all the legal issues surrounding the father's holdings and the father's estate.

In fact, an ancient Roman-Syrian law book lays down the principle that a father can never put away an adopted son and he cannot put away a real (natural-born) son without good legal grounds. But the remarkable fact is that the adopted son held a stronger position by his adoption than a natural son had by birth. In fact, this Roman-Syrian law book actually gives an account of a natural-born son who had been put away by his

father, and then restored to favor with his father, but then he did something to get himself put away a second time. In this account the natural-born son complains that this second rejection by his father is illegal inasmuch as his restoration to favor put him on a level with an adopted son who cannot be turned away in that fashion. It is interesting that the position he is turning to is the adopted position, not the natural-son position.

These are just some of the issues concerning the particular frame of mind behind the concept of adoption as it was used in the ancient world and this is exactly how it is being used by Paul in Romans 8.

But there is another very important element to understand when thinking about God dealing with you as an adopted son of His. When you are an adopted son, you are considered by your Father to be an ADULT SON. Therefore, you now have greater privileges and greater advantages. Most of all, you now have the freedom and liberty that goes along with being an adult son.

That means that the Father is going to treat his adopted son DIFFERENTLY than He would treat His unadopted child! When we're talking about this biblically, that difference has to do with how the child (during childhood) was being raised. He was raised under the system of tutors and governors, which is exactly how a child was raised under the law.

That's why this issue of sonship education is a dispensational issue, because a child who was under the system of tutors and governors could NEVER be properly raised or properly educated as an "adopted son."

(1-2) Sonship Orientation

If you are familiar with the purpose behind the law and the events that led up to it being given to Israel, then you are aware that the law is actually a system of dealing with people, not as adults, but as

children. It is a “tutor and governor” system, which is how you deal with little children. It is a system designed to deal with immature children that require a check & balance system to keep them in line, to chasten and discipline them and in many ways, restrict their fellowship with the parent in many of the activities of adults. That’s how God dealt with his people, Israel, under the law in “time past.” So let’s look at that ‘tutor and governor’ aspect of the law over in Galatians.

Galatians 4:1 Now I say, *That* the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; 2 But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

The tutor and governor system is actually another function or another aspect of the law (we have seen several functions and purposes of the law so far in the book of Romans.) We have already seen that the law functions to: manifest sin, to give sin dominion and to make sin exceeding sinful. Now we see another function of the law; it acts as a

tutor and governor over the child under that law in which certain restrictions are placed upon the child who is under that law and the child doesn’t have the opportunity to enjoy certain liberties.

One of the great privileges you have as an adopted son is the privilege of making decisions on your own! It is important to recognize that a father did not deal with his son in childhood as he does when his son is an adult. That should not be hard to understand for almost every parent deals with their children in just the same way.

Notice that vs. 1 says that the child, even though he is the heir, is not different from a servant as long as he is child. This has to do with issues of liberty, decision-making, and privilege.

But, just as vs. 2 says, there is an “appointed time” when the father begins dealing with his son as an adult. At that time, the father no longer employs the same tactics and the same methods that he used with his son in childhood when he was bringing him up and dealing with him in that immature, irresponsible state; in other words, when the child was a “minor.”

A minor has a lot of restrictions put on him and that is the way it should be. He doesn’t get the liberty and responsibility to do things on his own.

Children have to be watched constantly and told what to do. (That’s exactly what being under the law is like.)

One of the ways that the child (the minor) was dealt with by the father when he was still in childhood was to place him under a “tutor.”

(1-2) Sonship Orientation

This is a term we are all familiar with to some degree.

Most commonly, a tutor is seen as someone who gives you some kind of private instruction or private lessons in math, English or some other subject.

But as it was used in the ancient world, (and as it is being used by the apostle Paul here in Galatians) the tutor is a person who has been entrusted by a father to bring up his child in the basic, elementary education that that child needs. Along with that, the tutor has also been entrusted to employ a measure of discipline and chastening on that child, especially in connection with teaching him **RIGHT FROM WRONG**.

The way we commonly think of a tutor does have some of these characteristics, but we have kind of taken a lot of things out of that word tutor that were originally part & parcel of the tutor's job. A tutor was far more than just someone who helps another person out in a given subject in school! (That's a very limited use of that word!)

In fact, even when Shakespeare wrote during the time of the KJ translators, and you find the word tutor being employed, it had a far greater and far larger scope to it than being just someone who comes

along and helps you out in a subject at school. Tutors (a child would have many tutors during his childhood) were those people who were in charge of providing a basic education, **PLUS** they also had the 'strap' on their belt (because the child is being taught right from wrong.) If the child stepped out of line, the tutor was entrusted to chasten child.

Actually, the child came to fear the tutor. Look again at Romans 8:15 and you will see that concept.

Romans 8:15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

The tutor was the individual who put the fear and the motivation of the father in the child. Under the law, that's how you operated and were dealt with because, if you didn't perform, not only would you lose the blessing, but at the same time you'd also get all the "curses."

A basic understanding of the duties of a tutor was that he was entrusted with giving the child a basic education in knowing right from wrong **AND** he's in charge of disciplining the child when the child does wrong and he can withhold something from the child if he fails to do what is right.

There is a second person mentioned over in Galatians that also has responsibility toward the child; the governor.

Galatians 4:1 Now I say, *That* the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; 2 But is under tutors and **governors** until the time appointed of the father.

(1-2) Sonship Orientation

A governor is a little bit different from a tutor. When you think about a governor (not as a person, but as a thing like a governor on an engine) it's a kind of gizmo that is used to regulate the gas or steam or water or whatever, to ensure an even and regular motion.

When you bring that over into talking about a person called a governor, he's the one who governs what you do and where you go and when you go; much like a pilot or steersman of a ship.

The governor tells you what you can do in certain situations and actually, what we're after in the concept of a governor, is that the main issue involved in a governor is that he is the one who **MAKES DECISIONS FOR YOU**.

In the childhood situation, the father entrusted the tutor with the basic education and discipline of the child for a given amount of time during the day (say from 9:00am until 3:00pm.) But the governor lived right in the house; he was there all the time! It was the governor who was entrusted with the overall supervision of the child 24 hrs. a day.

The governor was the one who determined how the child would be entertained; determined what sports the child would play; determined where the child could go, etc. That is, the governor made all the decisions of that child. And if there was anything the child wanted to do, he had to ask the governor if he could do it or not. This was not necessarily on the basis of whether it was right or wrong, but the governor made the decision and the child didn't have any liberty at all.

In essence, the governor oversaw the child's overall **WELFARE**, and made decisions for the child with respect to what was to the benefit of the child. Understand that it was by the "tutor and governor" that the father treated his child. That's why Paul says what he does in Galatians 4:1 that the child "differeth nothing from a servant."

A servant is **TOLD** what to do, what not to do and given orders, etc. Paul is saying that's how a father treats his child, even though that "child, being the heir, is lord of all. But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. "

Notice it's in the plural (tutors and governors) - and that's because the tutor and governor principle stays with him as he grows through childhood and adolescence. As a general rule in Paul's day, the age at which things changed was around 22. They said that the span of the age of childhood was from 0-22. Our system of education today still operates on that principle; 22 is about the age you get out of university. (Even though no child from about the age of 12 wants to think of himself as a child—he's an adolescent.)

Our laws and system of governing today recognizes the age of about 18-21 as the line of demarcation whereby one becomes treated as an adult, (no longer a minor.)

There is one other very important thing to recognize about this issue of

(1-2) Sonship Orientation

being a child with tutors and governors over you: all of the issues involving childhood actually RESTRICT the child's FELLOWSHIP with the father. The tutors and governors come between the child and the father. The child actually sees more of the tutors and governors than he sees or spends time with his father. But that all changes when the father no longer is treating his son as a child, but begins treating his child as an adult son.

Just as Paul lays it out in Galatians 4, in "time past" under the law system (and actually, *because* of the law) the father's fellowship was restricted by the "tutors and governors" system of that law.

Galatians 4:3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: 4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Under the law, fellowship with the father was restricted to only learning "about the father." The child had no right to make decisions on his own. If he messed up, he got the rod of chastening. The child was always stuck with the basics, with the fundamentals, and that always under the threat and fear of suffering the consequences for doing something wrong.

That system of operation existed until a particular time (a time "appointed") and at that time an entirely new system of operation was brought in. That new system could be encapsulated in the term:

LIBERTY! It's liberty from that law system of tutors and governors.

Galatians 5:1 Stand fast therefore **in the liberty** wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Galatians 5:13 For, brethren, **ye have been called unto liberty**; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

One of the most basic and fundamental issues in sonship education is that the father does away with the "tutor and governor system" and begins to deal with his adopted son PERSONALLY himself. Any further education that is needed will be provided by the father and this is going to provide for an intimacy of fellowship which the child never had before. Now, the son is in a position to appreciate the closeness of the relationship. As a result, the son will be extended the great privilege and liberty to make his own decisions about the details of his life!

That is pretty much how things work for you and me today. Once you become an adult, you don't always call up your mom or dad and ask their permission to make decisions concerning the details of your life. If you are thinking about buying a new couch for your living room, you do not call up your folks and ask their permission. You make your own decisions; that's what adulthood is about.

We all recognize that things change when you become an adult and they are supposed to. If you continue to behave as a child that would be unnatural and dysfunctional. But, that is exactly how most saved people act when it comes to their relationship with their heavenly Father who has

(1-2) Sonship Orientation

now declared them to be an adult, adopted son with liberty. In spite of the fact that God now sees them as adults, they still want to behave like children under the “tutors and governors” and they continue to operate in the relationship of a child who is still in that tutor and governor system.

As you go through the whole curriculum of your sonship education, you are going to learn much about the liberty you have as a son. But for now, the main thing to focus on is that, as an adopted son, you have been given the liberty to make decisions on your own. In contrast to how God dealt with Israel under the law, the basic issue for us (adopted sons in the dispensation of grace) is that God has given you the responsibility, the liberty and the privilege of making your own decisions concerning His will in the details of your life.

As an adopted son, your heavenly Father is dealing with you very differently from the way He dealt with Israel whom He put under the tutors and governors system of the law. Instead of that, He has given you the liberty of making decisions on your own and the relationship He wants with you is that of a Father and an adult son (or daughter.)

Under the law, the children of Israel had set up for them a system of judges that were charged with all the decision making for the members of the nation of Israel. Everything was decided FOR them; they were not left to making any decisions on their own. The judges would hear each case and then make a discerning interpretation in connection with the law, and then tell that individual God’s will for that particular instance.

If someone brought a matter before the judges in which it was particularly difficult to determine God’s will, it would be passed along to a higher and higher decision-making body. The system was that first, a man would take his decision before a tribal head (prince.) If he could not make a decision then it would go to a higher set of judges. If they could not determine the correct course of action it could eventually wind up coming before the high priest. The high priest wore a breastplate called the “breastplate of judgment” which contained two stones called the “Urim and Thummim (the lights and perfection.)” The high priest would pull out one of the stones (casting lots.) The answer to what was God’s will would depend upon which color stone came out, the white or the black and that would determine God’s will. But one thing is certain, that Israelite could not make that decision on his own.

There was no freedom or liberty for an individual Israelite to make a decision on his own with respect to the will of God in any of the details of his life. The reason God dealt with them thusly has to do with them entering into the law contract, which put them in a relationship as children and hence, under the “tutorship and governorship” of the law. The law told them what they could and could not eat, what kind of material they could and could not make their clothes out of, when they could and could not work; in short, it regulated every part of their lives.

But that’s NOT the way in which a member of the church the body of Christ is supposed to operate today. A pastor is not to be equipped with a Urim and Thummim in order to determine God’s will for the people in the assembly. In fact, a pastor of a church has NO RIGHT to tell you what the will of God is in the details of your life. I know there are plenty of them out there that like to govern everyone and control what they do and don’t do. If you have a pastor that is doing that, and if you approve of doing that, then he is your tutor and governor, and you are

(1-2) Sonship Orientation

refusing to act like an adult son. Instead, you're determined to act like a child! Sadly, that's exactly how most of the members of the church, the body of Christ, are acting today.

The truth of the matter is, the doctrine of sonship is one of the most misunderstood and neglected doctrines in the entire dispensation of grace. All that most Christians ever get is the idea that they are sons. But they never get how they are supposed to LIVE as sons or how to function as sons to God's honor and glory!

The remarkable part of this is that you have it right now; you don't have to wait until this life is over and you get displayed as sons in heaven. We have the privilege of doing so right now! God expects us, as sons in this dispensation of grace, to act like sons, to think like sons and to live like sons.

All throughout our epistles (Romans-Philemon) EVERYTHING the apostle Paul teaches us, EVERY exhortation he gives us, it is ALL in accordance with us being SONS, walking as sons and living as sons.

Therefore, you are not to expect God to treat you as a child. You are not to live like a child and you should not expect God to treat you as He did His CHILDREN of Israel in "time past" when He had them under that tutor & governor principle of the law.

Instead, expect God to treat you as the adult son or daughter He's made you to be. As you go through the sonship curriculum, you will see many differences between the way an adult son is treated from that of a child. But for now, I would like for us to briefly look at just a few of those important differences.

(1) Freedom from fear motivation. (Rom. 8:14-15)

As a son, you don't have "the spirit of bondage again to fear" The spirit of bondage is that law system with its tutor and governor structure that God utilized in "time past" with His nation Israel as His heirs.

The law was called bondage because that was exactly what it was; a yoke of bondage. You have already been taught by Paul that the law binds you to sin's mastership. It binds you to only operate on the weakness of your flesh. But in addition to that, now you need to understand that the law has an additional aspect of bondage to it. It carries the bondage of a tutor and governor system.

As such, it binds you to being treated as an immature, irresponsible child. It binds you to be subject to extreme discipline, strict discipline for failures. It binds you to a restricted relationship with God your Heavenly Father. It binds you to great limitations on what you can know and what you can learn. It binds you from being able to function on your own as an adult.

The law has a great number of ways in which it can bind you and therefore it's called a spirit of bondage. But there is still something else the law binds you to, it also binds you to the issue of FEAR as the reason for why you do things.

(1-2) Sonship Orientation

In contrast to the fear motivation of the law, under sonship you have liberty and you are free from being motivated to do things because of fear. That is a marvelous privilege of God's grace to you!

In this dispensation of grace, we are free from that tutor and governor system. When it comes to learning what God wants us to learn, He is not dealing with us as with a tutor that carried the strap (the rod of correction.) When you don't learn what you ought or when you don't conform to what you have learned, He does not punish you like you are a child, but now He is going to deal with you as an adult.

For us, God hasn't put a supervisor over us to tell us what we ought to do, what God's will is in a particular matter or to make all our decisions for us (what we should wear, where we can go, etc.) We've been delivered from all that because we are not being dealt with as children; we have the liberty of adulthood. And you need to appreciate—really appreciate—just how great that is!

Misunderstanding what the law was and why it was given causes many people to think that living under the law is just wonderful. But you need to understand clearly that living under the law system (the tutors and governors system) was never designed to be 'wonderful.' SONSHIP, with all its adult sonship liberty, is wonderful! Sonship carries the wonderful liberty of grace!

The most foolish thing any member of the church the body of Christ could ever do, in view of who God has made you to be "in Christ" and given you the position in Christ He's given you as adult sons, is to go back and live under that law!

So we have as our first major & fundamental contrast or distinction or benefit of being treated as sons in this dispensation of grace as opposed to the childhood treatment of the children of Israel under the law's system of tutors and governors: 1) Freedom from fear motivation. (Rom. 8:14-15)

Just so that you see the difference clearly, you can go back to passages in God's program with Israel (especially passages back when that law system was brought in there in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and

Deuteronomy) where God had Moses tell Israel that certain things were taking place so that the fear of God would be in their hearts!

Leviticus 25:17 Ye shall not therefore oppress one another; but thou shalt **fear thy God**: for I am the LORD your God.

Leviticus 26:14 But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; ¹⁵ And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, *but* that ye break my covenant: ¹⁶ **I also will do this unto you**; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it.

(1-2) Sonship Orientation

Deuteronomy 4:10 Specially the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that **they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth**, and that they may teach their children.

Deuteronomy 6:2 That thou mightest **fear the LORD thy God**, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged.

Deuteronomy 6:13 **Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God**, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.

Deuteronomy 6:24 And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, **to fear the LORD our God**, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day.

Deuteronomy 8:6 Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and **to fear him**.

Deuteronomy 10:12 And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but **to fear the LORD thy God**, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul,

Deuteronomy 10:20 **Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God**; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name.

Deuteronomy 13:4 Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and **fear him**, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.

I think you get the point; the law brought the bondage of FEAR and the way the entire law contract was set up was to effect proper behavior through the motivation of FEAR. You step out of line you get judged, cursed, punished!

Hebrews 10:28 He that despised Moses' law **died without mercy** under two or three witnesses:

In view of what God has given you by His grace in Christ Jesus, the motivation for you and I to live as sons in honor and as well-pleasing in God's sight is the issue of love, gratitude, thanksgiving, and appreciation for what God has done for us by His grace! In this dispensation of grace, IF GRACE ISN'T MOTIVATING YOU, GOD ISN'T MOTIVATING YOU!

In our next session, we will take up the next liberty that we have as "sons." There are only 3 that we are going to acquaint ourselves with right here at the start, but they are foundational for properly seeing the difference in how God is dealing with us today from how He dealt with Israel in time past.