

(117-118) Sonship Orientation

Let me give you a homework assignment right off the bat. As we come to the end of Sonship Orientation, I want you to begin looking ahead to what is coming next, Sonship Establishment.

Romans 8 is the longest chapter in the book of Romans. We already know that the chapter is broken into parts.

- Romans 8:1-13 – what it means to “walk after the Spirit
- Romans 8:14-15 – 3rd component of Sanctification; sons of God
- Romans 8:16-39 – Sonship Establishment

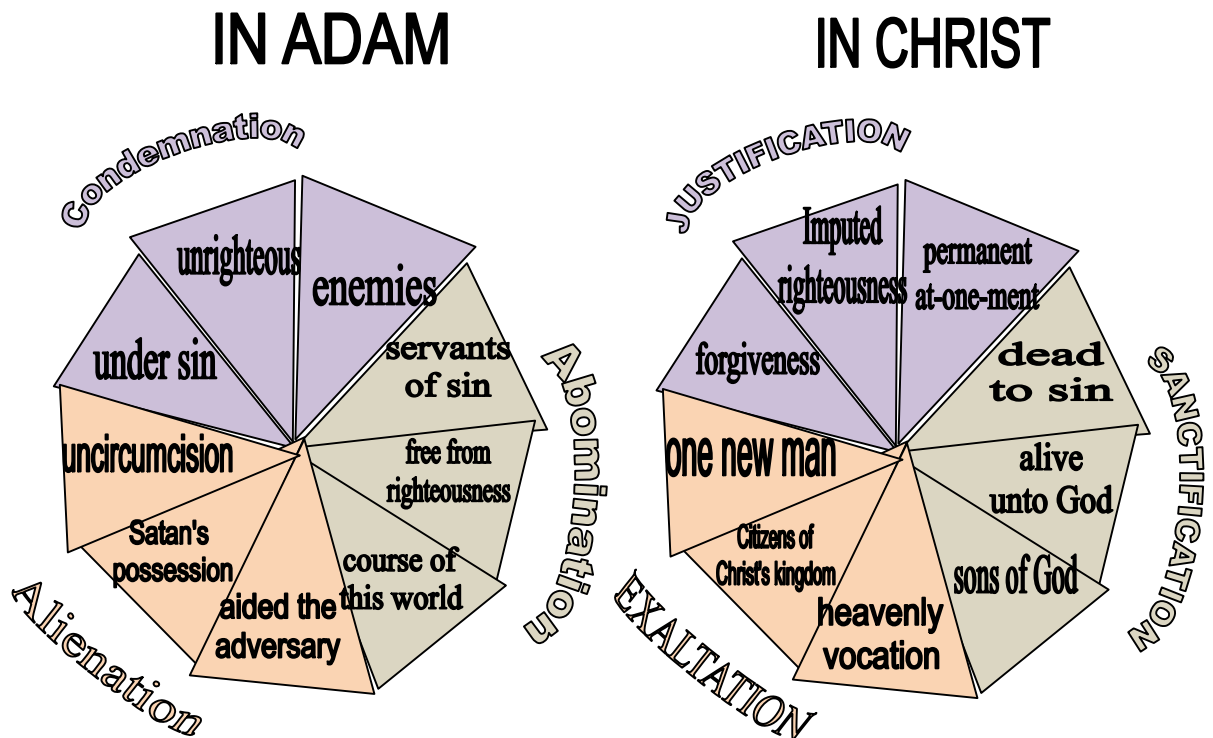
It is that last part (vv. 16-39), that I’m interested in. Over the next week or two, I want you to begin reading the remainder of the chapter and looking at it to see if you can observe the “parts” of that section of the chapter. What I am telling you is that vv. 16-39 can be divided into at least two parts, maybe more, or maybe only two, but that is what I want you to see for yourself. Don’t worry about dealing with details or sub-components, but just the major breaks or major components that forms the doctrine contained in the remainder of chapter 8.

Now, one last thing. As we get ready to move into Romans 8:14-15, you have to know what it means to “walk in the Spirit.” If you can define walking after the Spirit as walking after who the Spirit has made you to be in Jesus Christ, then you are exactly right.

So, who has the Spirit made you to be in Christ? What makes up this new identity that you were given the moment you trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior?

As we identify these components of our new identity in Christ, notice that some of them have to do with your justification and others have to do with your sanctification. There are even some that deal with your exaltation, but we haven’t covered those yet, so we won’t concern ourselves with those just yet.

Just as there are three major components to our position “in Christ” after we are saved, there are also three major components to our former position “in Adam.” As you will see, each of these components are made up of three parts. The illustration gives us a basic over-view of our standing “in Adam.” In Christ, these have been replaced in accordance with our new identification with Him.



Now, if this represents your understanding of your new identity in Christ, and you know that to “walk after the Spirit” is to conduct yourself in accordance with this new identity, then you are ready to move on to Romans 8:14-15.

In order to do this, let's transition out of vs. 13.

Romans 8:12 **Therefore**, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.
13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but **if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body**, ye shall live.

Notice that verse 13 presents another “if” to us. This would naturally raise the question, “How do I, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of my body?” Or you may be wondering “how many more “things of the Spirit” am I supposed to be “mindful of?”

It is as though you get to vs. 13 and you realize that there are some details and features that you still need to know. That statement introduces us to what we are told in the next two verses and to the role of Holy Spirit as “the Spirit of adoption!” I've got to know more about that Spirit of God *dwelling* in me and *quickening* my mortal body.

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.

The “*For*” of vs. 14 tells you that God is about to give you an explanation for the questions that are now in our mind. As you read those two verses, the first thing that catches your eye is the use of the word “sons.” This is the first time, in the book of Romans, that this expression has been used this way. In the book of Romans, up to this point, the word “*Son*” has been used five times (1:3, 4, & 9; 5:10; 8:3). But all 5 have been referring to the Lord Jesus Christ as a capital “S” *Son*.

Romans 8:14 is the 1st time “*sons*” (small case “s”) is used to refer to us! By use of this term “sons,” you are made to realize that all that terminology back in the previous 13 verses (i.e., “walk in the Spirit, don’t walk after the flesh, mind the things of the Spirit, the Spirit dwelling in you, the quickening of your mortal body, etc.”) **is a description of how God deals with sons!**

You would not ever have been given the information of Romans 8:1-13 if you were a child, under the Law, in Israel’s program.

Therefore, the “*For*” is a further explanation and amplification of what it means to walk after the Spirit - to mind the things of the Spirit - to be in the Spirit - to have the Spirit of God dwell in you - for the Spirit of God to quicken your mortal body - and through the Spirit, mortifying the deeds of the body.

In other words, it’s a further detailed analysis of how you are to functionally live unto God. Therefore, everything you’re going to get from now on is going to address that issue!

Let me ask you a question. In Israel’s time past part of their program, when they were JUEL, did they “receive the Spirit” or were they “given the Spirit” as part of their Justification? The answer is “no.” And they were not spoken to with the terms of Romans 8:1-13.

But you and I are spoken to about things in our “inner man” just as we were told that we were “given” the Spirit when we were JUEL. And now, we see all of that defined as the way God deals with His sons. When God talks to you about what the Spirit is doing in your inner man, He is describing how He deals with sons!

Now, just to pick up on something I touched on before; the breakdown of Romans 8 with its component parts, I want to make sure we all realize that verses 14 & 15 form one complete component part.

Furthermore, it is important for you know what vv. 14-15 are designed to do. Or, to say it another way, what is it that vv. 14-15 provide for? I want to make sure you know what these 2 verses are designed to do, so what is it that they are designed to do?

They are designed to give the son his initial, basic **ORIENTATION TO SONSHIP EDIFICATION!** Therefore, Romans 8:14-15 comprise **SONSHIP ORIENTATION**. And while it may seem like there isn’t much to these two verses, the truth is, there are many things packed into these 2 verses; things that orient the son, or introduce him to, or brief him (give him his bearings, if you will) with respect to what his functional, sanctified life is all going to be about.

At this point, before going into the details of what vv. 14-15 say, I think it's now the appropriate time, as we begin to look at our sonship edification in the curriculum God wrote for us, to do something that probably has only rarely been done in history and that quite possibly has almost never been done in the presence of any living Christian today.

You already know that exhortations precede doctrine and therefore, before we cover the doctrine of Romans 8:14-15, I'm going to give you a pre-doctrinal exhortation in keeping with how a pastor or bishop of a local assembly is to function, NOT as an "*instructor in Christ*," but as a "*father*!"

And it is important for you to get this exhortation even before we look at what it means to be "led by the Spirit." There is a critical aspect to all of this, more so that perhaps you realize.

This exhortation isn't simply going back to Proverbs 1. So here we are in Romans 8:14 and we've cracked open the door (so to speak) by addressing the very first word: "*For*." That word "for" makes it so that we have a proper, smooth, seamless, connection with vs.14 to the preceding information sitting in the first 13 verses of chapter 8. The reason that is important is because what is happening in vv. 14-15 can't just appear out of thin air, so to speak. It has to be connected to something you have already been given. And the word "for" makes that connection.

When you "*read*" the verse, your eye, probably more than anything else in the verse, hits on that last phrase: "***they are the sons of God.***" This is the answer to the question, "How am I going to get my new position in Christ operating in me?" Answer: as "***sons of God***"! That's how it's going to happen, as "sons of God."

When that phrase "sons of God," strikes your eye, a whole flood of information should be coming into your thinking. If you have been following the doctrine through in the manner of a biblical theology, then there are some things you are already expected to know and it is those things which should be in your mind when you read that verse.

The most fundamental and basic concept you should have in your thinking is provoked by the use of that one word; "sons." Paul doesn't explain it but you should already know about what it means to be an adopted son and you should know about it out of God's program with Israel.

But there is something even more fundamental than that. At the very outset of sonship edification, there is something God wants you to know, and this is the critical part I mentioned to you earlier. **Your Father wants you to have a deep appreciation for the kind of relationship you and He are going to have from now on!**

The very first thing a father does when, at the time appointed of the father, when he adopts his son, at that exact same time He makes a public declaration.

The process goes something like this:

- He adopts his son
- He then makes an official pronouncement or declaration
- The son is adopted, and then pronounced as a son of his father

This is easy to see in the life of Jesus. He is adopted at age 12 where He is going to be about His Father's business. This phrase, sitting in Romans 8:14, is supposed to jog your memory and remind you of things back in God's word where this very issue is brought up; the issue of declaring a son, the pronouncement of a son.

Think back to Christ's baptism in Matthew 3.

Matthew 3:16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: 17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, **This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.**

Now notice the terminology used here and following. When Jesus was baptized, the Spirit descended upon Him. Then, the Father makes a pronouncement. Then, what happens next, following the Father's declaration?

Matthew 4:1 Then was **Jesus led up of the Spirit** into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

The Spirit, which had descended Jesus is now going to lead Him; "Jesus was led of the Spirit." Does that terminology ring a bell with you?

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

Jesus is declared a son and the next thing is that He is "led by the Spirit." You are declared a son and guess what – you are going to be "led by the Spirit."

But we can take this back even further than this. We can go back to another declaration which contains this first, fundamental issue that a son has to be confronted with. And it may well be that this fundamental issue is the issue with which most of you will have a problem. To see this declaration, let's go to 2 Samuel 7.

2 Samuel 7:4 And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying, 5 Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in? 6 Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle.

I know we covered this in our background material, but I just want to remind you of it by pointing it out once again. In the interlude of mercy, God rolled back the judgments and raised up two men; David and his son, Solomon. In the interlude, he gave Israel a picture of how things would be when the kingdom gets established on the earth. No, it wasn't in its fullness, but it was enough for them to see it.

Now, let's keep reading in 2 Samuel.

2 Samuel 7:7 In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar? 8 Now therefore so shalt thou say unto

my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: 9 And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth. 10 Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime, 11 And as **since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel**, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house.

You know where to place the time of the judges on the timeline, it is the 1st course of punishment. What God was not obligated to do was to deliver the people, but He did. In fact, two of those judges were referred to in a particular manner. One of them was called a Deliverer and the other was called an Avenger. Do you know who those were?

God, in His great wisdom, made a provision within the Law itself, that allowed Him to step outside of the Law and operate with mercy and grace.

Exodus 33:19 And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and **will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.**

This is the provision God made which allowed Him to bring judges in and deliver the people. And by bringing this incident up to David, in 2 Samuel 7, he bringing this kind of thinking (of His Jehovahness and grace) into David's mind.

2 Samuel 7:12 And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up **thy seed after thee**, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build an house for my name, and I will **stablish** the throne of his kingdom for ever. 14 I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: 15 But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. 16 And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever. 17 According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.

The verse I want to focus on is vs. 14.

2 Samuel 7:14 **I will be his father, and he shall be my son.** If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:

This is about Solomon, David's own son. This is a shocking statement; that God will be a "Father" to a man who will be a "son" to God. When you get to book of Proverbs, you see all of this happening in the terminology.

The impact this verse is designed to make is also the one that often gets overlooked; the relationship aspect of all that God intends to do. God means to establish a real "Father/son" relationship.

This is the first, fundamental issue of being “sons of God” is that no matter what you know about God, no matter His attributes and abilities, that is NOT the way God has determined to have a relationship with you. God does not cease to be any of the things that make Him who He is, but He is choosing to have a relationship with you outside of those attributes.

The thing you have to get in your thinking is that He is going to have a genuine, real Father/son relationship with you. This is what “sons” should have conjured up in your thinking in Romans 8:14.

Let me give you an example of God not dealing with regard to His omniscience, omnipotence, etc.

Genesis 3:9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, **Where art thou?**

When you understand sonship, which God intended to have with Adam from the beginning, then you know that the question God is asking is a real question. He has determined not to deal with Adam out of his omniscience. That does not mean that God was not omniscient, but that He did not utilize it in His dealings with Adam.

Could he have used that power and known where Adam was? Of course He could have. But what I’m after is that God is not just “asking for effect.” This is not an anthropomorphism or anthropopathism. It’s not language of accommodation. It is the real way in which God, as a Father deals with man, when he deals with him as a son.

Let me give you another one. The Galatians had ruined their sonship lives by going back under the Law and Paul writes to straighten them out. In the first 4 verses, He reorients them to sonship where even the cry of “Abba, Father” comes up again. But drop down to vs. 8.

Galatians 4:8 Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. 9 But now, after that ye have known God, **or rather are known of God**, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? 10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. 11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

In verse 9, the first phrase of “ye have known God” is fairly easy to recognize. We would say that about someone who has “been saved.” But what about that next phrase, “or rather are known of God.” The scholars see that phrase as a description of the fact that God “knows you.”

This is not a statement of God’s omniscience of God knowing you out of His attributes, but rather this is about God “coming to know you” out of who He is as a Father. We saw this in Psalm 139 where God becomes “acquainted” with David.

This is what this phrase is all about in Romans 8:14, that God is going to function as a real Father to a real son. You can ignore Him day after day after day, but if this is going to work, if you are really going to be “led by the Spirit,” then the very first thing that has to hit you is that your heavenly Father is going to operate with you in a real Father/son relationship. You are going to have to spend time with Him and tell him what it is you want Him to know. He wants to know what you are struggling with. He wants to know what concerns you. This is what

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establishes a real, living, vital relationship. That is the first, fundamental thing that should enter your thinking.

The reason that is such a problem is because most people cannot think of God in other way than as an omnipotent, omniscient God who already knows it all. This is very first step to getting off on the right foot; this a true Father/son relationship. That's how he dealt with Adam, it's how He told David he would deal with Solomon and that's the way He wants to deal with us in this dispensation of grace. It is a relationship that demands attention.

And that's the beginning of your Sonship Orientation.

As we approach our sonship edification, the first thing that has to take place in the inner man of the son is his orientation to being a son of his Father. Sonship edification is the capstone of a saint's sanctified position in Christ, and as such it will be the sphere or umbrella in which all edification is going to take place from now on.

Sonship edification is what all Christian edification is all about. It's the way God Himself has designed and determined for all spiritual growth and spiritual maturity to take place in a believer. It's a curriculum designed and written down by God in the particular order He wants it to be learned and understood.

It doesn't need to be figured out, it just needs to be followed. For us, it's contained in Romans 8:14 - II Thess. 3:18. And the very first component of it is the son's orientation to being educated and edified as a son of his Heavenly Father.

When you look closely at what Romans 8:14-15 says, you are supposed to notice something very important.

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.**

Notice carefully the last couple of phrases in vs. 15. Notice it does NOT say, "*whereby we will cry, Abba, Father.*" That may be the way most people understand when they read the verses, but that is not what it says. It says, "*whereby* (word of logic) *we cry, Abba, Father.*" What does that tell you?

It tells you that what is contained in all of vv. 14-15, down to the word *adoption*, all of that, when it is properly understood and appreciated for all that's packed into those words and phrases, it's **that** information there that causes us to *cry, Abba, Father.* That's what the "whereby" tells you.

In other words, when you read this:

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...

You are supposed to do this:

Romans 8: ¹⁵ ...we cry, Abba, Father.

It is important that you realize that everything contained in those 2 verses, when understood and appreciated, properly **results** in a saint crying out “*Abba, Father.*” What I’m telling you is that packed in **that** information are things that bring about a **cry** in the heart of the saint.

And if these 2 verses do not produce that cry in your heart, then you have no business whatsoever in continuing to vs. 16.

Therefore, there’s a whole host of things packed into those 2 verses and **some are stated and some are not stated!** Not only that, but another thing you realize that of all the things contained in these verses, **NONE** of them are explained to you.

In other words, when the Bible says, “as many as are led by the Spirit of God,” you are supposed to know what that means. When it says, “sons of God,” you are also supposed to know what that means. You are supposed to know what is meant by “the spirit of bondage again to fear.” And you are supposed to know what is meant by “the Spirit of adoption.” And I say that because none of these things are explained by Paul. You already know what that means; that you are supposed to already know about these things before you ever got to Romans 8:14.

In other words, you are being held accountable for all of the information from Genesis 1:1 up to Romans 8:14! If you’d have paid attention to all that, you’d be crying, “*Abba, Father*” just by what is stated in these 2 verses.

But, if you don’t know what these things mean, then we have to go back and learn about these things and that’s what we have been doing for the past 14 months. I realize that for most folks, when they read vv. 14-15, there does not seem to be very much going on; certainly not enough to elicit some “heart cry.” Therefore, Romans 8:15, the last phrase, is a marker to make sure that things are properly working. If there is no cry, then things are not working correctly.

You don’t just acknowledge that and go on, but you go back and make sure it is working properly.

But now we have to not only look at what **is** stated here, but what you are expected to know, even of some things that are **NOT** stated here. For example, the Father is going to **PRONOUNCE HIS SON AS HIS SON**. That is not mentioned here, but you should understand that it is included in the package of Sonship Orientation.

And how would you know about that? Because you would already know (if you’d been paying attention) that this pronouncement as a son is all a part of the process of adoption in the first place. (Therefore, it doesn’t need to be stated in Romans 8:14-15.)

This takes us to the issue of the son being pronounced by the Father as His son and it takes us to those passages we were looking at in our last lesson. Before we turn over to look at those, let me make this point clear. You should, by the time you get to Romans 8:14-15, be so aware of the process that when you read “sons of God,” you automatically begin to expect that a pronouncement has been made regarding your being a son.

The pronouncement is an integral part of the adoption process. A father does not adopt his son in secret. It's a public declaration; everyone knows.

Let me show you a few of things sitting back in your Bible that should have clued you in to that issue without it being stated in Romans 8.

2 Samuel 7:14 **I will be his father, and he shall be my son.** If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:

Notice that God says through Nathan, concerning David's son, Solomon; "*I will be his father, and he shall be my son.*" Notice He says, "***I will be***" and "***he shall be***." This is the sonship proclamation!

He doesn't say, "I will be **like** his father, and he shall be **like** my son."

(This is a critical issue and one that will cause some believers a whole lot of problems!)

This proclamation which the Father makes upon adopting His son, this first orientation issue that is to set the son's bearings from now on, is the issue of the REALITY of the relationship **with** and **to** his Father.

It's going to be a **REAL Father-to-son/daughter relationship!** It's not describing a characteristic of God that He really does not possess, just as it is not just putting it in terms that we poor, finite, mortal human beings can comprehend. Knowing that you are in a real "Father/son" relationship, orients you to your sonship!

By the way, II Samuel 7:14 isn't the only time this gets brought up. We are going to see this also in Psalm 89. In Psalm 89, you are at the end of book 3; the book of the Avenger in the psalms. But that's not really what I'm after in looking at this.

Psalms 89:3 I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant,⁴ Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.²⁰ I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him:²¹ With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him.²² The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him.²³ And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him.²⁴ But my faithfulness and my mercy *shall be* with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted.²⁵ I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers.²⁶ **He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father,** my God, and the rock of my salvation.²⁷ Also I will make him *my* firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.

David got the order correct in vs. 26. First, "father," then "God," and then "rock."

Hebrews 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,² Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;³ Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;⁴ Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by

inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. ⁵ For unto which of the angels said he at any time, **Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?** And again, **I will be to him a Father**, and he shall be to me a Son?

This ought to take you right back to 2 Samuel 7:14. I know it's not word for word, but it doesn't have to be. When you read this passage in Hebrews, there is one word that makes that "pop" or "click" in your thinking: the word, "**FATHER**"!

HERE IS AN ABSOLUTELY CRITICAL AND ESSENTIAL ISSUE THAT HAS TO BE PROPERLY UNDERSTOOD AND APPRECIATED, OR ELSE YOU WILL HAVE PROBLEMS WITH YOUR CHRISTIAN (sonship) LIFE:

YOU HAVE GOT TO BE ABLE TO SEE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHO GOD IS (attribute-wise or essence-wise) **AND HOW HE DETERMINES TO DEAL WITH YOU!**

God has made it clear, that when it comes to the issue of adoption and the sonship education/edification that follows it, that He is going to be to you just as any earthly, natural Father and you are going to be to Him just as any earthly, natural son. And that really sets a son's bearings properly from the 'get-go'!

When God says, '*I will be to you a Father, and you shall be to me a son,*' He's saying, I'm going to treat you like a natural son and I'm going to be just like your natural father. And you're going to treat me just like your natural father, and you're going to be just like my natural son!

And that's the most fundamental element to the whole thing—to the whole issue of adoption and sonship. That statement in II Samuel 7:14 **declares** the nature of the relationship.

This causes you, as a son, to understand and appreciate that this is going to be a "**BI-DIRECTIONAL**" relationship, or put another way, a Father-to-son relationship that demands 'bi-directional' communication.

In other words, it's a real two-way street (if you will) and it has 2 parts to it; one part is the Father's role and one part is the son's role.