

Session 25

The fact that we have been made sons of God by way of adoption means much more than simply being made part of God's family. Our adoption as sons is the capstone of godly sanctification.

The education that we are to receive as sons is that which is by God's own design. That is, it is not up to some man to search through the Bible and determine what needs to be a part of the education that we are to receive as sons, God Himself has ordered, wrote and formed the entire curriculum.

No one doubts that there is such a thing as "edification" or an "edification process." The root of edification is "edifice" which has to do with a building, hence the term edification has to do with the spiritual growth process or the "building up" of a saint.

2 Corinthians 10:7 Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he *is* Christ's, even so *are* we Christ's. 8 For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, **which the Lord hath given us for edification**, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed: 9 That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters.

1 Timothy 1:2 Unto Timothy, **my own son in the faith**: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. ³ As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they **teach no other doctrine**, ⁴ Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than **godly edifying** which is in faith: *so do*.

I just want you to notice that as Paul was a "father" to Timothy, leading Timothy through the curriculum, Timothy becomes a "son in the faith" to Paul. Paul charges Timothy to teach no other doctrine than the doctrine of godly edification (sonship education!) and then in vs. 4 he says to avoid the outlandish miracle stories (fables) and the things that Satan uses with regard to Israel's program (endless genealogies) and then he says for Timothy to engage in godly edifying. That's the message and the only message.

Ephesians 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, **for the edifying of the body of Christ**: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth,

according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body **unto the edifying of itself in love.**

1 Thessalonians 5:11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and **edify one another**, even as also ye do.

Even though it is universally recognized that there is such a thing as edification, what is **not** commonly recognized is, just how it is that we are supposed to get properly edified (or gain proper spiritual growth)? In other words, “After salvation (justification), what’s next?”

That question is legitimate, in view of the fact that thinking that salvation is the “end” would be terribly short-sighted and wrong. As we discussed in a previous session, thinking that once you are saved there is no big emergency to get anything else done is like thinking that once a baby is born, the main responsibility of the parents is over. In truth, it is only beginning. And so it is with salvation; for once a person is saved, now the real work of godly edification (or sonship!) can begin.

So the answer to the question as to how we are to get that godly edification is answered in God’s own curriculum. Sonship education **is** the process for godly edification. Sonship education is the means by which God no longer deals with you as child, but He now begins to deal with you as an adult son by that specialized process called “adoption.”

Today, in the dispensation of grace, every believer is automatically adopted by the Father, the very moment that person is saved or justified unto eternal life. It becomes then, a question of how you, as a believer in Christ, are going to respond to your adoption as a son of your heavenly Father.

We have already seen that the reason why a father would adopt his son (even his own natural-born son) was to impart his wisdom and his understanding into his son’s heart, so that in the end, the adopted son would enter into laboring with his father in all his father’s business.

There is no doubt that once a person discovers this wonderful truth, there is an excitement and joy just to know that you have been adopted, to know that you are no longer under tutors and governors, to know that you have this wonderful liberty in Christ. There is real exhilaration when you discover that your heavenly Father is offering you the opportunity to share in His eternal business. But after all of that, there is also a time when you will move into the sobering reality of what means to be a son in your Father’s business and it is at that point where the issue of your sonship commitment will come into play. In fact, this is actually the first checkpoint that you encounter with regard to sonship; the issue of your commitment to your sonship life and education.

And as far as where that takes place, you can put your finger on it; it begins in Romans 8:16-39. But I want us to look at it in the Proverbs. To see this issue of your sonship commitment, let's go to Proverbs 2.

Proverbs 2:1 My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; 2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; 3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; 4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; 5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

There is an application of this that Paul will use for us. This has to do with the fact that there is coming a time when you will determine the level of commitment you have to this education.

Proverbs 2:2 So that thou **incline thine ear** unto wisdom, and **apply thine heart** to understanding;

You have to realize that “attendance” is more than just bodily presence. What David is after with his son is more than just physically showing up, but he wants him to “incline his ear” and “apply his heart.” Now look at verse 3, which is a level that almost no local assembly ever arrives at.

Proverbs 2:3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;

Let me ask you, who is doing the “crying” and who is “lifting up their voice for understanding”? The son is. Then do you see what is taking place here – it is interactive learning. This is not the way it is normally done and in fact, this is not the way most pastors want to do it. This is also why sonship education is practically impossible for a mega-church to carry out.

Normally, sermons are preached with no interruption, no communication (except 1-way communication) and no response from the listeners. But sonship cannot take place that way. This verse actually has 2 aspects to this interactive learning:

1. Crying after knowledge
2. Lifting up your voice for understanding

The terminology used here is very precise. Notice that it does not say “if thou criest for knowledge.” Neither does it say, “if thou criest about knowledge.” It says “after knowledge” and later, when it is more appropriate, we are going to look at woman who did that. The same with “lifting up your voice for understanding.” There is coming a time when you aren't going to let a session end until you have an understanding of the things that were covered in it. And that is proper and right for sonship education to take place that way. In fact, to some degree, we have already begun to do that.

By the way, that is one way that “mutually edifying” takes place in a local assembly. I am referring back to a verse we saw earlier in this study, I Thessalonians 5:11. It’s not the only way that happens, but it is one way that happens when someone in the assembly is too shy to engage in the interactive learning, but someone else asks a question that they had on their mind – and when the answer is given, they are being edified by the one who did ask the question.

But to get ourselves back on track, what we are looking at here is the son’s commitment level to his education.

Proverbs 2:4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;

The “her” in vs. 4 is referring to wisdom. So, when the vs. says “if thou seekest her as silver, what is it referring to?” In other words, what is silver? I’m not after that silver is a precious metal. But notice that he didn’t say, “seek her as gold.” Why silver? What is it about silver? The answer to the question lies in the fact that you may well have something made of silver on your person. It’s money! Your silver is your money!

More saved people have derailed their spiritual lives over money than anything else. And just as an aside, you are to “seek” wisdom as “silver” but it is something different to “searchest for her” as for hid treasures. To seek and to search have something different in mind, just as silver and hid treasures are not talking about the same thing.

Now, God is not saying that it is wrong to earn a paycheck or make a living for you and your family, but what he is saying is that you should seek after this like you seek your own paycheck. And it is no accident that you are told to seek God’s wisdom like you would seek money because what you will discover later on, and we aren’t going to get side-tracked on it now, but we will learn that with this wisdom we will be able to “buy some particular things.” Does that shock you? I will only say that there is a lot left, that you have no idea about, that is going to shock you and thrill you all at the same time. So let me leave this subject by saying that your sonship education is going to allow you to “purchase” things. The curriculum allows for you to buy things with what you are “laying up” for yourself. So this use of “silver” is no accident nor is it just a convenient analogy. We’ll go over this in detail later on.

So what we are after here is this; when the initial excitement over being adopted begins to fade, your Father means to kick-in with some “wow-factor” issues that are meant to convince you of just how great and glorious His business is.

Think of it like this; the president calls you and says, “I need you at NASA to help plan the next shuttle mission.” Now, I know that is all a thing of the past and there aren’t going to be any more shuttles, but just bear with me. If that was the call, what would you be thinking? You might be thinking, “why is he calling me – what do I know about it?”

Now, take that times a million. Your heavenly Father is tapping you on the shoulder and asking you to come up there with Him and help Him run His business. And just for the record, His business makes NASA look like kindergarten stuff. And He wants you involved in it. So if you feel inadequate, that is why He left you here after you got saved – to train for that. It is a vocational training for an eternal position in the heavenlies. But again, the idea here is that you should have an appreciation (to some degree) for what is being offered to you.

And we can see reminders, all through Paul's epistles, that what we have in Christ right now, here on this earth, is not nearly the end of it.

1 Corinthians 15:12 Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: ¹⁴ And if Christ be not risen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* also vain. ¹⁵ Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. ¹⁶ For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: ¹⁷ And if Christ be not raised, your faith *is* vain; ye are yet in your sins. ¹⁸ Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. ¹⁹ **If in this life only** we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

1 Timothy 4:7 But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. 8 For bodily exercise profiteth little: but **godliness** is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

Paul is reminding Timothy that what he is going through at that time, is the vocational training-ground for the responsibility that will be given to him in the heavenly places.

In I Corinthians 6, Paul is upset with the Corinthians because they cannot settle their own matters with godly wisdom.

1 Corinthians 6:1 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? 2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

He is chiding them because they are not putting their sonship skills to use. They are going to a secular court and let godless wisdom determine something for them. The point here is not that saved people shouldn't take other saved people to court, the point here is that you are selling out to a competing wisdom to God's wisdom.

1 Corinthians 6:3 **Know ye not that we shall judge angels?** how much more things that pertain to this life?

Why does Paul bring this up here? Do you know that with every skill that you acquire as a son, something else is being done to the way you think. You are going to learn things as you go

through Romans about godly love and charity and such matters – and some of those things you may be a little squeamish about because it doesn't quite fit your personality, do you know what else you are being taught (at the same time) and you aren't even aware of it when it's happening? You are being taught how angels think.

You are going to judge angels and angels don't think like humans. But built into this sonship curriculum is something that when you stand in the heavenly places and issue Jesus Christ's commands, you will know how those angels think and how to command their work.

I realize that we have been looking at the "table of contents" of our sonship curriculum over in Proverbs 1. Just in our understanding of that "table of contents," you should have some level of appreciation for not only the grandeur of your sonship life, but begin to realize the level of commitment that is going to be required of you to get this and to properly function as a fully educated and fully edified son of your Heavenly Father. And that realization is going to get deeper and deeper as we go on.

I have mentioned to you that, in the beginning of the curriculum, we are only being taught those decision-making skills which we will learn and hone and sharpen so that we can eventually function in those skills in the heavenly places in our Father eternal business.

And now we are ready to move on as long as we have an understanding of:

- The significance of being an adopted son
- Why God needed to adopt you
- The goal of adoption
- How being an adopted son differs from being treated as a child
- Why we have gone to Proverbs 1 to see the basic structure of adoption
- Proverbs 1:1-6 contains the "table of contents" for the curriculum

If all of that is firmly settled in your thinking, then we are ready to examine the details of the table of contents of the sonship curriculum and see what we are about to receive in our education as sons in the book of Romans. We, naturally, will start with Level 1. As you know, level 1 is found in Proverbs 1:2-3 and those are the exact same issues that you are going to be faced with when we return to the book of Romans. You could say, when you see the book of Romans, that is Level 1 of your sonship education. And you should have already come to grips with the idea that you aren't doing one thing now and you are going to be doing something else in the heavenly places, but you are supposed to be training now for exactly what you will do up there.

Proverbs 1:2 To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;
3 To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;

Now, before I give you a summary statement for Level 1, take a look at Proverbs 1:2-3 and see if you can determine what it is designed to do. In other words, what would be the first logical thing the Father would do to educate His newly adopted son?

LEVEL I = Basic Sonship Establishment

In Level I, the son is newly adopted, and because of that, there are certain, specific issues that have to be dealt with in order to establish the son in his new-found sonship status. This is both a wonderful, awesome, and glorious time as well as a sobering, serious, and even dangerous time.

It is a time in which the son finally ‘gets-to-know’ his Father on a much more intimate basis than he ever has before. In this 1st Level of education, the Father begins to do things in the son’s inner man that will provide for the son’s stabilization and establishment. THE MAJOR ISSUE that is dealt with by this 1st Level of the son’s education is the way in which the son THINKS.

The son’s thinking might well be joyful and zealous and enthusiastic over the prospect of throwing off the bondage of childhood and gaining all the liberties of adulthood, but really that alone doesn’t consist

of thinking the way the Father thinks. And just to be clear, we are not saying that that this is the only place where you’re going to get doctrine or information that is designed to cause you to think like your Father, because the truth of the matter is, that will be happening all along.

But the major emphasis in Level I is to establish the son in some very important issues that deal directly with how the Father thinks, and to take that thinking and impart that to the son’s heart. Therefore, this 1st level of education becomes the time to confirm and settle some things so that they will be very powerful in the son’s thinking; not temporarily powerful, but powerful from now on throughout your sonship life.

This is a period through which the son will be given some things by his Father:

- The son is given information designed to steady, stabilize, and even calm the son’s mind (in view of the scope of the education).
- The son is fully confronted with his distinct identity in Christ, as a son of his Father
- The son is involved in some details that are going to make that sonship identity real and distinct from anything he has ever encountered before
- Each phase is going to have, at its core, the issue of dealing with the way the son thinks
- Each phase will provide the son information and exhortations to have the thinking of his Father imparted from the Father’s heart to the son’s heart, so that, the way the son views the specific issues given to him, and the acquired skills the son receives, all MATCHES up perfectly with the Father in every way!

So now, let’s look at phase 1 of Level 1 of our sonship education.

Proverbs 1:2 To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;

You have probably noticed that there are 2 parts to phase 1:

1 - *To know wisdom and instruction;*

2 - *to perceive the words of understanding;*

For now, let's focus on the first part: "*To know wisdom and instruction;*"

By the way, after we are given the things in this "table of contents," we are immediately given exhortations that designed to produce an excitement over each of these things. For example, take a look at verse 7. You are given the entire table of contents in vv. 2-6 with the first thing mentioned being "to know wisdom and instruction." So, in vs. 7, you have an exhortation pertaining to "wisdom and instruction" and that exhortation is designed to make you want that wisdom and instruction.

Proverbs 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise **wisdom and instruction.**

But getting back to vs. 2, what we need to know is, what exactly does it mean "to know" these 2 things (wisdom and instruction)? One of the first things to notice is that the word "know" can be used in a variety of ways. The verb form alone is used in over 20 different ways. So don't get locked in to thinking that this word "know" can only mean one thing.

The common way to see the phrase "to know" is to read it as though it says "to learn." So, the idea, if that were the case, is to read, "to know wisdom" as though this is saying that in this part of your education you are going to be learning a whole bunch of things that the Bible calls "wisdom." And that would be wrong.

As you read down through the passage, did you notice that these words come up over and over again, in some form of the word? For example, the word wisdom is used a number of times in this passage:

Proverbs 1:2 To know **wisdom** and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;

Proverbs 1:3 **To receive the instruction of wisdom**, justice, and judgment, and equity;

Proverbs 1:5 A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall **attain unto wise counsels:**

Proverbs 1:6 To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the **words of the wise**, and their dark sayings.

Now, take a look at instruction.

Proverbs 1:2 To know wisdom and **instruction**; to perceive the words of understanding;

Proverbs 1:3 **To receive the instruction** of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;

And now look at understanding:

Proverbs 1:2 To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of **understanding**;

Proverbs 1:5 A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and **a man of understanding** shall attain unto wise counsels:

Proverbs 1:6 **To understand** a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.

And now look at “knowledge”:

Proverbs 1:2 To **know** wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;

Proverbs 1:4 To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man **knowledge** and discretion.

So when we see the issue of “*To know wisdom and instruction*,” being brought up as the very 1st component part to the 1st Phase of Level I of our sonship education, and we realize that these words get utilized again (and in some cases several times over) then we understand that at this very beginning of the curriculum, when we’re talking about ‘*knowing wisdom and instruction*,’ we’re **not** talking about learning all about the things called wisdom and instruction.

So if this is not referring to our learning of all the things called “wisdom” and all the things called “instruction,” then what is the “to know” pointing us to? Because whatever this is, the very 1st thing our Father is going to teach us, He’s going to produce in our hearts the issue of ‘*knowing wisdom and instruction*’.

By saying it the **way** He does, we realize that this is not describing us learning the things called wisdom and neither are we being instructed in wisdom at this point. And even if you were tempted to think that is what is being referred to here, when you get to the phrase, “to know...instruction,” that puts a different spin on the word “*know*,” it gives it a different sense or meaning.

If “*To know wisdom*” is the very first thing God is going to produce in our sonship education, the very first thing He wants a son to know is to *know wisdom*, then we’re not talking about knowing wisdom in all its details and becoming wise because of that knowledge. What this verse is talking about is the basic issue of what to “*know*” something is.

The basic issue of “*know*” is that you’ve observed something, or you’ve become aware and cognizant of something. In this case, what you are going to do, and what the Father is going to

give you, is to *know wisdom*; that is, you're going to become **aware** of it, or cognizant of it. You're apprized of it.

So if "*To know wisdom*" is to become cognizant of it (which, by the way, appropriately fits the word "*instruction*" now) maybe it will help if we say that at this initial, basic establishment as a son, you're not getting wisdom, learning wisdom, gaining wisdom yet, building up wisdom yet, nor are you getting instructed yet or gaining instruction yet or being instructed yet. No, all you are supposed to do at this point is to "**know**" *wisdom* and to "**know**" *instruction* and that's all for now.

In light of our Father initially establishing us as His sons, and beginning the process of setting our attitude to be matching His attitude, that is, to get our attitude (our zeal and our enthusiasm and our desire) to **be** taught all this sonship education and curriculum to match up with His attitude to teach us (that is, His zeal and His enthusiasm and His desire to teach us and educate us into this curriculum), in light of that, the very first and most necessary thing for the Father to do (in order to get that done) is to get His son to be cognizant of, or to recognize, or to be aware of, or to find out (or know) the **VALUE** of the *wisdom* and the **VALUE** of the *instruction* he is about to receive from his Father.

By doing this **FIRST**, the Father is adjusting the son's attitude to be just as desirous to be educated as the Father is to educate him. It sets the son's desire to the proper level to be educated.

So, in the issue of the "first things first" of our sonship education, we are supposed to "*know wisdom and instruction*" and then move on to "*perceive the words of understanding*".

And if we're to *know wisdom and instruction*, it's not that we are now supposed to begin acquiring the wisdom, but that we are first of all supposed to realize what this body of information we're going to be getting (all this *wisdom* of the Father); as well as the entire educational curriculum that it is set in (all the *instruction* of the Father), we're supposed to realize and recognize **what all that is for—what it's designed to ultimately produce—and why it's so important above all else in life.**

You are first of all supposed to realize what this life as God's son holds out for you. You are to know the value, the importance, the worth, the gravity and weight, and even the grandeur of what we (my Father and me) are about to embark upon.

Another benefit the son gains from (first of all) coming to know the value of the information (*wisdom*) and the curriculum (*instruction*) he's about to receive from his Father is some **assurance** and **confidence** that all this wisdom and this instruction has a specific goal in mind; that it has been so formed by my wise

and experienced Father (this isn't His first rodeo), that it has taken into account all the pitfalls and possibilities and snares and snags and traps that could ever be encountered by the son.

As sons, the very first thing that your Father endeavors to accomplish in your education is producing in you the awareness that He has some important and valuable information for you; it's worth more than anything else, and it has serious and eternal benefits for you.

He has valuable *wisdom* and valuable *instruction* and you are to see it as such. You need to see why that matters. You need to see that the natural thing for a Father to do is for you, before He ever begins instructing you, is make clear the value, benefit and importance of the information He has for you. You need to understand and appreciate why that matters, and why that would be the first thing in your education as God's son.

I've actually alluded to the reason why; because the Father is going to have to deal with the son's attitude toward learning in the first place. And above all things, HE (the Father) knows just how valuable and just how important this information is. Therefore, the first thing He needs to get done is to get you to view that just like He does.

In fact, before He ever starts giving you the information, before He ever starts providing for you to have the same decision-making skills that He, Himself has, before giving you instruction in how to make decisions that will manifest God-like thinking (as described in :3, where you begin receiving wisdom that you operate upon), well before any of that happens, He wants us to perceive the value of the sonship education (to a great degree) just like He does!

In other words, your valuing of God's wisdom and God's instruction is to begin to MATCH God's own valuing of His wisdom and instruction.

And that 2nd part to Phase 1 is fantastic; you advance from just knowing wisdom and instruction to perceiving (not understanding; or not perceiving the doctrines that provide understanding; or anything like that at all), but to perceiving "THE WORDS" of understanding. That's the next step in gaining the proper value and appreciation for the education you're about to get.

So let's recap this:

- First, you are to know wisdom and instruction, which means that you are to know the value and importance of what He's going to give you;
- You are to know why that matters and why this isn't just 'time spent' that you kind of have to serve out just because your Father demands it of you to be properly educated by Him (time served, like some kind of a jail sentence - which is how most education is viewed).

And there's a BIG difference between childhood education and adult, adopted sonship education because here the son is supposed to start out with zeal and enthusiasm to RECEIVE this education and it's supposed to be on level with the zeal and enthusiasm that the Father has to teach it. The thing that starts all that going, and puts all that in motion is: "To know wisdom and instruction;"

And I should say that this introduces one of the aspects of sonship prayer in this dispensation of grace. We often say that we don't know what we should be praying for, well this is one of those things we should be praying for. We should be talking to our Father about the education He desires to give us. Your desire to spend time with your Father over this issue is an indicator of your level of desire for the wisdom and instruction of your Father. If you view this education with reluctant compliance, then this is exactly why this part is included at the very start – to adjust your attitude to view the curriculum as your Father views it; to be as enthusiastic about receiving it as He is to give it.

It is because our desire to study often does not match our Father's desire to teach us that this first phase of Level 1 is given. One of the main objectives of the 1st Phase of Level I of your sonship education is for the Father to produce in the son the same attitude toward the information and the education that the Father has.

It's supposed to produce in the son an understanding and appreciation for the wisdom he's about to receive; that there's nothing else that can compare with it, that there's nothing else that's more valuable than it, that there's nothing else that's more impressive or more important than It is and that there's nothing of greater worth than it!

And your Father knows that in order to do that, in order to get that accomplished in this empty but exuberant, newly-adopted adult son, the Father is going to have to set before the son something that is going to deeply impact him a "wow" factor; a jaw-dropping, impact-making issue of what the Father's business is and some inkling of what the son is going to be doing in that business.

Wherefore, you are supposed to begin your education as a son by knowing wisdom and instruction, by seeing that there is nothing in this world that COMPARES to what your Father has for you, that the opportunity to be educated by my Father and receive His wisdom and His instruction is the GREATEST opportunity in the world!

That's what knowing wisdom and instruction is supposed to do for you. To know wisdom and instruction is the establishment of the proper attitude within you of excitement and enthusiasm to begin this education.

As you go down through the section in Proverbs that is designed as the

exhortation from the Father to the son: for the son “knowing wisdom and instruction” (Prov. 1:7-19), right off the bat, you are confronted with all these allurements and distractions and attractions and enticements that the son is going to encounter. Let’s read through this section to get an idea of what I’m referring to.

Proverbs 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction. ⁸ My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: ⁹ For they *shall be* an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck. ¹⁰ My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. ¹¹ If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause: ¹² Let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit: ¹³ We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil: ¹⁴ Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse: ¹⁵ My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path: ¹⁶ For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood. ¹⁷ Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird. ¹⁸ And they lay wait for their *own* blood; they lurk privily for their *own* lives. ¹⁹ So *are* the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; *which* taketh away the life of the owners thereof.

Part of the issue of knowing wisdom and instruction is to understand that the Father knows all about these enticements that seek to lure son away from His Father’s wisdom, instruction and knowledge. He’s planned for all of them and He has information designed to work in your inner man that makes it so those things won’t affect your continued sonship education. He has exactly what the son needs to countermand all the allurements and enticements that come down the road that attempt to make it so you ‘decline’ your ear and incline it to the wisdom of this world and attend to this world’s wisdom instead of attending to the wisdom and instruction of your Father (i.e., attending class).

The son is to learn, early on, (in just the first 2 chapters of Proverbs alone), that he must come to understand that there are really only 2 paths of wisdom to follow: and one is valued and esteemed by his Father and the other is disdained by his Father. Actually, when you as a son, “know wisdom and instruction; and perceive the words of understanding” (Phase 1 of Level I), that’s all designed for you to see more attraction, and more allurements to what your Father has for you in this educational process than anything this world has to offer you!

How different is that compared to how most folks traditionally think about how they live as Christians? Most who call themselves Christians traditionally view living unto God (more often than not), as some form or fashion of ‘self-denial’! The idea being that ok, Christ redeemed us, then the least we can do is deny ourselves the lustful pleasures that we want and the whole ministry thing revolves around keeping you from sinning.

Now, it's not that I'm promoting sinning or saying that keeping saints from sinning isn't right, but the great problem with that is that you still see everything the world has as more attractive than what God has. In fact, most folks don't see anything attractive about what God has; it's simply their duty as one who has been redeemed to turn from sin and deny all these selfish lusts.

The idea is to reciprocate Christ's love for you by turning from everything you actually want and desire and that's alluring to you, and then determine to do without those things. That's pretty much how most saved people think. But what Phase 1 of Level I of sonship education is supposed to produce in you is radically different than all that. Coming to "know wisdom and instruction" and to perceive the words of understanding" are designed to cause you to value and esteem your Father's words and your Father's instruction and your Father's wisdom as having something that is more attractive and more alluring and more valuable than anything this world has to offer (or any other pursuit or endeavor you could put your life and your energy to doing).

One by-products of all this is to create in you a hunger and a desire for God's words, God's wisdom and God's instruction and understanding that just can't be satisfied by any other thing or in any other way. That's because we find all that wisdom and instruction attractive; and not just attractive, but we view it with the same desire our Father views it and values it and esteems it, Himself.

You see, it's not "Well, I really would like to be doing this other thing (fill in the blank) [because you find it more attractive] - but, since Christ died for me, and He'd rather me be here, then I guess I'll force myself to do this — or I guess I'll not go there or say that or live that way or whatever...."

But if Phase 1 of Level 1 (Proverbs 1:2) works properly, you'll see this education as far more attractive and valuable and worth more than anything else and then all those other details will begin to just naturally conform to you now making this education the priority of your life. Then, your life will begin to be arranged around this education as it's center, instead of something else being the center and this education being just one of many objects that orbit and revolve around your life!

If you really see all that, then you recognize that that's not just a subtle Difference; it's a radical difference! One view says, "I know I should attend church more; I know I should pray more; I know I should read and study my Bible more; ...", but the other says, "I can't wait for Bible class; I can't wait to read my Bible; I WANT this education my Father is offering me!"

SUMMARY STATEMENT: (for "To know wisdom and instruction")

- By knowing wisdom and instruction, a son's proper attitude towards his sonship edification is established within him, by the effectual working within him of the exhortations that provide for him to know wisdom and instruction, the desire is established within him not to be a fool. The fool despises wisdom and instruction. But the

son's desire gets established within him to emulate God his Father, to learn His knowledge and wisdom, to walk in His paths and His ways and to become skillful and capable to work with Him in the operations of His business.

With that first exhortation in Proverbs 1:7, the son is immediately confronted with a decision. You have a choice as to how you are going to respond to your sonship education. There are only 2 possible choices you can make. Are you going to enthusiastically respond to it and see it as attractive and beneficial; seeing all the allurements that it has and all the value and worth that it has for you? Or, are you going to be a FOOL in your Father's eyes, not seeing the value of it and being duped into despising it because you are a fool?

It's all pretty 'cut-and-dried,' you either know wisdom and instruction (which lays the groundwork for you to ultimately grow into that man of understanding) or you're a fool and you despise wisdom and instruction and you're never going anywhere in this sonship education.

So, the son is hit, right 'off the bat', that there are only 2 courses; only 2 ways; only 2 paths. There's godly wisdom and instruction as a son to my Heavenly Father; and there's everything else. Proverbs uses "path" and "way" over and over and over.

And by the way, when you are wise in your Father's eyes, prepare to be a fool in the world's eyes, because you looked at as worthless in all that they value and esteem! And that will not just be the unbelieving world, for some unbelievers will better understand your commitment to sonship education than fellow believers will. It will largely be other believers that will despise this and will look foolish to them.

You may fool others, but you won't fool the Father. He'll look at you and say, "That boy despises wisdom and instruction! He's a fool!" And, again, as that first exhortation gets underway in Proverbs 1:7, I just want to point out that when it says, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge;" I just want to make sure that you realize that the "fear" that is being talked about here is NOT the fear motivation that existed under the tutor and governor system of the law. In fact, you will find this issue coming up, even in Paul's letters (in the doctrine that is supposed to be written on our hearts).

- Paul does bring this issue up, several times:

2 Corinthians 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness **in the fear of God**.

Ephesians 5:21 Submitting yourselves one to another **in the fear of God**.

Colossians 3:22 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, **fearing God**:

The “fear of the LORD” (both in Prov. 1:7 and in all the passages where the apostle Paul uses it in a similar way) is not talking about being motivated to do something out of fear of God punishing you or cursing you or disciplining you or killing you off or anything like that at all. (sin unto death type stuff) Rather, it’s fear in the sense of a godly, sacred respect and awe or reverence.

It’s interesting that when you “revere” something or someone, that reverence or respect or “fear” is generated by coming to appreciate and viewing someone (God) as Superior in every way to you. It is a fear arising from 2 basic, fundamental issues:

- 1) from a clear understanding and appreciation of your weakness of, and dependence upon God; and
- 2) it is a fear arising from your obligation for favors received—(for instance the grace wherein He has dealt with you [which should have already been generated in you from the doctrine contained in Romans 1-5] — but also for having now received the adoption of sons, and all that now has been generated in you in light of the fact that God not only justified you, but sanctified you (and all those things you learned about that in Rom. 6:1-8:15)!

It’s a godly sacred respect for what God thinks (and that that matters) and for what God does/is doing (and that that matters). Therefore, “the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge” is really checking you out to say, ‘Look, if you’ve already had the proper, effectual working of all that you’ve been taught up to the point of, (and even including), the initial realization that you’ve been adopted as a son—if everything in your justification and in your sanctification up to this point has worked properly, then if my Father says, “This is important,” then my fear of Him (my sacred respect for what He thinks and for what He thinks is important or unimportant) greatly matters to me, and my fear is such that I don’t ever want to miss out on anything He esteems as important.”

In that way, that expression “the fear of the Lord” is really an expression indicating that you are afraid of missing something that He values and esteems! The truth of the matter is, fearing the Lord in this sense, is actually an issue of a properly adjusted attitude in the son, himself.

Now, I don’t want to over-simplify things, but let me see if I can boil this down to its essence. All of the things that you saw back in your justification (where God forgave your sin, imputed His righteousness to you and gave you permanent atonement) and in your sanctification (where he made you to be dead to sin, alive unto God and made you adopted sons) where God was building a track-record, so to speak, of His great wisdom and genius in knowing exactly what you needed and then doing it for you and giving it to you by grace as a free gift; knowing all of those things should have begun producing in you “The fear of the LORD” wherein “is the beginning of knowledge;” that is, there should already be a such a measure of faith built up in you so that you shouldn’t have to be ‘pleaded’ with or ‘begged’ to see it, or goaded or prodded or

anything along those lines when it comes to receiving the education as sons. No, you should already have a healthy, godly fear of the LORD, and that is the ‘kick-off’ (so to speak) that allows for the beginning of knowledge to naturally take place.

And I know I’m using some liberty here when I make this analogy, but you know that part of the job of the tutors and governors was to tell the child “about” his father and “about” his father’s business in such a way that certain attitudes about his father and his father’s business began to be formed in the child thinking, so that when the time came that the Father was looking to adopt a son, the son’s heart was already “bent” in that direction, well, in the same way, all that you learned in the chapters leading up to Romans 8 were (in addition to the obvious doctrine contained in them) designed to produce that same “bent” about our heavenly Father and His business so that when He looks for a son to educate in His business, we are already “bent” in that direction!