

Having completed our work on the first 13 verses of Romans 8, we have begun our study of the 3rd and final component of our Sanctification; that we have been made to be sons of God. And I just want to say to anyone who may have picked up this study, that it is imperative that you have those first 13 verses firmly entrenched in your mind and that you thoroughly understand them before moving on to verse 14 where you get oriented to your sonship.

I am going to say this to you now and I will probably say it many more times before we are done: you need to be aware that from this point onward (from Romans 8:14 all the way through to the end of Paul's epistles) your sonship is the subject matter and everything that you will encounter has to do with and is concerned with your sonship education and edification. You Father's intent from the beginning was to educate you as His adopted son or daughter and thereby, to qualify you to labor with Him in His business both now, in this dispensation of grace, and in eternity when we take up our governmental places in the Creature.

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.

In Romans 8:14 we are told that we are "sons of God" and the fact that we have received that "Spirit of adoption" should result in our crying "Abba, Father." And that cry is not some emotional outburst that comes from some experience, but it is the intelligent cry of a son or daughter who, upon understanding that they have been adopted as sons, cries out for the heavenly Father to teach them; to educate them.

While a person may certainly feel emotion upon hearing of their adoption, since it is the most thrilling news that a person could hear, that cry is not out of gratitude, emotion, exuberance or any such thing. It is out of the heart's desire of a son to now be educated by his heavenly Father in all that it means to be a "son of God." That cry of "Abba, Father" is saying "yes" to your Father's offer to educate you in His business. Actually, there are 3 components that you are going to learn about that cry of Abba Father, but for now all you should understand is that that cry indicates the desire of a son to be educated by his Father in all his business.

But there is something more that your Father wants to do with you than just educate you in His business. He wants to install His very own godly character in you. Do you know why He wants to do that? He wants to do that because we represent Him and He wants it to be of such a nature that when we conduct business (here and now or in eternity) we do so with His integrity, making the same decisions that He would have made. That is having His godly character installed into us. The result of which is that we learn to think, live and labor with Him. And more than that, there are some by-products of being educated as a son of your heavenly Father such as having the ability to give wise counsel. Another by-product is wise decision-making skills.

There will times in your life when you will be faced with making a choice, not just out of 2 or 3 options, but many options – none of which, if you chose them, would be wrong to do. Your sonship education is going not only gives you the liberty to make a choice among 15 good and right possible decisions, but it also equips you to know, without a shadow of a doubt, which one of those options will bring the most pleasure to your heavenly Father. This is what your Father wants to do with you by installing His godly character in you through your education as His son.

And just so you know, the installment of godly character is what every earthly Father should be working to put into their earthly sons and daughters. So, it makes perfect sense for your heavenly Father to install His character in us. And our cry of Abba, Father is the cry to say to Him that we want that, we desire for Him to do that with us.

And by the way, that is the first criteria that a son has to meet in order to be educated by his Father; he has to WANT to be educated. The son must have a desire for this education which means that he will do whatever it takes, on his part, to get that education in its fullness. And what a son is “willing to do” will depend on just how important he deems this education to be.

The value a son places on being educated by his Father will be reflected in what he is willing to do to get that education. I will tell you how much value I place on this. If I was living in a place where I could not firsthand experience this sonship education in the context that my Father intended for me to have it (that being in a local assembly) then I would move to a place where I could participate in that education in that local assembly. But that is only reflective of how much value I place on my Father’s offer to educate me as His son. I’m not telling anyone that they need to do that, I’m simply illustrating the lengths to which I would go in order to get sonship fully developed in me.

But let’s return to that first criteria; that sincere, heart’s desire to be educated as a son of your heavenly Father. Your Father is not going to twist your arm behind your back and make you be educated as His adopted son or daughter. If it isn’t a “big deal” to you, then your Father isn’t going to force you or anyone else to be educated as His son. But also, you absolutely will not get that education any other way. You need to know the surety of that. You cannot “accidentally” stumble into being educated as son.

There is one more issue that I want you to take notice of as we get ourselves underway in this session and that is the way in which your heavenly Father presents the Godhead to you. There are a lot of ways that God could have presented the Godhead. He could have presented it within the framework of government by telling you that He is “a Prince, a Ruler and a Governor.” He could have presented Himself in a framework of His power or of His character or any of a dozen other ways. But the one He chose was to present Himself in the framework of Father/Son/Spirit. Do you know why He chose that way? He presents the Godhead that way because all of those have to do with sonship.

With that in mind, I want you to read again the 2 verses we have before us in which Paul gives us the condensed definition of what it means to be a son.

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.

Looking at the verse, did you notice that it does not say, “For as many as have the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” He did not say it that way because that is not what is meant by what is said. It says “..as many as are led...” We will go over just what that means, but for now, I only want to point out that difference. But what I’m really after is that the way God presents Himself in all the persons of the Godhead, it is in terms that apply themselves to being a son.

We studied in our previous sessions that we were made to be adopted sons of our heavenly. Just as we have seen that many words in your Bible are used in multiple ways, (such as condemnation, salvation, justification) the word “son” is used in multiple ways as well. The word “son” is used more than 2700 times in your Bible and it is used in more than just one way. I’m not really interested in showing you all of the ways in which the word is used, but I do want to show you 5 different ways in which it is used. I show you this because when Paul uses the word “son” in Romans 8:14, he uses it in a way that most people never think of.

For example:

1) A Natural Born Son—Gen. 4:17 (1st use); II Sam. 19:4; Acts 16:1

Acts 16:1 Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, **the son** of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father *was* a Greek:

2) The 2nd Member of the Godhead - The Lord Jesus Christ Himself - the Son of God - Mat. 11:27; 16:16; Luke 19:10

Matthew 16:14 And they said, Some *say that thou art* John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.¹⁵ He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? ¹⁶ And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, **the Son** of the living God.¹⁷ And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

3) A son in the faith—(Timothy & Titus) I Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4

We saw in Acts 16, the word “son” used for a natural-born son as it applied to Timothy (Timotheus.)

1 Timothy 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, *which is* our hope; ² Unto Timothy, ***my own son in the faith:*** Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

When Paul says that Timothy is his “son in the faith,” it refers to the fact that Paul led Timothy to faith in Christ. Timothy isn’t the only one that is Paul’s “son in the faith,” but Titus is as well. Timothy and Titus are men that about as different as night and day. Their personalities were very different. Timothy is a pastor’s pastor with a tender heart. Titus was as tough as nails and could minister under the most adverse conditions.

Paul sent Titus into terrible situations where there was infighting and divisions in churches and Titus would straighten that whole mess out. For example, Paul sent Titus to Crete, one of the worst places on the planet with terrific problems, and he handled the whole thing beautifully.

Titus 1:1 Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; ⁴ **To Titus,** ***mine own son after the common faith:*** Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

This use of the word “son” refers to these men being “birthed” into the faith through the efforts of the apostle Paul.

Before we leave this point, I want to bring up Timothy one more time and show you something about the office of the pastor. I want to show you something about how a pastor is supposed to function. Let’s take a look at I Corinthians 4.

As a background to what we are about to read, the Corinthians didn’t have any problems, per se. They had plenty of money and plenty of people. You could say that they were a “flagship” assembly. But they came across something that the apostle Paul said that stopped them dead in their tracks. And we can identify the place where they “ran off the tracks;” it was Romans 8:14. Now, I’m not saying that they had the book of Romans, I realize that Corinthians was written before Romans was written. But they had been taught Romans doctrine by Paul before he wrote that doctrine down. And something they saw, at that point, just scared them to death and the process of their being educated as sons stopped dead in its tracks.

By the way, that is exactly where most of the mega-churches of today are. Their buildings are huge, there are lots of people and the “who’s who” of that city usually attend there. Outwardly, they look very successful (as the world defines success.) But they are failing miserably when it comes to laboring with their Father in His business. I know this defies the conventional wisdom, because most people look at the amount of money that comes in, the size of the choir, the tv ministry, the number of young people that attend, the professional musicians, the complex organization, the massive auditorium and all the “big-name” preachers that come through, heaping words of praise onto the church and the pastor, making everyone feel like they are excelling as a church. And in the eyes of most folk, they represent the pinnacle of what a church is supposed to be. But the truth is, they have stopped short of even beginning to properly function as a local assembly in the eyes of God.

They may be a lot of things, but biblical, godly and sonship are not among them.

Now let us return to the Corinthians. If you know much about the books of Corinthians, you know that they were a church that had some problems. Even though they had all the outward trappings of success, the apostle Paul is pretty tough on them. In all fairness, the Corinthians were an assembly of people that knew they were justified unto eternal life. They even understood that they were sanctified. But that is where it stops, for when it came to their sonship, there was an element that they saw that caused them to turn back.

For now, you may not entirely understand everything there is to get out of this, so just keep this in the back of your mind.

1 Corinthians 4:7 For who maketh thee to differ *from another*? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive *it*, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received *it*? 8 Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you. 9 For I think that God hath set forth **us the apostles** last, as it were appointed to death: for we **are made a spectacle** unto the world, and to angels, and to men.

While rebuking them Corinthians for some things in vv. 7-8, verse 9 says that the apostles are “made a spectacle.” A spectacle is something that is observed for the morbid amusement of those looking on, like gladiators in an arena. What Paul is doing here is comparing what he understands about what God is doing and what the Corinthians think God is doing. In vs. 9, Paul is talking about the enduring of sufferings that have nothing to do with you, but everything to do with Christ in you, the endurance of those things (even to death) produce, in the eyes of angels and men, an impact of God’s wisdom. For us to endure such things with such attitude, such faith, such love and such understanding of exactly what is going on, and still, in the face of such, making the exact decision that is most pleasing to the Father, it is within this crucible that the very wisdom of God is put on display. Paul says, “That’s how we are, (a spectacle) but that’s not how you Corinthians are. You are a mega-church. You’ve got the choirs, the talent, the money, the programs and all the rest.

Look how Paul describes them.

1 Corinthians 4:10 **We *are* fools** for Christ's sake, but **ye *are* wise** in Christ;

They looked at what Paul was doing and thought “what a foolish, pitiful thing to do.” They wanted no part in being perceived like Paul.

1 Corinthians 4:10 **We *are* fools**, but ye *are* wise in Christ; **we *are* weak**, but ye *are* strong; ye *are* honourable, but **we *are* despised**. 11 Even unto this present hour **we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace**; 12 And labour, working with our own hands: being **reviled**, we bless; being **persecuted**, we suffer it: 13 Being **defamed**, we intreat: we are made as the **filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things** unto this day.

Do you see the “righteous hubris” of the Corinthians? You know that all their wisdom, honor and strength” was made out to be “in Christ.” But Paul sees through that façade and finds it empty and lacking; without any real impact on men or angels. And the impact being looked for is not the kind as defined by the Corinthians, but as defined by their heavenly Father.

The truth is, if a church can operate in this “present evil world” in the face of Satan’s “course of this world” without being despised and hated, then you can be assured of that church’s affiliation with the Corinthians. And it doesn’t have to be big or rich to be like the Corinthian church, it just has to have the same outlook and the same goals. The Corinthians thought they could carry on their business with the blessing of the world, by believing that “we can all just get along, can’t we?” I’m not saying that we have to go out of our way to be despised and be made a spectacle. I’m not saying we should be offensive and obnoxious. I’m saying that when we conduct ourselves in accordance with sonship, the natural outworking of that is for us to be viewed as “the filth of the world and the offscouring of all things.”

Paul is explaining to the Corinthians what it is they have traded their sonship for. They do not want to be viewed like the apostle Paul is viewed.

1 Corinthians 4:14 I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. 15 For **though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many**

fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. 16 Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

We find ourselves today in the very position the Corinthians were in almost 2000 years ago. They had a lot of “instructors in Christ” but not very many preachers were functioning as “fathers.” Do you realize who he is calling a father? Read verse 16 again.

1 Corinthians 4:16 Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me. 17 For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

When Paul says “for this cause,” he is referring back to the “father” issue. And who is he sending to them? Timotheus. When Paul says that Timothy is his “son” and that he is “faithful in the Lord,” he isn’t just heaping some general platitudes of praise upon Timothy. He is saying that Timothy is a fully educated son. And Paul is sending him to the Corinthians to bring them into remembrance of “Paul’s ways.” It wasn’t about WWJD, it was about following Paul.

When Paul says that they have thousands of “instructors in Christ but not many fathers,” and then he says that he is sending Timothy to them, he calls Timothy his son, but what does he expect Timothy to be to them? He intends for Timothy to function as a “father” to the Corinthians and bring them along in their sonship which is the exact place they balked and refused to go further.

By the way, the aspect of being a “father” is the highest level of your sonship education because there is going to come a time when you are going to turn from learning to giving instruction. And you don’t have to be a pastor to do that.

Now I want us to look at the next way that the word “son” is used. This one is the most common way in which people understand the word “son” when they find out they are a “son of God.”

4) A son in the sense of belonging to the family of God – John 1:11-13

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: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

This is the way in which most people think when they run across the phrase “sons of God.” And this is the way they think Paul is using the term in Romans 8, but he isn’t.

In John 1:12, the audience in view is the little flock. When they are told that they are “sons of God” when they “believed” on Jesus, the idea behind the word “son” is that they are now part of the family of God, which is exactly what was the sense that Bill Gaither had when he wrote that song, “I’m so glad I’m a part of the family of God.” The word “son” in John 1:12 refers to being made part of God’s family when the members of the remnant responded to the gospel of the kingdom. So this 4th way in which the word “son” is used is as a “regenerated son.”

5) An adopted son – Romans 8:14-15; Galatians 4:1-7

I have a few things to say about this kind of son, the first being that when you understand what being made an adopted son of your heavenly Father really means, when you gain an appreciation for what all is involved in that, then you will see what an honor and what a privilege it is to be offered the opportunity to be educated as an adopted son. In my way of thinking, it is the highest honor that could be bestowed upon me. Our heavenly Father doesn't offer it lightly and we shouldn't look at it that way.

By offering to educate us as His sons, our Father is putting on display the greatest example of His power that has ever been exhibited – EVER. Unfortunately, the church is going to sleep through it. The majority of the church is way more concerned with building gymnasiums, being entertained and “feeling good,” that they are going to completely miss the greatest thing that our Father has ever done or designed to do with man.

The next thing I want to present to you about the use of “son” as it occurs in Romans 8 is that this “son” is being referred to in a highly specialized way. There is something else that is said here that takes it out of the ordinary way in which the word “son” is used.

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 phrase that lets us know that the “sons” in these verses are more than just regenerated children of God is “ye have received the Spirit of adoption.” Adoption is the specialized process, the process that God had not ever done before, which makes us more than just members of the family of God. Unfortunately, if all you think about when you read in Romans 8 is that you are a part of the family of God, then this is not going to have the impact on you it is supposed to have and you are not going to “cry Abba Father.” In fact, you won't even understand what that cry is about.

Even though adoption as sons is a specialized process that has taken place for us, in the dispensation of grace, God does intend to utilize adoption for the members of the little flock in the future. But did not happen back in Israel's “time past” history. They were always referred to as “children of God.” And the word children was apt since they were under the tutors and governors of the law.

We also see the use of “son” as it refers to an adopted son in Galatians 4. This is one of those places where Paul does explain some things pertaining to the issue of adoption as it applies to us in this dispensation of grace. Let's begin back in Galatians 3.

Galatians 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.²⁷ For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

How are you a “child of God?” We are children of God by faith in Christ. That is regeneration. So it is true that we are children of God, or in God's family, when we trusted Christ. But now Paul is going to explain something about no longer being just children, but receiving the adoption of sons.

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.

As we covered last time, when you were a child, your Father treats you very differently than He does as a son. Those tutors and governors could only teach a child about the child's father, but how much better it would be to be taken by the Father and have him instruct the son personally.

Biblical Adoption: A father adopted his son for the purpose of installing and instilling his wisdom into his son so that the son would labor with his father in all his business.

Under tutors and governors you are thinking about your Father, but under sonship, you are thinking with Him. And as an adopted son, you are now a son with great liberty. And listen carefully, everything that I am going to teach you is going to be matched step for step by some kind of counterfeit. But we will talk more about that later.

Last week, we were observing some of the liberties that you now enjoy as an adult, adopted son. We saw that we were free from "fear motivation," which is exactly how God dealt with Israel.

(What follows are notes that were originally contained in your notes for session 1-2, but we did not get that far into the lesson. We reprint them here since we are now going to go through them.)

(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.

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.

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.