

Session 35

Even though we are coming back from our break, I think all we need to refresh us as to where we are in our study is to read those opening verses of Proverbs where we were examining those first 2 phrases that comprise phase 1 of our level 1 education.

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; ⁴ To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. ⁵ A wise *man* will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: ⁶ To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.

We have spent some time looking at what it is “to know wisdom and instruction.” But just knowing wisdom and instruction isn’t good enough (or isn’t sufficient enough) to fully set the son’s attitude and fully establish him in his sonship life.

The Father knows that there are now going to be competing allurements and competing attractions and distractions and enticements to the son that will seek to ruin the son’s education even before it ‘gets off the ground’. (Which is what that first exhortation is all about in Proverbs 1:7-19.)

So, quickly following on the heels of the son’s initial knowing the value and importance of the Father’s wisdom and instruction, the Father then presents the son with the grand scope of all that the Father’s business is going to be about, along with the son’s roll in that business.

It’s kind of like the Father takes the son and says, “If you’ll just allow me to ‘take you under my wing’ (so to speak), then here’s what’s in it not only for me, but what’s in it for you!”

The Father then gives the son information designed for the son to “perceive the words of understanding.” And as great as the son’s initial ‘cry of Abba, Father’ is, it is really only the beginning, for instead of the novelty of the grandeur and glory of “the adoption of sons” wearing off soon after it’s received, it is actually designed to grow and intensify.

This is exactly what the Father wants to see happen when He goes on to establish his son in his sonship life by telling him about His business, the specific vocation that he is going to have in the business and especially when He tells His son about the vocational education and training that has been pre-planned and provided for him through the sonship curriculum.

All of this is what gets done as the son is then given the 2nd Part of his initial establishment as his Father’s son; that is, as the son is

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given to “perceive the words of understanding.” The corresponding part of the curriculum that is written to us and for us and about us is found in the very next section of the book of Romans; Romans 8:16-39.

We’ve already taken a very tiny look at the Rom. 8:16-39 passage, just enough to notice the Father doing exactly what we’d expect when He gives us to “perceive the words of understanding.”

We’ve noticed that “creature” and something of our vocation in it; (and I say “vocation” because that’s the word God will use to describe it later on—and that’s an excellent word to use because a vocation is a job or occupation that is one for which a person is particularly suited or qualified!)

Both of these parts of phase 1 are intended to set the son’s attitude toward understanding the importance of what is being offered to him and provide a basic look at the Father’s business that is meant to install an ever-growing excitement in the son that will carry the son all the way through his sonship education.

We also took note that “perceive the words of understanding” has a tighter focus than just “to know wisdom and instruction.” In the first phrase, we are to know it exists and begin to realize its importance. In a more narrow frame of reference, “perceive the words of understanding” point us to the fact that there are some particular words that we are to take note of that will produce an understanding of these preliminary issues. Those “words” are the words in the Bible, the words that make up the educational curriculum. Those are the words that we are to “perceive” and when we do, they produce an understanding; a “settling of an issue.”

The critical difference between “To know wisdom and instruction” and “to perceive the words of understanding” is that, because it is a step beyond “knowing” when you “perceive,” you’re not just taking notice of the general value of the wisdom and instruction and the words of understanding, but as a son, by means of perceiving the words of understanding, you’re going to recognize how the wisdom and instruction is going to function in the details of your life! Simply put: when you perceive something, you see how it’s going to work when you use it!

Looking at the word perceive in Smith’s 1893 edition of *Synonyms Discriminated*, we find this regarding the word “perceive:” We perceive external objects when the mind becomes aware of their presence by the senses, and also perceive truths, **when the mind has been led**, by reasoning or otherwise, to take cognizance of them.

Did the part in bold type “ring a bell” with you? “When the mind has been led” should conjure up a remembrance of the very verses that have led us back to Proverbs in the first place:

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.

I told you before that this has reference to the Spirit of God “leading” you through the sonship curriculum. Looking at what Smith has written, “we perceive truths (in this case, the curriculum) when the mind has been led (the Spirit of God is the One doing the leading” to take cognizance of them” (in this case, the “words of understanding). And that leading is in the role as the “Spirit of adoption” that verse 15 reveals Him to be.

In Crabbe’s 1935 book of synonyms we have: to see, perceive and observe listed together. The thing to understand about Crabbe’s is that the words are usually listed from the most general and basic to the more advanced. Here is what he says: to perceive is take into the mind from the senses; we see a star, for instance when the eye is directed toward it, but we perceive its movements if we look at it attentively...the blind cannot see and the absent cannot perceive...”

I want you to turn to Proverbs 4 and look at one of the exhortations in conjunction with this.

Proverbs 4:1 Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and **attend to know understanding**.

The verse says “attend to know...”what? Attend to know understanding. You have to “attend” to this, not just by bodily presence but your mind has to be attentively looking at it. And if the importance of this has begun to sink in, and this really does mean something to you, then you have to attend to get the understanding.

We are going to run into this exhortation “to attend” over and over.

Proverbs 4:20 My son, **attend to my words**; incline thine ear unto my sayings.

The first “attend” had to do with “understanding” and this second “attend” has to do with “words.” Isn’t that just what we were reading in Proverbs 1:2 – perceive (give attention to) the words of understanding.

Let’s keep reading in Proverbs 4 and see how David understood it and how he taught his son to understand it:

Proverbs 4:20 My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. 21 **Let them not depart** from thine eyes; **keep them** in the midst of thine heart. 22 For **they are life** unto those that find them, **and health** to all their flesh.

This all matches what Crabbe’s said in his book of synonyms that to perceive is to look at something attentively.

Proverbs 5:1 My son, **attend unto my wisdom**, and bow thine ear to my understanding:

You can “see with the eye” when “the mind is absent.” Isn’t that the truth! So the exhortation is to ATTEND; attend to understanding, attend to my words, attend unto my wisdom; that is don’t just go through the motions, but engage your mind – pay attention – look at it attentively.

Here is why all of this is important to have down; your Father is going to check out your commitment level. Your Father is going to let you in on some information that is fantastic, information you are meant to perceive. That is, you are going to be presented with some “words” that you are supposed to give attention to. And one of the things that will get done is that the Father is going to “probe” the son to see what his commitment level is with regard to what He has shown the son.

And the first thing the Father does is make sure that son is “attending” honestly. That means that the son is not there because someone drug him “kicking and screaming” but that he wants to be there. And I can tell you one thing for certain, dishonest attendance will never get the job done. There are no exceptions.

What you do cannot be to impress me or keep up appearances, but you have to view this as your heavenly Father instructing you as a son to do something important with you in eternity. I will tell you now, there is a lot of dishonest attendance going on in most churches today. That’s just one part of how your Father is going to probe your heart. We will deal with this in more detail when we get over there, but for now, I just want you know that the “attend” of the exhortation is more than just a bodily presence, it is so that you “perceive,” which involves giving mental attention as well.

Now, look at Proverbs 1:2 and tell me what you are supposed to perceive:

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

You are supposed to perceive “words”. Therefore, what do you suppose you would be “seeing” with your eyes whereby you “perceive” something? Well, you would be looking at words on a page in a book, wouldn’t you? And you are not just supposed to see something with your physical eyes, but you are supposed to see with your “eyes of your understanding.”

Let’s illustrate this by use of the creature. Our job, in eternity, is going to be to give life and intelligence to the creature so that it really does operate like a body. When you are placed in your position, you are going to be producing the life and intelligence of God out in the heavenly places! That’s going to be your job, that when it comes to God’s intelligence, He can rely on you to produce it!

God is going to look out into the heavenly places and say, “Right here, I have someone who thinks exactly the way I think. They can live just like I live. They know what my business is about and when I send out something for that body of the creature to begin functioning, this guy

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sitting on this throne (or principality, or power, or throne, or power, etc.) he is going to be able to put into effect my very life!

Do you see how far beyond anything this earth can ever offer this is? I want us to go back to Romans 8 and do this little exercise in “perceiving words of understanding.”

We are going to look at vs. 19 where our Father is going set before us what He wants us to perceive; the final results of what His business is going to be about.

Romans 8:19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.²⁰ For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected *the same* in hope,²¹ Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Verse 21 is the “carrot,” so to speak. When we get there, the creature is going to be delivered from corruption. With that basic view, with those words, if we are going to “perceive” these “words of understanding,” then we are supposed to see more than just black letters on white paper. What we see with our physical eyes, we will need to see with “the eyes of our understanding.”

What you are reading here in Romans 8 is the first glimpse that you, as son, get of what your Father’s business is all about. Now I want you to read something with me that most of you have probably read many times before. What we are about to read is going to come clearer because we are going to frame it in its proper context of us being sons, and that will allow us to “perceive” something with the “eyes of our understanding.”

I want us to go to the book of Ephesians. Just to set this in its proper context, by the time you get to Ephesians, you have been established as a simple son. Ephesians is going to move you into the next level (Level 2) of your sonship where you will add “subtilty” to what you already have.

Ephesians 1:13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,¹⁴ Which is the **earnest of our inheritance** until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Where did you first hear about your inheritance? In Romans 8.

Romans 8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:¹⁷ And if children, then heirs; **heirs of God**, and **joint-heirs with Christ**; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.

Can you see what Paul does in Ephesians? He builds on what you received back in the beginning of your education. Now, flip back to Ephesians:

Ephesians 1:14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance **until the redemption of the purchased possession**, unto the praise of his glory.

Now back to Romans 8. What, in Ephesians 1:14 is Paul referring to that he already introduced to you in Romans? What is “redemption of the purchased possession?”

Romans 8:23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, **the redemption of our body**.

What is Ephesians about? It about being “in the body of Christ.”

Ephesians 1:14 Which is the earnest of **our inheritance** until the redemption of the purchased possession, **unto the praise of his glory**.

See how this picks up on Romans 8:17-18?

Romans 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also **glorified together**. 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with **the glory** which shall be revealed in us.

Ephesians 1:15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

By the way, I’m interrupting the reading to tell you that this is a “marker” of your sonship education that you “have love unto all the saints.” That sounds like a small thing and most people just pass over this without much thought, but it is a huge component of what you are going to get when you get to Romans 12.

Ephesians 1:15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, 16 Cease not to give thanks for you, **making mention of you in my prayers**;

And now notice how Paul is praying for them:

Ephesians 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you **the spirit of wisdom** and revelation in **the knowledge of him**: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the

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head over all things to **the church**, 23 **Which is his body**, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

What I want to focus on is in vs. 18:

Ephesians 1:18 **The eyes of your understanding being enlightened**; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

What Paul is doing here is picking up on your first level of sonship education and advancing it properly. Everything we read, from vs. 13 onward, connects with something you have already been told in a very generalized way. And though it was very exciting, you now are going to be taken back and given subtilty to add to what you got as a simple son and that subtilty is what makes you a “young man”.

I hope that this did not reach out too far into the future that you cannot recognize any of these connections. In other words, all of this is rooted to what you began to get all the way back to Romans 8. The point being that Ephesians doesn't just happen out of a vacuum, but it is connected the a previous part of your education.

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To get to the end of the phrase: to perceive the words of understanding” let's go to Crabbe's Synonyms one more time.

Crabbe's - Understanding is: “the faculty whereby we are enabled to apprehend the objects of knowledge, generals as well as particulars, absent things as well as present; and to judge of their truth or falsehood, good or evil.”

That is exactly what you are going to be given, the understanding, based on learning to think like your heavenly Father, so that you can make judgments of truth, falsehood, good and evil, on the behalf of your Father and His business. We are going to be able, by this education to look at something and say, “that is evil man” or “that is the strange woman.” Our understanding may be very basic in the beginning, but we will be able to identify good and evil from that understanding.

Having examined the first two parts of phase 1 of our level 1 education, the next thing we would normally undertake would be to study the things contained in the next phase of level 1; the things contained in verse 3. But before we do that, it is very important that we recognize that there is a very important exhortation in the book of Proverbs.

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This exhortation is not found in the table of contents, but it does come up at this particular place in the exhortations for the purpose of checking to make sure that something very important is in place. This exhortation is designed to make the son aware of the level of commitment that he's going to have to make if he's going to succeed in completing his vocational training. And this has to be done before you move to the issues of Proverbs 1:3.

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. 6 For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. 7 He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. 8 He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints. 9 Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.

This exhortation actually runs through all 22 verses of the chapter, but we are only going to read the first 9 verses with the main part that we are going to focus on being contained in the first 5 verses. Did you notice that the things of verse 9 are the things contained in Proverbs 1:3? This dovetails beautifully with priming you to get the 2nd phase of your level 1 education.

As we do this, remember that the exhortation is like primer, it makes you able to receive the doctrine that is to follow so that the doctrine will “stick.”

It is at this point in your sonship establishment that you are going to have to deal with your commitment level to the education. And this will all culminate at a point where you're going to reach a checkpoint, and you're going to have to pass it honestly and properly, or else you will put your entire sonship life in jeopardy! (Hence, this is a vital issue!) This is a place where some sons are going to drop out.

I want to talk to you a minute about these “checkpoints.” These are times in which what is really in your heart is going to be revealed. Paul is going to teach us about the “searching of the heart.” For now, let me take you over to Psalm 139 and show you something about this.

Psalms 139:1 <<To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.>> O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.² Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.³ Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted *with* all my ways.⁴ For *there is* not a word in my tongue, *but*, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.⁵ Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.⁶ *Such* knowledge *is* too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot *attain* unto it.

Now, skip down to the last verses in the psalm.

Psalms 139:17 How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! ¹⁸ *If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.*

Notice how David is talking about how God thinks; God's thoughts.

Psalms 139:19 Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men. ²⁰ For **they speak against thee** wickedly, *and thine enemies take thy name in vain.* ²¹ Do not **I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee?** and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? ²² **I hate them with perfect hatred:** I count them mine enemies.

Now, I want you to notice what David says in the last 2 verses:

Psalms 139:²³ **Search me**, O God, and **know my heart:** try me, and know my thoughts:
²⁴ And see if *there be any* wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

What verse 23 refers to is going to happen to you over and over throughout your education. In intelligent sonship prayer, you are going to go before your Father and ask Him to search and probe your heart about some things that are there.

Now, before we move on I need to point out that the normal way this psalm is taught is that it extols God's omniscience. They point to the opening verses to prove that premise.

Psalms 139:1 <<To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.>> O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. ² Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. ³ Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted *with* all my ways. ⁴ For *there is* not a word in my tongue, *but*, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. ⁵ Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. ⁶ *Such knowledge is* too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot *attain* unto it.

What normally gets talked about is how God knows what you ask for before you ask Him. This is backed up by a verse in the gospels.

Matthew 6:7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. ⁸ Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

That instruction in Matthew 6 was perfectly suited to the little flock, but that is not how you were instructed regarding prayer at all. In fact, if your Father dealt with adopted sons that way, it would never produce the 2-way conversation and relationship that He intends.

Besides all this, there is a word sitting over in Psalm 139 that will not allow this to be a chapter on God's omniscience; the word "acquainted."

Psalms 139:3 Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.

If you are omniscient and you know everything all at one time, do you get “acquainted?” No, you wouldn’t be acquainted with anything, you would know it all. When you acquaint yourself with someone, it means you don’t know them until you go through the process of knowing them.

The use of the word acquaintance tells me that this is used within the framework of sonship, where God has taken the position of a real, actual father to David. This is not language of accommodation. It is a true 2-way street. And under adoption, God has determined not to deal with His sons out of His omniscience, but because this whole thing is relational, He is going to deal with me by not knowing what I have to say until I tell Him.

My prayer life with my Father is not that of “creature to God” but it is truly, in every sense of the words, a relationship of “Father to son.”

While it is true that God is omniscient, it is also true that He has chosen to make this Father/son relationship the genuine article and therefore, He does not deal with me out of His omniscience.

Psalms 139 is all about describing David’s 2-way relationship with his Father. But that’s all I want to say about that now, so let’s return to Proverbs.

But what needs to be appreciated here is that these are the words of a son, who has been engaged in an intimate two-way relationship over such a period of time that he can say these things.

In fact, the issues involved in God adopting you as His son, and holding out to you a perfect education that will perfectly edify you and provide for godly edifying, with all the eternal results of it (see 1 Tim. 4:6-9 [:8]) that such a serious undertaking as our sonship education demands that we have a commensurate level of commitment to it on our own part.

The Father now tells His son about the kind of commitment that he needs to make when it comes to getting his vocational education and training. It’s absolutely vital that you make a firm and serious commitment to learning all of the things that your Father is prepared to teach you—and that He has made full provision to teach you.

Such an education naturally requires a son to have a very strong measure of commitment to learning from his Father. So then, at this point—after the Father tells His son about the kind of commitment he needs to make, a positively and properly responding son then responds to his sonship establishment (once that’s over) by declaring to his Father that he will make the necessary commitment to learning what his Father wants to teach him — and then the son ‘caps off’ (so to speak) his sonship establishment by PRESENTING HIMSELF to his Father as one who is fully ready to get his sonship education and edification underway!

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This is exactly how it ought to be with us, when through the effectual working of Romans 8:14-15 we receive the glorious news that we have been given “the adoption of sons,” — and when, through the effectual working of verses 16-39 that follow, we too, receive our sonship establishment from God our Father.

We will have to have some further instruction (contained in Romans chapters 9, 10, and 11 (due to the “mystery” aspect of our sonship edification) and it is at the very point of Romans 12:1 where you are now going to have to present yourself to your Father, which is where Phase 2 of Level I gets underway; where your actual sonship education gets underway in earnest.

Due to how the curriculum develops and how it gets more and more involved, and how the resistance to it gets greater and greater from the determined foe (Satan himself), then the son’s own commitment and dedication needs to really ever be growing more and more intense all along the way in order to see it through to the end.

Therefore, if you don’t start off ‘on the right foot’ (so to speak) with the proper response to the exhortation of the son’s commitment, and that level of commitment isn’t properly at the level it’s supposed to be, then it won’t be very long before some distraction or some other life-pursuit, or some kind of boredom or other allurements (let alone any small ‘nudge’ from the Satanic policy of evil) will have you derailed and just sitting there wishing you were somewhere else doing something else, and that this is just a waste of your time!

This passage we’re going to be looking at isn’t the one and only time the Father does this with the son, it’s just the first time. The truth of the matter is, the Father will intersperse more exhortations throughout the son’s education that will come along and ‘steel’ the son’s level of commitment all that much more. It will exhort him to greater and more determined levels of commitment so that by its effectual working, it will carry the son right through to the end.

To illustrate this, I want to take you to 2 Timothy 4.

2 Timothy 4:6 For **I am now ready to be offered**, and the time of my departure is at hand.

Paul is not saying something to the effect of: “Well, life has been so hard and so difficult, I just want to check out...” This is not a statement of resignation or a statement of despair.

This is Paul, recognizing that as a fully educated son, his education was over and he is ready to engage in his Father’s business.

2 Timothy 4:7 **I have fought a good fight**, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

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If you want to sum up the sonship life in a single word, it is “fight.” And the “good fight” is not a description of how Paul fought, but rather a description of the fight itself; it is a fight worth fighting. And how could Paul say that?

1 Timothy 4:8 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**.

The life that now is has “promise” to it, and so does the “life which is to come.”

Now, let’s go back to Proverbs 2 and read through those first 5 verses I wanted us to focus on and I want you to notice the “ifs” that are contained in the passage.

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.

Basically, we can actually take that issue of the son’s commitment to his sonship education and break it down into a couple of component parts.

There are 2 major areas of commitment (or 3, if you’re a pastor-teacher and going to teach it—because you’ve got to make a commitment to teaching the curriculum).

These 2 major areas of commitment correspond to the terminology that we’ve been utilizing all along when we talk about our being educated as sons—you often hear me say, “sonship education and sonship edification.”

The 1st major area of commitment corresponds with the issue of us being properly EDUCATED as sons—or what you might call the commitment to LEARNING.

(1) LEARNING.