

Session 41 – The First Issue of Commitment to Learning

In our last session we were looking at the 2 commitments that a son will have to make before he actually begins the education proper. Firstly, he will be examined by his Father with regard to his commitment to the education (commitment to learning) and the second is his commitment to edification (commitment to effectual working).

At the end of the session, we were looking at the issue of the son's honest attendance. The son has to invest the time and effort to show up for class, but he also has to incline his ear while he is there. That is to say that he is not there reluctantly, but the son has an eagerness to hear every word that his Father says and to get it working in his life. And if the son is honest attending, then he is not going to be satisfied with anything less than that.

What I would like for us to do now is take a look at a place in Paul's epistles where he deals with this issue of honest attendance, or actually the opposite of it: dishonest attendance. We are going to the book of 2 Timothy which is one of the "pastoral epistles." Just like the other epistles written by Paul, these books are arranged in a particular order and it isn't chronological.

In the pastoral epistles, Paul writes to warn of certain attacks by the policy of evil against the local assembly. These attacks are not meant so much to shut those churches down, but rather to shut down the teaching of certain doctrines such as "right division," "the mystery" and "godliness".

The attacks against Timothy had a time when they had begun to take a toll. Because those attacks happened over an extended period of time, through sheer attrition, Timothy had developed a spirit of fear from the constant pressure of having to continually emphasize the doctrines that were a threat to the policy of evil. You need to understand that the attacks against Timothy and his assembly are not the kind of attacks that happen to every church, but only to those which are teaching the doctrines I mentioned earlier.

Well, I mentioned that there is an identifiable progression to these pastoral epistles. Let me use this as a way to get over to the passage on dishonest attendance that I referred to earlier.

So, as I was saying, it is important to understand that there is a sense and sequence to what is written in your Bible. Most preachers, and hence, most saints, don't even recognize the progressive nature of the arrangement of books in the Bible. And why would they, considering how most preachers construct their sermons; taking verses from all over the Bible and applying all of them to saints in the dispensation of grace. So, let me show you a little about the sequencing of the pastoral epistles.

You understand that one of the primary goals of the policy of evil in this dispensation is to take you out of the program you are in and put you back in Israel's program and the doctrines that

apply to it. That is certainly not the only thing it is doing, but this is one of the primary things it does.

Let's go first to I Timothy 4 where we will see the policy of evil's effort to utilize the word of God and men of God in putting people back under Israel's program.

1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

I was taught to look at this passage the way most young preachers were; that this all refers to things like the spirit of pornography and drunkenness and things like that. Now keep it in your mind that Paul writing about things that are going on in churches. This isn't about what is happening in the seedy part of town in back alleys and gutters, but, in church, they are going to depart, giving heed to "doctrines of devils."

The phrase "doctrines of devils" does not have anything to do with witches, witchcraft, Halloween, séances, or anything to do with the occult. You need to realize that doctrines of devils are Bible doctrines, which come right out of the word of God. These are doctrines that are misused, mishandled and misapplied. The erroneous teaching of these doctrines creates blindness on the part of believers to ever see God's word rightly divided or to ever see the marvelous structure to the word of God that provides this sonship education.

1 Timothy 4:2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;
³ Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

I know the popular way to look at this when I was a young preacher-boy was to see the phrases "forbidding to marry" and "abstain from meats" and then apply these rebuke to the Catholic church because they forbade their priests to marry and you couldn't eat meat on Friday. But, these are actually things out of Israel's program, which came along way before the Catholic church. The whole intent is to put saints back under God's program with Israel and have them live that way. By the way, that is one of the most popular things in churches these days; to teach everyone how to live by Israel's calendar and obey the commands of Israel's program.

Let's be clear, God's business today is not about following Israel's calendar, observing Israel's feasts days or implementing the rudiments of the world into your daily life.

I Timothy 4: ⁴ For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: ⁵ For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. ⁶ If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast

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attained. ⁷ But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself *rather* unto godliness.

What we are after here is the second word in vs. 7. We've already covered what "profane" and "old wives fables" are. Paul instructs Timothy to refuse the attempts to bring these elements of Israel's program into his local assembly. Now go to 1 Timothy 6.

1 Timothy 6:20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: 21 Which some professing have erred concerning the faith.

The "vain babblings" are also out of Israel's program and you can see those babblings in the midst of the Corinthian assembly. Now, notice the "science falsely so called." You KJV is the only Bible that retains the word "science." Now what does Paul say to Timothy about these things? He says to "avoid" them (vs. 20). That is a more intense response than "refuse" which he mentioned in chapter 4.

Now go to 2 Timothy 2.

2 Timothy 2:14 Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. 15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

Notice that now Paul tells Timothy to "shun" those things. He said to "refuse it, avoid it" and "shun it." Each of these words are progressive, they are advancements and developments that are commensurate with the policy of evil and its attacks. What I want you to notice is that if 2 Timothy had come first or if you had another book inserted between them, then you would not have the continuity that you have.

2 Timothy 3:1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

Now what Paul is doing here is focusing Timothy's attention on the dispensation of grace. The "last days" here are not a reference to the last days of Israel's program, but the closing days of the dispensation of grace.

2 Timothy 3:2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

The list that follows in vv. 2-5 are often taught as a description of places like Las Vegas (sin city) or Hollywood or as the evils of this world. Preachers read these verses and declare that those things are already happening in our society. But that is not what is being described here. This is a future “picture-in-advance” not of how this sinful world is going to go, but this is a picture of how things are going to be inside the walls of local churches! Now, let’s go back to verse 1 and look at the “perilous times.”

2 Timothy 3:1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

These days are called perilous because of what is going to happen inside the local assemblies. Things are going to progressively get worse; therefore, they are “perilous.” The times are not perilous because of who is in the white house or because we are losing more freedoms or because gas goes up in price. That isn’t what is being discussed here. And while I don’t want to get into this now, I will say that the things I just mentioned are not even peril to you until one particular line is crossed. And until that happens, all of those other things are not a peril to you at all.

What Paul is concerned with is that the saints, members of the body of Christ and members of local churches have degenerated to the point where they are all the things listed in vv. 2-4. Did you notice that vv. 2-4 are one continual sentence and then at the end of vs. 4 you get a semicolon? That semicolon sets off what that list is; it is believers that have a “form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” These people deny the power of godliness! And what is Paul’s admonition to Timothy? “From such turn away” is what Timothy is supposed to do.

What is happening when it says that have a “form” of godliness is that they are going to redefine what godliness is. And by redefining godliness, they will also change what edifying really is. That is one of the “perils” that comes out of this.

What Satan is trying to do, by his policy of evil, is find a particular group in that local assembly that are vulnerable to a particular attack that he can make that is being described in verse 5 and following.

2 Timothy 3:5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. ⁶ For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ⁷ Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Notice that these are believers who are never learning; they are “ever learning.” These are dedicated, Bible students who have no appreciation for the power of godliness.

2 Timothy 3:1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. 6 For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, 7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

What I'm after is found in vs. 6; that expression that is used to express a particular category of people in a local church (genuine members of the church, the body of Christ), "silly women." Those that the apostle Paul comes along and describes here as "silly women" are really one's to whom "Honest Attendance" doesn't apply at all.

And because they are really dishonest in their attendance, they are easy targets for the Satanic policy of evil that comes their way because of those who "creep into houses," the "houses" being of course, the local churches that met in homes. The "silly women" are easily victimized by the policy of evil.

Vs. 6 is describing a particular insidious attack by the policy of evil upon the local assembly, and I'm talking about a real, genuine, functioning local church with a faithfully functioning bishop or pastor-teacher and faithful deacons; one that is genuinely functioning as the pillar and ground of the truth, which is genuinely providing for the godly edifying of the saints therein. But when it comes to the Satanic policy of evil making a target out of that local assembly, and utilizing the forms of godliness that deny the power thereof—and when that PoE sends out its emissaries into the assembly—when they creep into the houses (the local churches) — those emissaries are looking for a particular kind or category of members of the church, the body of Christ that are in that properly functioning local assembly.

And they're after the one's called: "silly women." Now just because they're called silly women doesn't mean that men can't be in that position too—but it does mean that women are more likely to be in that position than men are.

It's kind of like our expression: a wise-guy—which can be applied to either a man or a woman, even though "guy" gender-wise points to a man—and you can call a woman a wise-guy (people don't usually call them "wise-gals"!).

The point is that the term silly women can be applied to men, too, but as it is used here, more often than not, the attack came upon women who are described here as silly—but any man who would fit the bill (so to speak) or function as such, would also likewise be called a silly woman. (It's not a term of endearment by any means!)

Nor is it meant to be a degrading, derogatory term either. It's actually meant to be a term of **REPROACH**. And as a reproachful term, it's designed to apply to someone who isn't taking something seriously that's supposed to be taken seriously—to the detriment of the one who's not taking it seriously.

2 Timothy 3:6 For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive **silly women** laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ⁷ Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

The expression “silly women” (in Paul's day, and even previous to it) was used in any situation in society (Greek or Roman and others), when in those societies, when there was provided the opportunity (for women especially but men as well), to receive an education and to, on the basis of that education, participate in the family business to describe that woman who was not taking the opportunity seriously. Because women were usually not afforded the opportunity for education like men were, if a woman was fortunate enough to get that opportunity and she squandered it, she was called a “silly woman.”

Therefore, that term silly women becomes a sonship term; one used in a very negative way. It's really talking about a person who is attending a local church (even attending regularly), but who's attendance is not being honestly done; it's dishonest attendance. They're in class, but they are not focusing upon the information being taught in any serious way at all. In other words, they are not “receiving my words” (receiving the words of their Father) at all.

The words are just, as the expression goes, ‘going in one ear and right out the other.’ They're not “hiding my commandments with thee” or “inclining their ear unto the wisdom,” and they're certainly not making any “application of their heart to understanding.” That's exactly why the passage goes on to say, “Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (II Tim. 3:7)

They're physically in the environment, but they're mentally absent! (They're ignorant—ignoring the words—ignoring the wisdom.) That's not honest attendance—that's dishonest attendance! That word silly is carefully chosen (not ‘weak’ or ‘weak-willed’ as many modern translations have it). It's said that way because that's the reproach that is supposed to ‘sting.’ If you're dishonestly attending with a dishonest heart for even being there, then that's silly; that's the silliest, most foolish thing you could do in connection with sonship education! A silly woman is a fool in her Father's eyes—it's a further description of that foolish son.

And I'll give my opinion of a good example of this: Paris Hilton. Here is a young woman who has been given more than just a huge inheritance, but a chance to really involve herself in her grandfather's business. But instead of caring about that business, all she can do is fritter her life

and money away. And although she is not in an actual classroom, she has an opportunity and the means and the name to make much of it (as far as this world goes) and she couldn't care less. In that sense, she is a "silly woman." But I'm just giving you an example.

The actuality of this is that the ones who are not honestly attending the assembly are the easiest targets of those characters who creep into the assembly. That's why they get led away with other things and by other things because the truth of the matter is: they WANT something else.

The reason why all the substitute and competing and counterfeit forms of godliness appeal to them so much is because the power of true godliness doesn't appeal to them at all.

So you may wondering, what is the power of godliness; what is "the power thereof?"

A: I Timothy 6:3—If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;

It's the excellency of God's word effectually working in our inner man! But we can now add to that: ... as outlined in this doctrinal curriculum for sonship education & edification! (It's not just God's word in general taught to teach a truth here and a truth there!) Let's get this clearly in our minds; they are not denying the Bible. Neither are they denying the local church or the pastor. What they are denying is that what you say, that this doctrinal curriculum of sonship education and edification, they deny that that is how godly edifying takes place. They will claim that it works some other way; usually by getting the latest and greatest thing down at the Bible bookstore; like The Purpose Driven Life or some other thing like Knowing God or some other man-devised system.

At the end of it all, they are denying that this curriculum can actually produce godliness (in all 3 components) in your inner man.

And notice the good, godly way in which Timothy is instructed to respond to that (even as a pastor— as a bishop of the local church): "from such turn away." (II Tim. 3:5) They DENY the power of God to produce godliness is through the leading of the Spirit through this doctrinal curriculum!

The thing is carefully crafted in that they are not denying that we should study the Bible. What they are saying is that watching some artist paint Jesus on a canvass is so edifying. And mission trips to build churches is so edifying. And AWANA programs are so edifying. And youth camps are so edifying. And VBS is so edifying. And whatever else you want to name – all of these "good things" are the way godly edifying takes place. What they will deny is this curriculum's ability to produce godly edifying.

What no one has the guts to say is that none of those will ever produce proper godliness as God Himself defines it. As this dispensation of Gentile grace goes on, the times will become even

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more perilous and ever more dangerous because the norm (not the exception, but the rule) will be that an ever increasing majority of Christians will deny that the power of godliness is to be found in the effectual working of the words of God as contained in the curriculum for sonship edification.

The majority of Christians will have some kind of a form of spiritual edification; it will all look great from the outside, but no one will be acknowledging what God Himself says produces true godliness! It has never occurred to most people that money, buildings and attendance are not indicators of godly edification.

So, as we go back to Proverbs 2:1-2, what is being described in those 2 verses is the very opposite of the silly women. Proverbs is describing honest attendance; the wise woman or a wise son.

Session 42 – The 2nd Measure of the Son’s Commitment to His Sonship Establishment

There are 2 commitments that every son will need to make in his sonship establishment and the Father will “check the son out” on both of those commitments before the education proper ever begins. The first of those commitments is a commitment to learning (education). The second is a commitment to effectual working (edification).

The first commitment is given in Proverbs 2:1-5 where that commitment to learning is broken into 3 parts. While there are 3 identifiable measures given in Proverbs 2:1-5, they all occur within one single sentence. Therefore, they are not in any way to be thought of as disjointed or completely separate from each other.

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.

The 3 measures of the son’s commitment to learning are identified by the “if” clauses contained in the passage. Not only are these 3 measures not to be looked at as disjointed from each other, but in fact, they all have a smooth, seamless development and progress to them so that one naturally follows on the heels of the previous.

The first measure (which we covered in the previous session) is that of Honest Attendance. That is, you are more than just a body in a seat, but you have a real desire to get your Father’s words. You know why you are going through the education and you desperately want it for yourself.

And what is being described in vv. 1-2 is the opposite of the “silly women” concept that we looked at last time.

Now let’s put some things together. If you know that Honest Attendance is the first measure of your commitment to learning and you also know that these 3 measures are connected (being contained in a single sentence), then you would expect that as soon as the commitment measure of Honest Attendance has been dealt with and passed by the son, then that will lead to something else (the 2nd measure) which will also lead to something else (the 3rd measure).

So, if that Honest Attendance is there, if the son is showing up for the reason of learning and not for some other reason (like qualifying to play on the church softball team, or to find a date, or to be entertained, or to showcase your talents, etc.) then the son is ready to move on to the next measure of his commitment to learning which is described in vs. 3.

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

Now, in verse 3, you’ve got another (the 2nd) Measure of Commitment to your sonship establishment. If you look carefully at vs. 3, you notice that there are 2 actions that are described. You will also notice that these 2 actions (or activities) are different from the 2 actions described in vs. 2.

In verses 1 & 2, the actions involved on your part (on the part of the son) are really all internal actions (or you might say they are ‘intake actions’) because you’re receiving words and commandments from your Father into your heart and mind as you “incline your ear” and “apply thine heart.” By the way, this is probably a good place to remind you that the word “commandments” in vs. 1 is NOT a reference to the law of Moses. You already know that words are used in different ways in your Bible, and these “commandments” are not about keeping the law. Instead, these are commandments concerning the education of a son. And as you know, a son cannot be properly educated under the “T & G” of the Law (Commandments). Even the apostle Paul will use the word “commandments” when he has no reference to the Law of Moses.

1 Thessalonians 4:1 Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.² For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.

Not to get off on a rabbit-trail, but what did Paul “command” concerning how we are to “walk” and to “please God?” You are to “walk” after who the Spirit of God has made you to be in Christ and the only way we can please God is to function (or live) out of that new identity. The only way for us to produce righteousness is for it to be produced out of what He has done for us (our new identity in Christ) and not out of what we can produce (our flesh). What I’m after here

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is that those are the “commandments” that Paul is referring to. So, too the “commandments” in Proverbs 2:1 are not referring to the Law of Moses.

But now in vs. 3, there is a change from an intake action or inhale action (receive/hide) to an ‘output action’ (or an exhale action). Because the 2 actions described in vs. 3 are “criest” and “liftest up thy voice,” they are actions in which the son ‘cries after’ and ‘lifts up his voice.’ They are describing the son saying something.

What is happening here is that you have this Father-son relationship dynamic that on the one side has the Father saying something to the son (teaching, instructing the son), but it’s not just a ONE-WAY street! No. After the Father speaks, then the son is supposed to indicate by his verbal response a measure of commitment to the words his Father has just told him.

Therefore, it’s a TWO-WAY street. Proper sonship edification requires an INTERACTION take place between the Father & son. Therefore, the 2nd Measure of Commitment to our sonship establishment is: INTERACTIVE LEARNING. Proper sonship education requires an interaction between the Father and the son. It’s not just important, it’s imperative.

When you think about it, it is a very natural and normal thing for the son to have some kind of response; as this is sonship prayer, which is different from how we understood prayer before. It may be in the form of some questions or in the form of some kind of gratitude or enthusiastic response or in the form of the son getting a grip on that wisdom. But because of the nature of that wisdom, the son’s gong to want more and more of it and that also is something that will show up in the son’s response to what is being given to him.

So, there’s a natural point where the son is going to say something. He’s going to verbalize some things to his Father that will indicate to the Father the son’s commitment level to his sonship establishment and to his sonship learning.

I am preparing you for when we get back over to our epistles so that you know that you’re going to” cry after knowledge, and lift up your voice for understanding.” What we are looking at is the sonship curriculum’s capacity to measure the son’s commitment level, which makes sure the son will be successful in getting the education.

Once the son has made a commitment to honest attendance, (the “Yea” of vs. 3 indicates an increase from that so that the son adds to that a commitment to interactive learning) the son is now going to be saying some things to his Father in response to the wisdom that is now being put in him.

The reason we call this second measure “Interactive Learning” is because it relates to two-way communication in which the son is going to have a response, which is direct and continual, to what the son is hearing from his Father. For example, when we get back to Romans, one of

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things you will discover is that you will see something that is very important to the Father. You, as a son, are going to be moved to have that be as important to you as it is to your Father and there is going to be some response on your part (as a son) to what you have been made to understand.

As this second measure is “interactive,” then you’re not just on the ‘receiving end’ of the information. The idea behind an interactive issue is that you participate in it. In other words, you’re not just passive, but you’re actively engaged. Therefore, when you’re talking about Interactive Learning, you’re talking about being engaged with the One who is teaching you.

It makes sense that when it comes to sonship education, the Father expects (and has designed) for interaction to take place with His sons.

What you are going to find is that there are 2 parts to the Interactive Learning. When you look at vs. 3, that should have already become apparent to you as this second “if” clause has the son responding in 2 different ways.

The one part has the son (in view of Honestly Attending to his Father’s instruction with his ear being inclined to hear the wisdom and his heart being applied to the understanding), responding to the instruction he’s getting. It has the son saying some things to his Father. That’s the 1st part of the interactive learning.

Then once that happens (the son responds with some questions and comments on his own to his Father) the son responds to the Father’s instruction by asking the Father to search his heart so that it’s absolutely clear to the son that he’s understanding and appreciating everything that he’s being taught. So, the actual ‘other half’ of that Interactive Learning issue is that: You are dissatisfied if you don’t learn what you think you’re supposed to learn.

As you can see, this is a very important aspect to this measure of commitment. I want to make sure you understand what I’m saying. because the son’s dissatisfaction with not clearly understanding what he’s supposed to understand or clearly learning what he’s supposed to learn, that heart-felt dissatisfaction is supposed to have some action taken about it on the part of the son.

That is how this second measure works; how you know if your commitment is where it needs to be. In other words, when you don’t get something, if this second area is working properly, then you won’t let this go before you get an understanding of it. If that is the way it is for you, then good, because that is the measure of this second issue concerning your commitment to learning. Just to nail down just how important this is, if Interactive Learning is not going on your part, then it will be impossible for you to meet the Commitment Level that will be required of you by your Father.

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So when this is properly working in you, you're going to ask questions; of your Father in intelligent sonship prayer and within the local assembly of the bishop (pastor) and deacons who are responsible for teaching you the things that you're learning.

To review: there are 2 major features to your 'output' (so to speak) or your interactivity in this Interactive Learning in sonship education:

1) The crying after knowledge and lifting up your voice for understanding, making comments (feedback) and asking questions

2) And the other major feature is your own sonship prayer—which is especially where the searching of your heart takes place as an interaction with your Father

Engaging in this interactivity aspect of learning should really be something you greatly desire to engage in because you should deeply desire and want to make sure your understanding is crystal clear. Your dissatisfaction with anything less will naturally have you engaged in this interactive learning process and you just won't 'let it go' with anything less than clear understanding.

It's like you won't leave Bible class and you won't walk out the door at the end unless all your questions with regard to the material that has been taught have been answered and that you can walk out that door knowing how to apply what you've just been taught.

And that's the kind of the measure or degree of interactivity in the learning that's described in vs. 3.

3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge,

That's very strong and powerful terminology and the preposition (after) is critical. When you cry after something, there's a passionate intensity about it; an intense desire (not 'ho-hum').

3 and liftest up thy voice for understanding;

When you 'lift up your voice for understanding,' that's the issue of making sure that you're heard in connection with concerns and questions you have with respect to whether you're understanding things properly or not.

That's what Interactive Learning is all about. And if that isn't what is going on in the local church assembly, there is NO WAY in the world that the FULL MEASURE of godly edifying as a son has a chance of taking place!