

Session 5 – What it Means to be an Adopted Son of Your Heavenly Father

In our previous session we were looking at the various ways in which the word “son” is used. We left off looking at how Paul describes people he has led to Christ as his “sons in the faith.” Timothy and Titus and many of the Corinthians were among those we took notice of. We saw how Paul was sending Timothy to Corinth to function as a “father” to the Corinthians and get them back on track with their sonship.

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 think about being a “son of God.”



4) A regenerated 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

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.

There are 2 items that tip you off that the use of the word “son” in vs. 14 is different from what you saw in John 1:12. The first thing that indicates a different use of “son” is the phrase “as many as are led by the Spirit of God.” Notice, it does not say, “as many as have the Spirit of God.” If it had said that, then we would be talking about being regenerated and if that were the case, you could understand this use of the word “son” the same way that we saw it in John 1:12. But not ever “child of God” is being “led by the Spirit of God.” And when you read that phrase, there is a natural thinking that comes into your mind that interprets that as some kind of “inner prompting” or “intuition” or some similar kind of “leading” aspect that the Spirit is doing in order to somehow direct us or steer us in the way or activity He wants us to go – and that is not at all what being “led by the Spirit” means. Now, we will get to that in due time, but I want to return to the point that got us off on that; there are some things that tip you off that this use of the word “son” is different from any other way we have seen the word used. When you properly understand what being “led by the Spirit” means, then you know that this use of the word “son” doesn’t just refer to being a regenerated son.

There is a second thing that connects to the issue of being the kind of “son” that Romans 8:14 refers to, that differentiates this kind of son to be the product, not of regeneration, but of a specialized process. In other words, the “son” of Romans 8 is being referred to in a highly specialized way; a way that entails more than just being regenerated. So, if my understanding of this is correct (and I don’t say it that way because I have any doubts about it) but if I’m correct, then the kind of son being referred to in Romans 8 is a further or additional issue to that of being a regenerated son.

Can you look at the verses and discover what is being 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; a 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 of “Abba, Father” is all about.

When I say that adoption is a specialized process that makes the “sons” of Romans 8:15 something different than just being “in the family of God” or being “children of God,” what I am emphasizing is that the adoption of sons is a dispensational matter. When I say that, I don’t mean that we are the only ones that will ever be adopted. In fact, when I said that God had never implemented this specialized process of “adoption” before doing so in this dispensation of grace, it does not mean that He did not want to, but only that He did not.

Even though adoption as sons is a specialized process that has taken place for us in the dispensation of grace, God wanted to utilize adoption for Israel in her program. When the nation foolishly elected to go under the law to produce their own justification and sanctification, they not only short-circuited God’s ability to give them the adoption of sons, but it ensured that their relationship was not going to be that of “adopted adult sons” but instead, they would have the very different relationship as “children.”

We understand from the Hebrew epistles that even though adoption did not happen back in Israel’s “time past” history, God does intend to utilize adoption for the members of the little flock in the future. They were always referred to as “children of God.” And the word “children” was apt since they put themselves under the “tutors and governors” of the law.

God’s original intention was not for them to be just children. Instead, His desire, when He led them out of Egypt, was to deal with Israel as a “son” (adopted son!) and utilize the nation in the land God had promised to Abraham. We are going to the book of Exodus to observe the record of Moses’ conversation with the LORD regarding his leading the people out of bondage in Egypt. At this time, Moses has already attempted to assert himself as their deliverer when he

killed an Egyptian that was persecuting one of the Israelites. When the body is found, Moses flees out of Egypt to Midian. After a time, the LORD speaks to Moses about returning to Egypt to deliver the people.

Exodus 4:19 And the LORD said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt: for all the men are dead which sought thy life. ²⁰ And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt: and Moses took the rod of God in his hand. ²¹ And the LORD said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go.

Now I want to show you a verse that is very important but is overlooked by almost everyone. When we read the very next verse, which is a verse where the LORD tells Moses what to say to Pharaoh, pay attention to what Moses is supposed to say and especially how he is to refer to the people of Israel.

Exodus 4:22 And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, **Israel is my son, even my firstborn:**

You realize that all this takes place before Israel went under the law. Even though the word “adoption” does not appear anywhere in the OT, the elements of adoption are all present. It is clear from the Scriptures that God intended to deal with Israel as an “adopted son” without ever using the word “adoption.” But even more than that, in the section of Romans where the apostle Paul is teaching you about the “fall and diminishing of Israel,” he tells you straight out that “the adoption pertaineth to Israel.”

Romans 9:3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: 4 Who are **Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption,** and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; 5 Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

Paul knows what adoption is and he knows what God intended to do with Israel. He also knows when and why that adoption did not take place. Additionally, he knows that it will take place for the members of the little flock who will enter into the kingdom of heaven on the earth in the future.

When I say that adoption is a dispensational matter, that doesn't mean that we are the only ones getting adopted; you have been looking at verses that show you that “the adoption pertaineth to Israel” and not just us. But what God is doing with regard to the adoption of sons in the dispensation of grace is altogether different from His purpose in adopting the believing remnant of Israel in the future. In other words, God's reason for adopting us is not the same as His reason for adopting Israel.

There are 2 different programs at work, utilizing 2 different sets of doctrine, meant to accomplish 2 different outcomes and both of them are implemented through adoption! It can work that way because the “structure” of adoption is always the same, but the “doctrines” that are in force are

different. And you know why – because God’s purpose with the 2 programs is different. Israel’s adoption has to do with becoming the head of all nations and a kingdom of priests in the repossession of the earth to God. Our adoption has to do with us, in glorified bodies, functioning as the body of Christ in the repossession of the heavenly places out in the Creature. As adopted sons, they have an earthly purpose and as adopted sons we have a heavenly purpose.

Now let’s make sure we are on track mentally. All of these things have to do with the use of the word “sons” in Romans 8:14 referring to an adopted son. 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. To see this, let’s begin back in Galatians 3 where he begins his explanation by saying that “ye are all children of God.”

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 is it that we are “children of God?” We are children of God by faith in Christ. That is regeneration. So it is true that when we trusted Christ, we became “children of God,” and as such, we are “in God’s family.” But now Paul is going to explain something about no longer being just children, but receiving the adoption of sons; he is going to take the issue further.

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.


Let’s put this together and see what we have. When you trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior, you became a “child of God.” And in that sense, you are called a son. That kind of son is JUEL. That is exactly what the little flock was being described as in John 1:12. They are saved, justified sons in the sense that they have been made part of the family of God. But in sanctification, there is a further issue of that being revealed to you.

So let me ask you, “You and me, in this dispensation of grace, are we also “sons” in the sense that we are part of God’s family?” Of course, we are. We have been JUEL, we have been regenerated and we were made “sons” in the sense of being made part of God’s family when we trusted Christ as our all-sufficient Savior.

But now, in Romans 8, we are presented with something more than just being sons in the sense of being “children of God.” Now we are told that we are “sons” in the sense of being “adopted.”

And if you know what biblical adoption is, then you realize that you are no longer being referred to as a child, but now you being referred to as an adult, for a “son” can be a child or an adult. Now that is only 1 aspect of being an adopted son. It not only implies adulthood and the liberty that comes along with being an adult, the change in the relationship that comes from being an adult, but it also points to the fact that you are going to be extended the highest, most prestigious honor that could be offered to you; you are going to be identified with your heavenly Father in the most intimate way. He is going to take His adopted son under His wing and begin to teach him everything about His business including the business secrets that no other son will know. He is going to teach him how to think like Him, how to live like Him and how to labor like Him. He is going to do this through an organized, planned curriculum that will result in the Father putting His character into His son.

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.



When you realize what it is that is being offered to you, when you see it for what it really is, then you will know that this is the most important thing you will ever put your hand to, **NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO FOR A LIVING** in this life. And I’m not denigrating anyone’s job. I realize that what people do is important, all the way from saving lives as a doctor or fireman or police man or soldier all the way to picking up the trash, because believe me, if no one picked up the trash, we would all find ourselves in a special kind of misery. So I’m not saying that what you and I may do for a living isn’t important, I’m saying that whatever it is, it takes a back seat to the business that your heavenly Father wants to prepare you for and train you to do. And when I say it takes a back seat, I mean in every way imaginable: in importance, in prestige, in honor, in glory, in power, in authority, in influence, in wonder, in impact, in adventure, in pleasure, in fulfillment, in excitement, in joy, in accomplishment, in achievement, in contentment and in success. In all these ways and more your heavenly vocation excels every other job in every way. No matter how much you love your work, believe me when I say that there is nothing that can be done on this earth, no matter how noble or how beneficial or necessary or fulfilling that can hold a candle to what your heavenly Father is offering you.

And here is the kicker, the vocation you are being offered is only going to become a reality for you based upon your getting equipped for it while you are here on earth. I know that is a bit of a surprise for most saints. They think that when they get to heaven they are going to get “filled in” on whatever they missed down here. You won’t. There is no training class or remedial course in heaven for those who did not have the time or interest to gain the necessary skills under the Father’s specific tutelage while here on earth. And one more thing, if you think that working at jobs here on earth, or developing “leadership skills,” or formal or OTJ training is going to equip you to function out in the heavenly places, then you are in for the shock of your life.

That just happens to be one of the reasons that you will never get your sonship education under the law. The law may tell you some things *about* your Father, but it cannot equip you to know Him in that Father/Son relationship; it cannot teach you to think like He thinks, which is the first component of godliness. Even though the law was ordained of and given by God, and it represents his perfect righteousness, you can never, and I mean never, be educated as an adopted son under the law or any form of it.

It may be true that under the “tutor and governor” principle of the law 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; by some kind of “competing wisdom.” For example, one of the things that you will be offered in place of your Father’s wisdom, is the wisdom of this world. And there are other “wisdoms” that will seek to take the place of your Father’s wisdom. There is a difference between the “wisdom of men” and the “wisdom of this world” and the “wisdom of the princes of this world.” And each one will be presented to you as a match or equal to your Father’s wisdom, but they are not. We will talk in more detail about those competing wisdoms later on in Romans.

In our previous sessions, we were examining some of the ways in which your Father treats children different from sons. One of the big differences is in the liberty we enjoy as adopted sons. One of the things we are liberated from is 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.)

Without going into any detail, let me just show a couple of verses that indicate the fact of our liberty in Christ.

Galatians 5:1 Stand fast therefore **in the liberty** wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Do you see that “yoke of bondage?” That is a reference to the law. Doesn’t that sound an awful lot like Romans 8:15 where we “have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear..?” And now skip down in Galatians to vs. 13.

Galatians 5:13 For, brethren, **ye have been called unto liberty**; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

Along with liberty comes responsibility. That is also part of adulthood, is it not? We are given great liberty but we are also asked to exercise that liberty responsibly.

One of the most basic and fundamental issues in sonship education is that the father does away with the “tutor and governor system” and begins to deal with his adopted son **PERSONALLY** himself. Any further education that is needed will be provided by the father and this is going to provide for an intimacy of fellowship which the child never had before. Now, the son is in a position to appreciate the closeness of the relationship. As a result, the son will be extended the great privilege and liberty to make his own decisions about the details of his life!

That is pretty much how things work for you and me today. Once you become an adult, you don’t always call up your mom or dad and ask their permission to make decisions concerning the details of your life. If you are thinking about buying a new couch for your living room, you do

not call up your folks and ask their permission. You make your own decisions; that's what adulthood is about.

We all recognize that things change when you become an adult and they are supposed to. If you continue to behave as a child that would be unnatural and dysfunctional. But, that is exactly how most saved people act when it comes to their relationship with their heavenly Father who has now declared them to be an adult, adopted son with liberty. In spite of the fact that God now sees them as adults, they still want to behave like children under the "tutors and governors" and they continue to operate in the relationship of a child who is still in that tutor and governor system.

As you go through the whole curriculum of your sonship education, you are going to learn much about the liberty you have as a son. But for now, the main thing to focus on is that, as an adopted son, you have been given the liberty to make decisions on your own. In contrast to how God dealt with Israel under the law, the basic issue for us (adopted sons in the dispensation of grace) is that God has given you the responsibility, the liberty and the privilege of making your own decisions concerning His will in the details of your life.

As an adopted son, your heavenly Father is dealing with you very differently from the way He dealt with Israel whom He put under the tutors and governors system of the law. Instead of that, He has given you the liberty of making decisions on your own and the relationship He wants with you is that of a Father and an adult son (or daughter.)

Under the law, the children of Israel had set up for them a system of judges that were charged with all the decision making for the members of the nation of Israel. Everything was decided FOR them; they were not left to making any decisions on their own. The judges would hear each case and then make a discerning interpretation in connection with the law, and then tell that individual God's will for that particular instance.

If someone brought a matter before the judges in which it was particularly difficult to determine God's will, it would be passed along to a higher and higher decision-making body. The system was that first, a man would take his decision before a tribal head (prince.) If he could not make a decision then it would go to a higher set of judges. If they could not determine the correct course of action it could eventually wind up coming before the high priest. The high priest wore a breastplate called the "breastplate of judgment" which contained two stones called the "Urim and Thummim (the lights and perfection.)" The high priest would pull out one of the stones (casting lots.) The answer to what was God's will would depend upon which color stone came out, the white or the black and that would determine God's will. But one thing is certain, that Israelite could not make that decision on his own.

There was no freedom or liberty for an individual Israelite to make a decision on his own with respect to the will of God in any of the details of his life. The reason God dealt with them thusly has to do with them entering into the law contract, which put them in a relationship as children and hence, under the "tutorship and governorship" of the law. The law told them what they could and could not eat, what kind of material they could and could not make their clothes out of, when they could and could not work; in short, it regulated every part of their lives.

But that's NOT the way in which a member of the church the body of Christ is supposed to operate today. A pastor is not to be equipped with a Urim and Thummim in order to determine God's will for the people in the assembly. In fact, a pastor of a church has NO RIGHT to tell you what the will of God is in the details of your life. I know there are plenty of them out there that like to govern everyone and control what they do and don't do. If you have a pastor that is doing that, and if you approve of doing that, then he is your tutor and governor, and you are refusing to act like an adult son. Instead, you're determined to act like a child! Sadly, that's exactly how most of the members of the church, the body of Christ, are acting today.

The truth of the matter is, the doctrine of sonship is one of the most misunderstood and neglected doctrines in the entire dispensation of grace. All that most Christians ever get is the idea that they are sons as in "part of the family of God." But they never get how they are supposed to LIVE as adult, adopted sons or how to function as sons to God's honor and glory!

The remarkable part of this is that you have it right now; you don't have to wait until this life is over and you get displayed as sons in heaven. We have the privilege of doing so right now! God expects us, as sons in this dispensation of grace, to act like sons, to think like sons and to labor like sons.

All throughout our epistles (Romans-Philemon) EVERYTHING the apostle Paul teaches us, EVERY exhortation he gives us, it is ALL in accordance with us being SONS, walking as sons and living as sons.

Therefore, you are not to expect God to treat you as a child. You are not to live like a child and you should not expect God to treat you as He did His CHILDREN of Israel in "time past" when He had them under that tutor & governor principle of the law.

Instead, expect God to treat you as the adult son or daughter He's made you to be. As you go through the sonship curriculum, you will see many differences between the way an adult son is treated from that of a child. But for now, I would like for us to briefly look at just a few of those important differences.

(1) Freedom from fear motivation. (Romans 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!

There are only 3 main liberties 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.

The second primary liberty you have as an adult son:

(2) Freedom from the rudiments of the world.

This issue deals with a wide range of issues, with the main issue concerning our being brought under the bondage and mastership to a strictly regulated “religious” lifestyle in which you observe days, months, times and years, and you use rituals, ceremonies and observances (such as water baptism, physical circumcision, holidays (holy-days), dietary regulations and so forth and so on.)

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:** ⁹ But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

Colossians 2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after **the rudiments of the world**, and not after Christ. ²⁰ Wherefore if **ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world**, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to **ordinances**, ²¹ (Touch not; taste not; handle not; ²² Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? ²³ Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

These are called elements and rudiments because of the nature of how they are directly associated with childhood training and childhood teaching aids! They are only shadows without substance; signs & wonders designed to impress children! They are the observance of special days, special places, special buildings, and special events, used to teach special-needs children!

But today, God is not treating you like a child, He’s treating you as an adult, and He doesn’t utilize things like that with you today. In fact, if that is being utilized, you are to understand and appreciate that those things are NOT of God, but of men. They are counterfeits and fakes and they are dishonoring to your Heavenly Father.

Another liberty you have as an adult, adopted son:

(3) Freedom from governorship and limited decision-making

Far from being wonderful and praiseworthy, being under the system of governors under the law was a life of bondage to always having someone else make your decisions for you. You can go back and read throughout God’s program with Israel after the law was brought in on them and you can find places where the average Israelite had to go through the judges system (the Sanhedrin, the Priest and finally the High Priest) just to ascertain what God’s will was for them in a particular matter.

You realize that the average Israelite didn’t have any opportunity or privilege of operating outside of that system; a system that was a part of the childhood treatment. Of all the things that sets sonship apart from

Childhood, this one is the one that shines the brightest. All we're going to do here is just touch on it, because it will be one of the great issues that we will be looking at very closely as the curriculum begins to get underway in our sonship education.

As a son you are free from governorship and limited decision-making. As a son you get to make decisions on your own; decisions that are made in light of your Heavenly Father instructing you out from the pages of His word and not from the opinion of men or any other competing system of wisdom. These are but a few of the distinct differences between being treated like a child under tutors and governors and being treated as an adult, adopted son by your father.

There is one other issue that I want us to look at; an issue that will give you an appreciation for being treated as a son. In order to get this we are going to have to go back and get familiar with the sonship concept as it was made known throughout God's program with Israel. We will be looking at something God did for Israel and in Israel's program that put on display His J-ness and grace, to do for them what they couldn't do for themselves. This important issue will be the topic we will take up in our next session.