

Session 51 – The Merchandise of Wisdom

We left off in our last session by looking at wisdom as a sort of spiritual money that can be used to purchase “merchandise”. We were beginning to list some of the things that can be purchased, the first two being:

1. A Reputation (to angels)
2. Godly Happiness

Before we continue our list, let’s read the exhortation that tells us about the merchandise which can be purchased by the wisdom we gain through our sonship education.

Proverbs 3:13 Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. ¹⁴ For **the merchandise of it** is better than the merchandise of silver, and **the gain thereof** than fine gold. 15 She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.

Vs. 14 makes it clear that wisdom not only has the capacity for acquiring things unto yourself, but that there are specific things to buy; there is “merchandise” (goods, wares, commodities, products, etc.).

Vs. 14 – Not only are there products you can buy, but you’ve got “gain” to be made by that wisdom and it’s better than silver (money), and it’s better or greater gain than fine gold!

Vs. 15 takes that “Top Priority” concept from merely the acquiring of the wisdom and the understanding and focuses upon the actual USE of that wisdom and the USE of that understanding and treating it as the ‘spiritual money’ that it is, and starting to make the purchases God has designed for you to make on the basis of acquiring those things.

Now, let’s continue to point out some of some items that you will be able to purchase with this ‘spiritual money.’ This list is in no particular order so don’t try to come to any conclusions based on the order of things here. You may have already determined that the merchandise isn’t of a physical nature (since it’s going to have to be taken with you into your heavenly vocation) and it’s not material possessions (or things along those lines), because you can purchase those things with physical silver and money and gold.

But what you’re going to be purchasing with spiritual money is spiritual commodities and spiritual merchandise and you’re supposed to do that. In fact, you’re expected to do that.

Here is the next piece of “Sonship Merchandise” that you can purchase with the godly wisdom and understanding you get by means of God’s sonship curriculum.

3. Godly Skills – one of the first things you can purchase

We've already addressed the issue that you are going to be acquiring godly decision-making skills all along the way as you go through your education into godly wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity.

It may not be quite as clear how that is something you can 'purchase,' but it will become clear when we go through Romans 12 -16. You learn to be able to purchase particular skills in connection with how wisdom gets applied in certain situations—and how, on the basis of godly wisdom, how one situation differs from another situation, and how it would be better to do one thing in this situation, and to do a completely different thing in this other situation.

Here's an interesting aspect of all this. Much of what you are learning in these first 4 godly skills of judgmental decision-making has to do with angels. We've already talked some about what they are thinking and expecting. They know that one day, we are coming to their realm to repossess that creature. They are watching you even now and observing all that you do. That is especially true for those who are involved in their sonship education; the angels are paying particular attention to them.

As you learn these skills you will find there are times when you will employ them in a combination of ways, such as utilizing wisdom with justice. This will allow you to deal with fairness issues and disputes, and things that require foresight so that you can foresee the ramifications and implications of your decisions.

Through the acquisition and practice of these godly skills you are able to buy up a position in the heavenly places; a higher, more demanding position for yourself. And that would be the next piece of merchandise.

4. Position in the heavenly places

You really do need to begin viewing your life here on earth as "practice" for your vocation in the heavenly places. The godly wisdom that comes from the education along with the proper exercise of it in the details of your life allows you to "purchase" that higher position in the heavenly places. Again, we aren't trying to go into these in any detail, but rather we are just listing a few of the items of merchandise that godly wisdom can purchase for us.

As you purchase to yourself the godly skills and by the use of those skill a higher position, then you also end up purchasing to yourself: Experience.

5. Experience

The kind of experience we are talking about here is experience in two realms. The first is in connection with dealing with one another as members of the new creature. the church, the body of Christ. The second kind of experience is in dealing with ones who are outside that realm; that is, those men who are not part of the body of Christ.

The fact is, as you deal with other people in this dispensation of grace, who are not members of the church, the body of Christ, (in just the normal living of your daily life) you should view that interaction as the training ground for how you will one day deal with angelic beings! (And you should look at those situations and circumstances just like that.)

The things you are doing now in a practicing (or training) sense are meant to enable you to deal with similar-type situations, relationships and circumstances when you get to the angelic realm of the heavenly places. There is a parallel between things you experience here and what you will experience in the heavenly places. That parallel can only be appreciated and seen for what it is by a son who has been educated in the wisdom of his Father. In the same manner, only by thinking about your situations, circumstances, relationships, etc. the way your heavenly Father thinks about them can you understand how your daily life becomes a training ground for eternity.

Now I want us to turn to a couple of passages to show you that this isn't just some made-up "pie-in-the-sky" type teaching. First, to demonstrate that the angels are watching you, let's turn to I Corinthians 4.

1 Corinthians 4:9 For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.

Before we talk about his verse, let me point out that this should shed new light on what is happening when we participate in the Lord's table. We are "shewing" something and it isn't to the lost world (when we perform the Lord's table). Remember that terminology?

1 Corinthians 11:26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, **ye do shew** the Lord's death till he come.

We are putting something on display; we are "shewing" something to the angels and especially to the fallen angels every time we observe the Lord's table. What we are shewing forth is that in the Lord's death, what they thought was their day of great victory was actually their complete undoing! That is, what was being accomplished by Christ was unknown and unanticipated by Satan and his minions. They thought putting Christ to death would end what He was doing in Israel but they had no idea He was making a provision for a body of Christ that would eventually unseat his boys in the heavenly places. He was taken in his own craftiness!

Let's look at the I Corinthians 4:9 verse again.

1 Corinthians 4:9 For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for **we are made a spectacle** unto the world, **and to angels**, and to men.

When you are a "spectacle" you are being seen! You know what "spectacles" are, don't you? They are glasses that allow you to see. Who does Paul say we are made a spectacle to? To the

world, to angels and to men. There is more to say about us being made a spectacle but we will have opportunity later on to revisit this passage and see the details of it. For now, I want to take you further into I Corinthians to chapter 6.

Let's get a context. The Corinthians had gone through the first phase of the first level of their sonship and then they ran into a host of problems. Paul writes to straighten out many of these issues. One of these being that the Corinthians were having problems in their assembly and instead of solving it within that assembly, they were taking the matter down to the courtrooms of the city. The problem with that is that they were settling matters in the secular world's court which decided matters according to the wisdom of this world. What else would a court of the world do? But is one of the issues Paul was upset about. Look at his terminology regarding this.

1 Corinthians 6:1 **Dare any of you**, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?

Did you catch that opening phrase? "Dare any of you...!" Why does Paul react so strongly about this? It is because he is reacting to this in view of this purchasing power in their skill and experience. In other words, here was a golden opportunity to gain some experience for their godly vocation in the heavenly places and they threw it away! It isn't just about being "a bad witness," it's about "blown opportunity." Now, look at the verse that follows.

1 Corinthians 6:2 Do ye not know that the saints shall **judge the world**? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

I wish we had the time to go through this book of I Corinthians in more detail, but now is not the time. If we did, I would show you how that when Paul uses the term "world" here, he is not referring to the earth, but to the "world" in which the creature resides; the celestial world! Here again is the precision of the text to not use "earth" but instead to use "world."

Let me try to put this in perspective for you. Paul knows that by taking these legal matters out of the realm of the intelligent son's decision-making skills and sticking them into the very competing wisdom that seeks to overthrow godly wisdom, they are wasting opportunity after opportunity to develop the kind of godly skill and get the godly experience that is supposed to one day make it so that they can "judge the world" and "judge angels!" Listen, this should put an entirely different perspective on your entire life! Now, look at the next verse.

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

Here was an opportunity for the "wise" in the assembly to put to use some sonship skills to show justice, foresight and fairness and to set this situation aright. The very context tells you that in putting those godly skills into practice you are rehearsing for doing the very same things with angels! Why else would Paul even bring them into the context?

1 Corinthians 6:5 I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?

The Corinthians should have looked at this as training ground for one day dealing with issues in the heavenly places. Out there, we will be dealing with beings which has different kind of nature than we have. By our very nature, we are familiar with humans beings, but we are not familiar with angels by nature. They are intellectual beings, but they have a different nature and they think differently. You can observe this different kind of thinking from time to time as you observe things written in the Bible.

But getting back to the Corinthians, what they should have understood was there are some things that they can learn that actually gives them insight into how the angelic realm thinks!

You are going to discover that in your own sonship life, especially as you advance, you're going to be up against the thinking of some diabolical angels, and at the same time, you're going to be viewed by some other angels that are on God's side. Even though you're going to be up against angels that are on Satan's side (fallen angels), they are still angelic beings, and still possess that basic aspect of their nature that is in common with the angels that are on God's side.

Just as there's a measure of commonness between the way the humans spirit of a lost man functions and the human spirit of a justified member of the body of Christ, the same applies in the angelic realm.

And while this is not the time in which we will delve into all the details of it, one of the things that you and I are able to acquire, (skill-wise & experience-wise) when it comes to dealing with the Adversary and his Policy of Evil, is some insight into the way in which angels think!

The Corinthians should have 'jumped' on this opportunity to put their godly wisdom into effect to settle these things amongst themselves! (see vs. 5) In much the same way, your Heavenly Father is looking for how you are going to gain from His wisdom in order to acquire the skills and experience so that you can wisely handle your spiritual money and spiritual wealth.

You need to realize that, by the way you're told about the value and 'purchasing power' of your godly wisdom, which you get in this sonship Education, you're not just getting an education or getting wisdom or getting doctrine just to 'sit on it'. You're acquiring the wisdom and making it that "Top Priority," you're buying up the needful items that you will make full use of in eternity. And you do that not just by getting wisdom, but applying it in your everyday life.

Before we move back to the Proverbs passage and note the next piece of merchandise, I want you to have something else to think about. This wisdom is not a singular wisdom, if I can accurately state it that way. What I mean is, that this wisdom is not just about knowing what is right and what is wrong. It is more than being able to identify good and evil. But it involves you

being able to take a very complex situation and properly evaluate every part of it and by combining various decision-making skills, come up with the best possible answer.

To give it to you another way, it is not just the “wisdom” of knowing that God is using us to repossess the heavenly places unto Himself. He is doing that and there is a measure of wisdom in knowing that, but that is only the most basic aspect of what this education provides for us. Beyond that, we are to also have some “understanding” that leads us to know that are equipped to do that by the wisdom with which we purchase to ourselves godly decision-making skills that enable us to sort through very complex decisions and accomplish the reconciliation of the heavenly places.

When you come to understand that, then you realize that just as Proverbs 3:15 states, that there is nothing in this life that you could possibly own (possession-wise, commodity-wise, material-wise, etc.) that can compare with the things you need and are to purchase right now and possess right now that are of a spiritual nature and that are going to be taken with you into your eternal vocation yet to come.

This kind of wealth that you acquire in this life not only can be taken with you, but God has actually designed for you to take it with you. And if you don’t take it with you, you are going to wish you had gotten it and had it with you when you stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ!

The next item in our list is:

6. Prudence

This has to do with having the capacity to see how decisions you render or the things you are going to be managing in the operations of your Father are going to play out over a period of time. It deals with things that require forethought and the capacity to think beyond the ‘here and now’ and foresee the ramifications and implications of decisions you make in the management of the Father’s affairs. Prudence is a more highly refined skill than most people think. To have godly prudence is beyond making right decisions, but brings into account how this will play out far into the future.

Now, I’m going to list some things that often times are used in a negative or bad sense (because there’s often times carnality associated with them), but these are some things God has designed to be produced in us and purchased by us that are to be used in a godly sense by the effectual working of our sonship education.

7. Respect

Just to briefly talk about this, because of what those angels see in you, while you are acquiring your sonship education, they will have a measure of respect for you before you are ever placed in your position in the heavenly places. They have heard of you and they know some things about you and they are anticipating what you are going to be doing.

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This issue is going to be touched on in the book of Romans, but primarily, this has to do with your Level II sonship education whereby you begin to make an impact upon the heavenly places and you are informed that you have your “conversation in heaven”. That means that this is dealt with fully in Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians.

By this, I’m not saying that this is the first time it will come up. We will see it introduced in Romans, brought up again in 2 Corinthians, again in Galatians and next in Ephesians 2 and again in Ephesians 4 and finally in Philippians 1.

The point is that in Level II of your sonship education, and you get to the point where you are to “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called” (Eph. 4:1), you are at that point able to generate RESPECT in the angelic realm for the effectual working of God’s word in you, for the genius of what God has designed, and the genius of what God has produced as those angelic beings see all those skills that are being acquired and purchased up by you as being the very things that are necessary for the creature to function as it was designed to function in the first place!

Although most of the Christian world will deny the power of godliness working in you, (deny the power of this sonship curriculum to produce godliness [II Tim. 3:5]) the angels will have great respect for the effectual working of God’s sonship curriculum and sonship education working within you. And that’s a commodity or merchandise that is better than silver and more precious than rubies that you can purchase to yourself. The “Christian” world has already substituted something else for the sonship curriculum so when you talk about this, it looks like you are “out of the mainstream,” some “Johnny-come-lately,” or a member of some kind of cult that has deviated from the majority consensus of how to “grow in grace” or “mature in Christ”.

While the world at large and the Christian world in particular will have no respect for true godly edifying, the angels have no respect for anything but godly edification. Only the display of godly wisdom as a result of the effectual working of God’s word in you can earn the respect of God’s angels. In fact, that respect resounds throughout the heavenly places and even though you may not totally understand all about it at this point, but that respect is an important issue to your operation in the heavenly places.

The next piece of merchandise which can be purchased by you, we have already mentioned, but we have not listed it as such:

8. Angelic Thinking

I think we’ve already said enough about this so that we can just move on to the next item which is:

9. Trustworthiness

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As you begin to properly function as part of a local assembly of believers, edifying one another, putting your sonship into practice, you will “purchase” to yourself Trustworthiness as it will be viewed by your fellow members.

Not only members of the local assembly, but there is a trustworthiness in the part of the angelic beings as they take notice of your ability to do all that is necessary to function in your position in the heavenly places. They are watching you as you get your education, as that word effectually works in you to produce all the components of godliness, as you become skilled through practice of your sonship skills and they have confidence in who you are becoming, and that is Trustworthiness. They know that you will be able to do exactly what ought to be done. That is why they are “waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God!”

Romans 8:19 For **the earnest expectation** of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

There is an “earnest expectation” which means there is emotion involved in your manifestation. Actually, this is going to get more developed in as you become a Level 2 son, but I can tell you that the issue of your walk being “perfected” in Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians. Those angels are looking for the effectual working of the word in you, they are looking for you putting it to use, for you purchasing the things you will need in eternity and for you becoming skilled and competent in the curriculum – and all of these things develop in those angels and measure of trust in your ability to “captain the ship” so to speak.

Even though this is a partial list, it is these kinds of “merchandise” that becomes part of your “conversation in heaven”.

Philippians 3:20 For our **conversation is in heaven**; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

This phrase “conversation is in heaven” is very misunderstood today. Most preachers have been taught to correct the word or retranslate the word to “citizenship.” Typical. I will tell you that the issue of your conversation being in heaven cannot be properly understood outside the realm of sonship education and the development of it.

Look, if you change that word to citizenship, all you have done is to say that you are one day going to heaven. Who didn’t already know that? You didn’t advance anything in your education with that change.

That conversation means you are the topic of heavenly talking points. When we get over to Philippians to see this verse in earnest, then you will see from the context that this is exactly what is meant by this.

Well, this is enough for now. I think you get some idea of the kind of merchandise that you will be able to purchase. I know you still have questions and you should. But I am not going to talk about how you actually make your purchase until we first get you some “money”!

Now, don't lose sight of how we got here. We have been discussing the 3 measures of a son's commitment to his education. Before we get away from this and move on, I want to take you back into Israel's program to when the Lord Jesus Christ was on the earth conducting His earthly ministry. Our purpose in doing so is to show you all 3 of these measures of commitment in the Lord Jesus Himself.

It should not surprise you that He would have the same things that you are supposed to have because He also was a Son that “grew in wisdom and in stature.” He took no short cut. He went through the education and had it effectually work in Him to produce godliness. That is to say, what the Lord Jesus learned enabled Him to “think, live and labor” with His Father on this earth.

And just to show you how important these measures of commitment are, the purchase of wisdom's merchandise will only take place when you have first of all committed to your sonship education to the degree of all 3 Measures: 1) Honest Attendance; 2) Interactive Learning; and 3) The Top Priority.

Concerning that last measure, you should realize that as you get along in your sonship life, the Adversary will hammer away at this issue of your sonship education being The Top Priority of your life. He will do this by his utilization of both the course of this world [the evil man] and his Policy of Evil [the strange woman]. He will oppose this measure and attempt to make it so you start putting other things on par with this top priority. This is for the purpose of relegating it to just one of many other priorities, so that you not view it as you were exhorted by your Father; so that ‘nothing you can desire is to be compared unto her’.

Now, I want to show you that the Bible actually records these 3 Measures all happening to a ‘Son’ who is beginning His sonship education and that Son is the Lord Jesus Christ.

The One who most exemplified the Commitment to Sonship Learning in His life was the Lord Jesus Christ. Hopefully you recognize that when you're over here in Luke's gospel, you are back in “time past” in God's program with Israel. Even though that is true, what we're going to be looking at is beneficial for us as adopted sons in this dispensation of grace because, the basic format or pattern for sonship education is the same no matter what program you are in. The doctrinal context that is contained here is, of course, different from ours. Their doctrine is going to be according to their program. But we aren't looking for the doctrine but the measures of commitment given by the exhortation and the exhortations hold for both programs.

While it is a very misunderstood and misconstrued issue in the minds of many (even among other saints that do ‘rightly divide’ God's word properly) the Lord Jesus Christ did receive the adoption as a Son from His heavenly Father. They teach that Jesus' adoption didn't kick-in until the issue of Psalm 2 was in effect; when He was “seated at the right hand of the Father.” What

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they fail to observe is that there is a difference between being “adopted” as a son and then being “installed” and “presented” as a Son. Those all happen at various times.

The truth is, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself went through all of the features that pertain to sonship and more than that, He functioned perfectly and flawlessly in connection with every one of them. When He was on the earth, He could hold the Psalms and Proverbs in His hands. He looked at the exact same table of contents that we look at. How amazing is that!

As we turn to Luke 2, we’re going to be looking at is some information in connection with His perfect and proper functioning as an adopted son at the very stage in His learning that you would find yourself when the exhortation of Proverbs 2:1-5 kicks in and comes into play. That tells you that the Lord Jesus had to examine the same 3 commitment measures that we have been looking at.

What we are about to see is that from the moment He received notification from His Father that He had now received the adoption of sons, and in connection with that notification, and with respect to the Father establishing Him as the Son that He is, and going over with Him the Measures of Commitment to the sonship learning that He is going to be engaged in, from the moment that took place, the Lord’s response was perfect, (His attitude was perfect), and in perfect keeping with a son’s expected commitment to getting his sonship education.

We’re going to see here the description of the issue of the Lord’s 1) Honest Attendance; the issue of His 2) Interactive Learning; and how He made it 3) The Top Priority of His life. Now bear in mind that this single chapter covers a number of years of the Lord’s life, beginning with His birth (vs. 6) and ending with Him at 12 years of age (vs. 42).

Luke 2:39 And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. 40 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, **filled with wisdom:** and **the grace of God was upon him.**

Verse 40 is a very brief glimpse of His development between the time He was a baby to the time of this trip to Jerusalem when He is 12.

Luke 2:41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. ⁴² And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. ⁴³ And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not *of it*. ⁴⁴ But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among *their* kinsfolk and acquaintance. ⁴⁵ And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. ⁴⁶ And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. ⁴⁸ And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus

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dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. ⁴⁹ And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? ⁵⁰ And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. ⁵¹ And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. ⁵² And **Jesus increased in wisdom** and stature, and in favour with God and man.

Verse 52 is a great synopsis of a son who is “well pleasing.” Now, let’s go back through this passage and break it down a bit.

Luke 2:41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the **feast of the passover**.
42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the **custom of the feast**.

Jesus’ parents were under the law in Israel’s “time past” program, therefore, they were being obedient to go to Jerusalem on the feast day. There were 3 feast days every year that required a visit to Jerusalem to celebrate them. This was the “feast of passover” which was one of the three. (The other 2 being Pentecost and Tabernacles).

In vs. 42, Jesus’ age gets brought up. There are only about 3 times that Jesus’ age comes up in the Bible and you can be sure that when it does, it is for a very particular reason. The reason his age gets brought up here is because 12 years of age, especially in the Hebrew world, was the age of adoption.

Because 12 was an accepted age for adoption, Joseph had probably begun to educate Jesus concerning carpentry; his business. And no doubt, this was also the time in which the heavenly Father made Jesus aware that He is now going to begin going through the curriculum to educate Jesus in His business. That training would ultimately end when Jesus became 30 years of age when He would be a fully educated Son. At that time, John the Baptist would break the 400 years of silence and Jesus would begin His earthly ministry, and all of that is in view and begins right here in Luke 2 when Jesus is adopted as a Son.

Luke 2:43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.

Jesus “tarried behind” for a reason. He’s not just there playing with some other kids in the back alleys of Jerusalem and just wasting time (playing baseball or anything along those lines—or just sneaking away from His parents and being a ‘naughty boy’).

No, He tarries behind in connection with His sonship and it being the driving matter on His mind now! (At 12 yrs. old)! His understanding of who He is as an adopted Son of His heavenly Father is now the most prominent matter on His mind!

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Luke 2:44 But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. 45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. 46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

Now, they are a day's journey out so they are also a day's journey back. Then, vs. 46 says that after 3 days they found Him. But does the 3 days include the 2 days of travel or do you have 2 days of travel and 3 days of looking for Him in Jerusalem making a total of 5 days? Either way, they lost the Messiah for at least 3 days; I'll let you decide about that.

Luke 2:48 And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. 49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

He says this (vs. 49) to them as if He expected that they should have known all about this and really it should have 'clicked' in their mind in view of the fact that He's now 12 years old and the adoption of sons has taken place. Here is a question for you, if Jesus was going to get involved in His Father's business, where, in all the land of Israel, would that business be conducted? In Jerusalem, of course! And not only in Jerusalem, but at the temple!

His heavenly Father's business is now taking priority status for Jesus. His Father's business is the issue of getting ready for the dealing with apostate Israel, as apostate Israel is going to be dealt with when the announcement of the climatic stage of the program is made to the nation, beginning with John the Baptist.

The Lord is now getting ready to participate in His Father's business and that means that He's now going to be actively participating in His sonship education for that business. What I'm hoping is that you are beginning to see why this account is even included in your Bible in the first place. It isn't filler and God isn't just reminiscing. This is in there for a reason and it has to do with the very issue we are discussing; Sonship.

What we're especially after in this passage is found in vv. 47-47, for what is said there sets forth all 3 Components or all 3 Measures of His commitment to His sonship education.

Luke 2:46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, **sitting in the midst of the doctors**, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

Jesus' parents found Him in the temple, but look "where" in the temple. He is "sitting in the midst of the doctors." No, who are the "doctors?" The "doctors" are among the teaching leadership of Israel. They were the very ones who had been entrusted by God to dispense the word of God to the people of Israel and to dispense it with understanding.

We don't ever talk about the Greek, but I want to show you something here. The term translated "doctors" is "didaskalos". It is most often thought of as a "teacher" even though it is translated "Master" more times than any other word. But this is the only time it is translated "doctor" and you should expect by now that there is precision to that word. And of course, all the other translations use the word "teacher". I'll show you shortly why this is a big deal.

It's very important that the word doctor is used here—if you have some perception of what a doctor is—and how important that issue of a doctor relates to a son and his sonship education.

The word "doctor" has its roots in the word "doctrine." A "doctor" is one who is thoroughly or fully "indoctrinated". Doctrine is a body of information that materially affects the way you think; it isn't just "teaching." Doctrine affects your thinking, which, in turn, affects your living in the details of your life, which dictates how you spend your time (how you "labor") in your life. That is, doctrine touches all 3 areas of godliness!

Being indoctrinated is more than just having a head full of information. Therefore, when you talk about a doctor (and this is where it fits in to the issue of sonship education), no matter what field the doctor is in, when a person is bestowed with the degree of "doctor" he is not only thoroughly understanding of all of the details of his discipline in an academic way, but he is actually able to understand how it all fits into the wholeness of a person's being and how any given circumstance or situation can be viewed properly in light of his discipline or field of study.

For example, a medical doctor isn't just a person who has a complete, academic understanding of the body, but in addition to that, he has the capacity to guide and counsel a person in light of how other things (stress, changes in environment, family history, what occupation you have, eating habits, and so forth) will impact his medical treatment for the whole of your being.

In view of that, when you're talking about these doctors in Israel who were entrusted with the dispensing of God's word, they were supposed to be ones not only with a keen, fully developed academic understanding and appreciation of God's word, but they were also to be skilled to deal with issues of conduct and behavior and the proper, healthy, godly use of the wisdom of God's word.

The word "doctor" does occur 2 other times in your Bible but it is a different word (nomodidaskalos). The "nomo" prefix means "the law". So these guys were "doctors of the law." But you don't need to the Greek to know that, the text itself will tell you that. Let's go to Acts 5 to look at this.

Acts 5:12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. ¹⁶ There came also a multitude *out* of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one. 17 Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the

Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, 18 And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison. 19 But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, 20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.²¹ And when they heard *that*, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.²² But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told,²³ Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within.²⁴ Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.²⁵ Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people. 26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned. 27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, 28 Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. 29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. 31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him. 33 When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.

Now you have the context. What we are really after is found in the verses to follow.

Acts 5:34 Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space; 35 And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. 36 For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. 37 After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. 38 And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: 39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God. 40 And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for

his name. 42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

An interesting side note is that Gamaliel was Paul's instructor. Verse 34 says he was a "doctor of the law." Just to illustrate the kind of thinking that should accompany a "doctor," look at how he approaches the problem. By the way, the men listed by name in vv. 36 and 37 both claimed to be Israel's Messiah. (See Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*) As you know, many after Jesus had made the same claim.

Even as recent as the translating of the KJV a man earned a doctorate after a lifetime of study, not in just a few years. What I am trying to do here is give you an idea of the kind of people that Jesus put Himself in the midst of. They were "doctors."

Luke 2:46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, **sitting in the midst of the doctors**, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

These doctors (even though they are corrupt) were the proper one Jesus would naturally seek out and place himself in their midst because they are the ones who are entrusted with dispensing God's word in Israel. Not only that, but they are also the ones who, above all others, should be able to instruct a son according to his sonship education and edification!

If there was ever a place that a son could go to be educated in Israel's sonship education, it should have been in Jerusalem, at the temple and it should have been by the doctors. So, the first thing the Lord does is to put the 1st Measure of Sonship Learning into practice: HE ATTENDS CLASS and HE ATTENDS IT HONESTLY! That's why vs. 46 says, He's "sitting in the midst of the doctors". In other words, He didn't just show up late, and grab a chair and put it put against the back wall near the exit so as to make a hasty getaway.

He, by His very physical presence in the class, hasn't just put himself on the perimeter and is just there marginally (so to speak). On the contrary, He has chosen a seat in the midst of class. He's chosen a seat where His attendance is going to be noticed and can't be missed. By placing Himself in the midst of the individuals who are entrusted with the teaching of the word of God, He's going to be able to hear every word they say; He's going to be able to look at them 'eyeball to eyeball'. And in all that, you can't get a better picture of Honest Attendance.

He's not just there, He's there TO HEAR. He's in the very position where He can 'incline his ear unto their wisdom' and He can 'apply His heart' to their understanding. That's why (:46) states the 2 things it does about the Lord's attendance in class.

We're going to take this up in our next session, but before we end, I have a question for you. If you notice in vs. 46 it says that Jesus wasn't just sitting in the midst, but He was "asking them questions." In our old "systematic theology" days, we would have never thought that Jesus

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needed to ask them any questions. So here is your homework assignment: why was Jesus asking them questions? We'll see the answer next time.