

- POST-DOCTRINAL EXHORTATIONS.

- We have now come to the complete and total end of a major form of doctrine—(sonship establishment) - and the natural thing for a father to do with his son (before going on to the next form of doctrine) is to give his son some exhortations in connection with what has been covered so far.

- And there are several reasons for this—one being, in order to ensure that the things the father has done and established within his son is not forgotten—also to ensure that the form of doctrine has done its effectual work within the son—but another important feature to post-doctrinal exhortations has to do with bringing back into the son's heart the ambition and enthusiasm that is supposed to be there so that the son is crying, *Abba, Father*, all the more—that is, that the son is enthusiastically anticipating the upcoming form of doctrine that will be built upon the preceding form of doctrine he has just accomplished.

- And this is exactly what our Heavenly Father expects us to have—that is, a godly ambition and godly enthusiasm that comes from a proper and intelligent understanding and appreciation for what He and His sons have, together, just accomplished—as well as the godly enthusiasm for desiring to go on to the next form of doctrine our Father is going to teach us.

- All of this is required as a proper and positive response to our sonship establishment.

- And nothing can generate that godly enthusiasm any more than a demonstration that you, as God's son, can 'put some things together' (so to speak) and prove to yourself by means of these post-doctrinal exhortations that the form of doctrine of your sonship establishment is effectually working in your inner man—and that those living words of the Living God that form the doctrine of your sonship establishment live in you!

- And by now you should have all of the proper attitude, commitment, godly optimism, and godly enthusiasm—(with all human bravado and false sense of courage and human willpower based upon human emotion being eradicated) - all properly developed in your inner man—so that your eagerness to go on and begin your sonship education is based upon all that your Father has accomplished in orienting you and establishing you as His son/daughter.

- Simply put, you should be crying, *Abba, Father*, even more now than ever before—and your cry of *Abba, Father* should be **genuine & intelligent!**

- But in order to ensure that your cry of *Abba, Father* is the proper thing it should be—and to demonstrate that by you putting some things together in your own mind—there are some post-doctrinal exhortations that will check all that out—and will bring back into your mind and heart the godly optimism and godly enthusiasm to now get underway with your education proper—as well as to make one of the most serious dedications & commitments you'll ever make in your life—(to *present your bodies a living sacrifice*)!

- Therefore lets look at a familiar passage of sonship exhortations—but now lets view them from the perspective of having **accomplished** what the Father intends to accomplish with you as His son in both sonship orientation and in sonship establishment.

- Proverbs 2:1-9

- Now as we have already looked at before—there are 2 ‘groupings’ of these exhortations that can be called ‘Post-doctrinal Exhortations’ in regard to the son’s level of commitment to his sonship education.

- And though we have already looked at these when we did all the background work in Proverbs for sonship education—my own understanding now is that there are 2 groups of exhortations for a reason:

- 1) Has to do with the post-doctrinal exhortation for the son after sonship orientation;
- 2) Has to do with the post-doctrinal exhortation for the son after his sonship establishment.

- That’s why these 9 verses have a set of conditions followed by a result (***Then...***) — and then you have another set of conditions (so to speak) followed by another result (another ***Then ...***).

- And so (:1-5) can be grouped together as the post-doctrinal exhortation for ensuring the son’s commitment level at the end of his sonship orientation.

- Which corresponds with Romans 8:14-15.

- And (:6-9) can be grouped together to form the post-doctrinal exhortation for ensuring the son’s commitment level at the end of his sonship establishment.

- Which corresponds with Romans 8:16-11:36.

- (Just prior to the son presenting his body as a living sacrifice).

- And while it isn't right to say that one is more important than the other—and you shouldn't think that at all — if you could say that one was more important or critical than the other, it would be the 2nd exhortation—(but, again, you can't say that)!

- But I do believe that you can say that one is somewhat easier than the other (or maybe one more involved than the other)— and that is the 2nd one more than the 1st.

- (i.e., the son's commitment to the effectual working of what he learns!)

- Now while I'm sure that you are familiar with both of these areas of commitment—you're probably more familiar with the first area (The Commitment to Learning) as given in Proverbs 2:1-5.

- (Briefly go over the 3 components to the Commitment to Learning).

- (see Rom. 8—Vol. 1)

- But though we've gone over it—it's actually in the 2nd grouping—or the Exhortation to the son's Commitment to the Effectual Working of what he Learns — that's contained in Proverbs 2:6-9 that we need to take some time on—and where you're going to demonstrate to yourself if your commitment level is where it should be in order to present your body a living sacrifice in Romans 12:1-2.

- And here, you should be able to 'put some things together' now, that you probably couldn't have done prior to our going through Romans 8:16-39 (especially) — and you should be able to now gain the benefits of this post-doctrinal exhortation far better than ever before.

- So let's focus our attention on these 4 verses of Proverbs 2 (:6-9), and see if you can match some things up and have a far better appreciation for your sonship establishment than ever before—and with this post-doctrinal exhortation, bring back into your mind and heart the godly optimism and godly enthusiasm for going on and beginning your sonship education proper in Romans 12:3 ff.

- When you examine Proverbs 2:6-9, the obvious thing to notice is that you have another set of conditions (so to speak) - but these aren't like the first set of conditions—because the issue here isn't *IF* you do what you're supposed to do as a son, *THEN* you'll get the full benefits from the education your Father is about to give you—here the tables turn to what the FATHER has done (and will do) in order to ensure the success of your sonship education.

- And the emphasis in all the components that make up the information that comes before the “*Then*” in (:9) - the emphasis is upon how the Father has taken into consideration all that you as His son will face in this education—and He has taken all that into account and made provisions within the very curriculum itself so that you can succeed to the very end of your education—even in the face of any and all opposition to it!

- And once you have presented to you (in exhortation form, not in any doctrinal form) what the Father has done and will do to ensure your success—that's when the “*Then*” of (:9) kicks in as a kind of promise to you as His son, that you **will** indeed receive the instruction you need that will provide for your successful sonship life!

- So we can clearly see that you have a body of information contained in verses 6, 7, & 8—followed by a promised result of it all in verse 9.

- Now the question is—in the body of information contained in (:6-8), how many components do we have?

- One of the things that will help us out here is to focus upon the issue that you have a number of things that **the LORD** is going to do—that is, He will do this, and He will do that, and so on—and those things that our Father is said to do for us in order to ensure our success as His sons—you can take each of those matters and say that each one constitutes one thing that He will do—and so, when you can identify how many things He'll do, you have the number of components to the information set forth in (:6-8).

- Simply put, you can focus upon the action verbs of (:6-8) and that should amount to the number of the components that make up the body of information.

- When we look at (:6—**For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.**) — my understanding is that even though it seems that there are 2 components

... (due to the colon) - the way in which what is said gets said, and the context of what is being said makes it so that you realize that, granted, you do have 2 distinct thoughts here, but the 2nd thought is a further description (or better, a further matter) of the 1st thought.

- In other words, the 1st clause sets forth the 1st thing that the LORD is going to do—and then the 2nd clause tells you how it's going to get done (so to speak).

- And this needs to be presented this way—that is, the whole issue here is to get *wisdom*—but not just any wisdom—but the LORD's *wisdom*. (Everything else is just a competing, counterfeit wisdom).

- And you need a colon to allow you to pause there long enough so that you appreciate that issue.

- But then that *wisdom* that the LORD is going to give is going to be accomplished & accompanied by the *knowledge* and *understanding* that comes out of His mouth—and no other mouth is supposed to be listened to by His sons.

- The 2 clauses enforce in the son's mind that he is to receive **only** his Father's *wisdom*—and the *knowledge* and the *understanding* that make up the Father's wisdom only comes from Him—and He's the only One the son will listen to, and will get that *wisdom* and *knowledge* and *understanding*.

- So my understanding is that (:6) in it's entirety forms the first component to this body of information—and the action verb that can be identified as the 1st component is the word ***giveth***.

- Then the rest of the components can be easily identified simply by pointing to the action verbs in each clause:

2nd Component: ***layeth up***

3rd Component: ***buckler***

4th Component: ***keepeth***

5th Component: ***preserveth***

- Therefore you have a total of 5 Components.

- So the 5 components of (:6-8) are —

#1—(:6) *For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.*

#2—(:7a) *He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous:*

#3—(:7b) *he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.*

#4—(:8a) *He keepeth the paths of judgment,*

#5—(:8b) *and preserveth the way of his saints.*

- And my understanding is that this forms a proper post-doctrinal exhortation that corresponds to the son's completion of his sonship establishment.

- And the Father—at the end of sonship establishment—wants to have his son look back upon the power and the wisdom and the strength that the Father has built into the curriculum His son is just about to embark upon—and by doing it this way, He is going to bring back into His sons heart all of the sober, godly confidence and establishment-produced enthusiasm for getting his sonship education underway—and therefore the only natural and reasonable thing for the son to do is to present himself to his Father for education and vocational training.

- And for this reason—my understanding is that these 5 components that make up this exhortation all correspond to those 5 probing questions that you went through—in that 'open heart surgery' that the Father performed on you in Romans 8:31-39.

- And once that is re-visited once again—by the effectual working of the exhortations—you as God's son/daughter should be crying Abba, Father all the more—and presenting your body as that living sacrifice is the only natural/reasonable thing for you to do—and it should be the thing you **want** to do more than anything else!

- So now let's see how each of the 5 components of this exhortation matches up to the 5 probing questions of Romans 8:31-39.

- Now remember that what you were established in—really from Romans 8:28-39—all of that is what you are supposed to **think** and

... **operate upon, and rely upon** as you live out your sonship life—and you're supposed to utilize this information when you get confronted with opposition from either yourself (as your own worst enemy) or from the Adversary and his Policy of Evil—or from any of the *sufferings of this present time*—or any thing that would scare you or frighten you or intimidate you or whatever—that would attempt to make it so that you would decide **NOT** to go on with your sonship education!

- The truth is—the information you learned in Romans 8:28-39 **is never to be forgotten**—and **never** to be laid aside and not to be used—in fact, some of these features will be (and should be) used by you **over** and **over** and **over** again for the rest of your sonship life!

- Now when it comes to understanding and appreciating those 5 Probing Questions of Romans 8:31-39—you shouldn't need any review on them—in fact, you should be experts with those things by now—and more than that—if you have any qualms or doubts or hesitation about presenting your body as a living sacrifice to your Father, chances are that something in that section of your sonship establishment has NOT effectually done its job in your inner man the way it was supposed to!

- And this post-doctrinal exhortation is designed to find that out!

- Let's begin matching up the 5 Probing Questions of Romans 8:31-39 with these 5 Exhortation Components of Proverbs 2:6-8.

- Caution: what we're after here is to see a matching up of these issues—more in matters of their **genera** (or their nature), and not matching them up terminology-wise.

#1—Proverbs 2:6 *For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.*

- Matches up with Romans 8:31b—*If God be for us, who can be against us?*

- So when it comes to this 1st Probing Question—what is it talking about—how would you explain it?

- God being *for us* is in the sense that (:28-30) set forth—He’s *for us* to succeed with our sonship education—and for the purpose of us being conformed to the image of His Son.

- And while we may have not expressed it a lot when we first went over this question—the nature of the question is one of **POWER!** (*If God be for us, VS. who can be against us?*)

- And therefore **in** the issue of God being *for us* in this sense: the curriculum has—(and will give us as we go through it)—**all the power we need to deal with everything we could ever encounter—that’s going to be against us every step of the way!**

- And that’s the issue of recognizing, therefore, God’s power IN the curriculum—recognizing that every form of doctrine we’re going to get—and every component in every form of doctrine is to be recognized by us as **the powerful Living words of the Living God being for us to achieve the objective of our sonship education.**

- That’s why over in Ephesians 3:20—at the end of Paul’s prayer—you have that issue of God’s *power* being brought up. (see Eph. 3:20)

- Here, you’re looking at what you’re now learning in Level II Sonship Education being built upon Level I Sonship Education AS THE POWER OF GOD WORKING IN YOU!

- And at that particular point, you are to recognize that—even though you may consider something impossible—God is *able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think—* according to **that** power!

- And in Level II you’re going to face some things that your flesh is going to come along and tell you that ‘It is impossible for you to succeed—you will NOT be able to handle this...’

- But God tells you that the curriculum is going to be able to do it!

- And what I’m telling you is that the issue of God’s **power** vested in the curriculum for sonship education is a BIG DEAL—and should be without a shadow of a doubt in your thinking right now!

- And right from the beginning of the point of adoption—when the father first introduces his son to sonship—one of the first things a father does with his son is to make him aware that the education he is giving him **is the most powerful thing he will ever possess!**

- And this concept is a very difficult hurdle to get over—that God’s greatest manifestation of His power **is when His living words live in you**—and that is difficult to appreciate if you don’t have a proper understanding and appreciation for the complete anticipation of sonship that a child has under childhood.

- And what I mean by that is that you can’t have a proper appreciation for that unless you study it out in God’s word—sitting back in Ex.-Deut. (esp.), and on through the OT.

- A properly educated Israelite knew that in all that God was doing for them—great as that was, and as miraculous as it was—they knew that because they were locked in under that Law contract, they knew *as children* that they were receiving LIMITED POWER in their lives.

- And that what they were seeing on the ‘outside’ was **not** the excellency of the power of God.

- And they knew that when the adoption of sons takes place, that those limitations and those restrictions will be gone—and the excellency of God’s power will be something that they could possess & operate upon.

- And it would be the issue of God putting His laws in their mind and writing it on their heart—and His words actually **living** in them!

- And since most Christians today don’t study that out—the assumption is that the greatest manifestation of God’s power is in external miracles, signs, and wonders.

- And by the time you get to this 1st Probing Question—you as God’s son in this dispensation of grace—you should already possess the realization that you are dealing with the greatest manifestation and effectual working of God’s power that He has designed to work.

- And it's the issue of His living words (in sonship education) living in His sons to the exact same degree they have lived in His own Son, when His own Son—in providing for sonship at the cross—demonstrated it in His own life!

- (And that applies both in God's program with Israel, and with us in this dispensation of grace.)

- [That's part of crying, *Abba, Father!*]

- And by *perceiving the words of understanding* that you're supposed to be doing in Romans 8:16-39—and especially in (:28-30) and all that the Father did to forge the curriculum for your success—you should be able to intelligently confess: *If God be for me* (and He is by what He's just shown me—and all the power is there in that curriculum), *who can be against me?* NO ONE CAN!

- And if I fail—it's because I didn't avail myself of that power.

- And I failed because I went on the basis of my own power—it can't cut it! — but the living words of the Living God, if I let them live in me, will!

- So this first 'obstacle' you are being probed about here in Romans 8:31 (in view of all that :28-30 told you) — is the issue of **UNDERESTIMATING THAT POWER!**

- Now the post-doctrinal exhortation that matches up with that sitting back in Proverbs 2:6 is—*For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.*

- In other words—all that you need to know *wisdom*-wise; all you need to know *knowledge*-wise; all you need to know *understanding*-wise — *God is for you*—and He's giving it to you—in the curriculum, you're going to find it all.

- And that's the parallel there—that is, *If God is for me* (and He is; and He's vested the manifestation of the excellency of His power in that curriculum that is to be written on my heart and live in me) - His wisdom, knowledge and understanding is there—and I now have it available to me—then who can be against me?

- Unless this is *not* effectually working in you—you don't have any reason for not *presenting your body a living sacrifice*, do you?

- Let's continue matching up the 5 Probing Questions of Romans 8:31-39 with the 5 Exhortation Components of Proverbs 2:6-8.

#2—Proverbs 2:7a — *He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous:*

- Matches up with Romans 8:32—*He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

- So when it comes to this 2nd Probing Question—what is it talking about? — how would you explain it?

- Here, our Father is telling us that He is the One who has the power and the authority to remove His Son from the evil and harm that He is going to have to go through—where? — on the cross — but even though He had that power/authority to do so, **He spared not his own Son** — He *spared* **NOT** — that is, He allowed His own Son to be delivered unto all the evil and harm that could be thrown at him!

- And this was necessary if you were to ever get justified unto eternal life! It was necessary if the Redeemer was to fully perform your redemption!

- And redemption was the necessary means for you to not only get the debt & penalty of your sins forgiven and receive the righteousness of Christ imputed to you—but it was the necessary means for you to get your sanctified position in Christ—the ultimate aspect of which is your adoptions of sons!

- And the reason that's supposed to be the **impressive** thing that it is at this point in this 2nd probing question—is because nothing can underscore to you and illustrate to you any more than this act of the Father **not even sparing his own Son**, but delivering him up for you, — nothing can illustrate and underscore to you any more than that, that when it comes to your Father providing for you what you need to succeed as His son: **THAT HE WITHHOLDS NOTHING FROM YOU!**

- If He didn't *spare* his own Son—if that's the degree of the investment He's made, and the degree of the provision He's made for your success—then what could possibly be withheld from you to fully and completely **be** successful as His son?

Therefore.....

- Do you think that you're ever going to come to a point where that curriculum He puts in your hands *doesn't* have the power or the capacity or the ability or the provision for you to succeed in or with whatever comes your way?

- Do you think that there will be something that will come up where failure will be imminent? or where danger or harm or evil will be able to succeed in becoming your demise as His son? **NO!** (why? because "*He spared not his own Son*")!

- And you're supposed to not only be suitably impressed with your Father and His capacity—but now He's making it so that you look hard at the curriculum He's putting into your hands (and that's going to effectually work in your inner man) and now become suitably impressed with what **it** can do—and the capacity & ability He's designed in that curriculum: in that nothing is withheld from you— you will have all of its power and might and capacity and ability to cause you to be successful no matter what comes your way!

- God your Father ***spared not*** the thing most dear to Him—his Son—as your Redeemer—so that you could be justified, sanctified, and adopted as His son—to make this sonship life possible!

- To make it possible to have that magnificent 'chain of provision' makes it so that *all things work together for good* to you! (when you avail yourself of that chain of provision)

... *how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

- That expression ***how shall he not*** is like coming along and saying, In light of God *sparing not His own Son, but delivering him up for us all* — in light of that, it would be **ridiculous** to think He would do all that and give all that so that you would fall short because some where or some place down the line, you don't have ***all things*** you need in that curriculum for something you face that could cause you to fail—that wasn't ***freely given*** to you and provided for you to instead succeed—provided for in the very words of that curriculum you hold in your hand! (**DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE IT!**)

- ... *freely give us all things* — the ***all things*** isn't referring to all thing in general—but specifically, all the things necessary for your successful sonship life—ex., the curriculum, the leading of the Spirit, the opportunities for being vocationally trained, practice, etc., etc.

- Now when it comes to matching this 2nd Probing Question up with the exhortation back in Proverbs chapter 2—(again, not looking for matching terminology, but matching in nature or genre) - the 2nd Probing Question of Romans 8:32 easily matches up with the first clause of Proverbs 2:7 — *He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous:*

- And you should be able to recognize that it's almost like what the question is asking in Rom. 8:32 is, Isn't everything that's *laid up* by my Father going to be *freely given* to me?

- Aren't all the things we need for our success as God's sons going to be there when we need them?

- And that's the issue—Yes, He shall freely give us all the things we need for our success as God's sons.

- 7 *He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous:*

- Notice the Father just spoke about *wisdom* in (:6) - but now He's talking about *sound wisdom*—and He says that He *lays it up*—and that indicates, therefore, that when you need it, it's going to be there for you.

- It's *laid up*—it's in reservation and being held for when you need it—and that's the emphasis on it being *sound wisdom*.

- It's not just *wisdom* in general—but it's *sound wisdom*—and that particularly pertains to the kind of wisdom you need to be able to make the programmed or scheduled advancements—and points of attainments and markers of progress (so to speak) throughout the education.

- And that's why it says that He *layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous:* — and that's not just talking about being righteous in the sense of being justified or saved from the debt & penalty of your sins.

- A son is righteous by nature—because unless he's been justified unto eternal life, he's not a son of God—so a son is righteous by nature as far as justification is concerned—but this is not that issue.

- This is the issue of a son of God—as he's going on in his sonship education—and the issue of the *righteousness* that he's bringing forth in connection with the decisions he's making and the *fruit unto holiness* he's producing.

- And there's points of progress that the son is making— there's identifiable points of attaining a particular skill, and acquiring a particular measure of understanding—and as that progress is being made, there are things that are given **opportunity-wise** to the son—to especially labor with God in what He's doing, and to put on display the success of what has been learned—and to, on the basis of that, therefore, be able to come along and say, Ok, we've learned this, and we've acquired this skill, and now we can move on to this more advanced issue.

- And the issue of *laying up sound wisdom for the righteous*—or the issue of *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* — that's the same matter.

- God *spared not his own Son* so that we could be justified, sanctified, and His adopted son—and He's made it, therefore, so we're able to successfully progress through our sonship life—and He put the curriculum together, therefore, in order for us to meet the objective of it all—and the issue is: as we go along, Isn't He going to *also freely give us all the things* we need to be able to put the education into practice, and acquire the training, and acquire the levels of attainment, and to acquire the points of maturity—and to therefore be able to mark down successes along the way—and then go on further? — And, of course, the answer is YES!

- That's only in keeping with the **extreme measures** He went to, in order to give us our adoption in the first place! (*He spared not his own Son!*)

- Therefore every sonship grace we need—every opportunity we need—every opportunity for practice and training to put our Father's wisdom on display—and every opportunity to labor with Him that's necessary to take something we've been educated in and to put it into practice and to cement the education in our minds and to acquire the skill from it — we're going to *freely* receive all those things!

- And all of that is built into the curriculum—and as we progress through the curriculum, they'll be identified—and you'll come along and be given an opportunity to train with the very thing you just learned!

- And that's what a son expects his Father to be able to do—to demonstrate to him what is resident in the curriculum so that the son can be **optimistic** that he's going to be able to progress—(after all, edification involves a building process, and therefore a son's not only building up information, but he's building up skills and maturity and experience as far as the ability to make even wiser decisions and labor more and more extensively—and to put on display on a regular ongoing and ever increasing basis, that he's able to handle more difficult tasks and deal with the information in a more comprehensive and a more thought-provoking and a deeper, more penetrating level).

- And built into the curriculum are all the provisions to do just that—and you'll get them *freely given* to you in the curriculum as you need them! (And as they're appropriate for you to deal with them).

- And you'll perceive them (the curriculum will make them obvious to you) - and you'll be able to avail yourselves of them—you'll have the opportunity to do *good* (so to speak) in the situation and at a particular level—and demonstrate it and put it on display.

- And that's what's involved in that 2nd Probing Question—(that 2nd potential obstacle) to succeeding with the sonship education—and that is that you won't have all the opportunities you need to be able to fully train and fully qualify yourself and fully make it to the end.

- And in order to succeed with our sonship education—**there has to be** the opportunities to put into practice what you're learning—it's not all 'book work' - it's not all academic — but there's the issue of *walking worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called* (Eph. 4:1).

- And that requires opportunities—and you've got to have them—and you've got to be able to recognize them—you've got to recognize (as Prov. 3:3 says) *mercy and truth* and not *forsake* them—and you've got to have that *mercy and truth* be given to you when you know how to devise that which is *good*.

- And the issue in this 2nd Probing Question/2nd Exhortation is that you **are** going to get all those things *freely given!*

- God has **not** put the curriculum together and forgotten about *freely giving* you all those opportunities.
- And in fact—this is one of the areas in which the Corinthians had to have their thinking corrected —
 - see I Corinthians 15:58—here Paul has just come through a major corrective-type form of doctrine and then he exhorts them to put it into practice (*always abounding in the work of the Lord*) — and then in the very next chapter, he shows them, “Here’s a whole bunch of ways to do that, that you’ve probably never even thought of!” (see ch. 16:1ff)
 - And all that is part & parcel of being able to lean a form of doctrine, then perceiving the opportunity to utilize it by walking worthy of who you are as your Father’s son—and *walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called*.
- Now you might be tempted to say—Well, that was in Paul’s day and in a totally different environment that I find myself in in the USA in 2011 — So how are those forms of doctrine going to apply here?
- Well, the issue is—that built into the curriculum is the ability to perceive those things (i.e., how that form of doctrine can be applied)—and you will be freely given those opportunities to put that doctrine into practice.
- And you have to have the **confidence** (right from the outset in sonship establishment) that that’s TRUE—that it’s all applicable to you right now (to a son living in this situation and this environment as compared to a son living in another situation and another environment)—and you’ve got to have that kind of confidence and that **optimism** about the sonship curriculum—(because thinking otherwise would produce a pessimistic thinking in respect to yourself to succeed in it).
- And while you may not have the same situation or same environment as those you read about in God’s word—the truth is, you still have an opportunity to put what you learn into practice and *walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called* **in another sense and in another way!**

- Moving on to the next match up of the 5 Probing Questions of Romans 8:31-39 with the 5 Exhortation Components of Proverbs 2:6-8 —

- #3—Proverbs 2:7b — *he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.*

- Matches up with Romans 8:33—*Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.*

- So again, when it comes to this 3rd Probing Question—what is it talking about? — how would you explain it?

- As you are aware by now—the final 3 Probing Questions of Romans 8:33, 34, & 35 all address the kind of stiff opposition that we will face in our sonship lives—the **enemies** to sonship edification.

- And that stiff opposition will come in 3 major ways—or in 3 Phases.

- And since nothing in God's word is given randomly, these "Who" questions don't occur randomly—they are given in a particular order.

- And since the very first one (*Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?*) and it's corresponding exhortation (*he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly*) - in that very 1st opposition the son will face is the issue of God being a *buckler* for him—and a *buckler is an instrument of war*—and that indicates that the son is going to be engaged in a **warfare**—and that sets in his mind the **magnitude** of the kind of opposition he's going to face.

- So in this warfare of opposition the son faces—there are 3 areas or 3 'fronts' (so to speak) in which he's going to have to fight—and my understanding is that since they're not given randomly—the 1st *Who* question of Rom. 8:33 is going to be the most common and the most troublesome for you—the 2nd *Who* question will be the 2nd most common & troublesome—and the 3rd *Who* question will be the 3rd most common & troublesome for you.

- Now as we have come to understand and appreciate already—(and just as a son is made aware of from the outset that he is going to face some stiff opposition—setting there in Proverbs 1:7 he's told what the first, the most common, the most often troublesome enemy that will attempt to derail his sonship education and that he's going to have to fight [*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but **fools** despise wisdom and instruction.*] - **is himself**) — **you are your own worst enemy!**

- And that's your first form of opposition—because if you're going to be a **fool**—then you've caved in to some opposition that desires you to be a *fool*—and if you've *despised wisdom and instruction*—then you have listened to a source of opposition that's opposed to the Lord wanting to educate you as His son—and that opposition is coming straight from you, yourself!

- Your first form of opposition is YOURSELF—and to be more explicit: **sin in your members**.

- And that's the very thing you're taught about in Romans 6, 7, and the first 13 verses of chapter 8—before you get to sonship.

- And because that is the greatest, most common opposition to your sonship life—that's why so much time is spent on that issue—and that's why so much is taught to you about it as a lead in to sonship in the book of Romans!

- Sins mastership in your members has been broken, all well and good, **but it's still there!** — It's still in your members—it still has that lust and it makes it's appeal—you don't have to obey it, but it's still there—it's constant, it's relentless, and it's the most common opposition a son will ever face.

- Now in view of the 3rd Probing Question of Romans 8:33—*Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?* — if you intelligently understand & appreciate what the probing question is asking and going after—it should follow that you intelligently understand & appreciate the godly remedy and why the issue of that remedy is: ***It is God that justifieth.***

- You know that what this probing question is going after is the issue of that first aspect of your inheritance—as an *heir of God* you are set to inherit the “*kingdom of God*” — which is NOT just another way of saying that you will have eternal life and live in heaven with God in a new, glorified, immortal body—but it's an inheritance that is **directly related to your Father's business!**

- And you have been informed that as an *heir of God* your Heavenly Father, you're going to be in that *creature*—and as a member of the *new creature*, you're going to have a part in *liberating* the *creature* from *the bondage of corruption!*

- So now—put yourself in your Father’s position—and through your Father’s eyes—and with His attitude toward what it means for you to be His heir—how would you answer the probing question of (:33)?

- When You have provided all that you’ve said you’ve provided for in (:28-30) - when Your son comes to you and has muffed-up in his own sonship curriculum so badly that he stands before you “*charged*” with something that could mean he would actually **fail** to receive his “*heir of God*” inheritance—what would you say to him in order to relieve his shaken confidence that, because of his own stupidity and foolishness whereby he has become his own enemy to his sonship life—what would you say to him to get him to ‘wise-up’ and stop feeling guilty, self-pity, despondent, discouraged, and depressed—and get up, dust off, and go on?

- You’d say, “Look son, stop dragging your tail, I **justified** you in the first place, didn’t I? And you how permanent your justification is, right? Ok, I just didn’t just justify you unto eternal life permanently, but in your justification you also became my permanent heir because you are a permanent member of my family, aren’t you? So son, is there any thing or any way that you could possibly loose your inheritance as my son? or fail to get your inheritance as my son?”

— No? So what’s the problem? —

- And as I’ve pointed out before—it’s perfectly appropriate (and even the most excellent) way to talk about this as a *justification* issue because as you learned back in Romans 1:1-4, the *gospel of God* or *gospel of Christ* is composed of both your justification **and** your sanctification—but you can’t learn about sanctification until you first learn about justification!

- And your Father wants you thinking about your justification here; but NOT in connection with anything to do with your eternally secure “at-one-ment” (as a re-cap of Romans 1-5) - but He wants you thinking about justification in a specific way— (**with you as His heir**) — and when you do that, you should think about the strength of Him justifying you—and the strength of Him justifying you doesn’t only make your eternal life secure—**it makes your inheritance as an heir of God eternally secure as well!**

- And just as secure as you are in the fact that you’re going to go to God’s heaven when you die and have eternal life with Him forever—you, as a member of His family, are just as secure in the fact that **as a son**, you’re going to inherit the *kingdom of God* in the *creature* NO MATTER WHAT!

- So that solves the problem of you as a son, ever becoming depressed or despondent or full of self-pity when you've muffed up in the curriculum for sonship education to where a "*charge*" could be laid upon you that would make so that you fail to receive your sonship inheritance as an *heir of God!*

- And when the time comes when a charge could be laid against you, your Father says, "Look at it, son, from my perspective—I justified you; I knew what I was doing when I did it; the **strength** of what I did to justify you makes it so that you have that inheritance as my **adopted son**—that's yours! — and there's nothing you could ever do to thwart that inheritance being yours!"

- And that's His attitude towards me, being His heir!

- You see, this isn't trying to work out some doctrinal issue in the "doctrine of justification" at all—it's taking what you've already been told and now gaining the Father's own **attitude** towards it all (towards you as His justified, adopted son who is now a member of His family and an heir of Himself).

- And this should make a **huge impact** upon your heart (your inner man) - it should have a 'kick' to it—because you're now thinking about justification (not as merely permanently secure and "at-one" with God) - but as a son who also has the strength of that permanent justification being extended to your inheritance as an *heir* of God your Father!

- And the issue is—what my Father's done for me as His heir, and His attitude toward me as His heir, **doesn't hinge upon me screwing up (sinning-wise)!** (What a joy that is!)

- And the 'kicker' is: **GOD HAS DESIGNED (IN ADVANCE) FOR HIS SON'S OWN FAILURES**—and He's designed for those failures **NOT to be a devastating thing** — (something that so overwhelms you that it becomes a *fatal* blow to your sonship life!)

- Ok—now let's take that issue of the 3rd Probing Question (and it's godly remedy) and see how it matches up with Proverbs 2:7b—when you're informed about the kind of opposition you'll face—and the full capacity of the curriculum to deal with the problems that we encounter as sons—and here in (:7b) we deal with the first enemy we'll face (and the warfare that will take place with it) - and God says that He's *a buckler to them that walk uprightly.*

- (And here's where you'll get an appreciation for why it says *buckler* and not "shield") - [which every modern English translation of the Bible changes from *buckler* to "shield."]
- First of all—a *buckler* is a kind of shield—but *buckler* and *shield* do **NOT** mean the same thing—that is, *buckler* isn't just another way of saying "a shield."
 - Notice: in numerous passages God uses both *buckler* and *shield* together—but note just one passage: Psalm 91:4 (read)
 - A *buckler* is actually a species of a *shield*—it's a particular kind of shield—but it's not designed to do what a full body-shield does—which is what a *shield* is all about—a full body shield is primarily designed to get your entire body behind—and to deflect anything that comes your way—(like in Eph. 6 *the shield of faith*—which is what you hide behind when those *fiery darts* come your way—or when the arrows come at you—or the big rocks are coming in from the slings and catapults that are used against a standing army).
 - Unlike the *shield*—a *buckler* is used **in hand-to-hand combat!**
 - The *buckler* is the soldier's weapon against another soldier!
 - (In other words—another person, just like **himself!**)
 - The *buckler* is the shield or weapon that the soldier **never puts down!**
 - In fact, it's usually strapped on to his arm—it can't come off—he can't lose it.
 - He can lay down his body-shield—in fact, once the arrows and the darts and the slings are done, the soldier usually does drop his body-shield—and then he charges the other soldiers with his sword in his right hand and his *buckler* on his left arm—the *buckler* is attached to his arm, it never comes off.
 - And what I'm saying in all this is that this is the kind of terminology you would be utilizing to describe a defensive, protection-type piece of armament (so to speak) **to deal with your constant and closest opponent!** (Just like in hand-to-hand, arm-to-arm combat!)
 - And that exactly what you're dealing with when you're dealing with YOURSELF—when you're dealing with sin in your members—that's your closest and constant opponent!

- The truth is—the Adversary can't even be described like that with us.

- He may be our most determined opponent—but he's not always close—and he's not always there.

- But sin in our members always is!

- And that's why the *buckler* term is used in connection with that issue.

- And the kind of opposition that sin in our members always rears its ugly head in opposition to is when we're walking uprightly!

- It's when we're *walking after the Spirit* that the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.
(Which you're taught about in Romans 6:1-8:13, and over in Galatians).

- Therefore, when it says in Proverbs 2:7b, *he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly*—our Father is dealing with what He has built into the curriculum that's designed to be able to deal with sin in our members—**our most constant, closest, and most frequent opponent: OURSELVES!**

- And it's especially important when we do fail—when we do yield to that opposition of the lust of our flesh—and we stop *walking uprightly*.

- And there's particular information that God has built into the curriculum that He wants us to operate upon when this kind of opposition gets the best of us—which is designed to recover ourselves and go on.

- It's kind of like you're the soldier there with your *buckler* on—and you get knocked down—what do you do now? — well, **the buckler actually gives you the capacity to get back up again**—(that's one of its most important reasons for its design and its purpose: giving the soldier the capacity to get back up again) — it's recognized that the soldier will get knocked down in combat—but this piece of his armament allows for him to put it to use in order to regain his footing and stand back up and get back into the fight!

- It's an ingenious defensive implement of war!

- The proper use of the *buckler* was not to hold it in your hand, but to have it actually laced on to your arm with leather straps—and then the soldiers would put water on the leather to shrink it and tighten it up on the arm so it couldn't turn on the arm—and so it would always be facing out toward the enemy—and the *buckler* would be made of some kind of metal plate with another piece of metal attached to it that stuck out or had a point on it so it could produce a glancing blow from the enemy's sword.

- And when the soldier was down on the ground he could put his left arm up with the *buckler* on it—and he would be able to deflect the blows from his enemy with that *buckler*—just long enough for him to put his hand (that had his sword in it) down on the ground and be able to push himself back up.

- And that's why it had the shape that it had—and was small enough for maneuverability.

- And when you think of all those things—you begin to realize the precision of what God has done—and the terminology He has chosen ...

- He's dealing with the first form of opposition, and the most common form of opposition we face—and He uses terminology to describe the close, hand-to-hand, arm-to-arm combat that a soldier has—which illustrates the close, constant, one-on-one type battle that we would have with sin in our members (with that opposition coming from within our own selves) — and then He puts it together with the issue of *walking uprightly* (and that has to do with what we're trying to do as sons)—[the issue with a soldier isn't one of *walking uprightly*] - but the issue is that in fighting, the soldier has to **stand**—and he has to be upright—he can't fight on his back.

- But the issue is that the opponent wants to get him on his back—and when he's on his back, he's failed in his position—and he has been knocked down; he has been overcome by his opponent.

- But the issue is: **he doesn't have to give up**—he doesn't have to open his arms (so to speak) and let his opponent put his sword to his throat and claim, "Victory!"

- He's got that *buckler* up—he can deflect all those blows—and it enables him to get back up again.

- And that's the concept in connection to us *walking uprightly*—that's the position we're supposed to be in—and the closest, most common, powerful opponent we face is ourselves when we fail by yielding to sin in our members as its lusts come along as we're *walking uprightly* - that *buckler* does the very thing that's described in our epistles (especially in Romans 6, 7, and 8).

- And when we do fail because we stupidly yield ourselves to the lust of our flesh—our Father has given us something in the curriculum that we're supposed to think about—and something He tells us to operate upon—and it enables us to, when we are knocked down and fail to continue to *walk uprightly*, to get back up and go on.

- And that's the way in which the 3rd Probing Question of Romans 8:33 matches up with the son's Exhortation to his Commitment to the Effectual Working of what he Learns in Proverbs 2:7b!

- Let's move on to the next match up of the 5 Probing Questions contained in Romans 8:31-39 with the corresponding Exhortation for the son's Commitment to the Effectual Working of what he Learns—over in Proverbs 2:6-8 —

#4—Proverbs 2:8a — *He keepeth the paths of judgment,*
(The 4th Component of Proverbs 2:6-8)

- Matches up with the 4th Probing Question of Romans 8:34
—*Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

- So when it comes to this 4th Probing Question—what is it talking about—How would you explain it?

- My understanding is that what we're dealing with here in (:34) is “Part B” (so to speak) when it comes to the issue of us being our own worst enemy.

- And the *condemnation* issue here that is **different** from the *charge being laid against us* issue of (:33) is the kind of *condemnation* that a **son can bring upon himself** because of the kind of failures that a son can make that are **not** legal violations of God's holiness and righteousness in his walk (like sinful behavior would be) - but are another kind of failures which are more along the lines of that sonship stupidity we've often talked about.

- Because they are failures in the sense of not wanting to (or not being willing to) respond positively and properly to issues *in* our sonship curriculum and *in* our sonship lives—that we have every legal right given to us as a son to say “**no**” to, if we want to— but we’re also told by our Father that it’s stupid and foolish for us to do that!

- But He’s not going to come along and ‘whack’ us with a cane or anything along those lines—He’s dealing with us as adult sons—and if we choose to ‘opt out’ — then we also choose the consequences that go along with that.

- And this is the ‘other side of the coin’ of us being our own worst enemy—because when you look at the issue of sonship itself—and what the sonship life of a son is all about—**there really are only 2 ways in which a son can fail his Father:**

- One is by the **legal offences** of participating in outright sinful, course-of-the-world behavior—as if he didn’t care at all that he was a justified/sanctified son.

- And the other is to opt out of participating in these grace features of his sonship.

- Both kind of failures will produce grief and godly sorrow in a son— (if he’s sensitive to his failures) —but both will **not** produce (necessarily) the exact same kind of viewpoint when the failures are acknowledged.

- And when it comes to the failures in connection with having opted out of, or chosen not to fully participate in those sonship graces (or opportunities & honors & privileges) and the like—the kind of self-recrimination & *condemnation* that comes upon a son when he has to face up to the fact that that’s what he’s been doing—his outlook (viewpoint) then is, “I might as well not even bother going on” — it’s kind of like thinking “I’ve fallen so far behind—I’ve made such a mess out of this—it’s just not worth it.”

- **And that’s putting it mildly!!!**

- This gets even more personal and more emotional than “Part A” of (:33).

- It’s important to recognize that the ***condemnation*** being spoken about here is not a *condemnation* in the legal sense of the word.

- Rather it's a self-condemnation that takes place when you 'opt out' of the sonship graces—those grace-given opportunities and honors and privileges built within the curriculum to participate in certain activities that (even though they may seem at times repugnant and distasteful and repulsive [and sometimes dangerous]) they are nevertheless designed for you to participate in because they are all opportunities for you to be *conformed to the image of Christ*, which is what you have been '*predestined*' for in the first place.

- And because you are treated by your Heavenly Father as an adult son—you have every right to 'opt out' of these sonship graces if you so desire.

- However in doing so, you also opt **for** the consequences of your decision.

- Therefore the time will come as you continue on in your sonship life where you are going to encounter problems associated with your foolish decision to 'opt out' of these sonship graces—and when those problems arise and you begin to recognize your foolish/stupid mistake, and realize how it puts your *joint-inheritance with Christ* in jeopardy, and therefore you internalize all of the guilt and turmoil and remorse that arises in your heart because of it—to the point of becoming *wretched* in your inner man—the result will be **you viewing yourself** as a total failure—a failure so bad, and to such a degree that unless there is a godly remedy for it and another viewpoint of it, you will end up, in the end, just giving up and not going on in your sonship life.

- And this is the area in which you can get into that condition (like the Corinthians did) in which you become (as Paul describes it), *straitened in your own bowels* — which we looked at in some detail when we first went through this.

- Now the godly remedy (*It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*) — that godly remedy is NOT talking about a 'doctrinal remedy' — **but it's a remedy contained in the Lord Jesus Christ's ATTITUDE**—it's the issue of us setting our thinking upon a particular **attitude** that the Lord has as an *heir*, Himself—and that **attitude** becomes **our** remedy—(just as the attitude of the Father was the remedy in the 3rd Probing Question).

- And that **attitude** (of viewing things the same way, and with the same attitude of Christ Himself) — that attitude that you are to have as a son as well—makes it so that you have the exact attitude of the Son as His Father’s heir and you being a joint-heir with Him—and it’s that attitude that makes it so that you’re able to realize that He’s not mad, He’s not thrown for a loop, He’s not giving up on you, He’s not looking at you as a failure, He’s not ‘throwing in the towel’ .. or anything along those lines at all—far from it! God forbid!

- Rather, He’s always ‘**at the ready**’ to go to work for you—in your stead—and make *intercession* for you to the Father!

- You see, that’s not a remedy that can be produced academically — that’s something that requires an **attitude**— (an attitude **from the Son’s point-perspective**)!!!

- Now since He *died* so you could be *conformed to his image*; and was *raised from the dead*, and is *at the Father’s right hand* as a Son who has received his sonship promotion—and along with that, his sonship inheritance to be the ‘head’ of the new creature of the church, the body of Christ—He, therefore, is in the position to *make intercession for you in connection with each one of those things that you’re failing at; and that you’re refusing to participate in; and that you’re balking at*—because **all those are things that pertain to you being conformed to Him!**

- Those are all issues of you going through the very same kind of things that He went through in His sonship life!

- And because they are of that nature—He can come along and go to your Father in connection with each of those things **and adequately describe the difficulty that there is in that sonship grace or privilege or opportunity!**

- (Not that He has to persuade the Father of it—or make Him aware of it—or anything along those lines—but the issue is that they can have communion & fellowship about it!)

- And that’s important because coming out of that communion & fellowship is that there’s **sympathy** on both of their parts in connection with when we **do** fail! — (They don’t come along and say, ‘Aw, you stupid son! What’s the matter with you? You might as well just give up and go away and eat worms!’)

- NO! There is with the Father and with the Son, the issue of **genuine** (godly) sympathy and **genuine** (godly) empathy for us!

- And the reason that's important is that what comes out of that godly sympathy & empathy is the issue of encouragement from both of them for us to GO ON — and to go back and get those participation opportunities and grab on to them and, instead of opting out of them—participate in them, and function in them, and get the wisdom and the experience and skill-development that they are designed to give us that will *conform us to the image of Christ!*

- And that encouragement is there—and more than that, **neither the Father nor the Son is going to come along and think one bit less of us!**

- Because the issue with them is that they **expect** us to go back — and **encourage** us to go back and get all that we need—and then go on, and keep going on!

- And so that **intercession** isn't a legal intercession at all—(because the legal aspect of us being our own worst enemy has already been taken care of in [:33]).

- This **intercession** is the *intercession* of encouragement—and the *intercession* of help!

- And therefore we have no right (so to speak) to come to our Father when those kind of condemnation-producing failures occur in our sonship life with our 'tail between our legs' - and be pessimistic and wretched in our thinking—afraid our Father is going to ridicule us or chew us out or 'skin us alive' (hide us) - or anything along those lines!

- The Lord Jesus Christ *intercedes for us*—and provides for a fellowship & communion between Him and His Father so that—**far** from us ever losing our *join-inheritance* with Him—both He and His Father sympathize and empathize with us, and encouragement comes from the curriculum to us that effectually works to make us not quit and not give up, but to keep on going and get those sonship graces & privileges and get our 'table of likes and dislikes' matching up with theirs and therefore joyfully participate in them— even in those that would be the most severe and the most horrifying to us, naturally!

- Now when you go to match up the 4th Probing Question of Romans 8:34 with the corresponding Exhortation to the Son's Commitment to the Effectual Working of what He Learns — the corresponding Exhortation being given in Proverbs 2:8a (*He keepeth the paths of judgment*) — let's first of all take note of where the son is first made aware of this "Part B" (so to speak) of himself being his own worst enemy—because what you'll be able to put together is the issue of just **how** you're going to be tempted to fail to get the full effectual working of what you learn and instead opt for some other option that appears more attractive and more alluring to you than what your Father teaches you.

- Granted, we learn from Romans 8:34 that the 4th Probing Question is all about **us** failing to participate in those sonship graces being offered to us as our vocational training devices (so to speak) - but we instead opt out of those sonship grace opportunities.

- But what we need to recognize and appreciate is that the consequences of opting out of sonship graces means that we opt **for** some other paths that we are going to walk instead of what our Father wants us to walk.

- And there is something already in place and waiting for you when you opt out of walking in the paths your Father wants you to walk—and the offer of another path will be made to you—and will look far more attractive and alluring to you (that is to your flesh) rather than the paths your Father offers to you in your sonship education.

- And so let's just identify what that "something" is that waits in readiness to offer you an alternative path rather than your sonship path.

- Proverbs 1:10—After you have been made aware (from 1:7) that your first enemy to the success of your sonship life will be you, yourself (and the sin in your members) making it so that you foolishly despise *wisdom and instruction*—verses 10 and ff set forth your second enemy to your sonship success—and it still is you, yourself—but now there is this other entity that tempts you in a specific way so that you opt for an alternative path than that of your Father's instruction.

- (read :1-19)

- (:10) - Where do you encounter *sinner*s? — In the **world**.—And the course of this world, and the world's enticements are going to set before the son powerful alternatives to the paths he's walking!

- Because as soon as you start “*walking*” as a son—the world has got the right—(that is, it’s so charted out by the Adversary and is so constructed [so to speak] - that it has built into it automatic resistance to godliness) — and when sons begin to walk the course of their sonship education—and come to the issue of having to make decisions in regard to which path to walk—when they’re in a position of making a sonship decision with respect to a particular path to walk, then due to the way in which the course of this world has been constructed and composed by the Adversary as the “prince of the power of the air” — it has got built into it an automatic response to godliness, and to offer an ungodly alternative as a different path to choose!

- And everything you read in Pro. 1:11-14 especially—if you pay attention to what’s being said—you will realize that all that’s being said and done there is **something that feeds your lust**—it’s lust-feeding—and that’s the genius of what is built in to the course of this world—and the course of this world is designed to feed all 3 categories of lusts (as John puts it in I John 2:16 *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*)

- And the course of this world is designed to exploit those lusts—to feed those lusts—to develop those lusts—and to have the course follow those lusts—and the things that are done by men in this world because of those 3 things!

- And the issue is—that even though we are justified, sanctified saints with the power of sin broken and we are therefore *dead to sin*—the truth of the matter is that sin is still in our members and when that is combined with living in this world and in the environment of the course of this world—sin in our members is going to appeal to us to follow a path that is in connection with the *lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*—and when we therefore choose to opt out of walking our Father’s path (one of those sonship graces), we end up walking on the path of this world.

- And that’s why, in Proverbs, as soon as the father knew that his son had made the decision to not be a *fool* but to be a wise son from the outset—because he’s made that decision, he’s going to invoke the opposition from the world that is naturally reactive to godliness.

- And every decision the son makes from now on is going to be met with opposition from the world.

- And since that's the case—that's why when God probes your heart in regard to you being your own worst enemy whereby you could opt out of following His paths (of sonship grace opportunities for your vocational training) - [and He says, *Who is he that condemneth?*] - and you instead opt for following a path of the course of this world and because of doing that and becoming *condemned* in your thinking to the point where you see yourself as so *wretched* that you just want to throw in the towel and give up —that's why He says in the corresponding Exhortation that He ***keepeth the paths of judgment***.

- Because the *paths of judgment* is the issue of the son making decisions to walk a particular path of sonship righteousness, and a good path—not an ungodly, worldly path.

- And the issue is that every time you as a son make a decision—the world is going to be there with its enticements to walk another path—and built into the curriculum is the ability to make those righteous-path decisions — and also built into the curriculum is the provision for when the son does foolishly opt for going in a worldly direction, the Father can get him back on the *paths of judgment*.

- And that's the issue in ***keeping the paths of judgment***—it's not the issue of making it so the son never makes a wrong decision (because as an adult son, you're given the ability to make a decision on your own) — but the issue is that, built into the curriculum is the capacity to **recover** from a lousy, poor decision—and to get back on making proper and right decisions.

- And for us—that godly remedy of Romans 8:34 is the mechanical means for us as sons to recover from the paths of the world we chose and to get back to those *paths of judgment* that our Father offers to us.

- By the way, you can see a parallel to this issue of being *condemned* in opting out of the Father's paths of sonship vocational training and opting instead for the paths this world has to offer over in I Cor. in the issues surrounding the corrective doctrine concerning the Lord's Table—(I Cor. 11:31-32).

- We're now going to look at the final matching up of the 5 Probing Question of Romans 8:31-39 with the corresponding Exhortation to the Son's Commitment to the Effectual Working of What he Learns over in Proverbs 2:6-9.

#5—Proverbs 2:8b— *and preserveth the way of his saints.*

- Matches up (or corresponds) with the 5th Probing Question of Romans 8:35 (and really all the way down to :39) —
35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- So when it comes to this 5th Probing Question—what is it talking about? How would you explain it?

- My understanding is that you have to be able to approach this question (and all these probing questions) with an adequate sonship kind of intelligence that enables you to understand and appreciate what the question is asking, why it's asking it; and why God has us look back to the 44th Psalm as a parallel issue for us as sons to grab a hold of and begin bringing **relief** to our fearful, panic-stricken heart and begin the process of fully settling the matter of our godly attitude of confidence, assurance, and conviction in our Father's gearing us for success **so that we will never abandon** His education of us as His sons.

35 (The final probing question) *Who* (the Adversary, Satan himself) **shall separate us from the love of Christ?** (the very love Christ himself has, and the very love we have now come to possess for the status as sons, for the sonship life, and for attaining all of its aims, goals, and objectives) **shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?** (a scope of the 7 categories of 'separation tactics' that are at the Adversary's disposal in his policy of evil to ply against you in order to attack your soul — and through fear, produce a 'wedge' in order to separate you from your love of living out your sonship life—each category being designed to kill our desire to go on with our sonship education and put that education to death within us—[death being defined as 'separation'])

- And why would the Adversary want to separate us from that *love*?
- Why does the Adversary hate your sonship life so much?
- (Actually the answer is in the first 3 words of the quote from Psalm 44:22).

36 *As it is written* (there is a parallel issue and concept to what we will suffer at the hands of the Adversary and his policy of evil with what the remnant of Israel will suffer [having received the adoption of sons] during the final installment of God’s program with Israel), ***For thy sake*** (the soberness of thinking that all these things have an ulterior motive and reason—one in which there is a direct benefit and profit for our Father’s cause with us as His sons—a benefit & profit for our new-found Father & son relationship and for the ultimate goal of what our Father is going to do with us as His sons) ***we are killed all the day long*** (all these things will come upon us and there will be no intervening of our Father to stop any of it—we are going to experience these things all the time—for the duration of this dispensation of grace); ***we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter*** (the Adversary and his policy of evil will be allowed by our Father to go right after us and even slaughter us if he can and if he so desires).

- And our Adversary does indeed hate our sonship life—why?
- Because of that ***“For thy sake”*** issue—because he knows exactly what our sonship life is for—he now knows (due to the *“revelation of the mystery”*) what our Father intends to do with us as educated sons; and he knows that we are the biggest threat to him losing his contention to be *“like the most High”* - we pose the greatest threat to him retaining his usurpation and possession and rulership of the heavenly places—of possessing & ruling *the creature!*
- We, as *the new creature* are going to be the means by which our Father is going to dismantle, demolish, and destroy the Satanic policy of evil in the heavenly places. We are a direct threat to the success of Satan’s designs on God’s kingdom!

37 *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

- Notice that it’s *“in” all these things*—not ‘removed from all these things’ or ‘God intervening in all these things’! No!

- And that issue of being a *more than conqueror* is the issue of our Father writing into the curriculum for our sonship education the ability and the capacity to take anything and everything that the Satanic Policy of Evil can throw at you—and He’s going to take that policy of evil and all of its afflictions and sufferings (that get described there in [;35] in those 7 categories) and instead of them being thwarting and hindering and defeating to us as sons—they actually have **an integral roll in our conformity into the image of His Son!**

- And He’s going to **utilize** them—they are actually **helpful**; and **beneficial**; and **contribute to our success as sons!!!**

- And that’s what is so important—and the important meaning behind what it means to be *more than a conqueror*—because it’s not just being victorious—but it’s taking what the Adversary means for your defeat, and not just not being defeated by them, but overcoming them and enduring them, and being victorious over them—but actually causing them **to be turned around to CONTRIBUTE** to our sonship education!!! (WOW!!!)

- And therefore, the things that we experience under the Adversary’s Policy of Evil not only work to our benefit and to our profit when it comes to the issue of us being *conformed to the image of God’s Son* — but also, **as** the Adversary goes through each one of his tactics and all the things that he’s able to work against us, and employs each one of the weapons in his arsenal (so to speak) - there’s actually a **propelling effect** to that—that moves us on—and **produces more developmental and progressive conformity to the image of Christ!**

- And really, there’s even more to it than that—because one of the benefits we get out of going through those sufferings—(because we’re having to deal with the Adversary in connection with being *more than conquerors* in connection with his policy of evil) — is the fact that we get some **skills** out of it in connection with some things that we are taught when it comes to handling the particular things he does that would produce the various forms of *tribulation or distress, etc.*, and the things that are built into the curriculum that we are taught, (along with these things), actually give us insight into the way in which the angelic realm operates; and the way in which the angels think—and we get skills out of it that fall into that “*more than conqueror*” concept—and that give more meaning and greater significance to the profit & benefit that we’re getting out of this.

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- Really, (:38-39) is an assessment of your sonship life under the influence of the Satanic Policy of Evil.

- And what you end up with in (:38-39) is the effectual working of (:36-37) coming along and saying: THE FEAR CAN BE HANDLED! — **the intimidation can be dealt with!**

- ***For I am persuaded*** — This is the natural assessment of being told (in advance) by your Father what you're **going** to face from the policy of evil—and as you've gone through the process of the godly remedy of (:36-37) — the “job” that these verses are supposed to have done is that they have not just been ‘thought’ about—but that they have moved out of your thinking (out of your human spirit) and into your soul, and you have been put in that ‘virtual reality’ that God’s word has the capacity to do to you (like the old ‘News Reels’ : “And you were there!”)—and you realize that when it comes to this **assessment** you’re making now, the things that are listed in (:38-39) are all issues that have to do with the power and the range and the focused areas of operation, of resistance, and of opposition of the Adversary’s policy of evil—all of which you’ve had occur to your thinking—and all of which you realize (or should realize) has the capacity to *separate you from the love of Christ*—all of which you are now **persuaded** that the curriculum that your Father has written can handle — to the tune of Romans 8:28, and 8:37—and without one iota of human, fleshly, carnal bravado, you can say, This love of Christ I now have is the greatest thing in my life, and **nothing** can separate me from it!

- Then we have that list of 10 things that should have come to mind as we went through sonship orientation and sonship establishment— *that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, ...*

- These are not random—in fact, they form into couplets & triplets.

- (See #45 — go through the 4 components)

- Then we have— *shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord* (“in Christ” - you’ve come full circle in your sanct.)

- Now when it comes to matching up the 5th Probing Question with the corresponding Exhortation to the son's Commitment to the Effectual Working of What He Learns (over in Proverbs 2:6-9) — the 5th Probing Question of Romans 8:35-39 matches up with the final component of Proverbs 2:6-8— which is the issue in (:8b) that the LORD *preserveth the way of his saints*.
- Now when it comes to this final Probing Questions and corresponding Exhortation—we know that we're dealing with the 3rd and final enemy to our sonship edification—which is the Adversary, Satan himself.
- And when we looked at the issue of our first 2 enemies to our sonship edification (you, yourself as your own worst enemy) - we saw that early on the father made the son aware of both of those enemies—(over in Proverbs chapter 1).
- But for this 3rd enemy (the Adversary) - we don't find this enemy being talked about in Proverbs chapter 1—and therefore when you come to chapter 2—and you're looking at the *words of understanding* with more perception—it's not until you come down to the exhortation of Proverbs 2:7 itself where you begin to encounter what God says about what He does and how He functions and what He's built into the curriculum to deal with any and all opposition—and because of what you've already been told, when the Father says that He'll be a *buckler*, and He'll *keep the paths of judgment*, you might think that that's all there is to our opposition—but there's one more.
- And that's the issue of when He says: ***and preserveth the way of his saints***.
- And now a son is confronted with one that he really hasn't had any need to deal with yet (his father has said nothing about it yet) - but he now needs to realize that there's a form of opposition that is dedicated to making it so that the overall ***WAY*** (singular) that the son is on—there's one particular form of opposition that its entire focus of attention is going to be to prevent the son from fulfilling that ***WAY***, and meeting the objective at the end of it!
- And there's a reason why He says that He *preserveth the way of his saints*.
- Notice that He doesn't say that He *preserveth the way of his sons*—but God instead uses the word ***saints***—
- And the reason for this has to do with what the word *saints* means—it means ones who have been set apart unto God, in general—but *saints* when they're being spoken about in connection with sonship more specifically looks at what the son is set apart unto in connection with his sonship education.

- He's set apart unto meeting and achieving an objective at the END of the whole thing.
- And therefore, there's a **SINGULAR WAY** that runs from the beginning of sonship education to the end of it!
- And achieving the overall objective of that *way* is going to involve the son being set apart unto achieving that objective throughout the entire course of the curriculum.
- Well—there's one form of opposition that knows that *way* as well as the Father did who put it together—and there's one form of opposition that can't afford to have the son make it to the end.
- The “world” really doesn't care if you make it to the end or not—and “sin in your members” really doesn't care if you make it to the end or not—**but the Adversary does!**
- Because he's the only one who is really hurt by a son making it to the end of the *way*.
- And it's once the son is on the *way*—and is demonstrating his ability to deal with sin in his members and the world's opposition, that the Adversary then earns the right to begin to oppose the son in the *way*.
- And that's why—in (:10-20) in chapter 2 of Proverbs—the Father then goes on and says to the son, more or less— “Now we've got to take a look at *the words of understanding* even more closely than we just have—because now we have to look at it in connection with this 3rd and final component of opposition.”
- “And you need to know, son, that when *wisdom enters into your heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto your soul—discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee: to deliver you from the WAY of the evil man* (verses 12-15) - and then *to deliver thee from the strange woman* (verses 16-20).”
- And the *evil man* and *the strange woman* are the 2 components of the Adversary's opposition that you'll be up against.
- They're not the most constant—and they're not the most frequent opposition—but they're the most **devastating** if you're overcome by them.

- And the main reason for that is that (even though the first 2 forms of opposition: those 2 aspects of yourself being your own worst enemy) — when it comes to that singular *way*—they can trip you up, they can knock you down, they can cause you some real problems—more often than not though, they don't make it so that you can never get to the end of the *way*. (That is, it's not their goal to do that).

- But the Adversary's goal is to do that—to make it so you don't finish on the *way*.

- And really—the Adversary's opposition is **designed to make it so that you don't want to walk that way any more!**

- The Adversary's tactic isn't to make it so that you simply choose (preference-wise) to not walk the *way* any more—but its to make it so that you choose not to walk the *way* any longer because you don't want to face the consequences of doing it any more!

- IT IS OUTRIGHT **INTIMIDATION!** — It is outright “scare the pants off you.” And you don't want to go on any more.

- And when you think about what all the *sufferings of Christ* are all about, that's what this is all about—and that's why in Romans 8:35 you have that list of those 7 things that the Adversary will do to try to *separate you from the love of Christ*.

- And what you have described in Proverbs 2:10-20 is really only 'round 1' so to speak of the Policy of Evil—and that's why you have the issue of the *strange woman* being brought up again over in Proverbs 7.

- But the issue for the son at this point is—that in view of the Adversary's opposition to you succeeding to the very end of the *way*—God's got it all covered—He has built into the curriculum the means for *preserving the way of his saints*—and He's going to function in a way that provides for *preserving that way* you're walking to the very end objective of it all.

- And at the outset—you're made aware (from Romans 8:36-39) that God does have it all covered—that more than merely enduring the separation tactics of the Adversary, you can be *more than conquerors* of those tactics—and then you get all that information contained in II Cor. that provides for your enduring *the sufferings of Christ* when they come—and the curriculum has progressive information in it that makes it so that you first become willing to endure them; then to rejoice in them; and finally to desire them!

- And you find out from the 5th Probing Question of Romans 8:35 that the objective of the Adversary is to drive a wedge between you and *the love of Christ*—because that will make it so that you don't want to go on and continue on the *way* any more.

- And the Adversary has the right to employ those 7 tactics to try to drive that wedge between you and *the love of Christ* that is supposed to (and designed to) **maintain you** on that *way*.

- That *love of Christ*—that's the whole thing that will keep you going on the *way*—that is, that you value and esteem reaching that objective of being *conformed to the image of Christ*.

- But he wants to separate you from that—he wants to put something else in your mind that makes it so that you don't want to continue on that *way*.

- But you're supposed to be *fully persuaded* by what your Father tells you about Himself and about the curriculum He's designed for you to go through—that not only can you withstand the opposition from the Adversary; not only can you endure it all; but the curriculum is designed so that all his opposition only makes it so that you get to the end objective of the *way* faster and better qualified than if he never opposed you in the first place!!!

- WHAT CONFIDENCE!!!

- And that's how the 5th Probing Question of Romans 8:35-39 matches up with the 5th Component of the Exhortation to the Son's Commitment to the Effectual Working of what He Learns.

- So when you put all of those 5 Probing Questions and the corresponding Exhortations together—those first 2 obstacle-type problems, and then the 3 direct forms of opposition (of your flesh, of you opting for the world's paths instead of your Father's grace opportunities for vocational training, and of you being victimized by the Satanic Policy of Evil) — when you know that the curriculum can handle ALL THOSE THINGS—and you're **fully persuaded** that that is so—and can honestly say that without a shadow of a doubt in your mind that your Father and His curriculum can handle them all—and nothing has been overlooked—and everything has been taken care of—then the full measure of godly optimism that needs to exist, does exist for the sonship education to start getting underway — if that's all there then you're ready for Romans 12:1&2 and to get the education underway in Romans 12:3ff. (If it's 50%, then you'll just get 50% out of Rom. 12:3ff, etc., etc.)

(Read Romans 12:1-2)

I. Romans 1:1-15 INTRODUCTION which contains information about the design and purpose of the book of Romans.

II. Romans 1:15-5:21 THE FIRST CORNERSTONE - Establishment in the doctrine of our **Justification** by grace through faith. The goal being the complete knowledge of our perfect judicial standing before God having trusted Christ as our Savior, and total assurance in the eternal nature of that judicial standing.

III. Romans 6:1-8:39 THE SECOND CORNERSTONE - Establishment in the doctrine of our **Sanctification** by grace through faith. The goal of this second cornerstone is the complete knowledge of our sanctified standing before God “in Christ” - including our status, orientation, and establishment as adopted sons of God, which enables us to live as those who are *alive unto God*.

IV. Romans 9:1-11:36 THE THIRD CORNERSTONE - Establishment in the doctrine of the dispensation of Gentile grace now in effect. The goal of this third cornerstone is to understand and appreciate what God has done with Israel now that His program with them has been temporarily suspended, and that we live in a new and different dispensation formerly kept secret. And not only that, but it provides for a particular and needed aspect of sonship establishment so that a son can begin to think dispensationally ‘on the whole’ - and therefore solidly *perceive the words of understanding* and properly handle the word of truth.

V. Romans 12:1-16:20 THE FOURTH CORNERSTONE - Establishment in the doctrine of walking worthy of who we are now as justified, sanctified, adopted sons in this new dispensation of grace. The beginning of our sonship education gets underway in earnest by receiving the instruction in sonship decision-making skills along with the admonition to put them to their godly, intended use.

VI. Romans 16:21-27 CONCLUSION - in which the apostle Paul underscores the design and purpose of this epistle.

 - Well—congratulations! — you are now an empty son! — You’re properly oriented and properly established as a son of God your Heavenly Father— Phase 1 of Level I Sonship Edification is over and completed—and we have now arrived at a critical moment in our sonship lives: a **SONSHIP CHECKPOINT** *must* be passed before Phase 2/Level I Son.Ed. gets underway.

- And it is no surprise to you by now—because I’ve mentioned it many times—that at Romans 12:1 & 2 you reach one of those major SONSHIP CHECKPOINTS—and one of your major **volitional testing points**.

- Therefore, while we can truly say that Phase 1/Level I Sonship Education is totally completed—really, since Phase 2/Level I Sonship Education gets underway at (:3) - you’re now so close to the beginning of sonship education proper that you can taste it—but still, you have these first 2 verses of chapter 12 that stands in your way (so to speak).

- And really, that’s what a checkpoint does—it stands in your way, and has to be passed before you are allowed to get to the place where you want to be.

- And more often than not—as you stand at a checkpoint—the place you want to be is right in front of you—you can see it; smell it; hear it, etc.—but you can’t get to it until you pass the checkpoint. (And that’s the case right here).

- General Definition of a CHECKPOINT = a stop where someone is inspected for certain qualities and/or authenticity in order to verify their clearance to move on.

- And in essence, that’s what we’ve got in Romans 12:1-2.

- But it’s actually much more than that—because there are several features to this Sonship-type of Checkpoint that are essential to both the Father and to the son that are designed to indicate that the education can get underway **honestly**—with no pretense on the son’s part, and with full assurance on the Father’s part that His son is responding positively and properly to all he has been told up to this point.

- Now as we always do—(when beginning a new section of God’s word, or a new form of doctrine) - let’s begin very basic and get a ‘birds-eye view’ of things and then move on to the details of (:1 &2).

- First of all—let’s move our thinking back to the issue of what a natural father would be doing with his natural son at the point of ending the father’s talk with his son in regard to what adopting him was all about and then all that the father said to the son in order to give his son all that sonship establishment is designed to produce in him (attitude, commitment, optimism, etc.).

- In other words we have come to know the basic Table of Contents for sonship education;

- We have come to *know wisdom and instruction*—we know the meaning and importance of adoption and being educated as a son.

- We have come to *perceive the words of understanding*—and we know where we find our ‘words’ for our curriculum—and we know its usefulness and how it’s going to work for us.

- We’ve come to appreciate a basic understanding for what our Father’s business with us is all about.

- We know the ultimate aim and objective that there is to the whole thing.

- We’ve got the fundamental godly perspective and viewpoint on our lives.

- We’ve got the proper, godly attitudes produced in us—as well as the commitment level we need—in order to receive this education.

- We’ve got the godly optimism about our Father and the curriculum He’s designed for us to succeed in our sonship lives.

- All of the godly desire and enthusiasm is there—we’ve just told our Father that, “*I am persuaded ...*” (just like Paul ends ch. 8)

.... So what happens now? ... what would you expect to take place?

- You’ve got these 2 individuals looking at each other now—eye to eye—and basically, since the beginning of our adoption as sons, the Father has been doing all the talking—you’ve only said 2 things to Him so far—1) You’ve cried *Abba, Father*—and 2) You’ve said, “*I am persuaded ...*” — but basically all the ‘moves’ (so to speak) have been made by the Father—so who makes the next move?

- THE SON!

- The Father goes silent at the end of Phase 1, Level I Sonship Education—and He waits — He waits for the son to make the next move—He’s waiting for His son to do one more thing after he expresses his full persuasion.

- And until the son does it, the Father will not begin the sonship education.
- The son has a particular responsibility at the end of Phase 1/Level I (in fact at the end of every Phase of the education) - to respond in a particular way before he goes on with his Father.
- And even though you have already passes 2 previous volitional testing points in your sonship life—you, as a son, are met with this 3rd volitional testing point—and due to it being at the end of a Phase of the Sonship Education, the son has a responsibility to demonstrate this next major agreement of his volition with his Father—and that makes it possible to properly make the transition into the next Phase of his education.
- Therefore if you appreciate that—you understand that the job of the first 2 verses of Romans chapter 12 are exhorting us to do what the Father expects out of us as the one last thing He’s looking for in us.
- And that is to ‘*present our bodies*’ to Him for the education to begin in view of all that Phase 1/Level I has effectually accomplished in us.
- And carefully notice how (:1) starts out—***I beseech you ...*** — notice that it’s not the Father, but the apostle Paul himself that exhorts you to do it—(I’ll get back to this later).
- But for now, we have reached a major volitional testing point—and there is supposed to be a cognizant (fully informed) decision that a son makes when he does, especially what (:1) says—and does it with the awareness of what (:2) goes on and says—and that’s what the Father is looking for!
- And that’s how the Father knows that everything that He has taught His son—to bring him to the point of readiness for his education to get underway *is* effectually working within him—because he makes a freewill decision on his own, on the basis of what he has just been taught, that makes him ‘*present*’ himself to his Father to get things going.
- The Father does not want to have to tell the son, “Ok, son, let’s get going” — the Father is looking for the son to come to Him and say, “Father, let’s get going!” (The son makes an acknowledgment to his Father that indicates to his Father that he is intelligently ready to go on.)

- And the volitional testing point at the end of this first Phase of Level I is the most outstanding one—because of what it is: the education actually gets underway.

- And what I'm after in saying all this—is to get you to see that what is going on here in Romans 12:1&2 has a **naturalness** to it and a **needfulness** to it—it's the natural thing that the Father expects the son to do when Phase 1 of Level I Sonship Edification has been completed.

- And a Father expects His son to **respond** in a particular way that lets Him come along and agree with His son and say, "Yes—let's get going."

- And what the Father is looking for, is for His son to take the initiative to get the education underway.

- And that's one of the son's first adult responsibilities—and the Father is going to hold him **accountable** for that.

- And really—what you're exhorted to do in (:1-2) doesn't just come up 'out of the blue' (so to speak) - but latent within everything that you've been told from the time you began the doctrine of your sanctified position "in Christ" up to the end of sonship establishment — latent in all that information are particular things that the Father has said to you that would prompt you to do what (:1-2) exhorts you to do—even though it wasn't spelled out in these exact terms) - and which makes the presenting of your body to your Father to be in the terms of the 3 ways it's described in (:1) = a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God—so that those aren't to be foreign concepts at all that you would be puzzling as to what those things mean.

- And the importance of me bringing this to your attention here—is to just underscore the fact that the truth of the matter is—you, as a son, are **accountable** (by what has been said to you already), you are accountable to respond to your Father in the exact manner described here in (:1-2)!

- And the way in which the Father has crafted the information He's already gone over with His son—is to so craft what He says, that without coming right out and saying it—if it works effectually, it will **prompt** the son to come to Him and say, Father, start educating me!

- So therefore—this is a point in which the Father is going to hold His son accountable to respond positively and properly to what He’s just told him—and when it come to acting like a son—and when it comes to living like a son—when it comes to, in view of the son perceiving now the fundamentals of sonship that allows for him to actually begin to express adulthood thinking—the first thing the Father is looking for is that the son makes that intelligent, wise, adult decision: “We need to get going—and I’m going to present myself—I’m ready to go!”

- Now that what we’re dealing with (in gist form) here in Romans 12:1-2.

- These 2 verses are designed to appeal to the next, natural thing in the son’s thinking.

- And what you’re going to be exhorted to do here is the most logical, natural thing for you to do—(which is why the last part of (:1) calls it *your reasonable service*).

- But it’s still something you have to consciously decide to do. (which is why it’s a *beseeking*)

- Now to come back to something I said before—notice that it’s the apostle Paul who does the *beseeking*—and this is one of the marvelous aspects of the genius of God in connection with the way He’s put the curriculum for our sonship education together.

- Because He’s put it together in such a way that He’s able to utilize the apostle Paul—not only as His own ‘mouthpiece’ (so to speak) when it comes to the sonship doctrines being communicated to us—but God is able to take Paul and have him step outside of that roll when necessary—and to function almost in a neutral/independent roll in which he ‘beseekes’ us, and exhorts us to do the very things that are natural and expected for sons to do at these major points of either transition or certification (so to speak) that something has been learned that can now be built upon.

- And the bishop of the local assembly has to learn to do this very thing from time to time as well.

- And then you see Paul fall back into his ‘mouthpiece’ type roll there as (:3) gets underway. (It’s fascinating how much more God can accomplish in writing His word in this epistle-type style rather than in categorical doctrines!)

- And it's kind of like Paul is standing there as this 3rd party—and he's looking now at the 2 of you (you and your Father) - and he says to you, “Uh, son, the Father's waiting for you to do something—(jabbing you in the ribs)— Uh, the 2 of you are standing there—and who's turn is it now—**it's your turn, son**—the Father's waiting for you to present yourself—well???”

- Well—the main thing I'm after here is that at the very outset you understand and appreciate what this '*beseeking*' is all about.

- It's being done for the son to now do the naturally expected thing that the Father is looking for—and that's for the son to make his first, intelligent, adult decision that shows the measure of maturity that Phase 1 of Level I Sonship Education has generated within him.

- And that first adult decision is: “Let's get going—I'm going to present myself to you, Father, now let's get the education underway.”

- “And I'm presenting myself to you— with the understanding and the acknowledgement of **what's at stake.**”

- And that's where the details of (:1) and (:2) come in—because those terms and those details are the expressions of the acknowledgment that the son has that makes it evident that he's not merely presenting himself because it's the expected thing to do—but he's presenting himself because it's the only *reasonable*, natural, logical thing for him to do.

- And with that intelligent acknowledgment there in those first 2 verses—the Father knows that the son is fully ready.

- And then (:3) comes along—and Paul steps back into his 'mouthpiece' roll and says, *For I say, through the grace given unto me,* and Phase II of Level I gets going.

- When Paul says, *For I say, through the grace given unto me*—that puts him back in that 'father' roll.

- Well—that's the kind of approach we have to have in order to then begin getting the details of (:1 & 2) worked out—to borrow an aviation expression, this is our 'final approach' and that should get some things going in your thinking as we now begin looking at the next thing to do here.

- And the next wisest thing to do here is to begin to examine the text of Romans 12:1-2 and to determine how many overall components go into making up this exhortation.

- And by paying attention to the grammatical markings—how many components do you see?

- This is a great place to take advantage of what the KJ Translators did—punctuation-wise. (And look for your major ‘thought-dividers’ — which is your periods, your colons, and your semicolons).

- My understanding is that you’ve got 3 major components:

- 1) (:1) - all of verse 1 forms the 1st Component—you’ve got one complete sentence.
- 2) (:2) - you have a major pause at the end of the word *world*—because you have a colon—so the 2nd Component would be—*And be not conformed to this world:*
- 3) Then the 3rd Component would consist of the remainder of (:2).

- This issue of the 3rd major volitional testing point for a son has 3 major components to it.

- So Romans 12:1-2 comprises the 3rd major volitional testing point—and there are 3 major components to it—that all goes to the son making the positive and proper response that the Father is looking for at the end of all that the Father has said to His son in Phase 1 of Level I Sonship Edification— that indicates to Him that His son has made his first adult decision as a son—and lets the Father know that His son is now ready to go on and begin his sonship education.

- And in the FIRST one—(all of [:1])—involves the son actually presenting himself, intelligently, to his Father to begin the education.

- (The critical term there being to *present*).

- And then the remaining 2 components take that *presentation*—and they involve the issue of the son acknowledging: that from this point on, this is what is going to be going on in his life.

- You're going to *present* yourself to your Father in order to get the education going—with the acknowledgment that from this point on, (with that education taking place) - these other 2 things are going to comprise your life—(and one's a negative, and one's a positive).

- And the SECOND component = you're not going to be *conformed to this world* any longer. (:2a)

- The critical terms being, *not conformed*.

- And the THIRD component = you're going to be *transformed by the renewing of your mind* to the tune of you *proving what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God*. (the remainder of :2)

- The critical term being that you're going to be *transformed*.

- And in general, that's what the Father is looking for—as any natural father would do—our Father is looking for us, as sons, (once Phase 1 of Level I is done)—once all the enthusiasm of crying, *Abba, Father*, is there—to make that first adult, responsible, accountable decision:

- We present ourselves to our Father to get the education going; and we acknowledge to Him (in connection with it), that our sonship lives (in general) will, from this point on, will bear the characteristics of the **negative**—(*not being conformed to this world*) - we don't want that any more; we're renouncing that—and instead, we want the **positive**—we want to be *transformed* — the curriculum is going to be *renewing our mind* and giving us the capacity to *prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God*.

- And when a son can say that in all honesty and in all sincerity and in all genuineness—then the Father knows he's ready!

- Now of those 3 Components—it's easy to see that the 1st and the 3rd have the most stuff in them (the most information) - and so those are going to be the ones that we well need to develop more than the 2nd one.

- The 1st & 3rd Components have some particular and identifiable and definable things that need our attention in order to make it so that your decision is not only honest, sincere, and genuine—but to make it so that your decision is also an informed and intelligent one!

- Now let's begin looking at that 1st Major Component (which is all of :1) — a little more carefully—and let's notice something about it that indicates to you that what the Father is looking for is **more** than merely for His son to present himself to Him and say, Ok, Father, let's get going.

- And by doing this—what I'm after is for you to be able to focus upon (or pick out) of this 1st component some detailed information that the Father is looking for and that you, as the Father's son, are to **intelligently acknowledge** when you *present* yourself to Him for the education to begin.

- And what I'm after is this—notice (as we so often do) what this verse does **NOT** say— it **doesn't** say: *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

- Now if all that's going on here is for you to make some kind of a 'show' in simply showing up when class is supposed to begin—and you just present yourself to your Father for Him to begin educating you—(in other words, if all that's going on here is what commonly goes on in so many church services/ missionary conferences/ camp-meetings/ tent revivals/ altar calls/ and all other such ilk—that has some appeal for your to 'come forward' to dedicate/ re-dedicate/ commit/ give your life to the Lord/ repent/ surrender/ and the like) — if that's what's going on here is like that—then what you have is some [maybe] Christian [maybe not] presenting himself for 'who-knows-what' and for 'who-knows-why'!!!

- Now that's not to diminish from the fact that this IS a major **commitment** that you are being exhorted to make—but the thing that sets it apart from all other pseudo-commitments and general goofiness that goes on in Christian circles today is that **this is a SONSHIP COMMITMENT**—and a sonship commitment is, by nature, a commitment made honestly, genuinely, and most of all **intelligently!** (adulthood type)

- Now when you focus your attention upon that 1st Major Component (which is all of :1) — you should recognize that the Father isn't simply waiting until you present yourself—but He's looking for that, **PLUS a demonstration of the measure of His son's intelligence** about the commitment he's about to make —and the Father is going to receive a proper, basic measure of His son's intelligence when His son presents himself to Him to get the education underway.

- And therefore, that's why each word of (:1) is carefully chosen and carefully crafted in order to not only set this apart from any other kind of commitment you could make—but it makes it so that both you acknowledge some things to your Father, and by the Father **receiving** that honest acknowledgement, there's intelligent genuineness to what you're doing!

- So when you look at the 1st Component of (:1) - of the many details contained in it—there are 3 identifiable and definable terms that are specifically utilized to describe the intelligent genuineness of your commitment to get going with the education (and which the Father is looking for, and which He will receive from you) - 3 terms that describe and define the son's intelligent understanding of what it means to present his body to his Father for the education to get underway—and that's what I want you to see before we deal with all of the details contained in (:1).

- And we'll need to do that with the 2nd Component (although there's not much to deal with in it) - and we'll have to do that with the 3rd Component as well.

- So what are the terms and/or phrases that describe the measure of the son's intelligence in presenting his body to his Father to begin his education?

- 1) *a living sacrifice*
- 2) *holy*
- 3) *acceptable*

- Now we're going to have to look at every detail contained in (:1) - but at the outset, I want you to recognize that these 3 terms/phrases lie at the core of the measure of the son's intelligence that will be received by the Father from his son—and that both you and your Father agree upon—that allows for your presentation of your body to your Father to be truly the genuine thing that it is supposed to be.

- And the truth of the matter is—(and this is critically important) - the truth is, these 3 things are a natural outcome of what has gone on already in Phase 1 of Level I Sonship Edification—and more than that, **there is something about those 3 things that make it so that the son's volitional choice as an adult to get the education underway—THOSE 3 THINGS MAKE IT SO THAT CANNOT BE FAKED!**

- That is, they make it so that the son cannot simply do what he thinks is the expected thing for him to do at this point. (there's more to it)

- That means that simply a dictionary type definition of these terms/phrases (going to a Greek dictionary/lexicon—exegeting the terms, going over them as categories of doctrine, etc.) will be **futile** and **meaningless**—and won't do a thing to properly handle Romans 12:1&2!

- And that also means that **on one**—no Christian—and no Pastor or Bible teacher—can just come along and pick up the Bible and turn to Romans 12:1&2 and teach it as a 'topical sermon' and have it effectually work! (That's simply **impossible!** — Those 3 things make it impossible to either intelligently or genuinely do what it says here **if you don't already know what those 3 things are all about!**)

- If this is taught out of sequence or outside of sonship education—Romans 12:1&2 is nothing more than good words that accomplish NOTHING in your inner man—and at best you just have a false sense of spirituality with no meaning and no lasting benefit to you whatsoever!

- Those 3 things are the **REASONS** — and are the way or manner in which a son presents himself to the Father—in other words, he presents himself and identifies himself to his Father in connection with those 3 things—and the only way a son can do that is if Phase 1 to Level I Sonship Edification has effectually worked within him!

- And just to be blunt about it—a son who does not have the full measure of enthusiasm, ambition, and delight for his sonship education—who is not, therefore, crying *Abba, Father* to the full extent that Romans 8:14-39 is designed to produce within him—**CANNOT DO THIS! IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!**

- And those 3 things make that evident! — And the Father is looking for that kind of intelligent presentation.

- In other words—the proper, positive presentation of a son to his Father (to get the education underway) does NOT have a son coming to his Father slouching, yawning, and shuffling his feet and saying, "Well, Dad, I guess we'd better get going." (lacking that enthusiasm)

- And the son, therefore, presents himself just because he thinks that that's what the Father wants to hear you say—or just because it's the expected thing to do—or because you're obligated to do it—or whatever ... (whatever kind of thinking would make you do that that's not genuine sonship ambition, delight, and enthusiasm).

- But rather—this kind of presentation here in Romans 12:1&2 is one that **demonstrates** that there's an intelligent understanding and appreciation for the MAGNIFICENCE of what sonship is all about — and for the **magnificence** of what's going to take place from this point on—as the education gets underway.

- And presenting yourself to your Father as a *living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable*—can only come about; and can only be expressed by you as a son in whom that godly enthusiasm genuinely exists!

- Because those things are a result of thinking about, (and having your mind occupied with) what your Father has taught you in your godly sanctified position “in Christ” and in Phase 1 of Level I Sonship Edification!

- With all that in view now—let's begin looking at the details of Rom. 12:1.

Romans 12:1

I beseech you therefore, brethren, ...

- “I” - Once again, we have the apostle Paul stepping out of his roll as God's ‘mouthpiece’ (so to speak) and communicator of the sonship doctrine and takes on a neutral/independent roll of a 3rd party that steps outside his ordinary roll and does the *beseeching* or the exhorting for us to make the next move and go to our Father and present ourselves to Him in order to get the education underway.

- “*beseech*” = to entreat someone; to earnestly beg someone; to implore; to make an earnest request.

- Granted, *beseech* is not a commonly used word today—though it hasn't fallen entirely out of use—and just as so many words that get ‘updated’ and re-translated to some inferior grammarian's idea of an ‘easier to understand’ word—*beseech* carries a shade of meaning that makes it to be the most excellent choice in this context.

- (Crabb's) - *Beseech* is an intensive verb meaning to seek strongly— (i.e., to strongly seek your proper and positive response to your Father, in this context) — it is a species of intensive ‘asking’ when the context indicates an urgent necessity for some action being at hand—*beseeching*, in particular, is done either by friends or by ones who are seen to be equals— therefore *beseeching* is done as an equal party; kindly but forcefully’ and not as one ‘pulling rank’ or authority over another.
- All of which perfectly fits the context of this situation where the Father and 2 adult sons now stand looking at each other, and the apostle Paul (viewing himself now as an adult son himself [i.e., as a *brother*]—and this 3rd, independent party) *beseeching* another adult son to make the next move and present himself to his Father for instruction.
 - And what I’m going after here is to put this issue of Paul *beseeching* us in the proper context—and, of course, that proper context is that of sonship edification.
 - And I say that (not that some of you would ever know) - but I say that because there are a bunch of Bible teachers out there—(and I mean those who do ‘*rightly divide the word of truth*’) who don’t pay attention to the context—and who pay no mind to sonship edification—and when they approach this verse they always like to point out the fact that Paul is *beseeching* you here and not ‘commanding’ you—because a command would be like we were back under Israel’s law program, but now that we’re no longer under the law, but under grace, we’re not “commanded” to do anything any more.
 - But Paul “commands” you a dozen or so time throughout his epistles!
 - So this *beseeching* isn’t some kind of a dispensational issue—it’s a sonship issue! And to fully appreciate it (instead of only appreciating it about 20%), you have to have a contextual, sonship frame of reference!
 - And you see the apostle Paul step back into his authoritative, ‘mouthpiece’ roll in (:3) and on throughout all the instruction of our 4 sonship decision-making skills! (12:3-15:7)

- And once Paul hits (:3) and on—he doesn't *beseech* you any more at all—from there on, it's all direct instruction—authoritative instruction as that surrogate father. (Do this; do that—think this; don't think that, etc.)

- The truth is—the word *beseech* is the apostle Paul's **cue** or **signal** that we are being dealt with as **adult sons**—and as an adult, you are now being exhorted or intensely asked to do what is necessary—which is to present yourself to your Father in such a way so that you and your Father can acknowledge that all of the information contained in Phase I Level I Sonship Edification has effectually worked and you're now genuinely ready to go on with the formal education.

- “*you*” = you, **as a son** who has accomplished Phase I Level I of sonship edification. (Not just any old Christian!)

- “*therefore*” = looks back to all that has been accomplished in your inner man through the effectual work of Phase I/Level I.

- And just as a side issue—notice that the *therefore* is shoved into the verse by the KJ Translators as the 4th word of the verse.

- (In the Greek, the word *therefore* [οὖν] is the 2nd word of the verse.)

- And I point this out because this is a technique of our English language—(and of our KJ Bible) - whereby the more that the word *therefore* gets placed further and further into a sentence or a verse—the more emphasis and the more **force** and the more importance is being underscored as to what is being said!

- “*brethren*” = underscores the brotherhood of **sons**; and points up our association and our alliance as brothers—not just as fellow believers or Christians, but specifically in this context as fellow sons of God our Heavenly Father. It's not a word to be used lightly or thrown around as Christian language or Christian jargon.

- Also, as indicated with the use of the word *beseech*, it's the appropriate term to describe the equality or bond that exists between Paul (now as that neutral/independent party) and us as the sons who are making this adult decision.

- So we now have ***I beseech you therefore, brethren, ...***

(Recap)

- At the end of Phase 1, Level I Sonship Edification—the Father has been making all the moves (so to speak) - and now He goes silent and waits on you, the son, to come to Him and make the next move.

- You have been prompted to make this next move—and you're now being held accountable to do the only *reasonable* thing for you to do at this point—and that is to go to your Father and present yourself to Him in order to get the education underway.

- However, above all, this presenting of yourself to your Father (or this major adult decision to get the education underway) cannot be done just any old way (so to speak).

- Rather, in order for this to be a proper and positive response from the son—this has to be **genuine**, and most importantly, **intelligent!**

- And with that in view—this exhortation has been carefully and specifically worded and crafted so that there are ‘checks’ within it that are given by the son, and received by the Father and that signals to the Father that your presentation of yourself to Him is honest, genuine, and intelligent.

- And this ‘check’ system within the exhortation makes it so that your presentation of yourself to your Father to get the education going CANNOT BE FAKED!

- And so the apostle Paul steps out of his authoritative ‘mouthpiece’ roll and into a neutral, independent roll (as a son, himself) and *beseches* you (or strongly entreats you to act upon the promptings of the Father that you're now being held accountable for) ...

I (Paul as an equal son myself) ***beseech*** (strongly beg of) ***you*** (as an adult, adopted son) ***therefore*** (in view of all that has been accomplished in your inner man through Phase 1 of Level I Sonship Edification), ***brethren*** (those who, along with me [Paul] are in the brotherhood of sons), ...

- Now—keeping in mind that **every word** of (:1) [the 1st Major Component of Romans 12:1-2] - every word is **critical/vital** to you passing this Sonship Checkpoint—each word is therefore carefully chosen in order to make it so that your presentation of yourself to your Father is genuine & intelligent

.... and one thing to keep in mind is that if an intelligent and genuine decision is to be made by you (to present yourself to your Father to get the education going) — an intelligent, genuine decision **DEMANDS** that you know **WHY** you are doing so!

- (Which, again, sets this kind of decision or dedication or commitment apart from all the phoniness that goes on in churches where you get everything short of being forcibly dragged up to the front of the church—where there's really no clearly defined reason for *why* you are doing so!)

- Now this is the point in which we actually begin to encounter the 'checks' that are put into (:1) - that make it the 'Checkpoint' that it is — (and makes it so that it's not just my idea that this is a checkpoint, but it **is** that because there really are certain 'checks' that are built into it, and that must be passed in order to 'clear' the checkpoint properly).

- And the 'checks' are what **prevents** fakes and phony's from ever passing this checkpoint—(if they do, they do so only in their own mind—because the Father certainly has not passed them—and the Father certainly will **not** begin to educate them).

- The 'checks' make it so that it is impossible for you to present some kind of fraudulent documentation (so to speak) to try to get by—no, the 'checks' come along and safeguard the checkpoint and to eliminate any Christian (sincere as they may be, or loving as they may be) from passing the Checkpoint and going on any further.

- The 'checks' keep you honest—& makes the adult sonship decision genuine—and at the same time causes the decision to be the intelligent one it's supposed to be.

- And in this way—the 'checks' built into (:1) perform a **duel roll**:
 1) They safeguard the Checkpoint to keep the unqualified out;
 2) They make it so that the son intelligently knows **WHY** he is doing what the Checkpoint calls upon him to do!

- And my understanding is that these 'checks' occur in (:1) at 3 distinct places: One has to do with having an intelligent understanding for **why** you are being *beseached* to present yourself to your Father in the first place — and the Second has to do with an intelligent understanding for **why** you are presenting your body to

your Father—and the Third one has to do with recognizing **why** you are being held accountable to come to your Father and present yourself to Him in order to get your education underway.

- **Check #1**—Why are you being *beseched* in the first place? (Because of *the mercies of God*).

- **Check #2**—Why is your presenting yourself to your Father genuine and intelligent [unable to be faked]? (Because you do so as *a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable*).

- **Check #3**—Why are you being held accountable at this particular time to present yourself to your Father to get the education going? (Because it is your *reasonable service*).

- And this is why we know (among other things—such as the nature of how the information is presented **prior** to Rom. 12:1-2, and **after** Rom. 12:1-2) - this is why we know that what we have here in these two verses is, indeed, a Major Sonship Checkpoint.

- And that's why this verse doesn't say: *I beseech you therefore, brethren, that ye present your bodies unto God*.

- Ok—so we've come to understand and appreciate the first 5 words of (:1) - *I beseech you therefore, brethren, ...* — so now let's move on and get through the 1st Check—which is to have an intelligent and genuine understanding and appreciation for why we are being *beseched* in the manner in which we are — and that is: Paul is *beseching* us to present our bodies to our Father *by the mercies of God*.

- First of all—this *beseching* or urgent/strong begging of us by the apostle Paul has to have a reason behind it—it doesn't just 'come out of the blue' (so to speak) - but it has a reason that makes it the right, needful, and natural thing that should happen at this point.

- Therefore Paul *beseches* us *by the mercies of God*—that's the 'check' - that's the thing that makes it so that Paul's *beseching* of us to make our first adult sonship decision has a measure of intelligence that we are to **already** have—and that we acknowledge is there in our inner man—and moreover, that the Father can receive that intelligence from us and agree with us that we have the measure of intelligence that will make it so we can pass this first 'check' of the checkpoint.

- And notice that you don't have Paul coming along and explaining what the *mercies of God* are—so that means that **you should already know** what they are and what this is talking about before you ever get here.

- “*the mercies of God*” — notice that it doesn't say *the mercy of God* (singular), but the *mercies* (plural) *of God*.

- And since this is the very basis upon which Paul *beseches* us to present our bodies unto God—and since we're expected to already know what this is talking about—we need to be able to identify and define what *the mercies of God* are, and to do that accurately and precisely.

- First of all—even though it doesn't say it this way—if you were to define the word *mercy*—how would you define it?

= showing compassion to someone where punishment is merited—being pitiful—not giving someone who has committed an offence something that they deserve—receiving pardon (very similar to the word *grace*) - receiving kind, compassionate treatment where severity is merited or expected.

- And that's a fine definition of *mercy*—but it doesn't say *mercy*—it says *mercies*.

- And my understanding is—that if all you're supposed to be thinking about as a reason to respond to Paul's *beseeking* here and present yourself to your Father—is because God has been so merciful in saving me from my sins and loving me so much and He's so wonderful not to have sent me to hell and to have pardoned me and God is great, God is good and merciful—so I'll present myself to Him because of His great mercy towards me — my understanding is that's **flatly WRONG** and not even close to the measure of understanding you're supposed to be putting on display at this 1st Check in the sonship checkpoint!

- Because by wording it the way he does—Paul says, *by the mercies of God*—(not because of God's mercy) — and then we come along and think that we are supposed to present ourselves to our Father in light of a particular understanding we're supposed to have so that our education can now get underway and we begin receiving instruction that allows us to emulate our Father—it seems quite odd to say that

the basis of Paul *beseeking* us to do this is because God has withheld His wrath—because that’s not only odd, but it flies in the face of everything we’ve learned as sons so far—because the basis of us going forward is upon the effectual working of our sonship orientation and our sonship establishment and the crying *Abba, Father* and the desire/enthusiasm/optimism gained from all that to impel and prompt us to go on.

- Now in order to get a grip on how God uses the word *mercies* in the plural in His word—let’s take note of a passage where that term is used (though in a different context), in a parallel manner in which it’s used here in Romans 12:1.

- And this should allow for us to better understand in Rom. 12:1&2 what’s expected of us—and what our Father wants to see as we come to Him and seek that next Phase of our education to get underway and genuinely acknowledge that the 1st Phase is operating effectually within us.

- **Acts 13**—Paul is preaching at Antioch, Pisidia—and is preaching to Jews.

- (read :32-37)

- Note (:34) - “*I will give you the sure **mercies** of David.*” (Quote of Isa. 55:3) - and Paul ties that to the reality that Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, having accomplished redemption, and will never see corruption as David did—that is not only could death and the pit not hold Jesus, but even when Christ’s body was in the tomb and left unattended, it did not see corruption—and therefore we can have the whole package of benefits from Christ’s Redemption—perfect justification and perfect sanctification—and be fit for God’s use by being fully identified with Him. (“in Christ”)

- And in connection with that, Paul says to those Jews, that in light of all that Jesus of Nazareth did as their Redeemer, that they were to receive *the sure mercies of David*.

- Now when that phrase (*the sure mercies of David*) is used in Israel’s program—that’s a description of the benefits and the package of benefits that God provides for Israel based upon the Davidic Covenant.

- And once Redemption has taken place, the remainder of the package of benefits are now sure!

- (That is, the Messiah, being their Redeemer, makes *sure* that He will also be their Deliverer, their Avenger, their King and their Blessor.)

- So therefore, those *sure mercies of David* are **not** talking about the sure withholding of God's wrath upon David!

- (That simply doesn't make sense!)

- The *sure mercies of David* are talking about a **package of benefits** that Israel is going to obtain, once redemption has been accomplished — and that's the very context in which Paul quotes it in Acts 13— and because of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, and Him never seeing corruption - that's why the *mercies of David* are *sure*.

- So you've got one Mandate securing all the other mandates — and the other mandates looked upon as a package of benefits that accrue because of the 1st Mandate being accomplished.

- And those other mandates are packaged together and spoken of as *the sure mercies of David*.

- Therefore the term *mercies* in the plural is often used by God to indicate **a package of benefits that one obtains**.

- Now going back to Romans 12:1—Paul *beseches* us on the basis of *the mercies of God* to present ourselves unto God—and therefore Paul is directing our attention to the basis or reason upon which he's going to ask us to do this presenting of ourselves to our Father—and it's not due to God's mercy in withholding His wrath from us (and we should just be so grateful for that that we do this thing) — nor are we to come along and scratch our heads and be puzzled about what in the world are the *mercies* that we're supposed to be able to come up with—but that we intelligently understand and appreciate that *the mercies of God* [far from being some indescribable thing or some indefinable thing] - they are some **specific** and **particular** things that we already know about and that are **the package of benefits** that our Father has given to us within Phase 1, Level I Sonship Edification!

- In other words—when Paul *beseches* you *by the mercies of God*—he isn't trying to get you to be so impressed with the **attribute** of God's mercy that you go ahead and do what he *beseches* you to do!

- (By the way—outside of proper Bible handling [sense & sequence and the context of sonship] — that's about all you can say about that phrase!!!)

- Therefore in order to properly and positively get clearance at this first 'check' to the Sonship Checkpoint of Romans 12:1&2—you're to have clear and precise intelligence that the reason for the apostle Paul to *besech* you to present yourself to your Father for the education to begin—that *beseching* is based upon the **mercies of God**.

- And far from that being puzzling or a foreign concept or phrase—you understand and appreciate that that's talking about a package of benefits that has been given to you and laid out before you in Phase 1 of Level I of Sonship Edification.

- And you can put your finger on those *mercies*—beginning at the benefit of being an adult, adopted son in the first place—all the way down to the benefit of Romans 8:28 and why it all works for you the way it does in conjunction with the sonship curriculum—and so forth and so on.

- In other words—it's not the issue of flailing around the entire Bible looking for each and every time God's *mercy* could be talked about—but it's specific (not general) and it's precise (not indefinite) - it's definable and describable!

- And though *mercies* is talking about a specific package of benefits we receive—it is the apt expression to use, because that package of benefits we receive as son is all due to God's mercy and His great grace — and we do acknowledge that we are beneficiaries of His mercy and grace. (But at the same time, we don't mishandle this passage or cloud the issue by improperly handling such a phrase as *the mercies of God*.)

- So we have — ***I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God,*** (and we should have precise understanding and appreciation for each and every word of Romans 12:1 so far—right?)

- Now by having an intelligent understanding (and I mean a **sonship** type intelligent understanding) - of the 1st 'Check' at this sonship checkpoint, we can move on to the 2nd 'Check.'

(Re-cap of Check #1)

- Check #1—A genuine and intelligent understanding for why you are being *beseech*ed by the apostle Paul in the first place = Paul has reason to *beseech* you to make the next move of your sonship education **by the mercies of God**—that is, not simply because God is or has been merciful to you—but the *mercies of God* makes it so you have to call to your mind the **package of benefits** your Father made you aware of, and that is yours as His adopted son in Phase 1, Level I Sonship Edification.

- The benefit of being adopted as your Father's son—and all that means as opposed to childhood.
- The benefit of being an *heir of God* and the very real possibility of being a *joint-heir with Christ*.
- A **hope** that is so grand and so magnificent and so powerful (namely, to operate in your Father's business in the creature [heavenly places]) - to liberate the creature from its *bondage of corruption* and to bring functional life to it as you labor with your Father in His business in connection with reconciling the heavenly places back to Himself (from the Adversary) and to no longer have it *subject to vanity*, but to put the functional life in it that makes it fit for the Father's use.
- This *hope* produces the added benefit that we have another **salvation**—saved from ever being victimized by the *sufferings of this present time*—*which are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us*.
- Due to the critical nature that we **must** have bi-directional, interactive learning going on between us and our Father—but due to not being able to know what we should pray for as we ought (at least at the beginning of our sonship life) - we have the benefit of the Holy Spirit *interceding* for us so that the searching of our heart can still take place and therefore make it so we will be able to 'find the knowledge of God' without hindrance to our sonship prayer life.

- The benefit of the power of the curriculum our Father is going to teach us to make it so that whatever comes our way, will work *together for our good* as sons and actually benefit us in our sonship lives. (**Rom. 8:28**)

- The ‘chain of provision’ our Father forged for us in Romans 8:29&30 that makes (:28) to be the living reality in our lives.

- The benefit of a Father and His curriculum for Sonship Edification that is so wisely and powerfully put together so as to make it so no obstacle; no enemy; not even Satan and his policy of evil can separate us from being successful as God’s sons—to the tune of anything and everything our enemy can throw at us will not only be overcome and conquered by us—but we will be *more than conquerors* in that those things the Adversary means to destroy us with, turns out to help us; aid us; and propel us to succeed in our sonship lives all the more!

- Now, if that’s not a ‘**benefit package**’ - I don’t know what is!

- And that’s what those *mercies of God* are talking about in Romans 12:1 when Paul says—*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, ...*

- So with that ‘recap’ of the 1st Check at this Sonship Checkpoint—let’s move on to the 2nd Check—and this is the ‘**core**’ of the Sonship Checkpoint—that is, this is the **big thing** that it’s here for —

Romans 12:1

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, **that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, ...***

- The word **that**—used as a purpose clause, identifies for us the fact that this is, indeed, the critical thing that is supposed to take place next—just prior to the actual instruction getting underway.

- The big thing now is that it’s now your move—and your move consists of going to your Father and presenting your body (or yourself) to Him — and at the same time acknowledge to Him these ‘checks’ in (:1) that make it so your presentation is honest, genuine, and intelligent.

- *ye* = 2per.pl. Nom. Case (whereas “you” was the 2per.pl Obj. Case) = all of you who are now Phase 1/Level I Sons—(again, this is NOT for every Christian/or every believer whose only reason for doing this is: God is just so merciful and loving and wonderful that I should just give Him my life!) [no—that’s unintelligent and doesn’t pass the checkpoint—that’s **not enough** to verify your clearance at this point!]

- ***present*** - now when you see that and hear that—since this is the core of the matter (presenting your body unto God) - what do you think of when you think about *presenting* something to someone?

- How would you define *present* here?

- In other words—why doesn’t this say ‘That ye give your bodies ...’? — what makes *present* different from ‘give’?

- (This is a classic place to talk about ‘vocabulary control’!)

- My understanding is that the word *present* is carefully carefully chosen so as to cause your thinking to be put in the position it needs to be in, in order for you to get the full meaning of what you are about to do—a sober reality check (so to speak).

- Because when you *present* either some thing (or in this case) some one (yourself, in the context in which this sets) — this isn’t just a simple ‘giving’ of yourself to your Father so He can begin to instruct you—(as if what’s being done here is what any old student does in University when he shows up for class)!

- My understanding is that this is far more than that—and the word *present* makes it far more than that—because, (unlike simply ‘giving’) - (and especially when you’re talking about some ONE instead of some THING) — to *present your body* to your Father = to put yourself into His hands for **acceptance**; to hand over your very self to your Father for Him to approve and accept and then, on the basis of that, to begin the sonship education proper.

- And critical to the word *present* is that, where *giving* can be done informally—to *present* is done **formally**—almost in the manner of a **ceremony**—sober and serious—w/intelligence!

- (This is one reason why English speaking people [even a D.J.] at a wedding [for example] - both at the end of the ceremony, and when the married couple are announced when they make their grand entrance at the reception—even the DJ will say, “Ladies and Gentlemen, I ***present*** Mr. & Mrs. John Doe!”)
- (You naturally discriminate between *give* & *present*)
- And when we’re done dealing with the detail of Romans 12:1-2—the expectation is that you will go to your Father—and in a private ceremony (so to speak) - just between you and Him—you will formerly *present* yourself for approval and acceptance (by enumerating to Him your measure of intelligence of each item in this Sonship Checkpoint) - and it should be one of the major events of your life!
 - (I don’t know if you really will mark it down and celebrate the day you did this—or remember it like an anniversary—but it has just that kind of sober **significance** to it!)
- The word *present* makes this **not ordinary** or **common** (that would be simply ‘giving’) — but *present* means that this is a term of **respect** and a **formal** giving over of yourself with a **specific view** or **anticipation** of something to now take place. (especially between the two of you: you and your Father).
- And that’s some of the discriminating features of what it means to ***present your body unto God***.

Romans 12:1

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, ...

- We’ll come back to the significance of “*your bodies*” — for now I want to begin dealing with the 2nd ‘Check’ in this Sonship Checkpoint—and this 2nd Check has 3 components to it:

- 1) ***a living sacrifice***
- 2) ***holy***
- 3) ***acceptable***

- And those 3 components are all natural things that (even though the exact terms may not have been used) - they are all things that have naturally occurred in your thinking—they're not anything new—and therefore, they are all things that you are already familiar with.

- And those 3 components span the measure of your intelligence when it comes to this formal presenting of your body to your Father for the education to get underway.

- And since this IS the core of the matter—it takes 3 'checks' or 3 distinct areas to properly measure your intelligence and to safeguard this sonship checkpoint against frauds and phonies from getting past it!

- These 3 things—more than anything else in this verse—verify the son's authenticity for clearance to move on! (Your passport credentials).

- So let's look at that first one—You're going to *present your body a living sacrifice*.

- First let's define that phrase: *a living sacrifice*—what is a *living sacrifice*? — or maybe we should start off with that issue of what is a *sacrifice* at all?

- **sacrifice** = in general and primarily it means a victim (usually an animal) slaughtered and offered or surrendered to God.

- But we know that we're not talking about animals (we are the sacrifice) - and we're not talking about being slaughtered as a sacrifice on some altar to God. [we're *living*]

- So it has to be talking about something else—and *sacrifice* has a meaning that is less common which means: the surrendering of something valued or desired for the sake of something having, or regarded as having, a higher or more pressing claim—and that's the more fitting definition of us *presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice* to our Father.

- You're presenting something of value (your body; yourself) for the sake of something having a higher or more pressing claim: your being educated by your Father as His adopted son!

- An illustration of this would be like a man who goes into the military service—he becomes a ‘living sacrifice’ - he has presented himself to his country and his Commander in Chief — and he has taken something he values (his body and his life and his freedom) and sacrifices it to his government for the higher & more pressing claim of fighting the wars of his country in order to preserve and defend its freedom.

- But now we have to take that general definition and make it a working definition that’s in line with the specific context of Romans 12:1&2.

- So the first of the 3 expressions of the measure of our intelligence in presenting our bodies unto God is that we present our body as a *living sacrifice*.

- And you should know by now that the usual way in which this is treated by the commentary writers and Bible teachers is that any old Christian, in view of how gracious and merciful God has been to love you and save you—that calls upon you to live ‘well-pleasing’ to God by sacrificing your will and your fleshly desires and determine to not live ‘worldly’ (whatever that is) but godly (whatever that is). And so we shouldn’t get tattoos; ladies should wear dresses (but not too short); men shouldn’t get their ears pierced; no card playing; no tobacco; no alcohol; no secular music; no shiny buttons; and off we go to the races of legalism! (A lot of ridiculous things get injected here).

- But keeping this in the context God put it in—it **excludes** any of that kind of thing getting injected into the picture here—and the truth is, since Paul doesn’t describe or define what a *living sacrifice* is in this context—we should recognize that this isn’t something new to us—and more than that, since it isn’t being defined here, it’s acting in a manner to hearken us **BACK** to something we already know.

- So the question is—when you think about yourself being a *living sacrifice*—what does that cause you to think about—more specifically, **where** does that expression take you **back** to in all that you’ve learned in the context of your sonship life up to this point?

- And let me just say that you have to keep something very critical in mind here—and that is that sonship **does NOT** happen in a vacuum (so to speak) - but it is the final ‘capstone’ issue in a much larger issue which is ... what? **Our sanctified position in Christ!**

- There's something about that expression: *a living sacrifice* that makes it so that, because of what we've already learned—that's not a puzzling, unclear, fuzzy term—but we know exactly and precisely what Paul means—it's definable and identifiable.

- (And this will help us expand upon those *mercies of God* and get an appreciation for some further benefits we have received—that we should be thinking about and responding to our Father about).

- Any ideas?

- My understanding is that the expression *a living sacrifice* takes your mind back—(and since sonship doesn't happen in a vacuum, but is the natural outcome of all that we are taught in what our sanctification in Christ is all about) — my understanding is that this specific phrase is talking about, and taking us back to, some specific things we have come to understand and appreciate **from Romans 6:1 — 8:13**.

- And it was in that section of Romans that we learned all about the doctrines and the aspects of our being a *living sacrifice*—even though that exact expression was never used there, **that's what we learned!**

- By being *baptized into Jesus Christ*, (fully identified with Him), we have been made *dead to sin* and *alive unto God* in righteousness.

- Look at:
(6:4 ...*walk in newness of life*)—

(6:11-13)

(6:14-16—this is the first time [outside of talking about himself in ch. 1] that Paul uses that term *servants!*) [not 'slaves']

(6:18-22)

(importance of ch. 7)

(8:1-13—esp., :9-13)

- The truth of the matter is—that all of your sanctification preceding sonship (at 8:14) is what's wrapped up in that expression of *presenting your body a living sacrifice!*

- And when you make the formal presentation of yourself to your Father at this Sonship Checkpoint—the first big benefit that He wants you to acknowledge to Him, and that you make Him aware that you understand and appreciate and submit yourself to the reality of is:

“Father, I understand and I appreciate that I’m a *living sacrifice*—I understand that I’m *dead to sin* and *alive unto You*—I understand that just as my justification was by grace through faith, that my *walking in newness of life* and not being a *servant of sin* any longer but now as a *servant of righteousness* and *yielding the members of my body unto righteousness* so that I can now produce *fruit unto holiness* is not going to be done by keeping the Law, but likewise will be by grace through faith—and I understand that I must now *walk after the Spirit* by *minding the things of the Spirit*—and when I do, He will *dwell in me* to do something (to put my functional life into practice under grace) - and the Spirit will therefore *quicken my mortal body* and produce functional life so I can be fit for your use.”

- And the only way to put my sanctified, functional life (and all that you, Father, have made me to be “in Christ”) into practice is under the status of being your adopted son—and my sonship status will take everything that Romans 6:1-8:13 has given me and made the living reality to me; and in my sonship life (with that measure of understanding of Romans 6:1-8:13) I can, Father, acknowledge to You that I am a *living sacrifice*. (Able to think/live/labor with You!)

“And I now *present my body* to you as such—as that *living sacrifice*—and I don’t want to be anything BUT that—I want to live and operate in the capacity You’ve created me for!”

- And therefore, what’s in your mind at the point of intelligently understanding of what it means to *present your body a living sacrifice* is all the information of your sanctification from it’s beginning up to the issue of the ‘capstone’ of sanctification: the adoption of sons.

- By the way—this is exactly why Romans 6:1-8:13 is so critical to have under your belt **before** you ever begin in sonship edification!

- It’s not only my idea—but even at the point of Romans 12:1, your **Father expects** that information to be effectually working in your inner man *before* sonship is begun—and so that you can properly, genuinely, and intelligently pass this Sonship Checkpoint!

- Therefore, sonship (and the education we receive as sons) again, does NOT happen in a vacuum—but rather, it goes hand-in-hand (or in sense & sequence) with all that we've learned in Romans 6:1-8:13—and sonship is the **key** or the means or the vehicle (if you will) to putting all that information into practice!

- And that's why you're to be able to clearly and easily see that the issue of being a *living sacrifice* that first entered your thinking in Romans 6:1-8:13—and why it's the first item that you are expected to indentify & verify as living, operating, and effectually working in your inner man—and why **that** is the first item of the measure of intelligence your Father wants you to demonstrate to Him that you've got!

- You have to have the ability to replace the sinful, carnal thinking—the sinful conduct & behavior—and the sinful energy of your flesh; for a godly thought process—a godly conduct and lifestyle—and a godly energy production & labor to accomplish not only **what** your Father wants accomplished, but to accomplish the **way** He wants it done (just like He would do Himself)!

- So at this Sonship Checkpoint of Romans 12:1-2—our Father is going to receive from us the measure of intelligence we now have that will allow for us to **pass** the checkpoint—and the first measure of intelligence He wants to hear from us is that we understand and appreciate that we are presenting our bodies to Him as a *living sacrifice*—and that distinctive phrase brings to our thinking all that we have come to not only understand and appreciate, but that we now have effectually working and operational in the details of our lives—from the beginning of all that God has made you to be in your sanctified position “in Christ” — and it comes right out of **Romans 6:1—8:13**.

- And that causes you to WANT to be that *living sacrifice* from now on—and you don't want to oppose that; you don't want to challenge that or fight that—but in view of what the curriculum for sonship education can do: you **desire** to be that—you don't want your own way any more—you don't want to continue to serve sin—you want to get grace *abounding* in your functional life—and you want to be useful to your Father—(*dead to sin, and alive unto God*).

- Now that brings us past the first 'check' to the 2nd 'check' of the core element of this Sonship Checkpoint: **holy** — we're going to present our bodies unto our Father as *holy*—and in this context we know that we're not dealing with the term *holy* in just any old way, but in a specific way.

- *holy*—What is the basic definition or concept of *holy*?

= something or someone specifically set apart and dedicated for God’s use and purpose—to be set apart for a specific service—something no longer considered to be common or ordinary—when talking about a person = someone who has been set aside **in a special manner** for God’s designed purpose. (Similar to the issue of someone who is *sanctified* in God’s sight.)

- We talked a lot about the issue of *holy* or *holiness* and what it is in God’s sight (what it means to Him) back in Romans 6—in the introduction to our sanctified position in Christ, as well as at the end of ch. 6 when we dealt with putting our sanctified position in Christ into practice to produce *fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life* [:22].

- And by running a bunch of passages sitting back in God’s program w/ Israel (the OT), as well as some passages in the book of the Revelation—we saw that when you’re dealing with the radical root meaning of *holy*, and what it means to God Himself—*holy* to God is **that which has complete and total acceptance with Him, and that which brings delight and pleasure to Him.** (see Rev. 4:8-11 [:11])

- And the “kicker” of Romans 6:22 (*But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.*) — the ‘kicker’ is that the *fruit unto holiness* that you produce is not only acceptable and delightful and brings pleasure to your Father—but with the additional issue of *everlasting life*, that *fruit unto holiness* that you produce is something your Father **wants** around Him and He wants it around Him **forever**—your Heavenly Father will never forget that fruit you produced—and it makes Him happy, joyful, pleased, and delighted **for ever and ever!**

- Now that’s a good definition of what *holy* is to God—but that’s all sitting back in Romans 6—and the first ‘check’ we dealt with (i.e., *a living sacrifice*) has already taken all that information into account and we’ve already given our Father the measure of our intelligence in connection with all of that information—so now we have to recognize that presenting our bodies to our Father as *holy* goes beyond that information—and so we need to have a **working definition** of *holy* not only beyond Romans 6:1-8:13—but we have to have a meaning to it that pertains to **sonship** as we encounter it **beyond** Rom. 8:13.

- And what I'm after here isn't so much the idea of *holy* or the definition of it (as being set apart & dedicated for God's use and purpose) — but I'm after the issue of **you** presenting yourself to your Father as *holy*—and specifically, I'm after that **special manner** in which you've been set apart for God's useful purpose.

- And my understanding is that there is a **specific place** that you can put your finger on and say—Right here is where I encountered that **special manner** in which my Father has designed for me to not merely **be** *holy* in His sight, but there is something (a **special, specific manner**) in which I'm going to produce that *fruit unto holiness* in His sight and a **special manner** in which my functional, sanctified life is going to be put into practice from now on.

- And if you think about it—the issue of presenting yourself to your Father at this Sonship Checkpoint as *holy*—has a better working definition of: **being set apart or separated unto the purpose for which God ever designed and created you in the first place!**

- And so what should be in your thinking as you look at that word *holy* (and think about the measure of intelligence you now have that you're presenting yourself to God as one who is **separated unto the purpose for which He ever designed & created you for in the first place**) — that is, the special manner or the vehicle in which your sanctified position in Christ is to be put into practice from now on—going on with the sense & sequence of all you've learned in your godly sanctification—what did you learn immediately following the information that your measure of intelligence told you was the issue of presenting yourself to God as a *living sacrifice*?

- Simply put—what did you learn **immediately after** all the information in Romans 6:1-8:13 was covered?

- What is the design & purpose or the specialized manner you were told about that would become the means for which you are going to produce *fruit unto holiness* to God?

- Is it the Law? - No—because you're going to now *walk after the Spirit* under grace and not *after the flesh* under the law.

- So what is it?

- **You're going to put your sanctified position into practice as God's son—God's adopted son—SONSHIP!**

- And this is why *holy* is so **excellent** in being that kind of ‘trigger’ mechanism that, by its definition, and by the way the concept of it has been generated in our thinking up to this point—it takes the overall definition of the word and now points to the **one big issue** that has come out of it and that now looms so large in our thinking at this Sonship Checkpoint.

- Because when it comes to the issue of presenting ourselves as *holy* unto God—we’re no longer thinking about that term in regard to its broad definition—but we’re thinking about it in terms of the specific and precise issue of the **MANNER** in which we’ve been ‘set apart.’

- Therefore presenting your body *holy* unto God isn’t a broad or general thing—it’s a very **specific** thing—it’s *holy* in terms of the specific, mechanical means or vehicle—and with a view to the very **design and purpose** for which we’ve been ‘set apart.’

- And with that kind of precision to the term *holy* (that comes out of the context in which it sets) — the question is: Where, exactly, were you informed of the **design and purpose** for which you were ever created and the means or manner in which you’re going to put your sanctified position in Christ into practice?

- ANSWER: **Romans 8:14-15**

- At the point of **sonship orientation** (in Rom. 8:14-15) - you encountered your first **volitional testing point** as a son.

- And what was that volitional testing point?

- (Are you going to be a *fool* in your Father’s eyes— or are you going to be a properly educated son?)

- (Are you going *know wisdom and instruction*?)

- And your volitional testing point response was: **“Abba, Father!”**

- And at this point—at the Sonship Checkpoint of Romans 12:1-2)— your Father needs to receive the measure of your intelligent understanding and appreciation for your Sonship Orientation—you’re not merely presenting yourself *holy* ‘by definition’ (so to speak) - but you’re perceiving & remembering that your adoption as a son wasn’t

merely an event—but that it’s the status in which you’re going to live out the entirety of your Christian life from now on—(and that’s the kind of specific-ness that the term *holy* is after in Rom. 12:1).

- So you recall and go back over those things you learned in Sonship Orientation.

- In order to give you some help in being able to measure your intelligence in this matter—let’s just focus upon your positive & proper response to your sonship orientation there in Romans 8:14-15—the outcome of that volitional testing point was that you cried, *Abba, Father*.

- And in doing so—you recognize that crying *Abba, Father* amounts to **MORE** than just expressing great relief, gratitude, and joy over being in the position of adulthood sonship! (see #39)

- But it involves an appreciation for at least 3 general components

- (see additional notes from Rom.8 pg. 655-657 & pg. 671)

- You tell your Father of your intelligent understanding that you don’t desire to just be a son by adoption only (or as an event only)—but that, more than anything else, you desire to be a *functioning* son that perfectly fits Paul’s one-verse definition of what a son is—(see #40 “Led by the Spirit”).

- And you can articulate to your Father what this education as His son consists of—and you can define it and describe it to Him—(see #42 “Sonship Edification/Education”).

- So therefore the next aspect or verification our Father expects us to give to Him as we present our bodies to Him in order to get the next Phase of our Sonship Education underway is that once we have give Him a proper verification of what it means to be a *living sacrifice*—the next thing He’s looking for is our measure of intelligent understanding of what it means **in this context** to present ourselves to Him as *holy*.

- That is, I’ve been ‘set apart’ - but not in the sense of understanding sanctification in general—but far more specifically, when my ...

... volition was tested as to whether or not I was going to pursue what You, Father created me to be in the first place—both as a man, and as a justified man: Your adopted son — I chose YES! I want this—
“Abba, Father!” (I want what You want!)

- So now at this Sonship Checkpoint of Romans 12:1-2—your intelligent understanding of presenting your body to your Father in order to get the instruction of sonship education underway should consist of 2 major issues, with only 1 issue left to verify.

- And it's important to keep in mind that this is a checkpoint—**you** are now going to make the next move and go to your Father and present yourself to Him for the education to begin—but not just any believer/Christian can do this—because there are certain ‘checking’ mechanisms built into this checkpoint whereby **you cannot present fake or false credentials and just breeze by!**

- And there are 3 major security measures built into this checkpoint that must be properly and intelligently given by you as a son—and received by the Father—and He will then agree with you that your credentials are authentic—and only then will He pass you through the checkpoint.

- And we have already encountered 2 of the 3 ‘checks’ or ‘safety measures’ at this checkpoint that have to be verified:

1) By the *“mercies of God”* you present your body to your Father as a **living sacrifice**—and that demands that you have an intelligent understanding of, and the effectual working of all of the information contained in Romans 6:1-8:13—and it was in that body of information that you first came to the realization that you are going to surrender something you value (your body, the members of your body) for the sake of something having a higher or more pressing claim—which is now understood as your sonship education/edification.

2) You present yourself to your Father at this checkpoint as **holy**—and that word acts as a ‘trigger’ mechanism to recall to your mind the first time your volition was tested in the doctrine of sanctification—and your thinking isn't just to recall the general issue of being set apart for God's useful purpose, but the **special manner** in which you have been set apart and the very purpose for which God ever designed and

created you in the first place—and you encountered that *holy* design and purpose in Romans 8:14-15—and your **adoption as God's son** is the **status** or the means by which you will put your sanctified position “in Christ” into practice and by which you will functionally live unto God—and at this volitional testing point, your proper & positive response was: *Abba, Father!*

- So now we come to the 3rd ‘check’ or security measure that has to be passed and verified— by you giving to your Father your measure of intelligence for what it means to present yourself to Him as: **acceptable**.

Romans 12:1

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, **acceptable unto God**, which is your reasonable service.*

- (By the way—before we even look at this issue—I think it's rather amazing that of the 3 verification measures [*living sacrifice, holy, acceptable*] - the average person would look at those terms and think that the most daunting or toughest one to have to **personally** face— [that is, ranking the 3 issues that way] - the average persons would say, *A living sacrifice* is the most daunting one; then *holy*; and then *acceptable* — but the truth is, **it's just the opposite!** *acceptable* is actually the most daunting and difficult one of them all for you to deal with and to properly pass!)

- These 3 expressions actually go from the easiest or most mild—to the most daunting or most severe!

- ***acceptable***—What does that word mean? = you have the ‘able’ English suffix—which means, *may or can be* + the word *accept* = something that may or can be accepted—but more than that *acceptable* simply means that **something can be gladly received or received with pleasure**.

- Now with that simple definition of *acceptable* being “something that can be received with pleasure” - let's now put that simple definition in the context in which God uses it in Rom. 12:1 and come up with a working definition that fits the context.

- So in view of the sonship checkpoint where you now come to your Father and present yourself to Him in order to get the sonship

education underway—and in view of the “*mercies of God*” you present yourself to God for Him to verify your credentials—that you genuinely possess the proper measure of intelligence to pass the checkpoint—and you’ve presented valid credentials that you are a *living sacrifice* (you want to get grace abounding and by *reckoning* yourself to be what He has made you to be “in Christ” - you’re *dead to sin and alive unto* God and you want to now produce *fruit unto holiness* under grace by *walking after the Spirit* and not under the law — and *holy* (the special manner in which that all is going to take place is by functioning as God’s adopted son whereby the *leading of the Spirit* takes place—and this will, from now on be a real Father-to-son relationship; I have responsibilities in connection with my sonship status; and it holds out for me the opportunity to have my Father’s heart imparted to my heart so that I can think, live, and labor with Him in all His business—and that’s the greatest thing I’ve ever been created and designed for, and I want that) — and that now takes you to that last big issue that your Father told you about, which, at the end of it all, presented you with another one of those times in which **your volition was tested**.

- And this final issue of presenting yourself *acceptable unto God* is in the context of that **2nd major volitional testing point** you encountered in your sonship life.

- And now you’re being held accountable at this checkpoint to let your Father know that the information that the word *acceptable* is driving at—that all that information has ‘stuck’ (it has effectually worked) and you can now honestly acknowledge to your Father the reality of that—and the question is where, exactly, did that take place?

- And the answer is: Your Father needs to know that you understand and appreciate that both **He** and the **curriculum** you are going to go through with Him—can do all that He said it can do in **Romans 8:16-39!**

- You are *persuaded* that this curriculum has unlimited capacities and unlimited abilities to provide for everything you will ever encounter to *work together for good*—to accelerate and advance your sonship life—to better enable you to think/live/labor with God—to deal with every enemy you’ll ever face and turn the tables on what would come your way that would attempt to thwart your success—but instead, those things will only better train you and better qualify you to function in your Father’s business (and be *more than a conqueror*)!

- In other words—presenting yourself as *acceptable unto God* does **NOT** mean that we are *acceptable* because we're saved/justified! — (if that's what you're doing here, God **won't** accept you!) — nor does it mean that we are *acceptable* because we want to 'surrender our selves to Jesus' and be His disciples—or any other kind of goofy 'dedication' ideas foisted upon believers by Bible teachers who mishandle God's word and teach this passage topically, categorically, or devotionally!) — again, if that's what you're doing: God does NOT accept you—you've failed the checkpoint and whether you realize it or not, all you've done is a big bunch of NOTHING! that means NOTHING to anyone but you, your feelings, and to an arrogant preacher who counts heads at an 'altar call!'

- And I say that because there is a shade of meaning to the word *acceptable* that has to do with the issue that—it is an **insult** to offer any thing by way of a sacrifice to God which is **not acceptable!**

- In fact, God cannot accept you as ready to move on, unless those first 2 things are honestly, genuinely, and intelligently passed, **and only then** does this 3rd one comes into play.

- And that is that you, presenting yourself to God as *acceptable*, checks out the genuineness of your credentials—that you understand and appreciate that your Father has so wisely and ingeniously composed the curriculum of Romans—II Thess. so that any and every thing that happens to you in your life (suffering-wise, enemy-wise, Satan's policy of evil-wise,), that when you do face any and all of those things, the curriculum will have the capacity and the ability to handle it all—and to successfully deal with it to the tune of being *more than a conqueror* **IN** all those things! (i.e., not being removed from any of those things!)

- Therefore the only way God is going to accept you as ready to move on to Phase 2 of Level I is that you present yourself to Him *acceptable* in His sight—by the genuine recognition that you are fully ***persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate you from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus your Lord.***

- The effectual working of Romans 8:16-39 makes you *acceptable* to God in the context of Romans 12:1!

- Now while that's all true—let's make sure that we **add** to that measure of our understanding that we got at the end of Rom. 8:39—since the issue for us as sons in our sonship establishment is to “*perceive the words of understanding*” - let's also recognize that for us to be fully accepted by God here - we should also recognize that we are also being held accountable for the information in Romans 9, 10, and 11 — and that we have come to understand and appreciate God's word ‘rightly divided’ - that God has suspended His program with Israel—that His program with Israel was entirely different and distinct from His program with us Gentiles in this dispensation of Gentile grace—and therefore we are not to attempt to find our sonship curriculum in the scriptures God wrote to, for, and about Israel—but only in the letters of the apostle Paul which were written to, for, and about us!

- So therefore, the final verification of our credentials of presenting our bodies unto God as *acceptable* takes into account the measure of our intelligent understanding of (and the effectual working of) Romans 8:16-39 PLUS all of Romans chapters 9, 10, and 11.

- Maybe now you can see why I said so many times that this checkpoint is so designed that it is impossible for it to be **faked!** (It has safety measures built into it to see that that does not happen!)

- So we have: *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, ...*

- Now we have that last phrase: ***which is your reasonable service.***

- And in view of the *mercies of God*—and in view of the body of information that has now become effectually working in your inner man (from Romans 6:1-11:36) - Paul says to you that this is *reasonable*—it's *your reasonable service*—it's the only *reasonable* thing for you to do at this point.

- And this phrase is horribly mutilated by the modern English translations: (NIV) ‘this is your spiritual act of worship’ (NASV) ‘which is your spiritual service of worship’ (NLT) ‘is this too much to ask?’ — etc.

- *reasonable* = λογικός = pertaining to reason, logic.

- But there is a reason why the KJ Translators didn't say, 'which is your logical service' - but they said it's your *reasonable service*.

- One of the reasons why *reasonable* is the most excellent word here is because you're supposed to view all that your Father has taken you through and said to you and taught you in that big body of information of Romans 8:14-11:36—you are supposed to stop at this checkpoint, and because of the terminology that you are given (that checks out your valid credentials for moving on) - you're supposed to think through and reason through all that information and reason through all the attitudes your Father adjusted/developed, as well as the kind of commitment, desire, and enthusiasm that got developed in you—by way of reasoning through all that at this checkpoint, it allows for you to tell your Father that all that 'stuck' with you and all that has done its effectual job—and He needs to hear that from you.

- And by reasoning through it, you're telling Him that you agree with Him that its all there—and you want all that He wants for you!

- And one important point about the excellency of that word *reasonable*—THAT'S ADULT THINKING! (There's sound judgment and sound evaluation going on!)

- And as you reason through the information as you talk to your Father and request to move on—your *reasonable service* is to articulate to your Father that all that He has done with you up to this point has been accomplished and now you're intelligently ready to move on.

- *Reasonable* is an intelligent appreciation of where you're at and what your Father needs to evaluate your readiness and accept your presentation of yourself—He wants you to intelligently demonstrate that you are on the 'same page' as Him—and therefore you're ready for Phase 2 of Level I to begin.

- *Reasonable* is NOT being used in the sense that, "Son, I'm not asking you to do anything that is unreasonable" — but it's being used in the sense that: You, as an adult, look at what you've learned, and in view of that, you, presenting your body as a *living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God* is the only sound, rational, *reasonable* thing for you to do now—and when apply your mind to it, you'll see that it is the *reasonable* and necessary thing and needful thing to do.

- And that is to present yourself to your Father in such a way that He sees that everything that needs to be in place in your inner man **is** in place so that He can accept you into the education—and that your education can advance on to the next Phase of Level I.

- So Romans 12 and verse 1 should now be clear and understandable to you:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

- And even that word *service* strongly points to **YOU making the next move**—you have a *service* to perform here at this checkpoint—and that is to make an adult sonship decision to move on with the education—and to present your credentials for your Father to verify and evaluate as being honest, genuine, and intelligent—and He agrees with you that all of the demands of this checkpoint have been met—you can pass it and move on.

- And before moving on to (:2) - I just want to pause here for a moment and take you back to something that was said to you earlier—that should have made it so that this checkpoint wasn't a surprise to you—nor was it something you should have dreaded or anything along those lines—but actually something was said to you that should have made it so (far from a quiz or test in High School or University), you should WANT to stand at this checkpoint and be checked out just this way. (You should desire this!)

- And I think it's appropriate to bring this up at this point because it all the more underscores the fact that what you're facing in Romans 12:1-2 is, indeed, a checkpoint. (The truth is, you're **obligated** to meet and pass this checkpoint!) — it's what makes this *service* you are to reasonably perform your 'duty' (so to speak).

- The 'servant' issue has already come up and been dealt with in ch.6—

- But what I'm after is the last 2 verses of Romans chapter 8, just prior to being informed about our sonship status—(Romans 8:12 & 13)

- (see pg. 157-162 of Romans 8—Vol. 1)

- So now we stand at this Sonship Checkpoint—with the 1st of 3 major components being now dealt with—and the truth of the matter is, at the end of the 1st major component (all of verse 1), the ‘hard part’ (so to speak) is over—where you have to present your body to your Father and verify your credentials to Him under those 3 ‘safety checks’ that gives your Father the proper measure of intelligence you must have to pass the checkpoint — and once that has all been honestly and genuinely assessed, you see that there is something more to this checkpoint than just verifying what you have already come to understand and appreciate—but now 2 more components stand between you and the beginning of your education—2 components that are going to have you confirm to your Father (not what you **have** come to know), but what you anticipate, what you have come to realize, and what you are now going to acknowledge to your Father as to what your life as His son is going to be **from this moment forward—from now on!**

- And what you’re going to do is—once you have presented your body to your Father just as (:1) *beseeches* you to do (passing all 3 ‘safety checks’) — then you are going to look to your **future** with your Father—and you’re going to tell Him (or better, you’re going to agree with Him) that life as you once new it (and I’m not just talking about your life before you believed in Christ as your Savior—but life as a non-educated, non-edified, functionally dead Christian) is now OVER—and all that **thinking** you have always had is now OVER!

- In a sense—you’re leaving your old home—and leaving it permanently! — and you’re moving into a new home from now on! (That’s how dramatic this is going to be!)

- So now—looking *ahead* to your education and your life as your Father’s son—you’re going to acknowledge to Him (first, by way of the first 7 words of :2; and then by way of the remainder of :2) that from this point on (and with that education continually taking place), that your life will bear the marks of 2 major things, **alway**:

- One is a negative; and one is a positive!

Romans 12:2

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

- And the negative issue that your life will bear from now on is:
“And be not conformed to this world:”

- Romans 12:2 is comprised of 2 major thoughts—(broken up by that colon at the end of the word *world*—where we are to pause and make sure that we understand and appreciate what is said in the first thought before moving on to the last thought).

- And the first part of (:2) sets forth a general, broad statement of what our lives are **NOT** going to be like from now on—while the 2nd part sets forth a general statement of what our lives **WILL** be like from now on.

- So once you've accomplished all that (:1) has *beseeked* you to do as *your reasonable service*—let's look at that first general statement of (:2) — ***And be not conformed to this world:*** (just 7 words)!

- From now on—your life is going to consist of *NOT being conformed to this world*—and even though this gets stated in just 7 words—it is a **massive** issue that will take everything you've come to understand and appreciate in Romans 6:1—11:36 to go into practice in order to accomplish what is stated so simply here!

- Especially all that you've come to understand and appreciate about being *dead to sin/alive unto God; walking after the Spirit; being led by the Spirit; the status of sonship; — that is, all that godly edification which is in faith* is all about—**NOT denying the power thereof** as most of Christianity does today!

- And as you are educated and edified as God's son—that curriculum will take the mechanics of what you've already been told—and will build your sonship life upon that solid, sound foundation—and one of the general characteristics of that functional sonship life is that you will *be not conformed to this world.*

- The first word (***And***) - tells you that the checkpoint is not yet over—there's more to this sonship checkpoint that's necessary and needful for you to confirm to your Father than what (:1) has you to do—and first, it's for you to acknowledge to your Father, “This is what I know has to take place—and this is what I WANT to take place—I'm fully committed to it!” (i.e., *to be not conformed to this world!*)

- And really, because of the kind of sonship thinking that has already begun to take place—this shouldn't surprise you!

- In fact, if everything has done it's effectual job—and if your sonship commitment is what it should be—(:2) should be your honored and noble duty! — YOU SHOULD NOW **DESIRE THIS TO TAKE PLACE IN YOUR LIFE!**

- Truth is—you should not want to be conformed to this world any more—and part of this checkpoint is for you to let your Father know that this is your desire and you're now ready **for this very thing** to get underway.

... but this could be a **snag** for some of you.... it depends upon what has gone on up to this point, if that really has done its job—and if it hasn't **this first issue should find you out!**

- *And be not conformed*—(note that the “*be not*” is not a prohibition as some higher ranking official would give to a subordinate—Paul is still *beseeking* us—he's not pulling rank—but as a fully educated adult son to a fully established adult son, Paul is setting before us what our commitment to our sonship life is, on the one hand, going to consist of).

- *conformed* — what does that word mean? what does it mean to *conform*?

= The English prefix *con*, meaning “together with” + *form* (in the sense of a mold, a die, a shape or pattern) and by pressure one is pressed or cast into the shape or form of another) —hence, to form yourself together with something else.

- And when you're *conformed* in this sense—it's talking about a pressing into a mold—or better, to reduce to a like shape or form with something else—or even better, **to reduce to a likeness in corresponding manners, opinions, and moral qualities.** Webster 1828

- And in this sense—when you're talking about being *conformed to this world*—that's what's going on—you are being molded or reduced (by pressure) to a likeness (because of the way you think) in corresponding manners, opinions, and moral qualities that is of *this world!* — this **ungodly** world! (ungodliness)

- And folks—as I've tried to say before—as we all sit here today—we all grossly underestimate *this world* and the power of it to hold sway in our thinking and in our lives!

- Now before going on any more with that issue of *not being conformed*—let’s look at the thing or the entity that has long been pressing us and reducing us into its likeness and its corresponding manners, opinions, and moral qualities—

- ***this world***

- First of all—remember that what you’re being *beseeked* to acknowledge to your Father is NOT stated in any way in **detail!**

- Rather it’s a short, general, broad statement.

- Why? Because all you know about it at this point is only short, broad and general—and you’re not supposed to be able to go into it in much more than that.

- Now that’s not to say that we have no clue as to what this is — because the truth of the matter is, we once again have some terminology set before us that doesn’t get defined—and that means that we should have sufficient knowledge of it so that we know what Paul is saying when he says, *this world*.

- Wherefore, if my understanding is correct—(coming from my background of systematic theology and categorical doctrinal study), when you see that word *world*—the tendency is to launch into a ‘stem-to-stern’ study on the cosmic world system of Satan—or other such thing—and attempt to nail down every detail and every verse in the Bible that talks about that thing.

- But to do so would **destroy** what’s going on here! (Not to mention destroy *godly edifying which is in faith*)!

- So we see the word *world* sitting there—but we’re not going to get the ‘vapors’ over it and try to come up with everything God ever says about it! (In fact, the word *world* here isn’t κόσμος, but it’s αἰών—if that matters!)

- For now—I want you to listen to the way this is said—and see if it doesn’t point you to a word that is often overlooked in this passage: *And be not conformed to **this** world:*

- ***this world***—again, this is supposed to be broad and general here.

- But notice what it DOESN'T say:
“And be not conformed to the world:”

it says, *And be not conformed to this world:*

- And really, you can't read it that way and not be forced to (however so slightly) be forced to slow down your reading (or your thinking) and almost say, ... *this ... world:* - as if you are almost forced by the terminology to emphasize the word *this*—or emphasize both *this ... world*. (The two consonants “s” at the end of *this* and the “w” at the beginning of the word *world* forces the slow-down.)
- And I know this is splitting hairs—but there is an important reason why it doesn't say “the world” but “*this world*” - and it has to do with the way the English word *this* works in a passage such as this.
 - *this* = as we often know, *this* is commonly used to indicate a kind or degree of something—and in (:2), it indicates the kind of thing we're not to be conformed to (*this world*).
 - And unlike ‘the world’ *this world* indicates the degree or nearness of our relation to it as being close and personal rather than being distant and impersonal (as “the” might indicate).

- But there is something in the English language known as the EMOTIONAL USE OF ‘THAT’ AND ‘THIS’ - and in cases where *this* is used unaccompanied by a gesture and marked by a peculiar **tone**—it can express praise or rebuke; pleasure or displeasure!

- And my understanding is that even the word *this* in connection with *this world* gives us the **tone** of rebuke or displeasure associated with those (Christians/believers) who **are** conformed to *this world* and remain that way to their grave! (That's the *fool*!)
- Even if you can't say hardly anything at all about what *this world* is—you come away from this statement with a definite idea that your Father is greatly **displeased** with *this world* (to say the least) - and doesn't want you to be anything resembling it as His son!

- Now let's take a look at this word "**world**" —

- What is Paul talking about when he says, *this world*—???

- How do you know that's what he's talking about here?

- Now while it is tempting to describe the *world* beyond what we have been given to understand and appreciate up to this point—and to superimpose a whole bunch of things we know (even things that might be right and Biblical) - let's remember that we are dealing with general and broad terms here.

- And the word *world* is a very general term—for instance we use the word *world* to talk about a whole bunch of different realms—such as “Pete Rose really hit a ‘daisy-cutter’ out to Roberto Clemente in right field!” — and in the WORLD of baseball, a ‘daisy-cutter’ is a hard hit grounder that doesn't bounce—it cuts right through the grass.

- And we talk about the world of sports; the world of music; the world of technology; the world of science; the world of medicine; the world of cooking; etc.

- But when talking about *this world* in the sense that Paul uses it in Romans 12:2—what is the *world* that he's referring to?

- My understanding is that—when you're only talking about the basic, general idea of *this world*—it's talking about **the general earthly state of human existence; this present life in which we live**.

- And even though that may not be a jazzy as you'd like it to be—the truth of the matter is—even in that general, basic description—there is a great deal we can know about what it means to us at this point to *not be conformed to this world*.

- In fact, as I pointed out a short while ago—the word *world* doesn't get defined for us here—and my understanding is that you have had sufficient enough adjustments in your thinking throughout sonship orientation/establishment so that **sonship thinking** has begun to take root—and that's why I would often ask you if you now think differently about things than you did prior to Rom. 8:14-39—do you think differently about things **as a son** (not just as one who can ‘rightly divide the word of truth’)? Have changes taken place in your heart where you view things different that you did before?

- Truth is—you should see some things about *this world* already, that you have come to realize is NOT how a son thinks or how a son acts!

- And if my understanding is correct—the power of *this world* (I know we can talk about it as “the course of this world” that Satan charted—but that’s getting a little ahead of ourselves) but the power of *this world* is far underestimated as to how deeply it has affected us (and, indeed, a great deal of sonship education is going to address that very issue) — but we should realize that *this world* is ungodly— rather than being conformed to the image of God [godliness], *this world* is conformed to the image of Satan [satanliness].

- It produces thinking, living, and laboring with the Adversary! — and the “kicker” is—it has the capacity to do that very thing **WITHOUT YOU EVER NOTICING OR REALIZING THAT IT’S BEING DONE TO YOU!!!**

(GO S-L-O-W-L-Y-!)

- Now that may seem all fine and dandy—but when you realize that *this world* has made **deep ‘inroads’** into your thinking—unless you have a solid, effectual working of Romans 6:1-11:36, you’re going to flare up or get emotional or fly off the handle when God, in His word tells you something that runs counter to the *course of this world*—and more than that, when God’s word tells you something counter to what *this world* taught you (**and the only way you’d ever know it was counter to what *this world* taught you is that God says it is in His word and only in His word!!!**)

- In other words—is there something your Father teaches you in His word—something that is counter to what *this world* says and does and teaches—that if you encountered it, would be your ‘third rail’ - would ‘hit a nerve’???

- What about the issue of evolution vs. creation?
(What about that GAP theory?)

- Here’s one: What is the biggest, single, solid object God ever created?

- *Firmament*—has waves that allow for rapid communication to take place where a message can be sent from the earth to the farthest edge of the universe in 100 quadrillionth of a sec.!

- And most often this isn't the issue of Christians vs. *this world*—but more often than not, it's the issue that most Christians and Christian functions and so-called “The Christian Thing To Do” is actually *conformed to this world* as well!

- *And be not conformed to this world*—the truth is, even at this early point in your sonship life, you should be able to perceive a **difference** between your status as a fully established son—and the general earthly state of human existence (*this world*).

- A **separation** has already begun to take place!

- And it comes out of the kind of (and the level of) sonship thinking that has begun to take place in your inner man.

- And again—you should be able to perceive that sonship thinking runs counter to the thinking of *this world*—but more than that, because of the deep inroads that the thinking of *this world* has made and the sway it holds in most of Christianity, (due to the failure of most Christians to be properly edified unto godliness which is in faith—[edified as sons] - [edified according to what **God says** vs. what **men say**]) — you also perceive that *not being conformed to this world* is not just a ‘one shot deal’ (so to speak), but is going to be an **ongoing process** which will be one of the hallmark signs that your life will bear from now on.

- Therefore, one of the places that your sonship education is going to go—and will continue on as you go on to be educated by your Father — is: *And be not conformed to this world*: — that's the negative aspect that your life will bear from here on out.

- And once that has been sufficiently appreciated—and once you have gone to your Father in sonship prayer and acknowledged to Him that you agree with Him that your life as His son will be an ongoing process of *not being conformed to this world* (which demands a measure of intelligence of knowing what *this world* is and how it is opposed to sonship thinking and sonship living and sonship laboring — and then you can now move on to the **final** major component to the Sonship Checkpoint — and with a proper measure of intelligence, acknowledge to your Father that from this point on, (with the sonship education continually taking place), this is the **positive** aspect of it ...

Romans 12:2

*And be not conformed to this world: **but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.***

- This now turns our attention to the **positive aspect** that will become the ‘hallmark sign’ of our sonship lives from this point on—our lives will bear the mark of constantly being *transformed by the renewing of our minds!*

- Now by paying attention to our English Grammar, we can get some help on how to properly handle this final, major component to the Sonship Checkpoint.

- First, we know that we are supposed to pause at the colon after the word “*world*” - (and we have done that) —

- Then the first thing that gets our attention is the first word of the next clause—the word “**but**” - which is a very powerful and strong adversative conjunction—which indicates a **strong contrast** is being made—so much so that this 2nd clause stands in direct contrast or directly opposite of that 1st clause.

- And this sets up a ‘two-sided’ coin (so to speak) - or as we have already pointed out, a negative issue (**be not**) now set in contrast to a positive issue (**but be ye**).

- So while, on the one hand, your ongoing sonship education will provide for you to *be not conformed to this world* — on the other hand, it will provide for you to *be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*

- And that ‘two-sided’ operation as stated here in Rom. 12:2 encapsulates what sonship edification is all going to be about!

- Now the English Grammar helps us out some more here in the remainder of (:2) - because we have this 2nd clause of the sentence (which is the 3rd Major Component of the Checkpoint) given an additional feature that the 1st clause of (:2) doesn’t have.

- And again—it helps to use that little exercise we often go through: Notice what Paul DOESN'T say: (He doesn't say, And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.) [period]

- And what I'm after here is that—unlike the 1st clause of (:2), here in the 2nd clause, there is an additional phrase—beginning with the word **that**—which indicates that there is a **purpose clause** attached to the end of the phrase: *but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind...*

- And the purpose clause says: ***that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.***

- That means that our Father expects us, at this checkpoint, to be able to intelligently acknowledge to Him that not only are we to understand and appreciate that, in general, our sonship life will ever consist of *being transformed by the renewing of our mind*—but we are to also acknowledge **WHY** that takes place—for what **purpose** that all is designed for: which is for us to be able to *prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God*—which we can do because of our sonship education by Him!

- So the final Major Component of the Sonship Checkpoint has us acknowledging to our Father that our for the remainder of our life as His son/daughter is going to consist of having our lives *transformed by the renewing of our mind*—for the purpose of us being able to *prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

- So let's begin looking at the details of the 3rd Major Component to this Sonship Checkpoint:

- **but** (in contrast to *not being conformed to this world*) **be ye** (2pp, Nom. = all of you [not just as believers], but as sons in the context) **transformed**—what does it mean to be *transformed*?

- μεταμορφώω = to change into another form. We get our English word 'metamorphosis' from it - but the KJ translators (while having that word available in 1611) didn't use it—why? — because metamorphosis carried the idea of being changed in form or shape by magic or witchcraft!

- **transform** = to change the shape or form of something—it also carries the shade of meaning of a change into another form that is **permanent** resulting from internal laws of growth, which means that it follows the natural order of things (which is what the adoption of sons does)—and in nearly every definition of the word, the illustration is used of a caterpillar transforming into a butterfly.

- Therefore when you use the word *transform*, you're talking about a **DRASTIC CHANGE** taking place!

- Now be careful—again, we're dealing with general issues; and more than that we're dealing with a sonship checkpoint. And what I mean by that is—we're NOT dealing with information that is designed to teach us or instruct us in some doctrinal issue here—there's no new doctrine being introduced here—and that means that you're not supposed to deal with these terms as a “doctrine” in and of themselves! And that means that the words like *transformed* or *renewing of your mind* or even the *will of God* are NOT supposed to be dealt with as a category of doctrine! That will get you nowhere, in fact, that will only serve to destroy what's going on here!

- The idea here is that you intelligently acknowledge to your Father that your desire, your ambition, aim, goal, objective in the education that lays before you is for you to be **transformed**—

- You no longer desire to be pressed or reduced into a likeness of manners, opinions, and qualities of this present earthly state of human affairs—you don't want to be *conformed to this world* —

- But rather, your desire is to be **drastically changed** (*transformed*) — and maybe the proper question at this point isn't about the *transformation*, but the question you should be able to answer is: *Transformed* into **what???** - (because everything in Rom. 12:1-2 are all things you should already know about)! — so, *Transformed* into **what?**

- You know what the *transformation* is **from**, right? (from being *conformed to this world*) - so what have you been **told already** that you should know what you're going to be *transformed* into?

- You're going to be *transformed* from a natural, ungodly man—with ungodly thinking and ungodly conduct, and with no natural capacity to labor with God—into what??? — **into the image of God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ!**

- Notice that here in Rom. 12:2, you have that word in the 1st clause— "*And be not conformed ...*" — when was that last time you saw that word *conformed*? — back in Romans 8:29!

- (In fact, Rom. 8:29 & Rom. 12:2 are the **ONLY** times Paul [and the entire Bible] ever uses that word)!

- So the 'prompting' has been put in your mind—that rather than being *conformed to this world* — your desire is just as it was when you went through sonship establishment—to be *conformed to the image of his Son* (to the Lord Jesus Christ **as God's adopted son**)!

- And that **demands** a *transformation* take place!
(A permanent, drastic change into another form)!

- **That's** the 'caterpillar-to-the-butterfly' — one is your natural, ungodly state, being transformed into the other—the image of Christ!

- Romans 12:2—*And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed* (now we get the 'how' - the mechanical means by which we're going to be *transformed* into the image of Christ) - ***by the renewing of your mind,***

- That's is the general mechanics of how that *transformation* is going to take place.

- ***renewing*** — what does that mean? = to make new, to restore to a former state, to rebuild, to repair—interestingly, the idea here has a shade of meaning of a renewal or **complete change for the better!**

- Interestingly, the only other time in the Bible where that word is used is in Titus 3:5 (read 3:1-7 a sonship issue!)

- And the way this *transformation* has to take place is by your ***mind*** being ***made new***— which means, as you acknowledge to your Father what you want your life to now be about in view of the *mercies* He's bestowed upon you—you have to acknowledge and appreciate your **dire need** for your *mind* to be made *new* and repaired from all the damage that's been done to it!

- It's interesting that Charles Smith in his "Synonyms Discriminated" brings out a shade of meaning that *renew* has in which he says, "Renew belongs to things internal, to one's self—and a similar term like Renovate which never implies any cessation or interval of time; Renew is often employed of the taking up of what has been suspended."

- Perhaps, what is being stressed by *renewing of your mind* is to restore your *mind* to a state that God can, as a Father, educate and edify you unto godliness, just as He could with Adam, prior to his sinning—a state of *mind* that has been suspended until sonship education can *renew* it by the power of the *leading of the Spirit of God causing the living words of the living God to live now in you!*

- But the truth of the matter is—a great deal of **damage** has been done to your *mind* by the course of this world and through your natural ungodly thinking and ungodly education you've been receiving from *this world*.

- And the concept behind *renewing* is that your *mind* is changing over and over and over again—throughout your education as a son.

- Kind of like, element by element of your *mind*—or piece by piece of it is made new—and the "*ing*" on the end of *renew* tells you that it's going to be an on-going process as long as the education lasts.

- *renewing* takes into account (much like 'repair') that there is something there (in the design of your *mind*) that's ok - or that's salvageable—there's some of it that's worth keeping.

- And the truth is, God doesn't take out your *mind* and give you another one that's blank (or just formatted) - but He takes the one you've got and keeps what's structurally there **and repairs all the damage**—and along with that, produce the proper thinking structure that He ever designed a human, intelligent mind to operate upon!

- And the *mind* is what gets the attention and focus here because you know that it is 'ground zero' (so to speak) - it is the very basis upon which godly living and godly labor will be built.

- So it comes as no surprise that you acknowledge to your Father that the **only** means for you to successfully be *transformed is by the renewing of your mind*—and that’s the basic, general, mechanical means by which your sonship education is going to take place—(because that matches up with the issue of what a son is in the first place [back there in Romans 8:14] - one who is *led by the Spirit*—something has to take place (a radical change has to take place) in my **mind** so I can *walk after the Spirit* and be *spiritually minded*!

- Which, when the thinking is godly, in turn allows for godly living and godly labor to take place.

- And sonship edification/education is the means by which all that gets accomplished!

- And let me say it even stronger: **SONSHIP EDIFICATION** is the **ONLY MEANS** by which that *renewing of your mind can* take place and can get accomplished!

- And I say it that way just to underscore the fact that God only will accept one (and only one) way to get the *renewing of your mind* accomplished and thereby produce the *transformation* you must make in order to be *conformed to the image of God’s Son*!

- No other way—no other means—no other education process, edification process (no other edification ‘model’), no man-made, Pastor-made, Bible Scholar-made, system/process/education/or edification will do that!!!!

- Every other attempt at edification or spiritual maturity (or whatever you want to call it) will **FAIL** to produce *godly edifying which is in faith* (I Tim. 1:4)!

- Other ways or systems or approaches may produce some sort of education (or data building) - but they all fall far short of producing *godly edifying*—WHY? — Because they all are competing *forms of godliness* that *deny the power thereof* — and the “*power thereof*” is the recognition of Paul’s letters as a doctrinal curriculum that is to be followed, from Romans through II Thessalonians!

- And the truth is—the vast majority of Christians **don’t** acknowledge that (they **deny** it), and even many who ‘rightly divide’ *deny* that!

- And, folks, that is the most radical, revolutionary thought or concept a Christian could ever have!

- When you realize that ‘going to church’ - being involved in ‘activities’ and ‘fellowship’ — (and all those things that there *can* be a value in, in certain circumstances)—are NOT the answer to your life **at all!!**

- “Going to church” is only the answer—if, at church, your *mind* is being *renewed*—having “fellowship” with other saints is only valuable if the *renewing of your mind* is accompanied by that fellowship!

- The only method and the only means for your life to be *transformed* is through the *renewing of your mind*—and that’s accomplished by means of this **sonship** education.

- And that’s something your Father wants you to acknowledge at this checkpoint—and therefore, that demands that you have a level of commitment (as a student) to give your *mind* to the education and apply your *mind* to the education.

- If you acknowledge, Father, I don’t want to be *conformed to this world*, I want to be *transformed by the renewing of my mind*—well, you’re acknowledging (and if your heart means that, and that’s real, and you’re not just saying it because you think that’s what your Father wants you to say—then you’re acknowledging that, **Father, I’m giving you my mind!**

- And every chance I can get, to get new information from You (in order to replace faulty thinking in my *mind*), I’m going to take — every thing that’s taught, I’m going to pour over and investigate and prove and make sure becomes a part of my thinking—because that’s the only way this *transformation* will take place!

- That *transformation* can’t take place through years of attending church—it can’t take place through any other means than through my *mind* being *renewed* by my Father’s curriculum He wrote and designed with that *renewing* of my *mind* in view!

Romans 12:1-2

- 1 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*
- 2 *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, **that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.***

- This is what the rest of your life as your Father's son (that is, the rest of your Christian life) is going to be composed of! (that is, *proving the will of God*).

- **that** - this *transformation by the renewing of your mind* is for a specific purpose (and the final phrase of [:2] is a purpose clause).

- **ye** (2pp. Nom. = each and every one of you who have accomplished sonship orientation and sonship establishment—all of you **AS SONS**—not just all of you as Christians—this isn't for just any old Christian!)

- And as I've so often said—the 'kicker' to all this is that **YOU** (as a son), **YOU** are going to *prove* God's will—it's not going to be a life of: praying, "OH GOD, what is your will???" in this situation, or that situation—NO! instead of trying to ascertain God's will in a certain situation by prayer or by getting God to "tell" you through some audible voice, or some "still small voice" or by flipping through the Bible until you "feel led" to a passage that seems to "speak to you" or by "silent meditation" until a message is received by some kind of spiritual osmosis—**you** are going to be able to intelligently, confidently TELL GOD HIMSELF, "Here, this is exactly what your will is in this or that situation or circumstance!"

- You will determine God's will, all on your own—and by your being educated by Him with the skill-sets you acquire in this sonship education, it's as if you will be able to say to your Father, THIS is what your will is, isn't it? And He will say, Why, yes it is!

- That's **adult** sonship thinking and decision-making!

- **may prove**—What does it mean to *prove* something?

- **prove** = to test for surety; to put to the test; to try the quality of or the genuineness of; to ascertain some unknown quality or truth by a test or **standard**; to verify or find one's will.

- Really, in this context, it's talking about: to ascertain one's will.

- And when you ascertain something—or ascertain some unknown quality by a standard—then what you're doing is: you're making certain or defining or reducing to **precision** by removing obscurity or ambiguity, what God's will is!

- And the issue is—that our education as sons is going to provide for us to identify and ascertain—(and that means to make certain; to define; and to be absolutely **precise** [precision]) God's *good, and acceptable, and perfect, will*.

- And this means that what your sonship education will be able to give you—is an understanding of God's will—where there is no ambiguity, no inaccuracy, no unclearness, no obscurity or fuzziness—but you're absolutely certain, sure, and **precise** in your understanding that this is exactly what God's will is—and this is exactly how God would think about this—and this is how He would have me think about this!

- And not only are you going to ascertain God's will—not only are you going to know what it is on your own (so to speak) - but notice Paul doesn't say, 'that ye may **know** the will of God' — but Paul says, *that ye may **prove** the will of God!* (Which is a far stronger way of putting it! In fact, it's putting it in the strongest of terms!!! It's putting it in the strongest way possible!)

- But now let's think about how Paul states the *will of God* here in (:2).

- We are given 3 descriptive terms that describe (or better) encompass the *will of God* in this case.

- And before going into what those 3 descriptive terms are about—When you're talking about "God's will" — and talking about it in the context of being God's son—of being what God ever created you for and designed you for in the first place—what do we say God created us for; or designed us for ... or **adopted** us for in the first place???

- Answer: To think like God thinks; to live like God lives;
and to labor with God in all that He's doing.

- And really—because of the way this is being presented to you here at this Sonship Checkpoint—you would expect, when it comes to describing the ascertaining or proving of God's WILL—you would almost expect 3 things to pop up next!

- Because what's being described here is what all your education as a son is going to accomplish—and therefore since you've already come to realize that it is going to accomplish those 3 things—3 things that ALL TOGETHER go to describing what God's *will* is—it should come as no surprise to find that God's *will* is described in 3 distinctive terms—and all 3 of them match up with the 3 aspects of what it means to have been adopted by God unto this education in the first place!

- The *transformation* has you being *conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ*—and since you have no natural form of godliness all on your own (you can't naturally think, live, or labor with God) - and more than that, you can't do that simply because your saved or justified unto eternal life!

- It takes being *transformed by the renewing of your mind* in order to get that accomplished!

- And that *transforming* is going to be broken down into 3 things: being *conformed to the image of Christ* by being *transformed* in the area of my thinking; my conduct; and what I exert my energy & spend my time doing (or what I labor in).

- And even if you wouldn't use these terms—it should come as no shock that when you see God's will being reduced to 3 descriptive terms—that Paul is talking about **GODLINESS!**

- And the issue is—that our sonship education is going to allow for us to *prove* or ascertain (not by experiment, but by a standard) just how we are to first of all THINK about a certain situation or circumstance?; and then, how should I conduct myself in light of that new and precise thinking?; and then, how can I put that thinking and that conduct together and incorporate them into some operation of, or aspect of God's business so that I can labor with Him?

- And those 3 terms (*good, acceptable, perfect*) are describing the 3 aspects of *godliness* in a particular way.

- And that 'particular way' - or why Paul doesn't say, 'that ye may prove what thinking, living, and laboring with God is' — and that's because the 3 descriptive terms are stated in describing the *will of God* and not, specifically, godliness.

- And so we have God's *will* that we will be *proving* said to be: ***that good, and acceptable, and perfect ...***

- ***good*** (a very broad and general term) = it can be contrasted to bad, or contrasted to evil—but the 'first-things-first' in your education that your Father needs to do, and that He expects you to understand at this point—is that He needs to provide for your *mind* (which is directly in view here—your thinking) to be made... ***good***.

- That is, purged from the defective, evil, corrupt, bad information that currently occupies it.

- And the wonderful thing about that term *good*—is that all those things can be said in opposition to it—(corrupt, bad, defective) - and you could fill in a whole bunch of other things at this point that are just less than *good*.

- First and foremost, it's that ***good will of God***—and that focuses upon the effects of my education upon my **thinking!**

- Your Father is going to first of all put in your *mind* what He says is *good*—He's going to replace that bad, corrupt, defective thinking—and this is consistent with what we came to understand and appreciate in our sonship establishment—(that is, to have a clear knowledge of what is *good* in His sight and what is evil—and to be able to make clear decisions that will preserve us from wasting our time on useless, worthless pursuits ...) [as per our sum. state.]

- God is going to provide what Paul talked about with Timothy as a *good conscience* and a *good sound mind*.

- ***proving what is that good will of God*** is that I know for sure how I'm supposed to **think** about this situation—this opportunity—this circumstance — this is the *good* thinking, the *good* way to view this; it's not defective, it's not corrupt by man's wisdom or thinking; it's not selfish—or whatever—it's *good* thinking—it's sound.

- Next: ***and acceptable*** = not only does it mean, that which may be received with pleasure; agreeable or pleasing; - but as Webster in his 1828 Dictionary defines it: **as a man makes himself acceptable by his services or civilities**.

- ***acceptable***—focuses upon the ability that we’re going to gain in our education as sons that will determine the *acceptable* way of manifesting that *good* thinking **in the conduct and behavior of our lives**.

- This focuses upon our **actions**—the way we **live!**

- Our sonship education is going to be able to provide for us to identify and put on display the *acceptable* way to conduct ourselves as sons—in light of the *good* thinking that we have obtained from our Father.

- And fascinatingly enough—when we scan down through the instruction (as it begins in Romans 12:3 ff) — that we’re going to find a whole bunch of things coming at us in 3’s! (thinking gets addressed first; then the living; and then the laboring)!

- And sonship (by default) demands that the Father isn’t just teaching His son for ‘kicks’ - but He’s ultimately teaching him so that he can end up working and laboring with the Father in the Father’s business.

- So, it’s only natural that a father would begin with having to get his son’s thinking *good* (in line with the father’s thinking); and then, from that *good* thinking, the son begins to put that thinking into practice in his conduct & behavior—which, because of the *good* thinking will be *acceptable* & pleasing to the father—and then, based upon those 2 elements, the son can then begin working and laboring with the father with a *perfection* to it that has the son emulating his father in all that he does!

- So then we have: ***and perfect***, - (and notice by way of the English Grammar—the commas make it so that we’re not talking about 2 things [i.e., *good* and *acceptable*] that describe the *perfect will of God*, but that we’re definitely talking about 3 things—all 3 of which are describing the *will of God*—and the last one is ***perfect***.

- ***perfect*** = finished; complete; wanting nothing—as a perfect likeness or a **perfect work**.

- That *perfect will of God* is the ability to take that new *good* thinking and that *acceptable* behavior—and incorporate them into an aspect of God’s business.

- And our sonship education is going to always be following this form—*proving what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

- You’re going to learn that *good* way to think—and then the only *acceptable* & pleasing conduct & behavior in light of that — and then here’s the *perfection*—here’s God’s *perfect* will—producing a *perfect* likeness and *perfect* work, laboring with Him in light of that *good* thinking and *acceptable* living.

- Now the wonderful thing about godly edification is that you cannot ascertain what is that *perfect will of God* if you don’t first of all have that *good* and *acceptable* in place—you can’t determine the proper or *acceptable* conduct and behavior unless you first of all have the *good* thinking in place!

- And in each form of doctrine you get—you’re first going to be taught things that are designed simply to change the way you think (so that it’s no longer bad & corrupt & deficient), but you’re thinking properly and *good* — and that’s all that that information is designed to do—it’s not designed to be used in any other way than to change an aspect of your thinking ...

— and then you’re going to be taught something that—in light of that change in your thinking—if that’s ‘stuck’ — then here’s the way that you ascertain and *prove* what is the *acceptable* way to conduct yourself in light of that—and now that’s going to change the way you live ...

— and then you’re going to get (once you’ve successfully changed the way you think and have implemented new & *acceptable* conduct & behavior in your life) — you’re going to be given the opportunity to now ascertain & *prove* what is that *perfect will of God*—and be able to say, The reason why I was taught to think this way; the reason why I was taught to conduct myself this way; was all so that I could labor with God in this operation.

- And that’s why it says: *that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

- And that's what your Father wants at this checkpoint—to acknowledge to Him that you “get it” - everything that you've been taught up to this point has done it's job—and I want exactly what You want for me: that is, to *not be conformed to this world: but to be transformed by the renewing of my mind, that I may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

- I understand that that's how all this education is going to take place—and I *present by body* to you, Father—willing and excited and committed to begin that *transformation* NOW — I want my *mind renewed* with the **instruction of wisdom!**

- Are there any questions? Comments?

- Well, I'm ready ... what do you say?

- Are you ready to go on to Phase 2 of Level I, Sonship Edification?

THE END OF PHASE 1, LEVEL I, SONSHIP EDIFICATION.

LEVEL 1 — PHASE 2 — SONSHIP EDIFICATION.

- Read Proverbs 1:1-6 again.

- Table of Contents: Proverbs 1:3

“To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;”

- At this point in your education, you’re now beyond the point of coming to know the value and worth of all that it means for you to have been adopted by your Father—(to no longer be treated as a child, with all of the restrictions that childhood has—and now being treated as an adult son with all of the glorious liberty that adult sonship has—and the grand prospect of one day entering into doing business with your Father) - and more than that, the needed **adjustments** to your **attitude** have now been properly fulfilled (sufficient enough) so that the your desire to be educated **matches** your Father’s desire to educate you.

- You have now come to understand and appreciate in some measure how this whole education is going to be personally useful to you; you now has a measure of your Father’s likes and dislikes operating on the evaluation scale of your heart—and they match up with the likes and dislikes in your own heart.

- You see the benefit and profit that this education is supposed to be to you—and by the effectual working of the information your Father gave you to **establish** you as His son—you now value and esteem the education you’re about to receive properly and positively.

- To you at this point, the education you’re getting from your Father is now the ‘**love of your life.**’

- And in view of all that, you should be genuinely and seriously and passionately crying, “*Abba, Father!*” — I want this—and you should be genuinely and intelligently persuaded that your Father and the curriculum He’s forged will succeed with you (as long as you operate upon that curriculum) no matter what comes your way in connection with either *the sufferings of this present time*, or in connection with any obstacles or opposition that you’ll ever encounter from the enemies to your sonship success — and with the kind of attitude and **commitment** you now have as a result of your sonship establishment; and having passed the Sonship Checkpoint of Romans 12:1-2 — you’re now asking your Father, “Let’s get going with the education!”

- And now with that basic similarity of attitude & commitment that you need to have, you can now sit down with your Father and look at your Father as your main teacher now—and the one from whom you now want to receive all this information.

- And once you've gone through Phase 1—and once you've properly come "*To know...*" and "*to perceive...*" — now you begin to "receive".

- We now encounter our 3rd "**To-Infinitive**" - and you should perceive that this is just a little bit different than those first 2 infinitives.

- And it really is different—because when you're dealing with a context of 'an education' - and within the context of these 6 verses—and within the way it gets presented to you—you kind of have in those first 2 infinitives what is kind of like showing up for class, but those first couple of lessons really only deal with orientation (or **establishment**) - or introduction to the whole education laying out in front of you.

- And even though "*to know*" and "*to perceive*" does have you 'getting' something—(because all of the infinitives are telling you what these Proverbs are going to do) - and when you come *to know wisdom and instruction*—and you come *to perceive the words of understanding*—you are getting something—but you're really not getting it in quite the same way as when you receive *the instruction of wisdom, justice,*

- In fact—what I'm driving at is that within the context and the **way** you're presented with this Table of Contents—even though in those first 2 infinitives that made up your basic sonship establishment—it's more or less like all you've done so far is just listen and think.

- That is, (and to put it in the framework of going to school), up to this point you really haven't opened any books yet—you really haven't taken any notes yet — you really haven't begun any of the courses in the 'core curriculum' as of yet.

- Not to say that what you've been doing isn't important—because it is—vitaly important and critical to insure that the rest of the education will effectually work and be successful.

- And I'm not minimizing Phase 1 of Level I—because it's got to be accomplished before any of the rest of the education can have any chance to do its job!

- But all I'm saying is that you haven't really begun getting the **meat** (or even the 'appetizer') of the curriculum—until you begin '**receiving**' it in (:3).

- And you need to appreciate that fact—that what begins to happen when you "*receive instruction*" is getting the education underway **in earnest**—you're getting down to business (so to speak) - getting down to **the serious business of receiving your education!**

- And this is actually the first time in the education as sons you've graduated to '*receiving the instruction*' - and this is the first time your sonship life gets put on display—where, for the first time you begin to **practice** your sonship life and position.

- Buy this time, you should be 'dying to get it' (so to speak) - you should be 'chomping at the bit' or **greatly desiring** to get it!

- So in (:3) we have, "***To receive the instruction ...***" - and even though we've already encountered the word "*instruction*" before—we now need to really understand and appreciate what that means beyond just getting the education.

- "***instruction***" = when you basically think of *instruction* or *instructions* you most often think of a **set of directions** (like the directions on how to build a model—or directions on how to put a bicycle together—or something like that).

- Or directions or teaching on how to do something.

- An instruction book; an instruction manual.

- OED Definition: *the imparting of knowledge or skill; making known to a person what he is required to do.*

- And really that's one side of the coin (so to speak) - but there's another aspect to *instruction* that's vital to coming to a real understanding and appreciation of it—especially in the context of this sonship education you're now getting from your Father.

- Because this other side of the coin is what *instruction* implies or a shade of meaning of what *instruction* is driving at.

- And it's this other implied meaning that is significant to the word *instruction* that really makes the impact on (or sets the stage for) just what you're to expect in this next Phase.

- And it's important that you appreciate that *instruction* isn't merely teaching—because *teaching* can be an informing of the understanding about things you may already know, but just how to use it differently.

- Also, *teaching* is the more proper word to use when dealing with strict academics (science/art)—not to mention the fact that you don't even need a “person” at all to be *taught*—for example, history can teach you things.

- But *instruction* is **personal**—in fact it is the most excellent and proper word to use when referring to a child being taught by his parent/parents—a son is properly *instructed* by his father!

- The critical issue that *instruction* is driving at (a shade of meaning, if you will) - is that when you're dealing with *instruction*, you're dealing with a body of information **that you do NOT innately possess** and you're going to be getting knowledge that you do NOT just automatically know—and you're going to be taught, therefore, things that do not necessarily or naturally **fit** in your thinking—and so **adjustments** are going to have to be made—and that concept that we run into there in Romans 12:1-2 comes into play—the *mind* is going to start being *renewed*.

- And really the critical thing about *receiving instruction* is that you are now going to get information that up to this time you are **ignorant of!**

- And we need to put both concepts together in order to really get the appreciation of what it means for us to *receive instruction* in all 4 of those following areas mentioned in (:3) - *wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity.*

- So when you're talking about *instruction*—and *receiving instruction* in this context of our sonship education - it's:

1) The receiving of directions or a body of information on **how to do something that you don't know how to do;** with the ability to do something that you don't naturally have the ability to do; and,

2) This body of information (or instruction that I'm receiving) on how to do something— is information that prior to me receiving it, **I was totally ignorant of!**

- And as your mind begins the process of being **renewed**—old information that now has no value whatsoever—and information that gets acquired from the **world** and *the wisdom of this world* is going to have to be recognized for the **worthlessness** that it is—and that it's all going to have to be replaced—and in view of all that being the critical and necessary thing that it is (even the natural thing to do that it is) - in view of that, when you see in the Table of Contents that this next level of sonship education is *“To receive the instruction”* of some things—it is to be expected that things are going to get more intricate and more complex.

- Because you're new getting beyond just acquiring some basic concepts in the mind and the orientation of the mind—or better yet, the **awaking** of the mind.

- By the time you get to Phase 2 of Level I—the mind is now awakened to the son's status and establishment—and now that the mind is awake, the human spirit of the son is now in a position where a whole bunch of additional features are going to come along and be added to his awakened mind and spirit—and you're going to begin going somewhere with it all.

- And by the time you hit (:3) you get confronted with 4 terms that (even though the 1st one has been encountered before, the other 3 have not) - and just by being familiar with how your Father presents things to you—you know that you're now 'out of the stands, and on the field' (so to speak) - you're now going from the general to the particular—or as we often like to say, “This is where the rubber starts meeting the road”!

- And when it comes to the first thing you are supposed to perceive here—*“To receive the instruction . . .”* — you need to realize that the information your Father is going to give you is information that you are ignorant of, and it's going to provide you with the ability to do some things. (And without that information, you won't properly **do** the things you're supposed to **do**—[you won't be able to put all the parts together—in the right order] and so forth).

- And depending upon the nature of the information—it could be helpful, or it could be absolutely essential—(and you realize that **you need to follow the instructions** if you want to get the thing put together right—with no parts left over!) — and if you have some idea of what it looks like (if you've seen it), the instructions may just be *helpful*—but in other instances, (if you haven't seen it) the instructions are **absolutely essential**.

- And you can bet (if you're a betting man) that in the vast majority of the cases—almost no one in modern-day Christianity has ever seen a properly educated and properly edified adult, adopted son of God!

- Couple that with the fact that the *instruction* (and instruction manual) you're getting is given to you from God your Heavenly Father **to provide for you to begin emulating Him!**

- (To provide for you putting your sonship life into practice for the very first time! - being *conformed to the image of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ*)

- And that makes that information contained in the “*instructions*” not merely ‘helpful’ (as most Christians—and some non-Christians view it) - this is **ESSENTIAL** information/*instruction* that has to be precisely followed—followed in the right order—and not one part of it taken lightly or set aside just because YOU don't see how it works, or YOU see/imagine a better way to do it (translation: a short-cut)!!!

- Now, at this point I just want to take what we've been talking about and dealing with in just this initial phrase of (:3) - “To receive the instruction” and by taking what we've now come to understand and appreciate about ‘receiving instruction’ and take it one step further—and state it so that you see, crystal clear, what that means to you—and the **huge impact** that just that phrase (with the 4 things looming out there in the rest of the verse) - but really just that one phrase—to see the **impact** that is supposed to now make on your human spirit.

- Because when you're told now by your Father that you are going to ‘receive instruction’ in some things—some of the very things that make up the way He, Himself thinks and how His own heart works and functions—and you're kind of like that kid who couldn't draw a stick-man or sculpt anything other than an ashtray or candle holder, but when he goes out and gets a model of a '56 Ford F-100 and he opens up the box and sees a couple hundred tiny plastic parts—he grabs hold of the instructions, and with a little glue and paying close attention to those instructions—those instructions actually transform that sorry artist into a master craftsman when he finally puts that last piece of the model on and he looks at a finished product that is an exact replica of the original!

- Well, you know that he's been given instructions—and those instructions gave him information that he was innately or naturally ignorant of—but it did **more** than that—what else did those instructions do?

- That kid who's never ever put a model together in his life opens up that box—and he realizes he's got a big problem—**he's never done this before**—but laying there on top are those instructions!

- (A:) — **he's going to be able to do something that he's never done before!**

- And that is a **huge issue** now for you as a son!

- And that's why you need *instruction*—why it's **essential**—because you're going to now have to put some things together so that you can be able to do some things that you've never done before in your life!

- And the first thing that you're is going to do now in Phase 2 of Level I of his sonship education is to get some information—to *receive* some *instruction* for doing some things you've never done before!

- (At least never done them like your Father's done them.)

- And that's the gist of what it means “*To receive the instruction of*” (whatever) - the you're going to have some information given to you that is going to teach you how to do some things that, without this instruction, you're **not** going to be able to do them—at least not to the emulation of your Father.

- And now we need to see what those thing are.

- And remember that they have been chosen and arranged by the ‘model-maker’ - by the Father who knows all about the entire program and curriculum—who functions in just this exact same way Himself—who has proven, Himself, that it works—He's been successful at it—and now He's going to perfectly instruct you, His son to do just what He does in His own business.

- And so you've got 4 components to what you are *to receive the instruction of*: “**wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity,**”

- And before going in to the details of what each of the 4 things mean in the context they're given here—when you just look at them ‘on the surface’ (so to speak) - or just look at the overall scope of them—what is it that they are giving you the ability to do? that you've never done before? — (and I know that, because we've gone over this all before, I know that you know what this is talking about).

- Because while all 4 terms are not the same—while they **do** have valid and essential differences—at the same time they are all **closely related**—they all have something in **common** as far as them all being spoken about within the context of this one objective to Phase 2 of Level I of sonship edification.

- And you have to think of them having a commonness to them that in each one of them (and all of them together) are going to have a **particular capacity** that's given to the son when he *receives the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity*—and what the son gets out of all of it is **a capacity or an ability to do something that he's never done before**—and that he doesn't have the natural, innate ability to do.

- These 4 things have in common (at least in the context and objective of verse 3) they do have a common capacity that an individual acquires when he becomes a possessor of them.

- And what I'm after is—what is that capacity? - what is that ability that he's going to receive that has these 4 components to it?

- (A:) — by *receiving the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity*—**the son is given the capacity of godly decision-making; the acquiring of decision-making skills.**

- You're going to receive instruction for making either *wise* decisions; or *just* decisions; or *judgmental* decisions; or *equitable* decisions.

- And when you kind of boil it all down—you're going to see, and you're going to come to acknowledge and appreciate that really, those 4 areas: *wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity*—if you were to take all of the areas of decisions you will ever make as a son—you might not find that every one of them is a *wise* or *just* or *judgmental* or *equitable* decision—because there may be decisions that you make that don't hit any one of these areas, but are decisions that actually have developed out of these 4—but what you will find is that the vast majority or bulk of the decisions you will ever have to make **will** be either a *wise*, a *just*, a *judgmental*, or an *equitable* decision.

- Now, I know you already know this—but it's important to bring all that back into your mind right here as we begin Phase 2/Level I.

- And don't let that keep you from appreciating the **hugeness** of all this—and the **profound impact** that is supposed to make upon your heart—because the truth of the matter is, this is a **huge** issue—and this decision-making skill is one that the world in general is desperately trying to conquer—and it is one that the Christian world has been (in parallel with the world) struggling to grasp hold of for a really long time.

- In fact, the Christian world is just as frustrated and discontented and unhappy and disappointed and disillusioned with their ability to make godly, proper decisions as anyone else in the religious world and in the world in general! (They're all just as lost as they can be in this area!)

- And the 'rub' of it is that most Christians who do read the best-sellers of the Christian 'stable of stars' winds up making decisions that they only *imagine* are good and godly, but in reality wind up being anything but that!

- Now there is another fantastic and wonderful aspect to our *receiving the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity* that goes along with the capacity to make good, godly decisions.

- The other thing we're going to see about these 4 things—and that also contribute greatly to our appreciation of all 4 of them having in common in the area of acquiring of decision-making skills—the other thing we're going to see is that *wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity* aren't just the decision-making skills that are expected in a son's life (although they most certainly are that, for sure) - but more than that, receiving the instruction of *wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity* **produces the abilities of a KING or a PRINCE or a GOVERNOR or someone in governmental ruler-ship and authority to do his job!**

- If he's going to be good and skillful at what he does, a governor or ruler has got to have *wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity* operating in him—and he has to be instructed in each and every one of these things so as to produce the corresponding decision-making skill!

- And what's remarkable about that is that your Heavenly Father, knowing that He's going to be placing you in a position of governing-type responsibility/authority in the *creature*—He starts you off with immediately learning the skills you are going to need when you function out there!—(vocational training)

- NOTE TO SELF: At this point I taught more on the review of the Table of Contents concerning Proverbs 1:3 from our original background work we did prior to Romans 8:14ff.

- This information came from the Romans 8 study (Vol. 2), pages 425-435.

- I also dealt with the following Scripture passages when I brought up the issue on pg. 425 (and on pg. 112 of these Romans 12 notes) of the sonship decision-making skills producing the abilities of a King, Prince, Governor, and Ruler—or someone in governmental ruler-ship authority to do his job —

- In connection with the Lord Himself:

(Psa. 99:4 [New Song Psalm] - [judgment/equity])

(Isa. 9:6-7 [:7])

(Isa. 11:1-4 [:4])

- In connection with David:

(II Sam. 8:15)

- In connection with Solomon:

(I Kings 10:4-9 [Queen of Sheba])

- Then, in a negative sense, and looking at the other side of the coin (so to speak) - how God puts a **premium** (or high value) upon these sonship decision-making skills:
(Micah 3:1-12 [:9])

- And underscoring that **lack** of them being found in apostate Israel:
(Isa. 59:1-15)

- Then I tied in the issue of the threat this is all going to be to the Adversary because he functions as a “Prince” ruler in both programs:

- “prince of this world” (John 12:31)
- “prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2)

- And I noted Gen. 32:28 and how the “Prince” issue is brought up in the very name of Israel himself.

- Then I noted the sonship issues Paul brought up in Acts 26:13-18 (:18).

- After this, I dealt with the issue of reviewing what we taught about what the initial instruction in **wisdom** is going to be about from my notes on Romans 8 (pages 430-435).

- Now, before going back to Romans 12:3—let's look at the corresponding **exhortation** that God gave to the members of the remnant of Israel—and which functions for us as a kind of format to alert us (as sons) to the very same aims, goals, and objectives that this body of information will have that makes up our **receiving the instruction of wisdom** (especially), and then **justice, and judgment, and equity**.

- The body of information in our curriculum for sonship education that makes up the *instruction of wisdom* is initially found in Romans 12:3-16.

- And the corresponding Exhortation to the *instruction of wisdom* is found in Proverbs 3:1-20.

- read Pro. 3:1-20

- reread Pro. 3:1-8 (note [:2] that issue of *peace* once again coming up as one of the aims, goals, and objectives to the *instruction of wisdom*!

- Let's take note of another one of those aims, goals, and objectives that sometimes isn't understood and appreciated as well as it ought to be—and that forms a very powerful exhortation for us to get this *instruction of wisdom* from our Father as the first component to our godly, sonship decision-making skills.

- Pro. 3:8—**It** (the issue of :7) **shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.**

- David is exhorting Solomon here to the effects that this sound doctrine will have upon him—and that's what is often found in an exhortation—the father tells his son, Look, son, here is what the results of this information that I'm about to instruct you in will have upon you—here are the **benefits** that will come to you as a result of getting *wisdom* as the first of 4 sonship decision-making skills.

- And there **is** an affect that sound doctrine has upon you that doesn't merely affect your *spirit* and your *soul*—but affects your **body** as well.

- And that's because—since we have, (as Paul says in I Cor. 15:44) a *natural body* and not a *spiritual body* right now—our body, therefore, responds to our *soul* and *not* to our *spirit*.

- In other words—our soul functions kind of like an 'interface' between our human spirit and our body.

- And so the body *responds* to the soul.

- And if things are therefore “quiet” (so to speak) in the soul—then the body is calm—(and I'm not talking about any physical illnesses here that can affect your body) - but I'm talking about your body's response to your soul.

- And the “*health*” that (Pro 3:8) is talking about is NOT health from physical ailments as far as diseases go—or as far as accidents go, or anything along those lines—but it's talking about the body's response to what is going on in the soul.

- And that's what the body does—it responds to the soul—therefore one of the best ways to illustrate that is when you are in a situation where your body does something in response to your **emotions**. (which come from your soul)

- For example—if you've ever had to speak before an audience (make a toast, deliver a speech, teach a class, or whatever) - or if you've ever performed in front of a live audience (musically, or in sports, or whatever) — you have probably felt some kind of response in your stomach or in your bowels—(such as what is commonly called “butterflies in your stomach). [The Barney Fife effect]

- And you get real nervous and you get shaky and tense and even (in some cases) you throw up—or your bowels get distressed—all based upon your soul!

- In fact, even in the case of falling in love—we have a colloquial expression for this very thing—we often say we're “love sick”!

- And we use the word “sick” to refer to the fact that our body is responding to that—and we've got that emotional (soulish) response coming out through our body—(sweaty palms) where fear and anxiety has an affect on the body.

- Now these are the kind of things being spoken about here—and that's what's in view in Proverbs 3:8—it's the issue of a state of *health*—or the state of whatever you're talking about, **functioning normally**; without it being stressed and having an abnormal function as a result of that stress.

- (That's the basic concept of “*health*”).

- Mental *health*, therefore, is a mind that is not in a state of distress—it's at PEACE—nothing's troubling it, or bothering it and therefore causing problems in the person's life. (You have mental *health*).

- And if you have Physical *health*—all the organs of your body are functioning as they are supposed to function—you don't have any disease that's afflicting you and causing an organ or part of your body to function abnormally. (You have physical *health*.)

- Now when David is talking about *health to your navel, and marrow to your bones*—while this issue will have affects upon your physical health—what is in view here is actually **your spiritual wellbeing**—and not just any wellbeing (or general spiritual wellbeing) - but it's a particular spiritual wellbeing that's in view—which involves the issue of a particular distress that comes from what is stated back up in (:7) - *Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.*

- And there's a particular inner man distress in connection with the *evil* at the end of (:7).

- And the simple issue that's in view there is that, when you conduct yourself as a *wise* son (making wise sonship decisions), and one who is not *wise in his own eyes*—but rather, functions upon the information he's receiving in the curriculum as he's going through it and benefiting from it's effectual working—(especially that aspect of *wisdom* that's going to identify *evil* for what it is and allow for him to make a *wise* sonship decision, therefore, **to leave it alone and to have nothing to do with it**—to discern it's enticements and not fall for them) — **that's** going to be *health to your navel*—(which is your 'guts').

- And that's a simple description of the fact that the normal emotional distress that you're going to end up with & find yourself experiencing as a son if you're **stupid** enough to go and participate in that *evil*—**this will spare you from that!**

- And it will be *marrow to your bones*—and Job tells you about having bones that are moistened with *marrow*—and the kind of **encouragement** that is.

- And this describes exactly what's supposed to take place—every exercise in connection with the beginning of our sonship education where we are receiving the 4 categories of sonship decision-making skills—every exercise of one of those sonship decision-making skills is designed to not only produce the affect it's designed to produce (which in this case is *departing from evil*) - but it's also designed to produce a corresponding **encouragement** on our part **for** the effectual working of that information—and to therefore become more skillful on our part to utilize it and apply it in **other** situations!

- And that's the “*marrow to your bones*” issue.

- Even Job knew that the *marrow* in the *bones* is what produces the **blood**—which is, in turn, what produces the life (*the life of the flesh is in the blood*).

- Therefore the very ability to live your life, physically, is in your blood— (but we're talking here about **functional** life) — and the growing, functional life of a son under Level I Sonship Education comes from **not** merely acquiring, but exercising his *instruction in wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity*—and to be gaining the skills and the skill-sets that come from that and the experience and the confidence that comes from that—and to broaden it beyond the original parameters in which our Father puts it into **other** useful places.

- And that's because our Father gives those things to us in the form of **Principles**—and a Principle (which is built upon the word “Prince” = which is a top-level Ruler) - **and a Principle is a top-level decision-making capacity!**

- And our Father gives us in our *instruction in wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity* a series of Principles—and we first get experience with them within the very context and confines in which He puts them—but then the issue is for them to become *marrow to our bones*—and to produce more of the life-blood of the sonship life!

- And as our heart gets enlarged, it gets a greater capacity to “pump” that and to engage in more and more and more of godly thinking and godly living and godly labor.

- Those 2 issues of (:8) are the 2 things that are necessary for a son to NOT stop his sonship education, and to go on.

- He doesn't stop it because he wisely applies it (*departs from the evil*) - then it produces the *health to his navel* (and the distress isn't there) - and it produces the *marrow for his bones* (he's able to go on to greater capacity)!

- And you're going to find this come up again in Proverbs 4:22—but there it's *health to all your flesh* (not just your *navel*) - and if you look at the surrounding context, you'll find that there's more involved than just emotional distress that you're going to encounter as a son.

- And this is something that you will find in the exact same way in our sonship education—because isn't one of the tactics of the Adversary you learned about in Romans 8 not only *tribulation*, but also *distress*? — and you can handle the tactic that character brings against you to try to *separate you from the love of Christ*—and you can become the *more than conqueror* in that situation—it's going to be *health to your navel, and marrow to your bones*, too as you gain the experience that comes out of that battle with the Adversary.

- And you'll be able to come along and shake your fist in the face of the Adversary and say, That was nothing! What's your next tactic?

- And you won't do that with any carnal bravado—you'll do that as a result of the godly edification coming along and **giving** you the capacity to do that very thing!

- And that's what those concepts are about—and of course, they apply to the members of the remnant of Israel and in their sonship too.

- Now—having completed Phase 1 of Level I Sonship Edification—and having passed the critical Sonship Checkpoint of Romans 12:1-2—and having reviewed the Table of Contents for “What's next?” — and having been exhorted to *receive the instruction* of the 4 godly decision-making skills—let's now turn our attention to the actual curriculum for our sonship education and get that education underway. (YEAH!!!!)

- ROMANS 12:3-16—The Instruction of WISDOM.

- We know from the Table of Contents (of Proverbs 1:3) that our first course of instruction is going to deal with the *instruction of wisdom*—and when we first dealt with the Table of Contents and matched that up to the corresponding curriculum for our sonship education as found in the epistles of the apostle Paul—we said that our *instruction of wisdom* is found in Romans 12:3-16.

- But let's just make sure that we see that the information in (:3-16) all goes together—and that something different is begun at (:17) ff.

- Now I've given you my understanding of the body of information that consists of our *instruction of wisdom* (being :3-16) - but do you see that? do you see that there's a difference between what is being dealt with in (:3-16), and that that all goes together—and then something different begins to be dealt with starting in (:17)?

- Well, there are a couple of things that help us out here and help to verify that there is something different that begins to be dealt with in (:17ff).

- One has to do with paying attention to the context of what is being talked about and dealt with beginning in (:3) - and then follow that continuity and context until a shift takes place and something else comes up—and our attention then begins to take on a different topic or different issue.

- And so—the question arises—what is the central thing or central issue that is being dealt with? (Now keep in mind that we are *receiving the instruction of wisdom*—however the word *wisdom* never occurs in this section, albeit the word *wise* does occur).

- And, really, the way (:16) ends, and the way (:17) begins is a huge clue to tell us that there is a different issue now being turned to beginning there in (:17).

- (But back to the question at hand) - granted, the issue at hand beginning in (:3) is *the instruction of wisdom*—but our Father doesn't instruct us “outright” in wisdom per se, (that is, He doesn't say, Ok, son, wisdom is (this), and wisdom is (that), and wisdom is (this other thing).

- No. Rather our Father instructs us in His initial, basic wisdom by use of (or by way of) something else—what is it?

- The basic means by which our Father instructs us to *receive the instruction of wisdom* is by means of LOVE—**GODLY LOVE**. (And I say **godly** love, because [just as you have come to recognize from :2] you already know something about love—but the kind of love you know about by in large comes from the way *this world* has taught you about love—granted, you have come to know something about God’s love—but it’s minimal, and really you haven’t had any ‘form of doctrine’ that addressed godly love as of yet).

- You’ve come to know that God, indeed, loves you (you learned that back in the first 5 chapters of Romans that dealt with the gospel of Christ and your Justification) - and you’ve come to possess *the love of Christ* which is loving your sonship life and the aims, goals, and objectives of it, just as Christ Himself loves it (and as your Father loves it) - but that’s different from being instructed in it as a means of teaching you your Father’s wisdom.

- Now we’ll come back to that in a little bit in order to deal with **why** He does it this way, but for now I just want to simply identify that the means by which our Father instructs us in His wisdom is by confronting us with the issue of His **godly love**.

- And we can verify that because after you get through the opening verses of (:3-8), He says in (:9), *Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.*

- Again, *Let love be* — and that demands something—what is it? — it demands that godly love has begun to be formed in your thinking by means of the preceding information (the information contained in [:3-8])!

- Otherwise (if godly love hasn’t been formed in you by that point), how in the world can you ever *Let love be ... anything???*

- And so—contextually, you should see something interesting about how this body of information opens up—and the way it ends up.

- Notice that in (:3) it begins with how you think about yourself—and it ends in (:16) coming ‘full circle’ (so to speak) back to the issue of how you think about yourself. (And that’s an indicator that you’ve come to the end of a body of information in [:16]).

- Therefore, by the context we see that something different (maybe not altogether different), but something different does begin to get addressed in (:17) because the context that began in (:3) is brought full circle in (:16).

- But another thing that indicates to you that something different is being dealt with in (:17ff) is that first word of (:17).

- ***Recompense*** to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

- ***Recompense*** is a justice-type word = to compensate or make a return of an equal nature for anything given to you—usually for a wrong done to you—an ‘eye for an eye’ type thing—which is a **just** or **justice** type concept).

- So by the very first word of (:17) we are given a ‘red flag’ (so to speak) that we’ve now ventured into a different form of *instruction* than we’ve been in before.

- Therefore, based upon the context, and the style of the presentation of the information—and based upon the terminology—(as well as what we’re to expect to have coming up from the Table of Contents) — my understanding is that Romans 12:3-16 forms the first body of information that is designed to give us the *instruction of wisdom*.

- And just by a general reading of the text, our Father has determined that the best way to give us that initial, basic *instruction of wisdom* is to get that all accomplished by producing in us the effectual working of godly *love*.

- (Now there’s another reason for why I understand that [:3-16] is what comprises that ‘form of doctrine’ - but I’ll try to bring that out by addressing what I mention earlier).

- And so I think that the next thing we should do is address that issue I talked about before—and that is **WHY** does our Father instruct us in the initial and fundamental understanding and appreciation for His *wisdom* (which will enable us to begin making wise decisions) by means of confronting us with this issue of His godly *love*?

- In other words—why doesn’t He just start off with, “Wisdom is ... this, and that, and this and that”???

- And here you see something of the genius of God and the genius of His skill as a teacher—Why is the appropriate way to instruct you in your Father’s *wisdom*, to do so by instructing you about the fundamental issues of godly *love*?

- First of all—you always have to keep in mind what this is being set in contrast to—who are you, as a son, being contrasted with?

- Answer: (12:2) *And be not conformed to this world—you’re being contrasted with the ungodly men and ungodly thinking of *this world*.*

- And the greatest mark of wisdom (for a son) is to be doing what love is at it’s root or core element—and what is the root or core element of love?

- Answer: When you love something (or someone), you value it and you esteem it!

- And therefore love is the perfect and most excellent way of all for a Father to instruct His son in how to make wise decisions from the get-go!

- Because the greatest mark of wisdom (for a son) is to value and esteem something the exact same way his Father values and esteems it—to value and esteem it the way his Father does, NOT the way the world does (or how the ungodly men in the world do)!

- This is your wisdom in the eyes of not only *this world*—but it’s your wisdom in the eyes of the Adversary.

- And when you intelligently presented yourself to your Father as a son with the wisdom of what your sonship orientation & sonship establishment effectually did in your inner man—you acknowledged that from now on, your desire is to not be *conformed to this world*, *but to be transformed by the renewing of your mind*—and your volition was tested as to your willingness to be *conformed*, instead, *to the image of Christ*—and therefore your desire there was to receive the education your Father has for you (and to not be a fool); [the world is full of fools] - and to continue in the course of this world and to participate in it **is foolish for you**—you want to be a *wise* son—and when it comes to being a wise son, (in general), we first get instructed in the fundamental components of *wisdom* when

it comes to *not being conformed to this world, but being transformed*—and that fundamental wisdom is the issue of **acquiring the fundamental characteristics that stands behind everything that God our Father does!** and that stands behind everything that will enable us to be *conformed to the image of his Son*.

- And that's the issue of possessing His love—(of possessing all that He values and esteems) - and operating upon His love—and loving as He Himself does!

- And when you understand and appreciate what sonship education calls for—being educated in God's love **IS receiving the instruction of wisdom**—because it gives us God's norms and standards for what He values and what He esteems—and that will give to us the wisdom to walk in this world **without** conformity to it; and **with** conformity to the way the Lord would walk in it!

- And so the reason why all that gets taught to you here has to do with godly love is in order to give you, as a son, the fabric (so to speak) or the 'wise stuff' (so to speak) that you have to learn first and foremost that will become the basis for which you're going to make choices about what you will value and what you will esteem in contrast to what this ungodly world chooses (or decides) to value and esteem.

- But remember that this is just the beginning of wisdom—in other words, this is fundamental—and a lot of other wisdom-type stuff is going to be built upon this—and so (rather than right now), later on you're going to be able to make *prudent* and *discriminating* decisions—but here is where it all starts.

- And this initial *instruction of wisdom* by way of godly love is what is going to characterize you as a son from now on—and will (just like your Father) be the characterizing feature behind everything you do!

- Now there's another reason (genius in it's own right) for why our Father starts our education off with not only the issue of His *wisdom*, but in teaching it to us in the form of His godly *love*—and it's found, (interestingly enough), back in Romans 8—and using it as that 'blueprint' — there was something was said to you about your Father's business (that you've been adopted for in the first place) whereby you would perceive that the very things you're taught about in Romans 12:3-16 are the things they are.

- Romans 8:19-22 — notice from (:20) what the state of *the creature* is at this present time—it's been *made subject to vanity*—and what is the major or most fundamental feature of anything that is *vanity* or described as being *vain*?

- *vanity* = something that is of no value or profit! worthless!

- Right now—out in that *creature* there is no godly valuing or esteeming going on!

- The ones who make up the intelligentsia of the *creature* are void of what God values and what God esteems!

- And as sons who are in training to remove those characters from their positions of intelligentsia—and who will be put into their positions that they now occupy—you're going to have to have your Father's norms and standards for what **He** values and what **He** esteems—and for being able to make, therefore, wise decisions based upon godly love (godly valuing and godly esteeming) in whatever position you will occupy in that *creature* in order to bring functional life (the life of your Father) to it!

- In other words—everything you're going to be taught and instructed in from now on—every form of doctrine and every component to every form of doctrine—is all going to correct the corrupted, vain, corruption that has wreaked havoc in the *creature* since the time the Adversary usurped that realm and brought his policy of evil to bear in it and upon it!!!

- And that's why (or what stands behind) every thing and every component that makes up this first sonship decision-making skill of *wisdom*—in other words, that why you immediately start off with not only the first component of godly love—but immediately after (:3) gets some godly love being generated, you are confronted with the issue of although *we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*

- You get confronted (right from the get-go) with **body-type** thinking and **body-type** conduct and behavior! (And that's because there **is no** body-type thinking in the *creature*!)

- And let's just let it suffice for now to say that—as you go on down through all the components that make up this *instruction of wisdom*, that, (even if we don't clearly see, right away, how it does it), all those things we're taught gives us skills and insights and experience that will be useful to us (and used by us) in the roll we will have in the *creature* and in our Father's business for that *creature*.

- And so, once again, there's tremendous genius behind the way or the manner in which our Father instructs us in wisdom by means of beginning to deal with it by way of godly **love**.

- Now since we know that our *instruction of wisdom* is what we're supposed to be *receiving* at this time—by now we've come to understand and appreciate a couple of things about the body of information our Father has given us as the first part of the sonship curriculum we are to be edified by as sons—we've come to recognize:

1) The verses that make up our fundamental *instruction of wisdom* runs from Romans 12:3 and down through :16.

2) That the ingenious way in which our Father instructs us and imparts His wisdom to our hearts is by means of the fundamental understanding and appreciation for His godly love.

- And you should be able to answer the question: WHY does God use the issue of godly love to instruct us in His wisdom?

- Well—if that basic understanding and appreciation for this form of doctrine is clear—then the next thing to do is to begin looking at those 14 verses of Romans 12:3-16 and determine the number of component parts that go to making up the form of doctrine of our *instruction of wisdom*.

- In looking at all 14 verses—it's very apparent that there is one particular place that (more than anywhere else) you can come along and 'put your finger on it' and say, There has to be a break between components right here — and where is that easiest break to see?

- Answer: (:9) — and whether you see numerous components in the first 6 verses and numerous components in the last 8 verses—the simple and obvious truth is, just by the way things are said & presented, there's a break at (:9).

- And the reason why I say that it's easy to see a break at (:9) is, once again, because of how it starts off—*Let love be ...*

- And what that's doing is saying that what took place in (:3-8) had to bring godly love into existence—because if godly love isn't already in existence, it would be stupid to say, *Let love be ...*

- *Let love be ...* demands that love is in existence!

- Therefore—(and it should come as no surprise by now)—even though the word *love* is never once used in all of (:3-8), it should be recognized that our Father is teaching us the fundamental issues **that brings His godly love into existence in our hearts**—so that by the time you get to (:9), it's already there and now more can be said about it—and more can be learned in connection with it.

- So it should be clear that at the very least, we have 2 Parts.

- And even looking at just 2 Parts—you have to recognize that the information contained in those 2 Parts doesn't just come along randomly—but (like everything our Father does) it has to have a sense and sequence to it—and therefore the things that make up those parts have **reasons** for them being there—and more than that, they have reasons for **why** they are in the **order** our Father put them.

- And we need to appreciate that—and we need to appreciate the **naturalness** for that sense and sequence.

- That is, why these things (and only these things) are the natural things that are the 'first-things-first' matters of wisdom that a son would **have** to know—and that they are foundational and fundamental in connection with our edification as sons.

- Well—for now, let's leave (:9-16) alone and focus our attention on (:3-8) - and what I want to look at here is not so much describing its effectual working or anything like that—but before dealing with any of the details in any of the components—there is a sense and sequence matter that I want to focus upon right now that will help us to better appreciate just how many parts make up our *instruction of wisdom*.

- And by doing it this way—it will help you learn some things from this first component that will make it so that you're looking for something similar to it with those other components because you're going to naturally be looking for this same kind of thing taking place in all of them.

- And I'm taking time to say all this—and to go into all this kind of detail—because, just as we have talked about all along—we're now involved in *godly edification* in earnest—that is, this edification process that we've longed to begin with our Father as His sons is now **actually** beginning to take place.

- And (not to say that nothing we've learned so far has any edifying to it, because it does) - but the major edification process is now going to begin—and it's no longer just a theory out in the future—but it's right here, right now.

- And **edification** is now THE BIG ISSUE—and everything is now interconnected—everything attaches itself to something else—and there's nothing along the lines of a 'free-standing' doctrine.

- And just as it says back in Proverbs in the exhortation for Level III — *Wisdom hath builded her house ...* and later on in the book of Proverbs — *Through wisdom is an house builded* (Pro. 9:1 and 24:3)

- And when you build a house, every part of that house is interconnected.

- And that edification process or building process is going to be the **big issue** from now on.

- And my understanding is that we should be able to look at a given section or component or part of our curriculum and we should be able to (or we should get skilled to be able) to see the pattern for godly edification taking place within the body of information we're given.

- And, of course, the edification I'm talking about and the *wisdom* that we're first and foremost given here is strictly in connection with the *wisdom* we're to *receive* as the members of the new creature of the church, the body of Christ—(and not as members of the remnant of Israel under God's program with Israel and His business with them).

- (Even though, at times, our curriculum and their curriculum will parallel each other) — in fact, we're taught godly love from the outset, and they're taught godly love from the outset, but some variations start to take place shortly after that because of the nature of the 2 programs.

- And therefore we need to be able to identify that our *instruction of wisdom* is composed of these (however many?) exact issues.

- And hopefully, by doing what we're about to do—you'll be able to better and more intelligently grasp the value of each component—and have a far deeper degree of the effectual working of each component.

- So—we can come along and say (with some degree of appreciation) that (:3-8) are designed to get godly love brought into existence in our heart (our inner man) - and that should be a reasonable thing to expect just from our examination so far.

- And by the time we get to the end of (:8), therefore, we are to have godly love beginning to operate in us as sons.

- That is—it's not just concept or theory, but it's come into some measure of real, genuine operation in us as sons.

- Ok—now to get to this issue that I'm after—when you just look at (:3-8) - there's something that you already know about in connection with how godly edification is supposed to take place—that makes it so that you see a kind of 'thread' that runs through the entire section—or a patter that you should almost anticipate that is going to take place—simply because you're dealing with the issue of (in whatever you're talking about) being an issue of godly edification.

- And that 'thread' or pattern is what I'm specifically after—and it's not so much found in the details of the passage, but the overall **structure** of it.

- So when you think about (:3-8) bringing godly love into existence by it's effectual working in your inner man—how would you say that has to get done? (don't answer for now) How would all that get done by following a particular pattern that you've come to appreciate that enables godly edifying to take place?

- Another thing that might help you out here (or spill the beans) is to just take notice of how many full sentences we have in (:3-8)? (there are 3 of them)

- Another thing that will help you out here is to just say for now (and I'll come back to this later on) - but for now, my understanding is that what you have in (:3-8) [even though it's obvious from vs.9 that godly love is going to go on and be dealt with further] - but what you have in (:3-8) is more than simply a component to godly love—but it actually forms godly love's **first major feature**.

- And I say that—just to make it so that you begin to think about (:3-8) in as having a little more 'completeness' to it than you may be thinking about it.

- And that's valid to say it that way—because by the time you get to the end of (:8) real, genuine godly love **has** been brought into existence.

- So when you think about a form of doctrine doing it's effectual job; and when you think about godly edifying taking place: what's the process that God follows in order to get that to take place with you as His son?

- Answer: Since godly edifying is designed to produce *godliness*—the 'thread' or pattern that it has to follow is; 1) To **think** the way God thinks; 2) To **conduct** and **behave** ourselves the way God does; 3) To **work** and **labor** with God in what He's doing. (that = godliness)

- And when it comes to (:3-8) - since this is the first major feature of godly love—you should easily be able to point to where the 1st and 3rd issues of godliness takes place (that is, the godly thinking and the godly labor) — [those are easy to pick out]

- In (:3) you have it given to you 3x's—*think, think, think*.
(:3) is your godly thinking in connection with godly love.

- In (:6-8) you have a whole bunch of things that we are to go about doing—or a whole bunch of things we are to immediately go to work on—or labor in.
(:6-8) is our godly labor in connection with godly love.

- And that leaves (:4-5) - and there you have some things that go to the issue of how you are supposed to (in light of the godly thinking) conduct and behave yourself now in view of godly love being brought into existence in your thinking. (:4-5) is our godly living in connection with godly love.

- And, as it turns out, the 3 issues of godliness follow the 3 complete sentences that's found in (:3-8) as well.

- Now before going on to deal with the other components of (:9-16), I want to return to something I mentioned earlier—and that is that what our Father is doing here is really a huge thing—it's a **big deal**—and the doctrine of godly love is a massive one that only begins here, and will be built upon throughout our sonship education.

- But as it starts off, (right at the very beginning) - we not only get godly love up and running in our sonship lives—but in this first, initial major component to it—we are also given godly love's **first major feature**—(and there will be many more that follow this).

- And right now, what I want you to do is to think about another common 'thread' that runs all through (:3-8) - something about godly love that you can come along and put a name to it—or come along and call it something—like, "Godly love is _____"

- And it is the most fundamental thing or fundamental major feature of godly love—(what is it)?

Answer: **GODLY LOVE IS SELFLESS.** (see #39)

- Now I know that you have a whole bunch of godless folks and even Christian folks that only operate upon the wisdom of this world who will come along and write books and hold conferences (and even psychologists and psychiatrists and sociologists and other religions and existentialists and philosophers) all would teach and agree upon the issue of: one of love's great virtues is that it is selfless—they'll all lay claim to that feature of love.

- It's even found in the issue of patriotic love of country.

- In fact—my own mother could be described as having selfless love.
- But the truth is—none of those things—and none of those people (including my own mother) have godly love; or the first major feature of godly love as taught to you here in Romans 12:3-8!
- And though it may sound cruel—the truth is, you can't have godly love unless it has been effectually produced in you by means of the exact information contained in Romans 12:3-8!
- Therefore—(and to recap)— the first thing our Father is going to do to begin our sonship education in earnest is to *instruct* us in His *wisdom*—(that's what the Table of Contents of the Sonship Curriculum calls for) — and we are now *receiving the instruction of wisdom*—but to get that accomplished, instead of simply telling us what is wise and what isn't, (case-book style), our Father gives us the *instruction of wisdom* by means of the essential, fundamental, foundational doctrine of GODLY LOVE.
- And the genius of doing it this way is that: the major, fundamental, core issue in what our Father's *wisdom* is all about is that we are to acquire the fundamental characteristics that stands behind everything that God our Father does!
- And that fundamental characteristic that stands behind everything our Father does is His **godly love**—(that is, what He values and what He esteems).
- Not to mention how getting godly love effectually working goes to remedying the *vanity* out in that *creature*!
- And so—simply put—Romans 12:3-16 gives us our *instruction of wisdom* by means of the fundamental doctrine of godly love.
- Godly love is the very thing you'll need as a son—in order to make wise decisions like your Father makes—and to accomplish the first aspects of *not being conformed to this world* and to be *transformed by the renewing of your mind* into the very *image of Christ*.
- (i.e., making wise decisions based upon God's N/S of what He values and esteems).

- So the natural thing to do is to—(since all you’ve got is the *world’s* way of love developed in you) - is to get **godly** love produced and brought into existence—and Romans 12 & vs.3-8 are designed to get godly love brought into existence.

- And more than that, to get the first major feature of godly love produced in your inner man: **GODLY LOVE IS SELFLESS**.

- And more than that, to get godly edifying taking place by a form of doctrine (about godly love and the feature of it being selfless) that produces godly edifying by affecting:

- 1) the way you think (:3);
- 2) the way you conduct yourself (:4 & 5);
- 3) and then giving you some labor to do in connection with that godly thinking and godly conduct & behavior (:6, 7, & 8).

- And that’s the general description of what Romans 12:3-16 is designed to do overall—and what the first major component of the doctrine that makes up our *instruction of wisdom* is designed to do.

- Now let’s turn our attention to the remainder of the verses that make up our *instruction of wisdom*—(and that pertain to the issue of godly love), and let’s see the remaining components to this form of doctrine.

- Well, we already have (:3-8) producing the fundamentals of selfless godly love in our inner man—and by means of (:4-8) especially, we get godly love put into practice in our lives as sons.

- And that most fundamental aspect of godly love being that godly love is selfless.

- And then (:9) says, *Let love be without dissimulation*. — and now an adjustment is going to take place (not an adjustment that’s going to make a correction or any thing like that) - but an adjustment that provides for a furtherance and a greater development in the issue of the godly love that has now come into existence.

- And even though it’s kind of violating our normal way of doing things—since I know that you’ve already read ahead through our epistles—then you already know that one of the

things you frequently encounter about the issue of godly love is that Paul talks about love *increasing* and *abounding*—and therefore, we would naturally expect that (:3-8) are not going to provide everything that God has provided for when it comes to the fullness of godly love being produced in us.

- (:3-8) gets it underway—it gets it into existence—but in order to get it to increase and abound, there has to be further doctrines in connection with it that need to be effectually working in us—and as it does that, it provides for it to increase and abound.

- And so it wouldn't be surprising to find that when you arrive at the next component that deals with our *instruction of wisdom*, that we're still going to deal with some things about godly love—but it's going to deal with **another fundamental, foundational feature or characteristic** about it that needs to be brought into existence as well.

- But there's another reason (a reason that we can look **back** to) - a reason that we've already been alerted to—that tells us that this next **fundamental feature** of godly love is what we would expect to find as the next, natural component to godly love and that goes to making up our *instruction of wisdom*.

- (We're not going to look at it right at this moment—but there is something sitting back in Romans 8 that has alerted us to what we're going to encounter here beginning in Rom. 12:9ff).

- But for now—looking at (:9-16) - do you see a break in that body of information? - where do you see the **next** component taking place?

- Keep in mind that, again, godly edification is the big thing taking place here as we are receiving the *instruction of wisdom*—so that should help you out or 'tip you off' as to what to look for in the next component — (although, I grant you that it's not quite as easy to see as (:3-8) made it to be).

- Hint: You should be looking for 3 things to take place—thinking; living; and labor.

- My understanding is that the next component that makes up our *instruction of wisdom* by way of godly love is found in (:9 and :10).

- Because, for one thing it contains all 3 issues of godly edifying.

- (:9) — *Let love be without dissimulation.*
(That's the godly thinking).
- (:9) — *Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.* (That's the godly conduct & behavior).
- (:10) — *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;*
(That's the godly labor).

- And if you think about it—something begins to happen to godly love beginning there in (:11) - and something mentioned in (:11) that makes it so that this godly love is talked about a little bit different than it has been talked about previous to it.

- (We'll deal with that much more a little bit later on).

- For now, though, when you look at (:9-10) - it's obvious by those first 3 words of (:9) [*Let love be ...*] that you're still dealing with the issue of godly love—but the remainder of (:9) and all of (:10) are things that were not sitting in any of the information contained in (3-8).

- And now there is something else being focused upon in connection with godly love—and even though you've got several issues being brought up in (:9 & 10) - everything that's being said there shares something in common (a common 'thread' that runs through them all) — so that when you grasp that 'thread' you're able to come along and say something that's the common denominator to everything that (:9 & 10) is saying.

- And the reason I'm taking time on this is that—when you grasp the common 'thread' to (:9-10), you'll end up with that next **major feature** to godly love—that next: **Godly Love Is _____**.

- Now to help you out—(even though you may have hit a 'snag' in connection with that word *dissimulation*) — but let's let that go for now — for now, if you just take for granted that (:9 & 10) do go together—if you look at just those 2 verses, and if you think about them producing godly edifying—where does the godly **labor** begin?

Answer: (at :10) - *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;*

- And what God is doing here is to produce in you godly love's **2nd major feature**—because godly love possesses more than one fundamental characteristic or feature.

- And (:3-8) provides for the 1st major feature of godly love; and (:9-10) provides for it's 2nd major feature.

- And these 2 occur one right after the other—(and that's because of what we're told about that's sitting back in our sonship establishment back in Romans 8—which we'll get to in a little bit).

- Godly love's next major feature won't occur until we've left the *instruction of wisdom*—and it comes up in *justice*, and another major feature comes up in *judgment*, and then a couple more come up in *equity* and in the remainder of Romans 15:8-end of the book.

- But when it comes to describing godly love—we first and foremost describe it as a **selfless** love—but being a **selfless** love, it also has some other features or characteristics about it—(because it's not just some theoretical thing, or an abstract concept—**but it actually functions!**)

- And since it **functions**, it's got characteristics and features about it.

- And under Level I Sonship Education, you're going to get 7 common fundamental characteristics and features of godly love taught to you.

- And one of the many jobs of Level I Sonship Education is to provide for getting all those features and all those characteristics of godly love operational in you as a son.

- And then in Level II you're going to get information that sends you back to Romans—and you're going to go over them again—and you're going to go over those 7 features of godly love again—but now the information in Level II is going to provide for that fundamental godly love to *abound* and *increase* in each of those 7 features - and then in Level III you go over them again, and by that information it provides for the fullness of those 7 features of godly love to be brought into existence.

- And the first 2 features of godly love occur back to back (so to speak) in our *instruction of wisdom*—as the first 2 components that make up our *instruction of wisdom*.
- And I'm saying all that just to say that the very terminology you first encounter in (:9 — *Let love be without dissimulation.*) actually leads your thinking into this next major feature of what godly love is.
 - Now maybe we should deal with that word, *dissimulation*, here because it will validate what I've been talking about, (& will talk about), but I still would like to hold off on that for now.
- For now—the word *dissimulation* is telling you that when you get to the end of (:8) and you have that first feature of godly love produced in you (**selflessness**) - it's telling you, “Don't stop there and don't think that that's all there is to godly love—because the whole thing hasn't yet been totally ‘assimilated’ or ‘made similar’ or made to resemble something else.” But it also has to have this other major feature or characteristic.
 - And there is a reason for why the first 2 features of godly love are dealt with back-to-back—(and why only these 2 and not any of the rest of them are dealt with here) — and that's because you have to have these 2 features of godly love operational and effectually working in your sonship life in order to properly deal with the remaining issues that are brought up and dealt with in the remainder of our *instruction of wisdom*.
 - In other words, it takes the effectual working of the first 2 major features of godly love in order to be able to do what vs. 11-16 are going to instruct you to do! (Everything in those verses are based upon the selflessness of godly love combined with this other feature of godly love.)
 - And our Father knows that that is sufficient enough for now to complete that first sonship decision-making skill of *receiving the instruction of wisdom* from Him.
- So we now have to zero in on what that common thread or major feature that these verses of (:9-10) is driving at—and if you're talking about a ‘feature’ - often times that feature is seen most clearly when it gets put on display or when it goes into action.

- And if you're talking about when something goes into action or gets put on display—and you're talking about it in the sense of the sense and sequence of godly edifying going on—in which of the 3 issues that makes up godly edifying is the action seen the most? or put on display for all to see it? — Answer: the **labor** aspect of it.
- So when you look at (:9-10), and you think about the fact that the godly thinking produces the godly living—and then both of those go to produce the godly labor—what is the major feature or characteristic that is describing the godly love in (:10) [which is the labor aspect of this section of the doctrine]??
 - (Note to self: If the folks get it now or not—move on to the next thing).
- Well another way to gain the understanding and appreciation for the 2nd major feature of godly love—since the beginning of (:9) tells you *Let love be without dissimulation*—it's coming along and saying Don't stop with vs. 3-8, but there's more to godly love than that, so go on and get this other thing — but we can now add something else to that — and that is to think: In godly edifying, what is the goal of it all? what are we to be like at the end of it all? Who are we going to be conformed to? (The Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son).
- Ok—that should tell you that if this is dealing with **godly** love, and there's more to it than the feature of it being **selfless**—then it stands to reason that you can go back and find that feature being described as being possessed by Him, right?
- So if He possesses this feature of godly love—then it stands to reason that He may very well have been described in connection with it—and if we're supposed to be 'similar' with it, the only way we could do that is if we can go back and recognize it as existing in Him.
- And therefore, we should be able to find it in God's word—and even to have it 'hit us' (so to speak) what this 2nd major feature is what is now being linked up with godly love.
 - And we do find it—and it is so fundamental and so basic that we often find it (some 30x) linked up with God's love.
 - And that word is: *lovingkindness*
- And **kindness** is that 2nd major feature of godly love.

- (:9-10) - GODLY LOVE IS KIND. (see #39)

- By the way—**kindness** is a word that has really been weakened over time in our English language!

- But **kindness** is exactly what the last part of (:10) is describing.

- When you possess kindness (not when you're occasionally kind), but when you possess **kind-NESS** (the suffix meaning that it's a characteristic you possess all the time—it's a feature) - when you possess kindness, you abhor anything that's evil, detrimental, or harmful to someone—and you cleave to the issue of goodness—the last thing you want to be is anything but good!

- That kindness on display!

- In fact, kindness is actually an attitude—and being kind is a manifestation of it.

- And so the first 2 major features of godly love are **selflessness** and **kindness**!

- Now we'll verify this and nail it down and settle the matter fully when we deal with the full details of *dissimulation*—but for now, that should give you some amount of confidence in the matter of what this 2nd major feature of godly love is.

- But the truth of the matter is—that when you first get the basic, fundamental understanding and appreciation of what godly love is: it's 2 main, major features or characteristics are that God's love is **selflessness & kindness**—and those 2 have to go together—they are inseparable!

- Granted, at times they can be spoken of individually—but as far as God Himself is concerned—He can't be selfless and not kind—and He can't be kind and not selfless!

- The 2 just go together!

- And the effectual working of Romans 12:3-10, fundamentally produces that exact same love in us—*lovingkindness*.

- So by the time (:10) is done with—and the effectual working of (:9 & 10) is effectually working within us—*kindness* and being *kind* on the basis of that—is to become an issue in our thinking and in our conduct.

- And we're going to begin the labor aspect of it with *being kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; and in honour preferring one another;*

- But just as (:3-8) is only the beginning of godly **selfless** love—(:9-10) is only the beginning of **kindness** as well. (But it has to begin someplace, and that's where it begins.)

- Now before going on—I want to return to something I said earlier that should be another thing that makes it so that when you look at the breakdown of the component parts that go to make up our *receiving the instruction of wisdom* from our Father—and in doing so, to get that wisdom in a form of doctrine about godly love—to come along and recognize Romans 12:9-10 as the next, natural component of godly love—and the 2nd major feature of godly love (being *kindness*).

- As I said before—when it comes to answering the question of Why is this the next thing we learn? Why are we given this 2nd feature of godly love (godly love is *kind*)? — there is something we have already been told back in Romans 8 that alerts us to the issue of *kindness* being a natural and fundamental characteristic that **we are going to have to possess as sons.**

- And therefore it comes as no surprise to find it being brought up right away as a natural and essential part of our *instruction of wisdom*—and in fact, should immediately follow the issue of godly love being *selfless*.

- So do you see something sitting in Romans 8 (in sonship establishment, especially) that alerts you to having to have as an essential and fundamental characteristic as a son—to have godly love's 2nd major feature: *kindness*?

- Once again—you'll find it when our Father describes to us what we will be doing (in general) in laboring together with Him as the adopted sons that we are—what His business with us is all about.

- (see once again, Rom. 8:19-22) (:21)

- Notice that—*the creature itself also shall be delivered from **the bondage of corruption** into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

- What I'm specifically after here is that—another glimpse our Father gives us into the situation that the *creature* finds itself in under the usurpation of the Adversary—is that it is in a state of **bondage**—and that word *bondage* is significant beyond being just a 'colorful' way of describing sin entering into the heavenly places and the heavenly places being brought under the authority of the Adversary and his policies of evil.

- That's NOT 'colorful' language—that's the real and genuine and **literal** condition the *creature* is in as it exists under the authority of the Adversary and his policy of evil!

- The *creature* is in *bondage*—now how in the world does that indicate to us that we are going to have to have this fundamental characteristic of *kindness* as sons—and as we are going to labor in our Father's business out in that *creature*?

- In other words—how is the *bondage* that the *creature* is in connect with this issue of godly love being one of *kindness*?

- Well, my understanding is that there is, indeed, a connection—so the question is, Where in God's word were you told something that when the issue of *bondage* was brought up—that the issue of being in *bondage* was the farthest thing from *kindness*—and in fact, was described with a term that is the exact OPPOSITE of *kindness*???

- Come back to Exodus 6:9 (read) — see that expression: *cruel bondage*? — well, when you have something or someone that has been made subject or forced into *bondage* that is nothing BUT **CRUEL!**

- And even though the word *cruel* isn't used in Rom. 8:21, that **is** the only appropriate way to think of the *bondage* the *creature* is currently in!

- Webster's 1828—CRUEL: Disposed to give pain to others, in body or mind; willing or pleased to torment, vex or afflict; inhuman; destitute of pity, compassion or *kindness*; fierce; ferocious; savage; barbarous; hardhearted ...

- The truth is—that *creature* is now in a state of *cruel bondage* itself—and because of that there is nothing *kind* about it—there is no *kindness* going on out there—and in fact, it is currently destitute of *kindness* and compassion—and as a ‘body’ it is (because of that *bondage*) in great pain and torment due to those beings that now occupy its intelligentsia!

- And just like we noted in connection with godly love being the *selfless* thing that it is (in Romans 12:3-8) - and therefore your wisdom being the *selfless* godly love that it is—when you get placed as sons in the *creature* to labor in your Father’s business—you will possess it as a **remedy** to the **vanity** that the *creature* was *made subject to* — by the same token, when you get placed as a son in the *creature*, you will also possess the **remedy** to the *creature’s cruel bondage*—you’ll possess the necessary *kindness* that will also be a godly remedy to the condition the *creature* has been in since the Adversary took usurpation and authority over it!

- And you’ll bring the very features and character of the One in whom you are being *conformed into the image of*—the Lord Jesus Christ Himself—and you’ll have His life and His character and His image—and in that way you’ll become the very functional life of the *creature*—just as God your Heavenly Father designed it in the first place!

- Again—I only bring this to your attention to underscore the fact that even though you may not imagine it to be so—everything you’re being taught and instructed in and practiced in, all has as its ultimate aim and goal and objective, correcting the corruption that exists in the *creature*!

- And that should give a “WOW” factor to every detail you learn in the curriculum for your sonship education!

- And all that is what lies ‘behind the scenes’ to godly love being *selflessness* and *kindness*!

- Now another thing that I want you to appreciate in the way in which our Father instructs us in these 2 major features of His godly love— (*selflessness & kindness*) — and that’s to just recognize something **in the way in which we go about putting our godly thinking and living into practice** in our godly **labor**—that is, when it comes to both the selflessness of godly love in (:3-8) and the kindness of godly love in (:9-10) - what is it that is in **common** to both (when it comes to the labor aspect of it)?

- Answer: Godly love (being both **selfless** and **kind**—or *lovingkindness*) is to be utilized and put on display in the laboring aspect of it **to members of the church, the body of Christ, FIRST**. (And especially ones that we assemble with).

- In other words—so far, in the first 2 components that make up our *instruction of wisdom*—we have godly love being put into practice first and foremost within the local assembly and to the members of the church, the body of Christ.

- But once godly love has been brought into existence—and once it has begun effectually working in us, and being utilized with the ones we assemble with—then it can begin to **‘branch out’** — and that’s where the 3rd Component that begins there in Rom. 12 and vs. 11 provides for.

- And it provides for the first time for godly love to operate OUTSIDE the ‘doors’ of the local church! (Or outside the doors of a family that’s made up of saints).

- And that’s part of the sense & sequence that this whole form of doctrine is made up of—that’s part of recognizing that, ok, once godly love is in existence, and now that the 2 major features of godly love exist and are being displayed one to another— Where does it go next?

- And where it goes next is exactly where (:11) takes it to!

- And where it goes after that is exactly where (:12) takes it to; and where it goes after that is where (:13) takes it to; and on and on.

- And everything that's going to be dealt with in the 3rd Component and the 4th and the 5th and following—are all going to be produced by the godly love **with** its *selflessness* and its *kindness*.

- So, for example, you're not going to (down in :13) - you're not going to *distribute to the necessity of saints and be given to hospitality* without that *selflessness and kindness* — and when it comes to *them which persecute you*, you're not going to *bless them*; and you're not going to *rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep* without that *selflessness* and that *kindness* in existence.

- In fact, the truth of the matter is—even though we will be able to identify some godly thinking, living, and labor connected with them; the things that get brought up and dealt with from (:11) on are **fruits** of that godly love's *selflessness and kindness*—and those are fruits of it in certain & particular areas of life.

- (And that's why I put that line in between the 2nd Component of our *instruction of wisdom* and the remaining components of it—just to make that distinction.)

- So these first 2 major features of godly love (*selflessness and kindness*) are sufficient enough to get all the rest of the components that make up this form of doctrine to do their effectual job in our inner man—and therefore godly love won't get the next major feature to it until there is reason to once again bring up the issue of godly love—and then you'll get the 3rd major feature to it, and so forth and so on. (till you have all 7 of them)

- But these first 2 are the most essential of all the major features of godly love—and they're inseparable, they go together—and *selflessness* comes first because *kindness* only exists when *selflessness* first exists—*kindness* couldn't come first because *kindness* demands *selflessness* in order for it to exist.

- So we're taught *selflessness* first—and then we're exhorted to not let it stand by itself, but to pick up the other **similarity** to God's *selfless* love which is so commonly spoken of in the book of the Psalms in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself (as He functions in connection with the 5 mandates of the Davidic Covenant), we're then taught loving-*kindness*.

- And really—(just to make the point) - you can **define** godly love as **a mental attitude of what God Himself values and esteems**—but when it comes to **describing** godly love (not simply defining it—which is an easy thing to do), it gets **described** in the 7 major features or characteristics that you'll get as you go on through the book of Romans.

- (*Describing* something is much harder and much more involved than simply *defining* it.)

- Ok—so we have the first 2 Components that make up our *instruction of wisdom* which is taught to us via the fundamental doctrine of godly love:

- 1) (:3-8) - Godly love is brought into existence—GL is selfless.
- 2) (:9-10) - Godly love is kind or kindness.

- And now that those first 2 Major Features of godly love are in existence, (as we said earlier), after it gets put on display, first of all, to the members of the church, the body of Christ (and the ones that we assemble with) - beginning in (:11), that godly love is now in a state that it can begin to 'branch out' beyond the limits of the local assembly.

- (:11) *Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;*

- And my understanding is that this one verse is the 3rd Component to our *instruction of wisdom* via godly love.

- And it's rather obvious by what it says that we're not dealing with 'one another' any more—but beginning in (:11) we're now outside our own rank (so to speak).

- And since edification is still the issue here—we're not dropping the issue of either godly love (which is the means by which our Father instructs us in His fundamental wisdom), nor are we dropping the issues of godly edifying (godly thinking, living, and labor).

- But for godly love to exist, it has to go beyond just the boundaries of the members of the church, the body of Christ—and so it's now going to **move out into the world**—and the first place it moves out to is where you'll spend the bulk of your time: **YOUR JOB!** or your **business**.

- And if you think about it—that's the most natural next place for it to move out to.

- So (#39) the 3rd Component of the Instruction of Wisdom:

3) Godly love outside the local church and into the world—your job.

- And so we're making good sense and good sequence—because this is the 2nd most natural realm in which godly love needs to function.

- (The 1st most natural realm is in the local assembly with other members of the church, the body of Christ).

- And my understanding is that even here (in :11) we can find the godly thinking (*Not slothful in business*); the godly conduct & behavior (*fervent in spirit*); and the godly labor (*servicing the Lord*).

- And right now I'm going to just let it go at that—and just get the remainder of the components in their sense & sequence set before you.

- The 4th Component of our Instruction of Wisdom via Godly love:

- (:12) *Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;*

- Now things have shifted a bit—because the godly love isn't dealing with a bunch of people now—and the truth is, without following what's going on here in the sense and sequence, you'd have the tendency to say, How in the world does godly love move into this realm??? (but it does!)

- And since we haven't dealt with everything perfectly from (:3) down to this point—we're obviously lacking some things to make it so that this is the natural thing to see happening to godly love—but sense and sequence demands that this is the next natural area for godly love to move out to.

- And as we go down through the details of (:3-11), there won't be any awkwardness to it and there will be a smooth transition to this realm where our godly love will move into.

- But we can come along and put a very general description to it—because since we're no longer dealing so much with a bunch of people—what this realm is (where godly love next moves to) is in the area of our circumstances and our situations.

- But the general matter of (:12) is talking about some specific and particular *kinds* of circumstances and situations we will find ourselves in.

- And we are going to learn to take the godly love that has been generate within us—and is beginning to function within us—and once it is effectually working in us within a local assembly situation — and then in our busy-ness of our daily lives—its next, natural thing for it to do as it becomes the foundation to **everything** in our sonship lives, is to move into the general area of common circumstances and situations in which we can find ourselves that aren't covered by what takes place in a local assembly, or by what takes place in our day-to-day business lives (so to speak).

- And in (:12) there's a particular reason for why the focus of attention is upon the things that are in it.

- Because, for example, the particular *tribulation* that Paul has in view here (as well as the terminology like *hope*) - is going back to the issue of *the sufferings of this present time* in general that he dealt with back in Romans 8:18.

- And we learned the basic principle of how to respond to that—and now, on the basis of godly love, **FOR** the *hope that we see not* (as 8:24-25 describes) - and godly love **FOR** what God is doing that enables sufferings and tribulations to continue on, and for us to experience them (and not be removed from them) - our *selflessness* and our *kindness* is going to have us responding to those things in a very particular way.

- In a way that emulates the Lord Jesus Christ's response to them even further than what we were first introduced to back there in Romans 8:18.

- And so (:12) is dealing with fundamental godliness based upon godly love in connection with us as members of the new creature of the church, the body of Christ encountering those *sufferings of this present time* that we know are going to occur & will continue to occur for as long as we live our sonship lives on this earth.

- So (#39) the 4th Component of our Instruction of Wisdom:

4) Godly love in our common circumstances & situations.

- Now when it comes to the 5th Component that makes up our *instruction of wisdom*—and, by default, when it comes to the remainder of the verses of (:13 through :16) — there are a couple of ways we can find out just how many major components those 4 verses have to them, and exactly where do we divide them into their respective ‘groupings.’

- And really, we can tell where to make the next break for several reasons—one is grammatical; one is ‘technical’ (so to speak); and one is contextual.

- On the grammatical side of things—notice, How many sentences do we have remaining in (:13-16)? — Answer: 6 — (docket that in your mind for now, and we’ll come back to this later).

- On the ‘technical’ side of things—what I mean by that is, that in each and every ‘packet’ of doctrine that our Father gives us that goes into the making up of this first form of doctrine we’re receiving from Him (which is His *instruction of wisdom* via godly love) - when it comes to how each component or ‘packet’ of doctrine within the overall form of doctrine does its effectual job of getting godly love produced in us in its most basic and fundamental way (yet, even though it is basic and fundamental, it, nevertheless, matches exactly the basic and fundamental godly love that exists in God our Father!) — but when it comes to each ‘packet’ or component of this doctrine to effectually work in our inner man and get the godly love produced in us—just how does it go about doing that?

- Answer: It does it by means of what **godly edifying** calls for—and that is to change our **thinking** and bring it into line with God’s own thinking; and then *by* that thinking, affect the way we conduct ourselves and behave ourselves (usually in just our own life, privately, where we, personally can see the conduct & behavior, or else where just a limited few that immediately surround us can observe it) - so by the proper, godly thinking, it materially affects our **living**; and finally, the godly thinking along with the godly living is put into practice in more than just our personal life, and so it has some **labor** to do and some furtherance to spread out to that is going to allow us to labor with our Father in some kind of operation or vocational training while we’re still on this earth—that will translate into taking that vocational training off of the ‘practice field’ (so to speak) and use that training for our Father’s business with and in that *creature*.

- Now I know you know that—but I said it the way I did so that we can **add** something very critical to our understanding and appreciation of how godly edifying takes place—and we'll do that when we begin to deal more closely with the 1st Component of this form of doctrine of our *instruction of wisdom*.

- But in order to get the final breakdown of the final 2 components to our *instruction of wisdom* here in Rom. 12:13-16—the issue of how many sentences we have; and the issue of keeping in mind that godly edification is supposed to take place in each of the components (therefore, we're on the lookout for that pattern of dealing with the **thinking** issue first, the **living** issue second, and the **labor** issue third) — those 2 things help us out in order to see where the break takes place—and now we can add to that the issue of the context that we find going on in the remainder of the verses.

- And my understanding is that there is a **shift** of the context that takes place between (:12) and (:13) — and so let's take notice of what that shift is — (and then we'll see where the final shift of the context takes place, and that should give us the actual 'break' of the final 2 Components.

- Remember that the context of the 4th Component of our *instruction of wisdom* in (:12) shifted from godly love dealing with a whole bunch of people back to us as members of the new creature of the church the body of Christ and the common circumstances and situations we find ourselves in as we encounter those *sufferings of this present time*.

- But now, beginning in (:13) **we're back to dealing with a whole bunch of people, once again**—and the first part of (:13) has *saints* (believers) in view—but the last part of (:13) doesn't necessarily have *saints* in view (although it could include *saints*) — so the indication would seem to be that it's not just *saints* in view, even though a particular thing is said about *saints*.

- So, again, we're back to dealing with people.

- And so, in order to begin to give a name or description to this component in its sense & sequence in the form of doctrine—the thing that distinguishes it from the previous

4 components, isn't so much the people that are in view, but what the godly love is **doing** to the people.

- And again, it's the selflessness and the kindness of godly love that's behind all that's going on here—and even in connection with the *saints* here in (:13), they're being treated in a different manner than what was spoken of them back in (:3-8).

- Therefore the godly love has returned to dealing with people — and now it's going to do **more** than what it has been doing with them already.

- (For example, it's not going to just deal with the *saints* in a way that provides for a local assembly—and it's not going to just deal with *saints* in a way that provides for them to be treated *kindly* and for *brotherly love* to be displayed and for that tightening up of the relationship to be going on—but the godly love is going to move into another area as well).

- So it says—*Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.* — and so now you've got *saints* that would have a *necessity*, that, based upon the godly love and charity would have you *distributing* to it—but also dealing with ones in a particular way, and that particular way, of showing *hospitality* to them (and not just showing it, but being *given* to it).

- So, the godly love and charity has now branched out to an area in which *saints* certainly may be dealt with, but that also may include other people who are NOT necessarily *saints*.

- Because when you're given to *hospitality*—the way that is stated has in mind **more** than just the other *saints* that you will come into contact with.

- In other words, there's no qualification that says that's only to be done to saved people!

- And what's going on here is that this next component to the doctrine comes along and extends that godly love—first to the *saints* but then to other people who are in a lost condition. (*given to hospitality* bringing or leading your thinking to include others who are not *saints*, i.e., the lost people as well)

- And as we'll see—that word *hospitality* and that phrase, *given to hospitality* is a 'trigger' mechanism that causes your thinking (your godly thinking about this godly love that has been produced in you) to move out to not only *saints*—and to think about them in a different way than you have before; but to also includes folks who are NOT of the *saints* variety!

- And sure enough—both verses 14 & 15 go on to describe some things in connection with those who are not necessarily *saints* (lost people) — and describes godly love existing in some other particular ways and put on display in some other particular ways.

- And even though we'll get more understanding and appreciation of this when we deal with these passages in full detail and in their full effectual working—but right now you should be able to look at (:14 & 15) and catch one of the major by-products (so to speak) that furthers the issue of godly love (and that our Father possesses Himself) and that He wants produced in us in order for it to be our *wisdom* before Him, before the angels, and before men in general.

- So when you think about what (:14-15) says—*Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.* — what is that describing, attitude-wise and display-wise in connection with both *saints* and lost people?

- Think about those words—*bless, rejoice, weep*—what is that dealing with in regard to godly love?

- Answer: In regard to both *saints* as well as lost people; when you deal with them in certain situations, you are to deal with them **tenderheartedly**.

- And if there's any fuzziness in your thinking here, we'll get full clarity on all this as we go through it—and we'll even be able to give a more clear definition and description to this component as we deal with it in detail.

- But context-wise—when you then look at what gets said there in (:16) [*Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.*] — my understanding is that there is a ‘shift’ that takes place, once again—and now you’re no longer talking about the same thing that (:13-15) were talking about—because you’ve gone back to a context dealing only with **other saints**—not to mention that you’ve come back to something similar to what you began dealing with in (:3-8).

- So therefore—in view of the grammar issue (that is, you have 3 sentences in [:13-15] and then 3 sentences in [:16]) — and in view of the technical issue (so to speak) of godly edifying going on in each ‘packet’ of the individual components that make up the form of doctrine (therefore, sentence #1 of :13 being the godly thinking; sentence #2 of :14 being the godly living; and sentence #3 of :15 being the godly labor) — and in view of the context of (:13-15) dealing with **both saints** and lost people, but then (:16) going back to dealing only with saints—my understanding is that (:13, 14, & 15) make up the 5th Component of our *instruction of wisdom*.

- So (#39) the 5th Component of our Instruction of Wisdom:

5) Godly love among both saints and lost people. (Tenderhearted)

- And therefore, that leaves only (:16) as our final, 6th Component.

- And we have 3 sentences to it—each one following the pattern for godly edifying to take place in connection with it as a ‘packet’ of the entire form of doctrine—and the context is shifted one last time to bring us back ‘full-circle’ (if you will) to what was begun in (:3-8), but now there are some other things that gets added to those features of godly love being **selfless & kind** in order to ‘cap off’ our initial, basic effectual working of godly love as our *instruction of wisdom*.

- And really—this last component takes every element you’ve learned about godly love—and now we’re going to get instruction on how to exercise that godly love (with all of its characteristics and features and sub-features) — and now all these things can be incorporated into particular situations whereby, due to how you’ve already been taught by the course of this ungodly world, your nature is to just naturally come along and handle some saints (in these particular situations) in a completely UNGODLY manner because you DON’T *condescend* to them!

- And this final component is going to instruct you on how to think, live, and labor with saints of *low estate*—which, even though you may not be able to completely get a grip on what that all means—it tells you that there are those saints that you’re going to deal with that maybe lack the understanding you have—or maybe they don’t learn as quickly—or maybe they’re feeble-minded—or one of those weaker brothers—but the truth of the matter is, and to kind of put it in a ‘nutshell’, **this is an advanced issue of how to deal with each other in difficult circumstances.**

- And it’s going to take work on your part—and effort on your part to deal with them—and there’s a godly viewpoint you have to have in order to deal properly as a son with them that are of *low estate*.

- And to deal properly with them—it’s going to take **everything** you’ve learned in the first 5 Components in order to deal with them properly and after a godly manner!

- And if you didn’t get those other 5 Components effectually working in your inner man—this 6th Component has NO CHANCE of working!

- So therefore the *instruction of wisdom* completes a circle whereby you come back to some advanced issues of how to wisely deal with each other in a very particular and difficult circumstance (naturally difficult).

- And the doctrine of our *instruction of wisdom* begins with how you are to think about yourself (properly viewing others and yourself as a body and members of the body of Christ) to whom God has *dealt to every man the measure of faith*—and it ends with *not minding high things* (just like not thinking too highly of yourself) - but there’s going to be members of the assembly that are of *lower estate* than you.

- Whether it’s because they haven’t received the education as readily—or because they have a natural deficiency in their intelligence—or whatever—but that’s something you’re going to encounter.

- And here in (:16) you’re taught the godly way to think (*Be of the same mind one toward another.*); the godly way to conduct and behave in that situation (*Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate.*); and the way to labor with your Father for the benefit

of that individual (*Be not wise in your own conceits.*).

- Rather than to marginalize that individual—or prefer not to deal with that individual.

- And the reason it comes last in the instruction is because everything else has to be in place in order to properly think, live, and labor in connection with those individuals in those kinds of circumstances.

- So (#39) the 6th and final Component of our Instruction of Wisdom:

6) Godly love in our dealings with other saints of low estate.
(or Godly love among others in difficult circumstances.)

- Q: Do you see the sense and sequence to this form of doctrine? Do you see the natural flow of it? Do you have any questions about it?

- Now before we begin dealing with the details of (:3-8) - I just want to underscore the importance of the kind of **structure** that each of the components have that make up our *instruction of wisdom*.

- And when I talk about the ‘kind of structure’ that each of the components have—you should already know that each component to the form of doctrine has the goal (as a component to the overall form of doctrine) to produce **godly edifying**.

- And by means of the effectual working of God’s word—by the time you get to the end of each component, a measure of godly edifying has taken place—and there is a deliberate and mechanical means by which our Father goes about to produce the measure of godly edifying that each component is designed to produce.

- In other words—just how does a component (like :3-8) go about producing godly edifying?

- And as we have already discussed and pointed out before—each component goes about producing godly edifying by dealing in a very precise order, it deals with the information according to what Biblical godliness calls for: and that is to **think** the way God thinks; to conduct and behave ourselves (or **live**) the way God lives; and then to take that godly thinking and godly living and then the component of doctrine will provide for an operation of our Father that we can manifest that godly thinking & living in some **labor** with our Father.

- And that means that we start off each component by addressing our **thinking**—and therefore the first thing that each component of doctrine is designed to do by its effectual working **is to produce a different thought pattern from the one we normally possess!**

- In other words—(just as :3 deals with) - it points out some thinking we naturally possess—and it presents the natural ungodliness in that natural thinking—and then it presents some godly information for you to think about and that's going to go about bringing a **change** in the way you used to think—and to think the way God thinks.

- And (:3) establishes the fundamental thinking that is productive, and designed to produce godly **selflessness**.

- And in fact—(:3) is so powerful on its own (by what it says) — that (:3) itself—when a son understands it; believes it (respond properly & positively to it) - **that (:3) itself will bring godly selfless love into existence.**

- (It won't bring godly love into existence in all of its full-blown glory—but it will bring it into existence in its initial form.)

- It's still going to grow and develop from this—but nevertheless, (:3) itself is designed to bring it into existence.

- And then (:4-5) is designed to take that now existing godly selfless love and godly thinking—and then to enable it to **conduct** itself and **behave** itself in the actual **living** of a member of the church the body of Christ in a way that's consistent with *being* a member of the church, the body of Christ—and it makes that member of the church the body of Christ able to look at *other* members of the church, the body of Christ differently, and exactly how he ought to look at them *being* other members of the church the body of Christ with him.

- And that allows for him to begin to conduct himself & behave himself towards them appropriately—and just like a member ought to conduct himself & behave himself.

- And then once that's effectually working within him—and he's got that effectual conduct & behavior in existence—then (:6-8) comes along and says: Alright, now you can start to effectually **function** and **labor** with God in the local assembly on the basis of selfless love.

- And then that local church can begin to function as an assembly, and as members of a body should function as *members one with another* with their various capacities—and you can then begin to perform aspects of God’s business and various aspects of it that **He** has—and then you can do all that to His honour and glory—and do that all based upon this godly selfless love that you now have, and this body-type conduct & behavior that you know now how to perform.

- Now I realize you already know this—because we’ve talked about it as we began dealing with this first form of doctrine that makes up our *instruction of wisdom*.

- But I wanted to underscore all that—and more than that, I wanted to **add** to that basic understanding and appreciation of how edification takes place and how each component of doctrine within the whole form of doctrine goes about getting godly edifying to take place.

- And what I’m after here really is an **additional element** to what we’ve now come to understand and appreciate about how godly edifying takes place.

- And that is—that when you’ve got the godly thinking brought about by the features that are within the information that goes about bringing about a change to your thinking—when that moves into the conduct & behavior and then the labor aspect comes along and gives you information of how you’re to go about putting that thinking and conduct and behavior into practice and how to participate in the labor your Father has for you in that particular field of His operations—and you’re then to perceive what the kind of vocational training that all has in connection with not merely the ‘here and now’ (so to speak), but also in the way our sonship education equips us to function as the *new creature* in the *creature* when we get placed in it and begin functioning in our heavenly vocation that is to come.

- Well—since there are going to be many ‘adjustments’ to our thinking, and ‘adjustments’ to our conduct & behavior, and many ‘adjustments’ to our participation in the laboring manifestation of our thinking and living—since that’s the case, it’s only normal and natural that we’re going to find ourselves confronted with things in the thinking, living, and labor aspects of each component of each form of doctrine—that we find **erroneous** thinking and **erroneous** conduct & behavior and **erroneous** ways of manifesting godliness that all has to be brought up, rooted up, and disposed of—right?

- Well then—that begs the question—How are you expected to do that? — How are you expected to make all those kind of changes to (especially) your thinking and your conduct and behavior?

- (Let's stop right here and look more carefully at something in [:3] before we answer that).

- In (:3), when it comes to the effectual working of getting the godly thinking that is designed to bring godly selfless love into existence, how many 'things' or how many steps or how many parts (so to speak) does it take (by what [:3] says) to get that done?

Answer: 2

#1) *For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think;*

#2) *but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.*

- Therefore in order to get (:3) to do its effectual job—2 things are being targeted (so to speak).

- And that means that in order to get the job done—the first half of (:3) is going to first of all **expose the natural ungodly thinking, and the natural thing that stands in the way of godly selfless love existing.**

- And it needs to be **exposed** so that we can recognize it for what it is—and so that we can recognize it as the **UNGODLY** thing that it is—and that **it's** the **reason** (the **culprit**) in connection with ungodly **selfishness** that so naturally characterizes us as men by nature.

- And then once that's done (and once the first half of :3 effectually does that) — the ability exists for the rest of (:3) to come along, and, because it's **God's word**, (it's *quick and powerful*, being God's word) — it's got the ability to 'evict' (so to speak) that kind of ungodly thinking and depose it from its normal position of power and strength in our mind—and replace it now with the kind of thinking that God Himself possess.

- And God Himself possess a particular kind of thinking in connection with us as members of the new creature of the church, the body of Christ in this dispensation of grace—and the rest of (:3) tells us what that is, and provides for us to think the exact same thing.

- And not only provides for us to do it—but actually **TELLS US TO DO IT!**

- And when we BELIEVE what (:3) says—both in its first half, and in its second half—then the 1st half effectually **deposes** the **root** of **selfish** thinking—and the 2nd half puts in its place the **root** for our **selfless** thinking — and when that takes place, **it brings into existence the issue of godly selfless thinking in our minds!**

- Now that doesn't mean that we're never going to ever have a selfish thought again!

- But the issue is (and this is where this **additional aspect** to godly edifying that I've been talking about comes in) — the issue is that when the ungodly selfish thoughts occur, **they can be handled in a manner that you're already expected to handle them!**

- And this is what I'm after when I asked the question: How are you expected to make the kind of changes that godly edifying demands you to make?

- In other words—you're expected to **'bring to the table'** (so to speak) **far more** to your sonship education as it gets underway, than maybe you've ever thought of before!

- And what I'm after is: What are you expected to 'bring to the table'? — especially when you're expected to handle such things as ungodly selfish thoughts (in our context here) when they occur?

- And the answer to all that is that when such things as ungodly selfish thinking occurs in your mind—those things can be handled in a manner that you've already been taught about—and that is **to handle them on the basis of what our fundamental sanctification provides for us to do—that we learned about back in Romans 6:1-8:13!!!**

- And therefore that ungodly thinking can be recognized for what it is—and then we, *through the Spirit* can *mortify* those thoughts and *the deeds of the body* that they lead to—and they **don't** have to be *yielded* to—and we've now got the alternative thinking in existence—and we can then think the alternative instead!

- And as we think the alternative instead—we're thinking with godly **love**! We're thinking with godly **selflessness**!

- And this should put some **great importance** on that information in Romans 6:1-8:14—and that should make far more sense out of why you were 'checked out' at the Sonship Checkpoint for being a living sacrifice!

- So maybe I should ask you—Do you possess a real, healthy living reality of Romans 6:1-8:13?? (Because you're not only going to need it all the time throughout sonship education—but you're EXPECTED TO BRING ALL THAT TO THE TABLE of your sonship education! That's why you were taught that FIRST, before getting to sonship in the first place!)

- Romans 6:1-8:13 is the **POWER** of our sanctification!

- And your Father expects you to bring the power of your sanctification (of Rom. 6:1-8:13) to each and every class! (so to speak)

- And it's not merely important, but it's **critical** and **vital** and **essential** that you have all that information of Rom. 6:1-8:13 effectually operating in your inner man—and that you 'bring it to each class' (so to speak) that you have with your Father—because it's the very means by which you're going to be able to do the things your Father expects you to do (and to do it immediately) with the doctrine; and as the doctrine gets taught to you and as the doctrine does its effectual job.

- Because the operations and the mechanics of Rom. 6:1-8:13 have to be utilized in order to move you from the carnal, natural, fleshly thinking and conduct & behavior to the godly thinking and conduct & behavior—and ultimately to be able to labor with your Father in His operations of His business.

- Therefore, in view of the vital importance of all this—I want you to think carefully—Do you really have the effectual working of Romans 6:1-8:13 ‘up and running’ (or operational) [so to speak] in your inner man so that it can be utilized in such a way that’s kind of an ‘interwoven feature’ that is always ‘running in the background’ (just to use that computer software type terminology) - so that it’s just second nature to you— and is ‘part and parcel’ of what you always bring to class in order to make the necessary adjustments that each component of the doctrine calls upon you to make?

- Well—let’s see—

- Notice once again that there is this ‘pattern’ that occurs in the structure of this first ‘packet’ of doctrine to our *instruction of wisdom*—(which is found in :3-8) — and of course, that pattern is according to how God and God’s word goes about producing godliness and godly edification—which is to first of all deal with the thinking aspect of things; then the living aspect of things; and then the laboring aspect of things.

- But just in that *thinking* aspect of things alone—(:3) has got 2 parts to it.

- And the first part is to come along and expose the **Ungodly**, carnal, natural thinking—(and this is very important here): many times you’re not even aware that you are thinking ungodly, or carnal, or natural—but God has to come along and **expose** that to you; and **reveal** that to you!

- In other words, you have some carnal, natural, ungodly thinking that you’re not even aware of right now—but your Father is aware of it—and it has to get addressed, exposed, and recognized by you that it is ungodly!

- And that’s what the first part of (:3) is doing.

- But then the 2nd part of (:3) comes along and gives you the godly thinking that needs to replace that exposed and uprooted ungodly thinking.

- And once that’s done, (:4-5) is going to then take that newly-produced godly thinking and put it into practice in your conduct and behavior—that is, to make it a living reality in the details of your life.

- And this 'pattern' is going to occur again and again and again—as you go through all the packets or components of every doctrine that makes up your sonship decision-making skills of *wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity*.

- So naturally, we're going to be confronting on an on-going basis carnal, natural ungodliness—(which in some/many cases we're not even aware of until our Father brings it to our attention—[that's just how deeply rooted the 'course of this world' has been rooted in us]) — and those carnal, natural, ungodly things are supposed to be perceived by us as what they are: **sinful**—but outside of the corrective doctrine, how to fully deal with that is NOT given to us— Why? — because you're supposed to already know the mechanics of how to put that ungodliness and sin away from you, and instead put the corrective doctrine into practice!

- So now at this point—let's just refresh ourselves on just this one point—How do you deal with sin in your members and instead live unto God and produce *fruit unto holiness*?

- (Go over previous notes—[Review Notes on **Romans 6:12-13**—pp.1-6, found in Romans 8 notes]).

- INSTRUCTION OF WISDOM (Romans 12:3-16)

- The initial *instruction of wisdom* is taught to us by means of the doctrine of **godly love**—and that godly love— (which is what the doctrine of God’s love is all about) — isn’t yet in existence in you as your Father’s son—**so now it’s going to get brought into existence**—and when it is, the first major feature of it will be brought into existence at the exact same time: **Godly love is selfless**.

- And (:3-8) is designed to get that godly love brought into existence, as well as producing the first major feature of godly love.

- And keep in mind that in all these forms of doctrine—the main issue in all of them is the issue of **edification** (*godly edifying which is in faith*) — and therefore we’re on the lookout for that ‘pattern’ or the means by which godly edification takes place—and those 3 components of godly edification are always present in our mind as we view the information contained in the doctrine—so we know by now that (:3) deals with the *thinking* aspect of edification; (:4-5) deals with the conduct & behavior or *living* aspect; and (:6,7,8) deals with the *labor* aspect of godly edifying.

- And really—we’re now at the point where we are to actually begin our very first ‘day of class’ (so to speak) - our very first time to deal with the actual curriculum for sonship education—and for the first time we’re going to experience being *transformed* from the course of *this world* by the *renewing of our mind*—and the very first time we’re going to be *conformed to the image of God’s Son* by the effectual working of our sonship education.

- And this should be one of the most exciting moments of your life!

- (And I’m not exaggerating—you should be delighted and thrilled at finally getting your sonship education officially underway!)

- In fact—the truth of the matter is, **in just a few minutes, you’re going to receive a real GEM!** — (see Pro. 3:13-15)

- Has it hit you as to the importance of what you’re about to receive education-wise? — because if you think about it, one of the very first things the Lord Jesus Christ did in His earthly ministry with the members of the remnant was to deal with this very subject—get godly love brought into existence! — (see Mat. 5:43-48; [all through Jn. 13,14,15]) and then with the members of the rem./Isr. when their program resumes Heb. 6:10; 10:24-25; 13:1!)

- Not only that—but this is such a major issue in sonship edification that you'll find it continually being built upon and advancements made to it—that even by the time you get to the **end** of the education, the doctrine of godly love is still a **BIG ISSUE!**

- (see II Thess. 1:1-4 (:3); Phlm. 1:1-7 (:5, :7))

- So let's now begin looking at the details of (:3-8) — particularly (:3) where our Father is going to begin to produce His heart in our hearts in connection with *receiving the instruction of wisdom* as our sonship education gets underway!

ROMANS 12:3

3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

- This single verse is designed to accomplish 2 major things—

- 1) To expose the UNgodly thinking we possess by nature—and which was further enhanced by the 'inroads' that the course of this world has made in our thinking—and all that it has taught us in connection with what love is;
- 2) Once that ungodly thinking has been exposed and rooted up—to replace that ungodly thinking with the godly thinking of our Father and bring that godly thinking into existence in our heart.

- Therefore, since there are 2 major things that have to get accomplished—it comes as no surprise to find that (:3) has 2 main Parts to it—the 1st Part is designed to get the first thing accomplished and then the 2nd Part accomplishes the second thing that has to get done.

- So the 1st part of (:3) [to expose the ungodly thinking] is:

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think;

- And the 2nd part of (:3) [to replace the ungodly thinking with the godly thinking] is:

but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

- (The 2nd Part has those 2 phrases to it—and main issue is in the 1st phrase [*to think soberly*] - and then the 2nd phrase **defines** what that means (*to think soberly*), which is [*according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith*].)

- And that should tell you that of all the information contained in (:3) - that last phrase is the most significant and most critical and most important of all!

- And one more thing along these lines—and that is that you have a healthy respect for what’s going on here—and what I mean by that is that if what all this is going after is simply to get you to have selfless love in the sense of the simple idea of “Others First” — (which is what the world sometimes tells you—in other words, the world has that kind of thinking) — if that’s all that this is after, then all it has to say is, *but to think soberly, of others first!* — but it doesn’t say that!

- Hallmark/Opra/Summer Camp/Dr. Phil/Supernanny — they all will tell you that one of love’s great virtues is to think of **others first!** (And even they’ll acknowledge that men don’t naturally think that way, but they have to be taught to do so).

- Well—here is a great example or case where the *world* has counterfeited and highjacked the thinking of God — and, in fact, “others first” **is** what’s going to get brought up here—but the critical difference is that **what generates** that principle in your heart isn’t merely the generally accepted virtue of putting others first (as it’s recognized in the animal kingdom); but what generates the godly selfless love, and what brings that into existence are those 12 words: *according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith*—and by their effectual working in your inner man!

- And the truth is—it’s not just putting *any* other person first (or more highly than yourself), but it’s first of all talking about some particular “others” within the local assembly—and then going out from there!

- So with all that said—let’s begin dealing with the details of (:3).

(Note: It's taken nearly 4 years to get here!)

- (:3) *For I (Paul) say, through the grace given unto me,*

- Just as we noted in (:1) - Paul has stepped out of his roll of the 'mouthpiece' of God (so to speak) and took upon himself the roll of another son standing with you and your Father—and his roll in the first 2 verses of chapter 12 was that of a 3rd party or the 'beseecher' (so to speak) — and not doing any instruction.

- But now—by this first phrase (*For I say*) Paul once again steps back into the roll of the Father's 'mouthpiece' and signals to you that the instruction is now going to get underway.

- And that's really what the first 2 phrases of (:3) are doing—they are signaling to you that the education as sons is now going to commence.

- And I realize that the most common way that the phrase (*through the grace given unto me*) is often dealt with—especially by those who do "rightly divide the word of truth" is to say that the terminology "*the grace given unto me*" is talking about the unique distinctive nature of Paul's apostleship—being our apostle—being *the apostle of the Gentiles* to whom "*the mystery of Christ*" was given — and that Paul is emphasizing his distinctive roll as the apostle of the Gentiles.

- But my understanding is that that's NOT what Paul is doing, and that's NOT what's being emphasized by that terminology.

- The issue isn't to think about Paul's distinctive apostleship or to think about the "mystery" or anything along those lines!

- Once again—you have to keep things **within the context** in which God puts it—and the context isn't dealing with either of those 2 things (i.e., Paul's apostleship or the mystery).

- Rather, this is a grammatical technique for signaling to you (the son) as the son-student that you are—that Paul is being utilized by God as His 'mouthpiece' - and that Paul has been given not only "the mystery of Christ," but that Paul has been given the words (that we have come to *perceive*) that forms the **curriculum** for our sonship education— ... and now that education is getting officially underway!

- Simply put—*the grace given unto me*— isn't talking about the “mystery” that was given and revealed to Paul (true as that is) — but the *grace* that was *given* to Paul here is the very curriculum for sonship education!

- Therefore Paul signals to you the very point at which our *instruction of wisdom* begins—and he's going to be speaking to us as the one whom God has graciously provided the opportunity to minister the information that God the Holy Spirit is going to write on our hearts—and that's what gets underway right here in (:3).

- And so then the instruction begins ...

(3) ... to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think;

- Notice very carefully that first phrase: **to every man that is among you** —

- The very first thing that deals with this *renewing of your mind* that has to take place and that YOU have to acknowledge is that: in this part of the ‘packet’ of information that has to do with your thinking—and that first of all goes right after some ungodly, erroneous-type thinking—or that goes right after the **problem** in your thinking—is that you have to acknowledge that **it's a problem that every one of you have**; and it's a problem that every one of you have **right at this very moment!** (It's a problem **YOU** have **today!**)

- In other words—**no one in this room is exempt!**

- And the truth is—by nature—and by the ‘inroads’ that the world has made in your thinking—**you do think more highly of yourself than you ought!**

- And that's the problem.

- And the problem is stated in the final phrase of the 1st Part of (:3)—

... not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think;

- And if you think of yourself **more highly** than you ought to think—you're thinking is ‘high-minded’ about yourself—and what is that kind of thinking? What would you call someone who thinks like that?

- Answer: **Proud**; arrogant; haughty; (or as the OED says) one who has an “arrogant spirit.”

- Now I recognize that you might have the tendency to begin to self-analyze here—and you can come along and say, Hey, wait a minute—I’m not that way—I think of others first—I’m not like that—or, if anything, at least I’m not all that bad ... or something along those lines.

- And you may be tempted to rationalize it—and put yourself on a ‘curve’ (so to speak) - and come up with an estimation of yourself that’s pretty darn good in the “selflessness” category.

- And, granted, many schools of training get some measure of selflessness produced—(like the medical field; firemen; police; military, ‘peace-corps,’ public service, etc.)

- Illustration: Mike Thornton— “How many here have a *friend*?”

- But the hard truth is—first of all, you’re not naturally like that—and second of all, even if you do have a measure of selflessness that you rationalize doesn’t put you in this category—the truth is, what ever measure of selflessness you’ve got **wasn’t produced by the last 12 words of Romans 12:3!**

- And that’s not only the point—but that ‘sinks your battleship’ (so to speak)!

- Because if it’s not the godly selflessness of godly love, then it’s still a problem because it’s all just thinking based upon the *course of this world!*

- Therefore the first thing you have to acknowledge with brutal honesty is that when it says, ***to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think***—is that that’s YOU!

- And therefore the way in which you think about yourself and the way you think about yourself in connection with other saints is WRONG—and that needs to be corrected! And there’s an element of ungodly thinking that’s fundamentally flawed and runs counter to everything that your Father wants produced in you and it has to be **replaced** with the godly thinking.

- But before that ungodly thinking can be replaced, we have to be honest enough to not read this and try to either rationalize or justify away the problem as it exists in you—and just think, Well, I can look around the room and point to someone else in whom you know the problem exists—and think that this is just talking about them, and not YOU!

- No. It's talking to YOU—and that's why it says, *to every man that is among you*—and that means that this is talking about every one of us!

- And the reality is—you & I are more selfish than you ought to be—you and I are naturally, arrogantly self-centered!

- And if your sonship education is providing for you to be *conformed to the image of God's Son* and to emulate your Father—and to put on display the life of God's Son in the details of your life—the 'first things first' is for you to acknowledge the reality of this—don't balk at it; don't buck it—but recognize that you and I (by nature and by the work of the course of this world in us) makes it so that *we think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think*.

- And because of that—just as we have noted before—since this is the case—and since this is dealing with the issue of edification—then that “power of your sanctification” that you got effectually working in your inner man from Romans 6:1-8:13 cannot be ‘deployed’ (so to speak) against that ungodly thinking unless you acknowledge it; that it exists; and that it exists in **you**.

- And you're going to see (as we deal with all this) that the ungodly thinking is totally inconsistent with who God made you to be “in Christ” — and therefore being *dead to sin and alive unto God*, plus the technique, the doctrine, and the mechanics of how God expects you to deal with ungodliness and sinfulness has to ‘come to the table’ and has to be **deployed** and utilized in order to make the kind of adjustments to your thinking that has to be made.

- But you can't consign sinful thinking or sinful behavior or ungodliness to functional death unless you can first of all identify it for what it is.

- And you should come along and appreciate that your Father has pointed that out and then provided the means to deal with it—because that's descriptive of me!

- Therefore the truth is—I do think more highly of myself than I ought to think—or else He wouldn't say: *to every man that is among you ...*

- Now once that grips your thinking—and once you appreciate the reality of that and the truth of that—then, and ONLY then are you ready for that thinking to be replaced with the remainder of what (:3) says.

- I realize that this isn't a pleasant thing to have to think about or have to come to grips with and acknowledge, but *receiving the instruction of wisdom* has to start somewhere—and here's where it starts!

- So are there any problems with this so far?

- Now before we go on to deal with the remainder of the verse—I just want to go back to something I brought up before—and that is that when you think about yourself as being described as you are here—and that is: *to not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think*—and when you think that way—when your thinking is therefore 'high-minded' - or that you value and esteem yourself more highly than you ought—what do you call that kind of thinking in general?

- Answer: That's **proud, arrogant, haughty thinking**—one who has an '**arrogant spirit.**'

- And the reason I want to come back to this before leaving this first part of (:3) that is designed to go right after a particular problem you have by nature *and* by the 'inroads' that this world has made upon you — the reason I want to come back to this for a moment is just to once again point out something that lies 'behind the scenes' (so to speak) concerning what our Father is doing here and what He's doing in the *way* He's going about doing it (if that makes any sense).

- Because the truth is—He is doing **more** than the obvious—more than just pointedly confronting you with an ungodly problem you have by nature that doesn't allow for godly love to exist.

- And so when you think about this issue as one of prideful, haughty, high-minded thinking—(especially about yourself) - not only is this an obvious impediment to getting godly love brought into existence in your inner man—but there is something more that God is going to accomplish (or begin to accomplish) by addressing this issue as the 'first' of the 'first-things-first' in your sonship education.

- I could say a lot of things about this here—but I'm going to limit myself greatly to what I'm going to say because I'm going to allow the natural sense and sequence process of all that occurs throughout the first 3 decision-making skills (especially) [*wisdom, justice, and judgment*] to do the job they're supposed to do in this area.
- But for now all I want to do is to get you thinking about what's going on here—just one 'layer' deeper (so to speak) - or a little more perceptive than you're maybe thinking right now.
- So first of all—it's great if you have come to see (and see in *yourself*) that the improper, ungodly thinking in connection with yourself is that you naturally **do** think more highly of yourself than you ought to think.
- And it's great if you've made the connection with that kind of thinking and the issue of it being **prideful** thinking—that's good.
- But the question I want you to think about is: Why is that so significant? Why is that the 'first' of the 'first-things-first' issues to be dealt with in sonship education—or in our *instruction of wisdom*?
- And to answer that question—and just to say something about it that will add another layer to your understanding of what your Father is going after in all this—(that is, more than the obvious issue of producing godly love in your thinking [which is no small matter]) —
- Let's look at a passage back in God's program with Israel in which the issue of what a man values and what a man esteems gets focused upon by our Lord and see if we can't discover some additional information concerning what pride does to a man.
- But before we do—maybe we should ask, What is it that pride does? That is, what is one of pride's most basic and fundamental features?
- For instance—if you lived in the Depression, and you tried to help someone, but their pride got in the way—what did they do with the help you tried to give them? **THEY REJECTED IT!** (right?)

- Therefore, one of the basic features of pride is one of rejecting something offered—even rejecting something that may be beneficial to a person—(it’s not the only feature, but it’s one of the more basic features).

- With that in mind—if you were to point out something that man rejects in connection with God Himself—especially in connection with what God offers to him salvation-wise—what would you say that man, in his pride, rejects?

Answer: **Grace!** (easy to see)

- And we could go to a number of passages in the Bible to illustrate that and to underscore that.

- And pride is a grace-rejecting policy of man’s sin nature. (But that has been dealt with a great deal in the opening 5 chapters of the book of Romans in dealing with our justification and it’s results).

- But now I want you to think about something else that pride, arrogance, haughtiness, high-mindedness and the like have a connection to that goes to the very matter we’re dealing with.

- And to illustrate what I’m after here—let’s go to that passage in God’s word (in God’s program with Israel) where the Lord Jesus Christ confronted this prideful thinking issue in a man He dealt with.

- Mark 10:17-22

- Now I know that it is commonly taught (and rightly so) that this passage is all about *riches*—and indeed, there is a great and massive doctrine of riches contained in God’s word and in His dealings with the nation Israel—and a real case can be made for the idea that this prideful rich man rejected God’s grace and the offer that Christ made to him—but look a little closer and you’ll find this other thing that pride so often rejects as much as grace itself.

- So notice: what does he reject (specifically) in (:21)?

Answer: He rejects God’s (the Lord’s) **WORDS!**

- And what I'm after is that you have some understanding and appreciation for the fact that ***pride is the issue in man, as well as in the Adversary himself, that causes someone to reject what God's word says!!!***

- **Pride is not only the grace-rejecting policy of man's sin nature—but it's also the word-of-God-rejecting policy of man's sin nature.**

- And there's an awful lot to be understood and appreciated in connection with this issue—but all I'm after right now is the concept of it.

- In fact—we can see that prideful, haughty, arrogant thinking as the source for rejecting God's words—right at the very beginning of God's word —

- Genesis 3:1-6

- Note that the Adversary was going about to do far much more than is commonly thought or taught here—because he not only was tempting the woman in order to get sin introduced into the world, and to ultimately get Adam to sin and thereby usurp the Monarchy of the earth to himself—

— but if you pay careful attention to the way in which the Adversary goes about this—and the specific targets (so to speak) of his temptations—what he's really after here is to do 2 major things:

- 1) To destroy man's **relationship** with God;
- 2) To pave the way for another **relationship** to be established between man and the Adversary himself (by means of his own, hand-picked man: the man of sin)!

- Remember that the Anti-Christ isn't doesn't just have to do with Israel—but with the rulership over the Gentiles as well—the whole earth is governed by him!!!

- So—let's come back to our passage in Romans 12:3 and appreciate some further insight to what our Father is doing here.

- When our Father begins our education as His sons—and when He begins to give us the *instruction of wisdom* as our first sonship decision-making skill—He does it by dealing with us on the basis of getting His godly love established in our inner man (in our thinking).

- And He first of all goes after something we all naturally possess, and which has been fostered and nurtured by the course of this word: and that is this ungodly way in which we *think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think*.

- And that sets our mind upon a course that, as we take the time to be properly confronted with the reality of that—(though it’s not stated), we recognize rather easily that we do think more highly of ourselves that we ought to think—and that kind of thinking is prideful, haughty, and arrogant.

- And on one level—it becomes apparent to us that this is inconsistent with body-type thinking, which is something we’re going to have to have being the *new creature* of the members of the church, the body of Christ. (And to remedy the kind of corruption that now exists out in the creature).

- And that’s right—that’s all well and good!

- But then there’s this other level that comes into our thinking—and that is that—right off the bat (so to speak), our Father is going right after the core (or source) of where you, as His son/daughter, that will be the most problematic (and the most well-exercised area in you—[“exercised” by the course of this world]) in which, if it isn’t dealt with properly—will end up with you REJECTING HIS WORDS!

- And since pride is the issue in you, as well as in the Adversary himself, that causes someone to reject what God’s word says— and furthermore, since **pride** is ONE of the 3 means (there’s 2 more) through which the Adversary seeks to destroy your relationship with your Father and to make it so that a relationship can be established with you and him!

... folks, that makes what’s going on here in Romans 12:3 so significant and so critical for you to understand and appreciate properly—and to not just ‘breeze’ your way through it!

- And hopefully, by our little additions we've made—you can see more clearly just how important and how valuable it is for you to get your *instruction of wisdom* based upon what your **Father values** and what your **Father esteems**—in other words: **godly love!**

- So we have— ***(3) For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think;***

- And you should have now taken enough time to think that over—to realize, recognize, and acknowledge to your Father that this is not only ungodly and inconsistent with who He has made you to be “in Christ” — but you should appreciate all the more that your Father began your education as His son with this very issue—and now you can agree with Him that this is, indeed, true with you.

- And once that has been accomplished, now you're ready for the alternative—the godly thinking that is designed to replace your natural, world-enhanced ungodly thinking.

- So we have— ***... but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.***

- And in view of what our sanctified status enables for us to do—which is to bring to bear the ‘power of our sanctification’ from Romans 6:1-8:13 to bear on the ungodly thinking and rather, put this thinking of our Father in it's place.

- Which means— the honest recognition and identification of the ungodly thinking provides for our Father to now produce godly thinking—godly thinking that will **evict** that selfish, ungodly, sinful thinking—and **depose** it from its position of power that it has occupied for your entire life (both as a lost person, and as a saved individual) — and this godly alternative is designed to pull the strength away from that ungodly thinking and replace it with the godly thinking (the way your Father Himself thinks,).

- And that will be a godly way in which to view yourself; and a godly way in which to view other saints — and of course, once that's done, that will provide for (:4-5) to do it's job and produce consistent conduct & behavior with that godly thinking.

- ... **but to think soberly,**

- **but** = a very power adversative conjunction (ἀλλὰ) which indicates that what is about to be said is adverse to; or opposite to; or counter to what has just been said.

- Therefore, this tells you that what you're about to receive is the **godly alternative** and **remedy** for *not* valuing and esteeming either yourself as you ought, or other saints as you ought.

- **to think soberly** — What does it mean to think *soberly*?

- *sober* (*ly* = like) = commonly it has to do with not being intoxicated or drunk (which doesn't exactly fit the context here). From the Lat. *sobrius* meaning a "**separation**" from drunkenness—and it denotes the character which by its natural gravity is constitutionally untempted to excess of any kind, being content with what is moderate and sufficient. (Smith's, pg.23)

= In terms of how we think = soundness; clarity of thought; serious; even quiet, gentle, peaceful—and in a sense of even the common idea of not being intoxicated, **it's thinking that hasn't been influenced by something detrimental to it.**

- And it's the issue of your mind now becoming **sound**, (i.e., whole, strong, right, correct, proper and full of **truth**).

- And the implication is (and it's a powerful implication) - that up until this very moment, you **HAVE NOT** been thinking *soberly* in regard to yourself and to other saints!

- The implication is that in connection with the way in which you think about yourself—your thinking has been under the influence of something detrimental to it—it's been under the influence of your sin nature and fueled by and nurtured by the ungodly thinking of this world!

- *Soberly* (just like *sober*, *soberness* and *sobriety*) is strictly a sonship term—utilized only by Paul and by Peter—and is one of the characteristics or features of sonship thinking—which means that sonship thinking is *thinking soberly*! (*sober* thinking)

- And one of the most important issues in a son's *sober thinking* in whatever area his thinking goes—is that the most general, basic, and fundamental feature of a son's thinking (and that *lies behind* a son's thinking) is the simple, yet profound issue of—(or what distinguishes sonship thinking from any other unsaved person, or even from any saint who has not submitted himself to his sonship education) - is the issue of a son's mind/thinking is **not under the influence of the course/thinking of this world—but it has been separated from that corrupt influence of the wisdom of men and the wisdom of this world!**

- It's of great significance that when, for the very first time that your *thinking* gets addressed in the curriculum for sonship education—(and in view of you just passing through that first Sonship Checkpoint where you acknowledged to your Father that from now on your life is going to bear the marks of *not being conformed to this world: but being transformed by the renewing of your mind*) - in view of that, the very first time your Father addresses the issue of your *thinking*—He does so in a way that immediately picks up on what you acknowledged to Him at the SSCP—and He has you realize that your thinking *has* been influenced by this world, but from this point on, it's going to get all that influence separated from it by the *transforming of your mind!*

- And that's what lies behind this 'reproof' or admonishment (really, it's an exhortation) - but an exhortation that carries some measure of getting you to acknowledge that the truth is, your thinking has been corrupted and influenced by both your own nature of sin, **and by the thinking of this world**—and now that thinking/influence has to be separated from the way you're going to think as a son.

- And the beginning 4 words of this clause (*But to think soberly*) sets the stage (so to speak) for the effectual working of the powerful, godly alternative (the last 12 words of :3) to do their job.

- Now let's just pause here for a moment and recognize something important as to how you, as a son, are expected to deal with this information you're getting so far (and we're only 32 words into the education, so we're not very 'far' along at this point at all) —

- In other words—what I’m after here is that you recognize that every word of what you’re being told here is highly significant—and you have to **take time** with every word of it—but what I want you to recognize right here is that you’re being told to *not think* one way; (i.e., *not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think*) — you’re told *not to think* one way—and then told *to think soberly* (or this other way).

- But notice what your Father expects out of you—notice that in all of (:3), and on through :8 — you’re not told HOW to do this!

- In fact, your Father expects you to already know how to do this!

- What? Aren’t we supposed to expect that we just read the words; ‘pray about it’ (whatever that means), and then wait for God to come along and just ‘rewire’ our thinking by some miracle—or by “standing on the promises”??? NO!

- Your Father expects you to already know how to take certain *thinking* and do something with that *thinking*—and then replace it with the Father’s own *thinking* — because the truth is, you’ve already been taught how to do that!

- Where were you taught that? and how do you stop *thinking* one way and begin *thinking* the way your Father teaches you to *think*?

Answer: **Rom. 6:1-8:13!!**

(The Power of your Sanctification!)

- Again, you’re supposed to bring the techniques and methodology and mechanics of the power of your sanctification to bear on getting the job done for what is to be accomplished here—and on, and on, ...

- Well this ‘sober thinking’ has to now be defined and described—because just saying to someone, Hey, stop thinking that way, think *soberly*! That doesn’t do a thing in accomplishing proper thinking—because the term *soberly*, while critical and important, doesn’t provide for the godly remedy to the improper, ungodly thinking!

- So now we come to the most important part of all of (:3) - the part that is designed to bring *godly selfless love* into existence in our inner man—and to have it operational in our inner man **from now and forever more**.

- And it is our first experience of *not being conformed to this world; but being transformed by the renewing of our mind* — it's the first time or the first step in our being *conformed to the image of God's Son*—and therefore the final 12 words of (:3) are **CRITICAL** to getting godly selfless love produced in us!

- **(Those 12 words are what produces godly love!)**

- And that means that of all places (in the short time we've been in the curriculum) - **this** is where you're going to have to **spend some time** dealing with the curriculum; and dealing with it between you and your Father in some intelligent sonship prayer—in order to 'settle' the matter and ensure its effectual working in your inner man!

- Therefore, instead of *thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think* (which is the way we naturally think; and the way in which *the world* has taught us to think) - we are to *think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith*.

- **according** = What does *according* mean? = agreeing; corresponding to; matching; consistent with; exactly; in a manner corresponding to the way in which ... ; suitably.

- But even here there is a great amount of "Excellency" in the choice of words God has used in our English King James Bible—because the focus of attention (or main point) here is to get your thinking *transformed by the renewing of your mind*—and to get you to no longer think in terms of **selfishness**, but to get you to think with godly **selfless love** (or body-type thinking).

- And just as we so often point out—every word of God's word is important—but when God's word narrows itself down to the 'critical core element' (so to speak) or the "power-core" of the words that actually bring the doctrine into existence (that is, the words that actually **create** the Father's thinking in your inner man) — [and these 12 words being that 'power-core'] — therefore, even this one word *according* is geared toward generating in your thinking not only the kind of thoughts the Father has (and wants you to have), but it also generates that "way" or "manner" in which our Father thinks that I so often talk about.

- What I'm after here is that—when you look at the word *according* — what is its root form? (A: *accord*) — and it's interesting (and not surprising) to find that even the word *accord* has a “root” to it—and what is it? (A: *cord*) - which we often spell in English “chord”.

- Now the word *accord*, as we use it in our English language, has borrowed from several languages for its origins—but Noah Webster notes in his 1828 Dictionary — **In some of its applications, it is naturally deduced from the Italian *corda* [the string of a musical instrument].**

- And that's why one of the ways to define *accord* is that = **harmony; a harmony of minds or an agreement of minds.**

- And there's significance to why the root issue in a “*chorda*” is a string of a musical instrument—there's significance to that and the issue of being in one “*accord*” as the remnant saints are described in the opening chapters of the book of Acts—(2:1 *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*)

- Or to put it this way—there's significance to why we have the word *according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith*—that word *according* and the issue of it being derived from the concept of “the string of a musical instrument.”

- And that's because a string of a musical instrument has body-type features to it! And has ‘agreement’ type features to it! And ‘harmony’ type features to it!

- (Illustrate at piano) (C doesn't like E?!?!?)
(C isn't to think more of itself than it ought!)

- Well all I'm after here is just to point up the fact that every word of the 12 words that brings godly selfless love into existence in our inner man—is designed to generate the body-type thinking that is so critical for us to have as “sons” and to take the body-type thinking into all of the details of our lives—and then to take that body-type thinking out into the operations of our Father's business out in the *creature*!

- Now just as the word *according* suggests—this final phrase of (:3) is designed to describe in detail what that *sober thinking* consists of.

- And it consists of a particular way of thinking in which ***God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.***

- And first and foremost this tells us that the distinguishing feature of godly selfless love is that—instead of thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think—godly selfless love (based upon the specific information contained in the last 12 words of [:3]) godly love thinks in a very specific and very particular way about **OTHERS**, rather than how we naturally think about ourselves.

- And that is apparent because the godly thinking is:
*according as God hath dealt to **every man** ...*

- *Sober* sonship thinking thinks in a particular way about others—but here at first, it's not just any old “*every man*” - or not just any old “others” — but the context makes it so that the “*every man*” that's in view is specifically talking about *every man* who is a fellow saint!

- That is the ‘others’ are all believers or other members of the church, the body of Christ.

- By the way—although this certainly isn't nearly the first time it's been used this way—this is one of those instances where you have the generic use of the word **man** being used to talk about men *and* women. (even women are talked about in certain contexts as “sons”)

- And the specific or particular way in which we are to think of “*every man*” (or every member of the church, the body of Christ) is:
according as God hath dealt something to every man.

- And note that it's ***as God hath*** done something (in the past—even though it's, for us, the recent past) — but note that the godly thinking is *according as **God** hath* done something—

- and that's a significant distinction—because it tells you that what we're after is to be taught to think a particular way
because our Father has taught us to think that way!

- And that may not sound like a big deal—but it is!

- Because the truth is—we're dealing with an issue here about which you've come to learn **a lot** of things—that is, you've **been taught** a bunch of things about this issue of *love* and how to think about others!

- In fact, it could be argued that among all the topics and issues you've 'learned' about in all your life—*love* is the one above all others that has **the most**, and **the most powerful influences** attached to it in your mind, in your heart, and in your experiences, than any other thing *that the world* or *the wisdom of men* have taught you!

- And by saying it the way our Father says it—*according as **God hath dealt to every man** ...* it confronts you as His son, for the very first time in the curriculum (and right 'off the bat' in the curriculum) with having to realize and recognize and acknowledge to yourself that there are a whole bunch of things (*love* being at the top of the list, so to speak) that I was taught by *this world* and by the *wisdom of the men of this world*—and if not careful, I will assume that my Father **has** to be pleased with that (I can't imagine He wouldn't be) - and what ends up happening is that you bring the thinking you were taught by *this world* to church, to God's word, and try to bend the church and God's word to fit what you only imagine is pleasing and compatible with Him!

- And this is DANGEROUS BEYOND WORDS!!!!

- This is what 'religion' does—this is what the world does—this is what the majority of Christians do—and this is what theological seminaries are the BEST at doing!

- And right here is where you need to make a pause and recognize the hugeness of what is going on here—even though it may seem so simple and 'uneventful'!

- Illustration: The pistol shooting Champion of the World — in WWII being trained by his army shooting instructor.... "You're going to learn to shoot the ARMY way!"

- And one of the biggest 'wake-up-calls' you're going to have as a son—is to realize how much you assume about yourself that you assume your Father is pleased at—but which He never taught you that, **the world taught you that!**

- So we have: *but to think soberly, according as God hath **dealt** to every man*

- And even that word **dealt** has meaning and significance to getting godly selfless love produced in our inner man.

- **dealt** (past tense of *deal*) = to distribute; to bestow among a number of recipients; to deliver.

- But there is a shade of meaning that the word *deal* has that other words (such as the modern English Bible translations use) - like “give” or “allotted” or “assigned” **don’t** have.

- And that shade of meaning that *dealt* has (and that ‘given’ doesn’t have) is that—*dealt* or *deal* is used when you want to make sure that what is being emphasized or expressed is that **MUCH has been done**, and not merely a “little” has been done.

- In other words, in our English language, we reserve using the word *dealt* for contexts in which we want to express how **great** of an amount or how **great** of an extent has been done in whatever is being distributed or delivered or bestowed!

- Granted, there are some contexts in which *deal* or *dealt* is used where no particular amount of strength is in view: (like ‘dealing’ cards) — but in a context such as this, *dealt* expresses that what God has *dealt to every man* isn’t little or insignificant or without much effort—rather, that He has *dealt* something **great**—and something that took **much effort** on His part—and is **highly significant!**

- Therefore He didn’t just ‘give to every man’ - but He *hath **dealt** to every man ...*

- And that then brings us to that phrase: ***the measure of faith.***

- So what does that mean? - or maybe the question should be: If you don’t know what that means, does Paul define it for you here in this passage? (No.) — so what does that tell you? That Paul has already defined what it means, but up until now he has never used this expression for what it’s definition means.

- And Paul has already said some things whereby this expression covers it all (so to speak) - and therefore there should be some things in your frame of reference already (especially from the fundamentals regarding sonship)—so that this expression, by what it says, should ‘click’ in your thinking like it ought to.

- And right here I want to say that my understanding is that this expression is **NOT** to be dealt with the way most Bible teachers and Bible commentaries so often deal with it—and that is to make this expression mean that God has dealt to every man the ability to have faith—or the “gift of faith”— or this corrupted doctrine that says that God has to give us faith or else we could never believe in Him—or anything along those lines.

- Therefore, my understanding is that this is strictly a **sonship expression**.

- In other words—if you understand what’s involved in sonship, there’s an aspect of what’s involved in sonship that, because of what it is, this expression is an expression that perfectly summarizes it or puts it all in a ‘nutshell’ (so to speak) or in a synopsis-type issue and tells you **THAT’S** what we’re going to be focusing upon now.

- Now I say that so that if your thinking is — that this is describing a package of benefits that we received when we trusted Christ as our Saviour—(granted, sonship is one of those benefits), but that scope is much too wide in order to grasp the meaning of this expression.

- So since this expression is coming up in our sonship education—and in fact as part of the very first thing of our sonship education—the logical thing to recognize is that **it’s got something to do with sonship itself**—because the very first thing the Father is going to educate us in when it comes to us walking and living as sons, has this expression as an integral part of it.

- Because in the context of what’s going on here—this expression is the fundamental component to the *sober thinking* that Paul says our mind needs to be *renewed* with first and foremost.

- Now granted—as you think back over what you’ve been taught in your sonship orientation & sonship establishment—you recognize that every member of the church, the body of Christ with you possesses the same sonship status—and the same potential opportunities that the sonship status provides for—because we’ve all received “*the adoption of sons*” - and we’ve all received the same curriculum.

- And that does make it so we do have a particular viewpoint about one another and about ourselves along with other members of the church, the body of Christ—but my understanding is that all that has done it's effectual job by the time you get here.

- But what this is doing is **refining** that concept even more!

- In fact, this is going to bring it down to the point where we're going to be able to **look** at one another—and **live** and **conduct** ourselves one with another as **members** one with another that we are in the body of Christ.

- And this is going to take that **equality** of sonship that every one of us possesses, and make us realize that **an even more specific or more particular equality exists that we all share in common in being sons.**

- And when you just take at face value (so to speak) the entire phrase: *according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith*—the basic essence of that whole thing is saying that **every one of us has got something in common!**

— and that none of us (on the basis of this) can think that any one of us is any better than the other—or better off than the other!

- If God's *dealt to every man the measure of faith*—then we've all **got** this thing! (what ever *the measure of faith* is, **we've all got it!**)

- Therefore, it's a 'level playing field' for us all!

- Now when we come out of Romans 8—there are a whole bunch of things that we all possess in common with each other—for example, we've all got justification, sanctification, the 'capstone' of sanctification: sonship — and in sonship, we've all got the same *inheritance of God*; we've all got the same potential for being *joint-heirs with Christ*; we've all got *the Spirit helping our infirmities*; we've all got the usefulness of *all things working together for our good*; we've all got the **curriculum**—we've all got a whole bunch of 'commonnesses' and a whole bunch of equalities with respect to ourselves as sons that are kind of just 'givens' that you come out of Romans 8 with.

- But there's **one specific one**—and one particular thing that we all have in common—that now needs to be **focused** upon—and that really makes it so that the 'mind-set' that God wants to establish within us by that 1st Component of our *instruction of wisdom*—in order to establish that 'mind-set' and that thinking with respect to ourselves that God wants us to have—the basic things we've come to understand about commonness in connection with sonship in general is **NOT** enough to do it.

- There's another particular issue with respect to our sonship status that needs to get focused upon—and needs to be thought about in a particular way—and needs to be recognized that God has dealt with every one of us in a very particular manner in connection with this by *dealing to every one of us* what's called: ***the measure of faith***.

- And when we realize this—and think of each other (and ourselves) in connection with this—all of a sudden, that **attitude** with respect to ourselves and our thinking about ourselves that has that general equality that we learned from Romans 8—all of a sudden, what was 'flimsy' (so to speak) in our thinking, suddenly turns to **granite!** (and it solidifies).

- And so there's this '*soberness of thinking*' that Paul describes that makes it so that: Man, if we think anything special about ourselves in comparison to another member of the church, the body of Christ—we acknowledge that to be **FOOLISHNESS!** (That's **ludicrous** in view of this!)

- In other words—in light of all the great 'equalizers' (so to speak) - this is the **greatest** 'equalizer' of them all for us as members of the church, the body of Christ.

- And there's an aspect about sonship that this expression ***the measure of faith*** addresses and focuses upon—and when we think of ourselves in connection with it—and perceive it properly, it makes it so that we realize that we've all got the same kind of importance to ourselves; we've all got the same kind of potential to ourselves; and we all share it 'across the board' (so to speak) - and it makes it so that any thinking of ourselves *more highly* with respect to any other member of the church the body of Christ makes us say, **That's foolish!** I shouldn't ever think that—because that's totally out of line with *the measure of faith* that God has *dealt to every one of us!*

- And that's what produces the *sobriety*—and it paves the way for looking at ourselves as (:4-5) are going to bring into play: that we genuinely are *members one of another* in this **BODY** relationship!
- Now—saying all that—let's focus our attention upon our sonship status—and point out the specific thing that this expression *the measure of faith* applies to.
- Granted, this isn't an expression you hear all the time—nor is it one that is used very much in our present day and age.
- And as I said, this is a fitting sonship expression—it fittingly has to do with a particular aspect of sonship.
- But one of the reasons why we don't hear this expression very often today is not that similar situations don't exist today in which it could appropriately be used—but in our own culture and in our own history as a nation (as well as North American culture—and even European culture) — we went through a time in our history that has made it so that expressions like *the measure of faith* (and the contexts in which it was frequently used), had a **BAD** connotation to it!
 - And because of that bad period of our history—we don't often hear it today—or even have that kind of situation around any more in which this kind of an expression is used.
- And the truth is—this was an expression that was used outside the realm of sonship—because this expression *the measure of faith* was used in connection with **Masters and Slaves**.
- When a Master gave a slave a **job** to do—he gave him *a measure of faith*, frequently!
 - And he used that expression **if he** (the Master) **wasn't going to be standing over & watching his slaves do the job he gave them to do**—or if he wasn't going to assign a “Task-Master” to him.
 - A slave owner, when he called his slaves together in the morning and gave them their jobs to do for the day—if he didn't have very many slaves, he could be their own Task-Master—and he could go out and oversee them doing their jobs himself.

- But if he was a large land owner, he could have dozens of slaves which meant that he couldn't physically do that.

- And that's when he would hire a "Task-Master" — which is why that expression is used—a Task-Master was not the slave owner—but he was a Master that the slave owner put in his place, to represent him in connection with overseeing a particular **task** that had been assigned to certain slaves to do.

- So when the slave owner wasn't going to be personally overseeing the slave fulfilling the job he gave him to do—he would hire the Task-Master — (or in some cases where he wouldn't hire a Task-Master, he would come along and say the same thing himself) —but the point is, the Task-Master would come along and say to the slave, "I'm giving you a measure of faith."

- And what he's saying to the slave is—I'm entrusting you with the responsibility to faithfully do what I'm telling you to do.

- And that's the expression that was used in connection with the **JOB** that he had to do!

- And the reciprocal term, in connection with that, — when the job was done **well**—the reciprocal term is one that Paul himself uses —

- He uses it later on over in Titus when he talks about servants showing to their masters *all good fidelity*.

(Titus 2:9-10) Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; (10) Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

- *Fidelity* was the reciprocal term when the slave received the *measure of faith*, and without being watched over (which is why Paul talks about *Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers*) [Eph.6:6; Col. 3:22]— without being watched over, pleased his master well in all things *shewing all good fidelity*.

- *the measure of faith* and *showing all good fidelity* are the 2 terms that describe the “slave” or the ‘employee’ getting his orders from his Master; doing the job well; and then being accounted as such by his Master at the end of the day!

- And now what this expression (*the measure of faith*) is doing here for us in Romans 12:3 for us as sons—is that it is focusing upon the fact that **God has dealt to every one of us as sons the responsibility from Him, to labor with Him in what He’s doing in His business!**

- And right from the beginning of our sonship education **we need to recognize that**—because that very issue is going to provide for the first Component of godly thinking that needs to *renew our minds*—it’s going to provide for the first Component of godly conduct and behavior for who we are **in** God’s business (members of the new creature of the church the body of Christ) — and it’s going to provide for the first opportunity for us to begin to labor with God in an aspect of His business—and that’s in connection with a local church; and fulfilling a particular “*office*” within it!

- That expression *the measure of faith*—is defined as:

It’s the privilege of being entrusted with the responsibility to serve in a cause or a business—and it’s been given or granted by the One who has the cause or the business.

- And in a situation like this—and like existed in our past—the Slave-Master or Task-Master comes along, and in a case where the slave did NOT fulfill his responsibility, the Master says, “I gave you a *measure of faith* in this—but you betrayed me!”

- And the issue was, You didn’t do what I asked you to do!

- I gave you *the measure of faith*—I went away and entrusted you to carry out my business in this area—but the slave wasted the time (or whatever) and squandered the opportunity — and at the end of the day when the Master came back and asked for an account, he then reprimanded the slave for betraying him because he failed in connection with *the measure of faith* he gave him.

- And that’s a **perfect** and **fitting** expression to use in sonship—because as soon as sonship takes place, that’s exactly what the Father does!

- In fact, the Lord Himself recognized that in His own sonship life here on this earth—the moment He reached the age of adoption (as Luke records [2:49]) when He was 12 years old—Mary, Joseph and Him go up with the rest of their kinsmen to the feast—He doesn't return to with them—they find Him in the Temple—and He says, *wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?*

- He says, As soon as I'm adopted, I enter into my Father's business! I've got the responsibility to start **doing** what my Father's business calls for!

- That's why He said, *wist ye not* — they should have figured that out.

- But the issue is—as soon as a son gets adopted and understands and appreciates what his sonship is all about—and has responded positively to that sonship—**his education begins with on-the-job training!**

- He immediately (along with what he immediately begins to learn) - learns something that he can immediately put into practice!

- And that's why, when your volition is tested in regard to responding positively and properly to what you have learned—has, in connection with that proper response aspect—looking for the opportunities to put into practice what you have learned.

- Because what you have learned is **NOT theoretical!!!**

- What the Father immediately begins to teach is not just 'book knowledge' — rather, it is designed to immediately go into practice!

- The godly thinking is designed to produce the godly conduct & behavior—which is designed to produce the godly labor—**and there's no break in that chain!**

- And so as soon as the son gets his education underway—he is getting his education underway **IN** his Father's business.

- **It's like the classroom is contained right within the building where the business takes place!**

- And in a local assembly—**that’s exactly what’s taking place!**

- The classroom **IS** the local assembly—and the business **IS** the local assembly!

- And so the first thing the son learns is — Look around, son, at all the other sons in this local assembly—You’re not only all “sons,” but I’ve dealt to you all *the measure of faith*—**You’re all employed by Me, equally!**

- And every one of you has got the opportunity to occupy an *office* and do a job that is as equally important to Me as all the other ones are!

- So look at yourselves that way—and recognize that NONE of you is more important than the other one!

- Look at yourselves exactly as I, your Father, look at you: You’re all sons to whom I *dealt* to each and every one of you the very same *measure of faith*.

- (Now that doesn't mean that I’ve given each of you the exact same job—but I have given each of you the exact same responsibility to **do** a job in My business.)

- AND IF THAT DOESN’T BRING DOWN HIGH-MINDED THINKING—NOTHING WILL!

- Because you can’t think *high mindedly* if that’s what you’re thinking!

- You can’t *think more of yourself* if that’s what you’re thinking!

- And that’s exactly how ‘members of a body’ **have** to think—if they’re going to function like ‘members of a body’!

- Because the ‘little toe’ is just as important as the right eye!

- And the reason this defining issue of *according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith* being the defining issue that brings godly love into existence—and that *measure of faith* being understood

to be the Father's way of expressing the fact that we are to think of one another (and view one another) with this **sonship equality** by which our Father has *dealt to every one of us* (equally) the **responsibility** from Him, to labor with Him in what He's doing in His business — the reason why the fitting sonship expression of that is that He has *dealt to every man the measure of faith*—is that when you take everything you've learned about your sonship life and your sonship status, and boil it all down to its most common denominator (so to speak) - the most common issue we all share in common as sons is that we have all been adopted by our Father (ultimately) to labor with God in all that He's doing.

- And it's been that way from the very beginning when God first created man as a help meet for Him—and the whole thrust of the sonship education (and the whole thrust of godly edification) is so God can come along and say, I've created you and educated you so that you can help Me do what I want to do!

- “**That's what I'm privileging you to be, as my son!**”

- And when it comes to all that you dealt with in the Sonship Checkpoint of Romans 12:1-2—what you were ultimately saying to your Father was: I want to now **serve** you in your business—and You're going to *renew my mind* now so that I can learn the things I need to know so I can **serve** You in Your business!

- And the first thing the Father tells you is: **YOU'RE NOT MY ONLY SON!** But every other saint out there is My son, too! And you're going to be serving Me in My business along with them: **equally!**

- And when you look at it that way—the most logical thing you need to *renew your mind* with first is this very issue of Romans 12:3!

- That every other saint is not merely a son—but is a son who is charged with the exact same responsibility to labor in the Father's business as you are—and you need to have that kind of viewpoint with the ones you assemble with because you're **ALL** going to be **working together in the same business that's being conducted in that local assembly— in the specific location in which you exist!**

- And just to underscore the issue once more—especially that we’ve **all** been given *the measure* of that last word of (:3) **faith**—again, when the master-servant or employer-employee relationship is dealt with by Paul over in the book of Titus (2:10), the reciprocal concept to having been given *the measure of faith* is that the servant shews forth **all good fidelity**—and you can’t show *all good fidelity* unless someone has entrusted you with ‘keeping faith’ with them!

- Because that’s what you’re shewing: that you ARE keeping faith with them—(that’s what *fidelity* is!)

- That’s why stereo systems in my generation were called: High Fidelity (or HiFi systems) - because **it faithfully reproduces those High Frequency sounds!**

- And in that way, a master has given his servant something he calls “*faith*” — (and it’s not belief or positive volition; and it’s not Bible doctrine or the curriculum—but it’s the responsibility to do a job given by the master to carry out in the master’s business!)

- Therefore the simple issue Paul is telling us here in Romans 12:3 (and it is to be kept simple here) — is that we are *not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith*—

- and that’s simply the realization of the fact that God has dealt to each of us as sons, the entrusted responsibility to take the education that we’re receiving and employ it in His business.

- And it does start out simply—but as we go on, we’ll learn a number of things about the many operations of God, and we’ll be able to employ our education in a number of things He does.

- But that doesn’t change the fact that, right from the beginning of our sonship education—in simple view of the fact that we are “sons” - we were *dealt* that privilege of being able to labor with Him in what He’s doing—and that’s just a natural part of sonship.

- And above all—it’s a natural part of sonship that we all have in common—**equally!**

- And so this is the needful, natural, and necessary thing that has to be focused upon right now in sonship—and it's the thing that needs to be focused upon as the first Component of our *instruction of wisdom*—because as sons, we're going to be given an opportunity to labor with God **right away**—and it's going to require the acknowledged reality of this being true for every member of the church, the body of Christ in the local assembly in which we assemble—in order for that first opportunity to labor with God in the business of the assembly to be able to be successfully produced.

- Therefore by the last 12 words of Romans 12:3, (and especially by the final 4 words of those 12 words—[*according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith*] — godly love (or what your Father values and what your Father esteems) gets produced in your inner man — and more than that, the nature of that godly love, or the feature of the godly love that gets produced in you—is one of **selfless** thinking—of *not thinking more highly of yourself than you ought to think*, but thinking of other saints in this very local assembly as having an equal responsibility to labor in the business of the local assembly with a particular *measure of faith just as you have been given or dealt*—each one of us has been entrusted with the responsibility to labor with our Father, and He is going to educate you to be able to do that labor—but you're not the only son He's educating—but He's educating every one in the assembly with you to be able to do that exact same thing (i.e., to labor with Him in what He's doing).

- And since you're **not** the only son—but since every other son is being given that same opportunity—and since every other son has that as part of his sonship life—and every other son's life is aimed at fulfilling that laboring aspect with their Father—then when it comes to the first aspect of the *renewing of the mind* that has to take place (because the wisdom of this world and sin in our members would have us thinking otherwise)—we need to *renew our minds* with the reality of this—and by the *renewing of our minds*, **displace** the tendency to *think more highly of ourselves than we ought to*—we now replace that with this *sober thinking*!

- And once that's replaced, it will provide for the consistent godly behavior of (:4-5) - and once that's in existence it will provide for the godly labor of (:6-8).

- And now the issue is for you to respond positively & properly to it and for that to produce a *sober* mind that can recognize when you're

thinking *more highly of ourselves that we ought to*—and which can **deny** those thoughts when they present themselves—and to make it, therefore, so we can begin to think consistently with what Paul will say later on, with *lowliness of mind* (Eph. 4:2) rather than *high mindedness*.

- And *lowliness of mind* is exactly what this is designed to produce! (Not **all** of it yet, but its basics & fundamentals).

- And all this takes **effort** on your part—it takes **work**—and it takes that positive and proper response on your part.

- Because this isn't just a matter of—ok, I understand that, so that's all done—we'll just put that on the shelf (like a trophy; like a doctrinal trophy to just collect dust) - no—but rather it's now in place in your thinking to be **constantly** in use; to be **ever working** in you moment by moment from this point on!

- And there's going to be a natural **struggle**—because there will be those times when you're going to muff up and the tendency will be to go back to your old way of thinking—but when those times come up, you know how to deal with it and how to consign that ungodly thinking to functional death and not let it get the upper hand in your mind. (Rom.6:1-8:13)

- So now the question is—Has godly selfless love been brought into existence in your heart (in your inner man); in your thinking?—and has the words of Romans 12:3 effectually worked in your inner man so that **ONLY** those words have produced godly selfless love in your mind?

- If so—then we're ready to move on to the next aspect of the godly edification of vss.3-8: (:4 & :5) we move from the godly thinking to the godly **living** (conduct and behavior).

- Now what's going on here in the first Component of our *receiving the instruction of wisdom*—(which is all of :3-:8)—is that you have to keep in mind that at the heart of it all is the issue of godly **edification**.

- And that means that we do go from a portion of information designed to produce godly thinking—and then transition that godly thinking into a portion of information that focuses upon godly conduct and behavior (or godly living) - and then with those 2 things, transition one more time into the godly labor.

- And though I know you know that—what I’m after here is that the way in which that gets done is by **LINKING** everything together.

- And once the godly thinking has been produced—(and that being the first “link” or first step)— then the next ‘link’ comes along and begins the process of the **transition** from the *thinking* to the *living*.

- And I want you recognize and appreciate each “link” or each step in the process—because you have to be able to identify those ‘links’ in order to understand & appreciate the sense and sequence of each ‘link’ **as the next, natural and necessary thing that it is.**

- In other words you’ve got to be able to have an appreciation for **WHY** what is said in (:4) is the next, natural thing that has to be said—(as the next “**link**” so to speak).

- And that’s important/critical because every ‘link’ is designed by your Father with a certain goal or aim or objective that has to be accomplished before going on to the next ‘link.’

- And every ‘link’ has a natural, progressive order to it that, when all the links are linked together ends up producing the overall aim or goal of the particular Component you’re dealing with.

- Which in this case is to produce godly selfless love as the 1st Component of our *receiving the instruction of wisdom*—and being able to make wise sonship decisions in view of that.

- And the first link in the chain that has been forged is (:3) — and that produces the fundamental godly thinking that needs to be in effect so that the things that now come up—come up as the natural products of this fundamental godly thinking.

- And the next link in the chain that begins in (:4) - is designed to take the now-existing godly thinking and move it into the area of our **conduct and our behavior.**

- And since this is the first Component (not only to our *instruction of wisdom*), but to our entire sonship education—when it comes to us as members of the new creature of the church the body of Christ, **this is the most fundamental “living” feature of all for a “son!”**

- And this is another aspect of our Father's genius in going about giving us the *instruction of wisdom* the way He does—because it allows Him to immediately confront us with the fundamental issue of who we are (collectively) “in Christ” - of what our business with Him will all surround—of what our Father's ultimate plan & purpose with us is about—and the fundamental issue upon which every thing else in our sonship life will be built upon!

- (And I'm not even scratching the surface here!)

- And even though the word *body* has been used a number of times already in the book of Romans—this is the FIRST time it has ever been used this way!

- And therefore this is our introduction to the terminology and the doctrinal issue of each one of us as individual saints and individual sons of God—viewing ourselves ***as members of one body in Christ, and every one members one of another!***

- And here again—because we have heard this before; and talked about it at great length; and because we do have some understanding & appreciation for us being members of the church, the body of Christ—you're going to have to pretend for a moment as if you've never had that thought run through your mind—and try to put yourself in that state where, for the first time, this enormous, grand, magnificent thought ‘clicks’ in your thinking—and begin to perceive how that is going to make an impact upon your conduct and behavior!

- Because the truth of the matter is—even though you may have a proper Biblical understanding of *some* things concerning “the body of Christ” — (like so many doctrinal issues), I doubt very seriously if that understanding you have (good as it is; proper as it is; and maybe even advanced as it is) - I doubt that it **began** right here and that the aims, goals, and objectives that these 33 words of (:4-5) have, makes up (or established) your fundamental understanding and appreciation for being a member of the church, the body of Christ!

- And if you don't have these fundamental issues down pat (so to speak) - you're in danger of making the same mistakes the Corinthians made!

- (In other words, you've probably MISSED some things!)

- (You should know by now that many folks often use ‘advanced terminology’ without first of all getting the proper fundamental instruction that allows for them to think about it the way God thinks about it!) [and this is one of those issues!!!]

- Now here in (:4 &5) - we have a kind of **transition** taking place that goes from the strict godly *thinking* that (:3) has effectually produced, to the first consistent manifestation of godly *conduct & behavior* that would come out of that, with us as “sons” (and with the purpose our Father has for us as sons in His business). [being the NC,CBOC]

- Now when you look at (:4-5) you should easily see that it is neatly divided into **2 Parts** —

4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

- You have one complete sentence—but it’s divided into 2 Parts or 2 clauses (by the colon) —

Part 1

4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

Part 2

5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

- And not only does the English punctuation mark (the colon) indicate that—but the KJ Translators divided the sentence into 2 verses in your Bible.

- And as you end (:3) - it’s one of those fascinating ways our English language can say something in the form of a sentence—but as it ends, (especially as you read it to yourself), it almost makes you verbally ask, **Why?**

*3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. **Why?** (:4) For ...*

- And (:4) is going to present some information to you that will take the now-existing godly selfless love—and by what it confronts you with, it will make the way to transition that godly selfless love out of your **mind** and into your **soul** (so to speak) - or into your *conduct and your behavior*—(**but for some very specific reasons!**)

- And once that transition has been made—into what the first part of (:5) does with it—it's really the **last part of (:5)** that comes along and provides for that godly selfless love to manifest itself in the fundamental, foundational conduct & behavior that is **consistent** for us **being** the members of the body of Christ that we are.

- And one of the things that (:3) gets generated in our thinking—(which is a critical and essential and vital thing that it is) — is that by God having *dealt to every man the measure of faith*—(in fact the entire verse) — in essence is generating in your thinking that each one of us (or every one of us, individually) are now in a particular (even peculiar) relationship, one with another!

- And that issue begs to be further described and further amplified upon—and some critical and essential things about that relationship to be brought to bear upon how we conduct ourselves and behave ourselves accordingly!

- And that needs to 'sink in' (so to speak) - and that needs to get some roots laid down in our hearts because we not only need to operate upon that, but that's going to be the fundamental foundation for what we're going to be (purpose-wise and plan-wise) in our Father's business.

- And that is, that we're going to operate in our Father's business in a "**body**" situation!

- And all of (:4) and the first part of (:5) is taking that selfless thinking now, and putting it in that framework.

- And I say that because as the transition is made—you're still kind of dealing with godly thinking in (:4) and in the first part of (:5) - but the difference is that the godly thinking is being transitioned into the **SPECIFIC** selfless godly thinking that members of a **body** (that we are) **need** to possess — and to think of it **in that context**.

- And then that provides for it to immediately begin to manifest itself in conduct & behavior, which by those simple 7 words that end (:5), provides for, for it to immediately begin to function in a conduct & behavior lifestyle manner that is consistent & true with who we are as members of the church, the body of Christ that we are.

- And so when it comes to the conduct & behavior—it's that last part of (:5) that's speaking about the proper conduct & behavior—and therefore it's that last part of (:5) that is the **most** critical of all—and that you need to think carefully about and think with some real perception—and **perceive** some things that are so critical as to how you conduct yourself **as** one who, *being many, are one body in Christ*.

- And when you do—you'll realize that, as simple as those last 7 words sound—they're actually saying **a whole lot** about the initial, foundational conduct & behavior that that selfless godly thinking is able to produce.

- And that—whatever this initial, foundational conduct & behavior is—it provides for the more detailed aspects of it that come out in (:10); that come out in (:11); and that come out in the remaining Components to our initial *instruction of wisdom as* members of the church, the body of Christ.

- Now when it comes to (:4) - (and even the first part of :5) - it's obvious that God has the apostle Paul set forth the information there in the form of an analogy. (the word **as** in :4 & **So** in :5 tells you that)

- *analogy = a comparison based on similarity; a likeness of relations; something similar to or resembling something else; something similar to something else in relations or attributes; parallel issues*

4 For as we have many members in one body,—(in other words, as we have many body parts in our one body) — **and all members** (or body parts) **have not the same office:**

- And really, every word of (:4) should be easily understood.

- And the analogy should be easily understood.

- And here is where you're to appreciate this next 'link' of information—this '**transition-link**' (so to speak) - which is designed to take the first link (of :3 = the now-existing godly selfless love), and move that godly *thinking* into your soul and therefore into the godly *living* aspect of your sonship conduct and behavior.

- And when I say that by this analogy Paul uses, you should be able to appreciate the way the transition is made from the *thinking* to the *living*—what I mean by that is, that you appreciate the naturalness for why the analogy would have to be about your **BODY!**

- That is—Why, when it comes to making an analogy that will provide for you to begin to think in a particular way about the godly selfless love that has now been produced in your inner man—Why is the most natural way to get you to perceive how that godly thinking can transition into godly conduct & behavior is to bring up the issue of your own physical body?

- (And there is a 2-fold genius behind doing it this way!)

- First of all—the naturalness of the way the transition is made is that, when it comes to what you **value** and what you **esteem**—what is the closest, common thing (nearest to you) that you value & esteem?

Answer: Your own body and it's *members* (or body parts).

- And there are far more reasons than this (or than just 2) — but for now 2 will do.

- And the second major reason for why the analogy dealing with your physical body comes up is to introduce you to the nature of the **LIVING UNION** you are now in as a son with all the other sons in your local assembly (to begin with) - and then with all other sons in the world in general.

- And though I'm getting a little ahead of myself—it's this **living union** type of relationship that I have already referred to as this particular (or even peculiar) **relationship** every one of us is now in—*one of another!*

- In other words—just as the members of the remnant of Israel had (and will have) a **living union** relationship one with another—which is the issue of them being a "**nation**" of God's own creation—(not to mention the fact that they're in a **living union** relationship with God Himself) — well, we too are in a **living union** relationship with one another—and just as Israel's living union relationship with one another had to do with how God would utilize them in His plan & purpose to repossess the earth from the Adversary and his cohorts—and God's plan & purpose calls for them to be a *great nation* with a *great name* and to be a *blessing for the whole world* — **we** have a **living union** relationship with one another and a **living union** relationship with God/Christ in which God's plan & purpose calls for us to be a **BODY**.

- And that's consistent with what God's plan & purpose for us calls for—because it calls for us to *deliver the creature from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God* — and the *creature* is designed to be a **body** or an embodiment for the earth in God's creation!

- And to get back to the issue at hand in Rom. 12:4 and the first part of :5 — even though you could say that the majority of (:4&5) is still dealing with how you think—it's not the same thing as (:3) was doing (which was to get godly thinking brought into existence in your mind) — but rather here, the issue is to transition that godly thinking into godly living—and to do that you have to begin thinking in a specific and particular way about that godly selfless love—and that specific way of thinking has to do with carefully thinking about and carefully perceiving some very basic and fundamental things (first-things-first) about how your own body lives in union with itself.

- Because there are some very elementary but PROFOUND issues that come from a body-type analogy that will **set** and **fix** your thinking on the proper road (so to speak) - or fix your compass on your **way**—that will serve you from now and throughout your sonship life!

- And this is the kind of thing I'm after when I'm talking about perceiving the **naturalness** for why this body-analogy is brought up as the means to transition the godly thinking of godly selfless love into the godly conduct & behavior.

- Now let's look again at (:4) — (and :4 is the FIRST HALF of the analogy).

4 For as we have many members in one body,

- “***For as***” begins the analogy.

- “***we have many members***” - in other words, when we think about our own physical body—we have many **parts** to it—many **limbs** to it— many **organs** to it.

- “***in one body***” - but all those many parts or *many members* make up just ***one*** physical *body* (our physical body)—**they exist in one body**.

- And the idea is—our Father says, Look at your own physical body and begin thinking critically and with some real perception about it.

- You value and esteem it don't you? (of course you do) - so think about it and about the fact that even though it's one body, it's made up of many members or many parts—right?

- Ok—start thinking about how those *many members* exist in a living-union type way in your *one body*—because the basic and fundamental characteristics that make up the way your *many members* of your physical body exist in living-union with your *one body*—those will be the fundamental, yet profound characteristics that will define and distinguish (and even identify) you as a son in your conduct and your behavior in the area of how you live in connection with your reception of your Father's wisdom—and how you make wise decisions as a son, accordingly.

- But that's not all of the first part of the analogy—the rest of (:4) finishes off the first part of the analogy.

4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

- And again—as I said earlier, nothing in (:4) is hard to grasp or hard to understand at all—except for one word.

- **and all members** (that is, all the different body parts/limbs/organs of your physical body)

- **have not the same office:** (do not have the same *office*)

- And that last word of (:4) - the word **office**—is where we might have some fuzziness or might be puzzled over why God chose to use that word instead of one that we would more naturally use—such as the word 'function.'

- And here is another great example in your KJ Bible of what is called VOCABULARY CONTROL!

- **office** = $\pi\rho\tilde{\alpha}\xi\iota\varsigma$ = a mode of acting; a doing of a thing—used 6x; deed 4; work 1; office 1

- And indeed, almost every other modern English translation of the Bible changes the word *office* to the word 'function' - but there are multiple shades of meaning (in fact the word *office* is pregnant with meaning) that the word 'function' simply does not have! ('function' is one of the **worst** trns.!)

- And while we can look at some of those shades of meaning here—it will actually be when we're at the end of the analogy in (:5) that we will be able to 'put it all together' (so to speak) and step back and see the depth of why this term is used here. (But let's look at some of those shades of meaning because it is the word at hand).

- And *office* is most often thought of as a particular position or seat of government or administration—a place from which a **duty** is performed—an *office* is usually **held**, and entrusted or *dealt* to a person.

- Therefore, by using the word *office* rather than 'function,' the word *office* **imposes a responsibility!**

- It is bestowed upon a man **from his qualification!**

- An *office* is a place of **trust!**

- An *office* imposes a **task** of some performance!

- An *office* implies that we always have something to do!

- An *office* is always assigned by another—(I Cor. 12:18)

- An *office* is always performed by one with the **intelligence** to do so—**who acts according to instruction!**

- George Crabb— **“The word *office* is sometimes employed in the same application by the personification of nature, which assigns an *office* to the ear, to the tongue, to the eye, and the like.”**

- In all these ways we can perceive some real insight into the way this analogy is utilized by our Father to indicate some of the very characteristics of not only the living-union relationship we have as members of *one body in Christ*—but also at the exact same time to perceive how we are being entrusted to function in our **sonship vocation** that we will occupy in our Father's business out in the creature!

- (We'll come back to this & deal with it some more later on)

- Now once that first part of the analogy is properly in your thinking and doing it's job—you're ready to move on to the 2nd part—(:5).

- And so once you've paused at the colon at the end of (:4) and that has effectually worked within your inner man—(:5) goes on to say...

5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, (and that's the end of the analogy—and what follows are the 7 simple words that focus upon the godly living or the conduct and behavior) **and every one members one of another.**

- **So** (just as the first part of the analogy set forth concerning our physical bodies having *many members*, but not all members having the same *office*—in that same exact way) **we** (each one of us as sons)

- **are one body in Christ**—and while the concept of being “*in Christ*” isn't anything new—the issue of us being **one body in Christ** IS something we are confronted with here **for the very first time!**

- And the idea is that we are to take the critical and perceptive thinking of the first part of the analogy and bring it to bear upon this final part of the analogy—that is, to **make the connection** (so to speak) between some fundamental and basic characteristics about how our *many members* exist in a living-union relationship with our *one physical body* all the while those *many members* having not the same *office*—and how those characteristics are the very characteristics that will mark our conduct and our behavior with us being *many members* in a living-union relationship as *one body in Christ!*

- So every 'link' in the chain—of how you are to transition from the godly thinking to the godly living can now be recognized and can therefore be dealt with properly.

- And therefore the only thing left to deal with is the application or the final 'link' that takes the now-existing godly thinking of the godly selfless love—and by the transition of the analogy, bring all that perceptive thinking to bear on the last 7 words of (:5) ...

4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

- And there is an **awful lot** packed in to those last 7 words!

- And the issue of us being *members one of another* has resident within that simple reality, the ability to understand some fundamental matters of conduct and behavior that would be naturally true for *members one of another*—that would not necessarily be as defined or as detailed as what comes up later on—but still needs to be recognized as fundamental matters of conduct & behavior nonetheless.

- And the way in which that's appreciated—and the way in which that's discerned—(the way in which you perceive what those fundamental characteristics are) - is by the analogy that (:4 & :5) says exists.

- You're supposed to look at the way in which the *members* of your own physical body are *members one of another*—and by that, perceive how they operate on their most fundamental, foundational conduct and behavior towards one another.

- AND THAT'S THE SAME KIND OF FUNDAMENTAL CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOR THAT IS TO EXIST AMONG US AS MEMBERS *ONE OF ANOTHER*—AND THAT IS CAPABLE OF EXISTING ON THE BASIS OF THE BASIC GODLY THINKING OF VALUING AND ESTEEMING ONE ANOTHER EQUAL TO OURSELVES and thinking of one another, not only as ones to whom *the measure of faith* has been equally *dealt*—but ones who are in a body relationship, *one to another*—and because of that, our conduct and behavior (one towards another) ought to have some fundamental body-member characteristics to it.

- And since this is the very first time we are told about and confronted with the issue of the truth that we are *one body in Christ*—it's very important for you to understand and appreciate—(and to dislodge the way you've already come to know about this issue) - that when you are informed about this issue of being *one body in Christ*—that this doesn't happen in a context dealing with 'rightly dividing the word of truth' — and what I mean by that is that most folks (grace folks included) only see this phrase/title as Paul's way of distinguishing between us and Israel!

- Well it is that—but it's not **just** that—and more than that, that's not the way you are to think about it at first—nor is it the primary reason for this kind of terminology!

- And a great deal of damage has been done by sloppy Bible handling—and by more often than not, getting the ‘cart before the horse’ — and here is one of those instances.

- Because the primary reason for us being *one body in Christ* isn’t to distinguish us as different from Israel—but to bring into existence the fundamental characteristics that we have to have in order to live and labor with our Father as His sons in all of His business!

- And a lot of folks can talk a lot about being members of the church, the body of Christ (Ephesians terminology) - but if you were to press them for the kind of characteristics that terminology is designed to produce—and the fundamental reasons for why we are called that (from God’s perspective), they’re at a loss to answer that question!

- But that title “the body of Christ” - or us being *one body in Christ*—is a title that describes the actual, living-union relationship that we have, one with another, that is equal with the kind of living-union relationship that the individual members of our own physical bodies possess.

- It is therefore that type—it is therefore that interconnected—it is therefore that interdependent—it is therefore that mutually existent—and so forth —

- And because of that, there are fundamental things going on in the members of our own physical body—that are going on even when the members of our own body are not visibly doing anything!

- Like when you are **sound asleep!**

- And even when you are asleep—the members of your physical body are still doing some things—there’s still a fundamental conduct and behavior that is going on with every one of those members to our body.

- And if those things didn’t go on on a constant basis—then when the alarm clock rings at 6:00am, **you couldn’t get up and do any of the other things you’d want to do!**

- And it’s that kind of perception you have to get at in order for this powerful analogy to do its effectual job in your inner man!

- And in a *body*—there are some fundamental actions of conduct and behavior—of interrelationship between the members of a body that just go on as a **natural part of its existence**.

- And if they **didn't** go on—none of the more detailed work and 'fineries' of work—and more elaborate work related things that are the visible outworking of those unseen things — those kinds of things would never take place.

- And in a *body* there are a whole bunch of “autonomic” type things taking place—even when you're sound asleep—(the lungs; the heart; the digestive system; etc.) — that occur automatically.

- And to use that illustration— verses 4 & 5 is providing for those 'autonomic' things to come into existence in the *body* of a local assembly.

- And especially that last part of (:5) — **and every one members one of another** is providing for **that** fundamental, foundational, 'autonomic' conduct & behavior based upon the fundamental godly thinking of valuing and esteeming one another equal to yourself—to come into existence in the local assembly.

- And then once that's done—and once the fundamental conduct & behavior is put into practice in the laboring aspect that (:6-8) has it to do—once all of (:3-8) is done— then the foundational operation of a *body* in a locale is established.

- And **only then** can it increase and grow—(which is what :9-16 provides for through the remaining 5 Components to our initial *instruction of wisdom*).

- And I'm saying all this stuff—so that you deal with the last 7 words of (:5) in the **fullness** that God has designed for them to be deal with!

- And to do that—God has designed it so that you have to carefully think about how God has designed your own physical body—and perceive what the kind of 'living union' type relationship exists between your physical members of your physical body.

- How different this is from simply thinking that the phrase “*body of Christ*” has to do with dispensational differences!

- And if you haven't thought about it yet—if this 'living union' type relationship has to exist in order for the local assembly to function as a **body**—then that means that the members of the local assembly are going to have to **communicate** with one another quite well—and on a far deeper level than has existed thus far!

- In other words—it takes the 'interactive learning' & makes you realize there's more involved in that than you may have previously thought!

- Now—I'm deliberately going slow here for a reason—and that is because just as (:4-5) sets forth some information—but then because it doesn't come along and 'spell every last detail out' for you—your Father expects you to take what's said here and do some **homework** on your own—and to figure out on your own what these fundamental 'living union' type characteristics are that constitute the foundational conduct & behavior of a **body**.

- That's your sonship responsibility.

- And by the effectual working of (:4-5) - you should be able to come up with at least 4 major characteristics that make up the 'living union' type (or autonomic type) relationship that exists in your physical body –and therefore has to exist in the body of the local assembly.

- And so important are these 4—that they become the basis upon which all the other, more particular and more eventful and more specific matters of *body* type conduct & behavior will develop.

- It's kind of like these initial 4 features are the 'life-blood' to the whole 'living-union' relationship that we have, *one with another*.

- And by the way—you don't have to go forward to I Corinthians 12 to get them!

- You can get them by the effectual working—and by the homework you do right here—but if you get in a snag, you can go to I Corinthians 12 and get them.

- And what you're doing here is '*exercising your senses*' just like the remnant sons will have to do in Hebrews 5:14!

- And this should be a **thrill** for you—to do this kind of homework (or *exercise*)—and this should be done with real ambition and enthusiasm—because this is what sonship is all about!

- And this is exactly what you've been told about how you can't just expect the living words of the living God to live in you by just coming to class!

- And now your 'work-load' is increasing for the first time!

- So at this point—you've been given enough time—and by what I've said over that past several Bible classes—to carefully giving some thought to the analogy that the apostle Paul sets before you in (:4 and most of :5) - therefore, what have you come up with that could be considered matters of conduct & behavior that would at the same exact time be considered characteristics of (or features of) a **body**? (don't answer right now)

- Because that's what the analogy is after—it's ultimately after taking the already-existing godly *thinking* of godly selfless love, and transferring it into godly *living* (godly conduct & behavior).

Analogy: 4 *For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:*

5 *So we, being many, are one body in Christ, ...*

- And then those final 7 words of (:5) - **and every one** (every other 'son' who sits in that local assembly with you) **members one of another** (that is, every other son in the assembly with you are to have the exact same features or characteristics that are shared between the various members of your own physical body—and now those exact same features and characteristics are supposed to come into existence and be the shared features and characteristics that now exist and will forever exist between you and every other son in the local assembly in which you sit.)

- Now before answering—and before getting down to 'brass tacks' so to speak—let's again remind ourselves that what we're dealing with here is the fundamental thinking regarding the relationship that we have one with another that's going to allow that selfless love that (:3) has brought into existence, to begin to naturally find an outlet in our conduct & behavior, one with another—and that's consistent with who we truly are in this dispensation of grace—and that is that we're

... not in a ‘nation’ relationship like the remnant of Israel was/will be in—but we’re in a **body** relationship.

- And the way we appreciate that is with the physical body.

- But what we’re after here isn’t some kind of individual acts that are done—or individual deeds that are done—or individual achievements or accomplishments.

- But all we’re after is what you think about goes on in your physical body that are **just going on all the time**—whether the physical body is awake or asleep or actually doing anything at all.

- And these are things that are always taking place and continually taking place between the members of a body—or to put it another way—they are **attributes of conduct**.

- And that’s a better expression than the ‘autonomic’ functions that I talked about before.

- Because an **attribute** is something that is always in existence—like God’s attributes (He doesn’t flip them ‘on’ and ‘off’ like a switch—but they’re just always there).

- And for us as sons in the local assembly—these **body attributes** are supposed to be ‘**always there**’ too!

- So really, this is a more fitting description—because with something that is ‘autonomic’, there’s really no consciousness behind that—but when you’re talking about an **attribute**, there is consciousness behind an attribute—and the consciousness here in this case is the selfless love—and the selfless love is behind every one of the ‘body attributes’ that we’re after.

- So let’s use that expression (**body attribute**) as a more fitting description of what we’re after here.

- Because these attributes are to become a part of your ever-present personality or make-up. (They are to become the hallmarks of a son’s conduct and behavior)!

- So now—given the amount of time you’ve had to put in some exercise or work on them—what body attributes of conduct & behavior have you come up with?

- My understanding is that there are 4 general body attributes of conduct and behavior.

- Let's take advantage of those 'answers in the back of the book' type thing that I talked about—and let's make sure that we verify these 4 **body attributes** by checking them against what the apostle Paul did when he had to confront the Corinthians with the kind of **problems** they were encountering because of their **failure** to have these body attributes effectually working in their inner man and therefore in their local assembly.

- I Corinthians 12:12-27 (read)

- Now there's much more going on here—and much more detail here—than just these 4 general body attributes of conduct and behavior—but all that we're going to focus upon are the 4 general body attributes.

- What we're after here isn't any deep detail—rather the most general and basic way that the information describes the analogy that exists between a physical body and what ought to be going on thinking-wise and conduct-wise between us as members of the body of Christ.

- And so we're not so much looking for a **word** in the text to tell us what the 4 are—but we're looking for a general and basic matter **that lies behind** the kind of detail that's given in the passage.

- And those 4 basic body attributes actually govern all of the more detailed type of matters of conduct and behavior that the apostle Paul talks about here.

- (It's like—if there were 20 detailed matters of conduct listed in :14-27 — then those 20 could be grouped together in 4 groups of 5.)

- And what's **behind** the 4 groups of 5 are these 4 fundamental body-type attributes.

- And the genius of what God does through Paul in this passage is that—as he teaches it and develops the thinking—and has us think about our physical body, and make the parallel to the body of Christ—in the way in which he sets the information forth, and makes us think about it—he sets forth an attribute first; and then some conduct; another attribute; and then some conduct; another attribute; and then some conduct; a final attribute; and then some conduct.

- And that means that this passage can serve a dual purpose for us— 1) to confirm these 4 body attributes—and 2) when we do deal with more detailed conduct and behavior that is to go one in the local assembly as *members one of another* who are *one body in Christ*—we can come back to this passage once again, and deal with the more particular things that are more of the detailed conduct and behavior.

- Well, (:12-13) are more introductory—so beginning at (:14) you go down through the information—and by looking at your ‘words of logic’ you can see where a particular issue has been sufficiently dealt with and where a ‘shift’ takes place to addressing the next issue.

- And my understanding of the general sense & sequence breakdown to the passage is:

- 1) (:14-20)
- 2) (:21-22)
- 3) (:23-25)
- 4) (:26-27)

- So what we need to do now—is to put an identifying concept to each of the 4 components (not paying attention to any of the details for now) - and we want to just think about (for instance) in that first component of (:14-20) where you have parts of the body ‘talking’ - and think: **what would the member who is ‘talking’ express about itself when it comes to this attribute that it has to have when it comes to being able to function as a *body*?**

- And what we’re after here (and what Paul is after) is: What would the member that’s talking THINK about the **other** members in the body in connection to what *they* do.

- And it’s the way *members* think about themselves in relationship to their *other members*—that **are** these 4 common, fundamental attributes of conduct—that *members* have to have if they’re going to function as a *body*!

- And the foundation for them all is: **SELFLESS THINKING!**

- If the selfless thinking is genuinely there—then as they recognize that they’re *members of a body*—the selfless thinking will generate these 4 attributes of common, fundamental conduct that the members will have with each other so that all the more detailed matters of individual deeds and works and matters of event-occurrence type behavior will be able to exist as well (later on).

(#1) - (:14-20) — There’s a fundamental underlying concept in all that Paul is saying about these members ‘talking’ to and about the other members.

- And because this is **first**—it’s the most critical, yet most basic body attribute of them all.

- In fact—every time you ever think about or talk about being ‘*members of the body of Christ*’ — this attribute should always be in the background of your thinking—(and yet, I doubt it ever has been—and I doubt that it is in the thinking of the majority of folks who talk about “the body of Christ”).

- Which tells you that they haven’t been taught about the body of Christ by their Father—but by men (or *instructors in Christ*).

- So when you think about the *foot* remarks about the *hand*; and the *ear* remarks about the *eye*—what is the underlying concept or attribute that they would **think** about one another as *members of the same body*?

- Notice that there’s no ‘wishing’ that one is the other—it’s simply a *member* looking at itself and then making a **faulty conclusion**—in other words the foot says, “**I’m a foot, I’m not a hand, therefore I’m not a body part!**” WRONG! You **are** a part of the body!

- And to get the underlying attribute we’re after—you have to be able to answer the question: What made the *foot* draw the erroneous conclusion? — What’s the fundamental thing it’s thinking when it compares itself to the *hand* and says, “**Because I’m not of the hand, I’m not of the body**” ??

- This is something that a *member of a body* would never say!

- Truth is—a *member* of the body recognizes that it **IS of the body**.

- And the reason why you would never hear a member of the body say something like that—is because the member of the body doesn't look at itself (and look at another member of the body) - and think that there's something wrong with there being a **difference** between the two of them!

- Members of a body recognize that differences in members is expected—is natural—in fact, **you can't have a body if the members all look alike and if all the members do the same thing!**

- And as simple as that sound—that begins generating in our thinking this first general matter of body attributes of conduct & behavior that **selfless thinking** generates in a body.

- The *members* of the body, based upon **selfless thinking**, looks at itself — and looks at the *other members* of the body; — honestly recognizes a **difference** between themselves— recognizes that **they don't have the exact same office—and doesn't think there's anything wrong with that!**

... and doesn't dislike that—but rather sees that there is something incredibly RIGHT about that!

- And it actually **likes** it that way!

- And (:16) comes along and emphasizes it again. (read)

- And (:17) drives the whole issue 'home.' (read)

- And (:18) says, *But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body*, (and here's the 'kicker') **as it hath pleased him**.

- So what does that mean for every one of us as *members of the body of Christ* when it comes to our assessment of being *members one of another*? — If it *pleased* the One who created it, **then it should please us**—we should be happy with that— all the members of our physical body are **thrilled** with that situation!

- In other words—you never find where any member (or part) of your body comes along and ever gets the idea that for some reason—it no longer wants or needs to be part of the body—and therefore seeks to **detach** itself from the body and go off and ‘do it’s own thing’ (so to speak)!

- And while you may not have all your body parts—it’s not because one body part took it upon itself to remove itself from your body—no—a doctor did that (or a surgeon did that)!

- And the truth is—your arm (for instance) has no conflict whatsoever with your leg—and it’s perfectly happy to be the arm—and perfectly happy with the leg being the leg—and both being of the same body!

- Now if you were to describe what that attribute is that has the members of your body viewing or thinking about all the other members of your body (different as they are; and with different *offices* that they have) - what is the most general thing each member thinks as it view every other member?

- What is it that the member sees about the other member that kind of acts as a bridge between the selfless thinking and the way in which they’re going to function?

- (the lowest common denominator)

- Answer: **The member (or body part) sees the USE of every other body part!**

- The fact that every other member has **usefulness** to the body!

- And since every member has **usefulness**—you can’t come along and ever think that another member is NOT useful—or that it has NO value—or NO worth.

- In other words—you can’t start thinking **selfishly**—or anything else but **selfless** in connection with something else that has **USE** to you — not if a body is going to function properly!

- So this 1st body attribute of conduct and behavior is that—**selfless thinking members of a body purposely acknowledge one another’s equal usefulness!**

- And you are to ‘purposely’ acknowledge that every other *member* in the assembly not only has use—but there was One who designed it with **purpose**—and that was God Himself!

- So the members purposely acknowledge one another’s *office* or usefulness.

- Because an *office* is occupied by someone who is supposed to be **useful**.

- And if you think about it—isn’t that what (:14-20) are dealing with?

- It’s coming along and saying—look, the *hand* has got its usefulness, and I (the *foot*) have got my usefulness — and the eye has got its usefulness, and I (the ear) have got my usefulness.

- And (:17) says, Look, if the whole *body* has got only one member (like the eye), then *where were the hearing—hearing is a useful thing for a body*—and if the whole thing is an *eye*, then you can’t talk about it being a *body*—because the *eye* is just a member that is isolated off by itself!

- And then (:18) says *But now hath God **set** the members every one of them in the body*—and when you **set** something in a ‘collective’- when you set it, you don’t do it randomly and haphazardly—no—you did it with forethought and with design.

- And therefore every member’s usefulness was well thought out—every member’s *office* understands and appreciates that—and based upon their **selfless thinking**, they each acknowledge their **individual usefulness** without envy; without strife; without quibbling; without jealousy; - without any of those things going on between themselves—they’re perfectly content with their individual *offices* within the *body*—and they’re **pleased** with the arrangement just as the Designer Himself is pleased with it.

- And (:19-20) is just like—Let’s make sure this is **fully** understood and **fully** acknowledged—**because the remaining 3 body attributes of conduct depend upon this one**—and so Paul says, *And if they were all one member, where were the body?* (You can’t have a *body* with only one member!) - *But now are they many members, yet but one body.*

- And therefore their function as a *body* is going to be **dependent** upon this first attribute of conduct.

- And it’s going to have 3 others that are attached to it—and they’ll provide for the ability of the *body* (and the *members* within it) to produce all of the other natural event-oriented, time-oriented, situational/circumstance-oriented matters of conduct & behavior that allow the *body* to complete all the operations (and participate in all the operations) God designed for it to complete & participate in.

- Any questions?

- Let’s look at the 2nd Fundamental Body Attribute of Conduct & Behavior:

(#2) - I Cor. 12:21-22 — *21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.*
22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:

- I see here a break between the colon at the end of (:22) and the *And* of (:23) - where in (:23) I see a ‘shift’ take place where Paul shifts to the issue of *members of the body, which we think to be less honorable*—which I see as a further issue than what’s being dealt with in (:21-22).

- And once again—just like we did with (:14-20) - we’re looking for the body attribute or fundamental concept that ‘stands behind’ all of the terminology Paul uses here—and that describes for the Corinthians the kind of body-type attributes they should have gotten and should be operating upon right now, but because they didn’t get it when they should have—it’s causing them tremendous problems in their local assembly.

- So what do you see as this ‘behind the scenes’ body attribute of how your physical body would conduct itself and behave itself in view of what Paul sets forth in (:21-22)?

- It’s obvious that, by the terminology Paul uses—you have this issue of **need** of one *member* for another—as well as the issue of the *more feeble members of the body* being **much more necessary**.

- And that’s all well and good.

- But what we’re after here is to pay close attention to what the *members of the body* **SAY** to one another—and by what they **say**, they say some things that are expressive of a more fundamental body attribute.

- And the **need** concept of (:21) - and the **necessary** concept of (:22) now takes things beyond the issue of the **usefulness** concept—but now, we have to take the **usefulness** concept (and not drop it away from our thinking—but rather take the **usefulness** concept and with that all in mind) — now we look at the parts of our body (our *members*), and view their ‘necessary-ness’ — but in viewing that, perceive the body-type attribute that has your *eye saying to your hand, I can’t say that I have no need of you*—and have your *head say to your feet, I can’t say that I have no need of you, either!*

- In other words—what is it that makes it so that the *eye CANNOT say unto the hand, I have no need of thee*: — and what is it that makes it so that the *head CANNOT say to the feet, I have no need of you?*

- Because there’s something that the **selfless thinking** that acknowledges and ascribes **usefulness** to every *member* of the body surrounding it, now perceives **along with** the **usefulness** as well.

- If there’s **usefulness** of all of the various members/parts of the body—then each *member* has to also perceive something else as well about all the other *members* that exist along with it in the very same body.

- And all the other *members* of the body perceive this about all the other *members* of the body—even if they’re **feeble members** of the body — and the **selfless thinking** perceives that they’re first of all **useful** to the body—and because they’re **useful**; *and because I cannot say that I have no need of them*—therefore, we all have to exist (even the *feeble* ones) in the same body—and therefore, this other, second body-type attribute emerges—which is the issue of _____.

- And not only is it a body-type attribute—but it's the thing that [just by what Paul describes in (:21-22)], it's the thing that kind of regulates the conduct and behavior of the various (even *feeble*) members/parts of your body as they exist together in the one body.

- In other words—it's the attribute that has to exist in a body made up many parts/members—where, for instance, the *eye* sees the *hand* and says, Hey, I need you, so this (_____) is how I'm going to conduct myself with the *hand*—or this is how I'm going to behave myself with the *hand*.

- And then the *head* says as much to the *feet* — and *much more* to the *feeble* members.

- In fact—because they are all various *members of the body*, that fact alone **DEMANDS** this particular and specific attribute of conduct and behavior out of them—otherwise, the body simply could not function at all!

- And really—this body-attribute comes out from 'behind the scenes' into the light (so to speak) most naturally by means of the exact words and wording of (:21) — *And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you* —

- In other words—I CANNOT OPERATE ALONE, (ALL BY MYSELF) - I have to exist in the very same body along with all the other *members*—and that fact, alone, **demand**s that I behave a certain way with all the other *members of the body*.

- And what is that behavior called?

Answer: Based upon **selfless thinking**—and based upon what has just been dealt with in (:14-20) — the first thing the *members of the body* do as they perceive one another is to acknowledge each one's differing *offices* and each one's **usefulness** to the body in that office-capacity—and then the very next thing that a member of a body would naturally acknowledge about every other member of the body — and

by that acknowledgement, generate another body-attribute in connection with what's going to govern his conduct and his relationship with these other members from now on — is that, because they're useful, he purposes to deliberately **COOPERATE** with them!

- Which someone in the assembly said earlier—we have to '**work together**' with each other.

- And that's the natural thing you do with something that's **useful!**

- Since you acknowledge a *member's use*—it's therefore got a designed purpose for the benefit for the whole body—and therefore the most logical thing you acknowledge next is that: I'M GOING TO **COOPERATE WITH IT!** (I'm going to work with it).

- I'm going to do what my *office* does that can help it out to do what it's *office* does.

- And that's why you would come along and say, I can't say that I don't have any need of it—because in order for YOU to function properly, you HAVE to have that other member there in the body doing it's job right along with you doing yours!

- It's **usefulness** is interlinked with your **usefulness!**

- Therefore in order for you to function properly—YOU **NEED** IT'S USEFULNESS—and you need to **cooperate** with it's usefulness.

- You need it's **necessariness!**

- And even if it's ***feeble*** (compared to you) - it's *necessary*-ness outweighs its *febleness* by comparison to you.

- And again—the bottom line is it's **usefulness**—not if it has the exact same *office* or job (as far as what it does) - but the issue is that it's **useful** to the body.

- And therefore in order for the body to function—and in order for every member to be able to successfully do its job—that **usefulness** not only needs to be acknowledged—but it needs to be **cooperated with!**

- And that's the 2nd Attribute of conduct & behavior between members of a body: **cooperation!**

- **They purposefully acknowledge and deliberately determine to cooperate and work with one another for the common good of the body.**

- **(Determination to cooperate for the body's sake!)**

- And that's consistent with **selfless** thinking.

- Any Questions?

- Moving on then to the 3rd Fundamental Body Attribute of Conduct & Behavior:

(#3) - I Cor. 12:23-24A

23 And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.

24 For our comely parts have no need:

- Now just as we've done already (with the other 2 fundamental body attributes of **usefulness** and **cooperation**) - in order to get things going on the right foot (so to speak) - let's focus upon just who it is that's 'doing the talking' - or in this case 'doing the **thinking**' and **performing the action** about/upon other members of the body.

- And what we've got here are the *honourable members* and the *comely members* **looking** at the members of the body that are *less honourable* and *uncomely*—and those *honourable* and *comely* members of the body are **thinking** about those *less honourable* and *uncomely* members of the body.

- And then those *honourable* and *comely* members of the body are going to DO SOMETHING to those *less honourable* and *uncomely* members of the body.

- So maybe right here we need to say something about those 2 expressions: *honourable* and *comely*—and I don't think you need any help with that word *honourable*—but perhaps *comely* needs some clarifying.

- *honourable* = esteemed, respected, holding a position of honour, of distinguished rank, noble

- *comely* = something that is considered fair, beautiful, pleasing, becoming, attractive

- So once again—it's not that the *less honourable* and *uncomely* members of the body are looking longingly at the *honourable* and *comely* members of the body (and thinking about them in any certain way) — but it's the other way around—the *honourable* and *comely* members of the body are looking to the *less honourable* and *uncomely* members of the body (who are *less honorable* and *uncomely* by comparison)—and they are thinking a particular way about them and therefore are going to **conduct and behave** themselves in a particular way **towards** those members that are *less honourable* and *uncomely*.

- Now if that's clear—then you have to realize that what Paul's after here is—that there's a kind of thinking that members of a body have that, regardless of what position they're in, and regardless of the 'attractiveness' of that position—that because of their **selfless love**—even though they would look at that other members and recognize the difference in position they're in—and recognize that their position would naturally be considered to be more *honourable* in the body than the other one—and even though they could look at themselves (so to speak) and see more 'attractiveness' to what their position is in the body compared to this other one's — because of **selfless love**, there's a kind of thinking (which is based upon the 1st body attribute of **use** and **usefulness** to every member; and based upon the 2nd body attribute, they have purposefully & deliberately determined to **cooperate** with each and every member of the body for the good of the body) - that, therefore, this **3rd body attribute** now emerges.

- And it takes into account that—the differences between the members is not only the recognition of individuality as far as individual members are concerned—but it also involves the honest recognition of the fact that some *offices* within a body are going to seem to have more *honour* to them—and are going to seem to have more 'attractiveness' to them—simply because they **are** different—and simply because of the way in which those *offices* are employed.

- And there's nothing wrong with that—in fact, that's a natural thing that goes on in a body!

- But even when that kind of difference exists—when those first 2 body attributes of conduct & behavior are in existence (based upon that **selfless love**) — when it comes to the recognizing of the reality of these different ‘evaluations’ (so to speak) of the differing *offices* that exist in a body—the members don’t allow that to become a hindrance—or become an issue between them—even when the ones that are in the positions of the more *honourable* offices and the more *comely* offices recognize the differences between their offices and the members who occupy (by comparison) *less honourable* and *uncomely* offices than theirs.

- In fact—due to those differences—and due to the **selfless love**—and due to the conduct and behavior of seeing the **usefulness** of all the other members, as well as determining to fully **cooperate** with them—something else occurs between the members of the body.

- And it’s an **advancement** especially upon the **cooperation** issue.

- And to get at what this 3rd Body Attribute of Conduct & Behavior is—it comes out of that core expression sitting in (:23) — ***upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need:***

- So what we’re getting at is—what ‘lies behind the scenes’ or what is it (in the most basic of terms) that you are doing (or what action are you taking) when you ***bestow more abundant honour*** upon those members of the body whose offices appear to be *less honourable* and *uncomely*?

- In other words—what is the Fundamental Body Attribute that describes what you’re doing in order to put this kind of behavior into effect?

- What is the member that is in that *honourable* office doing when he looks at a member that is thought to be in a *less honourable* office—what is he doing when he *bestows more abundant honour* upon that *less honourable* member?

- What is it (attribute-wise) that makes him provide *more abundant comeliness* to the *uncomely parts*?

- What is it that makes him come along and say, *I have no need* — what aspect of **selfless love** would make him conduct himself in this manner—or makes him do what he does to the *uncomely part* when he values and esteems him like he's supposed to?

- And what you've got is one member of a body properly evaluating and esteeming another member of the body—but he sees a difference between them that could be a potential problem for the body to function properly—and so he immediately takes a course of action (or a course of conduct and behavior) towards that other member of the body—and he responds to it by *bestowing more abundant honour* and by *bestowing comeliness* to it—and then looks at himself and says “I'm *comely*, I have *no need* at all.”

- What is that **selfless action**?

(generous? no. more basic—and people can be generous for selfish reasons)

- What are you doing when you give up of yourself to supply another's need?

- **Answer:** You're **SERVING** that other member—you conduct and behave yourself in the manner of a **SERVANT** to that other member of the body!

- And **SERVING** one another is a species of **cooperation**.

- And the attribute of a servant is that: **he's always looking for a need that he can help out with.**

- That's why Paul says in 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.*

- **This 3rd Fundamental Body Attribute of Conduct and Behavior is: that because other members of the body are USEFUL, and every member proposes to deliberately COOPERATE with every other member of the body—the *honourable* members of the body SERVE the *less honourable* members of the body.**

- **(SERVING ONE ANOTHER!)**

- And that's what the more *honourable* member is doing—he sees the *less honourable* member and says, Hey, I can help out here—I'm going to *bestow more abundant honour*—I'm going to serve the need that he has.

- And this is so critical and so important—because the differences of the *offices* within a body can often be **quite** different (or radically different) — and one *office* can **appear** to be *less honourable* than another—or can have less attractiveness to it than another—(that's just the nature of a body that's made up of many members) —

— but because of the **selfless love** that's there—along with the body attribute of **usefulness** acknowledged; and **cooperation** acknowledged — those differences in the *offices*, instead of producing any **discord** or anything along those lines—instead, those differences produce and generate this deliberate form of body conduct and body behavior of **SERVING ONE ANOTHER** that's designed to meet the need that the *less honourable* and *uncomely* members appear to have!

- And so, for example—if a member of your physical body received an injury (or a scar, or sunburn, or whatever), the other member of your body come along and treats the wound (or grabs the lotion and rubs it on).

- In other words, it sees the need and it **serves** it!
(No questions asked! No hesitation whatsoever!)

- And this is an extremely important thing for us as members of the church, the body of Christ—because for some of the tasks to be done by the body, (just as in your physical body), **it's going to require more than one member to get it done!**

- (Just like in your physical body, when you encounter a weight that one arm can't handle—and so without hesitation and without question, your other arm comes to help out the need of the one arm — and even the legs and the back come to serve the need of the arms — and there's no rebellion on the legs' part [in fact, the legs won't get much recognition for doing their part] — but the job gets done.)

- And that's the attitude/attribute of a **servant**.

- Now the question you probably have at this time is: Just how am I going to do this here in this body of the members of Triangle Bible Church?

- And what do you suppose the answer to that is?

- Part of it is that, as a son, you're supposed to figure that out on your own!

- But part of it will become more evident as we go along in the curriculum.

- But because the apostle Paul doesn't 'spell it out' for you here in Romans 12:4-5, neither am I.

- Now for the 4th Fundamental Body Attribute of Conduct and Behavior:

(#4) - I Corinthians 12:24b-26

24 ... but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked:

25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care for another.

26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

- Here you've still got that issue of one member of the body having *honour* — but Paul is taking that from the previous issue of how the members of a body (as an attribute of conduct and behavior) **serve** one another's needs — and now Paul takes that *honour* issue out of the previous body attribute—and he's putting it together now with the *tempering* concept—and by doing that, Paul is now getting away from looking at the individual members of the body—but now he is going to look at **all** the members of the body, and look at **the body as a whole**.

- *tempered* (nearly all modern English trns. change the word to 'combined' / 'composed' / 'arranged' / 'put together' etc.) = to bring something (such as a body) into a proper or suitable condition, state, or quality by mingling it with something else—to unite in due proportion; to adjust, as parts to each other.

- But (as usual) the real ‘punch’ to the word *tempered* that makes it the most excellent of all choices of English words here is that—unlike other synonymous terms, *tempered* is used in a context where the possibility of **discord** exists due to combining things together that, by nature, should **not** be combined; *tempered* tells you that the things that are being united or put together are (even in the many and various parts and *offices* of a body) all **perfectly fit** and are **suited** for one another and **for the benefit of the whole body**.

- The only other word that may be a little ‘out of the ordinary’ (so to speak) is that word *schism*.

- *schism* (again, rejected by nearly all modern English trns.) = a rent or cleft; a division or separation; a breach of unity.

- But *schism* isn’t just any old word that is used to indicate some kind of a ‘division’ or to indicate any old ‘dischord’ or ‘dissension’ or lack of harmony.

- *Schism* is the **one and only** English word that is used in contexts that not only want to indicate that a ‘rift’ or division has occurred—but it is reserved to only be used in contexts where divisions have occurred in a **church**—and more than that, that the divisions that have occurred are due to **doctrinal corruption!** (In other words, where **heresy** or **heretical doctrine** is the cause for the division or rift between the members of the local assembly)!

- Now that should cover the ‘tougher’ words in (:24-26).

- And again, when you read, *but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care for another.* (and then [:26] is going to come along and amplify upon that *care* concept there) — but again, we have the apostle Paul now looking at the body ‘as a whole.’

- And it’s kind of like you’re coming ‘full-circle’ here with this 4th Body Attribute of Conduct & Behavior — When you began at the 1st one, you had the recognition that there is this **one body**, but it’s made up of *many members*—and then he started looking at the *members* and describe the kind of thinking that individual members of a body have to have to generate these Attributes of Conduct that make it so

a body can function as a body, made up of these many members.

- And now as he's moving on—and the members have acknowledged **use & usefulness** for each member; and then have determined to **cooperate** for the body's sake; and then have recognized that, in connection with individual *offices*, some members are going to have a *need* when it comes to being able to function within the body as a whole, so that the other members are going to **serve** the need of any member (for the body's benefit) —

— well now this 4th Body Attribute is going to focus primarily upon the body 'as a whole' - because you've come to the point of coming 'full-circle' - and it's kind of like you're going to take the 'end' of the 4th Attribute and 'attach' it to the beginning of the 1st Attribute—and you're going to have the **whole body**, now, recognized as being a **whole body** (made up of these many *members* with all the many *members* having the proper thinking—with the proper 4 Body Attributes of Conduct that's going to enable them to **function as a body**).

- So this tells you that this 4th Body Attribute primarily has to do with the perspective (and with the perception) that each of the *members* has for the body's ability to function as a whole body because of the **genius** of their individual *member* relationship & capacity with each other **within** this body.

- And that's the kind of thinking (so to speak) that stands behind this 4th Body Attribute of Conduct—and that's why the terminology shifts here to, as Paul says, *but God hath tempered the body together*.

- And by God *tempering the body together*—each member of the body is to recognize this *tempering*—and by so doing, it puts each of the *members together* in this body.

- And it takes that 3rd Attribute where a member that lacks *honour* (or has a need) gets *more abundant honour* from the ones who have it because they want to **serve** them—and from that, it produce this 4th Body Attribute of Conduct that (:25) describes where there's no **schism** in the body.

- But rather than a *schism*, the members *have the same care one for another*—and they have that *same care* because it's for the whole body's benefit.

- And without that *care* a *schism* would exist—and the body wouldn't be able to function as its been designed to function.

- But rather than a *schism* existing—this mutual *care* exists—and that makes it so that if the *one member suffers*, *all the members suffer with it*—or if *one member be honoured*, *all the members rejoice with it*.

- And that's the conduct & behavior that's the product of this 4th Attribute.

- And because the members perceive something about the genius of this *tempering* that allows for the whole body to function **as** a body, they have a particular kind of conduct & behavior one with another, that, whether the 'pendulum' swings all the way to *suffering*, they'll respond by *suffering together* — or whether the 'pendulum' swings the other way and a member is *honoured*, they're all *rejoicing*.

- (It's kind of like the epitome of selflessness—or lack of self-centeredness).

- Because the central issue in the thinking is: THE BODY!

- And therefore what we're after is the 'frame of mind' that describes that *care* and concern—this *suffering with them* — this *rejoicing with them*.

- The answer is really found in that last phrase of (:25) *but that the members **should have the same care for one another***. (That's the core issue).

- The member *cares* for the other member in the **worst** case scenario—and he *cares* for him in the **best** case scenario.

- And he responds with a mutual-type response that can be described by this general 4th Body Attribute of Conduct.

- (The word *care* being used here for **both** when an adverse or bad condition exists AND for when an agreeable or good condition exists). [Unlike the way we often use the word *care* today when only a bad or adverse condition exist.]

- So what do you have in view when you have *the same care for one another*? When you look at all the other members and you have *the same care for every one of them* (in good shape or in bad shape) - what can that kind of attitude be called—or what do you have in mind for them all?

- And though it's often used today (especially in terms of our Government) - and it's often used in a way that many who call themselves 'conservatives' look upon with a sense of it being disagreeable—in this context of a body (and more to the point, *the body of Christ*) - it should never be a disagreeable term or thought.

- Well, when you *care* for someone like this—you're looking out for their wellbeing—you're taking interest in them, and you *care* for everything that takes place with them (good or bad) - and everything that pertains to their wellbeing is of interest to you—and it means something to you—(you're not just a 'fair-weather' friend).

- And “wellbeing” is really accurate enough to express the issue—but “wellbeing” really focuses upon the present—the better term to use for this 4th Body Attribute of Conduct & Behavior is: **WELFARE** (because *welfare* focuses upon the present and well into the future)!

- The 4th major Body Attribute of Conduct & Behavior is: that because of the selfless love that has the previous 3 attributes in existence as well—the 4th Body Attribute of Conduct is **that a member of the body always purposefully pursues the welfare of every member of the body you ever deal with.**

- Because that's how the body is going to be able to completely fulfill its function.

- (Every member looking out for and looking after the **welfare** of every member that the body deals with).

- And that's the Attribute of the Conduct that's going to be **critical** when it comes to the members of the body in the assembly participating in all of the operations of God in a local church!

- (And being able to advance & take on more operations—and perceive more operations).

- When each of the members are purposefully and deliberately looking out for and looking after the **welfare** of each other member — that's going to provide for each member to grow & mature, and therefore provide for the **whole body** to grow and mature.

- (Just as in Level II it says over in Ephesians— ... *according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. 4:12*)

- And when it *maketh increase* of itself unto the *edifying* of itself—it **just doesn't grow numerically**—but it makes *increase* of itself in terms of **strengthening** of itself—and as far as its strength is concerned, it's able to take on more capacity & more and more operations of God—and to be able to fulfill every operation of God that He has designed a local assembly to be able to fulfill in the locale that it exists.

- And when it's able to do that—it's able to do what the Thessalonians did out in Level III—and that is to kind of 'spin off' other local assemblies from themselves!

- And to repeat the sonship process in other areas!

- But that all starts with getting the Body Attributes down first, and then it really starts with what Rom. 12:6-8 does, and then you can expand upon that as you go along in Level II & III Sonship Edification.

- So you should see some real **value** to these fundamental Body Attributes.

- This becomes real important when we get to the receiving of the sonship decision-making skill of EQUITY—with having to deal with the '*weaker brother*' and all.

- Because in a physical body, there's some parts or members to it that don't come in until later on when growth to the body has already taken place (like the wisdom teeth, for ex.).

- And this just goes to show you something of the genius of how God has designed the local assembly as a **body**—and the curriculum of sonship education to think of everything that the local assembly could ever face—and to never 'miss a beat' in it's edifying process!

- USE/USEFULNESS; COOPERATION; SERVANT; WELFARE — that's the understanding of what members (**who are members of a body**) are to recognize as *being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another* — that they will have going on in their fundamental, foundational Conduct & Behavior one to another.

[RECAP]

- So in our *receiving the instruction of wisdom*—our Father has given us that instruction by means of His own godly love (therefore the ability to value and esteem what He values and esteems) & make decisions accordingly.

- And (:3), dealing with the thinking aspect of godly edification, He produced godly **selfless** love in your inner man for the first time.

3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

- So how does that produce godly selfless love?

- By giving us the **perspective** and **attitude** of our Father in which **you're not the only son** to which He has given "*the measure of faith*" - or the responsibility of having a job to labor with Him in in His business—but He has given a job of responsibility in His business **TO EVERY OTHER SON WHO SITS IN THIS ASSEMBLY ALONG WITH YOU!**

- And the godly selfless love comes into play in the sense that our Father values & esteems **every** job He gives with equal importance and equal significance and equal weight as the job He gave you!

- Now once that thinking has been brought into existence in your inner man—then that leads to the Conduct & Behavior (or living) aspect of godly edifying, which is contained in (:4-5).

4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

- Godly selfless love now transitions out of your mind in into your soul—into how you conduct and behave yourself in the local assembly.

- And by having you think about and perceive some things about the LIVING UNION type relationship that all the members (or parts) of your own physical body have (*one of another*) - the fundamental and foundational Body Attributes of Conduct & Behavior emerge.

- And I say that they are fundamental because they are the ‘first-things-first’ aspects your Father wants you to understand & appreciate as, for the very first time, you are confronted with the fact that you are not only members of a local assembly, but you are also *one body in Christ*.

- That means that the expression *one body in Christ* is **NOT** first and foremost a term used to simply designate between God’s program with Israel and His program with us today.

- In other words— “the body of Christ” does not begin as a term to distinguish between dispensations!

- But not only are the fundamental Body Attributes of Conduct & Behavior fundamental, but they’re also foundational—and the fact that there are 4 of them shouldn’t therefore be a surprise at all—because you have to have at least 4 ‘cornerstones’ (so to speak) to any good foundation!

- Therefore, as we thought about our physical bodies as having *many members in one body, and all members having not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ* — we have come to understand & appreciate that the 4 Fundamental Body Attributes of Conduct & Behavior are:

- 1) Usefulness
- 2) Cooperation
- 3) Servant/serving the needs of all the other members
- 4) Welfare/purposefully pursuing the welfare of every member of the body you ever deal with.

- And that, therefore, allows for the last 7 words of (:5) to do the **powerful work** they’re designed to do—which is to cause you to behave yourself in keeping with the godly selfless love in connection with all the other “sons” - or all the other members of the local assembly where you gather.

... and every one members one of another.

- Notice that the word order of those 7 words are very critical: because it doesn't say:

and every one members of one another.

it says:

*and every one members **one of** another.*

- And though I've flubbed up and turned them around from time to time—that's an important difference—they don't mean the same thing.

- Because if my understanding is correct—being *members of one another* fails to carry the particular meaning that is being gone after here—it doesn't 'get at' what this is 'driving at' (so to speak).

- Because being *members of one another* is more along the lines of how you express the issue of simply being an individual who is, along with other individuals, members of a club or organization—i.e., I'm a member and so are you—in other words, the emphasis is upon the issue of 'member-ness' (so to speak) - and that we're all connected by our membership to the club (or to the body).

- But even more important (and more to the point) is that by stating it the way God has the apostle Paul state it—and by the KJ Translators expertise in the English Language—*and every one members **one of** another*—forces you to recognize that you are joined together as a body **with these Body Attributes being in place (or in mind)!**

- In other words, by saying *members one of another*—it **expresses the LIVING UNION aspect of the body**—and the **living union** aspect that's being expressed are those 4 Body Attributes!

- And if you turn the words around to say, *members of one another*, you **lose** the concept of the LIVING UNION aspect of the body!

- To put it simply—being *members of one another* does not express the living union aspect of the body—but being *members one of another* does express that living union aspect!

- Now it's going to be up to you to determine and figure out what your **behavior** is to be in light of all this—and you need to give some thoughtful work to how this affects your **behavior** and your **conduct** towards the fellow members of the body here in this assembly.

- And since God has designed the body of the local assembly to be the way He has designed it—you should recognize that there are some aspects of it (just like your own physical body) that are “**static**” (so to speak) [or fixed, and don't change with growth] —

- that is, there are some *offices* within the body that are ‘static’ — and therefore **fixed offices**;

- but then there are some aspects of the local assembly that are not static, but are “**dynamic**” (so to speak) — that is, there are some *offices* that **change** over time—that take on varied aspects and various tasks.

- and some *offices* are needed at some times, but then there are times when those *offices* are not needed, while others that haven't been in use now come into use.

- And that's what I mean by the kind of design God has put into the local assembly as a body.

- Some of the **operations** of God within the local assembly are static (fixed *offices*—such as the office of the bishop; the offices of the deacons) — and some of the **operations** of God within the assembly are dynamic—and some of them grow; and some of them come and go and even come back again.

- So therefore, when it comes to taking the godly selfless love and the living union fundamental body attributes you have come to *receive* from your Father's *instruction of wisdom*—**you should be to the point where you're looking around for something to do!**

- And this can act as a kind of ‘check’ point for you to be able to see if (:3-5) have done their effectual work!

- For example, when you walk in the door of the local assembly—do you (or have you) ever walked in and looked around with real determined perception—and looked for either physical things of the assembly that need attention? or other spiritual-type needs of the *members* of the assembly that you could serve the needs of?

- And if you did—did you just think, “Well, the Pastor will take care of it” — or, “The deacons will take care of it” ???

- The truth is—if a local assembly functioned as it should—you would never have a need for such a thing as an “Opportunity Board” (like we used to have here).

- (your physical body doesn’t operate that way)

- Well, this actually takes us to the next section of Romans 12:3-8 — and that is, following the format or pattern for godly edification to take place—the next section of (:6-8) make up the final aspect of the pattern for godly edifying: the **LABOR** aspect.

Romans 12:6-8—The fundamental LABOR of godly selfless love within the local assembly.

6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;

7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;

8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

- A total of 7 “gifts” are listed here by the apostle Paul:

- 1) Prophecy; 2) Ministry; 3) Teaching; 4) Exhortation;
- 5) Giving; 6) Ruling; 7) Shewing Mercy

- And there are 7 of them for a reason—and as any ‘list’ you find in God’s word—these are not listed randomly or haphazardly—but there is a progressive developmental order to them that needs to be appreciated.

- Not to mention that there are ‘groupings’ of them that has to be appreciated.

- But before we ever begin dealing with any of the details of these 7 things—we have to make sure of something else that we’re confronted with right ‘off the bat’ (so to speak) - and that’s that word **GIFTS**—*Having then gifts* commonly called “spiritual gifts.”

- Now we need to make sure that we're all 'on the same page' (so to speak) in connection with this issue of spiritual gifts so that we avoid any confusion about what these 7 *gifts* that are listed here by the apostle Paul are all about—and so that we avoid being victimized by the kind of doctrinal corruption that exists today about either what a spiritual gift is—or how a spiritual gift is given.

- And there is a massive amount of confusion (and therefore corrupt doctrine) that exists out there in the world of Christianity today over this very issue.

- And that's not just by coincidence—but it's by design!

- And the one who is behind all of the confusion and corrupt doctrine is none other than Satan, the Adversary himself.

- And this is due to the fact that the issue of spiritual gifts is one of the '**pet doctrines**' of the Adversary—and it is one of the major ways in which he goes about keeping the body of Christ embroiled in controversy in order to prevent "godly edifying which is in faith" from taking place.

- And the Adversary accomplishes all this by means of his Policy of Evil—and to the point, by **counterfeiting** the issue of spiritual gifts.

- And we know this because of the fact that God has so designed His word—and especially our curriculum for sonship education (which are the epistles of the apostle Paul) — so that we actually have a series of "Red Flags" (so to speak) that act as a warning to us of the particular doctrines that the Adversary will 'go after' in order to produce corrupt doctrine and confusion in the body of Christ, and to therefore prevent godly edifying from taking place.

- And we've noted these 'pet doctrines' of the Adversary many times before — and we are already familiar with the fact that there are 6 of them—and we're familiar with how our epistles make us aware of which 6 doctrines they are.

- (#17) - And because of the nature of these 6 'pet' areas of doctrine that the Adversary goes after—we call these 6 doctrines **ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES**—and the way God warns us of them is that they all surround the 6 times in our epistles when the apostle Paul says, "***Now I would not have you ignorant***" or something very similar to that expression.

- I Corinthians 12:1—This is the 4th time you encounter this expression.

- (read :1-3) - Notice the warning Paul gives the Corinthians about this issue due to it being an Essential Doctrine in which the Adversary is highly successful in achieving the goals of his PoE in bringing about great confusion and controversy within the body of Christ today.

- And you're told here that at least one spiritual gift has actually been counterfeited by the Adversary—long before God ever brought in this present dispensation of grace—and way back in God's program with Israel when these Gentiles were being victimized by the Satanic Policy of Evil.

- As idol-worshipping heathen Gentiles, they had been duped by the spiritual phenomena that the PoE had been producing in time past—but also right at that very moment they were being victimized by this very same thing: **counterfeit spiritual gifts**.

- And the issue is that **you can't afford to be ignorant** in connection with spiritual gifts—because if you are, then you WILL be deceived by the Satanic Policy of Evil!

- There is such a successful capacity that the PoE has when it comes to producing deception and deceit and a counterfeit with respect to spiritual gifts—that unless you know and go by exactly what God says on the matter—**YOU WILL BE DECEIVED!**

- And you're not going to be able to go by what you see—you're not going to be able to go by what you hear—you're not going to be able to 'test the spiritual phenomena' to be able to see who's behind it all — but you're going to have to go by exactly what God says, or you will be taken in!

- **The counterfeit capacity that the Adversary has when it comes to the issue of spiritual gifts is of such a nature that it's impossible to discern them any other way than by going exactly and precisely by the doctrine that's set forth to us here in I Cor. 12, 13, & 14—and throughout our epistles — and that's the ONLY way to detect the difference!**

- And IGNORANCE plays right into the Adversary's hand!
(Hence Paul's warning NOT to be "*ignorant*"!)

- And not only were these Gentiles deceived in their past—but as (:3) points out—they were being deceived **at this very time!**

- Right there in their midst was a man who claimed that he was 'speaking for God' — or that 'God spoke to him' — but the message coming out of his mouth was **false** and **corrupt doctrine**—(all the while using good, godly Bible terminology)!

- And because they weren't going by (and only going by) **exactly** what God said about it in His word—they were being deceived!!!

- Now a large part of being able to **not** get deceived and caught up in this kind of thing—is the issue of "rightly dividing the word of truth" and honest Bible handling—and properly handling God's word—but there's even much more to it than that—(for instance, having a proper understanding and appreciation for I Cor. 12, 13, & 14, as well as other specific places in our epistles).

- But for the purposes of our Sonship Education—and our passage in Romans 12:6-8—I'm specifically after a critical issue that's actually **contained** in the doctrine of spiritual gifts—one that goes **beyond** the simple issue of merely "rightly dividing the word of truth" —

- Not that you don't need to be able to have the whole doctrine concerning spiritual gifts down pat—but what's so critical to understanding and appreciating Romans 12:6-8, and being able to get the very **powerful** issues out of it that deals with the first time you're going to begin to take some godly thinking and godly conduct & behavior, and then LABOR with your Father in the first aspects of His business that He wants you to labor together with Him in—it's vital and critical that you have this other issue clear in your thinking—or else you're going to have trouble (and have problems) with the first labor aspect to your sonship life!

- And this specific critical issue that I'm after gets stated by the apostle Paul at the very end of I Corinthians chapter 12.

- I Corinthians 12:31 — (read)— *a more excellent way*

- You've got to be able to clearly understand and appreciate what that expression is all about—and when the issue of spiritual gifts comes up in your thinking, your mind should immediately go to this and have it become just as much as a way to discriminate and differentiate between God's time past program with Israel and His program with us in this dispensation of Gentile grace in which we live: to say "Time Past" "But Now" and "To Come" — is that, when the issue of spiritual gifts comes up, to immediately be able to discriminate and differentiate between the less excellent way that God did business with signs, wonders, spiritual gifts, marvels, and miracles with Israel in His program with Israel—and the more excellent way in which God does business with us as *sons* and as the *new creature* of the church the body of Christ today.

- So really what we're going to be spending the next several Bible classes on is:

- The recognition of "The More Excellent Way."

- First of all—let's start off by noting and recognizing that the vast majority of marvels, miracles, signs, and wonders taking place actually take place in God's program and dealings with Israel.

- And the few references that we do have in our epistles—by comparison—are merely a **handful** of references.

- In fact, when those things are mentioned in our epistles—the majority of the time they are mentioned by Paul, it's in reference to them being the Adversary's counterfeits!

- And it needs to be understood and appreciated that God's use of these spiritual phenomena in this dispensation of grace (signs, miracles, wonders, etc.) was **limited to a very short period of time; and for a very restricted reason!**

- And as soon as this restricted reason was fulfilled—God was OUT OF the spiritual phenomena manifesting business!

- And that reason came to pass in Paul's very own lifetime!

- But the Adversary's reason to counterfeit them continued on!

- And what we need to have is a good appreciation for the **naturalness** for God producing these spiritual phenomena in Israel's program. (So let's note the **naturalness** of that)

- Exodus 34:10

- God makes another particular Covenant with Israel—and it's a covenant for them to **SEE** the work of the Lord in their midst.

- And in making this covenant with them—He actually covenants to be VISIBLE to them in the sense of what He's doing.

- But note that He only makes that covenant with **them!** And not with any other peoples—such as Gentiles!

- (That's why it says, *before all **thy** people!*)

- And these *marvels* were to be a way for the Gentile nations to confirm the fact that the one true God was among Israel—and not among them! (*and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the LORD ...*) [**this is extremely important to what takes place later on in the book of Acts!**]

- It's important to understand that God made a covenant for them, and for the Gentiles **to see Him work among Israel!**

- And as you go through God's program with Israel, you see those things occurring over and over again.

- In fact, when times would come when Israel didn't see those *marvels/signs/wonders* taking place in their midst—and when that happened—that itself ended up being a **sign** to them that something is **amiss** between them and God!

- Therefore Israel **and Israel only** had a right to expect these *marvels* occurring in their midst.

- In fact, over in the gospel accounts—when the Lord talks to the members of Israel, He says, *Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe (Jn. 4:48)* — where did they get that kind of thinking? (A: Because of this covenant sitting back here in Exo. 34) - they had a right to have things validated to them—and if someone claimed to be speaking for God, that individual could produce a sign that could back that claim up!

- Let's see a passage where, when those signs were **not** seen, then Israel knew that something was very wrong with their relationship with God.
- Psalm 74 (Book III Avenger/Avengement) — the issue is the destruction of the sanctuary.
 - (:7-8)
 - (:9) (The “*We*” is especially the members of the remnant)
 - Note that expression: ***our signs*** — Israel's claiming the **exclusive right** to these things!
 - Note that even the apostle Paul records in I Cor. 1:22— *For the Jews **require** a sign, ...* (Paul understood the issue) — he didn't say that they “want” one, or “desire” one — he said they **require a sign**.
 - And if you *require* something: you've got to have it, or you won't make a decision or a movement upon what's in front of you!!
 - And that *requirement* issue came from what they understood and appreciated that God had covenanted to do with them!
 - But here Asaph says they don't **see** their required *signs*—that were the exclusive right of Israel—which indicated that something was amiss between them and God.
 - But my point here is just to make it clear and plain that marvels, signs, miracles, and wonders and all forms of spiritual phenomena in God's prophesied and declared operations **belong to Israel!**
 - And that's a fundamental thing to understand—and lacking that fundamental knowledge provides the Adversary a platform in which to take advantage of the ***ignorance!***
 - And to the degree that there is little to no understanding & appreciation of this fundamental issue—then there's even greater capacity for the Satanic PoE to deceive a Christian—and to have them following his counterfeit spiritual phenomena that exists in this dispensation of grace!
 - And notice again that Asaph says, *We **see** not our signs* — well, Why do you expect to *see* them? Because that covenant said they shall *see the work of the LORD* — the covenant called for them to *see it!*

- And notice also that Asaph talks about *signs* and *prophets*—or someone with a **spiritual gift** like a prophet had—and he says, *neither is there among us any that knoweth how long*—and what you’ve got here is the issue of a teacher: someone who is able to take the information that’s already there, and properly teach from it and discern it and so forth —

- So Asaph’s not only got the issue of *signs*, wonders, and miracles in view here—but he’s also got the issue of **spiritual gifts** involved.

- And those, too, are the exclusive right of Israel as well.

- Well, first and foremost **you’ve got to understand to whom the right of spiritual phenomena naturally belongs.**

- Now let’s look at a couple of passages where a lot of the controversy over spiritual gifts & spiritual phenomena comes from—and especially the “pet” spiritual gift of them all—which is the gift of *tongues*.

- But by taking what we’ve already learned—we know that even this gift of tongues—that that is Israel’s gift (and for a very particular reason).

- Joel 2:28-32—a portion of this is quoted by Peter in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost in connection with what had historically arrived in God’s program with Israel.

- And that day that had arrived in Acts 2 was very critical to the outworking of God’s program with Israel—and the manifestation of the sign-gift of Israelites speaking with other tongues (or known languages which they naturally could not speak) was an important sign of judgment that any properly educated Israelite would have expected it to come (it wasn’t supposed to be a ‘surprise’) and would have known about in advance, and been aware of its significance when it occurred in Acts chapter 2!

- In other words—Israelites speaking in other known languages (or speaking in tongues) was a **prophesied event!**

- And what is critical to understand and appreciate about the gift of tongues is that the individuals who were directly benefitted by that gift—were ISRAELITES!!!

- (:28) - *And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh;*

- Note that God does pour out His Spirit upon *all flesh* (Jew and Gentile) - but what is quite often missed is the fact that the affect of that ‘pouring out of the spirit’ is NOT the same affect on *all flesh*!

- And the rest of the things that take place with the rest of the *flesh* that isn’t Israel’s *flesh* is spoken about in chapter 3.

- But before that gets dealt with—the affect that the ‘pouring out of the spirit’ has on **Israel’s** *flesh* gets dealt with from the rest of (:28) and on down through (:32).

... and what is that affect?

- (:28) ... *and your sons and your daughters* (that’s NOT “all” sons & daughters—not all the sons of mankind—but ISRAEL’S sons & ISRAEL’S daughters) ... *shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:*

(:29) *And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.*

(And then Joel goes on to describe the particular signs and wonders that will be taking place in Israel’s ‘last days’ - which is the final 5th Install. in God’s prog.w/Isr. (as The Day of the Lord moves on and progresses on to “*the great and terrible day of the LORD come.* (:31).)

- Now the gift of tongues isn’t directly identified in this passage—but it’s evident by what Peter explains that the gift of tongues is involved in the issue of *your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.*

- And the gift of tongues is the BIGGIE of all the gifts today in the circles that maintain that these gifts are still in operation — but that’s not surprising because of all of the spiritual gifts, tongues is **THE** gift that the Satanic PoE has chosen to focus upon and to counterfeit the most—because it’s the EASIEST one to counterfeit—as well as the easiest for folks to simply **fake** all on their own—and because of that, it’s important to understand some fundamental things about it—and the most fundamental thing to realize is that that’s ISRAEL’S!

- Israel not only had a natural right to the possession of ALL spiritual phenomena from God—but there was one particular gift (as the kingdom of heaven was ‘at hand’ and ready to enter in to it’s final stages that they had the claim on—and that they understood and appreciated was connected with communication from God) - and it was that gift of tongues!

- And God used the gift of tongues at the beginning of this dispensation of grace as an undeniable, un-doubtable sign TO Israel concerning a particular thing that Paul describes in I Cor. 14.

- Now come over to a passage in the prophets that describes the use of the gift of tongues out in the Day of the LORD—and even on into the time in which the kingdom is established—which is really the reason why this gift was recognized as Israel’s unique and special possession.

- (Because that was designed and intended to be the way in which Israel was to carry out the administration of God’s righteous rule—especially when the kingdom was established—and they would have the capacity to speak in all the languages of the nations as they go out and take the Law out of Jerusalem—and as they go to sit in seats of authority over those nations—as they function as that “*kingdom of priests*” and the ‘ministers of the Gentile’s God.’)

- Zechariah 8 20 *Thus saith the LORD of hosts; It shall yet come to pass, (talking about when the kingdom gets established) that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities:*
 21 *And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts: I will go also.*

(They’re going to be doing that in connection with what is spoken about earlier on in Isa. 2; as well as in Micah 4 when the word of the LORD goes out from Jerusalem—and it goes to the Gentiles, and the Gentiles say, Let’s go up to the house of the God of Jacob—He’ll teach us His ways; we’ll seek Him & He’ll teach us His paths, and so forth).

22 *Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD.*

23 *Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.*

- Those Israelites are going to go out to all the nations of the earth—and as they do, they're going to be in nations that don't speak the same language as they do—but they're going to be given a supernatural capacity to speak to them in their language without ever having learned that language (or use a language dictionary).

- And they're going to declare "God is with us" - (the "Immanuel" issue) — and those who don't speak Hebrew are going to hear that word because they heard it from that Jew speaking in their own language! (And they're going to take the *skirt* of that Jew and say, We're going to go with you!)

- And that Jew is going to be able to teach that Gentile (in his own language) the things he needs to understand!

- All this is so that you understand & appreciate how that this was the special possession of Israel!

- And that's exactly what you see happening in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost!

- Acts 2:14-21

- Now a failure to recognize that 99% of all signs, miracles, marvels, wonders, spiritual gifts, and spiritual phenomena that are found on the pages of God's word applies to God's program with Israel—a failure to understand that and the natural reason for why they are Israel's—is one of the greatest contributing factors to be deceived when it comes to the doctrine of spiritual gifts!

- And ignorance of these things makes the Adversary's job all that much more easy.

- And that should be sufficient for you to understand & appreciate that these spiritual phenomena DO NOT naturally belong to this dispensation of grace.

- Yes, they did exist for a very limited time and for a very limited reason & purpose at the very beginning of this dispensation of grace—but for right now, the truth of the matter is that for us in this dispensation of grace is to recognize that the natural thing for us is to, as Paul says in II Cor.5:7 ... *walk by faith, **not** by sight!*

- And nothing could be so easily seen as being totally **different** than Exodus 34:10 vs. II Corinthians 5:7!

- By the way—Paul says this in a context and by an example where it would look like, by all practical purposes, that God **wasn't** working in the apostle Paul's life AT ALL! — because he didn't **SEE** anything happening!

- And yet, he sets forth that as we *walk by faith, and not by sight*—Paul sets forth the BETTERNESS of that, rather than (as Israel did) waking by 'sight, and not by faith'!!!

- (This is said in a context of dealing with our **sufferings** today—which has a connection with the stark contrast and differences between us today and how God dealt with Israel in connection with their sufferings!)

- Now in our studies of "**The Recognition of The More Excellent Way**" - we're making sure to heed the warning the apostle Paul gives the Corinthians in I Cor. 12:1 (*Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.*) — and by now we should have a sufficient enough understanding and appreciation for 1 of 3 major issues that we'll look at in order to make sure that we're not *ignorant* about spiritual gifts/marvels/miracles/signs/wonders/spiritual phenomena.

- And there are at least 3 major areas that you (as a son and as a Christian in general) just can't afford to be *ignorant*—or else you will have some major problems when it comes to godly edification taking place. (& be taken in/victimised by the Satanic Policy of Evil)

- Areas where you can't afford to be "ignorant" :

- And the first area is what we have covered so far in our 'side-bar' study on spiritual gifts/spiritual phenomena and the recognition of the *more excellent way*.

1) Spiritual gifts (signs, wonders, marvels, miracles, spiritual phenomena) **naturally pertain to ISRAEL** (and only Israel—they have a natural 'birth-right' to them). [**Exodus 34:10**]

- And while a great deal more could be said about this first area where you can't afford to be *ignorant*—we'll let what we have covered suffice for the first area.

- Next, we're going to briefly (and I mean briefly) deal with the 2nd major area in connection with spiritual gifts/spiritual phenomena where you can't afford to be *ignorant*—and where, if you are, a great amount of confusion/corrupted doctrine is going to exist.

- As we noted before in Acts 2—on the day of **Pentecost** having *fully come*—the apostle Peter stood and gave a message concerning Israel’s “last days” - and how that what was happening was, as he said, *This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel* — and the signs, miracles, and tongues that were happening at that time (which were **certification signs**) gave evidence that God was WITH Israel, and that the “last days” of God’s program with Israel were now ready to commence. (i.e., the 5th Inst./5th CoP)

- And **Peter** was the man/apostle at the center of it all.

- But Peter would also be at the center of another incident that would indicate that God’s program with Israel had changed—and in fact, had been suspended altogether—and a new program had begun!

- After the year of forbearance & mercy was over—in Acts 9, God saved and raised up the apostle Paul—who became the very first member of *the new creature* God was creating of the Church, the Body of Christ.

- But God has to now make Israel aware of this fact (through their major apostle, the apostle Peter—and that takes place at what I call “The Cornelius Incident”)

- And we’ve gone over this in some detail back in Romans 9 where we saw how that God had changed the status of the Gentiles in His sight—which demanded a new dispensation (or new program) be brought in.

- Now without going over the entire incident again—let’s just focus upon some things that indicate the **Bona fide reason why spiritual gifts occurred at the beginning of this dispensation of grace.**

- The incident at Cornelius’ house has those **certification signs** now being produced by Gentiles!

- And that incident produced **Evidence that God was turning away from Israel to the Gentiles!**

- **And this is where “rightly dividing the word of truth” comes into play!**

- And this is where—if you **don't** 'rightly divide' God's word properly—you're going to be in for a whole bunch of problems and trouble when trying to deal with this issue of spiritual gifts/signs/miracles/wonders/spiritual phenomena!!!

- So let's look at a couple of passages that focuses upon this issue of the **Bona fide reason why spiritual gifts occurred at the beginning of this dispensation of grace.**

- Acts 10:44-46 (after God saved/raised up the apostle Paul)

- Why—(for a limited time at the beginning of this dispensation of grace) did Gentiles have the gifts and spiritual phenomena that rightfully belonged to Israel?

- Acts 11:15-17

- Peter realized that this wasn't natural according to the program with Israel! But he knew God was the One that did it! Peter **didn't** understand it at this time—but he wasn't going to *withstand* it!!!

- Again, WHY did God do this? — Well for one thing it was to indicate/certify/and give evidence of that fact that God had brought in a new and different & distinct program—a dispensation of Gentile grace—and by doing it this way it made it clear to Israel that God was turning away from them and to the Gentiles!

- But there is another reason—and that's going to take us to I Corinthians 12, 13 & 14—and the recognition of "**the more excellent way.**"

- Good as it is to know what we've gone over—that really isn't enough to withstand what the PoE will throw at you—but you've got to know why God would, at the beginning of this DoG, God would give the Gentiles sp. gifts like the Corinthians possessed—and you've also got to realize that the Adversary counterfeits the power of God (not only in God's prog.w/Isr., but in this DoG)—and once you understand that; you have to understand the doctrine that lets you understand & appreciate that once a **particular event** that's described in ch.13 takes place—which would take place in the very lifetime of the Cor's & in the very lifetime of the apo. Paul—that God would go out of the sign/miracle/wonder sp.gift/sp. phenomena business in this DoG—and the only individual left involved in it would be the Adversary! (& on the basis of that, you can identify counterfeit sp. phenomena!)

- So we've seen 2 of the 3 major things that you can't afford to be *ignorant* of in connection to spiritual gifts/spiritual phenomena—and this takes us to the final area—which is the issue that:

3) Satan (by means of his policy of evil) has in the past, and still does continue to counterfeit spiritual gifts/spiritual phenomena.

- I Corinthians 12:1-3—The counterfeiting capacity of the Satanic PoE.

(:2) - heathen idolatry going on in the assembly at Corinth.

- *carried away* = fascinated with it; followed it; gave themselves over to it.

- “Well, it just had to be of God!”

- They believed that the true and living God lived in that idol!

- Let's go over to a passage in the Psalms—but as we do—stop off at Acts 8.

- Acts 8:9-11

- *sorceries* (:11) = spiritual phenomena

- They gave him “*regard*” (:11) - i.e., they were going to listen to what he had to say!

- But God **wasn't** doing this and **wasn't** involved in this!

- Psalm 115—a remnant Psalm pertaining to the Day of the Lord.

- (:1-8) — (:5) — (:7)

- The priest/priestess (attendant) produced the spiritual phenomena of **ventriloquism!**

- Zech. 10:1-2

- also see Deut. 13 (for counterfeit spiritual phenomena)

- (:1-4) & (:12-15)

- back to Zech. 10 — (:2b) - no shepherd that could teach them the truth!

- Zech. 11:15-17 — (This is what's coming!)

- Mat. 7:21-23

- Mat. 24:23-25

- II Thes. 2:8-10

- Rev. 13:11 — Where'd his power come from? (:2)

(Rev. 13:12-13) - the sign of Jehovah to Israel that Elijah performed!

(:14)

(:15)

- back to I Cor. 12:3 — this is tongues!

- Well this should give you an idea of the reality that Satan has in the past; and still continues to this day—and will in the future be continually in the business of counterfeiting signs/miracles/wonders/spiritual gifts/spiritual phenomena — and you can't afford to be *ignorant* of it!

- Now let's move on to gaining a sufficient understanding and appreciation for (and recognition of) **THE MORE EXCELLENT WAY**.

- And let's bear in mind the 3 major issues we've covered that are 3 major areas in which you cannot afford to be *ignorant* of:

1) Spiritual gifts (signs, wonders, marvels, miracles, spiritual phenomena) naturally pertain to ISRAEL (and only Israel—they have a natural 'birth-right' to them). [Ex. 34:10]

2) The bona-fide reason for why spiritual gifts occurred for a limited time at the beginning of this dispensation of grace. (And the ability to avoid confusion by "rightly dividing the word of truth.")

3) Satan (by means of his policy of evil) has in the past, and still presently does, (and will in the future) continue to counterfeit spiritual gifts/spiritual phenomena.

- And we saw that in the assembly at Corinth (I Cor. 12:1-3), they were being victimized by the Satanic PoE due to their *ignorance* of these very issues!

- Now when it comes to recognizing what this *more excellent way* is all about—you really do have to bear all 3 of those things in mind—and especially that 2nd issue—because *the more excellent way* really (in a sense) comes along and replaces the ‘less excellent way’ that was in effect as this dispensation of grace got underway.

- And therefore when the dispensation of grace began—the *more excellent way* had not yet been brought in—and because of that, and because of the fact that God would utilize the issue of spiritual gifts & spiritual phenomena (as well as some other issues that were the exclusive right of Israel) - God would utilize those matters that were exclusively Israel’s and cause the Gentiles to have use of them for a limited time—so as to indicate and to certify to Israel that God had changed the program—that He had suspended His program with them, and turned to the Gentiles to begin a brand new (and until Paul, kept secret [a *mystery*]) program or dispensation of Gentile grace.

- And so you’ve got at least 2 major matters that come to bear upon that 2nd issue you can’t afford to be *ignorant* of—that is, Why spiritual gifts/spiritual phenomena occurred for a limited time at the beginning of this dispensation of grace, and then were no longer needed and so they no longer exist:

A) The issue of God verifying/certifying/indicating to Israel that He was no longer working with them—but had put their program in suspension—and turned to working with the Gentiles in a new and different dispensation of grace.

- But because God still intended to work with the Gentiles as “sons” — and because He still intended to have a “living union” type relationship with them (just as He did with Israel) - some of those things that spiritual gifts provided for (which is the issue of fulfilling certain *offices* and carrying out particular *administrations* and *operations* of God) — just as Israel need those things in their “living union” relationship as a nation; the Gentiles, too, needed those things in their “living union” relationship with God as a body (the body of Christ).

- And because the *more excellent way* was not in effect in God’s program with Israel as it came to be suspended in Acts 9 — (and as certified in Acts 10 & 11) — neither was the *more excellent way* yet in affect at the beginning of this dispensation of grace—and until it came into affect, the Holy Ghost supernaturally gave spiritual gifts to the members of the Ch./body/Christ for a brief/limited time until the *more excellent way* was brought in.

- And so a second issue comes into play that answers the question of Why spiritual gifts/spiritual phenomena occurred at the beginning of this dispensation of grace—but then no longer occurs—and that is the issue of:

B) THE MORE EXCELLENT WAY — God bringing in a *more excellent way* than the Holy Ghost supernaturally empowering a member of the church the body of Christ with a spiritual gift in order to carry out the *offices*, *administrations*, and *operations* of God.

- So God being in the business of supernaturally bestowing spiritual gifts and spiritual phenomena was going to cease—and it would cease in the very lifetime of the apostle Paul and in the lifetime of the Corinthians themselves!

- In fact, powers and capacities that the apostle Paul himself had at the beginning of his ministry—were gone, and he no longer had at the end of his ministry. (II Tim. 4:20)

- And that was in perfect accordance to the things that are spelled out here in I Cor. 12 & 13.

- And a proper understanding of the *more excellent way* makes it so that you really do understand & appreciate the **NATURALNESS** for why these spiritual gifts/spiritual phenomena are done away and no longer being produced by God today.

- I Corinthians 12 (survey the chapter) — beginning in (:4ff)

- Let's get an outline of the remainder of the chapter so that you'll get the general 'gist' of the flow of the doctrine as it's given to the Corinthians—

- and then, by that outline, we'll be able to get to the major issue that we need to focus upon that will allow us to be able to appreciate the issue of what the *more excellent way* is all about as it gets described in the latter part of chapter 13.

- (:4-6)— Paul sets forth information that describes the roll of each member of the Godhead when it comes to the doctrine of spiritual gifts.

- And when it comes to the roll that each one of the members of the Godhead has—there's a sense and sequence and progressive development to it all.

- For example, you have the roll that the Holy Ghost has—in which He actually works **within** each member of the body of Christ (within each believer) and produced the sp.gift in that member of the church in Corinth — well, the Holy Ghost doesn't operate that way **as a Maverick!**

- He's not operating 'on His own' — in the sense that there isn't a 'Master Plan' - and a design; and certain objectives that are designed to be achieved in connection with each one of these spiritual gifts that the Corinthians have.

- And right from the outset—you have to have an appreciation that all these spiritual gifts that were in operation at this time—they all fit the overall objective and goal of a 'Master Plan' - a plan drawn up by God the Father.

- And as Paul states what he does in (:4, 5, &6) - he makes evident the that there's a Master Plan to it all—and he declares the roll that each one of the members of the Godhead has in connection with that overall objective and Master Plan.

- (read :4-6 if you haven't already)

- And then in the remaining of the chapter (from :7-31) - Paul is going to take the roll of each one of the members of the Godhead—and being that there's 3 members of the Godhead—Paul sets forth 3 major components to the rest of the chapter—and each one of those 3 components focuses upon one of the 3 members of the Godhead—and Paul amplifies (in each of those 3 components) upon the roll of God the Holy Spirit giving the *diversities of gifts*; and then the roll of the Lord Jesus Christ as the One who is *administrating* the whole thing; and then he amplifies upon the roll of God the Father who set the whole thing up in the first place—and set forth the various *operations* that were being served; and the various *operations & workings* that were being accomplished by all this.

- And really, you've kind of got a building of information 'from the inside out' (so to speak) - from the inner man of that Corinthian to the outer working of the Father's operations in that local assembly.

- 1) And first of all—you've got to understand the *diversities of the gifts*—and the legitimacy of them.
- 2) But then you've got to understand that those *diversities of gifts* are all designed to work together to achieve some particular ministries that are being served—or *administrations* being served pertaining to the Lord Jesus Christ and His **body**.
- 3) And finally, you've got to understand that those *diversities of gifts* and the *administrations* they pertain to—are all subservient to; or all go toward the issue of some particular *operations* that God the Father wants to get accomplished!

- And the one that we want to (and need to) focus our attention upon—(that gives us the proper understanding and appreciation for what *the more excellent way* is all about) - is that last one, particularly: the issue of the *diversities of the operations* of God.

- Because if you're going to **labor** with God your Father—you've got to know what His *operations* are that you're going to be 'operating' in with Him as you labor together with Him in your sonship life! [common sense]

- And in (:4-6) the apostle Paul makes a statement with respect to spiritual gifts that applies to each member of the Godhead.

- (:4) goes with (:7-11) - and it was the 3rd Member of the Godhead (the Holy Spirit) that supernaturally equipped the members of the assembly there at Corinth with these spiritual gifts at the beginning of this dispensation of grace.

- And the sp.gift provided them with the supernatural ability to DO something—and it *manifested* the working of the Holy Spirit amongst them to *profit withal* (or to the benefit of them all [the entire body]).

- And at that time—this working of the Holy Spirit was the one of the Godhead most easily recognized—and had the most tangible way for the members of the assembly to realize His working amongst them.

- But if that's all they understood and appreciated—then there was a **major problem** caused by that!

- (And this is where your Pentecostals/Charismatic types all miss the boat (so to speak) in only recognizing the gifts of the Spirit—but then don't recognize the *administrations* of and *operations* of the other members of the Godhead!)

- All they see is the gifts of the Spirit as being a sign that the Holy Ghost is somehow? working in their midst—but that's **NOT** how these things were ever designed to function! (i.e., as if the Holy Spirit [as a Lone Ranger] was the only member of the Godhead involved!)

- And therefore they miss 2/3rds of what these gifts were designed for—again, they were given and designed to all work together in a local assembly in order for God the Father to ultimately be able to carry out His *operations*!

- It's not enough just to appreciate the *diversity* issue of the gifts—but you also have to appreciate the different rolls of *administration* that those gifts were designed to perform in the local assembly—and more than that, how that **in** the function of the local assembly, **some of those gifts were actually more important than others!**

- (and you can see that after you have gone through the amplification sections that deal with the sense & sequence [and how you have 3 levels to the working of these gifts so that they work out to the Father being able to perform His *diversities of operations*] - and when you get down to the end of the chapter you are told that some of those gifts are more important than others) — (see :31 *But covet earnestly the best gifts:*)

- Some of those gifts were to be looked upon as 'better' than others—and some were to be looked upon as the **"best"** ones.

- (see also :28 when Paul begins to amplify upon the various *operations* of God the Father — [read :28])

- You've got a '**ranking**' here of the gifts!
(*first ... second ... third ... after that ...*)

- And the Corinthians [as well as the Pentecostal/Charismatic types today] didn't/don't have any appreciation for that—and their conduct & behavior with these gifts made that evident!

- (There was a manifestation of their *ignorance* with respect to that; and the PoE was taking advantage of it!)

- In fact—as you go on through ch. 14 you’ll find that—so mixed up were the Corinthians concerning sp.gifts that they had actually taken one of the **least** gifts of them all—and they were promoting it as being the “**best**” one! [Tongues]

- And the gift that was designed to function the most—and to the greatest benefit in the local assembly at that time—was being relegated to a position of “**least**” importance!

- That’s how successful the Satanic PoE was in Corinth!

- And therefore what you’ve got here is **corrective doctrine**.

- And they were recognizing all good and well the roll of one Member of the Godhead (the Holy Spirit) in giving *diversities of gifts*—but they didn’t at all recognize that what those *diversities of gifts* were given for in accordance with *differences in administrations* of the *same Lord* that was being served by them all — and they didn’t realize that those *differences of administrations serving the same Lord* was subservient to the accomplishment of *diversities of operations* of the *same God* the Father who determined and designed to accomplish His *operations* with them as His sons!

- And the gifts are not designed to function independently—but they’re designed to function in a **cooperative** effort to serve the same Lord! — and for accomplishing some things in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ (particularly in His “body” or the new creature of the church the body of Christ).

- And when you have that expression there in (:5) - *And there are differences of **administrations*** — an *administration* is just as the English word says: add + ministering — it’s a ministry that **adds** or **aids ministering** to, or serving a particular individual!

- And the individual here is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. (Especially in the sense of the “body of Christ”).

- And you have to (and the Corinthians had to) appreciate how that each of these sp.gifts were designed to all **fit** (like a puzzle piece) into serving/ministering to the body of the Lord Jesus Christ—and that’s what that big section (:12-27) describes as the unit that we are (the body)

and the living union we have as *members one of another*—and by conducting and behaving with those sp.gifts according to those ‘body attributes’ serves the overall goal and function of the body of Christ!

- But even the more critical matter than all that—(especially when the apostle Paul will come along and describe the **temporary nature** of the sp.gifts in ch. 13) — the real BIG thing or major piece of information that *ignorance* of caused the Corinthians the most trouble (and will cause us the most trouble) is the issue in (:6)!

6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

- And *operations* are the issues of all of the workings of, or operating of something according to a Master Plan in order to get some particular, specified, identifiable objectives accomplished!

- So God didn’t come along and just give sp.gifts for no reason at all—and you’re not given differing ways of serving the Lord for no reason at all—but you’ve got all those things because there’s some *diversities of operations* that God is getting accomplished through these *diverse gifts* and *different administrations*!

- And in order for you to be able to labor with your Father properly and intelligently as His son—you’ve got to have an appreciation for what the *diversities of His operations* are—so that as you go about putting your godly sonship thinking and godly sonship living into practice—you’ve got an appreciation for what it’s going to get accomplished in your Father’s business (or in His *operations*)!

- And Paul amplifies upon that issue in (:28-31).

- And by ranking them the way he does—you’re able to understand what the *best* ones are—and on the basis of that the Corinthians were to get the corrective procedure underway — and so stop being victimized by the PoE — and then by understanding & appreciation the 3 rolls the 3 Members of the Godhead have in all this (especially the *diverse operations* of God) - THEN Paul is able to come along and say (on the basis of all that), **and yet shew I unto a more excellent way**—that is, a *more excellent way* that even thought it is what it is, **still accomplishes the diversities of the operations of God!**

- And in the latter part of ch. 13 Paul sets forth that there is something *more excellent* that is going to be provided by the Holy Ghost—and by the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father—that's **better** and **more excellent** than having any or all of these spiritual gifts supernaturally bestowed upon them!

- And once it's there—these are all going to be done away! And you're going to be left with a *more excellent way* than this temporary way!

- (And they ought to come along and say, YIPPIEE! - and they ought to appreciate it as a *more excellent* thing!)

- But the only way any Christian today is going to be able to appreciate this as a *more excellent way* (and the provision we have now that is *more excellent* than any or all of these sp.gifts) is to understand, especially, the issue of the *operations of God*—

— and to understand that that *more excellent* provision He has made is where He has deposited **ALL** His *operations* for the balance of this dispensation of grace.

- And as we'll see—it's where He's deposited His **POWER** to accomplish all of the things He wants to accomplish in that *more excellent* provision!

- And that's GOT to be appreciated—that is, you've got to appreciate the working of 1) the roll of God the Holy Spirit and the *diversity of gifts* — 2) the roll of God the Son (the Lord Jesus Christ) and the *differences of administrations* that those *diversity of gifts* serve — 3) the roll of God the Father and His *diversity of operations* that are served by the *different administrations* of God the Son along with the *diversity of gifts* that the Holy Spirit gave. [3-fold system/method]

- And when I say that they've got to be appreciated, I mean appreciated just as God Himself appreciates them—and especially those *diversity of operations*—you've got to appreciate and recognize the *operations* of God like He does in order to fully appreciate the *more excellent way* that is now in effect and that replaces the supernatural gifting that the Holy Spirit did at the beginning of this dispensation of grace, but is now no longer needed once *the more excellent way* was brought in.

- Now at this point we need to now survey ch. 12 — and focus our attention upon the ***diversities of operations*** that God the Father is involved with—and get a fundamental understanding for what those *operations* of God are because everything else is subservient to that—and so that when we go back to Romans we'll understand and appreciate that the *gifts* listed there (and the *more excellent way* that we are going to be operating upon as adult adopted sons—as we choose the *office* we are going to function in to labor with our Father in the function of the local assembly) - that we'll appreciate that the *office* we will function in is directly connected to aiding to and adding to the *ministry* of the body of Christ—and in turn, the aim of that (or the objective of that) is fulfilling one of these *operations* of God our Father.

- And it's these *operations* of God that really produce the vocational training we need to have here on this earth—that equips us and qualifies us to be placed in the *creature* (the heavenly places) in one of those positions of rulership/government/administration.

- I Cor. 12:4—*Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.*

- And the section of ch. 12 that amplifies upon that issue is contained in (:7-11).

- (read :7-11)

- It's the Holy Spirit that undertook the supernatural dispensing of the spiritual gifts—and the emphasis is being laid upon the fact that the ***same*** Spirit gave these gifts in the *diverse* manner that He did—because since the *more excellent way* had not yet arrived, the Holy Spirit had to do the job of distributing them because He understood what every one of the *operations of God* were.

- But once the *more excellent way* is brought in—we will have in our possession a written record of where God deposited ALL the knowledge of His *operations*!

- And (as :11 says), He *divided them to every man severally as he will*—again, not operating as the Lone Ranger (acting independently from God the Son and God the Father) - but He did it in accordance with His own understanding & appreciation of the *differences of administrations* of the Lord, and the *diversities of operations* of God the Father.

- And the Corinthians needed to get this straight in order to correct their misguided misunderstanding of these gifts!

- And these gifts aren't being cited because the Corinthians didn't know what they were—(they did know what they were) - but they're being cited so that they begin to think about them in connection with the *different administrations* and in connection with (especially) the *diversities of operations*.

- Let's just briefly note them:

- *the word of wisdom*—the ability to properly apply knowledge to a certain situation so that your conduct & behavior is appropriate to that situation.

- In connection with a particular decision that needed to be made that had to do with just what the will of God was in that situation—a person with this gift could stand up in the assembly and say, Here's the wisdom in this situation—and he could just supernaturally give it.

- *the word of knowledge*—(similar to *the word of wisdom*) — this is a gift of having insight and perception and critical discernment in connection with a given situation—and a person could 'read between the lines' (so to speak) and have real perception and then give the appropriate action to be taken.

- *faith by the same Spirit*—(see ch. 13:2) - the gift of *faith* was in connection with putting on display the issue of absolute confidence in things that God **says**—and displaying absolute confidence in the operations of His **power**.

- *the gifts of healing*—notice that the word gift is in the plural (*gifts*) of *healing*—and notice down in (:28) "*gifts of healings*" - and then in (:30) "*gifts of healing*" - this is the only gift that's always talked about in the plural! And there is a very important reason for that. But this is a supernatural gift of the power of God operating through a person to physically heal someone.

- *the working of miracles*—(plural here, but sometimes talked about as a miracle [singular]) — this is the supernatural power to demonstrate the power of God over against what would be considered natural.

- *prophecy*—the gift to function as a prophet—and information coming from God is going to be given to him—and revelations are going to be given to him—(again, see 13:2) - the ability to reveal things and disclose information theretofore kept a secret—information supernaturally revealed to a person directly from God.

- *discerning of spirits*—the supernatural capacity to detect and recognize the Satanic Policy of Evil—to detect the operations of those ‘seducing spirits’.

- *divers kinds of tongues*—the ability to supernaturally speak in other languages spoken by men, but which the speaker had never studied and didn’t know.

(I Cor. 14:10—*There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.*)!!!

- *the interpretation of tongues*—when tongues were spoken where there was a mix between those who knew the language of the tongue and those who didn’t—this person could supernaturally interpret what the guy that was speaking in tongues was saying to everybody else in the crowd—and yet he wouldn’t naturally know the language he was interpreting.

- Now the issue here is to do just as the apostle Paul says in (:7), and then underscores in (:11) — *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.* — yes, you’ve got all these *diversities of gifts*, you Corinthians, but make sure that you recognize that the Spirit gave those *diversities of gifts* in recognition of a PLAN!

- The Holy Spirit didn’t just come along and concoct a way to simply manifest himself amongst them and zap them with a whole bunch of sp.gifts—and then say, Let’s see what happens! (Or this phony idea that “God is among us”)

- No—it was following the 3-fold Master Plan for getting godly edification going at the time at the very beginning of this disp. of grace before the *more excellent way* came in shortly after this disp. got underway!

- Going on to the **next major section**—I Corinthians 12:12-27 —

- Sp. gifts don't function in and of themselves—but they are to 'fit' perfectly with the *differences of administrations* that occur within the church the body of Christ.

- Every sp.gift was designed to serve the Lord as they functioned in each member of the body—the body of Christ.

- And they see to it that the body functions as a body should function — (with those 4 major body attributes of conduct and behavior).

- So we have the 2nd 'level' (tier) of the Master Plan (not to be confused with Level II Sonship edu.) - and that got stated in (:5) —

5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

- And the section of ch. 12 that amplifies upon that issue is:

- (:12-27) - which we have just recently covered in some detail when we were identifying the 4 Body Attributes of Conduct & Behavior.

- So then—you should recognize by now that those Body Attributes of Conduct & Behavior don't occur in a vacuum (so to speak) - rather they are sandwiched between 2 other major issues that all go to making up God's Master Plan for what He is going to do with godly edification (and the Christian who goes through godly edification as a son)—which is another way of saying, for what God is going to do with His sons in sonship education!

- And since we've recently gone over the information contained in (:12-27) - we're not going to go over it all again.

- But the 'eyes of your understanding' should be open a little wider than before (when we first went over this) - and hopefully you're seeing some connections and putting some things together that better enables you to appreciate what's going to be happening when we get back to Romans 12:6-8.

- So when it comes to this overall Master Plan of God for what He's going to be doing with the edification of His sons—we now have:

1) On the ‘ground level’ (so to speak): *diversities of gifts*—which, for us, now that spiritual gifts and supernatural gifting of those sp.gifts by the Holy Spirit have been superseded by the coming in of *the more excellent way*—there are a variety of *offices* to be taken and fulfilled by us as sons.

- And those *diversity of gifts* (or *offices* of the body) are designed to fit with

2) The ‘first floor’ of the Master Plan: *differences of administrations* — which gifts/offices are designed to ‘minister’ to the needs of the Lord (the body of Christ) and manifest the godly Body Attributes of Conduct & Behavior.

- And you’re supposed to view your conduct & behavior as a son of your Heavenly Father just this way—(especially as you begin your sonship education by receiving *the Instruction of Wisdom* in the genius manner in which your Father gives it to you!)

- And all those gifts/offices—they don’t function independently—but just like your physical body, they’re designed to have the same mutual benefits to the local assembly just as they do to your physical body.

- But it doesn’t end there—because the gifts/offices that are designed to minister to and benefit the Lord (and His body: the body of Christ) - those *differences of administrations* are designed to link up with and fit with the ‘top floor’ or top level of the Master Plan of the Father ... the *diversities of operations* of God.

- And this is the one we need to really gain some advancement in and advance our understanding and appreciation of in order to gain the kind of sonship intelligence we need to put our new-found sonship wisdom-thinking and our sonship wisdom-living into practice as we begin to wisely labor with our Father in Romans 12:6-8.

- And the final major section of I Cor. 12 is—(:28-31).

- And those 4 verses amplify upon (:6) - *And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.*

- Paul is going to come along and give another listing of these sp.gifts—but in doing so here, he’s going to give the Corinthians a **ranking** of the gifts—from **best** to **least** (or lowest in importance or rank).

- And really, this is done so that you will *earnestly covet the best gifts*—and as it were, when the *more excellent way* comes in, you (as a son) will have some appreciation for the best offices—the ones that will be the most beneficial to the body of Christ; and most beneficial to functioning in the *diversities of the operations* of God your Father.

- And what should now be in your mind—if you’re perceiving things the way you ought to be perceiving them—is that when you look at the other sons in the assembly with you (the other members of the body) - your value and esteem (love) for them should ‘sky-rocket’ — because you’re not only viewing them as essential to the function of the body of the local assembly—but more than that, you should be viewing them as essential to the Grand Design your Father has to what He’s doing with the body—which is the issue of laboring with Him in all His *diverse operations* that He has for the body out there when it functions so as to *liberate the creature from the bondage of corruption* and become the embodiment for the earth (when God utilizes us as the *new creature* of the church the body of Christ and **repossess** the heavenly places back to Himself from the Adversary and his cohorts)!

- And the truth is—that when you as a son ‘come together’ and assemble together as a local assembly—the gifts/offices you determine to operate in; which serve and minister to the body of the Lord (the body of Christ); there are some gifts (the *best* gifts or the *best* offices) that are designed by our Father to make it so that we as a local assembly function as Paul describes later on in I Timothy 3:15 as ***the pillar and ground of the truth***—

— (and there’s a whole **lot more** to that expression than most folks ever think!)

- And those “*best gifts*” are to be “*coveted earnestly*” — and even though you may not ever function in one of those, the one you do function in is supposed to be viewed so that those “*best gifts*” or ‘best offices’ fully function to the greatest benefit of the body of them all!

- And this establishes a ‘support system’ (so to speak) of the lesser gifts/offices for the “*best*” gifts/offices to do their job to the benefit of the body/assembly to have godly edification taking place to the **maximum** (or to the highest and the best way possible)!

- And the Satanic Policy of Evil attempted to thwart that process by the counterfeiting of those sp.gifts **before** the coming of the *more excellent way*—and that same Satanic PoE still does attempt to thwart that process today, even **after** the *more excellent way* has come in—by counterfeiting spiritual gifts and spiritual phenomena—and causing a whole bunch of confusion within the realm of local assemblies at large.

- By the way—do you see now why Satan would attempt to muddy up the waters in this area? Because it strikes at the core of godly edifying and sonship education taking place!!!

- And it’s a **MUST** that we appreciate and recognize what this *more excellent way* is all about—and I don’t mean just recognizing **WHAT** it is—but recognizing that it really is far better and far *more excellent* than any or all of those sp.gifts—and understand **WHY**.

- But you **won’t** be able to understand and appreciate any more than merely **what** the *more excellent way* is if you don’t appreciate and view them as you should—which is within the realm of this Grand Design of God in connection with them—and especially if you don’t appreciate (at least in its basic concept) what these *diversities of the operations* of God are—and view them from His perspective.

- Because if you only view them from your perspective—and from only your desire for them for simply the sake of having it—or with envious eyes of having one that you’re not in any way equipped for—(as the Corinthians did—all going after a lesser gifts at the expense of all the others [the best ones]) — then that’s nothing more than a fleshly, carnal, Satanically inspired way of looking at them!

- You have to view these the way the doctrine tells you to view them and the way your Father teaches you to look at them!

- And when you do—you’ll see that some of them served only for a very limited time at the beginning of this disp. of grace—and no longer are in use throughout the balance of the disp. of grace!

- And the *operations of God* that still are in effect throughout the balance of this disp. of grace are now to be gotten knowledge of and appreciated under this *more excellent way* that is far superior than what the gifts and the supernatural gifting of those gifts by the Holy Spirit provided for.

- (read I Cor. 12:28-31)

- And that last **stunning** statement at the end of (:31) - *and yet shew I unto a more excellent way* — that's a **far superior** way than the supernatural gifting process that existed temporarily at the beginning of this disp. of grace—and that sounds like it runs totally counter to spiritual gifts being supernaturally given by the Holy Spirit to believers — and in fact, it will be a “stunning statement” to you—and you'll never understand and appreciate *a more excellent way* if you only look at spiritual gifts **through your own eyes!** or if you look at spiritual gifts in any other way than you're **taught** to look at them here in I Corinthians 12, 13, and 14!

- Now let's begin looking at the *diversities of the operations* God wants to accomplish and get done—and which gifts fit into which *operation*.

- And on the basis of understanding the *operations of God*—we'll be able to appreciate the **temporary** nature of the spiritual gifts—and we'll be able to appreciate (when we go back to Romans 12:6-8) the *more excellent way* in which we are to decide upon an *office* in which we're going to function in in the local assembly (that will minister to the Lord's body; and will in turn, function in one of the *operations of God* the Father).

- 28 *And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.*

- Now what you have here is a list of 8 spiritual gifts.

- And the apostle Paul has ranked them in order from **best** to **least**.

- And what we need to appreciate here is that these **are gifts** (that is, they are not operations) — but we're going to have to look at these gifts and appreciate something about the way in which they're ranked (where groupings of them occur) and then think about what *operation* of God lies behind the grouping or the gift that is listed & ranked.

- Now when you look at these 8 gifts—and the way in which Paul ranks them—you've got:

- 1) A **first**
- 2) A **secondarily** (a second)
- 3) A **thirdly** (or third)
- 4) An **after that** (or fourth)
- 5) And a **then** (or fifth) [consisting of 4 gifts]

- or a 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th.

- And what needs to be appreciated right here is that with each of these gifts (or within a grouping of these gifts) - there is an *operation of God*, and then a gift/gifts to accomplish that *operation*.

- The actual *operation of God* is NOT listed here—but the gift or gifts to accomplish that *operation* **is** listed—and not only listed, but **ranked**—which means that by perceiving the *operation* that goes along with the gift/gifts, we should also appreciate that there is a ranking (of good, better, best) where the *operations of God* are concerned—but the critical thing here is to begin to see what the *operations of God* are that are associated with the particular spiritual gift that is designed to accomplish it (as it serves/ministers to the body of the Lord).

- And what Paul has done here (by ranking them the way he does) is to get you to see that these spiritual gifts (in their ranking) - line up (in their ranking) to a particular *operation of God*.

- And that's why the gifts are ranked the way they are here—because they're in accordance with those *diversities of operations*.

- And all we're after here is to look at them very generally—and just get you to begin to think with some more perception about how the gifts fit into one of the *operations* of God.

- And I believe, even though we have 8 gifts listed/ranked here—I believe we can at least see 5 of the *operations* of God that are served by these gifts as they're ranked here and that they were designed to accomplish.

- So do you see any of these sp.gifts that could be grouped together? in order to accomplish an *operation* (or working) of God?

- Well, if you pay attention to the way Paul ranks them—he comes along and gives a **first**, a **secondarily**, and then a **thirdly**—but then he doesn't give a 'fourthly' 'fifthly' 'sixthly' 'seventhly' and 'eighthly' — but after the **thirdly**, he gives an **after that**, and then a **then** — and it's as though Paul has in his mind and in his thinking that those first 3 gifts have a very distinctive *operation* in view—and they do!

- And when you think about **apostles, prophets, and teachers**—even though they could be dealt with separately—they all fall under the same 'umbrella' (so to speak) - they all have a common *operation* in which they all function.

- **Apostles/prophets/teachers** (A.P.T.) —

1) The communication of God's word.

- That's the first and foremost *operation of God!*

- And in fact, those are the **best gifts** of them all!

- And in the context of a local assembly they are to be recognized as the **best**—and the main *operation* of God in a local assembly is the communication of His word!

- First & foremost the local assembly is a classroom for the communication of His word—of the curriculum for sonship edification—and godly edification is the primary objective of a local. assem.!

- And at the beginning of this disp. of grace the HS supernaturally gifted these to the members of the loc. assem., but once the *more excellent way* came in, there's a superior way in which some *offices* are filled in which this same process takes place!

- **after than miracles**, — *Miracles* have nothing to do with communicating God's word—nor do they have any roll to play in the local assembly—they don't achieve godly edification in the loc. assem.—but they've got an entirely different *operation*.

2) Confirmation of God dealing with Gentiles.

(That was the roll of the one who had the gift of the working of *miracles* at the beginning of this disp. of grace.)

- The HS gave the supernatural gift of *miracles* to ones in the local assembly—but that gift was to function **outside** the loc. assem. in order to confirm the fact that God had turned from Israel and was now working with and dealing with the Gentiles—and a new and different and distinct dispensation of Gentile grace was now in effect!

- And you can see that in Romans 15—(read :15-19)

- And by the working of these *mighty signs and wonders [miracles]* it was to be fully settled in the minds of the Romans that what God is doing now is (as :16 says), *the offering up of the Gentiles*.

- And the Holy Ghost was setting that issue apart (or *sanctifying* it) - *to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed, Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God* — and that provided for a testimony or a confirmation of the reality that the Gentiles were now being *offered up* and God had turned to the Gentiles and away from Israel!

- And the working of the gift of *miracles* operated OUTSIDE the loc. assem.—to UNBELIEVING Gentiles outside the local assem. so that the Gentiles would give heed to the gospel of Christ being given to them!

- So if *miracles* are happening within a local assem., then you know that they're **NOT** functioning Biblically or properly at all! — they don't function for godly edifying—and in fact, they've got a totally different *operation of God* that they functioned in!

- ***then the gifts of healings*** (different than & separate from the working of *miracles* — and they're not to be put together; and if you do, then you're not thinking about them like God thinks about them!)

3) Confirm the reality of God turning from Israel.

(And the roll of the one who had the *gifts of healings* was to operate with them especially TO Israel!)

- There are some specific *healings* (Pl.) that are described in a very special way as being very meaningful to Israel!

- (see Mat. 11:1-6 [fulfillment of Isa. 35:3-6] among other passages).

- Isaiah describes what the kingdom will be like—but the Lord had the privilege of giving the signs of the kingdom when He proclaimed it to be “at hand” during His earthly ministry.

- Those *healings* are designed to be specific and highly significant signs **to Israel** (and not just a bunch of random healings going on)!

- Especially in view of what **produced** the blindness, the deafness, the lameness, the lepers, the death, and so forth!

- Those were Israel’s healings!!! They were promised to them—and those were signs that **God had come to visit them!!!**

- And so when, at the beginning of this disp. of grace—when God had turned **from Israel to** the Gentiles (and as James said in Acts 15—God is ‘*visiting the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name*’ [:14] - He’s not **with** Israel any longer.

- And God gave Israel a sign to confirm the reality of that! And to do that—He took their *healings* and gave the capacity to produce their *healings* to some Gentiles in the new program.

- And this one didn’t function in the local assembly either—and the ones to be made an impact upon were Israelites!

- *then... helps, governments* (kind of a “part A” & “part B” of the same issue)

4) Local Assembly (Church) Orderliness.

- This had to do with the supernatural gifting of those in the local assem. with different rulership functions and helpful functions so as to bring about doing everything *decently and in order*.

- *diversities of tongues.*

5) The Final Sign to unbelieving Israel.

(This is not the same as the *gifts of healings* that confirmed God turning from Israel!) [We'll see more in ch.14] - but the roll of this gift was NEVER to take place within the local assembly!

- It was not designed to *communicate God's word*—nor *confirm God's dealing with the Gentiles*—nor *confirm God turning from Israel*—nor did it *produce orderliness in the local assembly!*

- In fact, as Paul will show—when the gift of tongues operates in a local assembly, **it produces disorder!**

- I Cor. 14:18-19 — note (:19) [*Yet in the church ...*] - Paul knew that the gift of tongues did NOT belong **in** the local church, but **outside** the local church!

- Point is—the *operation of God* that was served by the gift of tongues had no place within the walls of a local assembly—and had no place nor anything to do with the communication of the word of God! — And yet this is exactly what goes on in churches today that claim to have folks in it speaking in tongues!

- Therefore due to the gift of tongues being a pet area of the Satanic PoE to counterfeit (as well as having an emotional attachment to it that made it so that folks would just come along and outright fake it) - notice what Paul says next as he corrects their abuse of tongues and the false doctrine associated with it —

- (:20) - Paul tells them in no uncertain words that they are supposed to have intelligent, adulthood type understanding of this thing! And he's going to tell them what it's all about ...

- (:21) — Interesting: Paul is going to quote from 2 passages out of Isaiah (one in ch. 28 & one in ch. 29) — and yet he says, ***In the law it is written***—(Is Isaiah “the law”?) — this is said the way it is so that when they went to the prophets [like Isaiah] they would always appreciate that they were dealing with issue that pertained to God's program with Israel—and therefore that means that those things are “*under the law*” NOT “*under grace*!”

- And if there's one fundamental thing these Corinthians ought to understand (having gone over the basics of their sanctification) is that they're NOT *under the law, but under grace!*

- Therefore they should easily understand and appreciate that sitting back in the prophets (under the Law—and **pertaining specifically to God's program with Israel**) is information concerning a particular **sign** that would be given by God that had a specific *operation of God* associated with it—and it all had to do with being a sign from God to unbelieving Israel!!!

- (:21)... *With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak to **this people** (that's Israel!) and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.*

- Tongues was told to them (in advance) that when it arrived, it was going to be a sign to Israel of God's total **displeasure** with unbelieving Israelites!

- God actually gave it at the beginning of the 5th CoP—and He would use it throughout the 5th CoP to testify to unbelieving Israel of His displeasure with them—and He would use it as a FINAL sign to them that their destruction by His wrath was now going to take place!

- And at the beginning of this disp. of grace—and as Israel was *diminishing*—God gave this final sign to them as a sign of His extreme displeasure with them—(and those who didn't respond to #3 were given this one!) — and that's the gist of what this gift of tongues was all about.

- Now just to underscore the issue of tongues being a sign to Israel of God's great displeasure with them—notice something the apostle Paul says about God's dealings with Israel (and something Israel was given to understand) and the thing God did in order to make Israel understand what He wanted them to ...

- I Thess. 2:14 & :15 (“*Who*” [Jews—Unbelieving Israel])
 - ***pleased not God*** (and God's going to give them a **sign** of His displeasure)

(:16) *Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, (this was being done through that sign-gift of tongues!)*

to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost. — (notice that Israel hasn't experienced the Day of the Lord's Wrath yet, so what's Paul talking about? — he's talking about **the expression of God's sore displeasure and anger with them**—and God's wrathful displeasure is *come upon them to the uttermost* = it's gone as far as it can go—and that's the backdrop for this disp. of grace being brought in—and when God gets back to dealing with Israel—BOOM: His wrath hits! [but His anger & displeasure with them was to the *uttermost* back when He suspended the program with Israel!])

- So how was Israel supposed to know and understand God's displeasure? And how were they supposed to know that God's *wrath is come upon them to the uttermost*? Is there something [some sign] that gives them the understanding of that? and that leaves them without an excuse for failing to understand that? YES THERE IS: that gift of TONGUES!

- Come back to I Corinthians 12 —

- (read :29-30) - The answer to every question is NO! — and so anyone who ever comes along and says that every member of the church (or every believer/Christian should speak in tongues is simply SCREWEY!)

- And really—once this is understood—that alone should go a long way to straighten out the mess that was going on there in Corinth—and get back to the major focus of the local assembly (which is the communication of God's word) - and put's the *best gifts* of the apostles, prophets, & teachers back in their ranking #1 position.

- But even with all that—there's another critical piece of sound doctrine that needs to be understood and appreciated whereby the sp. gifts/supernatural gifting process [which was 'pretty good'] is going to be done away with for a far *more excellent way* of getting the *differences of administrations* accomplished and finally the *diversities of the operations of God* accomplished (in the field of godly edification).

- And one the reasons why—is because some (many) of the *diversities of operations* were temporary and not designed to

last throughout this disp. of grace—and they will only have a temporary and limited time to accomplish their objective (during the time of Israel's *diminishing*).

- But even the objective that the permanent *operations of God* have as this disp. of grace proceeds on (like the communication of God's word—like Local Church Orderliness) — a provision is going to come into existence that makes it far better than having a sp. gift of apostle or prophet or teacher, helps or governments —

- And Paul makes the statement of the reality of that at the end of (:31) - and all of ch. 13 amplifies upon that reality and sets it forth.

- (read :31) — *But covet earnestly the best gifts:* — this is NOT what they were doing—they had the ranking upside down!

... *and yet* (still; we're not done yet, folks) *shew I unto you a more excellent way.*

- Good as it is—God's got something *more excellent* than possessing any or all of those sp. gifts —and it's even *more excellent* than the apostle Paul possessing all of those gifts as well.

- And the *more excellent way* of God accomplishing all of His *diverse operations* — and the *more excellent way* of God accomplishing the *differences of administrations* — the *more excellent way* (that **excels in value** far more than the less excellent means of accomplishing them at the beginning of this disp. of grace) **is the issue of what you hold in your hand: the completed, written word of God!**

- And whether you believe it or not—or imagine it or not—or feel it or not—the reality you have to face is the fact that in God's eyes, His operations are accomplished by a far superior way (by what He has vested in His completed word) than by the supernatural spiritual gift process that only operated on a temporary basis until His word did get completed!

- And you have to go by what God **says**—not by what you **imagine!**

- Now much of the rigid resistance that exists in the thinking of most Christians today—(Christians who have been duped into believing that the Holy Ghost is still supernaturally bestowing sp. gifts to believers today) — a great deal of the resistance to God having done away with all that when His word came to be in its completed form— really has a lot to do with the fact that most Christians today don't view God's word the way God Himself views it!

- Because God has always viewed His word as being **superior** to any thing else (and any other way of communicating or doing things) - just as it says in the 138th Psalm (:2 ... *for thou has magnified thy word above all thy name.*)

- God's word is always looked upon as a **superior** way of Him doing anything!

- And when you've been taught to look at His word the way He looks at it Himself (which most Christians **don't** do) — you'll see the **natural superiority** that His word has to anything or any other way of doing any thing!

- Even the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is called "*the Word*" of God over in John's gospel!

- And if you understood and appreciated God's word the way He does—then it should come as no surprise to you at all to find that when Paul describes what the *more excellent way* is (down in ch. 13 and vs. 10) - the most natural thing to pop into your mind is that, "It has to be the completed, written word of God!"

- (once again I Cor. 12:31) — Paul has now set forth the necessary corrective doctrine so that the Corinthians can get straightened out (and turned around) from all of the effects and confusion that the Satanic PoE produced as it worked in their midst and in their *ignorance*—

- And on the basis of that—they should now be recognizing that they shouldn't be emphasizing the gift of tongues and doing it in the local assembly any more—but now when it comes to them functioning properly as a local assembly, they should be '*coveting earnestly those best gifts*' — and they should be starting to turn their assembly around and get it in line with what God designed it to be (which is *the pillar and ground of the truth*).

- (Which is what all of I Cor. 12:1 and down through the first half of :31 is designed to accomplish).

- But there's more that they need to understand—and most of all, they need to understand that the present situation that exists among them—with the spiritual gifts being utilized by God to accomplish those *diversities of the operations of God* that He wanted to accomplish—that He is going to REPLACE the **means** that He was using at that time with them—that He's going to replace that means with a better (*more excellent*) means for getting those *operations* done!

- And the *more excellent* means will last throughout this disp. of grace—and will have far more superiority to it that far surpasses those spiritual gifts!

- And that's what Paul states at the end of (:31) - and then goes on to explain fully in chapter 13.

- (:31) ... *and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.*

- And the **way** Paul is talking about here is the “way” that God was, (at that time), going about to accomplish all His *operations*.

- And the way He did that prior to *the more excellent way* coming in, was by the use of spiritual gifts—(and I don't want you to think that just because they were 'less excellent' that they should be viewed as 'bad' or 'useless' or 'inadequate' or anything along those lines) - but good as that is; there is a *more excellent way* to do that!

- And Paul says, I'm going to shew it to you—and you're eventually going to possess it!

- And when they eventually do possess it—all this temporary, less-excellent way is all going to be done away with—that is, the method of utilizing the spiritual gifts to get the *operations of God* accomplished will be done away with—and it will be replaced with something that is far *more excellent*.

- And something that is *excellent* **excels** something else.

- That's a comparative concept—something that is *excellent* excels something else and its ability to do something.

- Therefore, the completed word of God *excels* the sp. gifts—it's going to be able to accomplish those *operations of God*

BETTER than the spiritual gifts could do it! (Amazing!)

- And not only is it *excellent*—but it's *more excellent!* — and by putting those 2 superlative terms together—it's like Paul is coming along and saying, **YOU COULDN'T GET ANY BETTER THAN THIS!**

- And they are to appreciate that this *more excellent way* **could never be replace by anything better than it!!!**

- In other words—you're going to end up getting the very **best** thing you could ever have in order for God to accomplish those *operations!*

- And that's an important thing to understand!

- And the truth is—Paul, the Prophets, the Lord Jesus Christ, etc., talk about God's word **far different** than most Christians ever talk about it or think about it — (and far different than modern theologians and Bible scholars talk about it or think about it)!

- And really—that expression of *a more excellent way* ought to engender some real **excitement** in you (and in the mind of Christian folks today).

- The spiritual gifts were a marvelous provision for sure—but to have the completed, written word of God in your hands is far superior to even those marvelous spiritual gifts!!!

- And Christian folks today should be far more thankful for possessing the written, completed word of God—and holding it in your hand—and being able to deal with it consistently every day — you should be more thankful for that than for any spiritual gift you ever could have possessed! (any or ALL of them!)

- So in chapter 13—Paul begins to amplify upon that and show to the Corinthians what this *more excellent way* is.

- Chapter 13 is broken down into 2 main Parts:

- Part 1 = (:1-7)

- Part 2—(:8-13)

- You need to appreciate these 2 Components—

- Paul is first of all going to talk about—and really, bring back into the minds of the Corinthian saints—and bring them back to the fundamental and foundational (and really, the most important of all) doctrines you ever learn (and respond positively and properly to) in your sonship education—**godly love and charity!**

- And I want to pause right here and say that, while it is a doctrine that your Father teaches to you first and foremost (and fundamentally and foundationally) — it's always critical for you to remember and to have in your thinking when you're dealing with sonship education/edification by means of the curriculum for your sonship education — it's critical to always appreciate the fact that, while your Father has taken you under His wing (so to speak) - and while He has now begun to personally instruct you as His son—it's still His **Spirit** that is *leading* you through the curriculum!

- So while it's your Father's words and your Father's wisdom and your Father's plan, purpose, design, (and so forth and so on) — the Holy Ghost has an important and integral roll to play in godly, sonship edification as well—and it is a roll that **goes on all the time that the education takes place!**

- And we've pointed that out as we began sonship edification when we noted Paul's one-sentence definition of what a son is: *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God (Rom. 8:14)* —

- And we've pointed out that the Holy Ghost has a roll to play in sonship edification as He performs the 'heart-writing' of the doctrine so that it becomes effectually working—and becomes a permanent, sensitive issue in your inner man as godly edifying takes place. *(Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. [II Cor. 3:2-3])*

- Therefore, all the while sonship education is going on—God the Holy Spirit has several **ministries** to perform.

- And when it comes to the ‘first-things-first’ of the curriculum for sonship education—the very first component to your education as a son is to get **godly love** brought into existence as the means of you *receiving the instruction of wisdom* from your Father.

- And there are multiple levels of genius and needfulness for why that doctrine of godly love is the first thing you learn—and the first thing the Holy Spirit undertakes to lead you through and to write upon the fleshy tables of your heart!

- And a lot of that multi-layered needfulness for why that doctrine? and why that doctrine first? — all has to do with the kind of **POWER** and **WISDOM** you gain from getting your Father’s norms and standards for what He values and for what He esteems!

- And hopefully—as we go through all 6 Components that make up our *instruction of wisdom* by means of godly love—hopefully by the time we get to the end of it in Rom. 12:16, you will appreciate the **greatness** of the POWER and the WISDOM that comes from valuing what your Father values and esteeming what your Father esteems! (& the skill-sets it gives you)

- And I’m saying all this just to try to get you to appreciate the **greatness of the power** you’re getting in just the first sonship decision-making skill of godly **wisdom!!!**

- In fact, godly love is so important and so critical and so powerful & necessary to a son’s ability to make critical sonship decisions—that the issue of godly love & charity is brought into the picture here in I Cor. 13 in order to provide the Corinthians the ability to ‘right themselves’ and to appreciate the permanent provision of *the more excellent way* of having in their hand the completed word of God that will replace the less excellent way of those temporary sp. gifts.

- Now I say all that just to say that when you think about being taught godly love as the first component to your sonship education—and you think about how the Holy Spirit has a roll to play in that—then you should recognize that producing godly love in you is one of the first **ministries** (education-wise) that the Holy Spirit performs in your inner man.

- In fact—just to underscore the fact that, even though you can (and should) view the receiving of godly love as the 1st component of the sonship curriculum—at the exact same time you should also view that as a **ministry** that is produced by the Holy Spirit *leading* you through the curriculum and *writing it upon the fleshy tables of your heart*—as you take that doctrine and begin to express it by your **behavior** and by **laboring** with that godly love with your Father in His business—what is your labor? what does your labor consist of? what does your labor produce? what other terminology can you say to express that?

*(Rom. 6:22) But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your **fruit unto holiness**, and the end everlasting life.*

- The use of godly love in the Labor aspect of your sonship life—can truly be said to be **fruit unto holiness**.

- And the Holy Spirit has a roll or **ministry** in producing that *fruit* of godly love—right?

- Now with those kind of connections being made—it should come as no surprise to you that when Paul (later on) lists the “fruit of the Spirit” - what is in the #1 ranking position?

*(Gal. 5:22) But the fruit of the Spirit is **love**, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: ...*

- So therefore what you’ve got here in I Corinthians 13:1-7 — you’ve got the apostle Paul talking about **the most excellent ministry** that the Holy Spirit has.

- Because the Corinthians were looking at the sp. gifts as the most excellent ministry that the Holy Spirit had to them—and the most excellent ‘point of contact’ (so to speak) with the Holy Ghost.

- But Paul will show in the first 7 verses that that’s NOT right! — but that there’s a whole other ministry that the Holy Spirit has that they’ve seem to have forgotten—(or at least they’re ignoring it) - and it’s the most excellent **ministry** of all, that the Holy Spirit has: **charity** (godly love & charity)!

- And then beginning at (:8) - once Paul says what he does in (:1-7), he comes along and says, This most excellent ministry that the Holy Spirit has **will NEVER be done away with!**

- And it will **never** be replaced by some other ministry!

- But that's NOT true about the spiritual gifts—they **are** going to be done away—and they **are** going to be replaced with a more *excellent way* for accomplishing the *operations of God* that they're designed to accomplish.

- And that's the flow or sense & sequence to ch. 13—and you need to appreciate that.

- Let's look now at (:1-7) - and that most excellent ministry that the Holy Spirit has that will never fail or be done away with.

- (read :1-3)

- You see that Paul is talking about those sp. gifts (just as he has been since ch. 12) — but now he's going to have the Corinthians look at them, not only in connection with the *operations of God* and ranking them in order of importance as far as the local assembly is concerned — but now Paul is going to have them look at these sp. gifts with a view to recognize that they're not the **only** ministry of the Holy Spirit.

- And there's a ministry that the Holy Spirit has—that when you put it up against these sp. gifts—that if you had **all** these sp. gifts, but didn't have the benefit of this ministry, then you're nothing but a whole bunch of noise (*sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal*) - and on top of that it profits you **nothing!**

- Now there's an 'eye-opener'! — there's a ministry of the Holy Spirit that **exceeds** the possession of ANY sp. gift! — and if you don't have this ministry of the Holy Spirit then you're just spinning your wheels and wasting your time—and even if you have ALL the sp. gifts without this ministry, then you're not even getting to first base with what God wants to do with you!!!

- So what in the world is this more excellent ministry of the Holy Spirit? — well, what's Paul comparing all these sp. gifts to? — **CHARITY!!!**

- **charity** = (ἀγάπη) - love—and today we almost always think of *charity* as giving to the poor/needly — (which is a legitimate expression of *charity* [:3]) — but *charity* is a mental attitude of godly love in which you value and esteem someone or something to such a high degree that you value and esteem it (or him/her) MORE THAN YOURSELF—so that you are willing to give up of yourself for their benefit.

- And that's God's attitude—that's the fundamental and comprehensive concept for godliness and **sonship!**

- That's why it's the first thing you're taught as a son when you receive the *instruction of wisdom* from your Father—which is to think, behave, and labor like your Father does Himself with godly love!

- And that's why the most excellent ministry of the Holy Spirit to you as your Father's son—is to first and foremost teach you and install in your heart godly love and charity! (to teach you to think and act and walk *charitably*—like God does Himself!)

- And folks this is why you are confronted with the issue of God's love the way you are in the book of Romans!

- Romans 5:5—*And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.* (and then Paul amplifies upon that in [:6-10])

- And you get that information at the end of the Doc. of your Justification and its results—because you can't go anywhere in your edification until you learn to love like God does—and how much He first of all values and esteems YOU by justifying you unto eternal life!

- And that's going to be the basis upon which you're going to value and esteem other members of the church the body of Christ — and ALL men!

- And this is why you get (as the very first component to your sonship education in the *instruction of wisdom* the issue of God's love in Romans 12:3-16!

- And in connection with *godly love & charity*—there’s a progressive development going on to it all —

- Once the foundation is laid of how much God values and esteems (*loves*) YOU in connection with providing you full assurance of your justified status (and the permanency of it) — and the first thing you are able to value and esteem like God does it to value & esteem the cross-work of the Lord Jesus Christ and its benefits to you **like God does!**

- And then you learn to value & esteem your sanctified position “in Christ” - which is to say, you learn to value & esteem your sonship status so that you come to possess “*the love of Christ*” — and you come to love your sonship life and the aims, goals, and objectives of it just like Christ Himself does and **just like your Father does!** (which is what happens from Romans 8:14-39)!

- And then as you begin your sonship education—you come to value & esteem other members of the church the body of Christ that are members of the local assembly with you—**just like God does!** (which is where we’re at in Romans 12:3-8)!

- And it’s fascinating that when the issue of godly love gets dealt with later on—(when you receive the *instruction of equity* and are dealing with the “weaker brother” situation) — and when Paul deals with the improper conduct that could go on in connection with that—notice what Paul says — (*Romans 14:15*) *But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not **charitably**. ...*

- Do you see that a progressive development is supposed to take place from what we learn about godly love in Romans 12—so that by the time you get to Romans 14 that love (value & esteem) can now be talked about as **charity**?!

- [Rom. 14:15 is the first time the word charity occurs in your Bible!]

- And there’s a bunch of other passages we could look at as this doctrine gets further developed throughout sonship edu.

- But my point here is simply to point out that this *charity* issue in I Cor. 13 doesn't just happen 'out of the blue' - but all along our Father has been setting before us this most excellent ministry of the His Spirit that has to do with us receiving godly love & charity—and by valuing & esteeming the way God does, we gain the comprehension of what godliness is all about!

- And hopefully by the little that we've covered—you should, to some degree, have some appreciation for the huge **impact** that the statement you come to in I Corinthians 13:8 should have upon you:

Charity never faileth: ...

- And so important is this issue of this most excellent ministry of the Holy Ghost—that if you're not allowing your Father to teach you to value & esteem as He does—it doesn't make one bit of difference whether you were to have ALL the sp. gifts that there are—because if that's the case, you're nothing but a **noise-maker** and you're doing nothing to help anyone else out—and it's not profiting you one bit to have those things!

- And folks, that means that even when the sp. gifts *were* in operation: even then, they were **NOT** the BIG issue!!!

- And this is what Paul is after in those first 7 verses of I Cor. 13.

- (read :4-7) - Here Paul gives the Corinthians a synopsis description of the *charity* of God—and the effectual working of the education of the *charity* of God in their lives (and the *fruit* it's designed to bear and the displays of that *charity* of God) - and those displays are all displays of **godliness**.

- And the reason why Paul cites *those* things as the display of godly love & charity is that it puts on display to the Corinthians that they've been 'missing the boat' on this most excellent ministry of the Holy Spirit.

- Because if you go through I & II Cor., you see all kinds of examples of them being **NOT** being *longsuffering* with one another; not being *kind* to one another; *envying*, yes; *vaunting* themselves, yes; *puffed up*, yes—and so on down the list!

- Paul manifests to them that they're not benefitting from this most excellent ministry of the Holy Spirit.

- And more than that—every single *operation of God* that He wanted to get accomplished in that assembly **was at a standstill!!!** (Nothing beneficial was taking place)!

- They were so **spiritually screwed up** because of their ignorance and the effects of the Satanic PoE amongst them—that the **best** thing the Holy Ghost could ever do for them: **they weren't benefitting from!!!**

- And they needed to see that—and they also needed to see that this most excellent ministry of the Holy Spirit (teaching godly love & charity) **will never cease to be the Spirit's most excellent ministry!**

- Let's now survey the remaining verses in ch. 13.

- (read :8-13)

- (:8) - *Charity never faileth*: — **faileth** = *fail* is used here in a way that we often don't use it (although it still is used this way today, but rarely) — and when Paul says *but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail*—that doesn't mean that they will fail to come to pass —

- But the word *fail* here is used in the sense of when we would talk about an oil well *failing* or a well of water *failing*—the well failed—that doesn't mean that the well “didn't come to pass” - no—it means that the well ran out of water or ran out of oil—it dried up—and it's **failing** to give what it originally had to give—it doesn't have anything more *to* give.

- And the issue here is that *charity never faileth*—i.e., this most excellent ministry of the Holy Ghost (to teach you godly love & charity) - that's NEVER going to “run out” — there never will come a time when that's not going to have something to give.

- And there will never come a time when *charity* will cease being a service and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

- And that's never going to **not** be something that the Holy Spirit is in the process of doing with you and me as members of the church, the body of Christ!

- **BUT** ... that is NOT true when it comes to those sp. gifts!!!

- ALL of the spiritual gifts will be done away! — some of them will *fail*—some of them will *cease*—some of them will *vanish away*— but ALL of them are going to be replaced with something **more excellent**.

- There was a *more excellent way* (designed by God) that would be the means to accomplish what God once accomplished by means of those sp. gifts —

- Instead of sp. gifts, the **more excellent way** would be the **means** to accomplish the *differences of administrations* to the Lord—and ultimately the *more excellent way* would be the **means** to accomplish the *diversities of the operations* of God!

- And folks—that makes *the more excellent way* the most vital thing there is in existence in either the physical world or the spiritual world for godly sonship edification to take place!

- In fact, (just as “vital” implies) - it’s a matter of LIFE OR DEATH (functional life or functional death)!

- And that’s just what Paul sets forth in the remainder of (:8) and down through (:13).

- (:8) *Charity never faileth: but (adversative conj.) whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.*

- This is the declaration by the apostle Paul that this method of sp. gifts are going to *fail*—and run out—and have nothing more to give—they are going to become unnecessary & useless—and the Holy Spirit is no longer going to be operating with them.

- Now notice in (:8) that you have 3 gifts mentions as going to be done away with—(*prophecies, tongues, and knowledge*) - Why these 3? and does this mean that only these 3 will be done away with, but all the others will still be in operation?

- My understanding is that Paul mentions these 3 to represent the entire list of sp. gifts that were mentioned back in 12:8-10.

- And again, this is **my understanding**—that the sp. gifts listed in 12:8-10 are grouped together into 3 groups— (#1 *wisdom & knowledge*—#2 *faith, healings, miracles, prophecy, & discerning of spirits*—#3 *tongues & the interpretation of tongues*) — and Paul takes one gift out of the 3 groups (i.e., *prophecies, tongues, & knowledge*) to represent all 3 groups or **all** the spiritual gifts.

- And there are going to be 3 shades of meaning to the “*done away*” concept that applies to those 3 groups—

- The group that has to do with *prophecies* (*faith, healings, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits*) — *they shall **fail***—they’re going to run out; and have nothing more to give; and become unnecessary.

- The group that is represented by the gift of *tongues* (*tongues & the interpretation of tongues*)— *they shall **cease***—they’re tied to a particular event, that when it occurs, they’re going to just come to an abrupt stop!

- And the gifts that are represented by the gift of *knowledge* (*wisdom & knowledge*) — they’re going to ***vanish away*** — they just disappear—you’re going to look for them someday, and they’re just not going to be there any more.

- And there’s some fascinating things to study out about how these things historically occurred.

- And we’ll see some more (and perhaps even greater) evidence that not just a few sp. gifts (or part of the sp. gifts) were *done away*—but **ALL** the sp. gifts were *done away* when the *more excellent way* was come in—but we’ll see that as we go on through the remaining verses of ch. 13.

- But the issue here is that **ALL** the sp. gifts are going to be *done away* — (the process of doing away with them will be different as each group was *done away*—due to the impact that was being made as God replaced the *diversity of gifts* with the *more excellent way*).

- But the point is to contrast the temporary, less excellent way (of sp. gifts) with the permanent, most excellent ministry of the Holy Spirit: the teaching of godly love and *charity* (which ***never faileth!***)!

- And that most excellent ministry of the Holy Spirit will continue on throughout the duration of this disp. of grace!

- Now—**why** is that going to take place? - why are the *prophecies* going to *fail*? — why are the *tongues* going to *cease*? — why will the *knowledge vanish away*? ...

A: (:9) - *For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.*

- At the time in which the sp. gifts were in operation—this was the situation—and that situation was that they had only a PARTIAL understanding—and they possessed only a PARTIAL knowledge that God wanted them to possess as members of the church, the body of Christ.

- And in accordance with that, they could only *prophesy in part*—(and really all of the gifts were functioning in view of that and in accordance with that).

- And those sp. gifts were working to bring about a time in which their *knowledge* and understanding would no longer be '*partial*'!

- And folks, that means that any or all of the spiritual gifts (and their functions) is a tell-tale indicator of the fact **that they didn't have all of the information** (or knowledge or understanding) **that God wanted them to have!**

- And that means that if you're attempting to function in any or all of these sp. gifts today—by default, that's an admission on your part (if you're going to be honest about it) - that's an admission on your part that you only "*known in part*" - and you're admitting that **you don't have all God wants you to have knowledge-wise** — and that's an admission that **you don't have the complete word of God!!!**

- And folks—that's how, by Satan counterfeiting the spiritual gifts today is an outright attack upon the word of God—an attack upon the completed word of God!

- But in Paul's day—as more & more of the *knowledge* comes, eventually their '*partial*' knowledge will no longer be '*partial*'!

- Eventually God is going to communicate all He wants to communicate to us, as the members of the church the body of Christ: **and when THAT time comes, there's not going to be any need for those spiritual gifts!**

- And when that time comes—you'll be possessors of something *more excellent* than any or all of those sp. gifts!

- You'll be possessors of a far superior way for God to accomplish the *diversity* of His *operations*!

- Now that's the **why**—but now **when** will that happen?

A: (:10) *But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*

- "**that which is perfect**" - What ever the "*that*" is here in (:10) - that is described as "*perfect*" —when you can identify it and define it— that IS *the more excellent way*!

- And "*that which is perfect*" is the antithesis (or exact opposite) of the '*knowing-in-part*' (or partial knowledge) situation in (:9)!

- Now most critics of the Bible—and the position of those who would argue that sp. gifts are still in operation today— will say that what Paul is talking about in the phrase "*that which is perfect*" is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

- And so their reasoning is that—all the sp. gifts have to be still in operation today—because Paul says they'll be in operation until "*that which is perfect*" (or the Lord Jesus Christ) "*is come*" - that is, the sp. gifts will be in operation until the Lord Jesus Christ comes back at His second coming to set up and establish His kingdom on this earth!

- And so there is a raging debate going on—especially between Charismatics/Pentecostals/Apostolic types and those who believe that some or all of the sp. gifts were only temporary and have now been *done away*.

- And a great deal of the controversy and the confusion and the debate—centers upon this very issue: Just what is "*that which is perfect*"???

- Some (including myself, at one time) will try to make their case from the “original Greek” — but the problem there is that you end up being inconsistent with how you handle other passages of God’s word—so the best thing to do is to jettison that way to make your case, and stick with a far better method of doing it than by going to the Greek.

- A far better way for understanding and appreciating who or what “*that which is perfect*” is—is to pay attention to the CONTEXT and allow the context to tell you the identity of “*that which is perfect.*”

- Context rules every other way of interpretation!!!

- And if you’re honest with the context here—Paul is NOT talking about a Person here at all—Paul is NOT talking about the return of the Lord Jesus Christ—Paul is NOT talking about the establishment of the kingdom (because some will say, Ok, I see that Paul’s not talking about a person—but that’s ok because he doesn’t have to if what he’s talking about is when the kingdom of heaven comes then sp. gifts are still in operation) no, the establishment of the kingdom is in God’s program with Israel and not in this disp. of grace—and the truth is, the Corinthians were supposed look for it and to be anticipating the coming in of “*that which is perfect*” - they were to be expecting to see that thing come in and be beneficiaries of it!

- And my point in all that is this—if this is talking about the kingdom of heaven coming in and being set up upon the earth—then there’s absolutely no reason for the apostle Paul to be talking about it and showing the Corinthians this *more excellent way* **if they were NOT going to be participants in it!!!**

- In fact, in the very last verse of the chapter—Paul will tell them what now *abides*—and that’s what they’re to stick with!

- But the context **IS** talking about knowledge and the speaking forth of that *knowledge* (or prophecy)!!! [Which is THE WORD OF GOD]

- The identity of “*that which is perfect*” - by the power of the context telling you what it is—can be nothing (nor any One else) other than the OPPOSITE of that which is ‘*partial*’!

- And that which is ‘*partial*’ in (:9) is **KNOWLEDGE** and the revelation from God (or **PROPHECY**) that provided the *knowledge!*

(:10) - And so—*But when that which is perfect* (when the perfect, perfected, that is to say, **complete** knowledge comes by means of the final revelation from God for us in this dispensation of grace) *is come, then that which is in part* (both the partial knowledge and the gifts that service it) *shall be done away.*

- “*that which is perfect*” therefore can be nothing other than the completed revelation from God in written form:
THE BIBLE!

... completed through the ministry of the apostle Paul himself (as we’ll see him talk about it when it takes place)!

- But the reason why spiritual gifts were in operation for a limited time at the beginning of this disp. of grace was because the full revelation of the knowledge from God for us in this disp. of grace (the complete written word of God) was NOT possessed yet!

- And God was accomplishing His *operations* that He wanted to get accomplished through those ‘less excellent’ sp. gifts—awaiting the time when the complete knowledge would be written down and was something they could hold in their hands—and His *more excellent*, superior written word of God (that’s always been superior to anything; and always been the most excellent means for Him to do things) is there—and when it’s there, the sp. gifts are *done away*—and His WORD now accomplishes those things (especially as it operates in His “sons” and their sonship education and sonship lives)! — His word now effectually works to accomplish those *operations of God.*

- And this was a natural thing those Corinthians should have expected to have happen—and (:11-13) are going to set that forth and set forth the grandeur of *the more excellent way* when it comes compared to the ‘less excellent’ and inferior sp. gift system that existed temporarily.

- And not only that—but Paul will set forth the permanent abiding status of the most excellent ministry the Holy Ghost has—which is the greatest of all.

- And as we will see—in the very lifetime of the apostle Paul, and in the very lifetime of these Corinthian saints—*that which is perfect* actually arrived—the *more excellent way* came in—and we operate upon that today!

- And in the lifetime of the apostle Paul and those Corinthian saints—God withdrew all the sp. gifts—and the only sp. gifts that have been in operation since that day have been either counterfeits or fakery and frauds!

- Now in (:11) Paul sets forth an illustrative analogy that underscores both the **naturalness** of the ‘less excellent way’ of the sp. gifts being replaced by the *more excellent way* of the completed written word of God—and the **zeal** and **enthusiasm** and **delight** of those sp. gifts being *done away* and replaced by *the more excellent way*.

- And then (:12) describes the **glory** and the **grandeur** that the Corinthians will have (and that we now have) when they come to possess the *more excellent way* (the complete written word of God) - and the tremendous **advantage** that gives you over that ‘less excellent way.’

- And then (:13) comes along and, on the basis of *the more excellent way* having come in—it states the **lasting situation** that will exist throughout the duration of this dispensation of grace—and with the sp. gifts being *done away*, what now *abides* once that *more excellent way* has come in.

- (:11) — *When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.*

- Paul gives an illustrative analogy of what takes place when GROWTH takes place—from a *child* to a *man*—and not just in a physical way—but he’s talking about “*thinking*” “*speaking*” and “*understanding*” - he’s talking about **mental growth!**

- And mental growth takes place on the basis of **knowledge!**

- (By the way, the 3 categories Paul mentions here [*speaking, understanding, & thinking*] match up with the 3 gifts in (:8) and the 3 groups of gifts back in ch.12—but you can deal with that on your own).

- But that’s why Paul deals with those 3 things.

- But the point is—Paul says, *When I was a child*, that’s how I operated—and that was Ok, and in perfect accordance with being a *child*—

— And that is the description of what it was like under the sp. gift system (or the ‘less excellent’ way)!

- But then Paul says, *but when I became a man*—(which is the description of what it’s like when “*that which is perfect is come*” — or what it’s like under the complete written word of God system of the *more excellent way*).

- And the issue of “*when I became a man*” - is the issue of now having the full and complete knowledge of the educational system to operate upon—you’re no longer in a ‘partial-knowledge’ situation—you’re no longer *speaking, understanding and thinking like a child*.

- And once that growth-status has been reached—Paul says, Then I *put away* some things — (***I put away childish things***) - in other words, Paul did away with all the *things* that were in accordance with being **partially grown** (i.e., *speaking, understanding and thinking like a child*)!

- And folks, it’s incredibly easy and simple to understand and appreciate the parallel Paul is making here—(hard as it is for some folks to understand—& devastating as it may be to their *experiences*)!

- Right now (with the Corinthians—and with the sp. gifts) it’s as if they’re in childhood type education—(and they are—just as Paul described in the opening 3 chapters of I Cor.).

- And they had to temporarily operate by means of some *childish things*—and those *childish things* were those spiritual gifts!

- And that doesn’t mean that the sp. gifts were bad, or useless, or worthless or of no account — no—they ‘took up the slack’ (so to speak) quite well until the *more excellent way* came in:

... BUT it does mean that when God Himself looks at those spiritual gifts (and supernatural gifting): **He Himself views those things as CHILDISH! by comparison to His complete, written word!!!**

- Sp. gifts functioned and had a roll to play—but only when PARTIAL knowledge was in existence!

- And it should be recognized that the most natural thing to do—when complete growth has taken place—is to *put away childish things!* (That's natural and that's consistent)!

- But what is NOT consistent or natural is that when you've got the full realm of knowledge—is to keep on acting like a *child!!!* (to keep playing with your fisher-price toys!)

- [In fact, we lock people up today when they do that!] (They're unbalanced—something's mentally wrong)

- And there should be a natural **zeal** there—(a zeal just as a child would have to look forward to growing up!)

- And the Corinthians should have been longing for that *more excellent way!!!* ... because then they'll be able to deal with God as a **man** [with **full** knowledge] — and there's a grandeur and a glory to having *that which is perfect* and having that **full-realm** of knowledge!

- And the truth is—there's nothing more STUPID than for a member of the church, the body of Christ to not value and esteem that —and to look at what was going on there in Corinth with those spiritual gifts and think: *That's great!* (and to *want* that)!

- In fact—if you want a hallmark sign of a Christian's **weakness** in their edification—it would be: if they long for and desire a sp. gift! (If that's the case—they're woefully weak in their edification!) [Although they'd NEVER admit that!]

- But that's what it says here—**and you can't escape it unless you ignore what it says here or mangle the text!**

- (:12) - Paul goes on to amplify upon the grandeur and the glory of the full-knowledge status of *the more excellent way* by means of the complete written word of God (or *that which is perfect*) — and we ought to have an appreciation for that as well.

(12) **For now** (in that present partial-knowledge situation—before *that which is perfect* has come) ***we see through a glass darkly;***

- Is that how you want to see through a glass or mirror?
- No—in fact there ought to be some **frustration** when you *see through a glass darkly* — **there's no glory in having your vision dimmed**—there's nothing wonderful about not being able to see clearly!
- But that was the situation at this time—**their spiritual vision was dimmed without the complete written word of God**—the *eyes of their understanding* could not be fully illuminated—(but you see the **exact opposite** of that over in Eph. 1 when *that which is perfect* was arriving!)

12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face:

- And folks, that's NOT when you die and 'cross over Jordan' and 'pass through the veil' to the 'other side'!!!!
- Being able to see clearly ***“face to face”*** — that happened with the completion of the written word of God!—that happened when *that which is perfect* came into being—and that has been the situation from the time just before the apostle Paul died to this present hour!
- God's complete, written word makes it so that NOW (right at this very moment) every Christian can *see face to face!* — RIGHT NOW — not “when we all get to heaven”!!!
- And with God's complete, written word (and the curriculum for your sonship education) - you see EVERYTHING: (God your Father; the Cross; sin; decay; the devolution of man; your environment; governments; crime; sickness; suffering; every detail of your life (yourself) and so forth and so on ... with crystal clear (high definition) spiritual vision— with the complete written word of God it's as if you're *seeing through a glass, **clearly**; face to face!*
- And there's a **glory** to what you're going to see!

12 ... now I know in part; (and when the word of God was only in its 'partial' status—you could only know *in part*—especially when it came to what this disp. of grace was all about—and when it came to what your sonship life was all about)

12 ... **but then** (when *that which is perfect* is come) **shall I know even as also I am known.**

- When the completed revelation from God arrived—the realm of knowledge that would compete it—was knowledge from God about the fullness of how He sees you “in Christ.”

- Not just—forgiven, justified, reconciled, and sanctified—but the major realm of doctrine and revelatory truth that was not given yet (when Paul was writing this letter to the Corinthians) - was the doctrine concerning our Exalted position “in Christ” - which is to say Level II of Sonship Edification! (And you could say Romans along with that—which would be Level I and II Sonship Education!)

- But the point is—that when *that which is perfect is come*—that would give you the **full** understand and appreciation of all that God has made you to be “in Christ”!

- And that revelation (*mystery* revelation) will make it so that (just as Paul says) *you shall know even as also you are known*—As a “son,” you’re *known* by God and you’re *known* in the heavenly ranks as **MORE** than being merely a “saved” person—but you’re *known* for a unique status you have (as a son) and for a unique vocation you have (as one who will liberate the creature from the bondage of corruption—and one who will rule and administrate the life of God Himself in the creature) — and you’re *known* for a glory you have in connection with being, not just an heir of God, but a *joint-heir with Christ!*

- And the truth is—as far as all those principalities, powers, thrones, in the heavenly places—you’re *known* for **that** more than anything else!

- And it’s when the completed revelation from God came to be written down—with that information in it—that’s when—and that’s what makes it so that right at this very moment: *you know even as also you are known!*

- And though it’s not very often thought about at all—(because we almost never think what it would be like to NOT have the complete written word of God) - but there’s a glory and a magnificence to that—and Paul brings that out in Eph., Phil., & Col.!

- And the truth is—that once they got to the end of (:12) here—those Corinthians should have been so delighted and overjoyed with the prospect of *the more excellent way*—that they should have said, BRING IT ON—let’s get done with this *partial*, temporary method of doing things—and give me *that which is perfect* and far *more excellent!!!*

- And you and I have the privilege of NEVER having to operate upon a way that is *partial, childlike, darkly, and in part* — and we should have incredible joy and delight in holding in our hands the complete written word of God!

- Spiritual gifts are ‘weak and beggarly’ compared to what you’ve got now!

- Now after stating all that—the apostle Paul will come along in (:13) and in view of when the perfect, complete written word of God does come in—and the temporary (less-excellent) sp. gifts are *done away*—he sets forth what **will** permanently remain —

13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three;

- Notice again—when it comes to setting forth what **will** remain throughout the duration of this disp. of grace—**not one single spiritual gift is mentioned or listed** (because they are ALL going to be *done away*)!

- Of *faith, hope, and charity*—none of those are spiritual gifts!

- But these are 3 things that the Holy Ghost is concerned with doing throughout the duration of this disp. of grace **after** *the more excellent way* has come in.

- *And now abideth faith* — remember that *faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*—you can’t have that without the word of God.

- *hope*—you’re going to learn that *hope* is another one of those massive (and massively powerful) doctrines that you began learning about back in Rom. 5 when you learned about *the hope of the glory of God*—and another powerful aspect of your *hope* in sonship establishment: the *hope* of what your sonship life with your Father is all about—(which is a *hope* that *saved* you from being victimized by

the *sufferings of this present time*—and that *hope* is going to grow and abound (just like godly love and charity) - and it does so by **believing** what God tells you so that you have absolute confidence in it!

- **charity**—godly love and charity—which provides all of your Father’s norms & standards for what He values and esteems—so that you can conduct yourself like He does (godly: like Father, like son!)

13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

- Any Questions???

- Now—before going on—let’s look at some passages that attest to the fact that this *more excellent way* when *that which is perfect is come*—which is the complete written word of God—will be completed by the apostle Paul (in his very lifetime and in the lifetime of these Corinthian saints) - and that Paul himself is the one who finished writing the word of God.

- In Paul’s later epistles—when he’s in prison and getting to the end of his earthly life—especially in Eph, Phil, & Col, and the Pastoral Epistles— he’s going to set forth information about **completing** the word of God—he’s going to talk about the issue of *perfection* and perfect knowledge—he’s going to talk about the very things he said was coming back in I Corinthians 13.

- And by so doing, he’s testifies to the fact that *that which is perfect has arrived!*

- Eph. 1—Paul’s prayer that the Ephesians will benefit from the advancement of the knowledge that has come in—a knowledge that will bring them to the status of what he will call *the perfect man* (a fully educated son) - this is Level II Sonship Education where, as that *simple son*, you get the *subtlety* to become a *young man*—and as Eph, Phil, & Col do their job, you reach that *wise man* status of a fully educated son.

- And what has to now be understood and appreciated (once you’ve got your Justified & Sanctified position “in Christ” down pat) - is to (as a son) understand & appreciate your Exalted position “in Christ.”

- Pick it up with Paul's great prayer for these Ephesian saints that their sonship education will be able to advance to and through Level II—with the advanced information and advanced knowledge that can no longer be called “partial” or “in part” - but is now full knowledge; complete knowledge that will bring them to the status of a “perfect man” (or a fully educated son)!

- And as we read this—notice how there's no issue of them “seeing through a glass darkly” - no issue of them “knowing in part” - or anything along those lines!!! (But they're going to see with the eyes of their understanding with fullness of understanding!)

15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, (notice that they've been benefitting from the most excellent ministries of the Holy Spirit!)

16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: (which is the knowledge contained here in the book of Eph)

*18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know (and the things that they are to know from what Paul writes to them about here—are all things that will make it so that they may 'know even as they are known') — what is the hope of his calling, (that hope that has been building all along in sonship edification now has to do with what your Father has called you to do with Him in His business as a Level II son [a *young man* and a *wise man*] - and folks, your Father called you to a 'hope-expectation' - and He knows you by that [but do you know yourself by that?]) — and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, (He knows you as His inheritance—do you know yourself as His inheritance? or do all you think about as your inheritance is that you're going to inherit His life? — and if that's all you're thinking about, then you're nothing more than a Corinthian in your understanding!*

- Now my point here is just to say that there's an enormous difference between what Paul said back in I Cor. 13 (*now we see through a glass darkly—and I know in part*) **before** that which is perfect is come and here in Eph when the *more excellent way* of the complete written word of God has arrived—and you need to appreciate that!

- The *perfect* knowledge (when it comes) allows for you to no longer *see through a glass darkly*—no longer *knowing in part*—but you'll *know yourself even as also you are known!* (And that's what this is describing here).

- Eph. 4 — Now in Level II and Phase 2 whereby you move from that *simple* son status to the *young man* status—and in view of now having *that which is perfect* at your disposal—Paul is going to talk about having the **fullness** of knowledge and understanding for our sonship education to be completed—and Paul brings up those spiritual gifts for the communication of God's word—but as he does so, he's going to talk about them in PAST TENSE (God wasn't giving them any more when Paul is writing Ephesians) - and now Paul talks about the goal that's now in view now that the FULL REVELATION is now here and in hand! — And the goal he talks about is 'perfecting' and 'a perfect man' and the 'fullness of Christ' — and the Ephesians were getting that information (not by sp. gifts) but **in written form!**

- (read :7-11)

- Paul's looking back to the provision of sp. gifts that specifically had to do with the **communication of God's word** that was made in the past for every member of the church the body of Christ to enjoy the 'spoils of victory' Christ has got for them—and the 'spoils of victory' is **full sonship education in the magnificence of who God has made you to be "in Christ" - and all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that you can benefit from right now!**

- And the provision God made so that you can have all the 'spoils' of Christ's victory and all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge so that you can achieve the status of a fully educated son—is the complete written word of God!

- But God didn't leave those saints at the beginning of this disp. of grace in a 'lurch' (so that they couldn't advance in their education) - but He ***gave*** them sp. gifts so that His wisdom and knowledge could still be communicated while He was finishing His written word—and Paul has every right to bring that up here—but by this point it was a PAST TENSE issue because — as the Ephesian saints received the books of Eph, Phil, & Col they were getting *the more excellent way of that which is perfect* (the complete written word of God) and by it, do what Paul says they can now do!

- (read :11-13)

- In (:13) Paul underscores the fact that what the Ephesian saints were getting by the pen-work of the apostle Paul (and by the other ‘apostles’ who were copying Paul’s letters while he was in prison, and getting those letter to all the churches) — put them in the possession of *the more excellent way*—and put them in the position of being the beneficiaries of **all** that God has vested in His complete written word.

- And in view of being beneficiaries of that *more excellent way*—the issue is now their **perfection!** (and not being in a position of being *children*).

- And that *perfect man* is the “*man*” Paul talked about back in I Cor. 13— and the *perfect man* puts away those *childish things* and recognizes the roll those things had—but now he looks at *that which is perfect* and the superior nature of it— and THIS (the complete written word of God) is what he sticks with!!! (and he knows that he’s got everything he needs in a far superior manner in the BOOK!)

- And with the complete written *knowledge of the Son of God*—he’s able to arrive at the *measure of the fulness of Christ*—and there’s no “*in part*” about that! - that’s what you could NOT do when you “*looked through a glass darkly*”!

- But the Corinthians were going to get a copy of this epistle, and when they got it—they could reach all the aims, goals, and objectives of Level II Sonship Education!

- (:14) - *That we henceforth be no more children*, (that’s children in comprehension/understanding—dealing with childish things—and operating upon those sp. gifts—and there’s to be NO MORE of that - no more operating upon sp. gifts now, once *that which is perfect has come*) — but there **is** a character that **does** want you as *children*—and he’ll produce all kinds of “winds of doctrine” that will keep you in childhood and prevent you from ever growing up *unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*—

— in fact, the doctrine that impacts the Adversary the most, & causes him the most distress, the most trouble, the most embarrassment & gives him the hardest time amongst his principalities & powers in the heavenly places—is the doctrine of your Exaltation “in Christ” (**Level II Son. Edu.**)!

... because that's the doctrine that keeps on putting him to an open shame & embarrasses him to the hilt and puts on display the **failure** he is—and causes his principalities & powers (brave as they are) to TREMBLE!

- And the Adversary's goal is to keep saints as *children—tossed to and fro*—and notice how he does that: *by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive*; — and folks, that's magician terminology; that's seducing terminology (which is used later on—see II Tim. 3:1-8 [:8])!

- And the corrupted doctrines of sp. gifts not only deceive and seduce you—but worst of all, **they lock you into ignorance** where godly edifying and sonship education cannot possibly take place!

- Eph. 4:15-16—but this is what ought to be taking place!

- (:15) - note: ***all things*** (you're not dealing with a 'partial' situation any longer)

- And today a member of the church the body of Christ now *grows up into Christ in **all things***—and does so by means of what (:16) says—NOT by any of those sp. gifts! — but by means of *the more excellent way* in operation within a properly functioning **body** of a local assembly!

- And that method of God's complete written word (*the more excellent way of that which is perfect*) - operating within a properly functioning local assembly/body of properly educated sons—serves the *operations of God* far better and in a far superior way than any or all of the sp. gifts did at the beginning of this disp. of grace.

- Col. 1:7-11—(nothing '*partial*' here!)

- Come down to some passages that set forth the fact that the apostle Paul is indeed the one who completed God's word in written form —

- (:23-24) - [:24— "*fill up*" when you 'fill up' is there anything left to fill? NO.]

- Paul understood that as he was in prison at this time that his ministry and pen-work was coming to an end.

- (By the way—does it ever occur to anyone that when Paul was starting out in his ministry that he got released from prison by a miracle—but at the end of his ministry no miracle occurred to release him???)

- (:25) - ... to **fulfill** the word of God— “fulfill” = to fully fill; nothing left to do.

- It was Paul (not John) who wrote the final words & books of God’s word—the book of the Revelation was written long before this took place—the popular, modern Scholars are WRONG!

- (:26-29)

- Note (:27) - the Corinthians knew about the reality of the *mystery*—but only with the perfect, complete written word of God that Paul was given to *fulfill* — could the **riches** of the glory of this *mystery* be made known!

- And that’s what you see when you don’t *see through a glass darkly* any more!

- And that’s what you do when you *know even as also you are known*—you see the *riches of the glory* of what God is doing with you as His son.

- And you’ll never see the kind of *glory* Paul is talking about here with those sp. gifts in operation!

- (:29) - There’s a battle going on in connection with this!

- (2:1-4)

- (:18-19) - Paul indicates that there’s an operation of the Satanic PoE that’s going to talk about extra-biblical visions & revelations—and is going to talk about spiritual phenomena from **angels** that’s designed to lure you in and away from your completeness “in Christ” and your understanding that you’ve got everything you need in the complete revelation you now have about who you are “in Christ”.

- This person is *vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind* (there's no sound doctrine working there) - and he's *not holding the Head*—(which is to say, he's not adhering to/holding to the *more excellent way* that God has designed for education and for knowledge to take place!)

- It's all a powerful & deceitful trick of the Adversary (and many more will be deceived by it, and victimized by it, rather than won't be!)

- II Timothy 3:14-17 — Paul talks to Timothy about his (Paul's) ministry now being over—but Timothy has everything he needs to be successful and for him to make *full proof* of his ministry—and Timothy won't be left in a 'lurch' or be at a disadvantage when Paul dies because when Paul finishes this letter, Timothy will have a complete, written Bible!

- Timothy has had all the OT (Gen.-Mal.) from the time he was a child—he's got the 4 gospel accounts—he's been in contact with the remnant apostles (Peter, James, John) and has the books of Heb-Rev—and as soon as Paul gets done with this letter, Timothy will shortly have all of the NT books—and will have all of God's word!

- (:16) - That's not merely a statement about how God's word came in to being—but in the context, that's being said in contrast to a bunch of claims to extra-biblical revelations (*profane and vain babblings*) from some guys claiming to have 'inspiration from God!' (And further information from Him.)

- And Paul's coming along here and saying, Look, Timothy, it's ***all scripture that is given by inspiration of God ... NOT THOSE GUYS OR ANYTHING THEY SAY!***

- And you've got "*all scripture*" now, right in front of you!

- II Timothy 4:5-13 (:13)

- One of Paul's final acts is going to be the putting together of the Bible for Timothy—and Paul will take the OT books; the gospel accounts; the book of Acts; his own epistles; and the books of Heb.—the book of the Rev. — and assemble the complete written word of God!

- **OUTLINE: I CORINTHIANS 14**—and noting the specific event that took place in which the spiritual gift of “tongues” *ceased* its operation and after which, if anyone throughout the remainder of this disp. of grace did it, (or claimed to be doing it), they would be **marked out** as ones who were either being deceived and subverted by the Satanic PoE, or were faking the sp. gift of tongues and only imagining that they had this spiritual gift.

- Ch. 14 especially focuses upon the details surrounding the sp. gift of tongues when it was in operation (before *the more excellent way* had come in) - and because of the corruption of that gift that had occurred by the Satanic PoE, Paul has to give a detailed account of its proper use—as well as give a great amount of corrective doctrine in order to get it so that the saints at Corinth no longer were going to be victimized by the Satanic PoE—and ultimately so that they could get their proper sonship, godly edification going again!

- (And the misuse of the sp. gift of tongues was screwing all that up!)

- And a big part of the screwing up they were doing—had to do with the fact that back in ch. 12 Paul told them that tongues was NEVER to be something that every believer did—but that’s exactly what was going on!

- And whenever tongues was being spoken by ALL of the believers in a local assembly—far from having a positive impact, it had a totally NEGATIVE impact!

- And Paul wasn’t describing a situation that couldn’t exist—but he was describing a situation that actually DID exist in their assemblies!

- And there were actually 3 categories of those speaking in tongues in Corinth: 1) Those very few who really did have the sp. gift—and were using it properly: (Outside the loc. assem., and with a Jewish, unbelieving audience); 2) Those who were faking the gift or imitating it by working up some emotional reaction; and 3) Those who were duped, seduced & deceived by the Satanic PoE.

I Cor. 14:1—Paul sets forth the right & proper path (for the Corinthians to *follow after*) in order to get their godly sonship edification back underway. — And this statement in (:1) sets the stage for all that he’s going to say in the remaining 39 verses of the chapter.

- And the truth is—in light of what Paul just said at the end of ch.12—(:1) of chapter 14 just totally confuses the heck out of most folks!

1 Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.

- Wait a minute—didn't Paul just say (back in 12:29) that they didn't all have the gift of *prophets*???

- But wait—Paul says it again:

- (:24) — when they all assemble together, rather than them all speaking in tongues, if they would all *prophesy*, then if one that believeth comes in, or one who is unlearned—he's convinced of all—and he's judged of all—and you've got that positive response that he describes in (:25)!

- Well, how can they **all** *prophesy* if they don't **all** have the sp. gift of prophet???

- This is another one of those times when, because of the decline of the English Language—that you have to recognize that it's possible to use the word *prophesy* **in more than one way!**

- And you've got to recognize that the word *prophesy* can be used—(and **is** used here in I Cor. 14) in **another sense** than the one who has the spiritual gift of prophet!

- *Prophesy* is also used to refer to the issue of ALL of the saints as a whole, taking what has come through the one with the gift of prophet—taking the *prophesy* and dealing with it amongst themselves unto edification!

- Example: (:6) — Here Paul recognizes 4 potential communications that end up with positive benefit for the local assembly—and only 1 (the first one: *revelation*) is actually associated with the sp. gift of *prophet*!

- Also: (:29-30) — *Let the prophets* (the ones with the gift of prophets) - and the one with the gift of *prophets* gets the *revelation*—and Paul can use the word *prophesy* when he's not necessarily talking about what comes through the one who has the sp. gift of *prophet*!

- And if you'd been following things properly—you'd understand & appreciate that before you ever got to I Cor. 14!
- And ch. 14 of I Cor. is a confusing mess to most folks simply because they haven't paid attention to what Paul says — especially back in ch. 12 & 13—and most folks don't understand the kind and depth of confusion that was going on in the Corinthian assemblies!
- But there's 2 issues here—one that has to do with all the members of the assembly dealing with the message or revelation of the prophet— (or the *prophecy*) — and (2) the one that had the sp. gift of prophet!

- I Corinthians 14:2-5— Paul sets forth the foolishness of speaking in an unknown tongue in the church—in view of the design & purpose for a local church.

- Since the design & purpose for a local church is the edification of the members of the body of Christ in it—Paul points out the absolute foolishness of speaking in an unknown tongue (a legitimate language, but one that no one can understand) because by it, edification DOES NOT TAKE PLACE!!!

- There were ones who had the legitimate gift of tongues—and they were not abusing the gift!

- Then there were the ones who were Satan's own minsters that were counterfeiting the gift —

- And then there were ones who were faking it—(ones who really were bi-lingual and tri-lingual) who were jumping on the band-wagon who were abusing it. (As well as the fakers who were pretending to be speaking in a foreign language, but just talking gibberish.)

- But primarily, Paul is addressing the abusers of the gift of tongues and doing it in the local assem.—and Paul shows that to be downright foolish! (Because no one can be edified by speaking in tongues!)

- I Corinthians 14:6-12— Paul sets forth the foolishness of not profiting or benefiting the local assem. by not speaking to edification.

- Not just not speaking in a language people cannot understand—but not speaking **unto edification!**

- The purpose of a loc. ch. is not just for chitchat! —it’s not just a social gathering of people where they vent their opinions—but it’s a classroom for the communication of sound doctrine resulting in godly sonship edification!

- And if that doesn’t take place—then anything that’s going on in the loc. assem. is FOOLISHNESS!

- There’s no need to gather yourselves together if sound, godly, sonship edification is not going to take place!

- And Paul gives some illustrative analogies for that.

- I Corinthians 14:13-25 — Paul sets forth information (corrective doctrine) that they may know how to properly conduct themselves now.

- And those that did speak foreign languages (tongues) can know how to properly conduct themselves.

- And those that were faking it would begin to pass off the scene.

- And those who were counterfeiting the gift of tongues would be singled out and marked—because as Paul describes how to run things here, he describes the proper function of the legitimate gift of tongues when given by God—and it does NOT function inside the loc. ch.—and so anybody who says they’ve got the gift of tongues, and does it inside the loc. ch. are going to be **marked as not being of God!**

- (see :18—Paul was at least tri-lingual by nature [Hebrew, Greek, Latin], but could also speak in tongues [like Canaanian, and other Canaanite languages — but as :19ff goes on to say, the gift of tongues had nothing to do with believers in a loc. ch. [see :19])

- (see :20—Now you Corinthians need to be *men* in understanding about the legitimate use of the gift of tongues—and recognize that it’s not to be used in the loc. ch., but the *operation of God* behind it is for something entirely different.)

- And in (:21) Paul gets them to realize something about tongues from God’s program with Israel (“*In the law ...*”) — they understood that they were *not under the law, but under grace* —

- (:22) - *Wherefore tongues are for a sign, **not to them that believe, but to them that believe not:** — and who is “them that believe not”?*

A: **Unbelieving Israel!!!**

- Based upon the negative response of Israel to the sign gifts of the **miracles** and of **healings**—God had one final sign to give to Israel by which they would know that His displeasure was at its **fulness**—and left them without excuse—and that was the gift of **tongues!**

- Now at this point I want to take notice of something Paul says—when he quotes from Isaiah there in (:21) —

*21 In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; **and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.***

- And it’s those words: ***and yet for all that***—that is a reference to the particular event that was to take place in which ***they will not hear me, saith the Lord***—and when it occurred, the gift of tongues would *cease* (immediately cease & desist)!

- ***and yet for all that***—(referring to the Final Sign to Unbelieving Israel of the gift of tongues) - the Lord is going to declare (at a particular time and particular event) that ***they will not hear me***—and immediately God ceased giving that Final Sign.

- And that’s the time when, as Paul said, *whether there be tongues, they shall cease*—and from that time on, the gift of tongues given by God has never once operated!

- When and what was that event?

- **Acts 28**

— As you go through the book of Acts there are 3 times and in the 3 major Jewish populations that existed outside the land of Israel in which the apostle Paul recognizes that he is dealing with giving unbelieving Israel an indictment from God (as to His displeasure with them) - and where the sign that accompanied that indictment (the Final Sign to Unbelieving Israel: speaking in tongues) was utilized to indicate that.

- 1) Antioch Pisidia (Acts 13 & 14)
- 2) Corinth (Acts 18) [that’s why there were tongue-talkers in Corinth!]
- 3) Rome (Acts 28)

- And in each one of these 3 places, Paul makes a declaration concerning dealing with Israel—and concerning turning to the Gentiles.

- And as he moves along—he expresses God’s displeasure with unbelieving Israel as growing greater and greater.

- When he’s at Corinth, Paul performs that gesture of disgust by shaking his raiment and said, *Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.*

- And here in Acts 28—Paul knows exactly what to do—this didn’t come about by accident!

- And in Acts 28 Paul is addressing the Jewish Leaders of Israel!

- Acts 28:23—(by the way, notice that expression at the end of the verse: *from morning till evening* — it’s interesting that sitting in Isa. 65 when God makes a final indictment against unbel. Isr., God says, *I have spread out my hands **all the day** unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts;*)

- (read :24-28)

- That’s the final declaration that Paul is referring to there in I Corinthians 14:21 (quoted from Isa. 28 & 29) - *and yet for all that will they not hear me!*

- And when Paul got to that 3rd Jewish population there in Rome—he declared (and made a proclamation): **YOU WILL NOT HEAR HIM!** — It’s **over** with you (Jews) - and the Gentiles will hear it!

- And from the moment Paul made that declaration—the spiritual, supernatural gift of tongues CEASED! (And the ones in Corinth that had it: stopped — and the ones in Antioch that had it: stopped!)

- And in Acts 28, Israel’s diminishing was over—and the wrath of God had come upon them to the uttermost!

- That’s the event that made tongues cease—not the sacking of Jerusalem by Titus in 70 AD!!!

- And that takes care of the counterfeiting of the gift of tongues—because after that event in Acts 28 took place—if any person in a local assembly opened his mouth and spoke one word of tongues—**HE’S MARKED AS A COUNTERFEIT—a faker!**

- I Corinthians 14:26-40—Paul sets forth now how to properly run things in the local assembly there in Corinth so as to no longer be victimized by the Satanic Policy of Evil.

- (:37-40) (:38— *But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.* — That statement not only says, Look get this straightened out, because if it’s not by the time you get to the end of this chapter—we’re moving on without you!

- But more than that—this is a powerful statement and indictment of the fact that members of the church the body of Christ can be so duped by the Satanic PoE—or can be so duped by their own emotions—or by their own experiences—**that they would actually prefer to be in ignorance rather than to go by the truth of what God says on the pages of His word!**

- The issue of counterfeiting spiritual gifts in this disp. of grace:

- I Tim. 4:1-7 (:7) - (note :6—God’s remedy—not to go out and produce a greater miracle)
- (:7) [*refuse*] — (The Merry Men)

- I Tim. 6:13-16—(:16) = Claim to have seen the Lord! Claim to have gone to heaven! (Marked as one deceived by Satan)

- I Tim. 6:20—[*avoid*] (*babblings* = from *Babel* in Gen. 11— the Tower of Babel—the confounding of *tongues!* or languages—*vain babblings* are the continuation of the counterfeit gift of tongues, produced by the Satanic PoE)

- II Tim. 2:15-16 (:16) - [*shun*] (note the progress: *refuse/avoid/shun* (note :17—the original Charismatics!)

- Review: Romans 12:3-5

Romans 12:6-8—The fundamental LABOR of godly selfless love within the local assembly.

6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;

7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;

8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

- A total of 7 “gifts” are listed here by the apostle Paul:

- 1) Prophecy; 2) Ministry; 3) Teaching; 4) Exhortation;
- 5) Giving; 6) Ruling; 7) Shewing Mercy

- And there are 7 of them for a reason—and just as any ‘list’ you find in God’s word—these are not listed randomly or haphazardly—but there is a **progressive developmental order** to them that needs to be appreciated.

- Not to mention that there are ‘groupings’ of them that has to be appreciated.

- Now in order to properly deal with these gifts—and properly deal with the very first time you’re going to be laboring with your Father in your sonship life (and making some sonship labor decisions for the very first time ever) — it’s an absolute MUST that we bring to bear all that we have gone over in the last 6 weeks concerning *the more excellent way*—and bring our understanding and appreciation for *the more excellent way* to bear upon what is sitting here in (:6-8)!

- Now we know from our studies and our appreciation for *the more excellent way*—that the gifting situation that existed when the apostle Paul wrote that book of Romans only existed for a very limited time—and that **we don’t live in that limited time** right now.

- Therefore we need to (and we’re **expected** to) deal with this passage here from the perspective of *the more excellent way* having come in, and existing with us today!

- Now with that in mind—when it comes to the effectual working of (:6-8) in saints in which *the more excellent way* is in existence—you still have to deal with this passage exactly as it's being taught here to the Romans.

- Because by learning it this way—it's expected to, and designed to 'dovetail' itself together with the reality of *the more excellent way* (having now come in) —

— and the only difference that's going to exist in the way we deal with it now is that you now understand that under *the more excellent way* (and as an adult son) you will NOT function in an *office* in the local assembly because you received a spiritual gift from the Holy Ghost—

— but rather you will function in an *office* because, by the means of *the more excellent way* you're going to utilize *the more excellent methodology* for pursuing an *office*—and that's exactly what you're expected to do now.

- In other words—there's information contained in (:6,7,&8) - that right from the outset of saints functioning intelligently in a local assembly as sons of God in this stage in the dispensation of grace when *the more excellent way* has been in effect for a long, long time—the effectual working of (:6-8) provides for you to make an intelligent choice with respect to an *office* in which to function!

- Simply put—rather than you being supernaturally gifted by the Holy Ghost to function in an *office* in the local assembly—as an adult son with *the more excellent way* having come in—you **choose (all on your own)** to fulfill an *office* within the local assembly (as your sonship decision)—and thereby labor with your Father in His business!

- But the real critical matter in all this (just like everything else where sonship education is concerned) - is that you make an **INTELLIGENT** decision!!!

- And your intelligence comes from the effectual working of (:6-8) when that is connected properly with (:3-5)!

- And this is where real sonship **responsibility** comes into play!!!

- It's **YOUR** responsibility as a son to intelligently figure out (all on your own) the office and the manner in which you are going to labor with your Father in the business He's engaged in, in the local assembly.

- Again—sonship demands your participation!

- And to say that your 'labor' increases at this point is not true—because you haven't even begun to labor with your Father yet—this is when your sonship labor begins! (More responsibility should **delight** you!)

- So what you're confronted with here in (:6-8) is to have to make an intelligent sonship decision—a *wise* decision—but in order to make that intelligent sonship decision, that requires not just the recognition of the FACT that spiritual gifts have been *done away*, and a *more excellent way* has replaced that system—but it also requires a pretty good understanding about that *more excellent way*—and not just the **fact** that it is *more excellent*.

- And notice that it's called *the more excellent way*—and that means that there's methodology involved in it—and that means that there is purposed design and function in connection with it —

— and that means that all that methodology and all that purposed design & function **exceeds** in better-ness & excellence than that of the gifting system!

- And I know we have just covered this—but I'm saying it again so that you'll realize that what we've done in going over *the more excellent way* was designed to give you a better understanding and appreciation for the **way** or the **system** itself of *the more excellent way*.

- In other words—to properly deal with the information contained in Romans 12:6-8—the actual intelligence you have to have as a son (in order to make the wise choice of participating & functioning in an *office* in the local assembly) the intelligence you need is a sufficient understanding of that system of the *more excellent way*.

- Because without it—your decision will be **un**-intelligent (stupid) - or else you won't be able to make any decision at all!

- And the truth is—there’s going to be **more** places in our epistles (in the curriculum for our sonship education) where we are going to have to be aware of this issue of how things **were** being dealt with by God **before** *the more excellent way* came in—and how we are to appreciate how God is **now** dealing with things **after** that *more excellent way* has come in.
- And there is some real genius of God in having written His word the way He did—where, in a passage like this, you have it written during the time **before** *the more excellent way* came in—in other words), not waiting until after *the more excellent way* came in, and then write our epistles so that nothing is ever said about the limited period of time before the written word of God was completed.
- Because in a passage like this—you have the full, effectual working (in :6-8) **for** the very saints in Rome to whom this was originally written, who actually possessed these *gifts* at that time—and in the genius of how God has written it, and exactly what He has said about it, and the particular gifts He makes reference to—He has also provided for it to be able to have full, effectual working as well with saints like us today under *the more excellent way*—with the only difference being that the saints that are learning it today recognize that they do not have *gifts* that identify an *office* for them—by they have a *more excellent way* by which to identify an *office* for them—and other than that, **we’re going to take the rest of what it says here in (:6-8) and apply it just like the Romans did that had the gift provided for them!**
- And whether or not you think that what we’ve just gone over is merely a review of *the more excellent way*—I’m telling you that’s NOT the case at all—because the only way you’re ever going to be able to properly handle this passage that brings up this issue of *having gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us*—is to bring to the table (so to speak) a proper understanding and appreciation of the **WAY** or the methodology of *the more excellent way*.
- And what’s going to factor into your wise sonship decision of laboring with your Father in one of the *offices* of the local assembly—is the appreciation for the “Grand Design” or “Master Plan” the Father has for godly edification—and especially the *operations of God* that stands behind the particular *office* you determine to labor in with Him!

- So when it comes to the effectual working of (:6-8), we're going to recognize that it works exactly like it did with the Roman saints—but with one difference—we don't get the *office* by means of a supernatural spiritual gift, we get the *office* by means of being adult sons holding in our hands the complete written word of God—and based upon our wise, informed, intelligent sonship decision, we're going to have the privilege of choosing which *office* we will labor in with our Father in the local assembly—and we're going to take that *more excellent way* principle (and its methodology) and we're going to identify an *office* for ourselves on the basis of that!

- And (:6, 7, & 8) **expect** you to take that “Grand Design” of *the more excellent way* principle that a son operates upon and think about it—and discern an *office* for **your** use and usefulness.

- And the way in which (:6,7,&8) presents its information—you're going to know which *offices* are available (so to speak) to you—and you're going to be able to make an intelligent decision as to where you're best qualified to engage in one of them—or not.

- The effectual working of (:6-8) provide for that—by what it says!

- And folks—you may not be aware of it—but that means that this is an **extremely powerful** 3 verses!!!

- Because this aspect of laboring with your Father in His business—especially His business with a local assembly (His business with THIS local assembly) - this is only the **beginning** of a great, grand, marvelous, glorious design and undertaking by which God our Father has created the Divine Institution of a local church—and vested it with the most powerful of all His operations—and vested it with the most rigorous and the most critical mechanisms for the training of His sons to, in the future, populate the rulership capacity of, and become the living intelligence web of: *the creature*!!

- And your volition as a son is being tested right here and right now! Are you willing to function in one of the *offices* (carrying out one of God's *diversity of operations*)?

- And because there is 'liberty' in sonship—you may discern that you're not 'cut out' for one of these *offices* outright—

— but you may wisely conclude that your function is going to take on a slightly different roll in connection with another who is either functioning in or better qualified to function in a particular *office* than you are—but you determine to come along and function with that *office* in a supporting roll.

- And when it comes to the *operation of God* (which is what you're going to be most concerned with) - the most obvious and important one of them all is the first one you're confronted with in (:6 & 7).

- Because there are a number of *offices* in connection with a local assembly—(every assembly, from the moment it starts out, has at least a certain number of *offices* to it) - but as it grows, and as edification takes place within it—a number of further *offices* become evident and identifiable. (And further opportunities come into play).

- And as I pointed out before—sometimes new *offices* emerge—and sometimes those *offices* are of a temporary nature, and come and go, and maybe even come back from time to time.

- And because of that you should perceive that the local assembly (as *one body in Christ*) is designed to be a dynamic, body-type entity—(and, not surprisingly, so is *the creature*)!

- And this is where some real intelligent sonship prayer comes into the picture—some real intelligent, thought-provoking, and thought-involved communion with the Father about things—seeing what's going on in the assembly, and talking to your Father about your ability to either just help out in this or that situation to a certain degree, or by discerning that another saint would be better suited in that thing, so on the basis of the godly selfless love (and those 4 body attributes of conduct & behavior as *members one of another*), you talk to your Father about those kind of things and at the end of that kind of communion (and the searching of the heart), you conclude that you'll help out another saint in connection with an *office* he has.

- And the foundation for that kind of thinking—and for that kind of functional reality is what (:6-8) provide for!

- (:6-8) provide for a saint to discern what kind of *offices naturally* exist in a local assembly—and that every assembly has, no matter how many people are in it—that there’s a fundamental, common-denominator issue of some specific *offices* that are there—and that an assembly can’t function without (can’t be an assembly without them).

- And with (:6-8) properly and effectually working—that provides for the next natural component of godly thinking; and the naturalness of the next component of godly living; and naturalness of the next component of godly labor sitting in (:9) - and on down through the *instruction of wisdom*.

- And this same pattern continues on throughout the *instruction of justice & judgment*, - and then there’s a real growth-type advancement that takes place in the assembly so that when you’re dealing with the *instruction of equity*, there are some more *operations of God* that become perceived. (And God Himself is perceived differently) - and that provides for even more *operations of God* to come into play—especially in connection with how the Adversary will respond to the assembly once it gets to that growth point.

- Because not only are the sons within the assembly, but the assembly itself (as a body) is **taking on the very character of the Father Himself!**

- The assembly is no longer a ‘fledgling’ assembly—but it has ‘fledged out’ (got it’s wings) - and can now begin to more and more function in more and more of the *operations of God*. (And that allows for the Adversary to begin working his PoE against that local assembly).

- Now without getting too far ahead of ourselves—I just wanted to try to give you some idea of the importance of these 3 verses—especially as being a foundation that will be built upon as you go on though Level I Sonship Education—and how that at the end of it, it puts the local assembly in a situation where it will really begin to function as a local assembly is designed by God to function (as well as come under the opposition of the Adversary) - but that function **as a local assembly** is what (:6-8) begins providing for ——

— verses 6, 7, & 8—when that gets effectually working in you and therefore in this local assembly—by their effectual working, that is the very first time we begin to function as a local assembly was designed by our Father **to** function!

— but the only difference, once again, is that all that provision and all that ability and all that effectualness is going to take place by *the more excellent way* system, rather than by the Holy Ghost zapping you with a spiritual gift.

- Ok—by having our thinking in the proper position—we can now begin to deal with the details of (:6-8) and get their effectual working going.

- You know that you're not looking for a spiritual gift—the reality of *the more excellent way* is now in effect and you understand and appreciate what that means—and that means that what you are going to be looking for in these gifts that are listed here—is for an *office* that you can participate in—or you're looking for supporting a particular *office* that someone else is either now in, or will be in.

- And you need to also bear in mind that the godly selfless love you now have in existence, along with the nature of the Body Attributes of Conduct & Behavior (usefulness/cooperation/service/welfare) is going to allow for you to **intelligently** deal with the choice you will make in connection with the labor issues that are now laid before you by your Father here in (:6-8) - and make an intelligent sonship decision to labor with your Father in the business of the local assembly (and a **dynamic** body).

- Now you have to realize that when Paul writes the book of Romans, he's writing it to not merely one local assembly, but (as you can see in the 16th chapter) there were a number of local assemblies in Rome.

- And those local assemblies (that met in homes) had at least a fundamental comprehension (at least to a certain degree) for what a local assembly was designed for.

- And when Paul begins to deal with the Roman saints about the issue of laboring together with God **in** the loc. assmb. properly and appropriately, and for the fulness of the fundamental operation of each one of those assemblies in Rome at this particular time—we need to make sure (at the exact same time) that we have that same fundamental comprehension ourselves (for the fundamental design of a loc. assem.).

- And what I want you to begin doing now—in preparation for the effectual working of (:6-8) - I want you to take what (:3) did, and what (:4-5) did—[which should have produced in you now a *desire* to begin operating in the local assembly **as a body**] — and I want you to take that—plus your understanding and appreciation for *the more excellent way* having come in (and the spiritual gift system having been *done away*) - plus your appreciation for the “Grand Design” for godly sonship edification — and I want you to begin now to think about all that in light of and in connection with **what a local assembly is designed to do.**

- Because the truth of the matter is—a local assembly is designed to do something—and even though the major, un-eclipsed issue for the loc. assm. is to be a classroom for the communication of sound doctrine, and is therefore and primarily the place where godly sonship edification takes place—the truth is, the loc. assm. is actually designed for **MORE** than that!

- And it’s critical that you begin thinking along those lines at this point.

- And when you come to (:6, 7, &8) - you’re to understand and appreciate that these 3 verses are designed to provide for you to discern the fundamental *offices* that every assembly has—

— and every assembly **does** have these fundamental *offices* because the local assem. is fundamentally designed to **DO** something!

- And you should know by now that when you come together, you’re not coming together just to BE “together” - or for no particular purpose—but when you assemble together, you come together for a very **specific** purpose!

- And in order to achieve that specific purpose—and for that specific purpose, (once it is being achieved), to be able to expand and develop and accomplish a great deal of other things—the truth is, you have to start off with a framework of understanding what the basic design & purpose for a loc. assm. is—by which you’re going to be able to perceive its most fundamental *offices*—and by that, to make the sonship decision to, (in view of the effectual working of godly selfless love that’s in you; and with the desire that you now have

due to the effectual working of those body attributes of conduct & behavior) - **the natural, first outlet** for all that is one of these fundamental *offices* that every assembly has in order to meet the basic function of a loc. assem.—and with that in mind, therefore, discern those *offices* and discern the appropriateness (or lack of it) to **be** in one of those *offices*.

- And what I'm after in saying all this—is that there is a natural “GIVEN” here as Paul deals with the issue of saints occupying *offices* in a local assembly, and laboring together with God in them.

- And that natural “given” is—that you know what you're doing when you're assembling together *AS* an assembly.

- That is, you know what a local church is.

- And you have to appreciate that the local assembly is a place with natural *offices* in it for you to naturally be a part of—so that when you come together, you come together as members of a body in which, (when you come together), you function **as** a body—with those many members—and therefore, to do the **work** of a local assembly.

- And in light of that—I say all that because when you look at what (:6-8) says—it doesn't describe what the basic, fundament purpose for a local assembly is at all—nor does it describe why any of these *offices* are there—it simply mentions them—and what is focused upon is the way a saint would function **in** that *office* on the basis of the godly selfless love and the attributes of conduct that now effectually working within you.

- But there's the expectation that you recognize these *offices* are only natural—an assembly naturally has them—simply because it's a local church!

- And therefore these *offices* are going to be the first, natural ‘outlets’ (so to speak) for you who are members of *one body in Christ, and members one of another*—to begin to function *as* a body *in* the assembly—which is the ‘embodiment’ of ourselves when we do come together—and when we're apart, it's kind of like a whole bunch of dismembered parts—but when we come together, those various parts are now assembled—and now we're in a **living-union, member-one-of-another** relationship—and we've all got something to do!

- So understanding what a local assembly is—like Paul says: *the pillar and ground of the truth*—and as such, it's got some fundamental operations to it—and it's got some fundamental *offices* to it—and under *the more excellent way* system, we're taught what to think about and appreciate about the design & purpose of the local assembly—and to, on the basis of the education that's taking place, have the privilege of one of our first sonship decisions when it comes to labouring together with God as being one of discerning the fitness that we have to function in one of those *offices* or not in another—and make a decision to engage in one—and to make the other saints aware that that's what you're going to do.

- So again—in preparation for (:6-8), there's to be acknowledge that there's a 'given' - and the given is, It's a given that you already know at least in a very basic and fundamental way, what the purpose and design for a local assembly is—and the truth is, we've all become aware of much of it just by the time we've spent together and just by the time in which I've been your Pastor.

- And it's critical that you understand and appreciate that even at the outset of your sonship education—that your sonship education doesn't function in a vacuum or all on your own—but at the outset, it's supposed to function **in and as an assembly or church of saints**—and there's more opportunity and more for you to do in the assembly, and more for you to do in your functional life in the assembly—than JUST your edification!

- (and :6-8 lets you know that)

- And my main point in all this is to try to get you to see that not only when we assemble together do we assemble as a *body in Christ, and every one members one of another*—but just as any physical body, it doesn't have the many members of it just so that it can sit like a bump on a log! — no, it's designed to WORK—it's designed to accomplish some things—those legs, hands, feet, eyes, ears, etc., are all designed to be TOOLS to get something done!

- You've been coming to the assembly and have been on the receiving end of things up until now—but that's been feeding you; that's been strengthening you—but now, the information you're getting is going to be like nerve impulses to you; and it's going to be putting you into action! and the first place you're going to be put into action is amongst yourselves!

- And the fundamental *offices* of every assembly provide for that very thing—they provide for the saints to begin to DO something for the body’s sake; for the assembly’s sake.

- And those things that they do, provide for the assembly to begin to qualify itself; train itself; and prepare itself for more *operations*; for greater *operations*, etc., etc.

- Now what I’m after in all this—is to have in the ‘front of your mind’ (so to speak) what you have naturally come to know about what a local assembly is (and at least something of what it is designed for) - and to take what you have already come to understand and appreciate about the function of a local assembly—and now ‘mate’ that with this information (that’s naturally designed to ‘mate’ with it) - and by this information in (:6-8), provide for you to put your ‘body-member’ activity into practice by making a wise, intelligent sonship decision to operate in (or with) an *office* that’s described here.

- And the truth is—the information contained here in Romans 12:6-8 provides for us as a local assembly to be **MORE** than just a “classroom.”

- (It’s not going to make a *drastic* change right away — but it will begin for us to begin to fulfill that issue of us [as a local church] to be *the pillar and ground of the truth* (1 Tim. 3:15) - and that’s **more** than just being a ‘classroom’.)

- The “classroom” concept never diminishes—and is never eclipsed by anything else—it always remains the ‘life-blood’ of the body’s growth—but that growth isn’t just to grow for growth’s sake—but it results in what Paul talks about in passages like (Eph. 4:16 [read]) — well, the foundation for all that is Romans 12:6-8!

- Now it’s not that what we’ve been doing already is wrong—because that’s not true—what we’ve been doing up to this point is fine—in fact, it’s brought us to this point—but now there’s the expectation that you perceive an *office* for yourself within our loc. assem.—and that the education you’ve been receiving, and that you’re going to get now in this 3rd Part to your First Component of your *instruction of wisdom* is going to give you the capacity to discern **which office is for you!**

- And really—**that ought to be a THRILL!** — because vs. 6, 7, & 8 are satisfying a **desire**—the desire that (:3-5) has just produced in you!

- Now let's begin looking at the details of (:6-8) - and get a clear understanding of what these *offices* that are being offered to you are—

- By the way—it should be clear that there's one office that you're NOT going to be choosing—and that's MY *office*—that one is “off limits” - the office of the Bishop is currently filled—so what are the other ones that are now available to you?

- Like always—we're going to start off from a “wide-scope” perspective—and then work down to the details.

- First off—we've got this list of 7 gifts:

1) *Prophecy*; 2) *ministry*; 3) *teaching*; 4) *exhortation*;
5) *giving*; 6) *ruling*; 7) *shewing mercy*

- And now we need to confront that issue of **how** they're listed—(they're not just randomly stated), but they've got an **order** to them.

- And by paying careful attention to the **way** in which Paul talks about them—(because he doesn't talk about them all the same—and that's not simply because they're not all the same *office*) - but as he talks about them, by what he says, he also makes it evident that these fundamental *offices* can be broken down into at least **2 Major Categories** —

- And then within those 2 Major Categories, there's a further significant division.

- And you see that by paying **exact** attention to **exactly** what he says about them as he talks about them.

- And the King James Translators have given us a great deal of help here by their masterful use of the English punctuation—(of colons & semicolons) - in order to organize the information just exactly as Paul organized it in his mind, as God gave it to him to put it down in writing.

- So if you were to break this list down into 2 Groups—how would you do it?
- In order to perceive the 2 Groups—it's important to pay attention to the **way** Paul talks about them (pay attention to how they're talked about) somewhat more than merely going by the punctuation marks.
 - But to also pay careful attention to what each *office* being mentioned **is** —
- And my understanding is that the 1st Group consists of:
 - 1) Prophecy
 - OR>
 - 2) Ministry
 - OR>
 - 3) Teaching
 - OR>
 - 4) Exhortation
- And the 2nd Group consists of:
 - 5) Giving — <WITH
 - 6) Ruling — <WITH
 - 7) Shewing Mercy — <WITH
- Now the next thing we have to do—is now that we have the *offices* broken up into 2 Major Groups—we have to come along and be able to say what each of the 2 Groups are designed to do—in other words what is it that each group has in common? — what does *prophecy, ministry, teaching, and exhortation* have in common with each other; and what does *giving, ruling, and shewing mercy* have in common with each other?
 - And more importantly—we need to understand and appreciate **why just 2 Groups? - and why just these 2?** — why aren't there 3 groups or 4 Major Categories?

- Well, at the outset—it can be logically recognized that in connection with a loc. assem., that there be **one outstanding** Category of *offices* that would provide for what we might call the most essential need that a loc. assem. has — and then stemming from the effectual

working of that ‘most essential need’ - or fulfilling that ‘most essential need’ - *that* would provide for something else—and all the other *offices* would fall into that other Category.

- But what then has to be done—is to identify and/or define what each of the 2 Categories are—that is, they need to have a precise label put on them that allows for you to be able to identify what each *office* is about within each Category.

- And since the 1st Category or Group is perhaps the easiest to identify—let’s start with the 2nd Category or Group of *offices* and deal with what they all have in common.

- These last 3 *offices* (*Giving; Ruling; Shewing Mercy*) are carefully chosen—because if you were to take the basic and most general function and design for a local church—it would break down into 2 Major Categories—and these 3 *offices* make up that 2nd general, basic Major Category of the design of the local church.

- In other words—the reason why those last 3 are the ones God had the apostle Paul list is because they not only define what that 2nd Category is—but they also define that everything that would come under the ‘umbrella’ of that 2nd Category has some fundamental characteristics about it—and has some fundamental ways in which the *offices* within it would function when they do their job.

- So—when you think of *Giving, Ruling, and Shewing Mercy*—what kind of general (very general) and basic (very basic) concept or feature that makes up the design of the loc. assem., would you say they would be a part of? or would be categorized by?

- These 3 have a commonness of purpose.

- But what we’re after is something r e a l basic/general.

- The *offices of giving, ruling, and shewing mercy* all deal with **THE PRACTICAL NEEDS OF A LOCAL CHURCH.**

- And then when you think of *Prophecy, Ministry, Teaching, and Exhortation*—even though we can say that they all have to do with the handling & teaching of God’s word—what basic/general concept

... or major feature (this being the primary purpose for a local church of them all) - but what major concept/feature that makes up the design of a local assembly would you say they would be a part of? or would be categorized by?

- And again, all 4 of these have a commonness of purpose.

- And the *offices of prophecy, ministry, teaching, and exhortation* all deal with **THE EDIFICATIONAL NEEDS OF A LOCAL CHURCH**.

- 1st Category of *offices*: EDIFICATIONAL NEEDS

- 2nd Category of *offices*: PRACTICAL NEEDS

- Those are very broad terms—but every one of the *offices* listed fall under one of those basic categories of what a local church is designed for.

- *Prophecy, ministry, teaching, and exhortation* most fundamentally all pertains to making a contribution to edification: the Edificational Needs of the loc. assem.

- *Giving, Ruling, and Shewing Mercy* most fundamentally all pertains to making a contribution to the Practical Needs of the loc. assem.

- And Edificational Needs & Practical Need—those are the 2, always-in-existence categories of “need” that **every** local assembly has!

- And our Father has designed certain *offices* to be for the successful accomplishment of fulfilling those 2 fundamental categories of need.

- (And every assembly has got them!)

- And every assembly at the very beginning of this disp. of grace—(no matter how many people it had in it) - even if it had 6 people or so (like some of the ones Paul mentions back in Romans 16) — had some saints in it who had *offices* that served the Edificational Needs—and the rest of the saints functioned in *offices* that served its Practical Needs.

- And the truth is—there’s an awful lot of saints that simply don’t appreciate all of the Practical Needs that a loc. assem. has! (Pretty much, all they think about is the Edifica. Needs.)

- And the saints realize—(especially in a very small assembly) - that there's really only 1 person that does all of the 1st Category.
- And if all they do is come in—sit down—take in the sound doctrine—and then go out — the truth is, they really haven't labored together with God in what that assembly is designed to do very much at all!
- And they haven't really exercised any skills—or acquired any skills by exercising any decision-making adeptness—and haven't really perceived themselves as being a vital, needful, useful member of a body that has a contribution to make for the good of the body.
- And of course, the main reason for that kind of **lack** of understanding & appreciation for what they are designed for within the overall design & purpose of the local church in which they sit—is because most saints usually don't get Romans 12:3, 4, and 5 effectually working within them! so that they've got genuine godly, **selfless love** operating within them that seeks a genuine 'outlet' for them being a member of the *new creature* of the church, the body of Christ—and then as soon as they get to be talked to as members of that body, that selfless love begins to see its avenue for operation.
- And then as they begin to be educated in what it means to be *members one of another*—and they realize how *members* function—and they become aware of those 4 Body Attributes of Conduct & Behavior—and that selflessness that's been generated within them begins to realize: That's how godly selfless love begins to manifest itself **in a body!**
- And therefore, there's a very **powerful** operation that occurs within you by means of those Body Attributes of Conduct & Behavior—that produces a **very powerful desire** to function for the welfare and benefit of the whole body!
- And that powerful desire arises within you to the point where you're 'on the lookout' - you're actively looking for and desiring to pursue an active roll to play in the body—because you know that **this** is where you're designed by your Father to function first & foremost.

- And then Romans 12:6-8 mates perfectly, and fits perfectly with the NEED that (:3, 4, & 5) have now generated.

- And when you then hear about the fact that there's these other fundamental *offices*—even though there may only be 10 of us here—the recognition is, there are 2 Major Categories of fundamental NEED that every loc. assem. has: (Edificational Need & Practical Need) — and as the effectual working of that doctrine mates up with the effectual working of the doctrine that's already been there—the 'lightbulbs' begin to light up—and your thinking now begins to focus upon being a **functioning member** in one of those Practical *offices*—and by your sonship decision-making and sonship prayer, and based upon what you learn about those *offices*, you determine to function in one of them as the legitimate way to Labor with your Father in the body of the loc. assem.

- And because of the fact that the inferiority of the gifting system has been replaced by the superiority of *the more excellent way*—you know that **it's up to you** to make that decision all on our own.

- And God **expects** you to do that—and He's **waiting** on you to make that decision!

- You don't have to ask God for a gift—or for a word of knowledge—or for a vision, or a revelation—but rather by intelligent communion with your Father and by the effectual working of the sound doctrine of (:3-8) - you come along and make an intelligent assessment of the assembly you're in—you make your choice as to which of those Practical *offices* you're going to function in.

- And that's how it works!

- Now with a proper understanding and appreciation for there being 2 Major Categories of Needs that **every** local assembly has—(**1 Edificational Needs; 2 Practical Needs**) — let's begin looking at the details of those categories of needs in order to better appreciate the perception you're going to have to have in order to make an intelligent, wise, sonship decision as to what *office* you're going to participate in when you take the godly selfless love you now have in existence—and put that into practice by **laboring** with your Father in His business in our local assembly here at Triangle Bible Church.

- Now based upon what we've come to understand and appreciate about the list of gifts/*offices* given here in (:6-8) — it's really only those last 3—or the Practical Needs of the local assembly (given in the last 3/4 of :8) that are the ones that **you** are going to primarily be concerned with—since the first Category of Edification Needs (or the first 4 gifts/*offices*) are going to primarily be fulfilled by either 1 person or a very few persons in the local assembly.

- But the truth is—even though there are only 3 gifts/*offices* listed in the Category of Practical Needs of the local assembly—the truth is, **every one of you** will be able to function and labor with your Father in this local assembly in one of (or in a combination of) those 3 general Practical areas of need that our local assembly has.

- Therefore **every one of you** will find yourself intelligently and prayerfully and wisely laboring in either Giving; Ruling; or Shewing Mercy.

- And while there's more *offices* that will be discerned later on—this is sufficient to get a local assembly to begin to operate and function as our Father has designed for it to function—which is to function according to His overall “Grand Design” or “Master Plan” whereby you know that your sonship decision to function in one of these *offices* will minister to the body (serve the Lord), and in turn, fulfill one of the *diversity of the operations of God* Himself.

- Nevertheless, we're going to study all these out in the order in which they're given by our Father.

- Under the category of: **Edificational Needs**—Paul lists a total of 4 *gifts* (or *offices*, under the *more excellent way*) - and they are:

1) Prophecy; 2) Ministry; 3) Teaching; 4) Exhortation

*6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether **prophecy**, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;*

*7 Or **ministry**, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on **teaching**;*

*8 Or he that exhorteth, on **exhortation**:*

- And the truth of the matter is—(and it’s the case with all 7 of the gift/*offices* that are listed here in Romans 12:6-8)—the truth is, all of these *offices* are GENERAL DESCRIPTIONS.

- And the significance in that is—that there are going to be **sub-offices** (so to speak) or offices that will have a more **specific** description to them that FIT or MATCH UP with one of these generally described offices listed here.

- In other words—the actual **function** you will have in the local assembly may well be called something more specific than “Teaching” - or more specific than “Ruling” - or more specific than “Shewing Mercy” — but regardless, that more specific office or more specific function you determine to participate in and labor in, in the local assembly (no matter what it is) will FIT or MATCH UP with one of the offices listed here.

- Again—this will have to be something you’re going to have to figure out all on your own—and perceive all on your own. (more later)

- Romans 12:6— *Having **then** gifts ...*

- Notice the “**then**” — *Having **then*** — and notice that Paul does not say, ‘Having gifts differing according to the grace that is give to us,’ ... — but he puts that little word **then** in there—and that’s significant.

- The **then** tells you that something has been accomplished—and upon what **has** been accomplished, we can now move on to the next thing (which is the final thing for the effectual working of what :3-8 are designed to accomplish) — and since what :3-8 are designed to accomplish is to get the 1st Component of our *instruction of wisdom* effectually working within us—and since godliness or godly edifying is what is going on—that **then** is designed to make sure that you have the effectual working of the THINKING aspect of (:3) accomplished; and then the effectual working of the LIVING aspect of (:4-5) accomplished.

- In other words—when you come to (:6) you’re expected to bring to it the godly selfless love that was generated in you in (:3) - **and** the Body Attributes of Conduct & Behavior that were generated in you from (:4-5) that are the natural outworking of that godly selfless love.

- So what Paul is doing is—to make sure that you’ve got the effectual working of the godly THINKING, and the godly LIVING that (:3-5) have accomplished—and now **THEN**—in view of that accomplishment we can now begin to LABOR with our Father in His business that has to do with the local church in which you assemble.

- And that may sound very repetitive—but actually it’s a very critical and essential thing—because what is beginning to happen is—that you’re kind of ‘leaving home for good’ (so to speak) - and what I mean by that is that your view of what it means to “assemble” every time you come in to the local church should now be in the process of changing.

- You’re no longer just assembling as a classroom of believers—coming to church for a Bible class—or coming to church to get some ‘divine truths’ from the Bible.

- But assembling as a local church should begin to mean far more to you than it ever did before—and the godly edification you’ve been coming to Bible class to get should take on far more meaning than simply something that benefits YOU and your edification—even your edification as a son or daughter of your Heavenly Father!

- Because while that issue of assembling to receive your godly sonship edification is still the paramount issue—the truth is—every time you put your hand on that door to come into the local church—it should now cause you to pause for a moment and realize and recognize that when you walk in that door—you’re not just an individual saint walking in to receive your own private edification—but more than that, when you walk in here, you’re assembling as a BODY!

- And that means that assembling as a body—with body type thinking and body type features to the local assembly—you now view yourself (and every other person you assemble with) as members of a body—as *members one of another*.

- And since that’s the case—as a member of a body—you’ve got an office to fulfill in the body!

- And folks—there’s almost NO Christian today that thinks that way when they ‘go to church!’

- Almost no one ever comes to church and views it properly: as a **dynamic, living-union relationship!** But that's exactly what God ever designed it to be.

- And the reason for that is—that's exactly the same kind of dynamic, living-union relationship that God designed to take place out in *the creature* where you will be placed as His son—and where you'll be thinking/living/and laboring with your Father in His business with the heavenly places!

- Romans 12:6— *Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, ...*

- Now at this point—as we pointed out before—we're going to handle this exactly like it was designed to be handled by the Roman saints—with only one exception:

- and that is—that we're aware that the gift-system that was 'less excellent' (albeit sufficient at the time) that existed for a limited time when this dispensation of grace began—has now been replaced by *the more excellent way* of the complete written word of God—and with that complete written word of God in hand, and with our status in our sanctified position "in Christ" being that of adult, adopted sons—instead of being 'zapped' by the Holy Ghost with a spiritual gift, as intelligent sons, we get to choose/determine which office we will participate in and function in as a member of the body of this local assembly—as *members one of another*.

- But this phrase (*Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us*) — still has significance to us, even though we are operating upon *the more excellent way* —

— because the office-holding members of the body are still just as Paul says they are over in I Corinthians 12:18 — "*But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.*" — and even though the gifting-system has been replaced by *the more excellent way*—God's "Grand Design" is still the same—He still has *diversities of operations* to accomplish with the local assembly/body—and He designed the body with its *many members* and 'many offices' - and He set them so—**and they still stand** even though *the more excellent way* has come in!

- By the way, you should be absolutely thrilled that the gifting-system has been replaced by *the more excellent way*—(in fact, if you want to “praise the Lord” for something, praise him for that!) — because you may have never thought of it before (and I’m sure that Christians who still want to operate upon the ‘less excellent’ way of the Holy Ghost bestowing spiritual gifts—that it never crosses their mind) — that one of the things the sp. gift-system did was LIMIT you to the gift the Holy Ghost gave you! But under *the more excellent way*—you’re NOT limited to just one gift, but by being able to choose your office, you have far more **liberty** to operate in MANY offices—the offices of your intelligent choosing!

- Now let’s look at those gifts/offices in detail — and for now we’re going to briefly concern ourselves with the 1st Category that deals with the fundamental Edificational Needs that every local assembly has: the gift/office of Prophecy; Ministry; Teaching; and Exhortation.

- Again, since most of you are going to be filling offices that deal with the **Practical Needs** of the assembly and not the Edificational Needs—at least as far as I know at this time [no one has expressed their desire to be a Bishop or a Deacon]—and since these 4 offices under the category of Edificational Needs are pretty self-explanatory, we’ll only briefly deal with them—but we will take notice of the additional information Paul gives concerning each one.

- Romans 12:6— ... *whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;*

- The first of the Edificational Needs of the assembly in this list is **prophecy**—or that which the one holding the office of the Prophet would provide.

- And used in the way Paul uses it here—my understanding is that it’s talking about one functioning as a Prophet—one with a supernatural spiritual gift of receiving a revelation from God—and then who speaks forth the words of God which have yet to be written down in His word.

- And my understanding is that Paul isn’t using the office or gift of **prophecy** (noun), nor the verbal action of the Prophet (**prophesy**) in the Old Testament Prophet sense—but rather he’s using it in the way in which it was utilized in the local assemblies at the beginning of this dispensation of grace—(for that limited time & limited purpose).

- And there's a natural reason why this gift would be listed **1st**—and that's due to a specific **need** that existed for that limited time at the beginning of this disp. of grace—and what was that need?

- God's word had not been completely written—and therefore the curriculum for sonship edification for those who are *the new creature of the church the body of Christ* did not possess the entire sonship curriculum—(which was the very means by which *godly edifying which is in faith* could take place)!

- Therefore first and foremost, (and most naturally), the first Edificational Need that an assembly that existed prior to *the more excellent way* coming in had, was one of receiving the words of God (the curriculum for sonship edification) so that godly edifying could still take place.

- And if this didn't take place—(when the word of God was not yet completely written) - there would really be no reason for a local church to assemble themselves together—unless someone in the assembly had been supernaturally given the words of God and would then speak forth those words!

- But notice the additional information Paul gives in connection with the gift of *prophecy* — **let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;**

- That phrase: *according to the proportion of faith* — further describes the way the gift of *prophecy* was to be utilized in connection with the local church assembling itself together for godly sonship edification at the beginning of this disp. of grace.

- In other words—my understanding is that you're not supposed to analytically agonize or categorically concoct & exhaust a doctrine of what *the proportion of faith* is!

- (a “word study” won't do you any good here!!)

- Rather it's a simple matter—and the simple matter is that the one doing the *prophesying* is to be **LIMITED!!!**

- He is limited only to the information (the exact words) he was given—and NO MORE—(or to *the proportion of faith*)!

- In other words, there were RESTRICTIONS placed upon the one with the sp. gift of *prophecy*—and his job was for him to selflessly labor with his Father in His business as a member of the body of the local assembly—but it was a job that was strictly limited to do only one thing—and that was to speak only the very words that God gave him to speak—or as it says, *according to the proportion of faith*.

- And the *proportion of faith* is the reality that God only gave him **so much to say**—and once that is said, **he was to be silent!!!**

- He was not to give any opinion about it—and he was not to continue to dominate the meeting—not to spend any more time in front of the saints than to give the words God gave him to tell them.

- Do not try to “teach” that information—do not try to craft an “exhortation” about that information, etc. (why? because someone else was gifted with the ability to *teach*—and to *exhort*)

- This person was gifted only to speak the *proportion of faith* he was given to speak—and that was his LIMIT.

- So a portion of the word of God would be supernaturally given/revealed to the one in the assembly with the gift of *prophecy*—and he was to speak only that *portion*—and that’s what he could do in godly selfless love—and that’s the only way to use that gift selflessly in accordance with those 4 Body Attributes of Conduct & Behavior in relationship to other members of the body—and anything outside of that would NOT be appropriate and would NOT be a valid contribution to his Father’s business.

- Now as we’ve defined it—and as we’ve kept everything within the **context**—it should be self-evident that with the arrival of *the more excellent way* **this office is no longer available** and there’s no longer any need for this particular office.

- However—that said—the one caveat or parallel that would apply to the Bishop (Pastor) of the loc. assem. when we do have the complete written word of God—is that, the Bishop does occupy the closest

thing to the office of one having the gift of *prophecy*—but as the one who “speaks forth” or “teaches” the word of God—as the Bishop who is the one who handles the word of God—he, too, needs to do so selflessly as a member of the body and do so *according to the proportion of faith* —

— and that means that his job is NOT to interject his own **opinion**—NOT to interject any human viewpoint—or any thing of that nature other than strictly teaching the curriculum at hand for the good of the hearer!!!

(Tough thing to do—especially if you’re me!)

- He’s not to interject anything for his own good—or anything that presents him as ‘smarter than the average bear’ or sophisticated or worldly or political—or whatever.

- The truth is—you simply can’t handle the word of God to the edification of others and mingle anything other than what God has to say about it!

- The Pastor (Bishop) is given a portion of God’s word to speak and to teach—and the way he selflessly is to labor with his Father is to speak that word—and that ALONE!

- Romans 12:7—(the 2nd gift) - ***Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering:***

- My understanding is that this gift was replaced with the arrival of *the more excellent way* by the office of the Bishop (Pastor) - but even more ideally by the office of the Deacon.

- And when you examine Paul’s epistles, you find that there’s really no description of—or detailed analysis of what the Deacon actually does.

- There’s requirements or qualifications that is to characterize the Deacon and his capacity to do certain things—but really the Deacon is kind of like a ‘servant-at-large’ or *minister* of the local assembly.

- He meets a whole bunch of different needs—and assists the Bishop in maintaining the integrity of the assembly—and protecting the assembly from the Satanic Policy of Evil and so forth.

- But when it comes to this gift/office of “Ministry” - (and it’s going to follow for the additional information given in connection with “Teaching” and “Exhortation”) - though it’s very little information, it is *additional* information—and that additional information is:

7 *Or ministry, let us **wait on** our ministering: ...*

- “**wait on**” - what does that mean? = just as in the case of a ‘waiter’ a ‘waiter’ serves someone else; to give attention to; to look out for; to be in readiness to serve—

- Interestingly: the OED: “to attend to a business or a duty” (Bible, Rom. 12:7)

- “**ministering**” = (δ ι κον $\acute{\iota}$ α) - service, ministration, administrate.

- Then we have the 3rd gift listed — 7 ... **or he that teacheth, on teaching**; - pretty self-evident what that gift/office is about: “teaching” God’s word.

- Romans 12:8—(the 4th gift) - **Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: ...**

- My understanding is that the gift/office of Exhortation isn’t what is commonly thought of (and taught) in connection with the issue of spiritual gifts—(that is, that the sp. gift of “exhortation” is a supernatural ability to encourage others; or to urge them on; or to give a stirring argument for someone to ‘commit their lives to Christ’ or anything along those lines. [like Barnabas])

- My understanding is that the *exhortation* being talked about here is in the CONTEXT of sonship edification—and that has to do with the job of the Bishop/Pastor who crafts the appropriate exhortation for those sons in the assembly who are being educated as sons—and it has to do with the kind of exhortations you find, (for instance), back in the book of Proverbs—where David would provide the appropriate exhortation for Solomon—it has to do with those ‘pre’ and ‘post’ doctrinal exhortations in connection with the sonship curriculum and the Bishop functioning as a “Father” himself to his assembly (and not merely being an “*instructor in Christ*” of which there are thousands of those guys around!

- So again, with the arrival of *the more excellent way*—this sp. gift was also replaced by the office of the Bishop/Pastor.

- And so when it comes to Ministry, Teaching, and Exhortation—the issue is to **wait on** it—that is, give attention to the gift God gave you because you can selflessly serve the Edificational Needs of the body in that office.

- And don't long for having a different office—but pay attention and serve in the office you've been given—and carry that out in the godly selfless love that has been generated in you.

- And along with all those Body Attributes of Conduct & Behavior—you can now labor for the first time with your Father in what His business is about in the loc. assem.

- And in that way (i.e., of “*waiting on*” those things) with the proper godly selfless love and Body Attributes—you begin to see how God (simple as it may seem) has *tempered the body together* (1 Cor. 12:24) - and that's going to get even more understood as you go through those Practical Need gifts that remain in (:8)!

- And in recognition of *the more excellent way* having now come in—the gifts of Prophecy, Ministry, Teaching, and Exhortation have been replaced by either 1 office (of the Bishop) - or 2 offices of the Bishop and the Deacon (or deacons).

- ANY QUESTIONS SO FAR?

- Now let's begin looking at the details of the 3 remaining gifts that fall under the Category of the **PRACTICAL NEEDS** that every local assembly has.

- Romans 12:8— ... ***he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.***

- Here we have a gift/*office*—followed by some additional information (in each of the 3) that further describes the kind of proper, godly mental attitude that is designed to go along with that office and designed to be what marks the son's labor in that office (which is the result of the godly selfless love [thinking], and the Body Attributes of Conduct & Behavior (body-type) [living].

- And the function of those 3 specific offices are all **typical** for ANY office under the category of meeting a Practical Need.

- And those 3 offices serve as examples of every Practical Need any local assembly has.

- Also—those 3 offices (by the effectual working of knowing what those 3 offices provide for when it comes to specific Practical Needs) — they provide for every member of the church the body of Christ in a local assembly who learns them—to be able to discern OTHER Practical Needs in the assembly when they arise.

- And therefore—later on (viz., over in Level II) - in Ephesians (for example) - Paul doesn't have to talk about Practical Needs or practical aspects of what goes on in a local assembly in any detail—but he talks about them only in very general terms —

— because the saints (as wise sons) have got the capacity to discern what those individual Practical Needs are—and every assembly might not have the exact same ones—so Paul will simply talk about *the work of the ministry (4:12)* or simply talk about *the effectual working in the measure of every part and the body maketh increase unto the edifying of itself in love (4:16)* — and those are pretty broad descriptions —

— but part of the issue of sonship education is that, sons are learning ADULT TYPE THINKING! — and adult type thinking DOES NOT have a “tutor & governor” come along and say— “It’s this—it’s that—you missed this—you missed that—etc.”

- **SONS THINK FOR THEMSELVES!** (mature thinking!) [You’re figuring something out] - and that’s exactly the kind of skill that’s necessary to be able to occupy a position of a *principality, power, might, dominion, or a throne*—those 5 main positions — the characteristic of all 5 of those is the skill or ability to think and to figure things out **without being told** what to think and what to figure out!

- That’s what makes those positions to be separate & distinct from ‘lower-echelon’ type positions!

- Just like in the military—what separates a commissioned officer from a non-commissioned officer (when you have a “corps” or body of troops) - what separates them is that the commissioned officer is entrusted with planning, strategy, and figuring battle plans out! and how they’re going to put them into effect —

— the non-commissioned officers (and the troops underneath him) **take orders from** the commissioned officers and do the ‘grunt’ work!

- And one of the things the effectual working of (:6, 7, & 8) provides for is, by the genius of how God has dealt with this opportunity for saints to begin to labor with Him in His *operations* of a local assembly—is that He provided even for that ‘down-the-road’ issue of discerning what’s involved in *the work of the ministry* of that assembly—and discerning what it’s going to do when it *makes increase of itself*.

- And right from the outset—when you’re taught about those 3 offices that meet the Practical Needs—God selects the 3 particular offices that have a trait and a feature to them that is characteristic of **every** office that meets an assembly’s Practical Need—and that, at the same exact time, provides for the ability to discern what **other** Practical Needs an assembly will have as it grows, and as it matures, and as it develops.

- And that would be an expected thing—because the truth is, we’re dealing with **edification**.

- Therefore there’s something ‘down the road’ that’s going to ‘attach’ to this that we’re learning here first.

- So when it comes to meeting the Practical Needs of the local assembly—and when it comes to the majority of you (the office of the Bishop & Deacon aside) - when it comes to you as a son, for the very first time to begin to **labor** with your Heavenly Father in His business in the local assembly—let’s now look at that first general category of *office* in which you can determine to participate in:

- Romans 12:8 ... *he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity;*

- The first Practical Need Office is **Giving**—and it is to be done with **Simplicity**.

- So when it comes to functioning in the office of **giving**—how do you perceive that you’re going to do that, if you so desire to do that?

- Question: Do you have any (any at all) of say, ‘a level of frustration’ about *giving* being an *office* you are to function in?

- I guess what I'm asking is—are you a little bit frustrated that you're not told exactly what it is that you're supposed to *give*?

- Because the truth is—in all 3 of these offices, you're only given a very broad and general term that describes the 3 offices of the Practical Needs that every loc. assem. has.

- (we'll come back to this in a moment)

- Think about that word: *giving* — granted, the most common thing (and the first thing) most folks think about in connection with *giving* in a loc. assem. is giving money/finances.

- But there are a whole bunch of other ways—that meet a whole bunch of other Practical Needs that you can give something as a member of the body of the local church.

- For example, you can give your time; your talent; you can give possessions; you can give your experience; your expertise; other resources at your disposal—such as giving to others in the assembly to help their particular need (so they can get to Bible class and continue their sonship education; etc, etc.

- And the truth of the matter is—as far as our loc. assem. is concerned, a lot of you have been doing a lot of these things already!

- But now you're going to have to look and view those things a little differently than you ever have before.

- And what I mean is—where most folks who attend the assembly will only see their giving as a responsibility to 'keep the doors open' or 'keep the ministry running' — you (as a son) now see that your Father looks at that as an opportunity to serve both the Lord (and His body) as well as fulfill one of the Father's *diverse operations* that He wants to get accomplished in your sonship training.

- Because as a son—you're now looking at the local assembly with a different 'set of eyes' (so to speak) - because now you're actively 'always on the lookout' for these Practical Needs to be met—and your *giving* to whatever area of practical need you give to, is now perceived properly by you as the function in a particular *office* that the body is designed to have, and that God has "set" so in the body.

- And the truth is—all of the *giving* type *offices* really meets some **material need** of the assembly (or of someone in the assembly).

- And I say that just to make a distinction between the issue of *giving* and *shewing mercy* — but even then, the issue is to labor in an *office*, so whether it's *giving* or *shewing mercy*, you're still functioning and laboring in an *office*.

- But hopefully by just what we've gone over—your thinking now is going **beyond** the issue of finances—and you should be perceiving that there really are a lot of things that can fall under the category of the *office* of *giving*.

- And the big issue here is that you view the *giving* you do as far more important than maybe you've ever thought of it before—because you now have that godly selfless love; plus the Body Attributes of Body Conduct and Body Behavior—and you now acknowledge that every *office* (and every *member*) in the body is IMPORTANT and USEFUL — and they're not all equally *comely* (and that's ok), **but they're all needed to the body!**

- And just to point it out—since we have an internet site—there are needs that have to be met there—and there are a whole bunch of folks that are utilizing that web site as their only means of godly sonship education—and so our ministry (or our body) has remote members—and there's another opportunity to meet some practical needs by your *giving*.

- In fact, there's some needs there that are pending someone determining to step forward and at least inquire if there's anything they can do to meet some of the needs that are 'hanging' (so to speak), but that for various reasons just can't be met by the few that are currently working in that area.

- And along with this is the issue that you appreciate that, in the area of *giving* there are some needs that 'come and go' (so to speak).

- But the point is that you recognize that there are a whole lot of areas (besides money) whereby you can utilize your godly selfless love/ Body Attributes of Conduct & Behavior to occupy an *office* of *giving*—and **labor** with your Father in what He's wants accomplished in fulfillment of one of His *diverse operations* in our local assembly.

- Now before going on to the further information that describes the way in which this *office of giving* is to be carried out by a son—I want to return to that question I asked before—about there being any level of frustration in your mind because you're not told here in any exact terms what you are to do, or how you are to fulfill the *office of giving* (and for that matter, *Ruling* or *Shewing Mercy*).

- All 3 of those term (Giveth, Ruleth, Sheweth Mercy) - those are **very generic terms**—and they're designed to be generic.

- And that's because when we're dealing with the category of Practical Needs that every assembly has—and that have, therefore, *offices* that need to be occupied and fulfilled by the members of the assembly—Paul is concerned here with setting forth the fundamental understanding and appreciation of that reality—and the fact that, for the beginning of an assembly's function, and for the beginning of its *operations* with God as an assembly—**every one of the Practical Needs that will exist in an assembly (until it reaches a certain attainment as an assembly)— every one of its Practical Needs will fall into one of these 3 areas.**

- And so when you, as a son, realize that you're dealing with these areas within the overall Practical Needs of the loc. assem. — **it provides for your sonship decision-making**—and the liberty of that sonship decision-making—**to be able to exercise itself.**

- Which means that you have the sonship liberty to figure out all on your own: “What kind of Practical Needs do we have that would fit the *giving* variety that I might be able to help out in?”

- Maybe you don't have the financial resources to help out—but you could *give* something else.

- And this same thing is going to apply to the area of *Ruling* and *Shewing Mercy*.

- And my understanding is that this falls under the very **wisdom** of God in speaking as generically as He does here—and that fits in with the whole concept of sonship!

- Remember that the Exhortation that corresponds to *receiving the instruction of wisdom* sits back in Proverbs 3:1-20. (read :13-20)

- In this passage you have some things told to you about the general “scope” of your sonship education (not just the 3 Levels/6 Phases) - but when you first get those **first 4 verses** of ch. 3—a son, as soon as his education gets underway is supposed to be **looking for** and **figuring out** what kind of opportunities he has to take what he’s acquiring knowledge-wise and wisdom-wise as a part of his sonship education—and when you look at what is said in (:13-20) - and look beyond just the superlative nature of the education you’re getting—and you get beyond the comparative of the *merchandise* (spiritual money) and the purchasing up of the things your education can allow for you to “buy” (so to speak) —

— what you should begin to see is that by that wisdom we’re supposed to be receiving—we’re supposed to be making intelligent ‘purchases’ in connection with how we utilize our time on the basis of that information (wisdom).

- And that all fits in beautifully with the overall concept that Paul will bring up later on—when he talks about us “*redeeming the time*” - which he brings up in Ephesians 5:16 and in Colossians 4:5 —

- And when Paul brings it up again over there in Colossians (*Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.*) — not that this is the first time it’s dealt with—but in the context, Paul is dealing with our ‘conversation being in heaven’ - and the issue is to not waste our time on this earth— but the issue behind all that is the issue of being able to make an intelligent sonship decision based upon the information in our sonship education/curriculum—and on the basis of it, it gives us the capacity to be able to make a ‘purchase’ like that, by a decision we make—that ends up with us investing our time and intelligence; and the use of our mind, and the use of our hands to do something that God Himself is doing in an aspect of His business and in an aspect of His operations.

- Well—the whole foundation for all that is right here in Romans 12: 6-8—in the very **beginning** of our sonship education—and all this ‘generic’ type terminology is designed to perfectly ‘dovetail’ with that—and is perfectly suited to all that.

- And what’s going on is the working of our sonship liberty; along with the properly generated desire & anticipation that we now have; and sufficient enough information—that allows for **US** (all on our own) to figure out and make a decision for our godly labor with our Father!

- And as we've always talked about—under sonship (as opposed to childhood), you're not under a 'tutor & governor' telling you what to do—and now we're at the point where that becomes a 'nitty-gritty' reality!

- You don't have God coming along and saying— "Ok, you (fill in the blank), you do this, and you do that in the local assembly!"

- (In a sense, that's what did take place when the gifting-system was in effect)

- But now with *the more excellent way* having come in—the expectation now is that the full liberty of sonship decision-making is to be engaged in by sons—**right from the 'get-go'** (right from the very 1st Component to the very 1st form of doctrine, to the very 1st category of sonship decision-making involving *wisdom!*)

- And so, the 'eyes of your understanding' are supposed to begin to come into focus—and the local assembly is now to be look upon by you for the fundamental *operations of God* that it has (and you know at least 2 of them: 1. The Communication of God's word [Edificational Needs]; 2. Local Assembly Orderliness [Practical Needs]) — and every son in the assembly is to be a participant in those things—and when it comes to the those Practical Needs that the loc. assem. has in which the majority of you will participate in—you're to see that as a marvelous opportunity for the way in which you're taught it—to not come along and fret or be frustrated or gnaw your fingernails wondering "what do I do now?"

- No. But if all has worked effectually up to this point—then you should be enthusiastically looking forward to learning something that you can put to use in a very practical way in your sonship life!

- Truth is—if all has worked properly/effectually—when you're told about the basic *operations* of God in connection with what any local assembly is—and you're given the general description of the *offices* available to you—and with knowing that your Father is looking for you to make your first intelligent sonship decision accordingly—your inclination should be: "NO, Father, don't say another word—don't tell me what to do!" — but with your intelligent thinking and intelligent communion/fellowship with your

Father in sonship prayer—you're going to come along and make the choice all on your own—and you'll confirm that with your Father and with the saints in the loc. assem. that that **is** your choice with respect to either the area of *giving* or of *ruling* or of *shewing mercy*.

- Now let's return to the issue of your laboring with your Father in His business with the local assembly (as being *many members of one body in Christ, and every one members one of another*) — and your very first area/aspect of labor with your Father will be to meet the Practical Needs of the loc. assem. — and of the 3 generic categories that you may determine to labor in, **giving** being the first one—

— with a healthy appreciation for the fact that *giving* can be far more than merely the giving of finances—if you think about that generic term *giving*—(to better help you out to make decisions to *give*, [if you so choose]) — if you were to describe giving (as opposed to simply defining the term) as an *operation of God*, what would you say that all *giving* (financial or otherwise) in the loc. assem. is concerned with?

- In other words—**what area of Practical Need is giving concerned with?** (and even this has to do with body-type thinking!)

- My understanding is that the area of Practical Need that *giving* is concerned with is: **To SUSTAIN the Existence of the Local Assembly.**

- “Sustain” embraces all of the ideas of maintenance, supply, support, and so forth.

- And if you think about it—of all 3 terms (*giving, ruling, and shewing mercy*), *giving* goes to the **largest** and most **overall** issue of the 3—because every kind of *giving* (financial or otherwise) is absolute in it's nature—that is, it is **vital & critical** to the very **existence** of the local assembly—it lies at the core of a body's life—it has to be **given** “**sustenance**” or else it dies!

- Because of the living nature of a *body* that uses up certain resources, **it has to be sustained!**
(It has to be *given* things in order to survive!)

- And the idea that lies behind all/*any giving* in the local assembly (as a body) is the idea of exerting yourself in some way in order to keep the body of the loc. assem. from sinking into a state of death! — to keep it from dying—to keep it alive and vital! (to bear it up)

- So with being able to appreciate the manifold aspects of *giving* that has to go on in the body/loc. assem. — and by being able to perceive the area of Practical Need that *giving* is concerned with (which is to have an appreciation for the *operation of God* that lies behind all *giving*) — you should now start having a better appreciation for **why** you have 3 *offices* listed here, and the order of them, and the progressive development to the list of 3.

- That is—even though all 3 terms are generic, they're not so generic that you can't see that they go from: *giving* being the most 'overall' Practical Need; to *ruling* being a little more specific as to the actual members of the body; and then *showing mercy* being the most (of the 3) specifically directed to the actual members of the body of the local assembly.

- And it takes all this kind of 'work' of further perception in order for you to have some intelligence to your decision to operate in one or more of these *offices*.

- In other words—it gives you more direction (or guidance, or 'more to go on' [so to speak]) in making a sonship decision to operate in these *offices*. (And yet, **not be told what to do**—as a 'tutor or governor' would do).

- And this is the kind of 'work' you're going to have to do (and the kind of time you're going to have to put in) in all the **labor** aspects to your sonship life!

- So therefore, when it comes to you determining to operate in the *office* of *giving*—no matter what you give, it will be of the SUSTAINING variety for the existence of the loc. assem. (and for the members of the body in that loc. assem.)

- And even though you may not make any adjustments in *what* you give—you should acknowledge that a very real adjustment has to take place in the way you now VIEW your giving—and bring that in line with your sonship labor.

- So the first *office* available to you as a son to labor in with your Father in His business in the local assembly is **giving**—and there's a whole bunch of ways to give (other than just money/finances):

- (time/talent/possessions/experience/expertise, etc.)

- And you should now recognize that according to God's "Grand Design" behind your godly labor of *giving* is the issue that your *giving* all goes To Sustain the Existence of the Local Assembly. (and that should accompany all your *giving*: each and every time you *give* anything to the assembly!)

- And keeping that "Grand Design" in view is one of the major ways that separates godly giving (with selfless love and the Body Att. of Cond. & Beh.) from the way in which the majority of Christians go about "giving" to their church or ministries!

- And you should be able to take your sonship labor of *giving* — and do it, and think your way through how: 1) It's an office made available to you through God's complete written word—and the Holy Spirit has to do with that— 2) It's an office that "administers" to the very body of the Lord (the body of Christ that this local assembly is) — and 3) It's an office that has a "diverse operation" of God the Father that is served and accomplished by your *giving* (and you intelligently know what that operation is).

- And just to avoid confusion—in the area of meeting the Practical Needs of the loc. assem. by the office of *giving*—that *giving* will be of the **Physical/ Material variety** — (which should be a way to draw the line between *giving* and *shewing mercy*)

- Now if all that's clear—then we can proceed on to dealing with the first of the additional terminology that accompanies each of the offices.

- Romans 12: 8— ... *he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity*;

- First of all—before dealing with that word—I just want to point out the fact that when it comes to the 'additional information' that Paul gives in connection with the gift/offices—that these last 3 (that fall under the Practical Needs) are described differently than the first 4 (that fall under the Edificational Needs).

- And what Paul is doing by the additional information he gives in connection with each of the gifts/offices—is to describe their **functionality**—and the critical thing to keep in mind here is—that the **body analogy** that began up there in (:4) **still holds sway** in the context of (:6, 7, & 8)!

- In other words—with the godly selfless love + the Body Att. of Cond. & Beh.— as you think about these offices that are now available to you to begin to labor in—**every thought you have about them should be governed by that body analogy** (or that body type thinking)!

- And in connection with these last 3 that have to do with the Practical Needs of the loc. assem.— in order to properly perceive what the “administration” to the Lord’s body (the body of Christ) is; and what the “operation” of God is in connection with each of the 3 offices—the only way you’ll be able to do that properly **is to connect it with how your physical body operates and functions!**

- And this is **critical**—because if you don’t do that, this all ends up being just an academic exercise!

- And so—just as we did with *giving* (that is, we saw how it is related to a body—because a body has to be given ‘sustenance’) — we have to do that very same thing with *ruling* and with *shewing mercy*.

- But getting back to this issue of how Paul describes the ‘functionality’ of the offices—he does describe the first 4 **differently** than the last 3.

- And really, the last 3 (or the Practical Needs) - [just as is consistent with the ‘ranking’ of the gifts] — the Practical Needs (and the gifts or offices that meet those practical needs), those offices are kind of like “background” offices to the local assembly.

- (Just as your body has member/offices that function ‘in the background’ [so to speak]) [such as tears for emoting]

- And when we have the Practical Needs offices talked about—they have a further description of their functionality that is totally consistent with the way in which a member of your own physical body would function in its office on the basis of that selflessness and on the basis of those Body Att. of Conduct.

- And just to briefly make an observation about it (without getting into any real detail here, because going into detail here really doesn't gain us any real ground) - but just to touch on it—my understanding of why the first 4 (Edi. Needs) don't have the kind of functionality-type terminology that you have here in the last 3 (Pract. Needs) really has to do (again) with the wisdom of God in the way in which He writes the curriculum—

— because the truth is—those first 4 gifts/offices are going to go through some major adjustments (that is, several of them are going to be “done away” with the coming of *the more excellent way*—and they are going to be boiled down to just 1 or 2 offices for the remainder of the disp. of grace—and the further details concerning their functionality are going to be contained in a section of the sonship curriculum that is specifically written to those functioning in those 2 offices—namely, the Pastoral Epistles of I & II Tim., Titus, & Phlm.

- But when it comes to the Practical Needs of the loc. assem., those 3 offices given here in Rom. 12:8—those are going to be in existence not only at the beginning of this disp. of grace, but they will exist throughout the remainder of the duration of this disp. of grace.

- Therefore when it comes to the issue of meeting the first area of Practical Need that every loc. assem. has—(and with all that body analogy ‘in tow’) — the first office is: *he that giveth, let him do it with **simplicity**.*

- **simplicity** (what does that mean?) = singleness; the state of being unmingled or uncompounded; freedom from a propensity to cunning or stratagem; with no ulterior motive; with no “strings” attached; without requiring recognition.

- Now the question is—why is that (*giving with simplicity*) such a significant issue? why does your giving HAVE to be marked by *simplicity*—or else it's **NOT** giving that results from godly selfless love and the reality of being a member of *one body in Christ* with all those attributes of Body Conduct & Behavior — in other words, why, if giving is not with *simplicity*, then it's NOT godly labor/giving, but rather it's Ungodly labor/giving?

- Answer: (:3) - because anything other than giving with **simplicity** is nothing more than **highmindedness!** (*thinking more highly of yourself than you ought to think*)

- Therefore the reality is—that for each of these offices (of Pract. Need) - each one of these has a **carnal counterpart!**

- And the carnal counterpart to *giving with simplicity* is that—often times when someone in a local church gives something—more often than not, they do give AND get something—they want everyone to know what they gave!

- Which is why you'll often see a plaque on a pew: "This pew given by [or in memory of] so and so"

- Or why at the church potluck supper—someone will stand up before everybody eats and say, "So and so slaved so many hours so we could have this great meal"

- Or why, for big money givers, whole buildings or whole rooms are dedicated to them.

- THAT'S NOT GIVING WITH SIMPLICITY!!!

- And neither is giving 'begrudgingly' or with reluctance!

- And I think it's very telling of the Biblical Scholars who concocted the new English versions of the Bible—that when it came to this word *simplicity*—they changed the word to "liberality" or "generously" — (which tells me a lot about their translation skills) - but they simply skirt this issue altogether ... humm...wonder why???

- But a **body** doesn't do that—a body doesn't call undue attention to what is given or who did the giving or anything along those lines!

- In fact, you may give to the church with all kinds of strings attached, but you **can't** say that your giving was done as a son laboring with your Father—and that your giving was *with simplicity!*

- All that is, is carnal giving of your flesh—and all that is, is simply UNGODLY giving!

- The truth is—where godly giving *with simplicity* is concerned—the real **joy** in it all isn't in any kind of recognition—(a son doesn't think like that) - but the joy is in knowing that you're laboring with your Father in His business & being trained for *the life that is to come!*

- And by the function of this Practical Need Office of *giving with simplicity*—by it being an office that functions ‘in the background’ (so to speak) - the godly *giving* that’s generated by selfless love in accordance with your position as *members one of another* (and members of this *one body in Christ*) - that giving is done in the background—demanding no recognition; no strings attached—and is done for the sake of, and the good of the whole body—because it’s done selflessly.

- Whether it be a gift of your finances; a gift of your time; a gift of your expertise or talent; a gift of your energy; a gift of your possessions; whether it be ongoing giving for the maintenance of the assembly; or a one-time gift that you saw a need and met it — it all has to be done *with simplicity* or else it’s **not** a genuine labor with your Father that He can accept and utilize as a training issue for your sonship life.

- In other words—godly giving can’t be just giving in any old way—but godly giving has to be generated by this very passage!

- And really—with all 3 offices—the terms that describe their functionality—(*giving with simplicity; ruling with diligence; shewing mercy with cheerfulness*) - those are the 3 constant characteristics of functionality when it comes to the offices that meet the Practical Needs of an assembly.

- And those are the traits or characteristics that **make sure** that the functionality of those offices provides for the **PURE** function of those offices, just as God has designed them!

- (or as I Cor. 12 said—*But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. [:18]*) — and some are ‘comely’ and noticeable, and some are ‘uncomely’ and go largely without notice [background].

- Therefore the *simplicity* and the *diligence* and the *cheerfulness* are designed to be produced **GOD’S WAY**—and God’s way is for (:3) to produce the godly selflessness; and (:4-5) producing the Body Conduct & Behavior based upon that selflessness - because we **are members one of another** in the body of Christ!

- So the issue of *he that giveth, let him do it with **simplicity***—giving with *simplicity* describes the **functionality** of the office of giving—in other words, HOW you are to function when you are doing it!

- Any Questions about *he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity* ???

- Romans 12:8— ... *he that ruleth, with diligence*;

- At the outset—I want to say (if I haven't already said it) - that my understanding is that this type of *ruling* is **not** the type of ruling that is talked about as being a responsibility of a Bishop or Deacon—that is, it's not maintaining the order of the assembly where edification is concerned—nor one of protecting the assembly from the Satanic Policy of Evil.

- But this type of *ruling* has to be viewed by bringing to bear that **body analogy** of (:4-5) - and by thinking of your own physical body, you will come up with some ways in which *ruling* can be one of the major *offices* that the members of your body are involved in and/or are functioning in.

- And then you simply bring that to bear on thinking about how or in what ways there are in the local assembly (other than the ruling of the Bishop or Deacons) that could be described as an *office* that a member could operate in that would be called ruling.

- So when you think about **ruling** in this context—what kind of specific things that do or could go on in the local assembly that would fit into the *office of ruling*?

- Ruling, being a roll of regulating or managing or being in a position whereby you are 'over' something that needs to get done; or 'over' some other person or persons that need to get something done.

- Order in which our Bible classes takes place.

(Getting started on time, how we start, etc.)

- Nursery

- Recording of classes

- Cleaning the building/maintenance of the property

- Décor/layout/decoration

- Lord's Table/Communion

- Web Site/Internet listeners needs

- Lighting/temperature
 - Keeping the 3X5 Cards outlining every class
 - Projector/charts/teaching aids?
 - Singing?
 - Jail Ministry?
 - Welcoming newcomers?
- (Remember that nothing gets done mystically or magically!)
- Well—even though it may seem strange to call the doing of these type things *ruling*—that’s what your Father calls it—and so when you think about these types of things being done - and being done under the category or office of *ruling*—what then is the connection in that “Grand Design” for the godly labor aspect to godly edification?
- In other words—what can you say about the office of *ruling* as to how it ‘*administers*’ to the Lord (the body of Christ) - and then what can you say about it as it fulfills one of the ‘*operations*’ of God that He wants to get accomplished?
- (and here is where you have to stick with that body analogy)
- A body needs some practical attention given to its overall hygiene—and it’s overall appearance (the way you dress—which can differ greatly from occasion to occasion)—and therefore there’s some offices that your members have that when they function take on a *ruling* over or what might be called that of the Regulating/Managing variety of office—and that meets the needs of these kind of things for the body.
- And therefore, in view of that—the overall ‘*operation*’ that lies behind the office of ruling would be that it all goes to **Giving Orderliness to the body/local assembly.**
- And the nature of the *ruling* that falls under the category of Practical Needs—and therefore held as an *office* by the members of the body (the loc. assem.) [other than that of either the Bishop or Deacon] - the nature of the *ruling* will be of the **Regulating/Managing** variety—that is, regulating and managing the orderliness of the local assembly.
- (see I Cor. 14:40)

- So there's a bunch of ways that you can meet Practical Needs in the assembly by determining to function in a ruling capacity or *ruling office*—having some measure of authority over and/or management over, and having responsibility over something that's lacking orderliness—and making sure that it's done or managed in an orderly manner.

- Romans 12:8— ... *he that ruleth, **with diligence**; ...*

- Godly *diligence* describes the **functionality** of the *office* of *ruling* — and that's what is stressed by that word: *diligence*.

- And just as *giving* **has** to be done with *simplicity*—*ruling* **has** to be done with *diligence*.

- And just as *giving* has its carnal counterpart (i.e., giving with “strings attached” or giving grudgingly or with political motives or with the desire to be noticed or draw attention to yourself) — *ruling* also has its carnal counterpart. [the opposite of *diligence*]

- But even though the world (the course of this world, the fashion of this world, and the wisdom of men) has taught you [and can produce many examples of] *ruling with diligence*—the *diligence* (being the way in which the *office* of *ruling* is designed to function in a body) — that *diligence* is to be produced GOD'S WAY—and again, that is to take the godly selfless love + the Body Attributes of Conduct & Behavior from (:3 and 4-5) and because we **are members one of another**—the functionality of the *ruling* (described as doing it *with diligence*) - **that *diligence* is generated from all of that!**

- (In view of the living-union dynamic of us being ***one body in Christ***, and every one members one of another!)

- ***diligence***—(what does that mean?) = the constant and earnest effort to accomplish what is undertaken; steady in applying oneself to the business at hand; due attention; exertion of body or mind without unnecessary delay or sloth; care; (interestingly), = the persistent endeavour to please! [servant]

- And just as is true with all 3 descriptions of functionality to all 3 of these *offices* of Practical Need—the word ***diligence*** is specially chosen to make an **impression** and have an **impact** upon a son who chooses to function in the *office* of ***ruling*** —

— and that impact is found in the various shades of meaning that the word *diligence* carries—which can be found, for instance, in Charles Smith’s very excellent work called: “Synonyms Discriminated” —

- “The *diligent* man is he who gives sustained attention to any matter which admits of perseverance and interest. It denotes a specific pursuit. *Diligence* signifies the attention we pay to any particular object out of preference to others. *Diligence* is a **combination of activity and order**. The *diligent* man does not lose a moment, but employs and fills up **all** his time. It is the indispensable requisite of all ordinary success, especially because, **to the *diligent* man, work is not irksome!**” (Charles Smith)

- Therefore the functional expression of the office of *ruling* (that being *with diligence*) perfectly suits the office of *ruling* (and the operation of God that stands behind it: Local Church Orderliness) - and also perfectly suits the son’s heart with the effectual working of his sonship orientation and sonship establishment—and his desire to **please** his Father as he begins to labor with Him in what He’s doing in His business in the loc. assem.

- And with the additional effectual working of godly selfless love + Body Attr. of Con. & Beh., the son’s labor of *ruling* will be the **natural result** of that effectual working—his labor will be characterized by his sustained attention to his specific pursuit of ruling within the body of the loc. assem.—and to the ORDER that his *ruling* labor brings to the assem.—and will never be characterized by viewing his *ruling* labor with his Father as anything such as being irksome to him (or weary or annoying or tedious or anything along those lines)!

- Again—a son sees through a different set of “eyes”! (He sees through the “eyes of his understanding”!)

- And just as the only way functioning in the office of *giving* is going to be acceptable to your Father is to do it *with simplicity*—so too,

the only way in which functioning properly in the office of *ruling* is going to be acceptable work/labor to your Father is that the accompanying functional characteristic to your *ruling* is to do it **with diligence**. (and having real, intelligent understanding and appreciation for what that means as a “son”—and what that means to your Father!)

- And as I said before—*diligence* has its carnal counterpart—and the truth is, most people don’t like their boss—because they’re lazy, or good-for-nothing, or unfair, or overbearing, or whatever (fill in the blank) [real or imagined]— but my point is, the natural, fleshly response to authority is to **abuse** it.

- And the natural, fleshly, carnal response to most boss’s authority is to reluctantly, irksomely do just enough to ‘get by’ - or what may aptly (to sonship) be described as doing your job **half-heartedly!**

- That’s not sonship labor—sonship labor is done **whole-heartedly!** (especially when you labor with your Father in the office of *ruling* in the loc. assem.!)

- But you now have the privilege of being the one in authority—the one *ruling*—and you do so whole-heartedly—you do so **without abusing** your authority—and you do so **with diligence**—(as one with godly selfless love; and do so consistent with being *one body in Christ, and every one members one of another*)!

- And so you have a couple of offices to think about—to apply the godly selfless love and Body Att. of Con. & Beh. to—and to talk to your Father about in some intelligent sonship prayer—and then to figure **out all on your own** to choose to function in one of these offices that meets the Practical Needs of the assembly—and then to figure out exactly what needs done and what you’re roll is going to be.

- AND THAT SHOULD THRILL YOU! (Because for the first time, you not only get to labor with your Father—but you get to do it in all the **liberty** of adult sonship living!)

- And by the way—there’s absolutely nothing wrong (or sinful) in choosing something that you ENJOY doing—or that makes you **happy** doing! [There’s nothing “godly” in self-mutilation type work! (ala Opus Dei of Roman Catholicism)]!!!

- Romans 12:8— ... *he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.*

- The 3rd major *office* of Practical Need that every local assembly has—is the need of the *office* of **shewing mercy**.

- And you're going to handle this *office* just like you have handled the previous 2—and that's by bringing the '**body-analogy**' of (:4-5) to bear upon it—because that's the contextual setting of all 3 of these Practical Need *offices*!

- And just as you had to view *giving* as it pertained to your physical body—and had to view *ruling* as it pertained to your physical body—so here also, you have to view **shewing mercy** as it pertains to your **physical body**.

- And I say that just so that we don't go down the wrong path in connection with *mercy*—and end up 'lost in the woods' (so to speak).

- Because one of the most common ways that a persons thinks about the issue of *mercy* is in the area of justice—or in a legal sense—(like a Judge who shows mercy upon a criminal—and grants him 'leniency' - "leniency" being a synonymous term to *mercy* in the legal sense).

- So then—setting aside the definition of the term *mercy* in the legal sense—(though it may seem odd to do so), you have to think about this *office* of **shewing mercy** as it pertains to some Practical Needs that your physical body has—and come up with some ways in which you would operate according to *shewing mercy*;

- And once that's done—you have to keep in mind the "Grand Design" for your godly sonship labor (as the final component to this form of doctrine for godly edification) - and that means that you have to perceive how you **shewing mercy** 'ministers' to the Lord (to His body—here in this loc. assem., which is now understood by you as *one body in Christ*);

- And once that's done—you have to perceive the overall "*operation*" of God that He wants to accomplish by your laboring with Him in the *office* of **shewing mercy**. (simple)

- Now before dealing with the definition of *mercy* as it pertains to our body—let’s just look at a couple of passages that underscore the fact that the word *mercy* can be used in another sense—other than the judicial or legal sense (of not pouring out wrath on an individual) —

- (Actually, we’ve already noted this from Rom. 12:1 when Paul ‘besought’ us *by the mercies of God*).

- Psalm 37:21 (read) — Here you have a contrast between the *wicked* and the *righteous*—and the *wicked*: he’ll borrow and never pay you back—but the *righteous*: he shows *mercy* and he *gives*—not only would he not take from you and not give back what he owed; but instead, he actively looks for opportunities to give to somebody in need—and that’s his way of showing *mercy*.

- Psalm 109:15-16 (:16) (read) — Here the contrast to *showing mercy* is to *persecute the poor and needy man*—and therefore the opposite of that would be that you see someone in need or someone who is poor, and you meet that need and you provide for them to have relief from the predicament that they’re in—therefore you show them *mercy*.

- *mercy*—(what does that mean?) = grace in action; showing forbearance and compassion to another (not merely to someone who deserves your wrath) - but rather than turning a ‘blind eye’ to the need a person has, you determine that you can meet that need and therefore compassionately (and *cheerfully*) meet that need; compassionate treatment.

- Now when you take that understanding—and you think about the actual physical members of your own physical body—what condition is one of your members in, if you’re going to show it *mercy* in this sense?

- (And what I’m after here is that you can think through how *showing mercy* goes to one of those ‘different administrations’ of the Lord [or how it ministers to the Lord’s body]).

- Isn’t the condition of one of your members of your own body in a state or condition of SUFFERING?

- So therefore isn’t *showing mercy* in this sense, the gracious action toward those who **suffer** and are in trouble? (provide relief)

- In other words—providing comfort; **thoughtful concern for the health of the members of the body!**

- And if that's the kind of 'ministry' that 'administers' to the Lord's body—then what would you say is the overall "*operation*" of God that He wants to get accomplished by this *office of shewing mercy*?

- My understanding is that there is a word that takes all these ideas and terms and issues—and describes the overall *operation* of God that He desires to get accomplished in the body of the loc. assem. by means of this *office of shewing mercy* (in this sense) — and that one term is: **SOUNDNESS—To Give Soundness to the body/local assembly.**

- "**Soundness**" is the term that signifies a body that is free from suffering/disease/ or taint of any kind—(physically, mentally, emotionally, even spiritually [the forms of doctrine doing their effectual work]) - the "wholeness" of the body!

- Psalm 38:1-7 (:3 & :7)

- Isaiah 1:1-6 (:6)

- Luke 15:27 (the Prodigal Son)

- Acts 3:1-16 (:16)

- II Timothy 1:7

- ***Shewing mercy* is the thoughtful concern for the comfort and health of the members of the body!** (it's soundness!)

- Therefore the overall "*operation of God*" that is served by the *office of shewing mercy* is: **To Give Soundness to the body/local assembly**; and the "*administration*" of the Lord (the Lord's body of the local assembly) will be of the **Supportive/Gracious Action** variety.

- So when you think about *shewing mercy* in this context—what kind of specific things could go on in the local assembly that would fit into the *office of shewing mercy*?

- That is—when you would graciously act in a supportive roll to ensure the "soundness" of the body/loc. assem.? (when a member is suffering in some way?)

- (And keep in mind that this all has to do with compassionately **dealing with the INDIVIDUAL needs** of the members of the local assembly.)

- (And also keep in mind that—out of the 3 categories of Practical Needs—this is the one that will **change** most frequently.)

- Encouragement
- Thoughtfulness-consideration
- Action to alleviate suffering—whether physical, mental, emotional
- Looking for opportunity to compassionately respond to other members when they are having problems/struggling or are in need—or lacking in some area
- Assistance to get to Bible class
- Helping a members understanding of the doctrine when you're understanding is strong and theirs is weak
- Prayer
- Giving up your seat for a member to have a better one?
- You hear of a better job opportunity and tell a member about it
- Doctor/dentist/auto mechanic/house repair—recommendations

- Let's now then look at the final descriptive term of the **functionality** of the *office of shewing mercy* —

- Romans 12:8— ... *he that sheweth mercy, with **cheerfulness**.*

- And again, just like with all the words and terms we find in our initial component of our *instruction of wisdom*—**cheerfulness** is a term we've all heard and used and understood before—(in fact, the world and the course of this world and the fashion of this world, and the wisdom of this world has already taught us what *cheerfulness* is) — but just like all these terms, this is supposed to be **godly cheerfulness** — this *cheerfulness* is now to be produced GOD'S WAY—(which is to take the godly selfless love + the Body Attributes of Conduct & Behavior—and the body analogy that: because we are now in a **Living Union** relationship as *members one of another*, and as *one body in Christ*—the functionality of the *mercy* (described here as doing it with *cheerfulness*) - **that cheerfulness is designed to be generated from all of that!**

- **cheerfulness** (ἰλαρότης) — what does that mean?

- *ness* = the English suffix meaning a **state** or **quality** of.

- *cheerful* = being **full** of cheer.

- Hence, the state or quality of being full of cheer.

- *cheerfulness* = animated; being of good spirits; a state of moderate joy; — *cheer* = to dispel gloom, sorrow, silence or apathy; to cause to rejoice; to gladden; to incite; to encourage.

- And there are some **shades of meaning** to the word *cheerfulness* that makes it the most excellent choice of words used to describe the functionality of the *office* of *shewing mercy*:

- The overall ‘radical root’ of the shade of meaning that the word *cheerful* has—is that it is always used of that which promotes **good spirits!** (Charles Smith)

- That is—everything that is done (*shewing mercy* in this case) - is done to ultimately relieve the **mind** or **human spirit** of some suffering—and *cheerfulness* becomes the natural and habitual state of mind of happiness—and therefore seeks to bring that happy & contented state of mind to others. (Again, in God’s Way—according to godliness).

- *Cheerful* denotes **the absence of unwillingness**—it is **opposed to reluctance!** (George Crabb)

- So—even though you may not have ever thought about a member of your physical body *shewing mercy*—and though you may not have thought about the importance of *shewing mercy with cheerfulness* as it relates to the overall **soundness** of the body (or loc. assem.) - the question is: Is it all that important or significant? does it really matter?

- Well, here at the very beginning of sonship education, it may not seem all that important—or it may only be seen as mildly important or ‘somewhat’ important (at least in view of how some of the members around you have ‘suffered’ or been stressed in various circumstances or situations that you’ve observed over time) it may not seem so much important.

- And though this *office of shewing mercy* seems to be the one of the 3 that is only utilized occasionally (or even rarely), the truth of the matter is—this *office of shewing mercy with cheerfulness* IS OF **HUGE** IMPORTANCE TO THE BODY AND TO THE LOCAL ASSEMBLY—especially in light of what we are going to experience farther on out in our sonship education!

- Truth is—it is of **GREAT** importance—it was to the saints that made up the churches during the time at the beginning of this disp. of grace—and it was of **TREMENDOUS** importance to our apostle: the Apostle Paul!!!

- In fact—there is a very particular/specific word that Paul uses over and over again—that describes the **result** of this very kind of *shewing mercy with cheerfulness*—(do you know what it is?)

- I Corinthians 4:6-13

- I Corinthians 16:13-18 (:18)

- II Corinthians (book of suffering) 4:6-11

- II Corinthians 7:8-13 (:13)

- II Timothy 1:3-18 (:16)

- Philemon vs. 7 & vs. 20

- Remember that you were told—even before you ever began your formal sonship education in earnest—that along with the everyday type of suffering, you will have to suffer both *the sufferings of this present time*—and there's coming a day in which (because of the opposition of the Satanic Policy of Evil against you and your sonship edification) you will have to undergo and endure the *sufferings of Christ!!!*

- Therefore there are a whole bunch of *offices* that you can determine and choose (as a son) to function in, in the local assembly, that fall under the overall Practical Need *office of shewing mercy with cheerfulness*—and the ministry (or *administration*) that they serve to the body of Christ is of the **Supportive/Gracious Action** variety.

- And then the overall *operation of God* that the *office of shewing mercy with cheerfulness* accomplishes is that of the **Soundness to the body/local assembly**.

- **Recap:** (#49) [Practical Need Offices in view of the Grand Design for Godly Edification]

- And now that you've got the understanding and appreciation for the information contained in Romans 12:6-8 (the *labor* aspect of the 1st Component to *receiving the instruction of wisdom*) — when you think about these 3 *offices*—can you perceive why those 3 are given in that order?

- You know that the reason for why those 3 *offices* are mentioned as the Practical Need *offices* that every loc. assem. has is because they are the 3 most needed *offices* of every local assembly (where Practical Needs are concerned).

- But one of the reasons for why they are listed in the order they are: is because they are listed from the **most used office** to the **least most used office** by a real, physical body!

- And **as** that is true for a real physical body—so it will be true for the *body of Christ* as a local church/assembly! (Especially as you first start out in your sonship education, and as the assembly first starts out together in their sonship education.)

- Now—in light of that—are there any questions? (Concerning :6-8)? or (Concerning :3-8)?

- Note to self: Make sure the folks understand and appreciate that all of the issues dealt with in (:3-8) are only to be thought of and dealt with INSIDE THE LOCAL CHURCH itself—and deals with the way in which we have this Living Union Relationship in connection with us being *members of one body in Christ, and every one members one of another*.

- (As per Helen's question—but in light of (:3) - "*For I say, through the grace given unto me, **to every man that is among you**, ... [i.e., every one in the loc. assem. in which you sit]*")

- END (of the 1st Component of *receiving the instruction of wisdom*).

- Now at this point we're at the end of our first Component to a 'form' of doctrine:

- The form of doctrine being the receiving the *instruction of wisdom* from our Father.

- And the first Component to that form of doctrine (the first of six) generated within us and taught us GODLY SELFLESS LOVE.

- And that first Component was broken down into 3 parts—all of which followed the format for godly edification—(:3 dealing with the godly thinking; :4-5 dealing with the godly living [Conduct & Behavior]; and :6-8 dealing with the godly labor).

- And therefore for the first time in the actual curriculum for our sonship education, we have come to the **end** of a major Component to a major Form of doctrine (all "firsts") in the curriculum for sonship education.

- And, folks, what we've actually arrived at now is a particular point (in fact it's a pivotal point) - where, even before ever going on to the next major Component to the form of doctrine—a **son is supposed to recognize that he's at this point**—(and especially the Father is supposed to recognize it; and make His son aware of it [if he's not aware of it]) —

— and that is that we've now arrived at another:

VOLITION TESTING POINT!

- And you've already been through 3 major volitional testing points:

- 1) Romans 8:14-15— "*Abba, Father*"
- 2) Romans 8:38-39— "*I am persuaded*"
- 3) Romans 12:1-2— Sonship Checkpoint

- And so this is the 4th major volitional testing point for you as a son.

- And the truth is—from knowing what you should know about how you are supposed to be educated as a son—by this time—and by getting to the end of either an entire 'form of doctrine' or just a Component to a 'form of doctrine' (like we have here at the end of Romans 12:8) — when it comes to having everything you need to have in order to get the **FULL** effectual working of this first Component to *receiving the instruction of wisdom*—truth be told, you really should NOT be **satisfied** that you have the full effectual working of (:3-8) - right? - isn't something missing?

- Because the truth is—there's MORE that goes in to providing for the full effectual working of either a form of doctrine (or a component of a form of doctrine) than simply studying it out in the portion of God's word in which it's found.

- That is, there's more to it than that—**IF** you're being properly educated as a son—and **IF** true *godly edifying which is in faith* is what you're after taking place in you!

- And since we're at the **end** of the 1st Component to the 1st Form of Doctrine for our sonship education—we now have to take time to go over this issue—and to make sure we don't just have a 'talking-about-it' type appreciation for it—but have the working, living reality of it taking place in your inner man—so that you know how to respond to the doctrine you just learned—and so that you intelligently know what to do with it and gain the **full effectual working of it!**

- And when it comes to this 4th Volition Testing Point in your sonship life—this one is going to be an **ongoing** and **continuous** point of the testing of your volition—and will continue on throughout the entire span of your sonship education.

- And that's because it's the volition testing point that will **always** occur whenever you have learned something—and the fullness of the teaching for what you have learned has fully been provided for—the teacher has fully taught the material properly & sufficient enough for it to do its job —

— but when that occurs, then you as a son know that you've arrived at this volition testing point—and just as that phrase suggests, the activity now shifts **from** the teacher **to you, the son!**

- And now **your active roll** takes up at the end of the teaching—and **you** go into action to provide your part—and each and every time you finish off either a Component to a form of doctrine, or the full form of doctrine—you will encounter this volition testing point—and the test for you as a son will be one of: **RESPONDING POSITIVELY AND PROPERLY** to what you have learned as a son —

— which is **the activity on your part** that fills in the rest of what needs to be done so that what has just been learned can effectually do its job to the best of its ability as to how it's been taught and how it's been learned by you at that point.

- And this is a **huge** difference—and an enormous departure from the way in which the average Christian goes to church or goes to Bible Study—because this isn't just about getting information—or getting some Bible truths—but this is real godly sonship edification—which demands your participation!

- And it's a vitally important thing to understand and appreciate as a son what your roll is and what action you are expected to take at the end of each component and each form of doctrine you learn!

- It's vitally important that you understand and appreciate what it means to respond POSITIVELY & PROPERLY to the doctrine you just learned!

- And this is what I've talked about before—as the kind of 'positive pressure' and 'positive demand' that you take upon yourself as that adult son that you are—it's adult-hood type action that is to be taken on your part now: and it's called sonship responsibility!

- The doctrine of Romans 12:3-8 has now been taught properly—everything has been done to provide for its effectual job to be done—and it's now prepared to be written on the fleshly tables of your heart and by what you will add to it in your positive & proper response—it will make it so that when that's all done, we, as an assembly, can then move on to the next Component!

- And these times of hitting these Volition Testing Points—these are the times for your **sonship responsibility** to come into play—and that's what adulthood type sonship living is really all about: **sonship responsibility!**

- And this responsibility is beyond the issue of your initial sonship responsibility to respond to the sonship **status** in Romans 8:14-15 —

- And its beyond the issue of your **sonship commitment to Learning** (and all of the realization of your levels of commitment to getting your sonship education) —in fact, the issue (for example) of your commitment to being here in class in **honest attendance**; and to engage in **interactive learning**; and making your sonship education the **top priority** of your life — all that's a past & settled issue by now.

- And really this is an issue of you as a son (and all of sonship education is designed by your Father to be this way) - it's an issue of a positive & proper response **to what has just been learned!**

- That is—it's not a volition testing as to your willingness to be educated as a son—but it's a volition testing as to the immediate doctrine that you just learned in the curriculum!

- And your Father has designed your education as His son—so that this kind of testing of your volition (as to its positive & proper response) will take place **at the conclusion of every time a son learns something.**

- And the genius of designing the curriculum this way is so that—just because a son responds positively and properly to the previous thing he learned in the previous component or form of doctrine that was taught to him—doesn't guarantee that he'll do it the next time.

- And therefore it's a volitional issue ALL THE TIME!

- And not only that—but each form of doctrine (depending upon what it is & depending upon what its effectual working is designed to produce) - there can be a slight “variation” (so to speak) upon what constitutes that positive & proper response.

- And therefore, even though a son's volition is tested upon the completion of each thing he's learned—the common feature will always be him demonstrating a POSITIVE response to it—and then a PROPER response to it.

- And, depending upon what has been learned: the positive response and the proper response won't always be exactly the same—as far as exactly what takes place with the completion of every form of doctrine—but the point is, that there will always be those 2 issues: A Positive, and then a Proper response.

- And the **POSITIVE RESPONSE** will simply be the opposite of a negative one: a confident conviction (a “yes” factor) in which the information gets ‘laid down’ in your human spirit without objection and without question. It's all understood and accepted with all confidence and conviction—(pretty simple).

- And for those of us that are from the ‘old school’ of the systematic approach we used to espouse here— (ICE teaching) - or even from the way in which Bible doctrine and Bible teaching is commonly approached by most Christians today—all we really cared anything about was the positive response—or “positive volition to Bible doctrine” — but the reality is; and the truth is—upon closer examination of the word of God itself—that’s NOT ALL THERE IS TO IT!!!

- Just a positive response isn’t good enough—that is, it’s not good enough for real, godly sonship edification to take place!

- So then—the **PROPER RESPONSE** is the issue of doing with the doctrine exactly what the doctrine told you to do with it!

(and that’s oversimplified) - but to start off, you have to start off with a simple definition/description of it.

- Every time we, as sons, learn something (and I’m talking about going through the curriculum that begins in Romans 12:3) - [in other words, I’m not talking about when you’re reading through the Bible and you learn that Peter chopped off the ear of the high priest’s servant] - every time we, as sons, learn something in the sonship curriculum that ‘*renews our mind*’ so that we *may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God* in the details of our lives—in connection with that, there’s a **prescribed volition testing point** for a son that has a Positive & Proper response to it that is designed to take place (and which the son is responsible to fulfill) at the end of every component to a form of doctrine (as well as the whole of the form of doctrine) that he learns for his sonship education.

- And a son is to be aware of it—and the Father is to make his son aware of it.

- And therefore you, as a son, have **an active responsibility**—and it goes beyond ‘just being there in class’ and having your Father teach you—but once the teaching is underway, you expect and anticipate, therefore, that your Father will come along and say, “Ok, you’ve learned something now—I’ve given you a body of information that provides for you to think like I do; and conduct yourself like I do; and labor with Me in an operation of My business” — and then the Father **pauses** at the end of all that—and then the son is supposed to come along and say, “I think I’m supposed to be doing something with this aren’t I? - (and that’s the issue!)

- And before the Father says, “Ok, we can now go on and learn the next thing,” — the son is going to need to do something that, (more or less), **demonstrates** that he has learned what he’s supposed to have learned!

- And since the learning doesn’t just involve ‘mental cognition’ of what has been said— but since **all three components of godliness** are involved, the learning, therefore, is going to have EVIDENCE to it!

- (There’s actually going to be a manifestation of it!)

- And that’s because the learning has involved the godly thinking, that provides for the godly conduct, that provides for the godly labor.

- And it will primarily be through either the evidence of the godly conduct (living) and the godly labor—that the Father will perceive that the effectual working has taken place—OR, the absence of the godly conduct and the absence of the godly labor gives evidence that the effectual working has NOT fully taken place!

- And that makes it so that—as long as the Father is fully persuaded that HE has done everything He’s supposed to do on His end to provide for the effectual working of the doctrine—then that makes it so that everything gets traced back to the fact that the son obviously did not **respond fully** (as he ought to) in connection to what he’s just learned.

- And this very thing (this Positive & Proper response that the Father is looking for in His son) - this is the very thing that the opening verses of Proverbs 3 is all about.

- By the “tone” of how chapter 3 opens up—you can easily tell that no longer are these exhortations, exhortations that pertain to establishing the son in sonship (and that deals with what takes place before the education gets underway) - but since it opens up by saying, *My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:* — then it’s evident that the sonship education is underway.

- And now this exhortation that begins in Pro. 3 is the exhortation that a father gives his son—once he HAS begun to learn things. (And in the exhortation, the father understands the things that a son can do that would be a NEGATIVE & an IMPROPER response to what he has learned—& that will cause problems for him—and make it so that the rest of the sonship edu. does not have “free course.”

- Therefore the father exhorts his son to NOT respond negatively or improperly—but to respond Positively & Properly - and by responding Positively & Properly, he provides therefore for the full effectual working of what his son has just learned—and he provides for it to **produce** all of the achievements that it's supposed to produce so that the next Component to the form of doctrine (or the next form of doctrine itself) that follows in the curriculum can now be successfully built upon it—and the continuing godly edification can now take place—exactly as it's been designed to take place.

- But the point is that the son (and *you* as a son) have **to respond Positively & Properly** to what you've just learned—and that sets the precedent (or the example) for the way in which **ALL** your sonship education is going to be dealt with.

- And if not—problems will occur—and it's the son's responsibility to respond this way—and it's the son's responsibility to minimize the number of hindrances and impediments that could occur in his making progress through his sonship education.

- So there's actually a feature that's designed into all 6 Components to our *instruction of wisdom* in Romans 12:3-16 — whereby all that's provided for in connection with the godly CONDUCT and the godly LABOR that every one of the 6 Components deals with (from :3-16)—each one of them does provide for a **quick manifestation** of the effectual working of the *renewing of the mind* that occurs for each one of the Components—and at the exact same time, it also provides for an **enduring effect** (so to speak), that, as time goes on, it provides for those initial manifestations to grow, to increase, and to come to a point of naturally reaching a “peak” (so to speak) or fullness.

- My point in all this is—that you as a son should understand and appreciate what your Father wants to now see in you as His son— (and you should be aware of this, and anticipate this at end of each one of these Components—and at each Volition Testing Point) - is that what the Father now wants to see isn't necessarily the 'full-blown' capacity that the doctrine has—but He wants to see the **EVIDENCE** that **the doctrine is doing what it's designed to do!** (a.k.a. A POSITIVE AND PROPER RESPONSE)

- And given that we're only at the **beginning** of our sonship education—that evidence of a Positive & Proper response will start off as a very **basic** and very **simple** manifestation —

- And that brings us to a better understanding and appreciation for exactly WHY the 3 gifts/offices that are listed to meet the Practical Needs of the loc. assem. in Romans 12:8 are what they are: *giving, ruling, and shewing mercy.*

- There's a particular reason why, when Paul deals with the operation of God in a local assembly—that, the selfless thinking and the selfless behavior and conduct (that :3-5 provide for) - there's a particular reason why he deals with, not only the issue of the gifts, but why he deals with the **particular** gifts he mentions in connection with that.

- Because those are the gifts in which the selfless thinking, and the selfless conduct and behavior is most readily able to manifest itself in the function of the offices that the saints are in, in the assembly that they are a part of!

- And so, once again—what we've got here isn't just 'mental cognition' taking place—(nor is it a cleverly turned phrase by a well-spoken Bible teacher that you can eagerly add to your Bible Study Notes)—(or a cleverly concocted [homiletically sound] New Series of Bible teachings by some popular Pastor) — but since **godliness (acquiring the very heart of your Father)** is what's in view—(sound doctrine, that by the *renewing of your mind*, materially affects the way you *think*—which in turn, materially and significantly affects the way in which you *live* (conduct & behave)—which then materially affects the way in which you *labor* to spend your time (redeeming it) — since that's what's in view here:

— there is, therefore, the ability for the godly thinking of a particular Component of doctrine to provide for a **ready manifestation** of its effectual working in its natural 'outlet' and Conduct—and in its natural 'outlet' in Laboring together with God in one of His operations!

- And that's what the Father/father wants to see so that he can ensure the son has got the effectual working of that particular Component or Form of Doctrine—so that he, and his son, can have the confidence that they can go on to the next Component or Form of Doctrine.

- The Father expects that, once the doctrine is initially working—that it's going to grow; and it's going to develop — and it's got its "life" (so to speak) to it, to be able to fully fulfill what it's able to do—(which in this case takes place in the remainder of the duration of the son's Level I Sonship Education).

- And folks, if you haven't already had it occur to you—this is your beginning of understanding and appreciating what it means to have **THE LIVING WORDS OF THE LIVING GOD LIVE IN YOU!**

- FAR from the way in which most Christians and most Bible teachers handle/read/approach/study/and teach God's word—(far from that), **this is how God's word is designed to work!** (that's a foreign concept to most Pastors!)

- And as long as a particular Component/Form of doctrine is doing its job—and the effectual working is there (from its initial manifestation and on), **then edification can take place** — in other words, then the next Component/Form of doctrine can properly and appropriately be taught, and it's not going to have any **problem** being built upon what has previously been taught—because what has previously been taught has been learned; and it is effectually working; and what's taught next is just going to be built into it, and incorporated into it—and then the 2 are going to be growing and building together—and then the next Component/Form, and the next, and the next, etc., etc.

- And often times—this is why you often find that the very first thing taught has the MOST information to it—and then the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and so on, have progressively a smaller amount of information to them.

- Because when you're at the point where you're just beginning and starting out—**you do not have a FRAME OF REFERENCE** built as of yet—and those things that come after the initial doctrine/instruction are built upon an already-existing "frame of reference" - and those doctrines simply **attach** to the previous information (with its already-existing frame of reference) - and so they don't have to repeat the process of building those fundamental frame of reference issues—because they're already there!

- And if you think about it—when you look at the amount of information contained in the 1st Component to our *instruction of wisdom* (in Rom. 12:3-8) - the remaining 5 Components get (for the most part) increasingly smaller in the amount of information contained in them.

- In fact—when it comes to producing the first 2 features & characteristics of godly love (Selflessness & Kindness) - the one that HAS to be produced first is the Selflessness—because Kindness is not going to be able to exist without Selflessness — and so Selflessness has to exist first; and that’s the most difficult one to get produced properly (and in a godly way).

- And it takes 6 verses (Rom. 12:3-8) to produce it—and yet, once it’s in existence—in order to produce the next Component and the next characteristic that “mates” with it— (the Kindness) — [so that you’ve got “lovingkindness”] — verses 9 & 10 are sufficient to do it!

- And that’s roughly 20% of the information that (:3-8) have to them!

- But if that Selflessness wasn’t already there—and the whole frame of reference that goes along with it—Paul could talk “until the cows come home” about the Kindness, **and the capacity to produce it wouldn’t be there!**

- (Because there’s no frame of reference for it to attach to or be built upon!)

- And you can see that same kind of thing happens with Paul’s epistles—(Philemon, for example).

- Now with this understanding and appreciation—you should now begin to recognize that—because we are a **body**—and because we function as *one body in Christ, and every one members one of another*—you should recognize that: not only are you involved in learning the doctrine of the sonship curriculum for your own personal and individual godly edification—but more than that, there are attainments that are to be met for the overall growth and edifying of the BODY (or the local assembly as a whole).

- And so—what you now have in mind is not merely 1 area of godly edification; but **2 areas** of edification—all taking place simultaneously!

- 1) Your personal/individual edification, and 2) the overall edification of the body (or local assembly)!

- And that, too, is one of those parallels that will exist in *the creature*!

- And that's another **advancement** on your understanding and appreciation for the methodology for God's design for godly edification.

- (Which, again, is a foreign concept to most Christians and Bible teachers!)

- And those 2 areas are to ALWAYS be in your thinking as you go through your sonship education—because the doctrine and the curriculum for sonship education addresses BOTH of those areas!

- And so both you, individually, and the assembly as a whole (right from the beginning of the curriculum in Romans 12:3-8) - you both start off 'on the same foot' (so to speak) being edified **TOGETHER**.

- And it's just a marvelous and magnificent aspect to the DESIGN that God has built into your inner man and into the local assembly!

- And what this is driving at is that the loc. assem. is (and you, individually are) BOTH an architectural building AND a **living building**—and so is *the creature*—*the creature* is not only an actual architectural building, but at the exact same time it's ALIVE—it's a **living building**!
(I Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19; Eph. 2:19-22)

- Proverbs 3:1-4 (read)

- As noted before—Proverbs 3, and verse 1 through verse 20 is the corresponding Exhortation to a son who HAS received *the instruction of wisdom*—which is his first form of doctrine in his sonship education—and which is his first sonship decision-making skill.

- Therefore, as we noted before, this is a “Post-doctrinal Exhortation” — that is, it’s the exhortation a father gives his son AFTER he has begun learning what his father instructs him in first and foremost.

- And we verified that by noting that the “tone” of the exhortations changes here from the “tone” that 1:7-2:22 takes.

- And one of the primary things that the Father is now going to do, (exhortation-wise), is to exhort His son on how he is to RESPOND to the instruction he has just gone through and the things he has just learned.

- And the response the Father exhorts his son to have to what he just learned has 2 Parts: 1) A **Positive** Response & 2) A **Proper** Response.

- So first and foremost—let’s verify (from Pro. 3:1-4) why we can say that the response of a son to his education—(and what makes it so that real, true, genuine godly edifying is taking place with him) - is that he has to demonstrate both a Positive and a Proper response—and that those 2 Parts to his response is legitimate.

- And also the fact that—what is spelled out here in Pro. 3:1-4 is something that constitutes the kind of response that a son needs to have in connection with the learning of EVERY form of doctrine that he’s going to learn throughout the curriculum for the sonship education—as well as each Component to each of the forms of doctrine (if there are components to it).

- And that means that what we will come to understand and appreciate here—is going to be an ONGOING aspect of our sonship education from now on!

- And as we go through these passages—you need to recognize just how **important** it is—and how **critical** this Volition Testing Point is **to the full, effectual working of a son’s sonship education—**

— because when you get to Level II Sonship Education, this exhortation gets repeated again (7:1-5) — and it gets repeated not only because of its essential Volition Testing Point that it is (and that it will exist throughout all of Level II Sonship Education as well) - but it also takes on some further features

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- And therefore the Positive “nature” and the Proper “nature” of the son’s response has some furtherances and some further issues to it in Level II simply because of the kind of information and the nature of the education that’s taking place under Level II—(where the issue of *subtlety* is coming in, and the *increased wisdom* is coming in)—and the information being given involves critical discernment & discretionary judgments and things like that.

- And that’s why you have these additional features given to the exhortation in ch.7—in order to accommodate the kind of education that’s taking place under Level II.

- Granted, Pro. 7:1 doesn’t actually start the exhortations for Level II Sonship Edu., — but again, it starts the first exhortation for a son AFTER he’s begun to learn the things contained in Level II Sonship Edu.

- (read 7:1-5)

- You’ve got the same basic concepts involved here—but now the amount of information is increasing—the *binding* isn’t *about thy neck*, but now the *binding* is to your *fingers*—and especially in (:4), what you’re going to say about *wisdom* now is something **far more intimate** than you’ve said about *wisdom* at the outset of Level I.

- But all I’m after is that—the exhortation that the Father gives His son after Level I Sonship Edu. gets underway; and the exhortation that He gives His son after Level II Sonship Edu. gets underway—**both involve the issue of the fact that, “My son” you’ve got to respond POSITIVELY & PROPERLY to what you’re learning in this Level—and you need to avoid responding Negatively & Improperly: because it’s going to have an impact upon your ability to proceed on and fully benefit from, and fully provide for the effectual working of what’s gong to take place and what you’re going to learn under Level I & Level II Sonship Edu.**

- (back to 3:1-4) - Let's get a breakdown of these 4 verses: (and the English punctuation marks used by the King James Translators give you a great deal of help here!) [the colons & periods]
 - (:1-2) - Exhorts the son to have a POSITIVE response;
 - (:3-4) - Exhorts the son to have a PROPER response.
 - The POSITIVE response is what (:1) says.
 - The PROPER response is what (:3) says.
- And as we will see—that will validate that in Sonship Edu., you've got this ongoing Volition Testing Point that has 2 parts to it for whenever a son learns something.
- Now notice that with each response (or each response verse—i.e., :1 and :3) — that there's an additional verse that accompanies the response verse—(namely, :2 and :4).
- And what you've got there is that: if there's a POSITIVE response that exists; then there's a BENEFIT to be received —

1 My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: (POSITIVE RESPONSE)

2 For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. (THE CORRESPONDING BENEFIT)

- Of course, this is primarily dealing with God's program with Israel—and that's why (:2) says what it does.
- But there is going to be a similar, parallel-type benefit for us in this disp. of grace—and we'll deal with it later on.
- But what you need to appreciate is—that the Positive response has a benefit to it—and if the Positive response does NOT occur (but a Negative response occurs), **then the son does not partake of the benefit!**

- And likewise with the PROPER response —

3 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:
(PROPER RESPONSE)

4 (if you do this) So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.
(THE CORRESPONDING BENEFIT)

- And that one **does** exactly parallel what goes on with us in this disp. of grac—because the apostle Paul says the **exact** same thing to us in Romans 12 and following!

- So the Proper response has its benefit to it—and if the Proper response of (:3) does NOT exist (in other words, an Improper response exists) - then the benefit of (:4) does NOT take place!

- And my point is—that the benefits are **ESSENTIAL** to providing for the **FULL effectual working** of what's being learned!!!

- And that's because **you're dealing with EDIFICATION!**

- You're not learning something that has NO connection with it to anything else!

- If all God was doing is giving us compartmentalized information that had no connection with anything else—then it wouldn't make any difference (so much) what your response was to it, as long as you simply understood what you learned. Because all it would be, would be information that would just be information of “mindfulness” - that would have no ‘outlet’ in Conduct & Behavior; and have no ‘outlet’ in Labor in an operation of God.

- But, again, we're dealing with EDIFICATION—we're not dealing with compartmentalized learning—and with edification, when you learn something, what you've learned provides the foundation and a ‘natural attachment’ for something else that's going to be learned next—and then when that next thing is learned; the 2 things compound and are designed to operate **together**—(they're not designed to operate independently of one another)!

- It's just like—the individual education we're receiving is EDIFICATION; and who we are as members of the church, the body of Christ, **functions in the exact same way.**
- That is—we're all individual members of the church, the body of Christ—but we're *members one of another*—and we're NOT designed to merely function individually—we're designed to function **collectively!**
- And every member of the body of Christ that comes into our assembly, (for example), is designed to be immediately integrated; and every saint in our assembly is designed to immediately recognize that that saint that just came in—that we're all *members one of another*—and we're designed to immediately function.
 - (In other words—we're not supposed to think, Oh no, now we've just grown a 3rd arm!)
- But the point is—that the education we're being given is education that is **perfectly suited to who we are as one body in Christ.**
- And (to get back to the issue I was talking about a while ago) —just as we **individually** exist, but **function collectively** as *members one of another*—so the information that we learn in our education, **functions in a Living-Union Relationship with each other component in it**—and that's what edification provides for!
- And the **edification** that's taking place within us is **NOT a material building**—but it's the edification of the **LIFE OF THE LIVING GOD!**
- And the very things that constitute His functional Life—by what He thinks; that governs how He Conducts Himself; and governs what He does—are being given to us!
- And therefore we are a **LIVING EDIFICE**—and that's why we are ***God's building!***

- I Cor. 3:9 — *For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry*, (not “field” - the KJ Trans. understood there's more to it than that—“*husbandry*” focuses upon the administration & management aspect of agriculture [which is the aim of our sonship training] ***ye are God's building.***

- And that's why the foundation is a LIVING PERSON: Jesus Christ!
(I Cor. 3:11)

- (see also Eph. 2:19-22)

- And it's a LIVING EDIFICE that we're building!

- And in that sense—it's like the Positive & Proper response of a son (if you're talking about building an edifice) is like the **mortar** and each 'form of doctrine' is like a **brick**.

- And in order to produce the edifice—you've got the brick (and you understand what it is and where it's supposed to go) — **but you just can't lay one brick on top of another brick, and expect to build a building!**

- But you've got this thing called "mortar" — and it's like the Positive & Proper response of the son to every "brick" of the curriculum that he learns, is like the "mortar"!

- And when he responds Positively & Properly to the "brick" of doctrine he's just learned—then he's able to "stick" that brick on the brick he's previously learned—and then that provides for him to get another brick and "stick" it to the one he just learned — and the "Edifice" gets built!

- So the Positive & Proper response of a son to what he just learned **is an essential thing** to what God calls "godly edifying"!

- And it's also an advance upon our understanding of godly edification (beyond merely "thinking, living, & laboring" like God) - and beyond understanding and appreciating that "Grand Design" God has behind all the laboring together with Him—and now we can add to that, this Positive & Proper response of the son that is so essential to godly edification!

- So you should now see that we've actually got a far better insight to God's own "methodology" of education and edification—(and it's far removed from the way God's word is taught/handled by the majority of Christian Bible teachers today)!

- And because the son's Positive & Proper response IS such an **essential** thing—that's why (in Proverbs 3:1-4), you've got those 2 **benefits** mentioned there. [in :2 and in :4]

- And in general, those 2 benefits that are mentioned there:
PROVIDE FOR GOING ON!

- Regardless of what the details are within them—and regardless of the unique things in them that either pertain only to the remnant in God's program with Israel, or with us in this disp. of grace —

— when you distill everything in (:2) down to a common denominator, and distill everything in (:4) down to a common denominator— **the common denominator is: YOU'RE GOING TO BE ABLE TO GO ON!**

- (:2) *length of days, long life, peace, shall they add to thee provide for going on!*

- (:4) *finding favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man provide for going on!*

- And that's the fundamental issue that's got to be understood and appreciated, **first!**

- That this Positive & Proper response of a son to either a component of doctrine or a form of doctrine that he has just learned: **IS ESSENTIAL IN ORDER FOR HIM TO BE ABLE TO GO ON!**

- And that means that—the more you understand the essential nature of the Positive & Proper Response of a Son—the more you realize that more often than not—the biggest obstacle that most saints ever face in their sonship education is right here! (that is, a Negative and an Improper response)!

- Let's just verify that using these terms "Positive" and "Proper" as the response a son is to have to what he has just learned is legitimate.

- In (:1) you have the Father exhorting His son to, "Don't do this ___" which means, the negative is what you're probably going to be doing, and the opposite (the **Positive**) is what I want you to do."

- And then in (:3) you have the Father saying, *Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:* — well, that’s not simply an issue of, “Don’t do this, but do this other thing” — but what you have here is a real description as to the **precise manner** in which something needs to be done.

- And when something needs to be done in a **precise manner**, it’s then being done “**Properly**”!

- Therefore the response of a son to the information he learns—and the Testing of his Volition that is designed to perfectly mate with the doctrine he just learned is to first of all be **Positive**; and secondly (because it’s edification that’s taking place—and Conduct & Behavior & Labor are all part of it), then the son has to respond **Properly** to what he just learned by doing with the doctrine what it is designed to do.

- And folks, what we’re going to end up with here—is a far better understanding and appreciation for what’s going on when we assembly together—that is, I know what I’m supposed to do as the Bishop and Father of the loc. assem., (and you know what I’m supposed to do) — and then you now know what you’re supposed to do on your end of things with the information you learn as a son/daughter—(that is, you know what’s expected of you: to, when your volition is tested, to respond both Positively and Properly to that doctrine you just learned). [and I know what you’re to do]

- And by the effectual working of the curriculum for sonship education—edification will be going on here on 2 continuous levels: 1) Individually; 2) Collectively (as a body).

- (By the way—that should also give you more perception into how godly edifying can be **hindered** or **halted** [individually, or in the assembly]).

- (In other words—you know what would be the cause of FAILURE of the doctrine to work effectually—either for you as an individual, or for us as an assembly).

- So the more we know about the Positive & Proper response (and the benefits that come from it) - the better off we’ll be.

- Let's begin looking at the details of Proverbs 3:1-4 —

- It has 2 Parts to it (or 2 sides of the same coin of how a son is to respond to what he learns) — (:1-2) and (:3-4)

Proverbs 3:1— *My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:*

- First of all, don't get tripped up on the words *law* and *commandments* thinking that what's being talked about is the Law of Moses & the 10 Commandments - because that's **not** what's in view.

- The issue of using the words *law* and *commandments* is simply the issue of what the Father has taught His son has come **from** the Father **to** the son—and therefore the simple issue is, that the information is AUTHORITATIVE.

- And that's what a father gives his son—he gives him authoritative information — and that's why even the apostle Paul can come along and talk about giving us *commandments* and so forth.

- And sonship information can come in the form of these *commandments* that provide for the capacity to determine a right from a wrong and so forth.

- And the truth is—you've already been given what may be described as *commandments* in Romans 12!

- But the point here is to recognize that this exhortation tells you that you've been given a body of information—and therefore the Father calls it "*my law*" — and then it has its components to it; and those components are made up of what the Father calls "*my commandments*" that make up the whole form of doctrine.

- So we could look at our curriculum in Romans 12 and say that (:3-16) make up the part called "*my law*" — and then the 6 components that make it up can be called "*my commandments*" that make up the that body of "*my law*".

- And this underscores all the more that what you've got here is a POST-doctrinal exhortation.

(:1) - *My son, **forget not** my law;*

- The issue of “*forget not*” — most commonly is thought of as simply “a lack of remembering” something—but my understanding is that there is more involved here than that.

- Because my understanding is that this isn’t just an exhortation by the father to the son to always combat the tendency not to remember things.

- And since we are forgetful by nature—then we should be told ‘not to forget’ things—(kind of like a child [or old person]).

- But David isn’t dealing with combating the natural deficiencies we sometimes have as human beings that doesn’t allow us to recall everything we’ve ever heard or learned.

- And our English word *forget* (or the words *forget not*) - or ‘forgetting’ something—it really is one of those words that, to get the depth of its use, has to be understood in the **way** it’s used.

- And in a context such as this—the exhortation to ***not forget*** it means that the nature of the information you just received is ESSENTIAL; it’s VITALLY IMPORTANT information—and that the learner needs to take all the steps necessary to make it so that what has been learned is able to DO for him what it’s designed to do.

- And when that kind of information has been taught—that’s when a teacher would come along and say, “Now **don’t forget** what you’ve learned!”

- And the teacher is not saying that in the sense of natural forgetfulness—but it’s the issue of the teacher coming along and (still utilizing the “forget” word, because that is the word that indicates the lack of remembering something—and therefore because of that you aren’t able to utilize it like you wanted to utilize it) — but putting it in a exhortation or admonition type form—and putting the onus upon the one who has learned it—that it really is his responsibility to make sure that what he has learned “sticks” with him—and that he is able to make the proper use of it like he’s supposed to.

- And that's the way in which a father exhorts his son here in (:1) - and that's the way in which the "*forget not*" is being utilized.

- And as it's used here (*My son, forget not my law;*) - you're supposed to recognize that the information you've just received and that you've just learned is **ESSENTIAL** and **VITALLY NECESSARY**—and now the responsibility is put upon **you** to make it so that you have these things in 'remembrance' - and to have them with you so that they are always available to be utilized—and when the situation comes up in which they are to be utilized, they **CAN** be utilized!

- Therefore the exhortation is designed to make the son aware that **he's responsible for responding to what he has just learned**—with **more** than just the 'intellectual' recognition of what he has just learned.

- He hasn't just learned information that's only designed to fill up the 'attic' of his mind—or just be filed away in the 'filing cabinet' of his mind — no

— he's learned something that's designed to be part of the 'fabric' of his thinking — it's designed to 'make up' his thought patterns. (The issue, once again, being *godliness*).

- And the very things his Father thinks with—and the very manner in which his Father thinks (which are the 'fabric' of God the Father's thinking) are being **transferred** to the son.

- And now they're designed to be part of the son's thinking—and to be the composition of his mind—and the son needs to respond to them as such.

- And in order for them to become the fabric of the son's mind—the son needs to recognize that once he understands them (and they've become learned, therefore) - that really, it's his responsibility to take the next step that makes them part of the fabric of his mind.

- And this will be the issue of, in the final analysis, getting them *written on the fleshy table of his heart*—this major Volition Testing Point is the very thing that the Holy Ghost within you responds to, and takes the information therefore when the Positive/Proper response is there, and writes it as *the epistle (of Christ)* on the fleshy table of the heart!

- And that's why—when you get down to (:3) - the son is exhorted to do that—and to take the necessary steps in order to get that accomplished—because THAT'S the goal of it all — (that is, to get the doctrine of the component of the sonship curriculum that you've just learned: written on the fleshy tables of your heart) - [III Cor. 3:3 *Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.*]

- **And this “next step” is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY!**

- And a son understands that he's responsible for taking the necessary next step to get that accomplished!

- But the actual “Agency” that gets it done is: ***the Spirit of adoption*** that is resident within the son (within you).

- And both the son and the Spirit are intelligently understanding that—on the basis of the fulfillment of the Positive & Proper response—that information, now, **becomes part of the fabric of the son's thinking!** (Just as it's part of the 'fabric' of the Father's thinking!)

- So the Positive Response so far—(*My son, forget not my law;*) — is the son making the conscious decision [in connection with what he has just learned] - that he knows exactly what the information/ doctrine is designed to do — (not just in connection with what it says, but in that **it's designed to BE part of his thought patterns** and the WAY in which he thinks—it's designed to be information from which his thoughts from now on will have IT as part of the composition of those thoughts)!

- And that's how it's supposed to be with YOU as your Father's son—and the kind of responsibility you now have at the end of Rom. 12:8—to take the godly selfless love you now have produced in you—and to not only do with it what it's designed to do in the outworking of the Conduct & Behavior and in Laboring with your Father in an office in the local assembly—but you're responsible to respond Positively and Properly to it in such a way (an intelligent, definable, describable way) that ends up with godly selfless love (as far as it goes so far) 'not forgotten'; 'kept' in your heart; 'bound about your neck'; & 'written upon the table of your heart!'

- And as a son, you're to make the conscious decision *not to forget it* on the basis of ALL THAT!

- Proverbs 3:1— *My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:*

- The operative verbal component here being that you're exhorted to 'let your heart **keep** my commandments' — you're to let your heart KEEP them.

- **keep**—(נָצַר) Natsar = to guard, watch over, preserve) - and my understanding is that, based upon the word usage as well as the way in which it's used—and the context surrounding it—my understanding is that this is not talking about “keeping” the Father's commandments in the sense of obeying them, or observing them, or performing them—[in other words, this isn't an exhortation to 'keep' or perform the 10 commandments—or any commandments for that matter].

- So the question is—in a sentence structure such as this: *My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:* — what is the nature of the 'keeping' that's in view here?

- It's a 'keeping' in the sense of the heart holding on to it; and preventing it from departing from it.

- And when the English word 'keep' is used in this sense—there is an almost unspoken understanding that a particular element or issue naturally accompanies what runs through your mind when you're exhorted in such a way as *forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments* —

— because when 'keeping' something is like it is here—with the sense of holding on to it and preventing it from departure, what else is in view (at the root of the 'keeping')?

Answer: TIME! — This (the Father's *commandments* or doctrine—the information just learned) has to be ever present in your mind **over a long period of time!** (the heart is not to ever let it depart from it!)

- [And other 'elements' that will try to 'dislodge' it are going to have to be dealt with!]

- And so this is an intelligent decision you're going to make as a son to *keep* your Father's *commandment*—and the reason why you're going to have to *keep* it is because you want to **USE** it!

- You don't want to lose it! you don't want it to get away from you—you don't want it to not be there when you **NEED** it! (or have a hard time recalling it).

- And when you 'let your heart keep' something—what you're doing then (just like it says) - you're keeping it **close to your heart**.

- You're keeping it there so that it is ever available to you!

- And that's a **conscious** decision that we make as sons.

- Now I realize that years ago—I attempted to take things like this and come up with (concoct) some kind of mechanical way in which the human spirit and the human soul [along with the Holy Spirit] mechanically did all this — but my understanding now is that God's word doesn't give us that kind of mechanical knowledge—and as Pastor David Harrowar said in 1818, "To be wise above what is written, is nothing short of opposition to God."

- But, although I can't come along and describe what mechanically takes place in the inner man — I do know that when we make that conscious decision to do what's described here in Proverbs 3:1, that a mechanical operation does, indeed, take place in the inner man — and our heart does keep that information—

— and therefore it's **THERE** so that the 2nd aspect to the Positive & Proper response can now make use of it. (:3)

- And once the 2nd aspect makes use of it—(which really is the issue of putting it into practice [living & labor]) — that's when it actually ends up becoming a fixed and permanent part of your mind—and not only that, but that it's always in a ready state to be added to by further information that comes along—and to become a component of further issues that we learn—and therefore (as I've said before), it becomes the very fabric of your mind—and it just becomes the natural frame of mind you have to process everything that makes an impact upon you [either from without, or from within].

- And that therefore provides for a godly ability to make decisions—and to plan—and purpose—and estimate—and resolve—and decide and determine and all that can be said that takes place in connection with “thinking”!

- And of course, that’s exactly what God has designed His word to do—and this is the godly sonship response to anything you learn from the curriculum for your sonship education that’s designed to become an integral part of your thinking from then on.

- And the 1st Part is that POSITIVE response to what has been learned for what it’s designed to be: and that is **to be resident within the heart for utilization in forming the thoughts**—and you as a son make the conscious decision that that’s what you **want** it to be!

- And because of that—you’re going to naturally make the issue of your response to what you’ve just learned (so that it isn’t *‘forgotten’* and so that it is *‘kept’* in your heart) - you’re going to naturally make that information and the keeping of it (your Positive response) a matter of your sonship communion & fellowship in **prayer** with the Father!

- Psalm 139 — This very thing is why, when David goes over the issue of the “searching of the heart” — that once he goes over the major things that takes place when the Father searches the heart— then David comes along and says ...

*17 How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God!
how great is the sum of them!*

- And David comes along and acknowledges exactly what all that information he’s been learning has become to him: it’s all *precious* information!

- And notice that he enumerates them! (:18)

18 If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.

- And that’s the **action** of a son, once again, in connection with having responded POSITIVELY to what he’s learned!

- And notice that David doesn’t go into any real detail here, but deals with it only in general — but what it does do is ...

... it provides sons (both in Israel's program, and with us in this disp. of grace) to understand that, part of the communion & fellowship of sonship prayer involves taking what HAS been learned—and expressing to the Father (in view of it now being learned) the understanding and appreciation of the *precious* nature of it all—and the realization of how it all is going to be utilized.

- And that's a natural thing that a son would be saying to his Father—that expresses to the Father that he's made that conscious decision to take what has been learned and to provide for (as his responsibility) for its usefulness!

“I'm not forgetting what you've taught me, Dad—I want it kept in my heart” — and you go on to express how *precious* those things are—and then go on to express the enumerable nature of them like David describes there.

- (In fact, he actually ends up falling asleep—and when he wakes up, he's still at it!)

- But my point is to get you to gain some further insight to how godly edifying works—and a large part of it is to get the information or doctrine in that **finalize** state where it gets written on the *fleshy tables of your heart*—and now we're coming along and recognizing some of the things that goes into all that. (**And intelligent sonship prayer is a major part of it!**)

- And therefore the issue in Proverbs 3:1—of *forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments*—being the 1st Part or the Positive Response of a son to what he has just learned—and the kind of going over those things with your Father in sonship prayer (like David does) is just a natural thing that a son would be doing that is an **indicator** of his Positive response (as Proverbs 3:1 indicates).

- And that's “natural” because that's the kind of expressiveness that a son would give to his Father because He knows that the information is indispensable—highly vital and important information—and that the last thing in the world that He's going to do is to “forget” it—and therefore you make the conscious decision to esteem it to such a degree that it takes on an ‘unforgettability’ quality to it to you, too.

- And really, that's what part of the human spirit is designed to be able to do.

- The human spirit has the capacity to come along and place a VALUE upon something that is GREAT and that is EXCEPTIONAL and that EXCEEDS other things — and that’s what provides for that thing (whatever it is) to be given a **prominent place** in the heart—and for it NOT to get buried in a bunch of other stuff! and not to get put away in a corner or on a shelf.

- But it stays in a central location—and it stays in an obvious location—like bringing something into a room that you really LOVE (like a piece of art) - and it’s *precious* therefore to you.

- So when you bring it into the room, you don’t put it behind a couch! no You find some prominent place on the wall where you’re going to display it—where every time you ever walk into that room, your eye will immediately go right to that art work. Because every time you’re in that room, you want to see it!

- And you even go to great pains to ensure that no plants are in the way—or other pieces of furniture or whatever—blocking your view—you may even put a light on it—all because of how important it is to you!

- And other things that don’t have as much esteem in your eyes end up getting pushed to the side of the room (or even **removed** from the room)!

- And that’s the concept here—because when the mind esteems something like that—that makes it so that whatever that thing is, is in a position within the mind (and within the heart) **where it doesn’t get lost!**

- It doesn’t get covered over in the ‘clutter’ of the mind—in fact, the truth is, since we’re dealing with **God’s** word here—it’s able to **take the place** of some other things; and not just shove them aside; but completely **get them out of the mind!**

- (And that’s why we’re dealing with *the renewing of the mind*).

- So this 1st Part of the Volition Testing Point of a son once you’ve learned something—this Positive Response aspect of it—is the issue of: positively responding to what has been learned in view of the VALUE OF IT!

- And acknowledging the **value** of it—and acknowledging it (naturally) with the Father in sonship prayer — by doing so, just makes the acknowledging of the **value** of it all that much more of a **sure thing**; and all that much more of a **complete thing**—and that provides for it, therefore, to be put in the position of prominence (prime importance) in the heart—**and when that takes place, then the COMPLETE Positive & Proper response has occurred**—and that results in it being written upon *the fleshy tables of the heart*.

(GO—S-L-O-W-L-Y)

- And now (once it gets written upon the heart), now it's in the **permanent 'Book of the Soul'** (or 'Book of the Heart') [so to speak] where all the information that's been Positively & Properly responded to gets recorded **that becomes the basis upon which the thinking takes place!**

- And so, when we think "as sons" — when it comes to taking information and constructing thoughts that results in decisions being made; plans being made; purposes being determined; resolutions being made — it's kind of like what we (as sons) end up doing is Rapidly Flipping through the pages of *the epistle of Christ* that's being written upon the *fleshy tables of our heart* **and composing our thoughts from that!** (from all that information that applies)

- And mechanically speaking—this is far more understanding than you have had previously in connection with getting the sonship curriculum *written on the fleshy tables of the heart!* — and greater understanding and appreciation for the roll of sonship prayer in connection with that—as well as a greater appreciation for the essential roll of the Positive & Proper response to what you just learned has to proper, godly edification in general!

- And hopefully—you've got a better appreciation for what I've labored so much to try to make you aware of—and that is that issue of a son who doesn't merely 'think God's thoughts' - but rather thinks LIKE (or in the same way) your Father thinks (you process information in the same way).

- Because the truth is—it's quite possible to get God's words 'stored up' in your soul—and yet NOT have them 'written on the fleshy tables of the heart' - and therefore using God's

words as ‘slogans for life’ - or hoping (in the worst sense of the word) that it will bring good luck or a good outcome to your problems—or in an even worse case, misapplying God’s word—and in the end of something like this, a great deal of **frustration** can occur because you’ve got a bunch of God’s word (or a bunch of doctrines) in your soul, but they’re just collected in there with no way of knowing how to USE them properly!!! (i.e., they’re not ‘written on the heart’!)

- And so it’s the ‘flipside’ of this Volition Testing Point (the **Proper** response) that provides for the **full permanence** (so to speak) of the information—because it’s at the end of the Proper Response that the writing of it upon the table of the heart takes place.

- And that’s when it’s permanently ‘etched’ there—indelibly written!

- And being permanently recorded there—it’s then ready to be intelligently utilized in the thinking **from then on!**

- So then—the Positive Response (and I mean an intelligent Positive Response based upon the Exhortation the Father gives you as His son in Proverbs 3:1) is essential and indispensable—because it provides that mechanical means by which the information you just learned to be **prepared properly** to be written on your heart as a permanent matter.

- And when you consciously (and by means of communion & fellowship with your Father about it in sonship prayer) - when you don’t *forget* the doctrine; but *let your heart keep* it as understood in the context of Pro. 3:1—then that provides for and paves the way for that doctrine to be permanently written on your heart—simply put, the Positive Response **paves the way** for the Proper Response to take place!

POSITIVE RESPONSE

Proverbs 3:1— *My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:*

BENEFIT (of the Positive Response)

Proverbs 3:2— *For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.*

- My understanding is that this benefit is specifically for the remnant of Israel when they function as adopted sons.

- However—there is a general issue or parallel that applies both to them in God’s program with Israel, and to us as sons in this disp. of grace in which we live.

- Because there’s a reason why *length of days, long life, and peace* being **ADDED** to them—there’s a reason why they would see that as being a benefit (or being beneficial) to them —

(And really—if you could have *length of days, long life, and peace* you’d see that as a benefit as a son, too).

- But the general issue is that that Positive Response to the doctrine your Father gives you **paves the way for your sonship education to continue on!**

- Now for a member of the remnant—living a “*long and peaceful life*” has as it’s core value to him as a son the benefit of: “I get to continue this education for a long time!” (and the *peace* issue has to be part of it because if you think about it, education is nearly impossible without it! — ever try to teach or learn any thing in a classroom where chaos is taking place and others are disturbing the class? or ever try to learn any thing when conflict and discord exists in your heart?)

- Now we know that these kind of physical blessings that Israel could partake of aren’t promised to us—and the truth is, you’re NOT promised to get *length of days and long life* — (the *peace* however is another matter) - but the truth is, **the same benefit is obtained by us as sons today!**

- Because when you respond Positively to your Father’s doctrine (to His *law* and His *commandments*) **you really are paving the way for your sonship education to continue on!** (Just like in Israel’s program)

- Now in light of (:1 & :2) - do you understand and appreciate what the POSITIVE RESPONSE is all about? — do you really understand and appreciate what would constitute a Positive Response (and what would constitute a Negative Response)? — and that the Positive Response is not just: Do you get it? Can you give it back to me the same way I taught it to you? Is it interesting to you? Is it meaningful while we’re here together?

(Notice that none of that was stressed there in :1)!

- What's stressed is: *forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments*: — and simply 'understanding what's been taught' (while that has to take place), that isn't sufficient enough for what constitutes a Positive Response —

- What constitutes a Positive Response is:

My son, forget not my law;

1) A conscious decision/determination to recognize the ESSENTIAL, VITAL IMPORTANCE of the information you just learned from your Father (it's *transforming you by the renewing of your mind*—and it's providing for all 3 aspects of godliness to take place); and in view of that, you're determined to have it in 'remembrance' so that it can be UTILIZED when it's needed.

but let thine heart keep my commandments:

2) A conscious decision/determination to commune and fellowship with your Father in sonship prayer so as to allow for your human spirit to appreciate the PRECIOUSNESS and VALUE of the information you just learned from your Father—and from that, your human spirit mechanically gives that information a prominent place in your heart where it doesn't get lost. (At which point the information is prepared for the Proper Response to take place).

THE PROPER RESPONSE:

- **Proverbs 3:3**— ***Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:***

- This is the verse that has the most information in it—and it's the one that you might have the greater problem or difficulty in appreciating everything that's said here—(as opposed to the Positive Response).

- ***Let not mercy and truth forsake thee:***

- ***mercy and truth***—my understanding is that, not only by what is said about it here, but also in the rest of the Proverbs themselves—that this is an expression that particularly refers to the issue of a son perceiving (based upon the information that he's learned) - **perceiving the opportunities to put that information into practice**.

- In other words—to take it out of being an issue of simply the godly *thinking*; and to either put it into the godly *conduct and behavior (living)*, and/or put it into *laboring* together with God in an operation of His business that has been learned about.
- Simply put—the *mercy and truth* issue focuses upon the 2nd component of godliness (the *conduct & behavior*) and/or the 3rd component of godliness (the *labor*).
- And when you as a son, have the opportunity to put godly *thinking* into practice (both in basic *conduct & behavior* in general; and in *laboring* together with God in something that He’s doing) - that IS a ‘**merciful**’ provision that has been given to you that allows you to live ‘**truthfully**’ and honestly as to who you are in God’s plan and purpose!
- And that’s true of ourselves in this disp. of grace, and that’s true as well of remnant sons in God’s program with Israel.
- And that’s why this issue of: the opportunity to put what has been learned into practice is the issue of ***mercy AND truth***.
- Because it’s a *mercifully* granted opportunity that gives you the opportunity to walk *truthfully* in view of who you are.
- And what you’re learning (of course) is to be able to walk as the “sons of God” that you are—to walk as who God has made you to be “in Christ”.
- And the godly thinking provides for the *truth* of who we are to be put into practice in Conduct & Behavior, and in the Operations of God.
- And so that expression: *mercy and truth* is describing that very issue.
- And that’s why it says—*Let not mercy and truth forsake thee*: - because we almost expect it to come along and say, “Don’t forsake mercy and truth” - but that’s not the issue—the issue is ‘*Don’t let mercy and truth forsake thee*’ - in other words, *mercy and truth* is looked upon as something **that WE have the opportunity to take a hold of**—and take **advantage** of and **UTILIZE!**

- But if we DON'T—then it's going to go on, and someone else is going to get the opportunity—(not to be competitive about it), but that's the idea of '*not letting mercy and truth forsake thee*' — what it has in view is that you have the opportunity, and you should **never** want that opportunity to 'pass you by' (so to speak).

- And it's quite possible that an opportunity to *let not mercy and truth forsake you*—which is to say, an opportunity to take what the godly thinking has produced in your godly living (or Conduct & Behavior), and then when it comes to putting it into practice in the Labor aspect of godliness—it is quite possible to let that opportunity pass you by with the result that it goes on to someone else!

- (and you can see that with the Corinthians).

- And folks—it is at this very point where you should be able to look at this first Part of the Father's exhortation to you as a son (once you have learned something in the curriculum for sonship education) - and make some connections:

- For example—*Let not mercy and truth forsake thee* is the Father's exhortation and admonition to you as His son who now has the opportunity to LABOR with Him in an operation of His business —

— now think about that one thing for a moment —

— The Father says, "Son, make sure you don't let this sonship opportunity to labor with Me in my business pass you by—son, don't let this *mercy* (or this opportunity to put 'grace into action') pass you by—and don't let this opportunity to put on display the *truth* of who you now are "in Christ" as a son who I have taught and trained to labor with Me **as** my son— and together with Me, fulfill one of My business operations—son, don't let that pass you by!"

- Does that 'ring a bell?' — does that remind you of anything that we talked about (in great detail) when we were back in Romans 8 and dealing with the issue of sonship **establishment**?

- Well, to help you out—and to make one of those “connections” I talked about—it says, “*Let not mercy ... forsake thee*” — or another way of saying it is: Don't let the putting of Grace into Action forsake you!

- And the “connection” to be made here is that—this “*mercy*” or laboring with your Father in the sense of putting Grace into Action—isn't that talking about one of those grace opportunities? or what we called: those sonship graces?

- (see Romans 8:34—[the 4th Probing Question])

- This is one of the reasons why the Exhortation of Pro. 3:3 is said the way it's said—because while the Father exhorts/admonishes you to *Let not mercy and truth forsake thee* — **He doesn't come along and tell us that we HAVE to do it!**

- But the exhortation is put in such a way so as to make us realize that if we do “*forsake*” the sonship grace opportunity to labor with our Father with our newly-developed sonship thinking and conduct—then that would just be plain **STUPID**—that would be **sonship stupidity!**

- And **sonship stupidity** will end up with **sonship condemnation!**

- And when it comes to failures in connection with having **opted out** of—or choosing **not** to fully participate in those sonship graces (or opportunities, honors, and privileges) and the like—the kind of self-recrimination & *condemnation* that comes upon you as a son—your outlook (viewpoint) can get to be: “I might as well not even bother going on” — “I've made such a mess out of this that it's just not worth it” - “**I quit!**”

- But that's when that **godly remedy** kicks in: *It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us!*

- And perhaps now (from the perspective of a son who has learned something from the sonship curriculum) — you can **far** better understand and appreciate that 4th Probing Question and the godly remedy for it!

- So once again—the Exhortation/Admonition of *Let not mercy and truth forsake thee*—is an exhortation to not let the opportunity (the opportunity to participate in one of the sonship graces) pass you by!

- And the truth of the matter is—in sonship education (for both the members of the remnant of Israel, and for us in this disp. of grace) - when we start receiving either our Instruction of Wisdom, or our Instruction of Justice, or Judgment, or Equity—we’re receiving information in which godly edification is supposed to take place (even within the forms of doctrine—in the very components to the forms of doctrine) - and because godliness and godly edification is in view: that means that our *thinking*, *living*, and *labor* will all 3 be addressed; and therefore in each component/form of doctrine, we will be confronted with an opportunity to: 1) participate in the opportunity to put an aspect of *mercy* on display, and 2) participate in the opportunity to put an aspect of the *truth* of who we are “in Christ” on display.

- In other words—especially in connection with *receiving the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity* there is ALWAYS going to be a “*mercy and truth*” opportunity to EVERY component to each of those categories of instruction!

- And so that’s why—when it comes to this first Fatherly Exhortation to you as a son—once the education has gotten itself underway—you not only have the **Positive** Response (of :1-2), but you also have this **Proper** Response (of :3-4) —

— because since everything you’re learning as a son, right from the ‘get go’ is providing for you to, (on the basis of *thinking* a particular thing); translate that into godly *conduct & behavior*; and then translate that into godly *business* — therefore, that **PROPER** Response needs to be there.

- You need to discern the *mercy and truth* opportunity that exists (based upon the godly thinking you’ve just learned) - and when you perceive those *mercy and truth* opportunities: **DON’T LET IT GET AWAY!** (Don’t let it *forsake* you!)

- And you WILL have that opportunity presented to you— and then you'll have adequate time to respond to it—and if you don't respond to it: it will simply move on!

- (Kind of like the expression: “When opportunity knocks: OPEN THE DOOR!”)

- Here—*mercy and truth* comes “knocking” and says, “Here’s your opportunity, don’t let it *forsake* you!”

- And this is where your PROPER Response to that comes into play—and where you TAKE that opportunity and put on display that *mercy and truth*.

- And by doing it this way—by responding **Positively and Properly**—it makes it so that what you have just learned **becomes a PERMANENT part of your inner man!**

- And therefore it’s going to be a **permanent, vital, living** part of your thinking from now on!

- Now— at the end of that phrase in (:3) - *Let not mercy and truth forsake thee:* — we have that colon.

- I haven’t addressed this before—but you’ve got a total of 3 colons in (:1-4).

- And the King James Translators have done a marvelous job of making their verse divisions and information divisions (with the paragraph markers) here.

- Because 1 of the 3 colons is used in a slightly different way than the other 2.

- The 1st one (at the end of :1) - and the 3rd one (at the end of :3) do come along and tell you that you’re supposed to consider all of (:1) as a thought—and then all of (:2) as a corresponding benefit to (:1) — and then you’re supposed to consider all of (:3) as a thought—and then all of (:4) as a corresponding benefit to (:3).

- But (:3) has within it a thought that could stand on its own (almost as a sentence itself), but it's not—it's supposed to be attached to the rest of the information contained in (:3).

- Which therefore makes the rest of (:3) an issue of **mechanics** (in this case)—that is, how it is that you are supposed to (mechanically) *Let not mercy and truth forsake you.*

- And there are 2 ways in which that mechanically takes place — 1) You are to *bind them about thy neck*; and 2) You are to *write them upon the table of your heart.*

- In other words—the 2nd colon at the end of the word *thee* in (:3) is not coming along and telling you that a 2nd (or entirely different component) is being set forth in the remainder of (:3) - but rather that the first thought of (:3) is so powerful that a long pause should be taken there to get that first body of information of (:3) all settled—and then the rest of (:3) goes with it as a description of mechanics of how you are to *let not mercy and truth forsake thee.*

- So the way in which you as a son *do not let mercy and truth forsake you* is by doing what the rest of (:3) says.

- Proverbs 3:3— *Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: **bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:***

- And there are (mechanically) 2 Parts or 2 Steps to that.

- And notice that in each of them you have the word “**them**”

1) *bind **them** about thy neck;*

2) *write **them** upon the table of thine heart:*

- And each of those ‘*them s*’ are talking about the *mercy and truth* of the 1st Clause of (:3)

- *bind them (the mercy and truth)*

- *write them (the mercy and truth)*

- So instead of *forsaking* them—the son *binds them about his neck; and writes them upon the table of his heart.*

- And that two-fold description is a description of an action that an individual takes when he determines to have something with him when he goes about to do what he does in the details of his life—so that when an opportunity comes around—he’s able to take advantage of it — and he’s got ‘on him’ or in his immediate possession what he needs to take advantage of it.

- And there’s 2 things stated there in (:3) to describe that.

- The first one (*binding them about thy neck*) has to do with the provision that someone makes to be able to **PURCHASE an item** when they’re ‘out and about’ in their daily lives.

- And the issue of “*bind them about thy neck*” is the issue that (back in David & Solomon’s day [and even back in Paul’s day] {and quite possibly, even what Judas’ “*bag*” was all about}) — and when something was ‘bound about the neck’ - typically, what was ‘bound about the neck’ was a **leather pouch or bag**.

- And that leather pouch was kept underneath the garments or tunic that the people wore—and in that pouch was your **MONEY**—(similar to our wallet that a man would carry in his back pocket; or that a woman would carry in her purse).

- And they would take that pouch and ‘bind it about their neck’ - so that, first of all, it can’t get lost—secondly, it’s not going to get stolen—because it’s bound about their neck.

- But in it is their **money**—and it enabled them, therefore, when they’d go out, to be able to **make purchases** when they were out in the market—and therefore any time they needed to buy something — if they bought a piece of merchandise, or if they had to pay a fee or toll—or whatever they might need money for in the commerce of their day, then they’re prepared for it.

- And they’ve got with them their money to be able to take advantage of any merchandizing they want to do or any tolls, taxes, fees, customs, tributes, or whatever they might need to pay in going about the routine of their lives.

- (Dickens’ Scrooge was a good example of this.)

- Let's look at the 1st Step— *bind them about thy neck*;

- This is the issue of a son taking that godly thinking that he's just been taught—and on the basis of it—perceiving and discerning how it's designed to be utilized (and of course, part of what he'll be perceiving & discerning will come about in his communion & fellowship with his Father in sonship prayer) ——

—— and when it comes to the actual implementation of that godly thinking in the details of his own personal life (and what he does and what he encounters in his daily life)—then when he perceives those *merciful and truthful* opportunities, then the issue is that he makes another conscious decision:

There they are! I recognize them! I'm not going to let them forsake me! I'm not going to let them get away from me!
I'm going to *bind them about my neck* and I'm going to *write them upon the table of my heart!*

- And so what the Father is saying to the son is— “Look, you've got some information now that's like **spiritual money!**” (see Pro. 3:14)

- **And what you have just learned is to be treated like SPIRITUAL MONEY**—and the thinking that you're doing with it is going to **enable you to purchase opportunities to put it into practice**—and purchase opportunities to put on display who you are **in truth** in God's plan and purpose!

- **And your PROPER RESPONSE now to what you've just learned in Romans 12:3-8 is to treat it just like that!**

- And to make the conscious decision now—as you go out and do your 'daily business' (whatever that might be) - that you're going to be looking for the opportunities you've discerned to put this information into practice!

- And as those opportunities appear—and you're confronted with them—then just like money in that pouch around your neck— you're going to come along and say, “I'm going to **buy** that opportunity” - “**I'm going to redeem the time**” - “I'm going to purchase that opportunity” — and it's going to be like you're going to reach into your tunic and into your pouch, and you're going to pull out that spiritual money **and your going to BUY that opportunity!**

- And that's the ***merchandise of your wisdom*** (just as it says there in :13-14ff)!

- And so that's what that 1st Mechanical issue is of how you are to *Let not mercy and truth forsake thee.*

- And the 1st Issue of *not letting mercy and truth forsake you* involves the issue of discerning the *merciful* and *truthful* opportunities that the godly thinking that you've just learned provides for—and you then make the conscious decision that you're not going to let those things get away from you—and when the opportunities come along, you're going to take advantage of them.

- And so in connection with that, you ***bind*** those *merciful* and *truthful* opportunities (or **sonship graces**) *about your neck as “money in a pouch”* so that when the opportunity comes to **buy** something that you like—you're able to buy it!

- And then the 2nd Mechanical Issue is to:

write them upon the table of thine heart:

- And that's the issue of making it a PERMANENT part of your ever-looking desire to take advantage of any opportunity that comes your way to SPEND your SPIRITUAL MONEY.

- And (to carry the purchasing illustration over) — it's like you make a **list**—and you're specifically out there looking for those things on your list to buy.

- And it's like— you just don't have the money with you, but you also have the **list**—and when you then see the things that match up with what you have on your list: you want to BUY them!

- It becomes your spiritual “**shopping list**”! (which is a cheap way to describe it—but it gets the basic concept across).

- And of course—that terminology (*write them upon the table of thine heart*) - a son, both in God's program with Israel and with us in this disp. of grace understands & appreciates what that means **in connection with being a beneficiary of the New Covenant**—because the New Covenant provides for God to put His law in our minds (our *inward parts*) and write them in our hearts!

- By the way—come over to Jer. 31:33 — in that 1st Component of New Covenant Sanctification—that’s why you’ve got 2 Parts or 2 Issues to that first part:

1) ***I will put my law in their inward parts,***
(There’s your POSITIVE RESPONSE)

2) ***and write it in their hearts;***
(There’s your PROPER RESPONSE)!

- It gets in the mind first—and it’s ***PUT*** THERE!
And it takes its prominent position **in the mind!**

- And that makes it so that the PROPER Response can come along next—which is the issue of—I’m going to utilize it and recognize it as the **precious** thing that it is—and so I take that information and I discern the *merciful and truthful* opportunities to put it into practice —

- And when that takes place—it’s like me *writing it upon the table of my heart*—and I’m going to go out and look for these things like a “list” - and I’m going to **do** this and **do** that—and **put it into effect** this way and that way—

- And when that takes place (with the conscious decision to commit it to the heart like that) **THAT’S WHEN GOD HIMSELF WRITES IT UPON THE FLESHY TABLES OF YOUR HEART!!!**

- AND THAT’S WHEN THOSE LIVING WORDS OF THE LIVING GOD ... FULLY ... LIVE ... WITHIN ... YOU!

- And they become the LIVING THOUGHTS for our “inner man”!

- And that’s where the 2 Benefits (the benefit of :2 and the benefit of :4) — when you distill them both down to their common denominator — both of those things are describing **the son’s ability to go on!**

- And when a son responds Positively & Properly to each body of information (a whole form of doctrine or just one of its components)

... when you response Positively and Properly to it—and by the Positive & Proper response—the *Spirit of the Living God* writes it upon the fleshy tables of your heart—

— and then, and only then are you able to go on.

- And the next Component or the next Form of Doctrine is able to be edificationally added to what you just learned.

- And that's the **Positive and Proper Response!**

- And then we have the BENEFIT that goes with the Proper Response —

- **Proverbs 3:4**— *So* (why should you do what [:3] says?) *shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.*

- And just as it was with (:2) - here in (:3), the common denominator to both of these added benefits to the Positive & Proper Response is so that you as a son can GO ON to the next Component or the next Form of Doctrine.

- And the Father looks for that 'marker' in His son of both a Positive **and** a Proper Response to the doctrine he has just learned—and when the Father sees that, and when the son knows full-well that he has responded Positively and Properly, then both Father and son know that they can then move on in the curriculum for sonship education.

- And this particular benefit of (:4) is found and stated in almost this exact same way over in Romans 14:18— *For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.*

- This particular benefit is shared by both the remnant of Israel (as sons), and by us (as sons), the members of the new creature of the church the body of Christ in this disp. of grace.

- If you respond Positively & Properly to the doctrine of your sonship education—then you're going to *find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man*— now that doesn't mean that everyone is going to "like" you—but it means that you've done the **right thing** in the sight of men—you've functioned as a "son of God" emulating your Father, precisely how you're supposed to— and whether or not

they “like” you or don’t “like” you—that Positive & Proper response to your sonship education has done to them, and produced in their sight what that doctrine is designed to do—it’s made the proper and appropriate IMPACT upon them that it’s deigned to make.

- (Especially in the sight of both God and other “*men*” who are fellow believers/Christians who are part of the body of Christ, but who may not be responding to their sonship education.)

- In other words—that doctrine has been put to use and put into practice PROPERLY!

- Now let’s take what we’ve learned about the PROPER RESPONSE and put the essential elements of it in a **SUMMARY STATEMENT**.

- What constitutes a PROPER RESPONSE is:

Let not mercy and truth forsake thee:

1) With the newly acquired godly thinking, you will then be given the sonship grace opportunity to put it into practice, (both in basic conduct & behavior, and in laboring together with God in something that He’s doing), which is to be recognized as a ‘merciful’ provision that allows for you to live ‘truthfully’ and honestly as to who you are “in Christ” and in God’s plan and purpose—whereupon you determine NOT to allow such a sonship grace opportunity to pass you by!

bind them about thy neck;

2) This is the issue of taking the *mercy and truth* sonship grace opportunity to live & labor with your Father and make the conscious decision to treat it as ‘spiritual money,’ kept in a pouch about your neck in order to ‘purchase’ the opportunity to put your sonship thinking into practice—and thereby “*redeem the time.*”

write them upon the table of thine heart:

3) This is the conscious decision to take the “*mercy and truth*” opportunity to spend your ‘spiritual money’ that comes your way by creating in your heart a ‘list’ of opportunities you want to ‘buy’ or put into practice—whereupon God Himself writes the doctrine upon the fleshy tables of your heart, making it so that the living words of the Living God fully live in you!

- Godly Sonship Edification and the “Lord’s Table” (Communion).

- What we’re going to do next (prior to going on) — is to take Communion—but in view of both what we have now come to understand and appreciate in our first Component to our first Form of Doctrine—we should now have a far greater appreciation for [and intelligent understanding of] just what we’re supposed to be doing when we celebrate the Lord’s Table).

- And because of that—and because of some things we hopefully come to appreciate over the next few Bible classes, the way in which we celebrate the Lord’s Table is going to undergo some “**adjustments**” to it—that hopefully will make it even more meaningful and more significant to you as a **son** who is ever more aware of how you benefit from the New Covenant—as the ‘book of your soul’ is now beginning to be written by the Spirit of the Living God!

- (Go over the issue of the NEW COVENANT—[slide show])

- The issue of “Communion” and the ‘memorial service’ that it is.

- And the IMPACT that the Lord’s Table is designed to have.

- And SON’S (above all) should bring ‘more to the table’ so to speak, and properly educated, intelligent sons should bring more meaning to the Lord’s Table (and the Lord’s Table should be more meaningful to them) than any one else!

- I Corinthians 10— It is proper to talk about the Communion service as “The Lord’s Table” and totally **improper** to talk about it as “The Lord’s Supper”!

- Notice the context—(:1) — Essential Doctrine #3: Godly **Sanctification!** [slide #17]

- (:14) - The Corinthian’s Conduct & Behavior is out of line in a number of ways with the issue of their **sanctification!**

- (see 1:1-3 [:2]) - The Corinthians were having problems when it came to putting their sanctified sonship position “in Christ” into practice in the details of their lives!

- (Both in the world and amongst themselves in their local assemblies).

- And the Corinthians had a whole bunch of things that they were doing in their conduct & behavior that was completely out of line with their sanctified position “in Christ” — and out of line with their sonship status (having gone through Level I Sonship Education [or Romans doctrine])!

- Ch. 2—(:1-2) [they could NOT “move on”!!!]

- Ch. 3— divisions (:1-3)

- Ch. 4— a Christianity based upon the wisdom of men (:7-15)

- Ch. 5— fornication among them (:1)

- Ch. 6— taking one another to court (:1ff)

- Ch. 7— ungodly conduct in connection with marriage

- Ch. 8-10— ungodly conduct with weaker brothers

- Especially in Ch. 10—the issue is of them failing to appreciate that when they were “sanctified” God separated them from what they used to be involved with; separated them unto Himself—and the desire & purpose God has is that they LIVE unto HIM and not be drawn back into the things they came out of!

- And the whole thing boils down to the issue of their failure to understand and appreciate what it means to be beneficiaries of the New Covenant **and then living consistent with that!**

- And in Ch.10—the context deals with the fact that the way in which they were handling the ‘weaker brother’ situation (and the *boast* they were making concerning their ‘strength’ in the faith) is not only inconsistent with how to handle the ‘weaker brother’ - but as Paul points out in Ch.10, he’s really concerned that it’s a veiled issue with respect to a ‘desire’ that they had to go back into the issue of idolatry that they came out of—because they’re more **pleased** with that than they are with respect to the issues of who they are “in Christ”!

- And that's why, in the opening verses of Ch. 10, Paul brings up the parallel between Israel—(when God sanctified Israel by bringing them out of Egypt and brought them unto Himself (by means of that '*baptism unto Moses*')!

- And how that they weren't pleased—even though God gave them the *spiritual meat* and *spiritual drink*—and they weren't happy with that and so they desired to go back into Egypt that they had just come out of. And God wasn't pleased with that!

- And Israel rebelled against their sanctification—and so Paul's coming along and telling the Corinthians here, "The real thing I'm concerned with, with you guys, is that that's the issue with you!" — (and that's why Paul deals with the issue of temptation there and so forth—and that they're acting just like Israel did in connection with their sanctification).

- (:15) — Here Paul is going to talk about the issue of something that is really put on **display** when they observe Communion or the Lord's Table.

- And what they put on display is something with respect to their IDENTITY as sanctified sons—and that it's no longer what it used to be!

- And that's the context you need to have in mind here.

- Now let's look at what "**Communion**" is—and underscore that the Lord's Table is the appropriate terminology—but the "Lord's Supper" is NOT appropriate at all.

- (:16) - And the issue is: Yes! It is! The "communion" concept is there—why?

- (:17) - Well, if you're all *partakers of that one bread*, then there's a "communion" issue—a fellowship/partaking issue.

- And that's an appropriate term to designate the observance of 'taking the cup of blessing' [and **blessing** it in connection with taking it] — and taking of the bread and partaking of that together—(the 2 emblems within the observance).

- It's appropriate to call that "Communion" - because as Paul is saying it here—it's certainly putting that issue on **display**.

- Then as you go on down through the information here—Paul goes on to say the things he does in order to get the Corinthians to realize that **FLEEING** from idolatry is the only consistent thing to do in view of who they are "in Christ" (and who they are **collectively** "in Christ")

- Even though, as sons, they have the liberty to do certain things—the issue is, that it may not be (and in this case, it certainly is NOT) consistent with the testimony that they are supposed to portray—nor is it consistent with the kind of "communion" and fellowship that the Lord's Table is supposed to portray!

- (come on down to :19-20 [read]) — notice that "*fellowship*" and "*communion*" go together [hand-in-hand] — and the Communion issue isn't consistent (or the *cup* and its benefits and the *bread* and its benefits) isn't consistent **with what they were doing!**

- (:21) — and here is the issue of the "**Lord's table**" - and the reason why that is the appropriate term will be seen even more later on—but for now that is the appropriate designation for the observance of "Communion" in the loc. assembly.

- And when Paul gets back to dealing with this issue in Ch. 11 he's going to make it very clear that viewing the Communion Service in a loc. assembly as the "Lord's Supper" is NOT an appropriate or proper designation, nor is it right to view it as such!

- I Cor. 11:17 — God designed the loc. assem. for a "betterness" to take place: betterness in edification; betterness in impact; betterness in being 'knit together'; betterness in everything that takes place.

- But when **they** assembled together—a worsening was taking place—and if you follow what's going on, Paul lays out several categories of worsening that was happening when they assembled together—and one of those things that Paul deals with is their IMPACT that, as sons, they are designed to have upon, especially, the angelic beings in the heavenly places! And that's understood from sonship edification—from Romans doctrine [sonship establishment].

- And by what they were doing—they **cancelled out** the ‘good’ & proper impact—and it’s been replaced by an impact of **mockery!**

- And that’s accomplished by turning the “Lord’s Table” into the “Lord’s Supper”!

- By the way—if you don’t understand & appreciate this—you’ll never understand why God says what He does in (:27ff)!!!

- (read 11:17-20) — They turned the Lord’s Table into a SUPPER—and a supper is **an appetite-satisfying meal!**

- Notice (:34) - you’re to have “supper” AT HOME!

- (:21-22) — What they were doing was—treating the Lord’s Table (Communion) **as if it was AN IDOL FEAST!**

- And they came out of that kind of stuff—Aphrodite’s Temple was right down the road from them—and they’re used to “holy days” and all types of “feasts” and observances.

- And in connection with those feasts—there was a lot of drinking and debauchery—and that’s what they had turned the Lord’s Table in to!

- They’re reveling in a drunken, gorging, monstrous atrocity — and putting the Lord’s **name** to it!

- And by so doing—they’re not making any line of demarcation between the Lord and the Idol—and themselves and the idol-worshippers!

- Their unique IDENTITY “in Christ” is not being put on display—(and Christ’s unique identity)-- is **BLURRED**, if not **WIPED OUT** entirely by what they’re doing!

- So therefore, the appropriate and proper term is “The Lord’s Table” and not “The Lord’s Supper”! — and you’re supposed to come to it with an intelligent understanding & appreciation for the kind of separation that has taken place in your sanctified sonship status—which is designed to make an **impact** upon some characters!

- And God takes that IMPACT issue that the Lord's Table is designed to make **VERY SERIOUSLY!** (In fact, if you don't understand & appreciate that issue properly, you'll never understand why God responds the way He does in 11:27-34!)

- Now let's gain an understanding and appreciation for what was in Paul's mind—and what is in God's mind—when He talks about this issue of “*communion*” — and get the understanding of what that means to God.

- Come back to I Cor. 10—and once again, in the context here, Paul is dealing with the way in which the Corinthians (by their conduct & behavior) in desiring to go back into that Idol Temple—aren't simply desiring to flex their strong, sonship liberty “muscles” (so to speak) - but Paul understands that this is really A **TEMPTATION** and they're succumbing to it—just like the children of Israel did when they were brought out of Egypt and desired to go back! (and it's going to stain/ruin their sonship identity/reputation!)

- And after Paul deals with them on that matter (from :1 down through :14) - and gets it so that when they value & esteem their sonship sanctification like they ought to—and that they don't have that same mentality that Israel had regarding sanctification when they came out of Egypt—verse 14 tells them that the only consistent thing to do is to ‘slowly turn and walk away from idolatry’ ??? - NO!

*14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, **flee** from idolatry.*

- You “FLEE” from something that is hazardous to you; that is dangerous to you—and if you stay in that thing, you're going to end up being victimized by it!

- You “FLEE” from a TRAP, from a SNARE—you “flee” from things that are harmful to you! (**Separate** from it!)

- And if they get all that Paul sets forth from :1-:13, then they'll know that what they're doing is giving in to a TEMPTATION that will destroy them and the IMPACT they're supposed to be making and putting on display in their sonship sanctification—but God is *faithful* and makes a *way of escape* (escape that trap) - and therefore the only consistent thing for them to do is to FLEE from that trap!

- And to cap off that issue—Paul says in (:15) *I speak as to wise men* (addressing them as the sons that they are in this disp. of grace) *judge ye what I say* (the decision to do what Paul says is theirs as sons).

- And Paul wants to get them to function as *wise* sons—(and not as “Wise Guys”) — and by saying *judge ye what I say*, they are to think about it; analyze it; and make a sonship decision on the basis of what Paul’s just said to them here.

- And the doctrine they just got allows for them to discern between a **temptation** ... and **soundness** (sound judgment).

- And the NATURAL thing to bring up in connection with all this is: The issue of **what is consistent with your IDENTITY**—and how you put that identity as justified, sanctified sons who should be utilizing the forms of doctrine and the components to those forms of doctrine of your sonship edification to put on display your sonship identity “in Christ” (**IF** you have responded to them **Positively & Properly**) —

— and there is a natural ‘outlet’ (so to speak) - an ordinance that is given to the loc. assem. that is designed to manifest and put on display your sonship sanctified identity “in Christ” — to “show” that issue especially to the Adversary and his cohorts (who are in charge of idolatry)!

- And what I’m after here is that you see the “naturalness” for why Paul then brings up the Lord’s Table issue in (:16-17)

16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

17 For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

- Paul says, “Who do you have *communion* with? Who do you have fellowship with?” Who are you “one” with? — and Paul reminds them of what they learned in Romans 12:3ff — that you’re *one body in Christ, and every one members one of another* — as the local assembly/church that you are—joined to **that** body, NOT joined with that idol temple!

- And Paul can make the connection with them that they are *one body* and *one bread*—because the bread represents the very **body** of Christ Himself!

- And what I want you to see is that there is a direct & natural connection between your sonship education (and what you learn in the Components & Forms of doctrine that make it up) to the Lord’s Table where you can put your sanctified sonship identity on display!

- And it's critical that you make the connection with the New Covenant benefits; your sonship sanctification; and the Positive & Proper response to the components/forms of doctrine contained in the curriculum for your sonship education — that you make the connection between that and the **impact issue** that the Lord's Table allows for you to put **all that** on display!

- And that has to be in your mind when you approach the issue of Paul's understanding (and God's understanding) of the issues involved any time the word "*communion*" & "*fellowship*" come up.

- And any time the word "*communion*" & "*fellowship*" come up—whether in this context here or in any context—the issue is **consistency with the identity** you possess as justified, sanctified sons!

- And there's an **impact** that God has designed the communion & fellowship of the Lord's Table to have upon some characters who **HATE** that identity you have as sons "in Christ" — **because of what that means to them!**

- II Corinthians 6—in view of the corrective doctrine Paul set forth in I Cor., and the doctrine in II Cor. up to this point—he exhorts these Corinthians who have yet to acknowledge him and have yet to separate themselves from their **inconsistent** associations—and when Paul gives them their final 'beseeching' here to do so—he brings up their identity issue once again, but now he does it in a '**multi-faceted**' way.

- It's like Paul takes the issue of their sanctified sonship identity "in Christ" - and looks at it as a 'jewel' (so to speak) - with all these various facet cuts to it—and turns it around as he talks about it and sees: "Here's the light that you are; here's the darkness you used to be: Where's the connection?" — "Here's the righteousness you are; here's the unrighteousness you used to be: Where's the connection?" — "Here's Christ that you belong to; here's Belial you used to belong to: Where's the connection?"

- And as he does that—Paul takes the concept of *communion* & *fellowship* and talks about it in every conceivable shade of meaning that those words have in connection with the **identity features** of your sanctified sonship life!

- And what we're especially concerned with is how he uses the term *communion* and what that issue is all about.

- (read :11-13) - (:14) ***Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers:***
(and that’s exactly what they were—and by the way, this isn’t simply talking about the marriage issue only)
- But the issue is that the Corinthians were ‘yoking’ themselves together with Idol-Worshipping Gentiles—and not just in a ‘business-type’ manner, but in a **fellowship-type manner!** (without seeing much difference [spiritually] between themselves and the idol-worshipping Gentiles)
- And a “yoke” is designed to put 2 oxen together (closely together) with a purpose in mind: and that is to LABOR TOGETHER in order to get something done.
- And therefore this admonition from Paul is directed squarely at their SONSHIP LABOR with their Father!
- Because they were supposed to be laboring together with God! — that’s what their sonship education was all about and all provided for!
- But they’re laboring together with *unbelievers* **in the name of “doing things for God”!!!**
 - By the way—here is a classic example of how Paul (as their “Father-Teacher”) could take them to task about their edification as sons because he could clearly SEE that they had not responded PROPERLY to the sonship doctrine!) [it was evident that there was no **evidence** of their Proper Response!]
- And Paul says that this is an ***unequal*** yoking together—it’s **unequal** — and the reason why it’s unequal is because the **IDENTITY** possessed by the 2 that are in the yoke is totally **different!**
- (:14 again) ***Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?***
- And the answer to every one of these rhetorical questions is: **NONE** (there is no connection—there is no consistency of the 2 identities going together and laboring together!

- (By the way—I'm not talking about believers and unbelievers living together on the face of the earth—or working together in their business or whatever—but this is talking about sonship labor with the Father in HIS business!)

- (:14 again) ... *for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? (NONE!) and what communion hath light with darkness? (NONE!)*

- Notice here what Paul (and God Himself) think when that word “**communion**” is used—and what it means to Him—He says, You’re dealing with the issue of “**light**” and “**darkness**”!

- “**Communion**” deals with the issue of your identity with God Himself—and an identity **with the realm where He dwells!** (because He dwells in the LIGHT!)

- And when Paul talks about *communion* and thinks about *communion*—(and the reason why he identifies it as *communion* back there in I Corinthians 10:16)—is because by being made a partaker of the *blood of Christ*, and by being made a partaker of the sacrificial *body of Christ*—you become identified with God Himself (who is ‘all light’) — you’ve been delivered **from** the *power of darkness!*

- And now let’s realize just where that realm is that you’ve been delivered unto!

- Colossians 1:12— *Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us **meet** to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:*

- Notice that expression: *which hath made us **meet*** — (or ‘fit’) — well that issue of the Father making you *meet*—that’s what you’re celebrating and putting on display (personally celebrating in your own heart & amongst yourselves) when you partake of The Lord’s Table!

- Because one of the things the New Covenant declares and provides for is your SPIRITUAL FITNESS — that’s how you were made *meet* by the Father!

- *meet* being a much more powerful word than ‘fit’ - carrying the shade of meaning of valuable/ excellent/ lawful.

- (:12-13) *12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:
13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us **into the kingdom of his dear Son:***

- And that's where the realm that you've been delivered into is: IN THE REALM OF THE "**LIGHT**" OF THE 3RD HEAVEN!

- And that's why over in I Timothy 6—and in (:14) Paul, referring to *the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ*: says in (:15) ...

*15 Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; (that's His 2 Titles in connection with both reconciling the heavenly places & the earthly places back unto Himself)
16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the **light** which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.*

- The point being—Paul understands that when the *communion* issue comes up—when *communion* is the concept—you're dealing with the **IDENTITY you** as a saint (as a **son**) possess with **the light**—and the fact that you possess **NO** identity whatsoever with the **darkness** you used to belong to.

- Now the Adversary (in response to the change in programs God made when He suspended His program with Israel and brought in this present disp. of grace in which we live) - the Adversary in response to that, has changed his identity (for seductive purposes) — and he's transformed himself into **an angel of LIGHT!** (II Cor. 11:14)

- And his ministers are *the ministers of righteousness*.

- And that's for the sole purpose of **deception**—and to deceive ignorant, unlearned members of the church the body of Christ into being *unequally yoked together* with him and his agents (his *ministers*).

- And that's what was involved with the Corinthian's **abuse** of the Lord's Table **and turning it into the Lord's Supper!**

- Come back to II Cor. 6 and notice the rest of the **identity distinctiveness** issue.

- (II Cor. 6:15) — 15 *And what **concord** hath Christ with Belial?*

- “*concord*” being a synonymous term with *communion* & *fellowship*—all having slight shades of meaning differences and distinctiveness about the issue of cooperation and togetherness that they’re collectively dealing with.

- “*Concord*” has the ides of harmony in purpose—it involves the issue of intelligent design & purpose, aim, goal, objective.

- And that’s why it’s used with the personages involved: *Christ & Belial* (the term of the Adversary in connection with being twice-dead Gentiles under his lawful possession).

15 ... *or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?*

- What *part* (or roll to fulfill)

16 *And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?*

- And that’s what was going on with those Corinthians back in I Cor. 10—they were going back in those Idol Temples—and by doing that, they were putting on display that there was an *agreement* they had with those of that idol temple!

- Now it could be rationalized: “Oh, it’s just minimal; We don’t agree on everything; so it’s not that bad.”

- But the truth is, you’re testifying that there does exist some sort of an agreement!

- And right on the heels of that—Paul brings up (in the remainder of :16) the issue of the 2nd Component of New Covenant sanctification benefits: *for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will **dwell** in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people!*

- And by “*dwelling*” in you—He’s going to do so in connection not only in the way in which you think—but also in the way in which you live (conduct & behavior) - and especially in the way in which you labor together with God in what He’s doing!

- And Paul doesn't stop there—but he goes on to make the application in (:17) — *17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye **separate**, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*

- And Paul ties this all directly to the issue of their **sonship status** and **sonship life!** (Operating as a properly educated; Positively & Properly responding son should operate and function—putting his sonship status properly into practice)!

- And the issue of *fellowship, communion, concord, part, & agreement* DEMANDS SEPARATION from those things of which there is *NO fellowship*; is *NO communion*; is *NO concord*; is *NO part*; and is *NO agreement!*

- And all that we've talked about—all of that is really the foundation to the **IMPACT** issue!

- Because SEPARATION ALWAYS MAKES AN IMPACT!

- And that's what God has designed the separation-type/ manifestation-type observance of The Lord's Table (in both His program with Israel, and in this disp. of grace) to have!

- To have an impact—especially upon the ones from whom the separation has been made!

- And with that kind of background and frame of reference—and with the intelligent understanding and appreciation of the godly edification that takes place in each Component & Form of doctrine of the sonship curriculum—even in our 1st Component to our 1st Form of doctrine of Romans 12:3-8) - you should now be in a position to bring to the Lord's Table a far more intelligent understanding and appreciation for what you're doing, and what you are supposed to do, when you and I observe the Lord's Table together as an assembly of sons.

- In other words—how **you** can (and should have) a **roll** in The Lord's Table in which YOU can participate! (all of you)

- Now that we have the full, effectual working of the 1st Component to our *instruction of wisdom*—and the manifest evidence of it occurring in our local assembly (which is where we're supposed to *labor* with our Father first) - and by your Positive & Proper response to Godly Selfless Love in Romans 12:3-8; we can now be confident/satisfied (and our Father can be confident & satisfied) that we can now move on to the next Component of doctrine that makes up our *instruction of wisdom*.

- ROMANS 12:9-10—The 2nd Component to the son's instruction of wisdom.

9 Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

- Once again—keep in mind that this is only the 2nd Component (of 6 total Components) that make up our *instruction of wisdom*.

- Which means that the context is still dealing with our Father instructing us in our first sonship decision-making skill of *wisdom*—but in order to do that, He teaches us wise sonship decision-making skill by means of His Godly LOVE! (And what HE values and what HE esteems).

- And as we now are very familiar with—the 1st Component of Godly Love also gave us the 1st Feature or Characteristic of Godly Love: Godly Love is **SELFLESS**.

- And because (:9) starts off “*Let love be ...*” — we know that godly love HAS, indeed, been brought into existence by now—or else you couldn't say, “*Let love be*” anything!

- But now that we DO have the basic understanding and appreciation for what our Father values & esteems—(which is the beginning of our sonship decision-making skill of *wisdom*) — because (:9) starts off by saying, *Let love be without dissimulation*, we need to recognize that an **adjustment** is going to take place—(not an adjustment in the sense of making any kind of a correction to what we've just learned) — but an adjustment that provides for a **furtherance** and a **greater development** to the issue of the godly love that has now come into existence.

- And as we noted—this issue of godly love is designed to **increase** and **abound** throughout our sonship education—therefore we would naturally expect that (:3-8) are not going to provide everything God has provided for us when it comes to the **fullness** of godly love being produced in us. (it only **begins/gets underway** there!)

- And in order to get godly love to **increase & abound**—there has to be further components to that doctrine that need to be effectually working in us—and as it does that, it provides for godly love *to increase and abound*.

- So it's not at all surprising to find that when you arrive at the 2nd Component that deals with our *instruction of wisdom*, that we're still going to be dealing with some things about Godly Love—but it's going to deal with **another fundamental, foundational FEATURE or CHARACTERISTIC** of godly love that now has to be brought into existence to go along with the Selfless feature/characteristic.

- And that 2nd fundamental, foundational FEATURE of Godly Love will become apparent to us as we identify and come to understand and appreciate the elements of (:9 & 10) that pertain to **godliness** and godly sonship **edification**.

- Because as we noted when we introduced this entire section that comprises all our *instruction of wisdom*—(that is from :3 down through :16) — that every component (of the 6) will all have the 3 major features of godliness to them—(i.e., a *thinking* part; a *living* [*conduct & behavior*] part; and a *labor* part).

- And this is due to the fact that GODLY **EDIFICATION** is the BIG thing taking place here as we receive our *instruction of wisdom*.

- So even though it's not quite as easy as (:3-8) was—you should still be looking for those 3 things to take place: *thinking; living; and labor*.

- And (:9 & 10) **do** have all 3 features of godliness and godly edification accounted for.

- And even though you only have 2 verses instead of 6—it's still pretty easy to identify them.

- Notice that in (:9) you've got 2 complete sentences — and then in (:10) you've got 2 clauses divided by a semicolon (not a colon) - and then (:11) [even though it's part of the sentence that (:10) began], (:11) actually begins the 3rd Component to our *instruction of wisdom*.

- (:9) has 2 sentences contained in one verse—and that 1st sentence really doesn't **directly** deal with the way you think—(although it does *indirectly*) — but it actually acts as a kind of **Exhortation** all on its own—it powerfully exhorts you to **not stop**, but to **go on** and get the **next** form of sonship godly edification—(which does, *indirectly* deal with the way in which you *think* about godly love).

- However, my understanding is that the 1st Element of godliness (the *thinking* issue) is the second complete sentence of (:9) —

- (:9) — **Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.** (That's the godly *thinking*).

- And then you have the 2nd Element of godliness contained in the first clause of (:10) —

- (:10) — **Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love;** (That's the godly *living* [*conduct & behavior*]).

- And then the rest of (:10) comprises the 3rd Element of godliness —

- (:10) — **in honour preferring one another;** (That's the godly *labor* aspect).

- And (:10) ends the 2nd Component of our *instruction of wisdom* because, even though (:11) is still part of the overall sentence structure—something begins to happen to godly love in (:11) - and something is mentioned in (:11) that makes it so that this godly love is talked about a little bit differently than it has been talked about previous to it.

- (It begins to move out from the loc. assem. into your 'work-a-day' life—your business life).

- For now, though, when you look at (:9-10) - it's obvious by those first 3 words of (:9) [*Let love be ...*] that you're still dealing with the issue of godly love—but it's also important and critical to recognize that what is said in all of (:9 & 10) are NOT things sitting in any of the information contained in (:3-8) — in other words, (:9-10) isn't re-hashing or going back over any of the information in (:3-8).

- But rather—there is something else—another FEATURE of godly love that is being focused upon.

- And even though you've got several issues being brought up in (:9-10) - everything that's being said there **shares something in common**—(a common 'thread' runs through them all) - and when you grasp that 'thread,' you're then able to identify the 'common denominator' to everything that (:9-10) is saying.

- And when you do that—you'll arrive at that next Major Feature/Characteristic to godly love: **Godly Love is _____**.

- And since the godly *thinking* leads to the godly *living*—and the godly *living & labor* is ultimately going to manifest (or make the godly *thinking* to be clearly seen/visible) — it's not at all surprising to find that this next Major Feature of godly love actually gets mentioned "by name" & emphasized in the *living & labor* issue of (:10).

- And what our Father is doing here is to produce godly love's **2nd Major Feature**—because godly love possesses **more than one** fundamental characteristic or feature!

- And godly love has these features or characteristics to it because it's not just some 'theoretical' thing or 'abstract' concept—**but it actually functions!**

- So (:3-8) provide for the 1st Major Feature of godly love (Selflessness) - and (:9-10) provide for the 2nd Major Feature of godly love.

- And they occur back-to-back (one right after the other) because for one thing, they go together like 2 sides of the same coin (so to speak) — and for another, you have to have **both** of them in order to get the effectual working of the remaining Components of our *instruction of wisdom* in (:11-16)!

- We'll get the remaining Major Features of godly love later on in the curriculum—(after we've left the *instruction of wisdom*) — [on into the remaining sonship decision-making skills and the remainder of the book of Romans].

- I'm saying all that just to say that the very terminology you first encounter in (:9) - [*Let love be without dissimulation.*] — is designed to get you to realize that the “Selfless” feature of godly love has to immediately be combined with this other Major Feature of godly love — or else godly Selfless love (standing alone, by itself) will exist **WITH** “*DISSIMULATION*” - right?

- Because by saying “*Let love be without dissimulation*” - (even though you may not know what “dissimulation” is), if you're being told to *Let love be without dissimulation*, then it's quite possible that love can “be” or exist WITH “dissimulation”.

- That first sentence of (:9) is telling you that when you get to the end of (:8) and you have the first Major Feature of godly love produced in you (Selflessness) - it's telling you, “Don't stop there—and don't think that that's all there is to godly love—because the whole thing hasn't yet been totally ‘assimilated’ — but as a minimum, it also has to have this other Major Feature or characteristic to go with the Selflessness.

- And as I said—the reason for this has to do with the fact that you have to have these 2 Major Features of godly love operational and effectually working in your sonship life in order to properly deal with the remaining issues or Components that are brought up and dealt with in the remainder of our *instruction of wisdom*.

- In other words—it takes the effectual working of the first 2 Major Features of godly love in order to be able to do what vs. 11-16 are going to instruct you to do!

- (Everything that's said in :11-16 is based upon the Selflessness of godly love COMBINED WITH this 2nd Major Feature of godly love).

- And our Father knows that even though there are many more Features to all that godly love is—these 2 are sufficient in order to complete the first sonship decision-making skill of *Wisdom*.

- Now I know that you know what this 2nd Major Feature of godly love is—(way back from our introduction to Rom. 12:3-16).

- And the 2nd Major Feature of Godly Love is:

KINDNESS!

- But since that's been over 6 months ago—let's just remind ourselves of this issue.

- As I said—and as would be expected—the actual Feature we're after is brought up in the *living & labor* element to this 2nd Component of our *instruction of wisdom*—(or in :10).

- And when you acknowledge that the goal of all this instruction that we're receiving from our Father is designed for us to be *conformed to the image of his Son*—it stands to reason that we can come along and find this Feature being described as being possessed by the Lord Jesus Christ.

- And really we need to do this—(that is, to look back and find this Feature of godly love being possessed by the Lord) - because without it, godly love would be WITH 'dissimulation' — and one of the things that tells us is that our godly love (and the Lord's godly love) is supposed to be WITHOUT 'dissimulation' - or another way to put it is: our godly love and the Lord's godly love is supposed to be **SIMILAR**—therefore this 2nd Feature of godly love exists in Him.

- And if that's true—then we should be able to find it in God's word—and we DO find it—some 30x being linked up with God's love.

- Psalm 17:7 — *“lovingkindness”*

- Psalm 26:1-4

- Psalm 103:1-5

- Jeremiah 9:23-24

- Therefore Romans 12:9-10 is designed to teach us, and to produce in us the issue that **GODLY LOVE IS KIND**.

- By the way—**kindness** is a word that has really been weakened over time in our English Language!

- But **kindness** is exactly what (:10) is describing when it says: *Be **kindly** affectioned one to another with brotherly love (living); in honour preferring one another (labor).*

- When you possess *kindness* (not when you're occasionally *kind*), but when you possess **kind-NESS** (the suffix meaning that it's a characteristic you possess **all the time**—it's a "Feature") - when you possess *kindness*, you *abhor* anything that's *evil*, detrimental, or harmful to someone—and you *cleave* to the issue of *goodness*—the last thing you want to be is anything but *good*!

- And that's 'kindness on display'!

- In fact, *kindness* is actually an **attitude**—and being *kind* is a manifestation of that *kindness*.

- And so the first 2 Major Features of godly love are **Selflessness** and **Kindness**.

- And those 2 Features HAVE to go together—they are **inseparable!**

- Granted, at times they can be spoken of individually—but as far as God Himself is concerned—He can't be Selfless and not Kind—and He can't be Kind and not Selfless!

- And the effectual working of Romans 12, **verse 3** through **verse 10** fundamentally produces that exact same love in us—*lovingkindness*.

- So by the time (:9-10a) is done with—and the effectual working of it does its job—it will have produced within us **GODLY** *kindness* and being *kind* on the basis of it—and that is to become an issue in both our *thinking* and in our Conduct & Behavior (our *living*).

- And in (:10b) we're going to begin the *labor* aspect of it with "*and in honour preferring one another;*"

- But just as (:3-8) is only the beginning of godly **selfless** love—(:9-10) is only the beginning of **kindness** as well. (But it has to begin some place, and that's where it begins.)

- Now at this point—we need to remind ourselves of our appreciation for one of the major reasons for WHY our Father teaches us this 2nd Major Feature of godly love (*kindness*) - which reason again exemplifies His genius for crafting our sonship curriculum the way He has done it.

- And we find that reason in Rom. 8:19-22 (:21) - [read]

- Notice that—*the creature itself also shall be delivered from **the bondage of corruption** into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

- What I'm specifically after here is that—another glimpse our Father gives us into the situation that the *creature* finds itself in under the usurpation of the Adversary—is that it is in a state of **bondage**—and that word *bondage* is significant beyond being just a 'colorful' way of describing sin entering into the heavenly places and the heavenly places being brought under the authority of the Adversary and his policies of evil.

- That's NOT 'colorful' language—that's the real and genuine and **literal** condition the *creature* is in as it exists under the authority of the Adversary and his policy of evil!

- The *creature* is in *bondage*—now how in the world does that indicate to us that we are going to have to have this fundamental characteristic of *kindness* as sons—and as we are going to labor in our Father's business out in that *creature*?

- In other words—how is the *bondage* that the *creature* is in connect with this issue of godly love being one of *kindness*?

- Well, my understanding is that there is, indeed, a connection—so the question is, Where in God's word were you told something that when the issue of *bondage* was brought up—that the issue of being in *bondage* was the farthest thing from *kindness*—and in fact, was described with a term that is the exact OPPOSITE of *kindness*???

- Come back to Exodus 6:9 (read) — see that expression: *cruel bondage*? — well, when you have something or someone that has been made subject or forced into *bondage* that is nothing BUT **CRUEL**! (it's not GOOD!)

- And even though the word *cruel* isn't used in Rom. 8:21, that **is** the only appropriate way to think of the *bondage* the *creature* is currently in!

- Webster's 1828—CRUEL: Disposed to give pain to others, in body or mind; willing or pleased to torment, vex or afflict; inhuman; destitute of pity, compassion or *kindness*; ...

- The truth is—that *creature* is now in a state of *cruel bondage* itself—and because of that there is nothing *kind* about it—there is no *kindness* going on out there—and in fact, it is currently destitute of *kindness* and compassion—and as a 'body' it is (because of that *bondage*) in great pain and torment due to those beings that now occupy its intelligentsia!

- And just like we noted in connection with godly love being the *selfless* thing that it is (in Romans 12:3-8) - and therefore your wisdom being the *selfless* godly love that it is—when you get placed as sons in the *creature* to labor in your Father's business—you will possess it as a **remedy** to the **vanity** that the *creature* was *made subject to* — by the same token, when you get placed as a son in the *creature*, you will also possess the **remedy** to the *creature's cruel bondage*—you'll possess the necessary *kindness* that will also be a godly remedy to the condition the *creature* has been in since the Adversary took usurpation and authority over it!

- And you'll bring the very features and character of the One in whom you are being *conformed into the image of*—the Lord Jesus Christ Himself—and you'll have His life and His character and His image—and in that way you'll become the very **functional life** of the *creature*—just as God your Heavenly Father designed it in the first place!

- Again—I only bring this to your attention to underscore the fact that even though you may not imagine it to be so—everything you're being taught and instructed in and practiced in, all has as its ultimate aim and goal and objective, correcting the corruption that exists in the *creature*!

- And that should give a “WOW” factor to every detail you learn in the curriculum for your sonship education!

- And all that is what lies 'behind the scenes' to godly love being *selflessness* and *kindness*!

- LEVEL I — Phase 2 — Sonship Education

- To Receive The Instruction of Wisdom. (Table of Contents Pro.1:3)
- Romans 12:3-16—Godly Love as a Wise Decision-Making Skill.
 - 1st Component: Romans 12:3-8—Godly Love is brought into existence: Godly Love is Selfless.

- 2nd Component: Romans 12:9-10—Godly Love is Kind (lovingkindness)

- Now that we've identified the 2nd Component to our *receiving the instruction of wisdom* as (:9-10) - and now that we recognize and acknowledge that, (just as it was in the 1st Component)—this Component as well has GODLY SONSHIP EDIFICATION in view—and since godliness is a major part of the methodology of how our Father teaches us as His sons—we naturally expect to find 3 major parts to this 2nd Component of (:9-10) — and we do find all 3 aspects of godliness being dealt with—but we have an additional element at the beginning of (:9) that acts as a kind of pre-doctrinal Exhortation just prior to those 3 aspects of godliness.

- The first full sentence of (:9) - (5 words in all) - make up that exhortation to our thinking to go on and get the 2nd Feature of Godly Love.

- And since our sonship education deals with what we gave our agreement to at the Sonship Checkpoint (of ch. 12:1-2) - we naturally anticipate that the information we're about to receive from our Father will again (just as the 1st Component of *the instruction of wisdom* did) - make it so that 1) We're *not going to be conformed to this world*; but rather 2) We're going to be *transformed by the renewing of our mind*—that *we may prove* (by our newly acquired sonship decision-making skill sets) *what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God*.

- And that's exactly what is going to take place in (:9-10).

- And the first thing we're confronted with in (:9) is this Exhortation to us as sons—which is a **powerful exhortation** that is designed to prime and prompt our inner man as to the NEED to **add** to our godly selfless love another Feature so that our godly love (and the wise decision-making skills we get from it) is sufficient to handle the rigors of the jobs that will be required of it.

- Therefore the Exhortation to our thinking in (:9) is —
9 Let love be without dissimulation.

- *Let love be ...*

- The first 3 words of the first sentence of (:9) tells you that:

- 1) Godly Love has now been brought into existence by the effectual working of (:3-8).
- 2) That we now have the effectual working of the 1st Major Feature of Godly Love: Godly Love is Selfless.
- 3) That we immediately recognize that we are NOT to ‘stop’ there at the end of (:8) with this issue of Godly Love—because that’s not all there is to Godly Love—the whole thing hasn’t yet been ‘assimilated’ or ‘made similar’ or made to resemble God’s Love to the degree it’s supposed to (in order to be fully useful to us for the remainder of our *instruction of wisdom*) — that is, to fully produce our first sonship skill-set that allows for us to make wise sonship decisions—but we need to now immediately get this other Major Feature to Godly Love—and by this additional Feature, we will undergo our first experience of being *conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ*.

- Now before going any further—we need to get an understanding and appreciation for that word **dissimulation**—because we probably have never used that word before—and even though we may vaguely grasp its meaning, a vague understanding just won’t do for the kind of job this is supposed to do in regard to our *thinking the way our Father thinks*.

- So first of all I recognize that this is a rather ‘unused’ word in our English vocabulary—(if it’s even in your vocabulary) - but it’s NOT an “archaic” word—nor is it a word that has completely fallen out of use.

- And as always is the case—even though there are a lot of ‘similar’ words that could be used here—it’s to be understood that due to something sitting in the **context** (which the King James Translators understood and appreciated) the word *dissimulation* is the most excellent choice here! (In fact, the context DEMANDS it!)

- And also (as always) nearly every modern English translation of the Bible CHANGES this word *dissimulation* to some other word that is supposed to be ‘easier to read’ or more accurate to the “original Greek” (ha!) or some other reason to cast doubt upon your KJV!

- And the reason modern Bible Correctors want to change this word is due to—1) They don't really know what *dissimulation* means either, so their own vocabulary is very limited (that is, they're not **experts** in the language they write and speak [English, the "target" Language] (which disqualifies them to be "translators") — and 2) They see what the Greek word is and want to "transliterate" it with a word that they do know quite well (which is a common practice among Bible Correctors (scholars).

- The 2 words, ***without dissimulation***, is one Greek word— (ἀνυπόκριτος) - which is the Greek negative prefix (ἀν) + the word (ὑπόκριτος) - which is where we get our English word "hypocrite".

- Hence, "non-hypocritical"

- And nearly every modern English translation will change the word *dissimulation* to either 'hypocrisy' ["Let love be without hypocrisy" — or 'sincere' ["Love must be sincere"] or 'genuine' ["Let love be genuine"] or like the NLT ["Don't just "pretend" that you love others"].

- But the problem with all those 'similar'-type words is that NONE of them take THE CONTEXT into consideration— because if they did, they could NOT use any of those words - because the truth is, *dissimulation* is the ONLY word in our English language that PERFECTLY fits the CONTEXT of Romans 12:9!

- Now before you ever even get to the point of having to deal with what the word *dissimulation* means—there's something in the context itself that tells you something critically important as to how you're supposed to handle what (:9) says—and it's critically important that we recognize it and acknowledge it—because it will keep us from making the same mistakes the Modern Bible Correctors make by their translations (which obscure the passage and make it much much harder to understand—and which make it **impossible** to handle the passage properly).

- And what I am after here is simply this: When Paul says, "*Let love be without dissimulation.*" - **THAT IS NOT AN ADMONITION OR A REPROOF OR A CORRECTION OR ANYTHING ALONG THOSE LINES!!!** (Which is exactly what the Modern Translators make out of it by their "easier to understand" terms)!

- And I say that because—when you get to the end of (:8) - and godly selfless love has been properly brought into existence by the effectual working of (:3-5)—and then you have the saints in the loc. assem. functioning in those ‘offices’ based upon their Godly Love—and, for example, the ones in the office of *giving*, doing it with *simplicity*; and the ones that are *ruling*, doing it with *diligence*; and the ones that are *shewing mercy*, doing it with *cheerfulness* — well that IS not only Godly Love now in existence, but that’s Godly Selfless Love displaying itself **PROPERLY!**

- In other words—there’s NOTHING WRONG going on that needs to be CORRECTED or REPROVED!

- So the truth is—there IS NO ‘HYPOCRISY’ YET!

- And yet, Paul has a reason to come along in (:9) and say— “Ok, now that you’ve got Godly Selfless Love in existence, *Let love be without dissimulation* — and yet he’s already acknowledging by the words “*Let love be*” that the effectual working of (:3-8) not only has brought Godly Love into existence, but the saints are already displaying that Godly Love PROPERLY in some manner or form by the ‘offices’ they are functioning in.

- And my point in all this is to underscore the reason why, (of all of the words that could be used here in [:9]), “hypocrisy” is the LAST word that could/should be used here!

- The context **forbids** the word “hypocrisy” to be used! (And the only word that does fit the context is *dissimulation*)!

- *Dissimulation* is a species of ‘hypocrisy’ - but it’s a very **particular** kind of term—and ‘hypocrisy’ is far too broad of a term to be used—because ‘hypocrisy’ would indicate the fact that, “You just say you love, but you’re not really showing it at all” — but (:3-8) come along and DENIES that they’re not showing it at all!

- Again—Paul is NOT attempting to CORRECT any problem with the Roman saints at all here!

- Paul’s not saying, *Let love be without* “hypocrisy”—as if what they were doing was being hypocritical—or as if their love was in ‘word only’ but not in deed!

- But the issue here is that our Father now wants that now-existing; and properly-existing Godly Selfless Love to have this **other alteration** to it (so to speak) — that is, He wants it to now go on and get this 2nd Major Feature to it.

- And hopefully, by saying all that—it puts the ‘brakes’ on you going down the road of thinking that *dissimulation* is just a fancy way of saying ‘hypocrisy’.

- So by the CONTEXT we know that when Paul says, *Let love be without dissimulation* — we’re not immediately jumping to the conclusion that the saints were either hypocritical in their showing Godly Love, or being warned against being hypocritical in showing their Godly Love—but rather the context forces you to ‘stay on track’ (so to speak) and recognize that this healthy, properly functioning Godly Selfless Love that they do possess and are properly putting on display NEEDS TO HAVE AN ADDITIONAL FEATURE ADDED TO IT.

- And not only does the context do that, but the meaning of what the word *dissimulation* is, does that as well.

- Now, granted, *dissimulation* is a word rarely used—in fact it’s a very context-sensitive word—used in some form only 7 times in the Bible—and used only one other time as *dissimulation*.

- (ex.) Gal. 2:13— (Paul rebuking Peter at Antioch) *And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him (Peter); inasmuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.*

- And in recognizing what a *dissimulation* really is—it will validate that this exhortation of the first sentence of (:9) is really exhorting us to **not let our Godly Selfless Love just be what (:3-8) have provided for.**

- And again—what God is driving at is that it is very possible (since this says, *Let love be without dissimulation*) - it’s very possible that Godly Love can be (or can exist) WITH *dissimulation*—that is, it can exist on it’s own with only the one Major Feature to it—but in order for Godly Love to do what it’s designed to do in the remainder of our *instruction of wisdom*, it has to have this 2nd Major Feature of Godly Love to go along with it—and you have to have these first 2 Major Features of Godly Love in order to get the effectual working of the 3rd, 4th, 5th, & 6th Components to our *instruction of wisdom*.

- *dissimulation* — now without even consulting a dictionary, the word is made up of the English Prefix “*dis*” - meaning, NOT.

- Plus the word “*simulation*” = the most common definition being a false pretence (which is where the term is similar to the word or idea of ‘hypocrisy’ - but we know that that isn’t what we’re dealing with here, or else the KJ Translators would have used that word) — but the word “*simulation*” has another common meaning (just somewhat less common than the most common meaning) - and that is **the issue of bringing into existence something that is ‘similar’ to something else.**

- And it can be used in a sense where there is NO attempt to pretend, or to intend to deceive, or to falsely assume anything.

- But it can carry the simple and honest meaning of imitating the behaviour of something—and is used that very way for the purpose of training **military** personnel! (Such as: “Chess was invented for the purpose of *simulating* warfare strategy.”)

- So when you put the English Prefix *dis* with the word *simulation*—*dissimulation* is the issue of saying that something that **should be** ‘similar’ is **NOT** SIMILAR.

- A *dissimulation* is therefore the issue **of failing to fully simulate something.**

- And with *dissimulation*, you’ve got something in existence that exists as either a **partial** simulation of something—or that exists as a **defective** simulation of something.

- Now bear in mind that we have to keep everything here in it’s proper CONTEXT—and in our context, we’ve got to remember the aim and goal of our sonship education: **being conformed to the image of God’s Son**—and it starts out with our being conformed to the issue of His Godly Love —

— and (:3-8) have provided for us to be conformed to the issue of the SELFLESS aspect of His Godly Love —

— and (:9) is now coming along and saying, (*Let love be without dissimulation*) - that is, Don’t stop the ‘similarity’ between you and Christ’s Love with Selflessness—but there’s **more** to His Love than that!

- There's at least one more Major Feature & Characteristic to His Love that teams up with Selflessness—and when it comes to our conformity to His Image, we've got to make sure that we've got those 2 Characteristics in existence.

- And of course, that 2nd Feature/Characteristic is the issue of Godly Love being **Kindness** (*lovingkindness*).

- So our Godly Love needs to be *without dissimulation*—that is, we now need to **complete the 'simulation'**.

- And by the rest of what (:9) goes on and says—it clues us in (so to speak) that this 2nd Feature of Godly Love involves taking a further matter of *thinking* that not only involves thinking 'less' of ourselves (the Selflessness of [:3-8]) - but by the kind of *thinking* we will do now—it produces an 'abhorrence' for some things; and a "cleavity" for another thing.

- And the thing that Kindness *abhors* is *evil*—and the thing that it has *cleavity* for is *goodness*.

- *Lovingkindness* **thinks** just that way!

- Therefore Godly Love existing only with the Feature of Selflessness **IS** *letting love be WITH dissimulation!*

- And if we don't add this 2nd Major Feature of Godly Love to that Selflessness—and if this 2nd Characteristic of Godly Love isn't effectually working and established within our inner man—then we can't go any further in our sonship life without our love being DISSIMILAR to that of our Father and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ! (i.e., His *lovingkindness*)

- But when Godly Love exists with both, the Feature of Selflessness **and** Kindness—then you are *letting love be without dissimulation!*

- And now with that exhortation that immediately comes along and tells you that it's not sufficient to just have the 1st Feature of Godly Love—but rather it will stand as only partial or defective unless you **add** to the Selflessness this Feature of Kindness—and that prompts you to go on and acquire *lovingkindness* along with the Selflessness.

- Therefore, with a proper understanding and appreciation for not only WHAT our Father is telling us when He says, “*Let love be without dissimulation.*” - but also WHY He has to say that—it allows for us (as sons) to value and esteem and to appreciate the fact that we can’t just have the 1st Major Feature of Godly Love (in order to make **wise** sonship decisions like our Father does) - but we appreciate the fact that we MUST have this 2nd Major Feature of Godly Love to go with it—or else our godly love will exist WITH *dissimulation*.

- And what I’m after here is that you understand and appreciate that there’s a **natural and logical order** to the things you’re being taught as sons.

- In fact—all 6 components that make up our *receiving the instruction of wisdom* all have a logical, progressive sense and sequence to them.

- And immediately after the Godly Selfless Love has been produced, and has been responded to Positively & Properly so that the godly *thinking, living, and labor* is all effectually working and operational—we’re immediately told:

Let love be without dissimulation.

- And that tells us that the godly love we do have effectually working at the end of (:8) has to have what (:9-10) says to go along with it, or else a *dissimulation* will exist in your godly love.

- That is, it WON’T be “similar” to our Father’s love—or to the Lord Jesus Christ’s love.

- (There’s your “WHAT”)

- And it will be only a **partial** simulation of it—and therefore it will be defective or deficient (not sufficient enough) for what the remainder of (:11-16) are going to require of your godly love in order for those remaining 4 Components to do their full, effectual job.

- (There’s your “WHY”)

- And so when you arrive at (:9), there’s a potential *dissimulation* in connection with love that now need to be **remedied!**

- And until that's there—you can't move your godly *thinking*, and your godly *conduct & behavior*, and your godly *labor* **outside** the realm of the local assembly!

- Because this 2nd Feature of godly love—(of not having the love be *dissembled*)—HAS TO BE THERE!

- Otherwise—as soon as you get out of the loc. assem.—you're going to end up “*dissembling*”!

- And that's because there's going to be things that are going to take place outside the realm of our local assembly (especially), that are just prone to producing *dissimulation*.

- So let's go back to a passage that I talked about before—and note an example of this whole issue whereby godly edification is supposed to be taking place—and it's got to take place in the order in which it's designed to take place—and that there's natural development to it—and that God has designed it to take place within the confines of the local assembly FIRST (before it moves on out of it).

- And if you were to take this word *dissimulation*—and you were to ask any Christian (saint) that's spent any time studying God's word—and you were to ask them where else in God's word does that word *dissimulation* come up—the first thing they're going to think about is Galatians chapter 2. (and appropriately so)

- **Galatians 2**—The context here is a continuation of having to straighten out the problems that the Galatian saints were having in connection with their sonship life—problems concerning being victimized by that “strange woman” and knuckling under the pressure of going back under the Law of Moses in order to put their sanctified position in Christ into practice.

- But the problems they were having ran deeper than even that—because they had actually so reverted to going back under God's program with Israel that they had actually gone back to thinking that the gospel message they were supposed to give was the “kingdom gospel” and not “the gospel of Christ” committed to the apostle Paul.

- (see 1:6-12)

- And when you come to chapter 2—the particular context here has to do with Paul dealing with what took place in Acts 15 when Paul & Barnabas [and we find out here, Titus as well] (who were at Antioch [Pisidia] at the time) all went to Jerusalem for a “Conference” to meet with the Circumcision Apostles (Peter, James, John, etc.) and bring them “up to date” (so to speak) about the details of the change in programs (and God suspending His program with Israel and bringing in the dispensation of Gentile grace now in effect).

- And then, once that conference was over, Paul and Barnabas (and some others) went back to Antioch—(Jerusalem being the ‘headquarters’ [so to speak] of the Remnant Church, and Antioch being the ‘headquarters’ of the Body of Christ [Gentile] Church).

- And while Paul & Barnabas were back in Antioch (just after the Jerusalem “Conference” had taken place) - Peter then went up to Antioch and met Paul & Barnabas there.

- And it was at that time that the incident took place that Paul makes reference to here in Galatians 2—and the contention that took place between Paul and Peter.

- Galatians 2:11-16 (:13)

- My point here is that when Paul describes the *dissimulation* that took place—it’s interesting that the ones who *dissembled* (or the one who produced the *dissembling*) [i.e., Peter] **did it amongst some saints that he had very little experience with!**

- And though they were “saints” — they were of a totally different “program” than he was—(than Peter was).

- Peter was among genuine “saints” along with himself—but he **wasn’t** a member of the church, the body of Christ. ... (and they were)

- And the point is—**Peter had moved OUTSIDE of his normal realm of activity**—the realm where his Conduct & Behavior was going on as a member of the Remnant of Israel (the Israel of God) - and as soon as he got out of it—***dissimulation* took place!**

- Now all I’m after here is—(for one thing, this is why the word here is *dissimulation* and not ‘hypocrisy’) — because *dissimulation* is a species of ‘hypocrisy’ that especially comes into play (or is more likely to come into play) **OUTSIDE** your normal realm or “**comfort zone.**”

- That “comfort zone” being the place where—in connection with your Conduct & Behavior — where you’re more prone to be consistent in it—and where you’re more familiar with it all—than you would be otherwise.

- And the whole issue of getting this further Feature or Characteristic of Godly Love (i.e., **Kindness**) that (:9-10) is designed to produce within us— Godly *lovingkindness* is designed to **BE** the Major **Thinking** and Major **Conduct & Behavior** and Major **Labor** basis, upon which we deal with **OTHERS OUTSIDE our local assembly**.

- And that’s why it has to be dealt with next—and that’s why it has to be functioning in the loc. assem. **first & foremost** —

— and the **experience** of it (by means of laboring with it); and the **full maturity** of it takes place in the loc. assem. so that when it does move on out from it—**dissimulation DOES NOT take place!**

- And godly *thinking*, and godly *conduct & behavior*, and a particular *laboring* together with God with the unsaved of the world can take place as we’re out there amongst them in the world!

- And so in a very real way—this 2nd Major Feature of godly love (*lovingkindness*) not only provides for rounding out the ‘other side of the coin’ (so to speak) in order to possess our Father’s selfless lovingkindness—but at the exact same time, **Kindness** prepares for (and paves the way for) Godly Love to be able to move out from the local assembly and into the world with a particular power (or ability to it, or capacity) to it that if only the 1st Feature of godly love were to be taken out into the world—a *dissimulation* would take place—and therefore a ‘defect’ or ‘deficiency’ could (and probably would) show up (or manifest itself) — just as it did with Peter and even with Barnabas!

- And that’s why the 3rd Component to our *instruction of wisdom* (in :11) moves you **out** of the local assembly and into your business world — where you’re going to encounter more **unbelievers** than at any other time!

- So what you've got, therefore, in the genius of how our Father has put our sonship curriculum together here in Romans 12:3-10—it's just a marvelous and wonderful example of what sonship edification unto godliness is all about—which is the issue of letting the effectual working of the doctrines take place **within the context in which they occur**—and letting them develop—and then **move on beyond** the parameters that God originally placed them in—all in due course.

- And outside of the obvious things you're being taught—this ability and perception you acquire as a son to take the information you're taught and figure out how it moves out from the context in which you were originally taught it, to be useful in other areas outside its original context—that's the kind of skill-sets you are to develop as your Father's son, and the kind of work you're supposed to do with the doctrine you learn—(all of which we were alerted to when we went through all the background work of the Sonship Table of Contents).

- And so it's obvious that by the way (:9) begins (*Let love be without dissimulation.*) — that the Love that (:3-8) has generated **isn't complete yet**—until verses 9 & 10 have been added to it!

- And only then is it complete enough to now be thought of, and utilized by sons **intelligently outside** the realm of the local assembly.

- And it's then that it's out there (outside of the loc. assem.) that Godly Love will pick up its remaining Features and Characteristics.

- But the first 2 are the most foundational of all—and they, themselves are sufficient to govern the majority of every situation and circumstance we will find ourselves in—both in our local assembly, and in our daily lives—until we get further on down into the curriculum for our sonship education where we can then appropriately pick up the remaining 5 Characteristics or Features—and be able to be responsible for, and put FULL Godly Love into practice and on display in the details of our lives.

- But the *Selflessness* of (:3-8) combined with what (:9-10) deals with (the *lovingkindness*) — once those 2 Features are in place —

— only then does our Father move us out beyond the realm of our local assembly, and beyond our conduct with one another within our local assembly — and moves us out into encountering the world ‘at large,’ and other saints, and even unjustified persons outside our local assembly.

- And (:11-16) will involve both groups in the remaining 4 Components to our initial *instruction of wisdom* — and the remaining instruction in connection with our *justice, and judgment, and equity* will either have unjustified men in view; or saints in view; or both unjustified men & saints in view.

- Once (:11) moves us out beyond the parameters of our local assembly—then we’re always going to have to be dealing with both saints and unjustified men—either together, or separately.

- So with all that said—you should now have the effectual working of this 5-word exhortation that starts off your 2nd Component of the receiving the *instruction of wisdom*.

- And when it says, *Let love be without dissimulation*. — you should understand and appreciate the meaning of, and the excellency of that word *dissimulation* — and the naturalness for how **critical** it is at this point to NOT let the love you now have generated in you to be WITH *dissimulation*.

— that is, you are not; and you can not let the godly love you have generated in you to remain with only the 1st Feature to it—(*Selflessness*) — but you must mate that godly selfless love with the *lovingkindness* that (:9-10) will generate in you.

— and if you don’t do that—the potential exists for your godly love to be only ‘partial’ and in a sense ‘defective’ or ‘deficient’ for it to ever move out from the parameters of our local assembly and into the ‘world at large.’

- Because if your godly love exists with dissimulation problems are going to occur in your skill-set of making **wise** sonship decisions in the world at large!

9 Let love be without dissimulation.

- Once that Exhortation has effectually worked and done its job of ‘priming’ and ‘prompting’ your heart to go on and add this other Major Feature of godly love to the now-existing Feature of **Selflessness** —

(that is, to add the Feature of **Kindness** to the Selflessness—and without it, a *dissimulation* will exist in your godly love; problems are going to occur in your skill-set of making *wise* sonship decisions—and the potential is there to make some *foolish* decisions)

— so with your heart being primed & prompted to **not** let your love be **with** *dissimulation*, but to immediately get the 2nd Feature of godly love (being Kindness): your immediate desire and concern is to begin that process—and you begin that process just like you did with the 1st Feature of godly love.

- And since sonship education deals specifically with **godliness** (becoming ‘god-like’) and since sonship always has godly **edification** in view—you know that the only way in which this 2nd Major Feature of godly love is going to work is by addressing/changing/*transforming* the way in which you first of all **THINK**. [*renewing your mind*]

- And just like love itself—and just like Selflessness—Kindness has been taught to you; and developed in you with all of the subjective emotion of it; and what should be the ‘target’ of your kindness; and how kindness should be expressed; and where it originates in your heart; and so forth and so on—all from the wisdom of men and the wisdom and course of this world. [*conformed/fashioned to this world*]

- In other words, Kindness is something that you are all very familiar with (and you can even cite many, many examples of and illustrations of and stories of it) - but just as Selfless Love was very familiar to you by the ‘inroads’ of the wisdom & course of this world—and wasn’t taught to you by your Father (especially by those last 12 words of [:3—*according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.*]) — you have to acknowledge and recognize (and come to grips with the fact) that the kind of Kindness you possess wasn’t taught to you by your Heavenly Father—and furthermore wasn’t brought into existence by the last 11 words of (:9)!

- And with acknowledging/recognizing that—even before dealing with the details of (:9b) - you have to keep in mind the CONTEXT of this passage.

- And that context is still dealing with our Father's *instruction of wisdom*—and it all occurs within the context of bringing godly love (as the means for having your Father's norms and standards for what HE values and what HE esteems as the powerful decision-making skill that godly love is) - but it's all being done [at the moment anyway] WITHIN THE LOCAL ASSEMBLY ITSELF—and the kind of 'body' thinking, living, and labor that naturally goes on in a body!

- In other words—we haven't left the context of getting us (as sons) to think, act, and labor as a BODY.

- And therefore the *lovingkindness* that's going to be generated in us by our Father's words—it's all still going to be dealing with US (with one another) as saints and as the *one body in Christ* that we are, and as *every one members one of another*.

- Simply put—what we're about to get here in our thinking (*Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.*), and in our conduct & behavior (*Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love;*) and in our labor (*in honour preferring one another;*) **primarily deals with us as members of the body of our local assembly!**

- And all that matters a great deal in how you're going to properly deal with every word that you encounter in (:9 and :10)! [Because (:9-10) have some very subjective-type terminology that, without the proper context, can be taken a whole bunch of ways!]

- In other words—we're not talking about 'Abhorring that which is evil' in just any old way—or 'cleaving to that which is good' in just any old way—nor are the things said in (:10) to be taken in just any old way.

- (It may be very basic & general—but it's still sitting in a specific context!)

- And with that in mind—let's begin dealing with the 1st Aspect of **godliness** in this 2nd Component of our *instruction of wisdom*.

- And first of all we're going to deal with the GODLY THINKING of our Father that produces *lovingkindness* in Him!

- And because it is our Father's thinking—that means that our thinking is going to be materially affected by the doctrine of verse 9b—which means that by the effectual working of the 11 words of (:9b) *lovingkindness* is going to be generated; some things are going to be brought into existence that have not previously been in existence in our thinking; and the thinking we have had that was generated in us by the wisdom of men and the course/fashion of this world is going to have to be torn down and jettisoned (removed)!

- Let's now get the GODLY THINKING of LOVINGKINDNESS.

- And there are 2 Parts to it that gets that godly thinking accomplished:

- PART 1: *Abhor that which is evil;*

- PART 2: *cleave to that which is good.*

- Now in order to produce the kind of *lovingkindness* that our Father possesses Himself—we obviously have to have a particular way of thinking about *that which is evil* and *that which is good*.

- Both *evil* and *good* are now going to be addressed here.

- And I want to caution you—DON'T OVER-THINK THIS!

- In other words—remember that we're just in the very beginning of our sonship education and our sonship decision-making skills—and therefore even though you may be inclined to think that you have to have a 'stem-to-stern' comprehensive understanding of the entire 'categorical doctrine' of good & evil—that's NOT the case—and that's NOT how this is to be dealt with!

- Truth is—you're not at a point where you're supposed to be doing what (for instance) the sons of the remnant of Israel are told to be doing over in Hebrews 5:14 [*But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*] — that context has some specific good and some specific evil in view! (it's not broad & general)

- Now I'm bringing all this up here because we've got 2 words here (*evil* and *good*) along with some action to be taken in connection with each one (*Abhor* the one and *cleave* to the other) - and even though the words *good* and *evil* are very basic and general—the **context that they are sitting in is NOT BASIC AND GENERAL!**

- And though that may not seem to be a big deal now—it will be when we look at the details of the *evil* and the *good* Paul talking about. (general as they may be)

- And this is critical—because what we're after here isn't just being told to "...hate bad stuff, love good stuff..." — but by the effectual working of these very 11 words (*Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.*) — you know as a son, that what those words are designed to generate—and what those 11 words are after is: to produce the 2nd Feature of godly love: **KINDNESS** (*lovingkindness*)!

- And you expect them to do that, much like the last 12 words of (:3) produced the Selfless love. (And you'd be right to expect that).

- So this isn't simply an admonition to 'hate bad things; and like good things' - (a natural man does that)!

- So what we have to do here—to properly and honestly handle this passage—we have to do 2 things:

1) Recognize that since the context here in Romans 12 is NOT Level II Sonship Education—(nor are we being reproved here as if that's where we ought to be at this time)—but since this is the **beginning** of our sonship education—(this is the remainder to Level I) - and it's **just** getting underway—then obviously, when the word *evil* and the word *good* come up here—they're being used in the **broadest** way they can be used.

- The context isn't dealing with any particular 'kind' of *evil* or 'kind' of *good*.

2) Recognize that while words can be used in a very general and very broad way—the **context** in which they sit can give specific direction and "confinement" to how they are to be understood & appreciated and applied or utilized.

- Therefore in (:9), God is dealing with the word *evil* and with the word *good* in their most fundamental meaning **as a word**. (i.e., as the word *evil* and as the word *good*)

- So what we have here are broad & fundamental words used in a specific context.

- And that specific context makes it so that our thinking isn't going to be "scattered" all over the place—but it's going to be "corralled" or "confined" to the specific context — and folks, that makes all the difference in the world!

- Because, as I said—this isn't just a matter of hating evil and loving good—and this is certainly NOT a matter of just relying upon your own natural, human **conscience** as a means to determine *good & evil*—because as a son being educated by our Heavenly Father to be conformed to the image of His Son, natural, human norms & standards utterly **FAIL** to produce godliness at all! (So we can rule out your 'inner moral compass' of your human conscience!)

- And that means that just as critical and just as important as the words *evil* and *good*—are the **verbs** that describe the kind of action your **thinking** is to take as a **son** in connection with *that which is evil* and *that which is good*! (*Abhor/cleave*)

- Now let's begin looking at the details of the godly **thinking** aspect of *lovingkindness* —

- (Part 1) — **9 *Abhor that which is evil***;

- "**Abhor**" (the action of your thinking toward *that which is evil*) —
What does it mean to *abhor* something?

= to shrink back in dread; to regard with horror and extreme repugnance or disgust; to hate utterly; to loathe; abominate; to view something as so horrible that it makes you bristle, shiver, shake or recoil—it's a term of hating, loathing or detesting to the highest degree possible!

- It's a term of **thinking** that actually causes or triggers a **soulish** response or reaction!

- And because of that—what’s being described here is a ‘sentiment’ of aversion possessed by God Himself—and one that you as His son are going to (by the time you get the effectual working of this verse) possess yourself.

- *Abhor*—from the Latin Prefix *ab* = to turn away from + *hor* (Lat., *horreo*) = to stiffen with horror.

- Charles Smith: “*Abhor* expresses a strong **involuntary recoil**—he who abhors something would escape from and avoid it.” (Synonyms Discriminated)

- Therefore, since *abhorrence* is a **thinking** about something so that an emotional sentiment or feeling is produced by that thinking—it comes as no surprise to find that *abhorrence* is described in God’s word as taking place in the *soul*:

- Lev. 26:15 (Israel-1st CoP); :30 (God Himself-5th CoP)

- **9** *Abhor that which is evil*; (What is “*evil*”?)

- **Evil** (as we have noted before) is a very broad and general term—and all of the ways in which it is defined are all BAD (none of them good) - and it’s going to have a variety of shades of meaning.

- *Evil* is used over 600x in the Bible—and 6x in the book of Romans prior to Romans 12:9.

- And since there is no definition given here—and the word isn’t given any kind of an analysis here—God expects you to already possess an understanding and appreciation for what *evil* is.

- Interestingly—in the Greek—of all the times that Paul uses the word *evil* in the book of Romans [19x], this is the one and only time he changes the Greek word from *κακός* to *πονηρός*.

- And I bring this up—not to say that the word need to be changed or re-translated—because the KJ Translators saw that, too, but they still (rightly) determined that the most excellent choice of word here is still to be “*evil*” — but my point is—that there is something slightly different in the way in which *evil* is being used here—and without going to any kind of a Greek dictionary or lexicon or even going to the

Greek at all—rather, the **CONTEXT** tells you that the word *evil* is being dealt with here in a different way than it has been up to this point (or even after this point)!

- (And this gets back to what we went over about the context in my introduction).

- The tendency is—that if you just crack open the Bible to this verse, and lift it out of its context—the tendency is to treat this as if God is simply telling you to ‘Abhor bad things’ - but that’s *not* what this is saying (exactly).

- Because if you look at the Living aspect in (:10) [*Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love;*] — and if you look at the Labor aspect of godliness in (:10) [*in honour preferring one another*] — the ‘common denominator’ in both those clauses is what?

Answer: ***one another!***

- Therefore, even though the word *evil* is to be thought of only in a basic and general (or in its most fundamental way) — the context makes it so that you confine your thinking about *that which is evil* to ***ONE ANOTHER***—or to other sons/saints **in the local assembly with you!**

- And it’s critical that you see that distinction! Because it matters a great deal in how you get godly *lovingkindness* produced in your thinking—that is, that you have kindness generated in you the exact same way that it is existing in your Father Himself!

- So the ‘parameters’ (if you will) for how we define and how we understand the words *evil* and *good* here—are all governed by how we deal with, and how we interact with, and how we respond to EACH OTHER, here in this local assembly. This is still all being done in that body-type thinking and that body-type analogy.

- And *abhorring that which is evil; and cleaving to that which is good* is all going to manifest itself *by being kindly affectioned one to another*—and then the opportunity to labor with this *lovingkindness* that was produced in us by *abhorring that which is evil and cleaving to the which is good* (along with the issue of *being kindly affectioned one to another*— you’re going to be able to labor by: *in honour preferring one another*).

- Therefore—the *evil* that you are to *abhor*, and the *good* that you are to *cleave to* all concerns things that you would do, or things that would happen to others—(specifically to *one another*)—or to other saints in the local assembly in which you gather.

- And though the common definition of *evil* is:

evil = bad (the opposite of good); wicked; depraved; corrupt; perverse; wrong — (by the way, that’s the definition of the Greek word κακός) —

— There is a very common definition of *evil* that perfectly fits the context of our passage here—

evil = anything that produces or causes pain, distress, loss or calamity; or causes harm; or in any way disturbs the peace, impairs the happiness, or destroys the perfection of others.

- Therefore, a change in our thinking is supposed to take place whereby we are to *Abhor* (to recoil in horror; loathe; and hate utterly) *that which is evil*— anything that would cause harm, pain, discomfort or trouble to each other (to another saint).

- And the truth of the matter is—this IS a change in our thinking.

- And you need to recognize and acknowledge that when it comes to the issue of kindness and being kind—the kindness you possess is of the ‘natural’ variety that has been generated, fashioned, molded, and shaped by the wisdom of men and the course of this world.

- (The wisdom of this world has ‘conformed’ your thinking about kindness up to this very point!)

- And when it came to random acts of kindness—your kindness was mainly determined by your own preferences of pity and sympathy—and it consisted mainly of being friendly, generous, or warm-hearted in instances that ‘tugged at your heartstrings.’

- But *godly kindness* has far more **objectivity** to it than that—and is generated from rock solid godly norms and standards—and not from ever-shifting human, natural sentimentality — and a broken human, natural ‘moral compass’ like your human conscience!

(Let's make sure we're not 'compartmentalizing' the doctrine—but that we're 'interfacing' it or linking it properly together):

- You come to (:9-10) with all that body-type thinking and the godly Selfless love that was produced in you in (:3-8) - and now you're going to be *transformed by the renewing of your mind* in the area of Kindness (*lovingkindness*) — and these first 5 words of (:9b) begin uprooting those 'roots' or inroads that the wisdom of this world has developed in you where kindness is concerned—and replacing that thinking with God's own thinking about kindness.

- And now—still viewing one another as *one body in Christ, and members one of another*—godly Selfless love is now operating in you (you truly don't *think more highly of yourself than you ought to think*) - and you view one another as equally important to the body as every other member of the body (including yourself) because your Father has *dealt to every man* (in the assembly) *the same measure of faith*.

- And because of that—your conduct & behavior towards every other member of the assembly treats them As just As Useful to the body as you are—and seeks to Cooperate with them—and Serve their needs—looking out for, and pursuing the Welfare of every other member.

- And you have demonstrated that by opting to labor in an office in the assembly that meets the practical needs of the assembly—either by *giving with simplicity*, or *ruling with diligence*, or *shewing mercy with cheerfulness*.

- And then by heeding the Exhortation to *Let* that Selfless love be without dissimulation—your thinking undergoes the 2nd *renewing*—& (:9) is producing another foundational characteristic of godly love, that's designed to naturally mate with selflessness—and that other feature of godly love is *kindness*.

- And the thinking process that stands behind your Father's own *lovingkindness* is to *Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good*.

- And the First Part of that 2nd *renewing of your mind* goes right after the way in which you think about other saints in the local assembly in which you gather—and just as you would with the actual physical members/parts of your own body—you *Abhor that which is evil* to it!

- (i.e., You **hate** to such an extreme degree, anything that would cause harm, pain, or trouble to another saint in the assembly (any other *body* member) - that even the THOUGHT of it is so dreadful, that it makes you shudder or recoil in horror—in other words, you truly do:

Abhor that which is evil; — anything harmful or troublesome or painful that befalls another saint (or member of your body) in the local assembly.

- I should point out that this (of course) isn't talking about ANY and ALL pain or harm that a saint experiences—since pain and trouble and harm (and so forth) can be brought upon a saint due to some sin—or some stupid decision—or from a rebuke — but that's not contextually what falls into the category of “*that which is evil*” in the sense of (:9b).

- Because some things can be done to a saint out of love (selfless love) that, while there may be pain involved, the saint's own foolish behavior brought it upon himself.

- But even then—you're not to be indifferent to it!

- Now that may not be quite as radical of a change in your thinking as (:3) was—but this is still a change in our thinking, none the less.

- (And that's “Part 1” - or one ‘side of the coin’ of the godly thinking aspect that produces *lovingkindness*).

- Now for “Part 2” — 9 ... cleave to that which is good.

- “**cleave**” - what does that mean? = to stick to something like glue; to adhere or cling to something or someone; to be united; to be strongly attached; to be tightly bound.

- “**good**” = (again, due to it being a very broad & general term, the context has to define it) - and much like *evil*, *good* is most generally thought of as: kind, benevolent, gentle, gracious, friendly, favorable (etc., etc.).

- But for our context, it concerns things that you would do, or things that would happen to **others** (viz., *one another* or saints in the loc. assem. in which you gather).

- Therefore, *that which is good* in this context has to do with **things that tend to the happiness or prosperity of another; that are conducive to the wellbeing, health, advantage, benefit, or profit of another saint in the assembly.**

- Now it's apparent that we're dealing with some very basic and some very general terminology here—and even some basic and fundamental *thinking*.

- But it's critical that you **don't** allow your thinking to kind of 'trail off' here—or to relax—or to shift into neutral (so to speak) just because you easily grasp the meaning of these words.

- Rather—it's critical that you understand and appreciate some things (along with all this easy-to-grasp stuff) - that are going on 'behind the scenes' (so to speak).

- And what I mean by that is this: neither the word *Abhor* nor the word *cleave* are words that describe 'mild' action! — those aren't 'weak' words! — neither of those words are used when you're just **mildly concerned** with something!

- Rather, those are very powerful words that describe very INTENSE action taken on your part!

- And—along with that—you have to understand and appreciate that something very important and very powerful is beginning to happen to the way in which this "Living Union" (that I often talk about) is existing in the *members* of this *one body in Christ* that you are, **as** you assemble, and **whenever** you assemble yourselves together in this local church!

- And what I mean by that is—that this kind of strong & powerful language is getting going (generating) in your thinking, the realization that, **we're NOT detached from one another!**

- And that kind of thinking that says—I'm just going to church to learn sound Bible doctrine by myself—and I'm not really all that concerned about anyone else getting it—I'm only here for MY own sonship edification that's all a thing of the past! Now the issue is: I'm going to church to get my sonship edification, but I'm also there as a member of an entire body—and I'm just as concerned about every other member of the loc. assem. getting their sonship edification as I am about my own sonship edification!!!

- And that means that this isn't just limited to something that I could actually do to you or to another saint in the assembly that might cause harm—or to the things that I could do to you that would be for your benefit — **but even “hearing” about things that are harmful happening to another saint or things that are beneficial to another saint—is all supposed to be MEANINGFUL to ME (and to YOU)!**

- When you so much as even hear that—you're supposed to *abhor that which is evil* to that saint—and you're supposed to *cleave to that which is good* to that saint! (We're NOT supposed to be indifferent to that!)

- Therefore the *thinking* that our Father has—(and that the Lord Jesus Christ has) that *abhors that which is evil*; and *cleaves to that which is good* is to get established in us!

- We're to *abhor* or hate anything that would cause trouble or harm to another saint—and we're to *cleave* or adhere to like glue (or be tightly bound to) anything that would be beneficial or profitable or healthy for another saint!

- And that kind of thinking—and the elements that compose that kind of thinking—is called something—that is, they are the essential elements or components that make up (thinking-wise anyway) what is going to be known as (and called) this other fundamental characteristic of godly love! (kindness or *lovingkindness*)!

- And that kind of *thinking* is going to have a natural 'outlet' that goes from our mind and into our soul—which will produce the conduct & behavior of the *living* aspect of godliness contained in this component to our *instruction of wisdom*. (in :10)

- And so your change of thinking is supposed to be just like your Father's when He hears that an injustice or a pain or harm has happened to one of His sons! — and He doesn't come along and say, “Ah, Que Sera Sera” “Those are the breaks!” — no — He HATES to hear that—He's disgusted by that—and He would personally **never** do anything that would hurt one of His sons—so likewise, our thinking is to be shaped just like His!

- And on the other hand—our *thinking* is to be so shaped that: I'm going to 'hold tight' (or *cleave*) to anything that's going to be in the best interest of another—that's going to bring prosperity, health, benefit, support or whatever can be so described as *good* to another saint—because that's exactly the sentiment of my Father towards His sons when He hears about *that which is good* happening to them!

- And all this (again) is bringing into existence a greater and deeper understanding and appreciation of what it means to be a **BODY** (to be that *one body in Christ, and members one of another*)! [and the 'living union' relationship of it]

- And the word that expresses and gets applied to that kind of godly *thinking* (and the manifestations of it that come up in the *living* and *labor* aspects in :10) - and the word that goes hand-in-hand with Selflessness (selfless love) [they're meant to be together—and if not, then you recognize that that's why your love would be 'dissimilar'] — and when you are looking out for the best interest of others in such a way that you would NEVER want to hurt them—you *abhor* the idea of anything you would ever do (or anyone else would ever do) to cause them pain, suffering, harm, or trouble in their life; and rather you 'stick like glue' to the things that would be beneficial for them—... all that I just described there is called something in our English language.

- That *thinking* can be called one word: **KINDNESS!**

- Noah Webster's 1828 English Dictionary: KINDNESS
 "Good will; benevolence; that temper or disposition which delights in contributing to the happiness of others, which is exercised cheerfully in gratifying their wishes, supplying their wants or alleviating their distresses. ['click'] **Kindness ever accompanies love!**

- And your love **can't** be like your Father's if it isn't accompanied with KINDNESS!

- Selflessness was the first thing—but along with it **HAS TO BE kindness!** (If it's going to be like His!)

- Now let's get a 'kicker' to all this!

- Remember that I've stressed the kindness as *lovingkindness*?

- And that's just what this is—*lovingkindness*—even though that word isn't used here—but you **do** have it, it's just that it's presented in a little different way—but you do have it: (notice in :10— *Be kindly affectioned* = lovingkindness—it's the Greek word φιλόστοργος, which has the word 'philos' or "love" as it's first component!)

- And everything in the godly *thinking* of (:9), and the godly *living* and *labor* of (:10) is all descriptive of LOVINGKINDNESS!

- Now I want you to think about that word *lovingkindness* and I want to go back and look at some of the instances in which it occurs in God's word.

- (Remembering that, just as Webster rightly understood: "**Kindness ever accompanies love.**")

- The naturalness of kindness being the compliment to selflessness when it comes to the fundamental establishment of godly love is seen in the fact that 30x in God's word (all in Israel's program) the word *lovingkindness* is used.

- Let's look at some of those 30 times and see something fantastic!

- (have them read the verse)

- Psalm 17:7 (1st use)

26:3

36:7, 10

40:10, 11

42:8

48:9

- Notice anything special about *lovingkindness*???

- If we ran down all 30x in which the word *lovingkindness* is used in God's word—every single time that word is used it's used in reference **TO GOD AND GOD ONLY as possessing it!**

- In other words no angel—and no human being—from Adam's fall on—is ever described as having *lovingkindness!*

... that is, until Romans 12:9 & 10!!!

- Romans 12:9 & 10 is the very first time in God's word where any human being (outside of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself) is ever said to possess this magnificent feature of God's love (that He has, up to this point, **reserved only for Himself**) — and the first time that ever comes up as being possessed by men and women on this earth is when it's possessed by **properly educated SONS!**

- Godly *lovingkindness* **is a privileged possession of sons!**

- **Isaiah 63**—Here Isaiah is given to see the LORD coming in His wrath at the end of the 5th Install./5th CoP.

- (read :1-6)

- (:7-9)

- Notice (:9) - *In all their affliction **he** was afflicted*, — in that phrase you have an example of the kind of thinking that composes *lovingkindness*—and just as Rom. 12:9b says, the thinking that's behind *lovingkindness* is the thinking of **abhorring that which is evil**—and that's what you've got in this phrase: *In all their affliction he was afflicted*—

— Evil befalls Israel—and the LORD takes it upon Himself—He **feels** that *affliction*—and He **abhors** the fact that evil/*affliction* would befall them (He abhors it) —

— and He exercises His *lovingkindness* to them—and as (:7 hints at—He *cleaves to that which is good*— He has bestowed “*great goodness toward the house of Israel*” - and He's been *merciful* to them “*according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.*”

- And lest you think that this is just a bunch of maudlin, syrupy, gushy sentimentality—(or emotion or feeling with no real ability to do anything about the situation except to cry about it with those who are crying—much like a great deal of modern-day Christianity that has no answers except to say, “Well, we'll understand it in the by and by” - look at (:9 again)

- Unlike the average anemic Christian today—(that can only seem to combat problems or evil with slogans and clever catch-phrases, which doesn't provide any real help) — rather, from godly *lovingkindness* comes real HELP:

- Out of His *mercies* and *according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses*, He **saved** them—and in his **LOVE** and in his *pity* he **redeemed** them; and he **bare** them, **and carried** them all the days of old. (There's a salvation that can take place from this godly lovingkindness!)

- And this is a fantastic passage that makes it so that you do see that LOVE and KINDNESS **are INSEPARABLE!** (just as Webster rightly observed)

- And that's why they become one word in describing God's Love: *lovingkindness*.

- And therefore (as we have noted many times by now) - godly **selfless** love cannot stand by itself—but it has to go hand-in-hand with **kindness** to form God's *lovingkindness*—and if godly love only stands with selflessness, (good as that is), it still exists **with** *dissimulation!*

- And just as this passage in Isaiah 63 reveals about God Himself (at least where Israel is concerned) - and due to the fact that we have all this very powerful terminology in Romans 12:9b (*Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.*) — God Himself wasn't just a disinterested spectator to Israel's suffering! — but because He is a "LIVING GOD" who personally interacts with His creation—and He has a "Living Union" relationship with Israel (the nation of His own creation) - He, therefore, **did something** for them and He did something **about** the predicament they found themselves in—and from His *lovingkindness* **He went into action for them!**

- And that's to be the same with us!

- The way we are by nature—I most often don't CARE at all if *evil* or *good* befalls someone—but now, with the *renewing of my mind*, and with the effectual working of **Selfless Lovingkindness**, (based upon being *one body in Christ, and every one members one of another*) - I **care deeply** what happens to you! I'm personally vested and interested in what happens to you as a member of my body!

- And whether you realize it or not—there’s a HUGE difference between that kind of love (and especially the **reasons that stand behind why** your love is the godly variety that is based upon the effectual working of Romans 12:3-10) — there’s a great difference between that and the average Christian who utilizes their own natural love and natural kindness (that the course of this world and the wisdom of men has developed and shaped in them) and they simply bring that wisdom-of-the-world love & kindness into the environment of a “church” setting — there’s a big difference between **that** and Godly Selfless Lovingkindness!

- Because—for one thing, natural love & kindness isn’t generated from the same place that godly selfless lovingkindness is generated from!

- (That is, from what it means to be *one body in Christ, and every one members one of another!!!*)

- And you should also be able to now recognize how that, without Selflessness existing FIRST, lovingkindness just can’t possibly exist!

- Because you’re to **Abhor** *that which is evil*; and **cleave** to *that which is good* — and you’re simply **not able** to do that if you’re **selfish!** (*Abhorring that which is evil, and cleaving to that which is good* concerning another saint in the assembly is a purely SELF-LESS way of thinking!)

- So at this point—your ‘**sober**’ thinking as a son—that which marks your wise sonship thinking is: godly Selfless Lovingkindness.

- Are there any questions about this so far? as to how your Father’s own selfless lovingkindness is generated and produced in your inner man? Does that make sense?

- Ok, so Romans 12:9b is telling you to think THIS about *evil* (**Abhor** it) - and think THIS about *good* (**cleave** to it) - and when you think it—it will begin to effectually work within you to become a matter of your **attitude**, and a matter of your **mindfulness** in connection with your dealing with *one another* (which is exactly how God has designed the doctrine to work) — and it will naturally ‘mate’ with the **selflessness** that has already been generated within you—and it will then produce God’s own *lovingkindness*.

- And once *lovingkindness* is in effect—then it can go on and produce **Conduct & Behavior** that goes **beyond** what (:4-5) have described—and become even MORE **intimate**, and even MORE **personal**—which is what the first half of (:10) describes.

- And then once *lovingkindnesses* become matters of your **Conduct & Behavior**—that provides for you to not only be functioning and laboring with God in your individual *offices* in the loc. assem. (as per :6-8) - but it also provides for you to do what the last part of (:10) says—

— and that’s to engage in an operation of God that is designed to produce GROWTH—and is designed to produce an **ADVANCEMENT** and an **INCREASE** in the other saints in the assembly! (and that’s what that issue of: *in honour preferring one another* is all about!)

- And that’s the gist of what the effectual working of (:9-10) is all about.

- And that has to be not only recognized and acknowledged—but that has to be what you **BELIEVE** in connection with the way in which this section of doctrine is to effectually do its job!

- Now if the godly *lovingkindness* has been generated effectually in your *thinking*—it’s now supposed to go to or look for a natural ‘outlet’ and move from your *thinking* (or your mind) into your soul where it will manifest itself in your **Conduct & Behavior**—therefore the next thing that gets dealt with in this 2nd Component to *receiving the instruction of wisdom* is the **LIVING** aspect of the godly sonship edification—and that’s contained in (:10a).

10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love;

- And this sets forth that additional ‘outlet’ that the godly thinking of (:9b) is going to be looking for.

- And since that godly thinking is the issue of *lovingkindness*—it’s going to be looking for an ‘outlet’ to do “kindnesses”.

- And (:10a) comes along and tells you to look at yourselves in the assembly—and realize that your relationship (one with another) has

some ‘**personal-ness**’ to it—and an **intimacy** to it that naturally provides for “*kindness*” to be exercised within it—and you’re exhorted, therefore, to DO IT!

- So the natural ‘outlet’ for the godly *Conduct & Behavior* that the godly *Thinking of lovingkindness* is looking for—and that can immediately take place within the realm of the local assembly is:

10 **Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love;**

- Notice that, just as it was with (:9b) - this is also a rather broad statement—(not much is given in the way of details in HOW you are to do this) - but that allows for **you**, as an adult son, to figure some thing out on your own (between you and your Father as to how you’re going to go about doing this.

- “**kindly**” - Although we’ve talked a lot about the word *kind*—and we noted Webster’s excellent definition of *kindness*—here we have the adverb *kindly*—and the *ly* suffix of course means ‘like’ -

- but the interesting thing about the word *kind* is that all of the words in the *kind* family (*kind, kindness, kindly, kindness*) - the word *kind* is derived from the little word **kin**—which is a group of persons descended from a common ancestor; those connected by blood-relationship — therefore, this is talking about the relationship you have, and the care and concern you have, and the benevolence you have **toward your kindred**—

- and all these *kind*-type words are related because *kindness* is to ever mark the relationship of “**kin**” (a word Southerners use more and appreciate more than do Northerners) —

- therefore, since we have in our passage: *Be kindly affectioned* (and then add to that) *one to another with brotherly love* — the obvious thing you’re to realize here and recognize is that in addition to being *members one of another* as *one body in Christ*—**WE’RE FAMILY** (which is another one of those issues that is commonly known and talked about by many Christians—but as is also commonly true, it wasn’t taught to them by their Father, and/or it wasn’t developed in their heart by the proper sense & sequence of the sonship curriculum—and therefore their common understanding of being members of “The Family of God” is inherently **weak!**

- Because that “family”-type relationship isn’t actually brought up until you get right here in Romans 12:9 & 10!

- But we ARE “family” - and we’re to be ‘*affectionate*’ with one another just like a family-type relationship would be—or with a blood-type relationship!

- And this kind of *kindness* or the adverb that stands before the verb *affectioned*—(***kindly***) — the kind of *kindly* we’re after here has already been set—or has already had the defining parameters put on it as being the thinking toward one another of: *abhorring that which is evil*; and *cleaving to that which is good*. (That’s the thinking that stands behind, and is the defining issue in being *kindly* here).

- ***Be kindly affectioned ...*** (and to define this term *affectioned* will help us out to determine the kind of Conduct & Behavior you’re going to have—and the opportunities you will have to be *kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love*).

- “***affectioned***” - What does that mean? (being swayed by the affections; well affected, kindly disposed or inclined)

= having an affection of the heart (Webster).

“*affection*” = (we often use ‘love & affection’ together) = a settled good will, love or zealous attachment; a fondness; a good disposition toward; a tenderness as, the affection of a parent for his child; desire; inclination; propensity—an attribute, quality or property, which is inseparable from its object.

- An exercise of tenderness; an attachment.

- Rom. 1:31— “*without natural affection*” = one who doesn’t have what naturally should be there as far as tenderness and loving attachment and a good disposition towards (particularly) their own family (especially their own children) — which is why this is such a grossly sinful thing (such as when a mother murders her child).

- George Crabb, in his excellent Dictionary of English Synonymes has a lot to say about this word *affection* —

“*Affection* denotes the state of being kindly *affected* towards a person. It expresses a sentiment of the heart that does honour to human nature—it is the **bond** by which mankind is knit to each other. *Affection* is a tender sentiment that dwells with pleasure on the object: we cannot have love without affection (though we may have *affection* without *love*).

Love is the natural sentiment between near relations; *affection* subsists between those who are less intimately connected, being the consequence either of relationship, friendship, or long intercourse; it is the sweetener of human society, which carries with it a thousand charms, in all the varied modes of kindness which it gives birth to; it is not so active as *love*, but it diffuses itself wider, and embraces a larger number of objects. *Affection* is a chastened feeling under the control of the understanding; it promises no more than it gives, and has but few alloys. Marriage may begin with *love*; but it ought to terminate in *affection*.

A person is *affectionate*, who has the object of his regard strongly in his mind and who participates in his pleasures and pains.

Relatives should be *affectionate* with each other.”

- This issue of *be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love*—that is the proper and natural ‘outlet’ for the *lovingkindness* that’s been generated now in your thinking—and it marks that you have a relationship with other saints in the assembly in which you gather that has an **intimacy** and **bond** such as that of a **family**.
- And it goes beyond the issue of us being merely *members* of a body.
- And this relationship naturally builds on the issue of being *members* of a body—it’s the natural next outcome of those Body Attributes of Conduct & Behavior (Usefulness; Cooperation; Service; & Welfare of the whole body).
- And now this element of godly Conduct & Behavior of *lovingkindness* **adds** an element of intimacy and bonding or being knit together in a ‘personal-ness’ that can only be described as: **a family**—because it’s one thing to know that you’re members one of another (organically, so to speak) - but it’s another thing to add to that the issue of being **kin** or being in a **family-type** relationship.

- Therefore, the appropriate and natural ‘outlet’ for the *thinking of lovingkindness* that’s just been generated in you from (:9) - is that it’s to change our Conduct & Behavior in our relationship with each other in our assembly.

- And much as a family would do—we’re to deal with each other with that tenderness and good will and zealous attachment as we would with **members of our own family** who we love dearly (as opposed to the members of our family that we don’t love dearly).

- But the point here is to establish a particular **BOND** between the saints in the local assembly—as tightly bound as the very members of your own physical body—and as tightly bound as the very members of your own family!

- But unlike family—this **bond** is established upon viewing each other with all that the godly Selflessness has generated in your inner man (*God having dealt to every man/woman in the assembly the exact same measure of faith as He dealt to me—and as us all being one body in Christ, and every one members one of another—and then laboring in those offices with that godly selfless love—and then added to that this issue of lovingkindness—which is generated from abhorring that which is evil ever befalling any member of the body, and cleaving to that which is good* happening to any member of the body).

- And these 2 elements—(just like what takes place in a chemical reaction) - these 2 elements of loving selflessness + lovingkindness produces a ‘reaction’ (so to speak) in which a BONDING takes place among the saints in the local assembly—(and it’s that **bonding** that we’re after)!

- And that family-type **bonding** is the very way in which your godly *living* (your Conduct & Behavior) is be the ‘hallmark’ of your functional life in the assembly and as you personally interact and deal with every other saint in the assembly.

10 Be kindly affectioned one to another ...

- Notice it doesn’t say “**to** one another” but *one to another*. — and the position of that little word “*to*” makes a difference.

- Because our English language has a technique or a way of being able to say this in such a way as to convey the meaning of (and to stress the meaning of) **intimacy** - a close, tight-knit relationship that has this 'Living Union' dynamic to it—as well as indicating a reciprocal type action that includes every one in view.

- It's the difference of saying, "Be kind to one another" and "Be kind one to another" — and my understanding is that by saying *one TO another* it preserves and emphasizes that intimate family-type BOND that should now be in existence between each and every member of the body of the loc. assembly.

- But there's **more** information about our godly Conduct & Behavior with *lovingkindness* (Paul doesn't end it with *another*):

10 ... with brotherly love; (φιλαδέλφία)

- And *brotherly* or "brother-like-love" perfectly describes, and is perfectly fitted to describing *kindness* or *kin* or a *kindred* type of relationship befitting a family type BOND!

- (i.e., "brother" = a son of the same parents.)

- And a brotherhood can be generated even without being actual blood relation! (*brotherly* = to be bonded or banded together as brothers—a band of brothers).

- But the truth is—we ARE "blood brothers" - we ARE related by BLOOD—(it's just not the blood of our natural father or our natural mother) - but it's the BLOOD OF CHRIST!

- We've all heard that saying: "**Blood is thicker than water**" — but why is that such a truism? (because family bonds are closer than those of outsiders!)

- And that phrase is descriptive of that loving & zealous attachment of being "*kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love;*"

- And that **bond** or that loving **attachment** of those who can be described as "*brothers*" is greater than the attachment of friends; it's greater than the attachment of being neighbors; it's greater than **any other attachment!** (which is why that's such a powerful truism!)

BLEST BE THE TIE THAT BINDS**Words: John Fawcett, 1782—Music: Johann Nageli (1773-1836)**

Blest be the tie that binds
 Our hearts in Christian love;
 The fellowship of kindred minds
 Is like to that above.

Before our Father's throne
 We pour our ardent prayers;
 Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one
 Our comforts and our cares.

We share each other's woes,
 Our mutual burdens bear;
 And often for each other flows
 The sympathizing tear.

When we asunder part,
 It gives us inward pain;
 But we shall still be joined in heart,
 And hope to meet again.

- And when it comes to us as *one body in Christ, and every one of us members one of another*—we're to recognize that in all that God has made us to be “in Christ” (sanctification-wise), that the cross work of Christ does indeed BIND us all together—and especially as “sons” in that we really are ‘blood-related’! (identified with His blood)

- And several things have prompted you to think that—but just look, for example, at one of those things:

- **Romans 8:28-30 (:29)** —

- Our Father didn't just determine to have His Son (Jesus Christ) operate alone with Him in His business—but He determined to have many sons (*many brethren*) **after** His Son to come along and be *joint-heirs* with Him in the business!

- In other words—your fixed destiny in this program of sonship education is that you would be, not only *conformed to the image of God's Son*—but that you also would have the privilege of sharing in Christ's own inheritance—and being identified as: **one of His brothers**—because you're both **sons!** (both by Adoption!)

- And Christ's own sonship status and your sonship status are both linked—by means of Him being an heir of His Father's business—and us being *joint-heirs* with Him (*if so be that we suffer with him, ...*)

- He has the pre-eminent position: as *the firstborn*;

- But the issue is, you're a *brother*! (Through adoption!)

- (And you don't have to be afraid of this word *brethren*—you don't have to try to find a better word for it—just to try to avoid the sloppy way it's been abused over the years!)

- The truth is, this issue of being a *brother* to the Lord Jesus Christ—even in God's program with Israel, is actually a New Covenant benefit, just as it is in our program:

- see Heb. 2:9-12 (:11)

- Point being, that's a New Covenant benefit that we don't often think about—but if the Lord Jesus Christ is the pre-eminent, *firstborn* adopted Son of God—and you're a *son* of God your Father (by adoption)—then that means that the relationship we have (especially business-wise) with Christ is one of being His *brother*! (Talk about '**A Band of Brothers**'!)

- And that all makes sense—especially in view of the business of our Father being given to His *heirs*: and those are all FAMILY members!

- Now the emphasis being laid back in Romans 8:29 was designed to generate a particular attitude toward your relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself (as a brother to Him by adoption) - and the confidence that comes from that proven fact—that stems from the Father's 'chain of provision' that makes it so that Rom. 8:28 is a proven reality and will effectually work in your inner man.

- But now the issue of *brotherly love* gets addressed here in Romans 12:10 in order to move your attention to this Family **BOND**: specifically toward **each other** in the assembly in which you gather! (as a matter of the **Conduct & Behavior** of *lovingkindness*)!

(GO S-L-O-W-L-Y!)

- And the **CRITICALLY IMPORTANT ISSUE** here in this portion of (:10) that deals with our godly Conduct & Behavior in connection with our godly thinking of (:9b—*Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.*) - the critical and important issue here is that: it's from a belief in the reality of the bond between each one of us in the local assembly as one of a FAMILY-BOND—which is an understanding generated in your inner man **by your Father's words** as written here in Romans 12:9-10) - it's from great faith and belief in that “Living Union” **family bond**—that from that belief and understanding comes the Conduct and Behavior toward each member of the body of the saints in our local church that would have you now ‘on the lookout’ for, and having the desire to perceive every opportunity you can find for **advancements** and **increases** for other saints in the assembly; and to actually **build one another up!**

- And whereas your thinking and your conduct & behavior in the area of family (and a family-bond) has always been that of “blood is thicker than water” - that is, your own blood-relation family has been the only place where your conduct & behavior has sought for their growth and their increase and their advancement—but now that thinking (and the conduct & behavior that accompanies it), is now going to **go in another direction**—and that's toward each other here in the local assembly as being not merely a “body” - but being a “family”: *being kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love;* — that's close-knit family type terminology if you ever hear it!!!

- And the truth is—as much as you still love your family, and as much as that bond and that care for them **never** diminishes; the truth often is: some members of your family aren't at all interested in either their eternal life; or their spiritual life; or their sonship life! (and that matters in eternity/creature!)

- But (by now) every saint in this assembly in which you gather are on the “same page” (so to speak) with you as to the importance of their sanctified, functional life (being *dead to sin, and alive unto God* and living out their functional life in the status of adopted, adult **sons** of God)! (being edified as sons)

- Now it's going to be up to **you** to now **figure out on your own** how to take *lovingkindness* and manifest it in your conduct and in your

behavior toward the other saints in the loc. assem.—where you're going to be: *kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love*—and **perceive** OPPORTUNITIES to build one another up; and to promote growth and advancement and make increase in each other's sonship life.

- In other words you're going to have to perceive (all on your own) how to live and behave consistent with all this.

- And when that's done—it will manifest a particular conduct and behavior that is just as it is for the members of your own blood-relatives (or your own family). (Because these saints in this assembly ARE your family!)

- And the conduct & behavior you exhibit will have that 'personal-ness' and affection and intimacy and closeness that actually goes beyond and exceeds that issue of being *members one of another* (:5) — that is, it takes those Body Attributes of Conduct & Behavior we learned there, and goes far beyond that single body issue to being BONDED together as a FAMILY!

- Our godly living with *lovingkindness* displays itself in our being *kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love*.

- And so you're going to have to commune and fellowship with your Father—and together, perceive areas in the local assembly where you can put on display your being *kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love*.

- And if this is only temporarily learned but quickly forgotten — then obviously you didn't respond to this doctrine either Positively or Properly—and the result WILL be: **problems** in the future; both individually, and as an assembly as a whole!

- And, by the way, **the curriculum will find you out!** (Eph. 4:13-16; Col. 2:1-3; 19; I Thess.)

- Now before we go on to deal with the godly labor—are there any questions concerning the godly living aspect of (:10a)? Does that make sense?

- The final issue in (:9-10) is to take the thinking of *lovingkindness* and the living as aspect of godliness (the Conduct & Behavior of being *kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love*) - and now the desire should be generated within your inner man to seek the natural ‘outlet’ for the godly living to be put to use in a particular aspect of LABORING with your Father in His business here in the local assembly—(which is the first training ground [or basic training] for you to labor in your Father’s business).

- And just as it did in (:3-5) with the godly selfless love and its corresponding Conduct & Behavior—now with godly *lovingkindness* and its corresponding Conduct & Behavior—the desire should now be produced within you to put that to work!

- In other words—(just as it was before) - you should now be saying to your Father, “Father, shouldn’t I be **doing** something at this point?” — and yes, you should.

- And that opportunity to labor with your Father with this thinking of *lovingkindness* and the Conduct & Behavior of being a Family-Bond among the saints—the labor aspect of the sonship godliness gets stated in just 5 words:

10b ... in honour preferring one another;

- And once the godly thinking and living aspects are **really** there and effectually working in your inner man—this labor aspect of the sonship godliness is actually designed to produce an **intensification** of what (:6, 7 & 8) have already described in connection with the fundamental laboring together with God—(which had you desiring to put your *offices* into effect for the good of the body) —

— well, now on the basis of *lovingkindness*—you’re going to want to perceive opportunities to make advancements; to make increases; and to actually build one another up (so to speak).

- And that’s where the issue of *honour* comes in.

- And when that’s perceived—*lovingkindness* prefers that **another one** is on the receiving end of it—and when that kind of ‘interchange’ is going on with the saints within a local assem.—and each one (on the basis of *lovingkindness* is *in honour preferring one another*) - that’s the beginning of the body’s ability to start **profiting itself**—and to work together to make it **strong** and to **increase its capacity**!

- And if my understanding is correct—it's the originating point or source-issue for what will be described later on in Eph. 4 and Col. 2 [where the body is talked about as being ***fitly joined together and compacted** by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, **maketh increase of the body** unto the **edifying of itself in love** (:16) - That their hearts might be comforted, being **knit together in love**, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ: In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (:2-3)] (Level II Sonship Education—that 'self-generation' issue).*
- All I'm after is that you recognize that, that seminal issue for the body to self-generate and to make increase of itself is brought up and brought into existence **right away**—at the very **beginning** of our sonship education. It's that BIG of a deal!
- And as quick as our 2nd Component to our *instruction of wisdom* that produces fundamental godly **love**—with its **Selflessness** and its **Kindness** - provides (in our relationship one with another as *members one of another*) to not only be able to **labor** together with God in the fundamental operation OF a local assembly—but to also provides for that local assembly (as the individual representation of the body that it is in the locale that it exists), to be able to provide for itself to GROW; and for itself to INCREASE.
- And when you're over in Ephesians—and that issue is brought up there—the issue is that the ***whole body** is **fitly joined together and compacted** and **maketh increase** unto the **edifying of itself in love***—and there your thinking moves from just thinking about your local assembly - to thinking about ALL the local assemblies—and the doctrine there is designed for you to take into account the 'like-mindedness' of other saints in other assemblies—and that the same thing is going on there that's going on with you in your local assembly.
- But it's designed to start off with the **narrow view** of your own local assembly—and getting that sonship godly love doing its job on a small, local level—and everything needs to be in operation in that smaller sphere first—and everything kind of gets tried out and tested out and 'fledged out' on that local level first—and then it gets moved out from there.

- And as the effectual working of the godly thinking, living, and labor of selfless lovingkindness gets itself established among the individual saints—operating in the one local church in which they gather—the labor aspect of the lovingkindness is going to produce: **the desire for you (the saints) to build one another up; and to provide for the assembly to GROW—(not merely numerically) - but to grow in the assembly’s CAPACITIES—to grow in its ability to further the operations of God that He’s designed for a local assembly to engage in!**

- And that mentality and that mind-set starts off with us in our own local assembly—and then as our sonship education continues on—and the advancement and the maturity takes place—there comes a desire to not only expand that growth issue beyond our own local assembly—but there’s actually a desire generated to recognize other assemblies and their sonship education: **and to have fellowship with those other assemblies—and to appreciate the “whole body” concept.**

- And it all begins in Romans 12:9-10!

- And the issue that the godly labor of lovingkindness is after is: ***in honour preferring one another.***

- And there’s a reason for that—and there’s a reason why it’s those 5 words.

- (That’s not just something God decided to say just to fill up space where the labor aspect is concerned—or just something God said because He thought it would be a good thing to say).

- Rather, that’s an aspect of laboring together with God in something that He’s doing!

- And the context of what He’s doing here is **within** a local assembly!

- And as you’ve become familiar with by now—(that is, back in :6-8) — you know that this has to be something that deals with an Operation of God that He wants to be carried out in a loc. assem.

- And the truth is—this is an **ADVANCEMENT** upon the operation that (:6-8) has focused upon! (review: see slides)

- And the truth is—even though you may be able to perceive the *operation of God* that stands behind the *labor* aspect of meeting the Practical Needs of the loc. assem—(as well as the Edificational Needs) — the truth is, there is an **overall operation of God** that stands behind **all** those Needs being met (and met properly) — and when all of the Edificational Need Offices are being participated in; and all of the Practical Need Offices are being participated— what would you say is the overall Operation of God that all those offices functioning properly within the local assembly amounts to—for that loc. assem.?

- And if you don't get this—you're going to be left thinking: when you see (:10) say, "*in honour preferring one another*" — "How in the world is that laboring with God???"

- Hopefully, by making some connections here—by connecting the godly labor in (:6-8) [and its Operation of God] with the godly labor here in (:10) [and its Operation of God] — it will help you recognize what the labor aspect of "*in honour preferring one another*" is all about!

- And one of the key things that I want you to see (if you haven't seen it already) - is that our Father doesn't just give us 'busy work' to do—and He doesn't give us "tasks" to do, just to prove or manifest that the doctrine is working.

- Rather, our Father gives us **labors** to do WITH Him—and if that hasn't 'rung a bell' yet in your head (or grabbed your thinking like it should have) - think of it this way—He's laboring to get some things accomplished—(**He's at work**; working upon getting His business accomplished) - and it turns out that all of the labor He gives you is designed to perfectly match up with (and come along side with) Him and the very work He's involved with in His business!

- And that should make the **laboring together with your Father as His son** the exciting enterprise that it is—so exciting and so grand that nothing else you do or ever will do can match it!!!

- And if we're building on the last 'laboring with God' issue in (:6-8), then this 'laboring with God' in (:10) is going to make sense.

- "Labor" itself tells you that you're working to get something particular accomplished. (This isn't spiritual aerobics where you expend a lot of energy in one place and never get anywhere!)

- So—again—what is the overall Operation of God that gets accomplished when all of the Edification Needs of the local assembly are met; and when all of the Practical Needs of the local assembly are met?

- **Answer:** The assembly is being **STRENGTHENED**—it's **better** for it—and the net result is that the assembly is now beginning to function the way it was intended to by the One who designed it and created it!

- 1) The Edification is taking place because God's word is being communicated—so the Edificational Needs are being met. (Bishop & Deacons)

- 2) The life of the assembly is being Sustained; the Orderliness of the assembly is being kept; and the Soundness of the assembly is being provided for—so the Practical Needs of the assembly are being met. (The individual needs of the assembly are being met).

- And because of those 2 areas of Need being met—the assembly gets established and gets **STRENGTHENED!**

- Now with that in mind—(with all those Edificational & Practical Needs being met) - **this** labor aspect of "*in honour preferring one another*" is going to **build** upon that first labor aspect—and it will take that Strengthening issue and not only make the assembly even stronger—but it will begin a process whereby the assembly will **STRENGTHEN ITSELF!**

- And the result of the local assembly getting strengthened and then beginning to strengthen itself—the Operation of God that God seeks to accomplish with the labor of the sons in the assembly *in honour preferring one another* on top of the Needs of the assembly being met - is to provide for that assembly to **GROW** and to **INCREASE** itself!

- (Kind of makes you think that God has the idea of growth, and increase, and development in mind when it comes to His business out in the heavenly places with the creature!?!?)

- But my point in all this is just to get you to see how these 2 labor aspects (the one in [:6-8] and the one in [:10]) ‘shake hands’ (so to speak) or connect—or a better and more precise way of saying it is that these 2 labor aspects of sonship education BUILD, one on top of the other! (and build **one out from the other!**)

- And you can’t GROW and you can’t INCREASE unless and until the assembly is first of all established and STRENGTHENED—because growth and increase naturally comes from the assembly being strong enough to grow and strong enough to increase and develop!

- Do you see the natural connection there?

10b ... in honour preferring one another; (notice *in*, not *with*)

- “*in honour*” - First of all—we’re **not** talking here about *honour* as a virtue or a trait or an attribute or as a norm or standard—but here we’re talking about *honour* as an **ACT** of *honour*! (It’s an **action of labor!**) — and in this context, we’re talking about *honour* as an **outward act** performed by the members of an **organization!**

- “*honour*” = when used in this sense and in this context—and by that I mean, when *honour* becomes an issue—*honour* in most contexts of an **organization** (whether you’re talking about a military organization or a corporate organization or whether you’re talking about any kind of an organization) - [and a local assembly is an organization] - when you’re talking about *honour* in the context of an organization; *honour* is something that provides for GROWTH and DEVELOPMENT in that organization.

- **George Crabb:** “A love of *honour* can never be indulged but to the advantage of others. It requires a sacrifice of every selfish consideration, and a due regard to the rights of others.”

- “*honour*” when used this way is a testimony of esteem; any expression of respect or high estimation by words or actions, as, for example: “the honours of war” or “military honours” or “funeral honours” or “civil honours.”

- And just to pick out one of those examples that has this idea of *honour* used in the sense of an organization—take a Military Organization—when there are awards that are given out, or special citations that are acknowledged—well when the honour is bestowed, the whole purpose of bestowing the honour has to do with the psychology of the soldiers (and even employees, if you're talking about a corporation).

- When the Medal of Honor is awarded (or even a lesser medal, like the Navy Cross or the Silver Star or the Bronze Star) — even though that award may have gone to only one individual within the organization/unit, it's designed to promote and **grow morale**—and **increase enthusiasm**—and it's designed to **increase zeal** in the members of the unit!

- And whether you're talking about a business or a corporation or if you're talking about a Military Unit or organization—the whole idea of bestowing *honour* is to **increase productivity**!

- And though, by comparison, all these types of examples fall far short of the local assembly—but the issue is, it's easy to see in an *honour*-bestowing situation in any organization—that the purpose of the *honour* is to make some sort of INCREASE in the organization!

- It's designed to **BENEFIT** the organization as a WHOLE!

- And that's what's being spoken about here in Romans 12:10b.

- You're talking about the organization of the local assembly — and the issue is that you, as a son/saint in the assembly, on the basis of your *lovingkindness* and having the exact same attitude toward one another that God the Father does—will bestow the *honour* upon one another YOURSELF!

- And therefore, when *honour* occurs—instead of being **selfish** (and preferring it to come upon yourself—[which would be detrimental]) — on the basis of your **selflessness** and **lovingkindness**—you will prefer it to be bestowed upon **one another** in the assembly!

- And when that's done—it will be conducive to producing the kind of growth and the increase that the **body** is designed to have!

- Now we really don't have the full 'picture' (so to speak) yet - or the fullness of how *in honour preferring one another* gets translated into exactly how we're going to be laboring with our Father in His business that He's carrying on in our local assembly—until we get the meaning of the word ***preferring***—and then put that together with the *in honour* issue.

- **“*preferring*” (prefer)** [What does that mean?] = the most common meaning is: to put forward or advance in status, rank, or fortune; to promote (to a position or office of dignity).

- Note again we have that issue of advancement and promoting someone forward. (growth, development)

- But however good that definition is—we find the most helpful information about *preferring* in the various shades of meaning that it carries—and for that we consult Crabb's English Synonyms.

- First of all—it's helpful just to note the words that are synonyms of *prefer* — TO ENCOURAGE, ADVANCE, PROMOTE, PREFER, FORWARD.

- And as George Crabb often does—he lists these words in the order as they go from the general to the particular—and from the 'mild' (so to speak) to the most intense.

- (Crabb): “The idea of exerting one's influence to the advantage of an object (viz., others, or “*one another*”) is included in the signification of all these terms ...”

- (Crabb): “First, as to persons, *encourage* is partial as to the end, and indefinite as to the means: we may *encourage* a person in any thing, however trivial, and by any means: thus we may *encourage* a child in his rudeness, by not checking him; or we may *encourage* an artist or a man of letters in some great national work; but to *advance*, *promote* and *prefer* are more general in their end, and specific in the means: a person may *advance* himself, or may be *advanced* by others; **he is *promoted* and *preferred* only by others**: a person's *advancement* may be the fruit of his industry, or result from the efforts of his friends; *promotion* and *preferment* are the work [labor] of one's friends; the former [*promotion*] in regard to offices in general, the latter [*prefer*] mostly in regard to **ecclesiastical [church] situations.**”

- The idea behind such words as *promote*, *prefer*, and *forward* is the idea of keeping things alive, or in a motion towards some desired end—usually accompanied by zealous enthusiasm (*esprit de corps*) to bring the one who is the object of your *preferring* to the point of maturity or perfection.

- Webster's 1828— “to bear or carry in advance, in the mind, affections or choice; hence, to regard more than another; to **honor** or esteem above another.”

- So with the phrase “*in honour preferring one another;*” - you've got the idea of an organization (the local assembly) where the individual members are going to act upon *lovingkindness* and the Conduct & Behavior it produced—and now they (you) are going to labor in the assembly to bestow *honour* upon other saints/sons in the assembly in order to promote **their growth, increased maturity, and development** as sons—**BUT also** (at the exact same time), by “*in honour preferring one another;*” individually, that labor also provides for the **capacity** and **productivity** of the organization (the local assembly as a whole) to be in a position whereby an aspect of God's business (that has to do with the assembly as a whole) can begin to get accomplished!

- Now I know that this may all seem a little bit fuzzy—especially as to just how it is that you're going to be laboring with your Father in His business in our local assembly by doing what (:10b) says— “*in honour preferring one another;*” — so let's get some of that fuzziness cleared up.

- Let's go back to that illustration I used before about honours that are bestowed to the Military.

- Even though there is the “Medal of Honor” - the truth is, all of the combat medals are medals of honour—whether it's the Purple Heart or any of the others up through the Medal of Honor—and, in fact, that's why our United States Military Combat Decorations are called “The Pyramid of **Honor**”.

- And those medals aren't given to make the Marine feel **ashamed**—but they're given to make him feel **HONORED!** And to make him an example unto the rest of his fellow Marines—and really, to the rest of the **Corps** (corporate) or “**Body**”!

- Which is why a ‘corporation’ is a BODY—and the Marine *Corps* (is the *Body* of the Marines) - it’s a *body*.

- And the point is—that when **one** is honoured—the issue is:

... ***ALL the members rejoice with it!***

(I Cor. 12:26) - *And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.*

- And that issue is a ‘**building up**’ process! - that’s a **compacting** process! - (which is a strengthening process).

- And when an assembly is has been strengthened by its compacting, that provides for it to be able to take on more and more responsibility; and take on further and further Operations of God!

- And the more you understand and appreciate that—the more you’ll understand why Paul, over in II Corinthians ch. 1 & 2— he talks to the Corinthian saints about his sternness, yet still out of love when it came to dealing with their discord and the sinning brother situation from earlier on in I Corinthians—and then he exhorts the Corinthian saints to forgive the brother and to manifest their love to him—

look at what it says — II Cor. 2:7-11 (:11)

- In this specific context, Paul saw that if the saints in Corinth would not respond to that brother, now, in a way that would provide for the assembly to be ‘**built up**’ further— that the Adversary would be able to succeed with the assembly and successfully make it so that that assembly would not be able to GROW as an assembly—and not be able to MATURE as an assembly.

- And, in turn, not be able to take on further Operation of God as an assembly!

- Therefore—you’re expected now to begin understanding and appreciating that: What takes place in the assembly INDIVIDUALLY (as an **individual son**) in his sonship education (as far as growth and maturity is concerned—and through that growth & maturity, being able to participate in further, ongoing, and increasing Ops. of God — well, that exact same thing takes place in an ASSEMBLY of saints!

- And just as the Satanic Policy of Evil's objective with an individual son—by thwarting his education and derailing it—makes it so that that son (by becoming victimized by it—and by not operating upon the things that are built into the curriculum to enable him to deal with the opposition of the Adversary) **stops his growth** — just as that makes it so that that son doesn't continue to participate in the Ops. of God like he ought to (and meet the objectives of his sonship education) — well, that same thing takes place with an Assembly as a WHOLE, too!

- And just as it's a 'feather in the cap' of the Adversary to do that to an individual son—it's just as much a 'feather in his cap' to do that to an assembly!

- And now—especially when we're dealing with a portion of the curriculum that's going right after our interactions and our function as sons within the assembly as a whole—and dealing with the Ops. of God within a local assembly—we need to understand and appreciate the fact that God not only has in mind your individual progress as a son—but He has in mind that the assembly as a whole is progressing along the course of Sonship Education! (That's how God designed it to work).

- And there are Operations that He has **that are specifically designed for an ASSEMBLY of saints to engage in.**

- And when these 'corporate matters' of our sonship education don't take place—or there are **difficulties** in connection with them—or there's success in the PoE in hindering them—then the assembly itself ends up being adversely affected by that! ... and ends up not participating in various Operations of God that it could participate in if it grew and matured like it's supposed to.

- Well—an example of that—or an example of a particular aspect of our sonship education that's designed to specifically provide for an assembly of saints to provide for the assembly as a whole to grow and to mature—is not only (:6, 7, & 8 of the 1st Component) - but it's also the end of (:10) in connection with the 2nd Component to our receiving the *instruction of wisdom*. [*in honour preferring one another*]

- By the way—just to underscore the **importance** of getting this in your understanding—is seen in the fact that the next time this issue comes up in particular (even though it does

come up in :13, 14, & 15 [in the 5th Component] - but especially in the 6th Component—the last part of (:16) [the part that deals with the godly labor] says, “*Be not wise in your own conceits.*” — if saints are *wise in their own conceits* then they’re doing things that are **destructive** to the assembly functioning as God has designed it to function. And the ones that are spoken about in the passage as “*men of low estate*” are going to end up **suffering** for it!

- The final Component in our initial *instruction of wisdom* returns to and links itself on to the 1st Component (forming a complete ‘circle’ of doctrine) - and you come right back to dealing with another aspect of ‘mindfulness’ about *one another*—and you’re going to be dealing with *one another* still as *members one of another*—but now you’re going to acknowledge that some are of **lower estate** than others are—

- And you’re going to take a course of action that is based upon the fundamental attributes of Conduct & Behavior that members of a BODY would have with one another—but it’s going to now incorporate the *lovingkindness* of the 2nd Component, and also the Care & Concern of the 5th Component—

— and that’s going to make it, therefore, so that when *men of low estate* are dealt with in the assembly, those of (by default) a ‘higher’ *estate* CONDESCEND to them!

- (And you do that for a very particular purpose) = because you **don’t** want them **left behind!** You **don’t** want them to **fall short!**

- And for the benefit of the whole assembly—so that the whole assembly can advance on—and do MORE than it’s already doing: the CONDESCENDING takes place.

- And that provides for a ‘**CONCEIT-LESS**’ environment to exist in the assembly—in which nothing is done on the basis of ‘conceit’!

- And when that’s in existence—my understanding is that that’s when a local assembly is able to function in accordance with ALL that God has designed for an assembly to be able to do in connection with the *instruction of wisdom*.

- And then that provides for the *instruction of Justice* and the *instruction of Judgment* to come along next.

- And it's interesting that when the *instruction of Justice and Judgment* gets dealt with—just about everything that's said in connection with those 2 categories of sonship decision-making is almost all addressed INDIVIDUALLY.

- In other words, you don't have a specific reference to the saints being dealt with AS an assembly of saints.

- The information you receive there is information you're going to be applying individually—in individual encounters that you're going to have—and in individual circumstances and situations you're going to find yourself in.

- The next time you return to the local assembly environment, specifically, is in the *instruction of Equity*.

- And the 'acid test' (so to speak) for a loc. assem. to function as God has designed for it to function—and to be able to fulfill its Operations as a loc. assem. under Level I Sonship Education—is when it has been in existence long enough so that there start to become a **disparity** in existence between the edificational statuses of the saints within it!

- And no longer do you have a group of saints that are all on the same level—but since the saints have been conducting their most fundamental Operation of God all along (which is to function as an **Ambassador** for Christ) - **new saints end up coming into the assembly!**

- And eventually, you've got some *weaker brothers*—and some that are VERY weak.

- And the 'acid test' for an assembly's proper function—and it's ability to fulfill all of the Operations that God has designed for an assembly to be able to fulfill under Level I Sonship Education—will be determined **based upon the saints Equitable treatment of weaker brothers!**

- (That will determine whether they: *in honour prefer one another*—that is, whether or not they will *condescend to men of low estate*—whether there will be any 'conceited' operations).

- And that's why—when you're dealing with the *instruction of Equity*—there are 2 times that the apostle Paul talks about: '*for meat don't destroy the work of God*' — (see 14:15 & :20)

- One applies to the 'work of God' individually in the weaker brother—the other applies to the 'work of God' in the assembly!

- And 'strong ones in the faith' despising weaker brothers, and not *walking charitably* towards them—can **destroy** the weaker brother individually; —

— **and** can destroy the 'work of God' in that local assembly! (and bring that work to a halt!)

- Now that's a lot more than you might need at the moment—but that gives you a view ahead as to the importance of this—as well as the effectual working of the edification process built into all of this.

Recap:

- What (:9) is doing is—by its effectual working: it's making you *THINK* about *evil* and *THINK* about *good* (not like you've always thought about them and been formed/fashioned to think about them like the world does or like the wisdom of men does) - but to think about them like the **FATHER** does!

- He **Abhors** *that which is evil*—and He **cleaves** *to that which is good*!

- And the effectual working of (:9) is to get you and I to think that exact same thing and that exact same way about *evil* and *good*!

- And THAT'S what produces **kindness**—that's what's behind **kindness**.

- Genuine **kindness** is the **expression** of the *abhorrence of evil*; and *cleaving to that which is good*.

- And the effectual working of that in your inner man is dependant upon you **believing** that! — and therefore, responding Positively and Properly to it!

- That's what makes it so that it get written on *the fleshy table of your heart*—and therefore becomes a constituent of, (or the fabric of), your thinking!

- And that's what you're providing for those words of (:9) to do—they're telling you what to think—and as sons, you know that your responsibility is to BELIEVE (not just that those words are God's words), but to **believe what** those words of God say!

- And then to make the conscious sonship decision that that's exactly what they're going to do! (generate God's own *lovingkindness*)

- And therefore you're going to think exactly like it says for you to think.

- And *evil* isn't something that you're going to just dislike—but you're going to **Abhor** it! — and *good* isn't something that you're just going to be happy about—but you're going to cleave to it!

- And that's what generates **kindness**.

- And then that mates up with the Selfless love of (:3-8) - and your godly love will be *without dissimulation*: it's now **lovingkindness**!

- Then—as you respond Positively to that (by believing that) - that *lovingkindness* is going to manifest itself as you begin to respond PROPERLY to it—and the first place it manifests itself is in your own personal Conduct & Behavior—and so you're going to conduct and behave yourself through the natural 'outlet' for that *lovingkindness* by *being kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love*.

- You're going to treat every member of the body of Christ in your local assembly in which you gather as you would treat your own **family**—with a Living Union Family **BOND**!

- And that makes it so that you're desire is to look out for every opportunity you can find for advancing and increasing the functional life of every other son in the assembly—and to build one another up!

- The object of your fond and zealous attachment—your desire to be inseparably attached to the other sons in the assembly—your BOND is to be as powerful as it is with members of your own FAMILY!

- As a **brother**—with *brotherly love*!

- And then to complete your PROPER response—you're going to set out to labor with your Father in His business that He wants to get accomplished in the local assembly by: *in honour preferring one another*.

- Your labor is going to be that of bestowing *honour* on others in the assembly—and by doing so, provide for both their individual growth and development—but also for the growth and development of the entire assembly!

- And by doing so—increase the morale, zeal, and enthusiasm of the entire assembly—and benefit the entire assembly so that it can (as an assembly as a whole) be in a position to take advantage of the Operations of God that He wants to get accomplished with our assembly as a whole!

- And as a body or a corps—when one is honoured, *all the members rejoice with it!*

- And not only are the individual sons in the assembly able to participate in the various Operations of God individually; but the assembly as a **whole** is able to participate in (and is **strengthened** enough) to take on the additional responsibilities of the Operations of God for the assembly **as a whole!** (as a corps or *body*)

- Now with a general grasp upon the fact that our Father is concerned with and is laboring to get accomplished 2 major things here:

1) Your individual sonship edification unto godliness which in in faith —

2) The growth, development, and edification of a Sonship Church—or a Sonship Assembly—that is, the edifying of the assembly as a whole.

- Each of those 2 have particular Operations of God to fulfill and get accomplished.

- And that edification process is able to get underway in earnest when this first sonship decision-making skill of *wisdom* gets fledged out when godly Selfless Lovingkindness has been generated you as a son.

- And the labor that you are going to engage in with your Father will first of all have you determining and choosing (as an adult son) to operate and function in a particular **office** in order to meet the Edificational and Practical Needs of the assembly.

- But then a furtherance to that labor gets presented—(and by your sonship decision to operate & function in that labor) — the furtherance to the labor of those offices is that: you will labor with your Father ***“in honour preferring one another.”***

- And the issue of you *in honour preferring one another* is the issue of you performing (laboring to perform) an ACT of bestowing *honour upon one another*.

- And since we aren't talking about the actual giving of a medal or a trophy or a certificate or anything along those lines—the act of bestowing *honour upon one another* in our assembly is, for the most part, going to be a **verbal act!**

- A verbal act of encouragement; of recognition; of commendation (commending); of encouragement and so forth—[all of which are HUGE issues to a corps or a *body!*]

- Or there may be times where actual promotion or moving another forward may be involved—(for instance, in the area of functioning in that *office of Ruling*).

- And the result will be that the individual saint will be benefitted—and at the exact same time, the body or assembly as a whole will be benefitted by your act of *honour preferring one another!*

- The **benefits** being: (especially for the body or the assembly) - an increased capacity for the assembly to take upon itself greater responsibility to fulfill further Ops. of God—as well as an increase in the overall morale of the assembly—an increase in the assembly's ability to produce more sons (by your Ambassadorship) and by aiding and even producing other assemblies where godly sonship edification is going on—an overall increase in the enthusiasm and zeal of the assembly.

- So what's going to happen when you choose (out of *lovingkindness*) to bestow *honour*, and see to it that *honour* is bestowed upon *one another* (other saints) who are doing what (:6-8) taught them to do—

— when other saints are properly carrying out that office that they've committed to carry out (either *Giving with Simplicity*; or *Ruling with Diligence*; or *Shewing Mercy with Cheerfulness*) in accordance with how they should carry out that office —

— and then you choose to bestow *honour* upon them—and actually SEE TO IT that *honour* **is** bestowed upon them —

— what you'll actually be DOING is to **verbally make mention of (tell them) how appreciative you are that they are occupying that Office!**

- The idea of *in honour preferring one another* in a body of the loc. assem. is that, by that ACT, the whole assembly will be strengthened and increase in its capacity to grow into the further Ops. of God!

- And when sons properly carry out their office—
lovingkindness **is going to seek to honour those sons!**

- (which is just the **opposite** of our carnal, natural, selfishly desire—which is to seek to BE honoured by others!)

- The course of this world and the natural men of this world seek honour and accolades and recognition—
but sons don't think like that! (they seek to bestow it!)

- And this goes hand-in-hand with Selfless Love.

- Sons, rather, *prefer another* saint is on the receiving end of the *honour*—the *honour* **he** is bestowing—a son seeks the advancement of another saint as much as his own! (Because a son has the intelligent understanding and appreciation of what that labor of “*in honour preferring one another*” will do [will get accomplished for the good/benefit of the assembly as a whole!])

- So your desire to labor this way is that you want to show *one another* that you respect and appreciate them—and want to show *one another* the esteem you have for them and for what they're doing to meet the Needs of the assembly.

- And the net result is—the **whole assembly** is strengthened and the capacity is increased in it to grow and go on to more and more Ops. of God!

- And there's no danger in doing this—(as if the saint you bestow *honour* on is going to let it 'go to his head') — because it's already been established in him that **he's** going to operate in Selflessness!

- By the way—this is EXACTLY what the apostle Paul is doing at the end of the book of Romans!

- see Romans 16:1ff !!!

- Now—with all that—do you now have a better idea of, when it comes to this issue of laboring with your Father *in honour preferring one another*—just how it is that you're going to go about doing that? (with **Selfless Lovingkindness?**)

- that—once the assembly is laboring so as to stabilize it and make it strong—a further strengthening takes place—and a capacity for it to grow and increase is at the **center** of our Father's Operations for our labor with Him with the full Selfless Lovingkindness now in operation within our local assembly?

- And so when you see offices being occupied and labored in out of godly Selfless Lovingkindness—your response of labor-type action of *your* Selfless Lovingkindness has you come along and, rather than giving it shallow notice (or no notice at all, which is usually the case) - and rather than saying, "Well, that's no big deal, look at what I'm doing" or "I'm doing the same thing ... so, so what?" — rather, Lovingkindness says, "I **highly value** what you're doing—you're doing **good work**, and I *cleave to that which is good*—and I so much appreciate what you're doing for the assembly –and I wanted you to know that!" (and that bestows *honour* upon them).

- And that should produce in that individual saint—(not vain pride) - but a sense of confidence; zeal; enthusiasm; and cement in their thinking (so to speak) their **loyalty** and **dedication** to being a *member* of this assembly—and to be excited about where it's going!

- And from that comes a **building up**; and a **compacting**; and a further **strengthening** process! (after a godly sort!)

- And you can express just how Useful that son/daughter is to the assembly—and that you can Cooperate with them—and that nothing they do goes “unnoticed” by you! (And that they are part of something unusual and grand and rare on this earth: an assembly of SONS—being educated and edified as SONS to one day liberate the creature from its bondage of corruption—and to be an active ‘player’ or ‘mover and shaker’ of our Father’s creation—having the privilege of bringing His very LIFE into existence in that creature that has known nothing but vanity and misery and cruelness and deadness!

- (You may look at Hubble Telescope pictures of ‘outer space’ and be impressed with it—and think that it’s some kind of ‘glorious’ place—but you’re flatly WRONG! — that place in under bondage; curse; and sin!)

- And if you think it’s grand & glorious out there in the condition it’s in now—just wait until our Father’s sons get out there and go into business together in it!

- Well—that all starts right here and right now!

- And I just want to underscore that what we’re doing here—because we have been taught what to think by our Father; and because that thinking generated a natural ‘outlet’ for it into our Conduct & Behavior; and from those 2 things (and with those 2 things), our Father immediately gives us some work/labor to perform along with Him—I want to underscore that what we’re doing is after a godly sort/manner! (it’s like HIM, not like this world!)

- In other words—the course & wisdom of this world does similar things—the men of this world bestow all kinds of honors upon one another—but usually it’s done in a manipulative way, and/or in a patronizing (condescending) way.

- But since this is all built upon genuine godliness—and the Components of the Sonship Curriculum (i.e., the very Living words of the Living God) - then in recognition of that saint’s Office Labor in the assembly, and your coming along and *in honour preferring them*—by telling them that you appreciate their labor, and that we’re **better** for their labor—that’s NOT patronizing; and that’s NOT manipulative! (that’s the honest, **kind** response to their labor!)

- And this serves to—(by both the one bestowing the *honour*, and the one receiving the *honour*) - it generates a **godly** ‘esprit de corps’ - that centers upon the mutual “**cause**” that we all are engaged in here in our local assembly!

- And if you’re not aware of it—that’s a rare thing even among Christians and Christian Churches! (where the only thing they’re impressed with is the new pews; or the choir robes; or the new organ; or the successful bake sale—but they’re almost never impressed with the CAUSE for why they even exist as a local church!)

- And that’s clearly seen—if you’ve ever had to spend any time in one of those churches where it was ‘like pulling teeth’ just to get anybody to do anything (like being a Deacon, or being a Sunday School teacher—or mowing the lawn or sweeping up or whatever!)

- When we talk about the action or **labor** of *in honour preferring one another*—that the action or labor performed is one of commending one another’s labor in one or more of the Offices of that saint’s own choosing—and then we say that by that act, there is an **increase** in the individual saint on the receiving end of it; and there is an **increase** to the assembly as a whole—(just to add some further explanation to that as it generates an increased ‘esprit de corps’ in connection with the “**cause**” that the whole assembly is engaged in — what I mean by all that is that there is an increase of the individual’s *and* the assembly’s **FAITH IN THE PRODUCT** (just to use that corporation analogy).

- That is, this variety of labor of bestowing *honour* upon *one another* has a “**galvanizing**” (to use that wonderful English term) **effect** surrounding the **PRODUCT** that every member of the body is both receiving and distributing—an arousal of keen awareness for why we’re an assembly in the first place — inspiring zeal & enthusiasm for the product of our body or corporation (which is the aims, goals, and objectives of sonship edification) — creating such **faith** in the product (or cause) that the whole body becomes **resistant to any attempt to corrupt or deviate from that product/cause!**

- Example: The Doolittle Raid—April 18, 1942
16 Mitchell B-25's launched from the USS Hornet to bomb the Japanese homeland.

“The Japanese people had been told they were invulnerable ... An attack on the Japanese homeland would cause confusion in the minds of the Japanese people and sow doubt about the reliability of their leaders. There was a second, and equally important, psychological reason for this attack ... Americans badly needed a morale boost.” — Jimmy Doolittle

- Example: Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima—taken on February 23, 1945 by Joe Rosenthal. (The most reproduced photograph in history).

Ira Hayes, Franklin Sousley, Mike Strank, Doc Bradley, Rene Gagnon, and Harlon Block

- Therefore—in the situation of the local assembly—a Sonship Assembly made up of saints that are there for their sonship education — once you've got Selfless Lovingkindness generated and in operation in the assembly as that very powerful sonship decision-making skill of Wisdom—the effect of that (especially in the labor of *in honour preferring one another*) - the effect of that is to ACT upon the close, personal, family-type BOND—and you're going to always be looking for and perceiving any other son in the assembly with you operating in one of those Offices of Need that the assembly has—and when you perceive that Office being carried out **well** and being **beneficial** and either you or other saints are **profiting** from it—you're going to bestow the *honour* upon that saint (mostly verbally) [you'll bless them] - and the effect will be 'galvanizing' - it will be an encouragement to them and to the whole body—it will result in an overall increase of faith in or confidence in the product of the assembly (sonship education) - and it will produce a strengthening of the individual and the assembly as a whole so as to resist corruption or any deviation from our mutual CAUSE!

- And this will cause the assembly as a whole to increase it's capacity for receiving more responsibility to take on more Operations of God — and we're not going to get out of our *receiving the instruction of wisdom* before we experience that very thing—(down in :13-15 in the 5th Component).

- And then there'll be more in our instruction of *Justice* and *Judgment*—and then the instruction of *Equity* is pretty much **all** taken up with an increased capacity that the body of the local assembly has to have when (if they're functioning the way their supposed to be functioning) - when we find ourselves in a situation where a disparity starts to exist between the edification that most of us will have and some new Christians or new saints join our assembly who are just getting started.

- And it's that increased capacity for us to always deal with one another **as members one of another**—and doing it with *brotherly love* that really **wants** to see progress and welfare and wealth (not financial wealth—but the spiritual health and wealth) of the saints.

- And that all has to be there in operation by the time weaker brothers are a fixture in the assembly — otherwise you'll have the strong ones judging the weak ones—and the weak ones not knowing how to respond to that properly, so they'll criticize the strong ones—and then you've got the “*work of God*” potentially being **destroyed!**

- But let's not get off track—because the truth is, the way God has designed the curriculum to work—and the way He's designed the Components of the curriculum to work—is (as always) in the very Sense & Sequence that He puts them!

- And by that I mean—that once the Godly Selfless Love has effectually worked, it **WANTS** to go to the next natural thing (which is the Lovingkindness)—and once that has effectually worked, it immediately **wants** to go on to what (:11) deals with—and that **wants** to go on to what (:12) deals with—and only then does it want to increase and provide for a further capacity for the loc. assem. that (:13-15) deals with—and then what (:16) deals with—**IN THAT ORDER!**

- In other words—once the Selfless Lovingkindness has effectually worked (as per :3-10), it **DOESN'T** want to immediately go over to I Thessalonians and function like a Level III saint! (It's not stupid—it wants to grow and develop just as God has designed it to!)

- ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?

- Post-Doctrinal Exhortation—(Proverbs 3:1-4)

- Sonship Volition Testing Point

- Review Positive & Proper Response.

- Now that we have the full, effectual working of the 1st & 2nd Components to our *instruction of wisdom*—and the manifest evidence of it occurring in our local assembly (which is where we're supposed to *labor* with our Father first) — and by your Positive & Proper Response to Godly Selfless Lovingkindness as per Romans 12:3-10—you should now be confident & satisfied (and your Father should now be confident & satisfied) that we can now move on to the next Component of doctrine that makes up our *instruction of wisdom*.

- Romans 12:11—The 3rd Component to the son's receiving the instruction of wisdom.

11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

- Now as we have noticed on our general/basic Outline of Romans 12:3-16 (which is the body of information that gives us our Father's *instruction of wisdom* so that, as our Father's sons, we will be able to make wise sonship decisions just like He does) — we've now received the effectual working of the first 2 Components (of 6) that make up our basic *wisdom*.

- And while the entire body of information deals with our Father's godly love as a powerful decision-making skill—(and while everything in those 14 verses deals with the issue of godly love) - a couple of things need to be pointed out (or re-pointed out) as we now get to this 3rd Component.

- For one thing—you need to understand and appreciate that it's only in the first 2 Components that God deals with the generation of and/or the bringing into existence of His own godly love.

- That is—the first 2 Components generate godly love in your inner man—and bring into existence its first 2 Major Features or Characteristics.

- And those are the only Features or Characteristics of godly love that are brought into existence in all 14 verses.

- So the Sense & Sequence of the entire section that makes up our *instruction of wisdom* is to:

1) Get godly love brought into existence—which is made up of 2 Major Features (or 2 constituent parts—at least for now): Selflessness and Kindness (*lovingkindness*). [More Features will be added later on in the curriculum.]

2) Once godly love (with its first 2 Major Features) has been generated—it is now in a **state** in which it can **do** and can **accomplish** all the things that the rest of :11-16 are designed for it to accomplish.

- In other words—once those 2 Major Features of godly love have been generated and are effectually working within your inner man and WITHIN the local assembly itself—NOW that godly love is in a **sufficient state** for it to MOVE OUT from the local assembly and begin its effectual work in all the other areas of the details of your life.

- Therefore, the next thing you're to understand and appreciate is that when you get to (:11) - a '**shift**' takes place.

- No longer are you getting information about the creation or the generation of godly love—but now you're getting information about putting that now-existing godly love into practice in all the other areas of your sonship life.

- No where in (:11-16) do you get any information that “Godly Love is _____” — rather, you get information about wisely utilizing godly love in a number of situations and circumstances—and what gets generated now is the skill-acquisition of how godly love is to be the powerful decision-making skill that it is.

- And there's no randomness to these other areas or circumstances—rather there's great design and purpose to them.

- There's a **natural** progressive development to them!

- The truth is—if all has gone well with the first 2 Components of godly love—your desire (and the desire of the “living” words of the “Living God” - the desire of the curriculum which is *quick and powerful*) - is that you and it WANTS to take this transformation that has taken place in your inner man by the *renewing of your mind*—your desire is to WANT to take that godly love you now have—and move it out of the local assembly and into the most natural place in which you spend the most amount of your time: **the place where you do business—your JOB—your work-place!**

- But there’s an even greater reason for taking godly love out from the local assembly and moving it into the realm of your *business*—and that has to do with the fact that *business*, (**God’s business**) is what you’re being trained for—and is the very **core issue** for why you were adopted in the first place.

- And because of this issue that the **development** of godly love (as far as any further Features or Characteristics being added to the Selflessness and the Kindness) ***isn’t*** in view in the final 4 Components to our *receiving the instruction of wisdom*—that’s why I’ve indicated this “**shift**” that I’ve been talking about on our Outline with that **line** that marks off the first 2 Components from the last 4 Components.

- But what I’m after is that you appreciate the naturalness and the natural order or progressive development that actually **calls for** the next thing to be dealt with is the issue of moving godly love out of the local assembly and into your *business* or your work-place.

- So when I talk about this “shift” that takes place in (:11ff), it’s kind of like—when you get those first 2 Components that generate godly Selfless Lovingkindness—it’s like going up flights of stairs—and it’s as though you’ve gone up some stairs—but now you come to this “landing”.

- And (:11) and (:12) are going to do their effectual work at that ‘landing’ (so to speak) - and then once they’ve done their effectual work—enough time will have gone by; and enough experience with have been gained by you; and Selfless Lovingkindness will have become such a **norm** (it will be just

so normal and familiar as who you are as God's son) - that you will then return to dealing with 'other saints in the assembly' in (:13, 14, & 15) in the 5th Component—and then (:16) in the 6th Component—and it's really there in those last 2 Components (5 & 6) that the next INCREASE can take place to godly love.

- (Not that it's another Major Feature, but it is an increase to those first 2 Major Features).

- And in those final 2 Components you do come back to dealing with other saints/sons in the assembly in which you gather. (Although, not exclusively).

- And what you get is this magnificent 'Circle' of Doctrine that comprises our initial *instruction of wisdom*.

- Really—that form of doctrine occurs in sets of 2:

(:3-8) & (:9-10) - Components 1 & 2

(:11) & (:12) - Components 3 & 4

(:13-15) & (:16) - Components 5 & 6

- And edification is like that—just like building a building where a lot of increase is easily seen, but then it seems that (from the causal observer) that there's a time when not a lot is going on—and then there's suddenly more increase to the building that's easily seen.

- And edification does that—it provides for increase to take place—but then because of the **work** that takes, you hit a 'landing' (so to speak) where some **time** and **experience** is necessary and is going to be gained before going on to the next 'set of stairs' that's going to increase the doctrine you got in the first set of 'stairs.'

- So I say all that—just to say that my understanding is that when you get to (:11), we're not abandoning the context of Godly Love—but we're actually at this point where a 'shift' takes place from adding to, or increasing the doctrine—but to shift to using that doctrine in the details of your life—where time and experience can be gained by you as a son before going on to the work of next increasing the doctrine of Godly Love.

- Now you need to bear in mind that what you're receiving here is the *instruction of wisdom*—and NOT the *instruction of LOVE!*

- And though we've heavily emphasized this issue of God teaching us His wisdom (and wise sonship decision-making skills) based upon His godly love—the truth of the matter is: this **is** the *instruction of wisdom*.

- And just for you to get a better grasp of the Sense & Sequence to this whole form of doctrine—and the 'shift' I'm talking about that takes place in (:11) — it's like, once you've got the godly Selfless Lovingkindness in effect—(much like hitting that 'landing,') you're going to kind of let that sit for a while. And that's going to function now (primarily) within the local assembly as members of the *one body in Christ*, and *members one of another* that you are.

- And that's what the first 2 Components deal with.

- But then the next 2 Components (#3 & #4) are going to move out of the local assembly—and into where your next, most natural area or realm of concern is; and the area in which you spend the most amount of time in— which has to do with your 'work-a-day' world.

- And it's not that you're going to abandon Lovingkindness, or anything along those lines—because that's to continue in existence and be brought into your work-a-day world—and will deal with the people you encounter there.

- But there's a need now to produce general godly Thinking; and general corresponding godly Conduct; and a general appreciation that there **is** godly Labor within this area of your life.

- And that's what Component 3 & 4 are going to deal with—they're going to deal with a general issue of this other area of your life (so to speak) - which has to do with your business world and your work-a-day world—and the general circumstances and situations of your daily life.

- And you're going to learn some fundamental matters of godly Thinking/Living/& Labor in connection with that.

- And it's really all marvelously and ingeniously developed:

- Because the first 2 Components—their major area is the fact that you're now a member of the new creature of the church the body of Christ (and deals with your relationship with other members of the new creature of the church the body of Christ in your local assembly environment with them).

- And then the second 2 Components step out into the world 'at large' - and deals with the fundamental Thinking/Living/ & Labor that God wants you to have with respect to the 'world at large' — especially in connection with the way in which you function in it—(which primarily has to do with your *business* and with the general circumstances and situations you're going to find yourself in there).

- And when you then get to the third 2 Components—those first 2 Issues get **blended together**—and you're going to be dealing with **saints** AND the **unsaved**—*both* in the context of the 5th & 6th Components.

- And you're really not able to handle the 5th & 6th Components dealing with saints AND the unsaved until you've got these previous fundamental issues of godly Thinking/Living/ & Labor with respect to saints - and with respect to ones in the work-a-day world (which, generally, are going to be unsaved people).

- And the genius of what God's done here is that He's provided for this natural development to take place—and He's going to deal with the saints first—then the unsaved that you're going to be encountering in the general *business* areas of your life—and then He's going to deal with another category of fundamental **wisdom** for us as members of the church the body of Christ that's going to be able to apply to BOTH of them. (And that's going to have to do with the issue of what Paul calls "*necessity*" — there's a *necessity* situation with respect to saints—and there's a *necessity* situation with respect to the unsaved).

- And to properly deal with those areas of *necessity*, you've got to have the godly Lovingkindness (of the first 2 Components) already in existence - and you've got to have the skills and the perception that the 2nd category (the 3rd & 4th Components) that deals with the world-at-large—and that makes it so that you can then perceive that *necessity* situation that the 3rd category (that the 5th & 6th Components deal with).

- So I say all this just to point out that you can look at these 6 Components that make up our *instruction of wisdom* in the way we already have looked at them—but you can also get some further appreciation for the Sense & Sequence of what's taking place here—and especially focusing upon the actual **WISDOM** that is being developed.

- And you get that by looking at these 6 Components as 'couplets' — or 3 Categories that consist of 2 Components each:

- #1 & #2 dealing with the 1st Category;
- #3 & #4 dealing with the 2nd Category;
- #5 & #6 dealing with the 3rd Category;

— and when you do that, you're actually seeing the **wisdom** developing.

- Because you've got Wisdom in connection with Saints; you've got Wisdom in connection with the World; and then you've got Wisdom in connection with the Saints and the World and their *necessity* situations.

- And hopefully that will allow for you to appreciate this '**shift**' that takes place here in (:11) [and in (:12)].

- And now the gears have 'shifted' to deal with the world-at-large in your *business* and your work-a-day world.

- And so, therefore, the best way to look at the 3rd & 4th Component (:11) & (:12) - we're dealing with another aspect of our essential, fundamental, foundational **wisdom**. (And it's going to move into the realm of our wisdom as we go about our normal, work-a-day, in-the-world-at-large lives as sons).

- And the further development isn't so much in connection with our Lovingkindness—it's a further development in our wisdom in connection with our godly thinking/living/& labor in our second-most time consuming area of our lives—which is going to be outside the loc. assem., and in the world-at-large.

- Now with all that said—**godliness** and **edification** is still in view as we are still dealing with a full Component to our *instruction of wisdom*.

- And being *not conformed to this world: but being transformed by the renewing of your mind* is all still in view and is still going on—even in this one verse that has only 10 words to the entire Component!

- So therefore the 3 Aspects of godliness are going to be addressed in this particular Component of **sound Bible doctrine**.

- And they're very easy to identify—because (:11) is actually made up of 3 Clauses (each being divided by a semi-colon).

- And those 3 Aspects of godliness are:

- 1) *Not slothful in business*; — **Thinking** like God.
- 2) *fervent in spirit*; — **Living** like God in your Conduct & Behavior.
- 3) *servicing the Lord*; — **Laboring** with God in His Business.

- Now while it's easy to identify the 3 Aspects of godliness contained in this Component—it may not be so easy to see how *Not slothful in business* is the **Thinking** Aspect and *fervent in spirit* is the **Living** Aspect.

- Because at the outset—or at first glance (so to speak) it seems that those 2 are reversed—and that the godly Thinking has to do with what goes on in the human *spirit*, so it would seem that *fervent in spirit* is the Thinking Aspect—and the issue of *not being slothful in business* is the Living Aspect because *slothfulness* seems to be a manner of Conduct and Behavior.

- But you know that your Father's format or method of teaching you is following that pattern of godliness in every one of these Components—so you can conclude simply from that alone that these **are** in their proper order for godly edifying to take place.

- But you also have to recognize that the description of the godly thinking and the description of the godly living (or Conduct & Behavior) **are very close**.

- And that's due to the nature of the Conduct & Behavior that's *godly*, when it comes to our Conduct & Behavior in the business world (or in the world at large) - but particularly in our business world— but that Conduct and Behavior is so intimately tied to **what we *think* about *business***, that the way in which God has Paul deal with it is (as far as the Conduct & Behavior goes) as it says, "*fervent in spirit*;"

- And you need to recognize that the word *spirit* or "*in spirit*" is an expression that can refer to—not just what you *think* about something, but it can refer to **your ATTITUDE towards something that GOVERNS the way in which you approach it!**

- And that's the concept here.

- By the way—all Conduct & Behavior is intimately tied with the way in which you Think—

— but there's a reason for why it's got to be **seen HERE!** and is dealt with like it is here.

- And that's because what's really taking place here in (:11) is something that, in a way, has an aspect of **REVOLUTION** to it! (that is, the issue of *Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord*; is revolutionary in the world and in the world of doing business!)

- And what I mean by that is—that it is so out of line or out of step with the way in which the world thinks about *business* that as it effectually works within us to produce the godly Thinking regarding *business*—the thing that's going to make the Conduct & Behavior of a godly saint in their business different from the Conduct & Behavior of anybody else in their business (as they're trying to 'get ahead' or whatever it is that motivates them and drives them in the "ethics" side of business) —the difference comes down to: **the Thinking that's behind it**—it all comes down to the Thinking that produces an ATTITUDE towards the business.

- And here again—as it will be all throughout all our receiving the instruction of *Wisdom, Justice, Judgment, and Equity* [all 4 sonship decision-making skills] - what we've got here (in 'spades' so to speak) is another one of those issues like *Love, Selflessness, Kindness, affection, brotherly love*, and so forth—we've got another one of those issues of having to deal with terminology and the concepts, ideas, thoughts, values, estimations, understandings, knowledge of, and even the actual doing of a thing **that we are all very, very familiar with**—and all these issues has made many a deep 'inroads' into our hearts and minds (and even in our conduct and in our actions) — but it has been generated, developed, (and along with a bunch of emotion and feeling and attitudes that goes with it all)—it has all been brought into existence and fashioned by **this world** (and the wisdom of **this world**) and has been 'certified' (so to speak) by **this world** as to what is the acceptable kind of thinking and conduct in connection with **business** and **work** and how we go about functioning in our work-a-day life.

- But you've been 'prompted' by what you and your Father agreed to at the Sonship Checkpoint (12:2) that all these areas are what the sonship curriculum is going to immediately go right after—and nothing should have made that any clearer to you than what (:2) said: *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

- Therefore you should expect that the information contained in the curriculum for your sonship education will immediately go after areas where **this world** has made huge and deep inroads into your heart—and root up and get rid of that kind of thinking and behaving and laboring—and replace it with the thinking, conduct, and labor that your Father has Himself—

— and even though many times the same exact words or terms or phrases that you are so familiar with and have used all your life and seem to know so well—will still be used (like love, and selflessness and kindness, and like *not slothful*, and *business* and *fervent* and *servant*) — but the difference now is going to be (not that those are wrong things) but that they are going to be generated from your Father and not from *this world*—and the issue now is: **what they are and what they mean TO HIM!**

- And then, you AS HIS SON, having (in common with Him) - your Father's Thinking, and your Father's Conduct & Behavior, and then Laboring appropriately and accordingly with your Father in the **business** that He's about doing!

- Well—in order to get that done, it's going to take some real **work**!

- And that means that in a case such as (:11) - where there's only 10 words to the entire Component—that means that there's a awful lot packed in to those 10 words!

- And as we have already noted—we've got the first 2 Aspects of godly edifying presented as:

- 1) *Not slothful in business*; - (Thinking)
- 2) *fervent in spirit*; - (Conduct & Behavior)

- But at the outset—it seems as though these 2 are reversed—and that the godly Thinking would be "*fervent in spirit*" and then the godly Living would be "*not slothful in business*"

- But we know that God is following His own pattern for godly edifying—which means that they ARE in their right order—but more than that - due to the kind of REVOLUTIONIZING they are going to bring about in your heart—and because when you're dealing with an issue like the world of *business*—**Conduct and Behavior is intimately tied to what you THINK about business**

—and therefore that expression "*in spirit*" isn't being used to indicate something going on in your human spirit or your mind or your thinking—but rather, it's referring to **your ATTITUDE towards something that GOVERNS the way in which you approach it!**

- And therefore the word *spirit* or the expression "*in spirit*" can be used to talk about one's BEHAVIOR and/or their Conduct—which is the Living Aspect of godliness.

- And it's important that you see the closeness between the Thinking Aspect and the Living Aspect of godliness—especially **here** as it's dealing with God's own understanding and appreciation for what He regards as **business** here in (:11).

- Because what we're getting at here is that when it comes to how **revolutionary** and how 'out of line' God's understanding regarding godly *business* is—as opposed to the understanding regarding doing business as the course of this world regards it—(as they try to 'get ahead' or do whatever functions as impetus & drive & impulse & motivation in the ethics of business) - the difference comes down to: **the Thinking that's behind it**—it all comes down to **the Thinking that produces an Attitude (or Behavior) towards the business!**

- And that's why these 2 expressions—(the one that describes the godly Thinking [*Not slothful in business*], and the one that describes the godly Conduct & Behavior [*fervent in spirit*]) - both are really focusing upon what's going on in the mind of the saint as they engage in their *business*.

- And the first thing: *Not slothful in business*—by **exactly** what it says—and by exactly what it means to GOD—is what produces the **Thinking** regarding *business* that makes you view *business* **from GOD's perspective!**

- And then by the effectual working of the Thinking Aspect of the godly edifying—that then produces an ATTITUDE of BEHAVIOR that's described as *fervent in spirit*. [The Living Aspect of godliness]

- Our English word "attitude" is a marvelous word!
 - Because an "attitude" is a state of mind that's been generated and brought into existence by values that have been instilled in someone.

- And when you're dealing with an "attitude" as a state of mind that takes a particular approach towards something because of the **value** that's placed on the thing (whether a good value or a bad value) - that's when you can come along and utilize that word *spirit* or that expression *in spirit* to describe the kind of Behavior or Conduct (an Attitude) that's directed at the thing of value!

- This was the case back in the time of American Independence—when a CAUSE was valued—and by the thinking that produced the valuing of the cause—that (in turn) produced an Attitude of Behavior.

- And therefore we got that expression: “*The spirit of ‘76!*”

- And when you talk about the *spirit* in that sense—that’s when things get done “*in spirit*” - and they’re done in connection with an Attitude that has been produced by values that have been instilled—and have become **the dominate thing in people’s thinking!**

- And during the time of the Revolutionary War—the values that were instilled were the fact that Independence from England was more important than life itself!

- “*Give me liberty or give me death!*” - Patrick Henry
And that became the ‘rallying cry’ of the whole thing because that put in a single phrase, the *spirit* of ‘76!

- But in order to Behave as a Patriot during those days—a particular way of Thinking had to first of all be produced by instilling in that Patriot the VALUES and the VALUE of the CAUSE: liberty!

- And the values that were instilled, and had become the dominate thing in the thinking of the people was: *LIBERTY* “Give me liberty...” — that’s more important to my way of thinking than life itself—I’d rather DIE than not have *liberty*.

- Now even though the word “Attitude” isn’t used here in (:11) - that “*in spirit*” concept that describes the 2nd Aspect of godliness (the godly Conduct & Behavior) is the issue of taking the Attitude that the Thinking of the 1st Aspect of godliness produced—and with that Attitude, producing the natural Conduct & Behavior that comes out of that Attitude!

- And that Conduct & Behavior is called here “*fergency*”!

- And *fergency* is the way in which you go about doing something **with appropriate energy!**

- So therefore—the 1st Clause (*Not slothful in business*) **IS** dealing with the Thinking—but it’s a particular aspect of thinking that produces and instills Value/Values for a particular thing: **business**.

- So then—that tells you that a great deal of the work that's going to be involved in that 1st Clause (*Not slothful in business*) is going to be in connection with getting instilled with the **VALUE** for what *business* is to God Himself (which will include the issue of *not being slothful* in regard to it) because you're going to be taught and instilled with your Father's Value & Esteem (or love) of *business* in which He regards it as the total **opposite** of being *slothful* about it!

- Therefore, "*Not slothful in business*" is the Thinking Aspect of the godliness in the 3rd Component to our *instruction of wisdom*.

- And then once that Value for *business* has become the dominate thing in your Thinking in regards to *business*—that's going to immediately move to the natural 'outlet' for that Thinking—which is going to produce Conduct & Behavior that puts the emphasis upon the Attitude that has been generated by the godly Thinking that then produces this appropriate **fergency in spirit**. [for the Cause]

- And that means then that the 2nd Clause (*fergent in spirit*) **IS** dealing with the godly Living—or Conduct & Behavior.

- And I'm spending such time on this because there's a NEED for you to see this **here** in this matter.

- Because in the work-a-day world—in connection with *business*—there is a whole bunch of energy and a whole bunch of *fergency*—but the Attitude and the Thinking and the drive and the energy that's producing it is **NOT** the godly Attitude/Thinking or a godly Viewpoint about *business*—but rather it's something else entirely: the "Almighty Dollar" or prestige/power or the 'self-made man' concept or whatever.

- And the reason why the terminology is what it is (especially in these first 2 issues in :11) - is that, the whole *renewing* of a saint's *mind* when it come to his/her *business* (and the work-a-day world that they're involved in) - there really needs to be a **revolutionary** (almost **radical**) *renewing of the mind* in connection with *business*—because *conformity to the world* in connection with *business* is a very **EASY thing for a saint to do!**

- And if a saint is going to Labor together with God in connection with *business*, and get the skills out of it that God has designed for a

member of the new creature of the church the body of Christ to get out of it—that are going to translate themselves into usable skills when he functions in one of those positions of intelligentsia within the creature when it's reconciled—then he's going to have to think about *business* **God's way!**

- And he's going to have to have *fergency* that's based upon the ATTITUDE that the godly Thinking has produced!

- And he's going to have to realize that the One that he's actually *servng* when he is doing his *business* is NOT his boss 'in the flesh' - but it's the Lord Jesus Christ Himself!

- And because of the **radical** nature of the *renewing of the mind* that that is—and because of the intimacy that there is to the godly Conduct and Behavior coming out of the godly Thinking—and that that **is** the Attitude (the *in spirit* issue) that is going to produce that godly *fergency* (and not worldly *fergency*) - that's why the terminology is as 'close-knit' as it is.

- And that's why you have *Not slothful in business* as the 1st Clause that deals with the godly Thinking—and then it's followed by *fergent in spirit* which is the 2nd Clause that deals with the godly Living or Conduct & Behavior.

- And that means that really—there's an awful lot of effectual working POWER in (:11) - in just 10 words! — 10 words that, by the Mightiness of their effectual working are able to produce complete godly Thinking, Living, and Labor in connection with a saint's job.

- And this is able to produce real **joy, satisfaction, and contentment** in a saint's job.

- The truth is—when (:11) is effectually working in your inner man—you can actually get up in the morning and **look forward** to going to work! — even if the boss is not only an unsaved person, but is a sorry boss!

- And this should be really a very helpful thing—because a lot of saints don't like getting up and going to work—not because they don't like work—but they don't like their work situation!

- That's not to say that a saint can't quit his job or take a promotion or better his job/position—

- but it simply means that if a saint/son looks at *business* as **God** looks at it—he's got a reason for (first of all) finding **delight** in it—then he's got a reason for **pursuing** the *business* and being **fervent** in it that doesn't involve the same thinking that others would have in 'scaling the corporate ladder' or of getting the 'bigger office' or of the normal, worldly drive that there is to 'getting ahead.'

- And then there's also (once that godly Thinking and godly Conduct & Behavior is there) - there's also the issue of recognizing that you're *servng the Lord* Jesus Christ in your *business*.

- So even if your 'master in the flesh' is a despicable character (one who is 'riding your case' all the time) and who is making your work to be unpleasant—this effectual working doctrine can make it so that you don't have to be **overcome** by your 'master in the flesh.'

- And there can be godly satisfaction and contentment—even when your 'master in the flesh' **isn't** satisfied — but when you know that you've satisfied your '*Master which is in Heaven*' (Eph. 6:9)!

- And that can allow for you to go home after work and you **won't** have to say, "Man, I had a horrible day at work!" (even though you might have!)

- But you don't have to say that with the same thinking and the depression and the dejection that an unsaved person (or an unintelligent Christian) is saying it with! — in fact, you can say that, and then say— "But, based upon Rom. 12:11 ... I see it all from my Father's perspective!"

- That's why I say that the POWER that's contained in these 10 words can radically change the way in which one of the major areas of your life is lived! (your job life) — there's some **powerful** information in those 10 words!

- Now let's appreciate just a couple more issues about the overall effectual working of (:11) before we get into the details of it.

- As we've noted before—we've got a couple of words here that you don't commonly (if ever) use—(that word *slothful* and the word *fervent*).

And even though we hardly ever use the word *slothful*—it's used in such a way that by the way it's used we have some **help** in determining just what it means and just what God is after in utilizing that terminology.

- Notice that first Clause that deals with the godly Thinking: *Not slothful in business*; — that's a phrase that's put in the **negative**.

- And when you have our English language constructed like this—it makes it so that when a negative is stated like it is here (with no defining or describing what the **opposite** of it is—[what the positive side of it is]) — it makes it so that **the positive is to be understood 'by default' so to speak**.

- In other words—Paul doesn't have to come along and say, “Not slothful in business, BUT (this) ...

- And that's one of the **powers of negation**—because more times that not, negation produces (by default) an automatic understanding of the positive.

- And what that tells you is—that once you understand what “*Not slothful in business*” means, it's going to automatically describe the opposite—the **proper** Thinking in connection with *business*.

- And then—in the 2nd Clause that deals with the godly Conduct & Behavior—it says, “*fervent in spirit*” — and you've got that word *fervent*—and that's not a commonly used word either—but as we shall see, that's also got a lot of meaning packed into just that one word.

- So really it's only the 3rd Clause or the 3rd Aspect of godliness that deals with the godly Labor that doesn't use a word that is uncommon or that is full of meaning.

- (Or one that we're going to have to look up and make sure that we fully understand what it says.)

- The phrase *serving the Lord* is pretty self-explanatory.

- And the big issue there is to realize that in your work-a-day world (in your *business*) - you naturally think of “*servicing*” **your boss** (and, true enough, you **are** doing that when you're in his employ) — and the issue is, that you don't ignore him as your boss (or anything like that) - but the issue is— that AS you are serving your boss, at the exact same time, you are *servicing the Lord!*

- And that's the “**key**” that makes it so that you can put up with even a sorry, unreasonable, difficult-to-deal-with boss!

- And you have to appreciate that that's said in connection with godly **Labor**—and in connection with laboring together with God, (as is true for each Component to our instruction of *Wisdom, Justice, Judgment, and Equity*) — the Part that's dealing with godly Labor all has to do with gaining our sonship training and sonship skill-acquisition—and part of our **experience** of taking what we're learning and putting it into practice — and that all has to do with us being able to be that “*joint-heir with Christ*” and one day being put into a position of responsibility in the creature's intelligence that corresponds with that.

- And so when you (as a son) realize that your Father has designed your own JOB so that—by implementing a particular portion of the sonship curriculum at and in the realm of your job— it all works out for “*good*” in terms of the experience you gain with your present job (utilizing the godly edifying of the sonship curriculum) being able to benefit you in your Heavenly Vocation yet to come!

- And that put's your job in a whole different light!

- Because you're no longer just going to work to get a paycheck! — to be able to pay bills — but you're going to work (as an intelligized son) in order to put on a demonstration that the things you are learning as a son, are being learned properly—and being learned

and are being able to put into practice in an environment that is **business oriented**—because the purpose of the creature itself is to conduct God’s *business* in the Heavenly realm.

- So therefore the perspective that you’re supposed to have in connection with your job and work-a-day life in the *business* world is— that you can take some information in your sonship education and put it into practice in the realm of your job—and actually **serve the Lord** by doing that—just as you’re going to be doing in your Heavenly Vocation with Him!

- And if that isn’t reason for getting up in the morning when that alarm clock goes off—I don’t know what is!

- So once that godly Thinking (from *Not slothful in business*) is produced—and that then produces the godly Conduct & Behavior (of *fervency in spirit*) - those go together to produce that real understanding and appreciation for *serving the Lord* in your business — then that, therefore makes it so that the whole issue of your *conformity to the image of God’s Son* is now taking place as well **in the business world!**

- And when you take what (:3-10) did—and now what (:11) does—along with (:12) which will cover the other common circumstances & situations of your life in the ‘world at large’ — well, by those first 4 Components of our *instruction of wisdom*, **you’ve got better than 90% of your life** pretty much covered as far as this issue of making *wise* sonship decisions!

- But again—this is one of those classic examples where the world can utilize these very same words—and can use them in the world of *business*—and can produce a work ethic; and drive; and success; and promotion — but those are merely substitutes, imitations and counterfeits that, on the surface, God’s way and the world’s way are **both** successful and **both** produce results — but the issue is (and has always been): “**Is it God’s way, or the world’s way?**”

- God’s constant question for you as His son is:
“**Son, are you doing it My way?**”

- (And that's been the contention with the Adversary from the very beginning of sin entering the world!)

- And if all a Christian thinks is that "the ends justify the means" — then he's going to come along and look at this verse; and then look at the way he goes about doing his job and say, "I'm not lazy in my job—and I want to be a valuable employee—and I want to make the business money — I want to 'get ahead'" - (and that's great—**but the world thinks that very same thing** — and the truth is, it's the Thinking/Conduct/ & Labor of the **world producing** that!)

- But God has His **own way** of producing all those "good" things related to *business*!

- Truth is—oftentimes most Christians look at (:11) and say, "I automatically do that!" — NO THEY DON'T!!! (and NO YOU DON'T)

- They do that on the basis of the **world's** thinking about *business*!

- You see—it's not that *not being slothful in business* is something the world knows nothing of (because they do) - and it's not that the world knows nothing of being *fervent in spirit* about their job (because they are) - and it's not that the world knows nothing of *serving* their boss (because they do that too) — the critical thing here in (:11) are the **REASONS BEHIND DOING ALL THAT!**

- And the world's got their reasons—and God's got His reasons—and (:11) is going to instruct you in all that—and that's why this is so radically revolutionary to *transform* you by *renewing you mind!*

- And because of that you know that when you confront (:11) - even with all that very familiar terminology and familiar concepts—you know that your present, current **thinking** is being **challenged!**

- Ok—enough of the introduction—now let's take on looking at the details of that first Clause dealing with the godly Thinking: ***Not slothful in business;***

- Since what we're after here are the REASONS (our Father's reasons) that are behind the Thinking—and since the issue is for us as our Father's sons to have His *wisdom* to Think/Live/and Labor in the world of business the way He does—then there's something in that first Clause of (:11) that I believe should be looked at **first**—even before we look at the issue of what the word *slothful* means—and that is to look more carefully and more precisely at that word ***business***—and make sure we know what that is from **God's** perspective.

- Because of all the 10 words that make up (:11) - *business* is the one word that we almost assume that we DO understand, but I think we'll find that our only understanding of it comes from the world and not from our Father.

- When it comes to defining the word *business* we all can come along and define it as something like: the subject and concerns of employment. Or being “busy” about something; busy-ness.

- But the fundamental question that has to be answered is this:
Imagine, if you will, that you were to come along and ask God: **WHAT IS BUSINESS?** — what would you expect Him to say about it? (besides Him giving you a dictionary definition of it).

- And here is where you have to go back to where the issue of (not so much the actual word), but the issue of *business* is dealt with by God for the very first time in His word.

- Genesis 1—(let's go back to the 6th Day)

- (:24-31)

- Notice (:28) - the first time God ever says anything to man (the ultimate creation in all His creation) — and of all the things God could have begun talking to man about (His love; His attributes; science (the makeup of the universe); money (where all the gold is); marriage; family; happiness (stress relief); etc., — no — the very first time God ever says anything to man **it's about BUSINESS!**

- Which should tell you something of just **how important** that issue is **to Him!**

- But there's a fundamental, foundational thing that *business* is to God—and it's not something that is actually said or stated anywhere in the passage—but it's IMPLIED — and it's very, very BASIC and very, very simple—and Adam immediately clued-in on what it is—he perceived what *business* is first and foremost to God — what is it?

- Based upon what you read here—if you were to ask God, “What is business, first and foremost, to You, God?” (And **not defining it**—but describing what it is in His sight—what it is to Him — what would He say?)

- My understanding is—that God would say:
 “Business—**that's something that I created!**”
 “I'm the inventor of business!” (and He is!)

- Now that's extremely **basic/fundamental**—but it's really something very **profound!**

- And this is critically important—because this is something that we not only simply have to acknowledge that this is true — but we have to **understand it because it's true!**

- The whole reason why man is a creature engaged in ‘busy-ness’ **is because God is a God of ‘busy-ness!’**

- God is not a lazy, ‘bump-on-a-log’ God! (He's not a ‘do-nothing’ couch-potato!)

- He's a God of busy-ness!

- And He created man, in His *image*, after His *likeness*—He created a creature who was to be: in business—in business with Him!

- Therefore the very first aspect of godly Thinking that a member of the church the body of Christ has to have about business is that:
GOD CREATED IT IN THE FIRST PLACE!

- And He created man to be a ‘busy’ creature!

- **Business is NOT a human invention!**

- Rather, **men are ‘busy’ because they were created in the image of God!**

- Granted, **sin** has affected that—but **it hasn’t obliterated it!**

- And one of the often misunderstood things about *business* and about “**work**” - is that man lived in a kind of welfare, commune-type ‘retirement-home’ or leisure-type environment that was free from time-consuming duties; free from work related responsibilities—and just lived in the Garden of Eden (the Garden of Eden itself being in most people’s minds a place of rest, amusement, recreation, relaxation—with nothing to do but eat, play, and have great sex with Eve) - but the idea that before sin entered the world, man just lived a care-free life of leisure! **AND NOTHING COULD BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH!**

- That is, it’s often misunderstood that it wasn’t until sin entered the world—and the **curse** from God—that man, **because of the curse**, had to go to work!

- In other words—that “**work**” was part of the **curse** imposed upon man due to his sin and disobedience in eating of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

- But ‘work’ wasn’t the curse—the issue of having to work now among a bunch of “*thorns and thistles*” (the ground became cursed) - and having to eat of the ground “*in sorrow*” — and eat his bread “*in the sweat of his face*” — THAT’S what the curse did! (But ‘work’ itself **wasn’t** a part of it! and **never** was a part of it!!!)

- The truth of the matter is—the curse was **imposed** upon ‘work’!

- And before sin ever entered the world—man was given to *till* that Garden and *keep* it—that was a part of his ‘busy-ness.’

- But the most fundamental thing of all in connection with *business* is that **God created it**—and God, as a busy God, created man *in His likeness*—and therefore **both God and man are busy beings!**

(Return to Bible Class after the Winter Break) —

- Now when it comes to being able to get the effectual working of the **radical** and **revolutionary** *transforming* from the way in which *this world* formed us and fashioned us (in connection with *business* and our ‘work-a-day’ world outside the local assembly) - and to, rather, get the *Thinking* of our Heavenly Father in connection with *business* by the effectual working of the *renewing of our mind* that exists in just 4 words in Romans 12:11 (viz., *Not slothful in business*) - we need to understand and appreciate some very **basic** and very **fundamental** things about what *business* is to God Himself—and that will, (by default), tell us what it means to God to **not** be *slothful in business*.

- And there are some things that are found in the first 2 chapters of Genesis regarding God creating man to be a creature of *business*—that are some fundamental, yet very powerful things that will **displace** the normal tendency of man to be *slothful in business* with the godly **opposite** of that!

- And it begins with what **God** says about *business*.

- And what Paul says in Rom. 12:11 (by bringing up the word *business*) - that’s designed and intended for us to go back to Genesis 1 & 2.

- Because in order to get God’s understanding about *business*, that’s where you have to go.

- And by getting some of the details about what *business* is to God, we’ll get an appreciation for what *slothfulness* would be to God as well.

- *Slothfulness* became a reality in connection with *business* when sin entered the world!

- Before sin entered the world—Adam demonstrated that he was NOT *slothful in business*—in fact what he demonstrated before sin entered the world was the **appropriate thinking** regarding the measure of the business that God had given him to do!

- And by going back to Genesis 1 & 2—we can perceive just what *business* is from God’s perspective—and let Him define for us the characteristics and features that *business* has in His plan and purpose.

- And in the course of getting the *godly thinking* in connection with *business*—it will expose what *slothfulness* is to God—and what the opposite of *slothfulness* is.

- And the effectual working of “*Not slothful in business*” is designed to produce the **exact opposite** of it!

- So we’ve already noted there in Genesis 1 that the very first utterance of God to man was there in (:28) - and the first thing God ever said to man was basically, “There’s your job!” “Now get to work!”

- And therefore that sets a precedent (so to speak) that **God is the inventor of business**—and the issue of business (God’s business) is a **PRIORITY** to God—He puts a **premium** upon business—He sets a **PRIME VALUE** on business from the ‘get-go’!

- God sets forth the fact that He is a busy God—and He created man to be a busy being with Him!

- Man was not designed to ‘retire’ or to live a life of total leisure—rather, man was created and designed to work! (Because he was created in the *image* of God and after His *likeness* — That’s what God is like; and that’s what man is like!)

- The truth is—(and this it still the way it is to this day) - **man cannot help but be ill-affected by not working!** (And that goes for retirement, disability, welfare, government assistance, government entitlements—good or bad in their intentions, man cannot help but being **ill-affected** by them!)

- Now when Day Six is re-visited in Genesis chapter 2—and further details are given that amplify upon what vs. 26-28 (of ch. 1) set forth—even before the Woman is created—and directly connected with that event—we need to focus upon what is said there in (:18-25).

- Genesis 2:18-25 (read)

- The obvious thing that’s most generally understood here is the fact that Adam is beginning to fulfill some of the responsibilities given to him—as he names the animals and the birds and every living creature. And God wanted him to do all that.

- But there's **far more** going on here than that—and you have to perceive some things here that give you further insight into just what was going on here.

- The truth is—Adam becomes **aware** of some things here—one of them being that there was no *help meet for him*.

- And then, of course, God puts Adam to sleep—and creates the Woman from his rib (notice that the Woman is not created from the *dust of the ground* (2:7), but from Adam's **body**) — and then Adam becomes aware of some things in connection with her.

- And really, what's going on here is a 'rounding out' of Adam's understanding from what vs.28 of ch.1 has already said.

- And in connection with that—when you read what Adam said about the Woman there in (:23-24) - the thing that's most often appreciated about that—and the thing that's most often pointed out in connection with that is the issue of marriage and how this passage should be used to determine the choice of your wife or your husband (and the 'romance' [so to speak] of it all) — and all that is RIGHT and GOOD to see and perceive (because it really is there).

- But the truth of the matter is that when God did all this, it's for the very reason He said—(:18 ... *I will make an help meet for him*.)

- The Woman is actually primarily created to be *an help meet for him*—which means that Adam needed HELP to do something!

- And what does Adam need *help* doing? Well, he's doing the very thing God's created him to be: a **busy** creature!

- He needs *help* in connection with the *business* that God has given him to do!

- And really—everything from (:18) down through (:25) is **business related!**

- And so our work here is to perceive and understand and appreciate some further things about *business* in regard to God creating the Woman as *an help meet for Adam*.

- Truth is—that's one of the big reasons why the Adversary struck immediately! — one of the reasons why there's no big gap of time till he struck—in fact, he struck on the 8th day!

- Because the "*anointed cherub*" was also created to be a 'busy' creature!

- And he knew all about *business*—and he set up an alternative *business*.

- And he knew that when the 6th Day was ended that the *business environment had been established!* (he perceived an awful lot more than most people perceive when they read [:18-25]!)

- And what we're going to do here is to gain the particular godly *Thinking* that we, as members of the new creature of the church the body of Christ in this dispensation of grace ought to have in connection with our *business* and our 'work-a-day' world—in view of the fact that we know from Romans ch. 8 that, since our sonship education is addressing it—that our doing our *business* fits in to equipping us, and training us, and qualifying us and giving us the skill-sets we need for our function in God's *business* in the Heavenly Places.

- And what we're going to be driving at is **the serious nature of *business*** from God's perspective.

- Because one of the characteristics of *slothfulness* is a LACK of appreciation for the VALUE of the SERIOUSNESS of something. (he possesses a disinterest; he doesn't possess a **serious interest** like he ought to)

- And that's one of the issues that separates the worldly thinking about *business* from God's *Thinking* about *business!*

- The serious nature of *business* to God is NOT 'how much money you make' - or how high up the 'corporate ladder' you can make it—the serious nature about *business* to God is what *business* IS to God— and Adam perceived some further things about what *business* was to God in connection with what took place on that 6th Day *after* he had been created; *after* he had been put in the Garden!

- Now to be **precise** (which I haven't been) — what you've got in the opening 2 chapters of Genesis (that's pertinent to our dealing with the issue of God's *business* and what *business* means to God) is:

- In Genesis ch.1 and :24-31 God sets forth the general description of what took place on the 6th Day of creation.

- And when God describes, for the very first time, the creation of man in (:26-28) - when He describes man; and He records for the first time in Scripture something He *says* to man—when God does that, He describes man in connection with His *business*!

- Again—underscoring the **important thing** that *business* is to God *and* to God's relationship with man!

- God is the inventor of business—He's a busy God—there's some business of His now in effect—and man was created in God's *likeness*, therefore man is to be a busy man—and since he was created to be a 'help meet for God', man's primary busyness is to be directly connected with working together with and laboring with God in **His** business.

- Then God has reason to re-visit Day 6 of creation and amplify upon it and give further details to it—and that takes place in Ch.2.

- And it's obvious that as you read down through the first 17 verses of ch.2—that God didn't create Adam and the Woman simultaneously (He addresses **both** of them in ch. 1 and :28 [don't get confused]) — rather, Adam is created first (out of the *dust of the ground*) - but, again, rather than deal with Adam or talk to Adam about a whole range of other, seemingly more important theological, scientific, economic, moral, political, issues—it's obvious from 2:15 that God dealt with Adam first and foremost about His **business**.

- And though we're not told what God said to Adam—it's obvious that in order for Adam to *dress* the Garden and *keep* it—that God **conversed** with Adam about that issue.

- And I point that out to say—that it's apparent to me that God's first words to Adam dealt with God's business—even though His actual words to Adam are not recorded.

- Then we have recorded in 2:16-17 the very first actual recorded words of God to Adam—and it concerned the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*—and God’s warning to *not eat of it*, lest Adam would *surely die*.

- So then—if you look at things chronologically—the very **first** thing God ever says to man **is** about His business, (however, His actual words are not recorded)—but then the **second** thing God says (and the first recorded words of God to Adam) is the issue surrounding the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*.

- And then we come to 2:18-25—which is where we get further details about God’s business with Adam—the acknowledgement that it was *not good that the man should be alone*—and God intending to *make him an help meet for him (:1)*.

- And to be precise—it’s **after** God makes the Woman from Adam’s rib that the statement of 1:28 gets said by God to **both** of them.

- But because God chose to record what He said to both of them—**and put that in Ch.1**—it again sets the precedent of the importance of God’s *business* (and man being created to labor with God in His business) as the PRIORITY — and to impress upon you the PRIME VALUE that God’s business is **to Him**, and that you should value it that same way, too!

- So now let’s focus our attention upon 2:18-25 — and let’s get the godly frame of reference for what *business* is to God that will allow us to appreciate what Paul says in Romans 12:11 when he says, “*Not slothful in business;*” —

- And there are things here in Ch.2 that are part of Adam’s own education in connection with God and His *business*—and that are some fundamental type issues and ‘frame of reference’ type issues that are foundational to our ability to recognize what the **opposite** of being *slothful in business* is — (and by the way, it’s MORE than just the issue of ‘not being lazy’ or a slow-moving employee).

- And just as there will be in Romans 12:11 when it says, *Not slothful in business; fervent **in spirit***—and by that we know that there’s supposed to be a particular ATTITUDE now in effect—then that’s what we are looking for here in Genesis 2 in connection with Adam.

- When you're describing something that's being done *in spirit*—you're not so much describing the individual's *Thinking* that's going on—rather, all of the thoughts that are going on in the mind go together to generate an **ATTITUDE which governs the approach that you have towards whatever you're engaged in.** (And our context is the issue of our *business* or job).

- And the **opposite** of being *slothful in business* is the issue of having the **attitude** towards it that is **God's own attitude** towards it—because He's not the least bit *slothful* regarding His *business*.

- (The radical root element or idea behind *slothful* being that of **slowness**—[**physical slowness**, which is why the *sloth* is called what it is—it moves slow; {not that it's mentally slow at all, in fact, the *sloth* is considered a very intelligent animal}).

- But it's called a *sloth* because the root concept of *slothful* is “**slowness**” or **to move slowly**.

- But the point is—when it comes to moving and doing things—God's **not** “slow” — (after all, He created everything in 6 Days!) — and He's moving rapidly in those 24-hour Days!

- And just that alone tells you that there are some things that God's got in His mind that makes it so that He's got an **attitude** towards His *business*—and that **attitude** makes it so that He's not slow and lazy in connection with what He does—but He's also displays the very opposite of *slothfulness* as He deals with Adam.

- And Adam's got God's very own attitude in connection with *business*.

- Here in Genesis 2 and especially (:18-20) - sin hasn't yet entered the world—and as Adam goes to work, there's no potential for him to be *slothful*—and therefore this provides us a great look at how Adam responds to an opportunity to engage in *business* with God—and to view Adam's own proper **attitude** towards it.

- Again—what is said here is said in a *business* setting/environment — and God puts Adam in the Garden and immediately puts him to work—and God didn't expect Adam to pull up a hammock and take a nap!

- And in (:18) God makes the statement as a recognition of what He's going to do in just a little while—He makes the statement that *It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.*

- But what's interesting is that **before** God **does** make *an help meet for him*, He does something that makes it so that **Adam is in the position whereby that help meet is recognized by him as NEEDFUL!**

- And that occurs by God putting Adam in the position of starting to DO the *business*.

- And so God does what he does there in (:19) - He *formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them:* — and so Adam has to start getting involved in the *business*.

- And it's when you get into the details of what is described in connection with Adam getting involved in the *business*— he, by the responses he has to the business manifests the components of the godly attitude man is supposed to have towards God's business (and reflect the components of the very **attitude** that operate in **God's** mind in connection with His *business*).

- Now before going on—we need to stop here for a moment and get some information from God's word — that when the concept of *slothfulness* is being spoken about—what is it that God thinks about and that's in God's mind as the exact OPPOSITE of *slothfulness*.

- **Proverbs 12:24 and :27** — God says that the exact opposite of *slothfulness* is **DILIGENCE!** (a word you had in Rom. 12:8 [*he that ruleth, with diligence;*])

- And *diligence* is an ATTITUDE! (just like *slothfulness* is)!

- Diligence is a state of mind (a mind-set) - which is evident from the context surrounding what's going on here in Prov. 12 —

- Sonship education is just getting underway in Level I for the members of the remnant of Israel—(which is why *slothfulness* is confronted by us at the very beginning of our Sonship education as well).

- But all we're after here is that when God has Solomon come along and describe these 'polar opposites' - one is *slothfulness*—and the polar opposite of that is *diligence*!

- And that's not the only time in the book of Proverbs that *diligence* is set as the opposite of *slothfulness*: (and even though the words *slothful* and *diligence* may not be found together—the concept of them as exact opposites is there).

- In fact, *diligence* is directly stated in connection with business in 22:29!

- Now return to Genesis 2:19ff—

- And so what Adam puts on display here in (:19) and on down through (:25) is the issue of **DILIGENCE**!

- And that's what God is in His *business*: He's *diligent*.

- Granted, *diligence* is a word that is used to describe the actions of ungodly men as well—but what we're concerned with here is: **godly diligence**!

- *Diligence* is the English word God uses to describe the **attitude** of the **opposite** of *slothfulness*.

- And now as we have that in our thinking—as we look at (:18-25) we should be on the lookout for the components that describe that attitude of *diligence*.

- And when we discover the components that describe *diligence* as found here in this passage of God's word—that will give us **God's** very thoughts on the issue of *diligence* in connection with **His** *business*—and by doing that, it will produce in us **godly diligence**!

- So the next thing we need to do is to look at (:19-25) [especially], and see how many components there are to those verses.

- And if you break down (or outline) these verses—we need to determine how many sections or portions there are to these verses.

- And by doing that—it will let you realize that, within those sections there will be a manifestation on Adam's part that's going to put on display or manifest one of those attitude-type components that make up his *diligent* attitude concerning God's *business* as a 'help meet' for God.

- How many do you see?

- My understanding is that there are **3 Components**—and that means that there are 3 Components to ***diligence***! (3 main characteristics or features of *diligence*) — and God wanted Adam to have the experience of those 3 Features of *diligence* (plus He wanted Adam to have the experience **of** the *business*). [getting his 'feet wet' in the *business*]

- My understanding is that the 3 Components are:

- 1) (:19-20a)
- 2) (:20b-22)
- 3) (:23-25)

- And the first thing God does is put Adam in the *business*—and then let those 3 Features of godly *diligence* be perceived by Adam in order for him to understand and appreciate the godly attitude of godly *diligence* for *business*.

- And these 3 Features takes place in the very order in which they exist in *diligence*.

- And once those things are understood—you'll know exactly what the characteristics & features of *slothfulness* are—because they're the exact opposite of these 3 things!

- 1) (:19-20a) - 19 *And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.*
20 *And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; ...*

- Now when it comes to godly *diligence*—Adam’s response to what God does when He brings the *business* to him and ‘lays it at his feet’ (so to speak) - Adam’s response to that, by immediately going to work to give names to ALL the cattle and ALL the fowl of the air and to EVERY beast of the field—Adam’s response to engaging in the *business* and seeing it through to the degree to which it says he did—was because of the 1st Component of Godly *Diligence* operating in his mind.

- So the question is—What characteristic or feature of *diligence* would account for that response?

- And what we’re after here is a particular attitude that Adam had because he possessed this Quality in his *diligence* towards doing the *business*—a quality that came from what he perceived about God’s *business* that made him **not stop** until the job was done! (and see it through)

- And this is a quality that every employer hopes is in his employees mind.

- In a context of work—when an employee values the *business* he indicates that he’s got this particular Feature or Characteristic.

- And what I’m after here is a word that God Himself uses as the 1st Component of *diligence* in a context of *business*.

- My understanding is that the word God uses as the 1st Component of *diligence* is the word: **GRAVE!**

- Gravity (or being grave-minded) is to be serious minded about something to the point that NOTHING will distract you! And you don’t want anything to distract you from the job at hand!

- When you’re grave-minded about your job—you won’t be temporarily serious about it—but because you perceive the job with gravity, it causes you to see the job through to it’s very end!

- And that’s why God Himself uses it in I Timothy when He describes the office of the bishop and the office of the deacon. (I Tim. 3:8, 11)

- And that's why when God brought the animals to Adam to name them—Adam immediately 'rolled up his sleeves' and got going!

- Adam rightly perceived that this was **grave**, serious *business*! (This isn't just playing games!)

- Adam didn't see all these animals and say, "Oh, brother, this is going to take a long time—I'll work for a while, but I'm going to take a break in an hour or so!"

- (Which is actually the attitude of seeing **yourself** as more grave than the *business*!)

- And it's evident (even by our English words for all the animals and birds) that Adam put an awful lot of thought into those names he gave them—in other words, he didn't just come along and say, "We'll call that beast 1, beast 2, beast 3; bird 1, bird 2, bird 3, etc."!!

- No—he thought about it and he took the naming **seriously**! And he gave **fitting** names to all those animals!

- In fact, Adam even gave the "*serpent*" its name! — and he gave it to him because he discerned that (just as 3:1 says, *the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field*) - Adam discerned that and perceived that!

- And that's why the Lord could later come along and say, "*be ye therefore wise as serpents*" — Adam perceived the *wisdom* in that beast!

- Which means that Adam had to do some investigation into these beasts. And it's no doubt that he named others based upon characteristics they had and that he perceived.

- But the point is—you've got to take your job **seriously** to do something like that!

- Well—that first feature, once again, is the issue of having an attitude towards your job in which your view is as a **grave** thing—you're **grave-minded** about it!

- And a person that can be described as DILIGENT—takes whatever he’s engaged in doing (and diligent in doing) - he takes it **seriously—even to the point that it means more to him than anything else!**
- And therefore, when he’s given a job to do—he’s going to do that job until it’s been **done**—and done **RIGHT!**
- And one of the distinguishing differences between worldly diligence and godly diligence is the issue of that **gravity**—that ‘nth-degree’ serious-mindedness.
 - And for a member of the church the body of Christ—in Phase 2, Level I Sonship Education—that’s to be there because God the Father is the One who created business in the first place! (business is not man’s invention)
 - And a saint being educated as God’s son is supposed to look upon business just as God does—**even if it isn’t God’s own business** (that is, your job)!
 - And even though sin has entered the world—and a lot of what man does in his business is ungodly, and can contribute to ungodliness, and can even be outright ungodliness—the issue is, man is created to be a *business* creature.
 - And therefore the reason why a member of the church the body of Christ (why you, as a son) ought to have **gravity** in connection with your business/job (and that be the 1st Component of your Diligence as you do your job) is because **you’re looking at your job from God’s perspective**.
 - And you’re thinking about your job as something that’s naturally ‘fitting’ for you as the man/woman that God created you to be as a ‘busy’ creature—and you’re therefore supposed to apply yourself to *business*.
 - On the outside—there may not be any difference (visually) to a member of the church the body of Christ who’s *not slothful in business* and an unjustified man who’s ‘not slothful in business’ - they both may be ‘diligent’ - but the distinguishing issue is: the information in the mind of the son of God being the **reason** for why he is diligent—(he’s thinking about the business the way God thinks about the business).

- (you're serious-minded to the point of **gravity**—because God's serious-minded to the point of **gravity** in connection with *business*).

- So when a person (such as an employee) is described as being DILIGENT (the opposite of *slothful*) - the 1st Component of 'diligence' is the attitude of taking the job serious to the point of **gravity** (nothing will distract you from doing the job to it's end).

- Now let's look at the 2nd Component of DILIGENCE: (:20b-22).

- Notice that for about 90% of what is recorded here—Adam is asleep!

- So that tells you that when it comes to figuring out what the 2nd Component of Diligence is in Adam as he goes about the *business* that God gave him to do—we're not going to learn much about that when Adam is asleep because he's not doing anything!

- So therefore we have to focus our attention on the last part of (:20).

20 ... but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

- It's apparent that by the way it's said—(that as Adam *gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field*), that this last part of (:20) was something the Adam himself came to realize—that is, Adam himself perceived that ***there was not found an help meet for him.***

- And if you kind of backtrack (so to speak) from here—you realize that Adam came to a point (as he named all the animals) where he perceived something about the *business* he was given to do that had an affect upon his **diligent** attitude.

- (Keeping everything in the last part of [:20] in its context) — God has just put Adam in the *business*—and Adam has just **finished** or **completed** a job that God gave him to do—and that therefore means that the fist 'order of business' (so to speak) has been done—**and for that, Adam did NOT come along and say, "I need help!"**

- Big as that job was Adam did it—and saw it through right to the end. (and didn't ask for any help any time throughout it.)

- But when that job was over—in view of what (:18) said (*It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.*) — God expected that thought to occur to Adam!

- Keep in mind that God just gave Adam part of the *business* to do **that did not require the Woman**—she wasn't needed for it!

- And Adam did that part of the *business* **perfectly** without her.

- And those little details are essential to understand in order to appreciate what the last part of (:20) is saying and in order to acknowledge what the LORD was saying in (:18) when He said, *It is **not GOOD** that man should be alone ... which wasn't true for ALL the business that God was going to give Adam to do—why?* Because otherwise, God would have made the Woman right away (**before** Adam ever began naming the animals)!

- Rather—God gave Adam some *business* to do alone—and Adam did it perfectly (without any help needed).

- But just as soon as that work was over—it became apparent to Adam that NOW (once that job was accomplished) he needed **help!**

- So the question is—what would make it so that at the END of the 1st Order of Business, Adam realized that he was NOW going to need some HELP?

- And really, it's the 2nd Order of Business that Adam saw and realized: “**That**, I can't do alone!”

- And that means that there's something “implied” (so to speak) in (:19-20a) - and the way in which things take place that let's you realize that when the 1st Order of Business came to an end—that Adam realized, “Oh, this makes it now so something else can happen!” ... and then, “Oh, this other thing can't happen unless I have some **help meet for me!**”

- And notice that it says in (:20b) *but for Adam there was not **FOUND** an help meet for him*— all the while he was doing the 1st Order of Business, he was looking for an *help* for the 2nd Order of Business!

- When God brought the animals to Adam and he *named* them—**Adam perceived that they were then able to go and do the job that had been given to them!**

- The animals had been given jobs to do—they weren't created just to be 'decorations' or pets—but they had jobs to do as well. (Even Job understood that certain animals were created to do certain jobs).

- And so Adam realized that as his 1st Order of Business came to an end—and the animals were then going to go out to do their job—that when the 2nd Order of Business gets underway—Adam realizes that, "I don't have *an help meet for me* to do that 2nd Order of Business!"

- Now coming back to the issue of Adam's DILIGENCE in doing his job—there's a 2nd Component to his diligence that made it so that that **bothered** him!

- And when a person is DILIGENT in his job/business, he's **bothered/troubled/upset** by not being able to conduct more of the business if he sees that he's hindered in any way to do it (ex., if he doesn't have the personnel to do it; or if he doesn't have the materials to do it; or if he doesn't have the equipment to do it) — and what is that characteristic or that attitude of diligence that fits that description?

- Answer: **AMBITION!** (godly ambition)

- If you have AMBITION for something—you don't want to be hindered, hampered, slowed down, or stopped in any way when it comes to being able to GO ON.

- And the 2nd Order of Business has just been presented to Adam—and he wants to GO ON—he's got AMBITION to be involved in it—**BUT** he realizes that in order to go on and do it, he needs **HELP!** (and it wasn't there).

- And that's what he was looking for and seeking for.

- As soon as that 1st Order of Business came to a close, he became aware of what the 2nd Order of Business was going to consist of—and he started looking around for *an help* to do it!

- And the reason why the end of (:20) says what it says, in the **way** it says it (almost in a **sad** way) - is because that's exactly what **ambition feels** when it realizes that it can't go on!

- And the 2nd Component/Feature characteristic of godly diligence is **ambition to go on in the business!**

- That is—when one job is done, to get the next job going!

- Because in God's *business*: jobs do NOT occur **randomly!**

- In God's *business*, **every job leads to another!** — Every *operation* leads to another—nothing is isolated!

- And you can see that in those *offices* that we looked at in Rom. 12:6-8—the Edificational Needs naturally leads to those Practical Needs—(which is one of the reasons why you encounter the word "*diligence*" in those verses).

- And that means that both you individually, and all of us as a whole (being *one body in Christ*) are going to go on and take on more responsibility and more operations of our Father.

- Every job and every operation is for a reason—**and it leads to another one!**

- By the way— it works for us just like it did with Adam — that is, when one job or one operation is participated in and is effectually succeeded with, the nature of our Sonship Education makes it so that **at the end of it**, there is a perception or a perceiving or an insight in connection with that as to what the NEXT job or next operation is!

- And you, as a son, are to perceive that and figure that out on your own—just like the Philippians did (*Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation** with fear and trembling—and Paul doesn't tell them what to do!*)

- And Adam does a beautiful job here—he finishes the 1st Order of Business—then he recognizes what the 2nd Order of Business is—and he recognizes that in order for him to get that done: he needs *help*.

- And as soon as he recognizes that 2nd Order of Business—and because he possessed that 2nd Component of Diligence—he wanted to get involved in it: He had **AMBITION!**

- And so (:21 and :22) says, God **immediately** gave him the *help!*

- God didn't say, "Let's wait a few days here, Adam" - no—because God's got the 2nd Component of Diligence as well: **He's AMBITIOUS!** (In fact, one week from the next day, God wants to bring His "city" down to the earth—that's how ambitious He is!)

- The 3rd Component of DILIGENCE — (Genesis 2:23-25) (esp., :23-24)

- Adam now has—as his **attitude of diligence** in engaging in the business God gave him to do—he has an attitude of **gravity** towards the business that matches up with God's attitude of gravity towards it—and Adam wants to be involved with the business so as he finishes the 1st Order of Business (so to speak), he knows that it's going to immediately be followed by the 2nd Order of the Business — and because he properly perceived that the 2nd or Next Order of Business was going to require administrating over all these animals as they began to do their job—so Adam knew that he needed *an help meet for him*—and none of the animals fit that bill because none of the animals were created "like" Adam was (in the *image* of, and after the *likeness* of God) - and therefore the 2nd Component of Adam's Diligence was put on display: his desire and godly ambition to get going with the Next Order of Business.

- And the stage is now set for God to create from Adam himself (from Adam's *rib* [or from his side—indicating that the Woman is not either 'above' him or 'below' him—rather an equal, helping mate!]) - and then God creates Adam's *help meet* and brings her unto Adam.

- And when the *help* was created for Adam and God brought her unto him—then that allows the **gravity** of the situation along with the **ambition** to participate in the business to also manifest the 3rd and final Component or characteristic of godly **diligence**—which is found or expressed in what Adam says when the Woman is brought to him.

- And since (:25) just makes a statement to us that Adam and his wife were both *naked, and not ashamed*—where we’re going to find the expression of this 3rd Component/Characteristic of godly **diligence** is in (:23-24).

23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

- And what we’re after here is more in the ‘**tone**’ of what Adam says, rather than the exact words that he says.

- In other words—it isn’t so much **what** he says that we’re after at this point (not that that isn’t critically important to describe the ‘living union’ relationship between a man and his wife—[both the Lord Jesus Christ and the apostle Paul refer back to this very passage in dealing with that issue])—but this 3rd Characteristic to godly diligence comes out in the manner in which Adam describes this living union relationship.

- That is—in the immediacy of what he says in view of that position he was in just prior to God creating the Woman—and in the order of what Adam says— all of that gives you this ‘tone’ of what state of mind he was in when he said it.

- And in contrast to the (almost) sadness of the statement just prior to God putting Adam to sleep—[*but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him*] - after God creates the Woman and brings her unto Adam—there’s a noticeable **satisfaction** with Adam’s godly **diligence!**

- In other words—another feature of godly **diligence** has now been **satisfied**.

- So—with Adam’s perception that the Next Order of Business cannot go on without *an help meet for him*—and with Adam now having that **ambition** of his **diligence** satisfied—what’s his state of mind—what’s his ‘tone’ as he makes the statement he makes in (:23-24)?

- (By the way, notice that just as Adam's job was to name all the animals—as soon as Adam wakes up and sees the *help meet* that God created for him—he immediately gives her a name!)

- In a context of business and doing the work of the business — when **ambition** is **satisfied** so that the work can now be pursued — or when the ambitious desire is there for the work to go on and not be stymied or be carried through with - and then you're given the 'tools' or means so that you can go on and carry it out—what is it that ambition feels when it is satisfied like that? In other words, what is your frame of mind when your ambition has all it needs to carry on the work? What's your frame of mind as you look at the opportunity to now go one with the business with all that your ambition requires?

- You're going to do that job with _____.

PLEASURE!

- The 3rd Feature/Characteristic of godly diligence is: **the pleasure, happiness and delight to engage in the work!**

- In other words—**delightful, pleasurable enthusiasm!**

-And that's what Adam is expressing here— **THIS is NOW bone of my bones, and flesh** — that's why the "**NOW**" is there!

- Notice that all this is happening on the 6th Day—that is, Adam's just a few hours old—and yet he uses a word that expresses the fact that 'something's finally arrived': **NOW!**

- "Now" I can get going—(that's what the godly ambition has wanted) - and when ambition is satisfied: pleasure is what you have—and in this case: Adam is **diligent** because he takes the job seriously and with **gravity**; he's **ambitious** to get the job done and go on to the next job; and he does his job with **pleasure!**

- **THAT'S GODLY DILIGENCE!**

- **Pleasure** is the fruit of satisfied ambition!

- And that's exactly what "work" was designed to be—that's what labor and laboring with God in His *business* was designed to be for man—A PLEASURE—happiness in the work—happy to be working at your job! (Which is a mostly foreign concept today—a radical, revolutionary concept!)

(one who is) - And that's what any employer would want in his employee: **DILIGENT**: that is, one who takes the job as serious as you do and works with you with **gravity**; one who is as **ambitious** as you are to get all the job/jobs done; and one who is delighted to be working with you—one who's attitude is: "It's a **pleasure** to be working with you! (or for you)"

- And that's why Adam is saying what he says in (:23-24) **to GOD Himself!** (He's looking right at God when he says this).

- And those 3 Characteristics of **diligence** is exactly what the Father **wants** to see in His son as he labors together with the Father—and the properly educated son will have that as his attitude about the Father's *business*—(and not to be a *slothful, sluggard* of a son!)

- That makes a 'glad' Father—when He sees the gravity and the ambition and the pleasure in His son!

- And when a son possesses the **diligence** with those 3 characteristics, he's **NOT** going to be *slothful in business!*

- And all that—all the work we've done in the past several Bible class—that should have now produced in you; and *transformed* you *by the renewing of your mind*—it should have rooted out the world's worldly norms and standards and values for doing business—and it should have replaced them and instilled in you your Father's **VALUES** for *business*—and given you a godly **ATTITUDE** for doing *business* and doing your job that matches your Father's attitude about *business*— "like Father, like son"!

- And now that godly attitude of **godly diligence** should **GOVERN** the way in which you approach your job—**from now on!!!**

- BACK TO ROMANS 12:11 —

- Now when it comes to taking the godly Love—with its 2 Major Features of Selflessness and Kindness—out from the confines of the local assembly and into the realm of your job (your work environment) - the first thing that is to mark you as a “son” of your Heavenly Father in the realm of your job—is that you have been *transformed by the renewing of your mind*—and therefore when it comes to the way in which you THINK about your job/business as a son: you are to be ***Not slothful in business!***

- And that isn't simply talking about being 'slow-moving' and lazy on the job! (It is that—but it's **much more** than that)!

- Rather—you're to have and display the very *thinking* of God, your Heavenly Father when it comes to business and your job.

- And that means that the opposite of *slothful* is DILIGENT.

- And since God is the inventor of business—and because God is **diligent** in His business—then so are you! And that sets a VALUE upon business like God values it Himself.

- And when you think about your job and business the way your Father thinks about it—that means that you're going to first of all take your job seriously—with all **gravity!**

- And because of that—you're going to be **ambitious** to not only get the job at hand done—but ambitious to go on to the next job or the next task and do that to the very end!

- And doing your job in that manner means that— as your godly ambition gets satisfied—you're doing your job with **pleasure** and delight — all because you VALUE your job and VALUE business the way your Father does!

- And that's the radical/revolutionary *transformation* that takes place by the *renewing of your mind* in connection with doing *business* as a son! (and your **reasons** are **godly**—not **worldly!**)

- And by instilling those godly VALUES into your heart—that produces an **ATTITUDE**—and with that godly attitude it naturally generates some specific **Conduct & Behavior** which gets addressed in the 2nd Aspect of godliness in connection with doing your job as a son with *lovingkindness*.

- And the godly *Living* Aspect is described in just 3 words: *fervent in spirit*;
- And if you think about it—the only way in which you can say that someone has a particular “attitude” (good or bad; excellent or poor) is determined by observing that person’s Conduct and Behavior!
- An attitude gets **manifested** by one’s Conduct & Behavior.
- And our Conduct & Behavior in our *business* realm is described by our Father as being done “*in spirit*”.
- And when you do your job *in spirit*—that refers to your ATTITUDE OF DILIGENCE that you have towards your job that GOVERNS the the way in which you approach it!
- Just as we talked about before—when those Patriots who founded our country back in 1776 had what was called, “the *spirit* of ‘76” - meaning that because they had the attitude of “give me Liberty or give me death” - they had an attitude instilled in them towards the CAUSE of Liberty in which they valued Liberty more than life itself!
- And therefore they **behaved** themselves and **conducted** themselves as “Patriots”!
- Therefore, when something is done “*in spirit*” - it’s done in connection with an Attitude that’s been produced by Values that have been instilled in you—and those Values produce an Attitude that becomes the **Dominant** thing in your *Thinking*!
- And your “*in spirit*” Attitude gets put on display and becomes manifest (or becomes observable) by a *fervent* Conduct & Behavior towards your job!
- *fervent* = hot; burning; boiling—ardent; intensely earnest actions; zeal & devotion—(interestingly enough, fervent is often used in contexts with reference to **love!**)
- And you **can** be said to “love” your job—even if you have a sorry boss—even if you have a ‘dud’ of a job—because the issue of ‘loving’ your job (as a son) is the issue of **valuing** it and **esteeming** it as *business*: just like your Father does!

- ***fervency*** is the way in which you go about doing something **with appropriate energy!**

- Therefore—as a son—when you have the godly Thinking doing its effectual work of *not being slothful in business*—and then your Conduct & Behavior is described as ***fervent in spirit***—then in view of having that godly Diligence with respect to doing *business*—an Attitude develops (which is an attitude of Diligence) - and it's an attitude, therefore, that doesn't look at *business* as something that's a 'ho-hum' thing—it's not looked at as a 'drag' or a miserable thing that has to be done 8-hours of the day — it's not, therefore, something that you wake up 'grumbling' about —

— rather, you wake up with that **gravity, ambition,** and that **pleasure** to 'get going.'

- And, especially with us as sons—we realize (based upon that 3rd Aspect of godliness) that we're *servicing the Lord*—(that is, you've got the Perfect Master! - you've got the Perfect Boss!) —

- But the point is—that, that godly Thinking has produced an Attitude that has Diligence as the **DOMINANT** thing!

- And therefore the issue of 'doing the job' - and doing the work that's involved in the *business* (whatever the business is—whether you're a 'burger-flipper' or the CEO) is that you're attitude towards it is to **SUCCEED!** And to have the *business* (and your participation in it) honestly contribute to its success!

- And with that, therefore, you're going to carry out your work within your *business* in a particular way — and there's going to be a **word** that describes the way in which you go about doing your *business* (whether you're filing papers in the filing cabinet; or answering the phone; or overseeing the employees; or swinging the hammer or whatever) - you're going to go about doing it in a particular way.

- And that's because in your *spirit* is a desire to do it that way (that the godly Thinking has produced/generated) - and that word is: **FERVENCY!**

- And *fergency* is the issue of going about and doing something in a manner that is productive; that is not wasteful; and that makes the best use of the time you've got to do it!

- And that's the issue involved with the godly Conduct & Behavior of *fervent in spirit* (as a son in connection with *business*)!

- And **NOTE**: What we're talking about here affects every one of you! In other words—you may be sitting here and thinking, “Hey, I don't have a job—I'm a ‘stay-at-home’ Mom/Dad—I'm retired” (or whatever) - and maybe you're thinking that this **doesn't** apply to you or your situation — or that because of your situation, you don't have the opportunity to implement this in your life ——

— well, the truth is, **NO ONE IS IN THAT SITUATION!** truth is, **everybody** has some *business* that they're doing!

- A ‘housewife’ has the *business* of being a housewife—a child going to school has the *business* of going to school—even a retired person has some kind of *business* they're involved with (even if it's managing the affairs of their own house)!

- Not all *business* is the issue of ‘making money’ - it simply means whatever you are busy doing!

- So what's being said here applies to **EVERY SAINT**—there's no saint being excluded from it! (And every saint needs to realize that they're doing something that qualifies in God's eyes as *business*!

- (Granted, there are mentions over in the Pastoral epistles about those who were being ‘idle’ — but the issue there is: that's not natural—they did have some *business* to do [it's not that they didn't have one] - but they've chosen ‘idleness’ instead—and that comes up after the initial *instruction of wisdom* has taken place—and so that behavior is considered to be **ungodly and out of line!**)

- But every son/daughter has some *business* to participate in!

- The 3rd Aspect of godliness for our 3rd Component of receiving *the instruction of wisdom* in our sonship education is the final clause in Romans 12:11 — *serving the Lord*;

- The **Labor** Aspect of the godly edification: *serving the Lord*.

- The godly Labor Aspect to this 3rd Component of Wisdom is the easiest of the 3 Aspects of the godly edifying to understand and appreciate.

- And unlike the previous 2 Labor Aspects (where having to determine and choose to operate in one of those *offices* in the local assembly—and having to perceive and determine who and when and where you are going to *in honour prefer one another*) - this Aspect of the godly Labor comes ‘ready-made’ (so to speak).

- In other words—you’ve already got a job—you’re already engaged in some kind of *business* or work or occupation—(even if you’re a housewife or retired or a child still in school).

- So it’s not that you have to ‘go on the hunt’ of something to do as *business* in order to put the godly Thinking and the godly Conduct & Behavior into practice—rather the issue is to take the godly Thinking and the godly Living right into the job/business you’re currently engaged in!

- (Regardless of how ‘menial’ it is [or you may think it is] - or how ‘high-ranking’ it is [or you may think it is]).

- The issue is—that by taking the effectual working of the godly **Diligence**, along with the godly **Fervency** that governs and dominates the way in which you approach your job—the issue is that with those 2 Aspects of godliness effectually working in your inner man—you are to now immediately **apply** that to your job so that, as you do that, you are to be aware of the fact that when you do your job that way, and in that manner, and for those reasons—**you are Laboring together with God—and the actual work you do is done as *serving the Lord!***

- And again—this is a **revolutionary/radical** concept—that even though you have a human boss (sorry or great) - you, as a son, now recognize and appreciate that ultimately, your Boss or your Master is the **Lord** Himself!

- And unlike those Christians who can only do this based upon a ‘slogan’ (“Well, I just do it as unto the Lord!” - which really only makes it so that they can ‘grit their teeth’ and ‘get through the day’ because they feel better by saying that to themselves) - or based upon a shallow understanding of God’s word—because they don’t have any appreciation for what *business* is to God; and because they don’t have God’s perspective/viewpoint about *business* and what it means to God to *not be slothful in business*; and how that naturally produces an attitude based upon how God values business whereby they naturally conduct and behave themselves with *fergency in spirit*—the majority of Christian folks **still view business/their job the way the world does**, but the difference is that maybe by trying to convince themselves that since the Bible says that *whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God (I Cor. 10:31)* then they assume that *Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord* means that by not being slow-moving and by not complaining and by getting along and doing a good job that that’s what it means to do their job as “*serving the Lord.*” (A mechanism that just makes it so that their work day is less miserable than normal)

- But that misses the ‘mark’ or misses the point—and that’s NOT what this verse is all about—and that’s NOT how a son does his job as “*serving the Lord.*”

- A son *serves the Lord* in his job/business because he has been ‘intelligized’ (so to speak) - he intelligently understands and appreciates that he can ONLY *serve the Lord* in his job by first of all having instilled in him what *business* is to God; and by having the effectual working of God’s DILIGENCE operating in his Thinking; and then having that Attitude GOVERN the way in which he **approaches** his job in the first place!

- And by an intelligent and godly understanding of *business*, can he then undertake the actual **work** of the business or the **work** of the job—and do it as ***serving the Lord!***

- Because a son doesn’t work at his job—or even view his job from the world’s worldly perspective and for the world’s worldly reasons—but a he does it with his Father’s perspective and for his Father’s reasons!

- And that means that as a son—whatever job you have (**like it or not like it**) is still viewed and carried out just this way! Because the issue isn't if you like your job or not like your job—the issue to a son is: you view all jobs and all *business* **like God does!**

- The Diligence and the Fervency In Spirit isn't produced by how much money you make (or don't make) - nor is it produced by how high up on the corporate ladder you are (or not) - but the Diligence and the Fervency In Spirit is produced by your Father's perspective of what *business* is to Him in the first place!

- And whatever job you do—it has **value** and **benefit** to you as a son to Labor in it with your Father's Thinking and with your Father's Conduct & Behavior—and therefore makes it so that when you Labor in your job you then are in all reality ***servng the Lord*** as you do it!

- Therefore all 3 Aspects of godliness in (:11) are designed to function TOGETHER—that is, when the godly Thinking that produces the godly Conduct & Behavior produces the full-blown satisfaction with the fact that you're ***servng the Lord***—then that becomes the 'bottom line' of your 'satisfaction meter' (so to speak).

- And regardless of the fact that it may be a menial task in the eyes of other people—regardless whether the pay scale is up to your co-workers or your neighbors or other people—or even if it is far superior to your neighbors or friends—the genuine godly satisfaction **ONLY** comes from your godly Diligence having produced the godly Conduct & Behavior that made it so that you ***serve the Lord*** as His Son would have!

- And that means that you can be working behind the counter at McDonalds—or you can be a Corporate Executive—or you can own your own business—and be absolutely happy and content for those godly reasons! (**godly contentment & satisfaction**)

- And one other thing to bear in mind—it is unavoidable and inevitable that with this 3rd Component to the *instruction of Wisdom* — that you're going to encounter your first taste of operating/functioning as a son in an environment of potential **hostility**—because you are there on your job operating with godly values for *business* that are not only **counter** to the world's—but **hostile** to it!

- Therefore, once again—you can take what you're taught here in (:11) and immediately put it into practice in a Labor Aspect of godliness: *serving the Lord*.

- And this is radical—because, for one thing, you should realize that it's not just those in the position of fulfilling the Edificational Needs of the assembly (the Bishop/Pastor, the Deacons) that are "*serving the Lord*" in their jobs—but ANY job, ANY business you do **as a son** can be in the realm of *serving the Lord*!

- And you have been given a great gift here—the gift of godly contentment and godly satisfaction in the realm of your job!

- It's not a "job" any more—it's a **sonship job**!

- And as you do it—you're proving that, as a son, you have the Diligence and the Fervency In Spirit for *business* that's going to be mandatory for carrying out God's *business* in the Heavenly Places! (You're proving that that's been established and brought into existence in you now in the business that you've been entrusted with by a secular employer!)

- Therefore we should have joy and delight in *business* because of what our Father has taught us about it—and that should make it so you don't moan & groan about getting up every morning to go out and do your work!

- Your motivation for your job is therefore far different than the world's—than what Diligence is to the world—and for what Fervency is to the world!

- And even if you work for a sinful, ungrateful Boss who doesn't appreciate you—who maybe doesn't even think you're doing a good job—you can be **satisfied** (even if your Boss isn't satisfied) because you know that you're *servicing the Lord* in what you're doing—and you're putting on display that you can carry out tasks at hand in the Heavenly Places that can be entrusted to you (and you'll be Diligent in that; you'll conduct yourself with Fervency In Spirit; and you'll *serve the Lord* in that function as well)! [see I Tim. 4:8—*... godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and if that which is to come.*]

- It's possible that you can have a job where your Boss is NOT pleased, but your Father is! (And it's possible for your Boss to be pleased, but your Father is NOT!)

- But every hour of your work day can be **useful** to you as **a son!**

- ANY QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?

- POST-DOCTRINAL EXHORTATION—(Proverbs 3:1-4)

- Review.

- Now that we have the full, effectual working of the first 3 Components to our *instruction of wisdom*—and the manifest evidence of it occurring within the realm of our local assembly and within the realm of our job or *business* world—and now with 3 Components to our sonship education being written on the fleshy tables of our hearts (and the ‘book of our souls’ beginning to be written so that we become the living *epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God*) — **you** should now be confident & satisfied (and your Father should now be confident & satisfied) that we can now move on to the next Component of doctrine that makes up our *instruction of wisdom*.

- Romans 12:12—The 4th Component to the son's receiving the instruction of wisdom.

12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

- Introduction & Pre-Doctrinal Exhortation to (:12).

- At this point we need to remind ourselves of the Context in which (:12) sits according to the Sense & Sequence and the overall design for our sonship education as we *receive the instruction of wisdom* from our Heavenly Father.

- And in our very simple Outline (#39) - we have already determined that the 4th Component of basic Wisdom that we receive from our Father has to do with: **Godly Love in our common circumstances and situations**—which is to say, Godly “**Wisdom**” in our common circumstances and situations.

- As we noted before—the 6 Components that make up our *instruction of wisdom* can be looked at as occurring in ‘couplets’ - or in 3 Groups of 2 Components each:

- Components 1 & 2 give us the first 2 Features of Godly Love (Selflessness & Kindness).

- Components 3 & 4 takes us to that ‘landing’ (so to speak) that we talked about when we made the analogy of going up flights of stairs (#41)—and for the 3rd & 4th Components, we are at that ‘landing’ - meaning, there’s no more advancements being made to the Godly Love here in these 2 Components, but they are designed to take that Godly Love and **do** some things with them.

- Components 5 & 6 then have us moving on up the next flight of stairs (so to speak) - and there’s going to be another advancement to the Godly Love in the final 2 Components.

- And a ‘shift’ does take place between the 2nd & 3rd Components: and that shift has to do with moving the Godly Love that’s been brought into existence (and that has been operating within the walls of the local assembly) - and **moving it out** into the rest of our lives where it will be put into operation in the details of our lives **outside** the local assembly.

- And just as you may have ‘scratched you head’ and wondered just how in the world does Godly Love move into the realm of your *business* world in (:11)—at first glance, you’d probably wonder just how in the world does Godly Love have anything to do with (:12)? **(But it does!)**

- And you’ll see that it does—by keeping in mind that when we talk about Godly Love, we’re talking about how our Father VALUES and ESTEEMS certain things—and by installing in us what He values & esteems, it produces in us our Father’s basic decision-making skills of *Wisdom* (and making wise decisions based upon valuing and esteeming things like He does—and by **not** valuing and **not** esteeming things like He does).

- And that has enormous potential—and gives us great ability and decision-making capacity in all these areas & details of our life!

- Now while (:12) contains only 10 words—and while it **does** move Godly Love/Wisdom **out** from the local assembly and **out** from our job-life or ‘work-a-day’ world and into the rest of the common circumstances and situations we will find ourselves in as sons—while (:12) may seem at the outset to be rather general—the truth is, it is dealing with some specific and particular kinds of circumstances and situations we will find ourselves in.

- And we are going to learn to take the godly love/wisdom that has been generated within us—and is beginning to function within us— (and once it’s effectually working in us within a local assembly situation — and then in our busy-ness of our daily lives) — its next, natural thing for it to do **as it becomes the foundation to everything in our sonship lives, is to move into the general area of common circumstances and situations in which we can find ourselves that aren’t covered by what takes place in a local assembly, or by what takes place in our day-to-day business lives (so to speak).**

- And something very important is supposed to be developing within you—just by the mere **way** in which this information is being given to you—and that is to say that, by the information contained in the 1st & 2nd Components (selfless lovingkindness) you recognize that the **time** you **spend** in the local assembly (more than just you’re sitting in Bible class and listening to the doctrine being taught!) is time your Father gives you for the privilege of benefitting you as His son—and then you are to recognize that based upon the information contained in the 3rd Component the **time** you **spend** at your job or your ‘busy-ness’ outside the local assembly has been given to you by your Father for the privilege of benefitting you as a son as well—and now by the information contained in this 4th Component, the **time** you **spend** in **everything else** in your life has benefit for you as a son!

- And you should be beginning to realize that the **way** this doctrine is being given to you actually begins to ‘encompass’ you—it covers **every area of your life** and how you **spend** your **time** in it!

- (#56) - And by the time we’ve received all of the Components of our fundamental *Wisdom*—it has touched upon—and has sonship benefits for—how we **spend** our **time** in **360 degrees of our life!** [And for the first time we get an inkling into what David said in the 139th Psalm— *Thou compasses my path and my lying down ... Thou has beset me behind and before, ... (:3, 5).*]

- And this is your first ‘taste’ into how it is that— even in this dispensation of Gentile grace in which we live—knowing that God isn’t dealing with us by putting His Omnipotent ‘hand’ between us and our circumstances—but on the basis of GRACE and the POWER OF GRACE (i.e., the Living words of the Living God living in you) — it can still be said of you (just as David said of himself in Israel’s program): *Thou hast ... laid thine hand upon me ... thou hast possessed my reins ... (:5, 13).*

- This is your real first experience with how it is that GRACE has a **power** to it that can ‘*guide*’ you and ‘*guard*’ you—NOT in your ‘outer man’ or physical circumstances/situations—but in you INNER MAN as you **endure** the circumstances/situations of your life! (It may be only a very ‘dim’ recognition of that—but it has to start somewhere! and it starts right here!)

- Now as I said earlier—while at first it seems that (:12) deals with rather general things—it really is dealing with some specific and particular kinds of circumstances and situations we will find ourselves in—and there’s a particular reason for **why** (:12) focuses attention upon the things that are in it—and when you have that “why?” question answered, you’ll find your Pre-Doctrinal Exhortation **in** that answer!

- First of all—how would you answer the question: Why is what is said here in (:12) the **next natural** thing that would be brought up in connection with our *instruction of wisdom*? Why is this brought up now (as the 4th Component)?

- To help out—what does the terminology in (:12) ‘**trigger**’ in your thinking that would have you recall something we’ve already been taught? (terms like: *hope, patient, tribulation, prayer*)?

- Way back at the time in which we first dealt with the Introduction and Outline of Romans 12:3-16—when we talked about this 4th Component to our *instruction of wisdom*—we talked about the fact that (:12) opens up with the phrase: *Rejoicing in hope*—and since Paul doesn’t describe for us what this *hope* is, we know that he expects us to **already know** what *hope* is that he’s talking about—so the question you first of all have to answer is, “**What hope?**” (where was the last time that issue of *hope* was dealt with?)

- ANSWER: Romans 8:16-25! (review)

- You have *hope* mentioned in (:20) & (:24-25).

- You have *patience* mentioned in (:25) - [which is a Sonship Checkpoint (just like at :14-15 when you *cried Abba, Father*) - but here the Checkpoint is: are you *groaning with hope* and *with patience wait for it* (i.e., for the *redemption of your body*)?]

- And where do you have something said about *tribulation* in this section of Romans chapter 8—?—

- Even though the word *tribulation* isn't used, you know you're going to have "trouble" in (:17-18) in connection with *suffering with Christ*, and in connection with "*the sufferings of this present time*".

- But the word *tribulation* does come up later on in chapter 8—in (:35)!

- And even *prayer* is brought up in Romans 8:26-27.

- Therefore the terminology of Romans 12:12 itself takes your thinking back to Romans 8:16-39 and your **Sonship Establishment**.

- That answers the question of what the terminology in (:12) 'triggers' in your thinking—(and properly and rightly so)—that's where your mind is supposed to go.

- But that still doesn't fully answer the question of: Why does God have the apostle Paul say the things he does in (:12)?

- Because the truth of the matter is—Paul isn't saying what he says here in (:12) simply as a **repeat** of Romans 8—or a 'revisiting' [rehash] of that doctrine!

- So therefore there IS something more specific that's in view here—and it's really the context itself and the natural progressive development of the sense & sequence of the passage that's going to tell you what, **specifically**, the "*Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;*" is going after—in other words—Why is this the next, natural thing where we have to have our Father's *wisdom*? (where *wisdom* wants to go)?

- At this point—let’s just look at our passage in Romans 12:12 and recognize the 3 Parts to it that make up the 3 Aspects of godliness:

- (#43) 1) Godly Thinking: ***Rejoicing in hope***;
 2) Godly Living (Conduct & Behavior): ***patient in tribulation***;
 3) Godly Labor: ***continuing instant in prayer***;

- Now in view of what we were established in, in Sonship Establishment—and understanding & appreciating that what God has Paul say here in Romans 12:12 isn’t just a repeat of the matter—there is something **more specific** in connection with the *hope* that we’re to have already—

— and there’s a way in which that *hope* is to figure into our godly Thinking in a more expansive manner than what our Establishment in it provided for—

— and that’s going to lead to a more expansive application (Conduct-wise & Behavior-wise) of some things that we were taught about our *hope* when situations arise in our lives that that doctrine is designed to address —

— and that’s going to lead to something that’s even a little more expansive in connection with Laboring together with God in something that He wants to get accomplished whenever that doctrine about our *hope* **needs** to be applied!

- And so—with having reviewed briefly Romans 8—why is it that now at this time in Romans 12—with Godly Selfless Love being established; Godly Lovingkindness being added to that and now operating in your life; and then Godly Sonship Wisdom being moved out from the loc. assem. and into your business world—why would it be natural and naturally important to now tell us to *Rejoice in hope*; *be patient in tribulation*; and *continue instant in prayer*? (and make an advancement upon that foundation that has been established about coping with sufferings?)

- ANSWER: Because now that you’re emulating your Father and being *conformed into the image of His Son* inside the loc. assem.—and then taking your Father’s Wisdom out into the day-to-day life of your *business* world ‘at-large’ (manifesting godliness there) — that ***tribulation*** is going to come your way and you’re more than likely going to experience some ‘**trouble**’!!!

- Now before going on—let’s make sure that we recognize the reality of how the information was originally given to us back in our Sonship Establishment—and make sure that we’re not getting mixed up on the way in which that information was given to us.

- Because simply acknowledging the reality that once we move our godly sonship education (*Wisdom*) from the ‘friendly confines’ of the loc. assem. and out into the ‘world at large’— and when we do, we’re going to experience some ‘trouble’ or *tribulation* isn’t sufficient to answer the question of Why does this come up here as the 4th Component to our *instruction of wisdom*? Why is it the next, natural issue that has to be addressed in the curriculum for sonship education? (Because this is a **furtherance** of that hope-doctrine!)

- And what I’m after is something that maybe just ‘skimmed by you’ or maybe whizzed past you without it having made the kind of impact upon you that it was supposed to make.

- And that is—(once again)—the reason why our Father brings up “*hope*” here is NOT to merely rehash or repeat or to have you go back and just make a review out of the information that was contained in your first “hope-doctrine”! (i.e., Romans 8:16-25)!

- Because that ‘hope-doctrine’ was going after something specific and particular: producing a *salvation* that was designed to **save** you from the ill-effects of being victimized by *the sufferings of this present time*.

- And the truth of the matter is—what’s being dealt with in Romans 12:12 is **NOT ONLY** dealing the *sufferings of this present time*!

- In other words—the *sufferings of this present time* are one thing—but the things you’re going to be experiencing when you are operating upon your Father’s godly *wisdom* in the ‘world at large’ is something **ADDITIONAL** to that! (And it’s critical that you **see** that; **acknowledge** the **reality** of that; and **appreciate** the development of that—because that’s how God Himself presents it to you! — and that **demands** a further expansion of *hope*!

- Back in Romans 8:16-25 that first ‘hope-doctrine’ was designed to deal with a ‘first things first’ issue of the kind of environment in which you (as a son) would live out the entirety of your sonship life, here on this earth.

- And more than that, it allowed your Father to touch upon something that was vital to generating and establishing in you a particular sonship **attitude** that matched His own attitude as your Father who is going to educate you as His son.

- And by bringing up *the sufferings of this present time* in a context that dealt with your *joint-inheritance with Christ*, and by default, put your thinking in the position of (or in the environment of) thinking about the Father’s business and you laboring together with Him in that business — (the very reason why you were adopted in the first place) — that first, initial ‘hope-doctrine’ provided for you to have your Father’s perspective, outlook, viewpoint and attitude concerning how a properly educated son **handles the suffering of this present time**—and also installing in you the zeal and enthusiasm for the Father’s **cause/business** in general—and that first ‘hope-doctrine’ was designed to produce a salvation for you whereby you are *saved from the sufferings of this present time’s* distractions & ill-effects (such as discouragement, becoming despondent, miserable, depressed, etc.).

- And therefore the ‘bedrock’ or foundation for all of your ‘hope-doctrines’ that are going to built upon **this** ‘hope-doctrine’ is your understanding and appreciation for the general issue of what your adoption as a son holds out for you—which is to one day be directly involved with liberating *the creature* from the bondage of corruption and be placed in the intelligentsia (in one of those principalities, powers, mights, thrones, dominions) of the creature.

- In other words—to install in your inner man a **hope** of the Father’s **CAUSE** that is so **big** and so **powerful** that nothing you could ever put your mind to; or your ‘hands’ to could eclipse that ‘hope’ - nothing you could ever set out to do apart from that CAUSE could ever match it; or ever be a better use of your time and energy than that!!!

- And the immediate result of that foundational/fundamental ‘hope-doctrine’ produced a salvation—it made it so that you can, (on the basis of some intelligent sonship understanding & appreciation)—be able to **properly handle** all of the *sufferings of this present time*.

- And that ability or capacity to handle *the sufferings of this present time* (by means of this **Grand Hope**) resulted in your ability to do just as Romans 8:25 said: *then do we with patience wait for it—you can **endure** the sufferings of this present time with **patience**—and wait patiently for it—that is, *patiently wait* for that *redemption of your body* (which is when you'll be placed as your Father's son in His business in the creature—which is what the new creature of the church the body of Christ is for in the first place)!*
- But the truth of the matter is—that's ALL that that first, initial, foundational, fundamental 'hope-doctrine' was designed to deal with—(regardless of what I said about it when we first went over it that quite possibly went BEYOND what it was originally intended to do)!
- So by the time you got through the 1st Component of Sonship Establishment in Romans 8:16-25—you received a 'hope-doctrine' that was so Grand & Glorious that it fixed your perspective upon the Cause & Business you were adopted for—and at the same time, it gave you the ability to handle with **patient endurance** the common realm in which you are to live out your life as a son: having to go through *the sufferings of this present time* without God omnipotently manipulating your circumstances or intervening in them in any way.
- So—that's one thing—but Romans 12:12 isn't dealing with just *the sufferings of this present time*—but it's dealing with a **further issue!**
- Hence—it's an **expansion** of that foundational 'hope-doctrine' into the realm of this 4th Component to our *instruction of wisdom*.
- And though it may have been tedious to go over all this—and though you may easily see that—it's critical that **you DO see that**—and acknowledge the reality of that in order to be HONEST with the context! (and deal with :12 properly)!
- And with that being clear—we can get to the core element for Why (:12) is the next, natural thing to be said—and to properly Exhort you as a son to get the effectual working of (:12).
- So the 'bottom line' is: Our initial and foundational 'hope-doctrine' dealt with handling *the sufferings of this*

present time—Romans 12:12 **isn't** dealing with *the sufferings of this present time* **primarily**—but it's taking that foundational 'hope-doctrine' and EXPANDING it into the realm of our sonship life that (:12) is addressing in its context! (the realm that **it** touches upon)

- Again—it's not a rehash or restatement of what we learned in Romans 8:16-25!

- However—it's the **right & proper** thing to do—to go back to Romans 8:16-25 and remind ourselves of our initial 'hope-doctrine' in order to prepare us for the expansion of that "*hope*" in our Thinking, Living, and Labor for this 4th Component of *Wisdom*.

- Because the "*hope*" we deal with in (:12) **comes from** our initial 'hope-doctrine'.

- So now here in Romans 12:12—something **else** comes up—something other than *the sufferings of this present time* comes up that makes it so that we are to now given (as the 4th Component of our *Wisdom*) a focused, 3-Aspects of godliness breakdown of that original 'hope-doctrine' we were given back in Romans 8:16-25.

- In other words—that Establishment-type *hope* now has a **need** to be moved out of its Establishment parameters and put someplace else.

- And God designed the doctrine of *hope* to do that — He never designed/planned for the *hope* of Romans 8:16-25 to just sit there in Romans 8:16-25.

- And it's kind of like God says, "Remember that *hope* back there? Well now that you've actually **begun** the curriculum for Sonship Education, it's now going to have more of a **daily usefulness** to it—more than just being able to handle *the sufferings of this present time*." (But you don't encounter it until this 4th Component to our *ins. of Wisdom*!)

- Well then if that's understood—the thing to do now is—to again remind ourselves of the progressive development and sense & sequence of the Sonship Curriculum as we've gotten underway with it from Romans 3:3-11.

- Phase 2, Level II Sonship Education = acquiring the sonship decision-making skills of Wisdom, Justice, Judgment, and Equity.

- Romans 12:3-16 = *receiving the instruction of Wisdom*.

- 1st Component: Selfless Love

- 2nd Component: Kindness (lovingkindness)

- 3rd Component: Wisdom in our business world

- So the godly *wisdom* that comes from the godly *selfless lovingkindness* starts off operating **inside** the realm of the local assembly—and then that Wisdom moves out into your job or work-a-day world—**and that puts you out in the world!**

- And this 4th Component of (:12) **still has you out in the world**—because that’s where you’re going to encounter a *tribulation*, more common than not.

- (Not that there can’t be *tribulation* amongst saints in a local assembly—but you’re never going to be able to handle that until you can handle it among unjustified men!)

- But that’s not sufficient enough to be able to answer the question of Why does our Father have the 4th Component to our Wisdom as stated to us in (:12)?

- In other words—it’s not good enough to simply say, “Well, it’s because now that we’re using godly wisdom out in the world in our job, that we’re naturally going to be encountering *tribulations* out in the world!” — well, yes you are! - but Romans 8:16-25 was sufficient for that!

- This is going after something more **specific** than that! — and that makes it so that it’s natural for (:12) to deal with it in this 4th Position of our *instruction of wisdom*.

- This is where that exactitude of the preposition in that Aspect that deals with our godly Conduct & Behavior helps us out—notice that it says: ***patient IN tribulation***—it doesn’t say ‘patient WITH tribulation’ - and when you’re being patient WITH someone or something—that’s the issue of coping with it or ‘putting up’ with someone (or tolerating them).

- But *patient in tribulation* tells you that this is going after something **MORE** than coping or handling or enduring the *tribulation*.

- And another ‘hint’ that there’s something **more** that’s in view here than merely coping, handling, or enduring the *tribulation* is that 3rd Aspect of godliness: the godly Labor: ***continuing instant in prayer***—and it’s not that you didn’t already know what Sonship Prayer is yet—this is assuming you do! — assuming that Romans 8:26-27 has done their job—and this is telling you to ... ***continue instant*** in it!

- And there’s an Operation of God that He wants us to engage in whenever a *tribulation* situation occurs in our lives—**that goes beyond just applying Romans 8:16-25 to the situation.**

- And that will make it so that your conduct & behavior is one of being *patient IN the tribulation!*

- In other words—**you’re going to face the tribulation with expectation!** (And that’s why your conduct & behavior is going to be one of **not running away from it**—and not falling apart at the seams).

- But it’s the determination to be *patient in it*—and to Labor together with God in a very particular way, for the success of an Operation that He has to be accomplished **IN** that *tribulation!*

- So with all that said—to adequately and properly answer that question of, “Why is this the next, natural thing to be addressed in our Curriculum for gaining our Father’s Wise decision-making skill in Romans 12:12?” — that means that there’s something **else** sitting back there in Romans 8 that makes us aware of the fact that once our Sonship Education got itself underway—we were going to be **expected** to take our “*hope*” from Romans 8:16-25 & utilize it (by expanding it) in a very particular manner.

- (And [:12] here is dealing with that!) — it’s giving us the godly Thinking; the godly Conduct & Behavior; and the godly Labor that we’re to have **in view of that expectation!**

- So really—(even though it was necessary and right to go back and Do a little review of our ‘hope-doctrine’ in Romans 8:16-25) — we Can actually rule out finding our answer there—and we can rule out finding our answer in Romans 8:26-27—so that only leaves one other section of Romans chapter 8 to look:

Romans 8:28-39

— and that’s where we’ll find the key to answering this “Why” question—as well as the key to handling Romans 12:12 properly; with the proper viewpoint, frame of reference; and in the proper context!

- And it’s critical to recognize that: the ‘hope-doctrine’ that you were taught in Romans 8:16-25 was designed to go to work (and go into operation) **right away**, as part of your Sonship Establishment!

- But is that true for Romans 8—and especially (:31-39)??? NO! — that information was designed to have you recognize that it’s full-blown function and full-blown operation won’t get realized **until you get underway with the actual Sonship Curriculum beginning there in Romans 12:3ff!**

- By the time you get to the end of (:11) - with godly Selfless Loveingkindness operating in the local assembly—and then that Wisdom being taken out and utilized in your business/job realm (which is out in the ‘world-at-large’) - (:12) still has you out in the ‘world-at-large’ - but now, because there has been a sufficient amount of ‘conformity to the image of Christ’ - the truth is, you can expect to now begin to suffer some repercussions for that!

- And those ‘repercussions’ are going to come in the form of some **tribulation** (or trouble) - which you were told in Romans 8:35 would be the beginning of the whole scope of ‘separation tactics’ that the Adversary has at his disposal to become a ‘wedge’ so as to *separate you from the love of Christ*.

- And through intimidation, the goal is to get you to compromise and separate from boldly living out your sonship life in the details of your life out in the world ‘at large.’

- But God our Father has already made provision for us to be **saved** from the suffering of the kind of *tribulations* that we will face when we have become *conformed to the image of his Son* by means of these first 3 Components of godly Wisdom.

- And His sonship salvation provision is the Expanded Hope-Doctrine found in Romans 8:28-39—and especially the godly remedy that is given for the 5th Probing Question in Romans 8:36—*For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*

- And as I said—it may not seem that godly Love has anything at all to do with Romans 12:12—but the truth of the matter is, since we are to be saved from the ill-effects of the *tribulation* we will be experiencing and saved from being victimized by it to the tune of killing our desire to go on in our sonship education — and that salvation comes by means of the Expanded Hope-Doctrine—that means (by default) that godly Love not only is involved, but godly Love is at the very center of this 4th Component of our *instruction of wisdom*—in fact, it's the **central feature** of it!

- And that's because whenever you're dealing with godly Hope (a 'hope-doctrine') - you're dealing with a **LOVE-BASED CONVINCEMENT!** "*Rejoicing in hope; ...*"

- And the Hope-Doctrine is an issue in a son's life for the entirety of it—it's a huge doctrine that gets built upon and built upon and built upon throughout your sonship education.

- It's even still something that is brought up as far out as Titus 3:1-8 (:4-5).

- NOTE: From Lesson #2366-2379 (14 classes) we went through an extensive review of Romans 8:28-39—especially focusing upon the Expanded Hope-Doctrine—and paying careful attention to vss. 35 & 36 (the 5th Probing Question and its godly remedy) as found in my own notes on that section of Romans. We went back to Romans 5:1-10 (especially vss. 1-5) and dealt with the first time God developed a 'hope-doctrine' for us in view of His godly Love-Based Convincement—and then, once we understood & appreciated God's technique for producing that, we then looked at the next time we confront having to have a salvation from suffering in Romans 8:16-25 where a 'hope-doctrine' was developed based upon a Love-Based Convincement—and then to have that 'Hope-Doctrine' Expanded in Romans 8:28-39.

- BACK TO ROMANS 12:12

- With all that review—and with a better understanding and appreciation for our Father’s technique/methodology for producing and Expanding the ‘Hope-Doctrine’ for sonship education—(based upon a Love-Based Convincement) - you should now have come to fully understand & appreciate the reason **Why** Romans 12:12 is the **next, natural** thing that a son needs to receive from his Father as the 4th Component to his *instruction of wisdom*.

- And the truth is—by all that we’ve done over the better part of a month in review—that not only should make it so you appreciate the **naturalness** for why this is the next Component to our *instruction of wisdom* (sense & sequence-wise) - but at the exact same time, you should be both **encouraged** and **EXHORTED** to the **dire need** there is to get this 4th Component of Wisdom effectually working in your inner man for your sonship education!

- The Pre-Doctrinal Exhortation is actually ‘built in’ to that understanding and appreciation for the Father’s methodology for generating a Hope-Doctrine by means of His Love-Based Convincement at the time in which you are squarely facing some brand of ‘suffering’ as a son!

- So with that review of our Father’s methodology for producing a ‘Hope-Doctrine’ freshly in our thinking—and with an appreciation for the naturalness to the sense and sequence for why this 4th Component says and addresses what it does —

— that is, by the time you get to the end of (:11) with the godly Selfless Lovingkindness operating in you as an individual son, and in the local assembly in which you gather — and then when that “Wisdom” (that wise sonship decision-making skill set) is then moved out of the ‘friendly confines’ of the local assembly and out into the world ‘at-large’ where you’ll spend the greatest amount of your time (which is in your *business* world / the realm of your job) — then (:12) is going to naturally address something that begins to take place when you’re still out there in the world ‘at-large’ and in the common circumstances & situations you’ll face in the world ‘at-large’ now that a sufficient amount of being conformed to the image of Christ has taken place!

- And the truth is—it’s at this point that you can now begin to suffer some repercussions for that in the form of **tribulation**.

- In other words—the way in which the world ‘at-large’ works (and the way in which the Adversary has charted the *course of this world*) is such that it will ‘detect’ (if you will) that not only are you a genuine “Christian” (or one who is a true believer in Christ—one who names the name of Christ) — but circumstances and situations will inevitably arise (that is, it’s just down right impossible to avoid or prevent) where this world (and those you come into contact in this world) will detect that you are no ‘ordinary’ Christian, but you’re a kind of Christian that’s far different from the kind of Christian that the world can shape/form/bend/influence and *conform* to its “way” - or what it determines as ‘acceptable’ thinking and ‘acceptable’ conduct and behavior!

- And you’d better just get used to the idea that sonship thinking and sonship conduct & behavior (and sonship decision-making) just naturally runs COUNTER to this world ‘at-large’ - and therefore sonship living is going to take place in an environment that’s going to OPPOSE it and cause ‘trouble’ for you!

- **But that’s not a problem for a son**—in fact, that’s not only **not** intimidating, but it’s the EXPECTED thing—and you were made aware of all that back in your Sonship Establishment!

- And what will **save** you from any of that kind of ‘trouble’ and what you’re going to operate upon from this time forward throughout the scope of your entire sonship life is always going to be: **HOPE!** (that Hope-Doctrine)!

- And this ‘*tribulation*’ situation comes up because you’re dealing with common circumstances & situations that are going to take place with you still
1) having a body that has sin in its members; 2) that is lived out in a world that is **naturally ungodly**; and
3) a world that has an Adversary in it!

- Therefore the methodology your Father teaches you is a **particular** method or a **particular way** in which you’re supposed to handle such a situation or circumstance of ‘tribulation’ that comes your way that is **productive** in connection with the **remainder** of your sonship education, and the ongoing nature of our sonship education.

- And that particular “way” in which you’re supposed to (and expected to) [as a son] handle a *tribulation* that comes your way—is by means of that Expanded Hope-Doctrine of Romans 8:28-39 (which now comes into play in “real time” or in a “real world” situation or circumstance).

- Therefore—once the natural need for this 4th Component of Wisdom is perceived and the Pre-Doctrinal Exhortation has been provided for—the next thing to do is to get the details of the 4th Component effectually doing their job in your inner man.

- And—once again—since each of the Components we’re given deals with godly edification—we know that all 3 Aspects of godliness are going to be addresses—and the first one is found in the first Clause of (:12).

- **Godly Thinking** (which challenges the thinking of the world that has made its ‘inroads’ into your mind—and which has to be confronted, rooted up, disposed with, and replaced with God’s thinking) is:

12 Rejoicing in hope;

- And this *hope* that we’re going to be *rejoicing in*—is **beyond** that initial & fundamental hope-doctrine of Romans 8:16-25 that provided us with the perspective and the viewpoint that we ought to have in connection with what we’re involved in, in God’s plan & purpose as His sons—

— and that godly perspective & viewpoint meant that when we encounter the *sufferings of this present time*—that they’re not distressing to you; they’re not upsetting to you; they don’t cause you to wring your hands and ask “Why is this happening?” - and our fundamental response to these *sufferings* are going to **match** that of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself (and our Heavenly Father) - and His initial response to these *sufferings of this present time* is that He’s **perfectly content** when they occur! (i.e., *patient*)!

— and when we understand and appreciate the issue **exactly** like He does—then we’re able to *suffer with Him* with the exact same contentment and the exact same patience as He, Himself has.

- This *hope* isn’t exactly that—rather it’s the Expansion of that *hope*.

- And I bring this up again (briefly) just to say that when the issue of God producing an Expansion of that godly Hope (over in Romans 8:28-39) - just by the nature of how chapter 8 ends (especially in verses 37-39) - although the word “*rejoicing*” isn’t used there—that IS exactly what the apostle Paul is doing there: **he’s REJOICING!**

- And Paul is rejoicing there because of how the added issues to our godly Hope-Doctrine has made him/us aware of how it is that we can be *more than conquerors* IN *all these things* (i.e., **in** all these sufferings and separation tactics of the Adversary)!

- And it’s not that the *sufferings of this present time* are excluded from the things that are brought up in Rom. 8:28-39—but rather, they’re **included** in them and now they’re given a **furtherance** (so to speak).

- And that “furtherance” is the issue of how these sufferings are going to **benefit** us and work out to our advancement and propel us in our sonship lives. (in other words, the “*more than conquerors*” issue)

- And folks—that’s **radically different** than anything this world thinks! That’s GODLY THINKING! THAT’S GODLY SONSHIP THINKING! (In fact, that’s radically different than anything most of the current Christian world thinks!)

- And that’s something to REJOICE in!

- And the truth is—because you’re not given any explanation or any details whatsoever in (:12) about the *hope* you’re to *rejoice* in—the truth is, you’re actually supposed to have already been taught this—you’re supposed to have ‘brought that to class’ with you from your Sonship Establishment!

- And it’s just that **now** is where it’s needed—**now** is where you’re supposed to pull it up to the forefront of your mind and this is where it now comes into play and gets **applied!**

- So the **Godly Thinking** of (:12) is: *Rejoicing in hope;*

- “**Rejoicing**” = English prefix “re” = again or anew + the obsolete English word “joise” = to enjoy the possession of + English suffix “ing” which expresses action or process.

- **Rejoice** = to enjoy something by having **full possession** and **use** of it—which makes one **full of joy**. And it carries a shade of meaning that is not limited to an outer and external display of joy (such as the word ‘*exult*’) - because we *exult* openly; but we can either *rejoice* openly OR calmly and inwardly. We *rejoice* in the **possession of** or at the **acquiring of** something good!

- Simply put—**rejoicing** is the act of expressing joy and gladness over some good thing we have come to **fully possess**!

- And that “good thing” that we’ve come to possess and/or acquire is our Expanded **Hope-Doctrine** that saves us from the suffering of the *tribulations* we face in our sonship life as we put it into practice out in the common circumstances & situations in the world ‘at-large.’

12 Rejoicing in (not “for” or “because of” but IN it) hope;

- **hope**—*Hope* is such an important doctrinal issue in the development of believers in Christ as you enter your edification and education as “sons” of God—that it comes as no surprise that it has received special consideration and attack by the Adversary and his Policy of Evil—(especially in connection with the issue of suffering).

- This seems to be the usual case of biblical terms in which, over the years, the term’s usage gets watered down; becomes weaker; and set adrift in a morass of unclear, unidentifiable, undefinable (almost unexpressable) human expressions or emotions. — In other words, it just becomes a “feeling” or a sense of something that is unclear to define, but somewhat recognizable to the emotions. (Which is why politicians love to use the word Hope as their slogan)!

- And this leads to doubtfulness and uncertainty in regards to interpretation.

- And doubtful meaning leads to erroneous and even **dangerous** application!

- And due to the nature of what *hope* and the ‘Hope-Doctrines’ are designed to produce in the inner man of a son—it becomes essential

that we rescue the term *hope* from its current ambiguity and bring it back into the clear meaning that the Bible intends for it to have.

- Today, *hope* is most often used in a negative or doubtful way. It's most commonly used in connection with an insinuation of despair. And for the most part, *hope* is nothing more than "*a desire; the fulfillment of which is in doubt.*"

- However, in order to restore the meaning of *hope* into the meaning that the KJ Translators understood and appreciated—one does not have to go back to the "original Greek" (elpis) - but one only has to consult the premiere dictionary of the English language (the OED).

- And even there the OED takes note of the watered-down usage that it has developed in the declining stages of the English language: "In modern colloquial usage it is used often in a weakened sense, expressing little more than a desire that the event **may** happen, or that the fact **may** turn out to be as stated."

- As we have it today, in the declining period of the English language, the term *hope* (except in the biblical usage) has become little more than a term of politeness: "I *hope* I didn't disturb you," or of mere desire: "I *hope* it doesn't rain." (usually a desire with little or no confidence or certainty).

- Today, *hope* is just a catch-phrase used in attractive pithy sayings: "*Hope* for the best, but prepare for the worst," or "*Hope* is a good breakfast, but a bad supper," or "He who lives on *hope* will die fasting," or "*Hope* is cheap as despair."

- Scoffers of the Bible say that the biblical kind of *hope* is nothing more than, "pie in the sky bye and bye."

- Fredrich Nietzsche even got into the act of degrading *hope* when he said, "*Hope* is the worst of evils for it prolongs the torment of man."

- (I've even heard some modern political radio talk-show hosts disparage the term *hope* as being something that a politician uses that has no real meaning and brings no real help to anyone!)

- Even more sinister and counterfeit is what Voltaire (Francois-Marie Arouet - 1694-1778 - French philosopher whose works epitomize the age of Enlightenment, often attacking injustice and intolerance) wrote in his *Philosophical Dictionary* (1764): he defines *hope* as “a Christian virtue which consists in our despising all poor things here below in the expectation of enjoying, in an unknown country, unknown joys which our priests promise us for the worth of our money.”
- But true, biblical, godly *hope* is NOT defined as any of these things!
 - OED: defines that strong, true, biblical *hope*, as the: “Expectation of something desired; desire combined with expectation, **to have confidence**.”
 - Hence, we come down to the exact meaning of the Greek word [elpis] = **confident, convinced, fully persuaded expectation**.
- But there is one more thing that we have that the Greek does not: we have the **context** in which the word “*hope*” is being used.
 - And the *hope* that we are to be *rejoicing in* is the absolute, fully persuaded confidence that was produced in us by the effectual working of our Father’s methodology of utilizing a Love-Based Convincement that has given us our Father’s own perspective and viewpoint concerning the sufferings and the *tribulations* we are to endure as sons.
 - In other words—the context of this *hope* is the very thing that is so powerfully working in His own mind and that He Himself thinks about (and that He operates upon) as He endures the same sufferings we do!—right along with us in this present dispensation of Gentile grace in which we live as sons!
 - No less that what operates in God’s own heart that fully persuades Him with absolute confidence of it (the suffering of the *tribulations*) “*working together* (with the curriculum [the word of God]) **for good**” — no less than God’s own *HOPE* is to now work in our inner man just exactly, and just as **POWERFULLY** as it does in His inner man!!

(and if that’s not something to *rejoice* in—I don’t know what is!)

- SUMMARY OF THE GODLY THINKING OF ROMANS 12:12a
Rejoicing in hope;

- The reason for why this issue of *hope* and a ‘hope-doctrine’ comes up at all (here at this point in our Sonship Curriculum), simply and briefly put—is because it’s at this point where a certain amount of being *conformed to the image of* [God’s] *Son* [the Lord Jesus Christ] has now taken place by means of the first 3 Components of our *instruction of wisdom*—plus the fact that we are now putting our sonship position “in Christ” into practice out in the world ‘at-large’ so that it becomes inevitable that at some time and at some place we’re going to begin to experience common, yet ‘troubling’ and bothersome circumstances and situations that will, if not dealt with properly, have the potential to begin to (or completely) *separate us from the love of Christ* which is our love for our sonship life and the successful aims, goals, and objectives of it.

- And that’s why it is the next, natural thing to be brought up, confronted, and dealt with in Sonship Education.

- The *hope* that we’re to understand and appreciate that we’re supposed therefore have in our Thinking (and be *rejoicing in*) comes from 2 major portions of God’s word that we have previously dealt with and have previously received the effectual working of:

- (Which means that we’re already supposed to be in possession of it—it doesn’t have to be generated or developed—and we’re supposed to ‘bring it to class’ [so to speak] with us.)

1) Romans 8:16-25—which is where, for the first time in our Sanctified Sonship Status, God our Heavenly Father developed and generated by means of a Love-Based Convincement, a ‘Hope-Doctrine’ that, in the face of having to endure the sufferings of this present time, saves us from being adversely affected by those sufferings—moreover, our perspective, viewpoint, outlook and frame of reference is one of being perfectly content and *patient* to endure such sufferings without becoming distressed, upset, perplexed or bothered by them in any way because of *the GLORY which shall be revealed in us*—that is, because of a far greater issue and a far grander issue regarding what this dispensation of grace is all about—and that grand and glorious issue being

far more compelling; far more significant; and far more important than any *suffering of this present time* ever could be — no matter how discomfoting or painful it might be.

2) Romans 8:28-39—which takes the ‘Hope-Doctrine’ of (:16-25) and **Expands** it to include much more than just facing *the sufferings of this present time*—and by the same Love-Based Convincement technique He used before—our Father develops and generates an Expansion of our ‘Hope-Doctrine’ to now include (along with us still facing *the sufferings of this present time*) — to now include the issue of us, as sons, having to face the entire scope of the Adversary’s tactics that would, (if successful), separate us from our love for our sonship life and the success of its aims, goals, and objectives of it. And the ‘hope of our salvation’ when we are in the midst of such suffering comes from the already-existing godly optimism & perspective we got from (:16-25) — and now **adding** to that the powerful doctrinal reality of (:28ff) which gives us the intelligent understanding and appreciation for having absolute confidence (hope) in both our Father and in His curriculum for our sonship education whereby: ***in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.***

- Therefore Romans 8:28, especially when it says, “***all things***” - has in view both *the sufferings of this present time* **AND** the suffering of the ‘separation tactics’ of Romans 8:35.

- And that means that as sons, we’re to expect that we’re going to encounter information in the curriculum for our sonship education—and as we go through it—in which there will be sitting some information that we’re going to be taught that will be able to be applied to any an all such things that would be troublesome, stressful, discomfoting, or bothersome to us—and rather than suffer their ill-effects, those things can be patiently endured with godly contentment — and they will actually benefit us to the tune of propelling us in our sonship education, and further training us for our heavenly vocation and qualifying us for positions in it—and as such we become *more than conquerors* “in all those things!”

- And in that way, your Father has given you incredible *inner man* POWER called “**HOPE**”!

- Therefore—in light of all that review and all the work we’ve done over the past month—that’s what stands behind, and that’s what the Godly Thinking of Romans 12:12 is all about:

Rejoicing in hope;

- Now the truth of the matter is—even though we’ve spent a lot of time dealing with this 1st Aspect of the Godliness (the Thinking-like-God aspect) - the truth is, it’s the Aspect of the Godly Living (Conduct & Behavior) and the Godly Labor that are the ones that are the **most critical** to understand in all that (:12) says!

- Because the Godly Thinking is supposed to be a “given” (so to speak) - or the thing that you were supposed to have already gotten down pat (so to speak) back when you went through your Sonship Establishment in Romans 8.

- **Godly Living**—in which you now take that godly Thinking and begin operating upon it in the details of your life as you encounter troublesome and bothersome circumstances and situations out in the world ‘at-large’ and then act, conduct yourself and behave yourself in accordance with that godly Thinking.

- patient in tribulation;

- And now the issue is that when a *tribulation* comes along—the issue is to be *patient* ***IN*** it—not simply ‘patient **with** it’!

- And that little preposition “***in***” indicates the perspective you’re to have as a son that got developed in you back in Romans 8:16-39.

- “***patient***” = the capacity to suffer pain, trouble, or evil with **calmness** and/or **composure**—being able to continue on in a course of action without being daunted by difficulties or hindrances.

= to look favorably upon all these circumstances! to see that there is **value** to them!

- It means that you won’t become impatient—you won’t become irritated, anxious, or unable to endure the suffering or opposition.

- It’s the enduring of the *tribulation* with **godly contentment!**

- And now we need to say something more about that little word **“in”** — because the issue here in (:12) is the issue of when a *tribulation* comes along—that we’re supposed to Conduct ourselves and Behave ourselves as sons by being *patient* and perfectly content ***IN*** it!
- And that little word **“in”** points to a particular development that has taken place in the way in which you were given the information and the way in which you were taught about suffering and hope back there in your Sonship Establishment of Romans 8:16-39.
 - And it has to do with the 2-fold way in which your Father generated/developed/produced that ‘Hope-Doctrine’ in your inner man.
 - And something further needs to be acknowledged and recognized about that progressive development that sits in Rom. 8:16-25—and then gets Expanded upon in :28-39.
 - And by recognizing this issue—it will confirm the fact that we have indeed handled God’s word properly—and that this 2-fold development in our ‘Hope-Doctrine’ is valid and that the emphasis here is upon that **2nd** development or **Expansion** of the ‘Hope-Doctrine’ as we found it in (:28-39) of ch. 8.
- We’ve noted that the accuracy of the word *in* tells us that we’re not just merely supposed to be patient **“with”** the *tribulation*.
- But you need to recognize that when we first were confronted with suffering (*the sufferings of this present time*) and the ‘hope-doctrine’ that *saved* us from being ill-affected by them—you need to recognize that when you got to the end of Romans 8:16-25—what you got there **was** the ability to be patient **WITH** it (patient **with** *the sufferings of this present time*).
 - And there was nothing wrong with that—that was in fact how your Father expected you to deal with those sufferings.
 - In other words—by the effectual working of that grand and glorious Hope given to you there—on the basis of the godly perspective and viewpoint of the “hope” - you therefore don’t become upset, worried, or troubled at the moment it occurs.

- There's the ability for the effectual working of the godly viewpoint & perspective **to immediately produce STABILITY!** — so that your imaginations don't run away with you—and so that panic and anxiety don't set in to the point that it takes over and becomes the controlling factor in your life.

- No—you've got an **immediate** response that **immediately** puts the sufferings or the troublesome situation into a godly perspective.

- **And that immediately puts your mind in a state of CONTROL!**—godly control in the suffering situation.

- And then that 1st of the 2-fold development of our 'Hope-Doctrine' allows for the godly Optimism to take over—and the intelligent, settled Thinking now comes along—and since you're now **patient WITH the tribulations/suffering—now that godly optimism can come along and say, “Ok, now I want to be *patient IN it!*”**

- And it has you saying, “I want to go through this, and handle it in a way that is consistent with my godly optimistic outlook ***knowing that all things work together for the good!***”

- And I can take a portion of the curriculum of my sonship education—and I can APPLY it—not just to endure this; but to be that *more than conqueror IN* connection with it!

- And that's the issue of being: ***patient in* [the] *tribulation*.**

- And that can't be done with just the 1st of the 2-fold 'Hope-Doctrines' (i.e., the one in 8:16-25) - but that can only be done when that 1st 'Hope-Doctrine' has had its Expansion as was done in (:28-39)!

- (:16-25) got it so you would be patient **with** suffering;
 - (:28-30) got it so you would be patient **IN** it! — with all that understanding & appreciation of the benefit that it will have for you as a son whereby you are *more than a conqueror IN* it!

- And your Conduct and your Behavior (the way in which you LIVE in connection with the godly Thinking) is consistent with that and reflects that 2-fold godly Hope -type Thinking!

- The WISE thing to do Conduct & Behavior-wise is that when some *tribulation* (some troublesome, bothersome) circumstance or situation arises—the WISE son’s Conduct & Behavior will be one of always being *patient IN tribulation*.
- The WISE son knows that the *tribulation* is going to be **USEFUL**—and the wise son knows just how to make **use** of it!
- The WISE son—and the WISE sonship decision-making concerning the *tribulation* situation is to NOT desire that the *tribulation* ends prematurely (so to speak) - or ends before the usefulness and the gain and the benefit of it has been achieved.
 - Because you can recognize and you can identify the **value** that this circumstance/situation has for you as a son.
 - And that’s because you understand & appreciate that there’s a difference between just coming along and being able to endure a situation of suffering/tribulation—and that you can, (by the effectual working of a portion of God’s word in your inner man) say, “I can make it to the end, no matter how long it may be, because what my Father holds out for me as His son is so great/grand that all those sufferings aren’t worthy to even be compared to it.” (great as that is and true as that is) — But you can understand & appreciate the difference between that and saying, “I recognize that there’s something of great benefit and usefulness for me as a son; and until that’s been achieved, I don’t want to get out of this situation!”
 - And that takes some real insight and some real discernment and some real perception into just what kind of things you’re experiencing that you are going to have to figure out all on your own as to what qualifies as a *tribulation* in **this** sense and in **this** particular context!
 - And the truth is—if this all works properly—you should never have to come to me and ask me if what you’re going through or what your experiencing is a *tribulation* or a suffering of this variety—or is it just a *suffering of this present time*—or is it a suffering of my own stupidity!?
 - And what I’m saying in all this is (not to be critical of you), but that this is the kind of WISDOM you are to have as a son!

- This 4th Component of our *instruction of wisdom* should be one of the most important and immediately useful Components of your Sonship Education so far—and that’s because it has **help**, it has **power**, and it has a **salvation** to it that can be immediately put to use by you EVERY SINGLY DAY OF YOUR LIFE!

- Because the truth of the matter is—since the ‘hope-doctrine’ we are supposed to be *Rejoicing in* has both *the sufferings of this present time* AND the suffering of the ‘separation tactics’ of the Adversary (as given back there in Rom. 8:35) in view - that is, (:12) applies to BOTH of those areas of suffering— (and even the suffering of your own stupidity) - and since every single one of you will experience (at the very least) *“the sufferings of this present time”* every single day of your life—you start to get the idea of just how great and how needful and how useful this Component is: right here and right now (today)—and every single day of your life!

- And if you don't see that right now—you will (or you should) by the time we get to the end of the verse.

- And so by the godly Thinking of “*Rejoicing in hope;*” - we are to Conduct & Behave ourselves by being “*patient in tribulation;*” - which does NOT mean that we’re just to be a masochist or anything along those lines—but rather, that we’re supposed to wisely determine the variety of suffering we’re going through—and then to intelligently operate upon the godly optimism that was Established within us—and by utilizing and applying the Doctrine contained in the Curriculum itself—recognize the VALUE and the USEFULNESS and the GAIN that can be gotten out of the *tribulation* and until that gets accomplished: a wise son will not want to get out of that situation or circumstance.

- And one of the things that’s being generated in you right here is: a **WILLINGNESS** to endure *tribulation* with godly optimism, godly contentment, and godly *patience!*

- So the issue for a son in his Conduct & Behavior in (:12) is—that (as I am intelligently *Rejoicing in hope*), I can now conduct myself **in** this *tribulation* in such a way as to gain the benefit of taking the doctrine of the Curriculum; properly applying it; and being MORE like the Lord Jesus Christ at the end of it (being even more *conformed to His image*) - and with the effectual working of the Curriculum of

God's word—this *tribulation* (or suffering) will *work together for good* for me as a son!

- The truth is—the *patience* aspect is that you don't want this to end before the proper conformity to the image of Christ has been achieved!

- And this makes a **tremendous impact** upon the heavenly realm (where our impact is supposed to be made) - because by being *Rejoicing in hope*; and being *patient in tribulation*; to the tune of it *working together for good* and to the tune of being even more *conformed to the image of Christ*—the **power** of God is seen and demonstrated and put on display!

- Not to mention that how by others witnessing that in our own assembly, it works to encourage them and mutually edify them! (and not only individually, but also from assembly to assembly [Grace Fellowship, for example])

- QUESTIONS? COMMENTS? so far

- Godly Labor—Taking the Godly Thinking of the *Rejoicing in hope* and the Godly Conduct & Behavior of being *patient in tribulation*—the naturalness of the Godly Labor now comes into play whereby you are going to be:

... continuing instant in prayer;

- The issue of “*continuing instant*” is a word in the Greek that is used 10x in the Bible—but it's only used this way this one and only time — which tells you that the KJ Translators saw something in this context that demanded the exact and most excellent English words: *continuing instant*.

- Therefore this issue of being *patient in tribulation* is one of the prime opportunities for the exercise of **sonship prayer**—and for the **intelligent sonship analysis** of a situation for the **accurate** and **wise application of the curriculum that's being learned TO the situation.**

- And to commune with your Father about it—and to gain all of the benefits that come out of it—whether it's fundamental '*peace of God*' - or whether it's some other discerning skills—or further perceptiveness ... or whatever.

- ***Continuing instant*** in prayer is what the intelligent sonship prayer is all about in this context—and that’s what the Godly **Labor** is all about in the 4th Component of the *instruction of wisdom*.

- Sonship prayer itself is now to be understood and appreciated as a way in which you’re going to now ‘go to work’ (so to speak) and Labor with your Father (naturally enough) to get an operation He has in mind accomplished.

- And since the nature of the *tribulations* are such as that they’ll be occurring **all of the time** (each and every day of your life) - then it’s only natural that this Labor Aspect is to be done on an ‘on-going’ or **continual** basis!

- And so—that alone tells you something—it tells you that if you haven’t already been doing this—**now** (and from **now on**) you’re going to be engaging your Father in the fellowship and communion of intelligent sonship prayer EACH AND EVERY DAY—because the nature of the *tribulation* (being **both** *the sufferings of this present time* **and** the ‘separation tactics’ of the Adversary) is such that there’s not a day of your life that you won’t be encountering these **general and common ‘troubling’ circumstances and situations** living your sonship life out in the world ‘at-large.’

- So if it hasn’t already—it’s at this point where sonship prayer now takes on a new, exciting, and delightful dimension!

- And your natural desire in connection with your Father and the ‘Father-to-son’ relationship you now have with Him—your natural desire is going to be one of *continuing INSTANT in prayer*.

- ***instant*** = pressing; urgent; earnest; immediate; quick; making no delay — *instant* comes from a root “*sto*” meaning “to stand” and signifies the point of time that “stands” over us, or as it were, over our heads—*instant* is always taken for present time—*instant* is used in contexts that often have to do with **a clear and present danger** in which action is to be taken **immediately** and with **haste in order to preserve life!**

- *Instant; instantly; instantaneously*— is one of the most powerful terms in the English language that expresses immediate action to be taken and to take place!

- *Instant* (or doing something *instantly*) expresses the shortest possible amount of time conceivable in order to do a thing; or to go into action.

- Charles Smith (“Synonyms Discriminated” 1882) said: “*Instant* is an **atom** of time.”

- Furthermore—*instant* or *instantly* is used in cases which have a succession of events in view (at least 2 or more)—such as with our passage in [:12] - where you have a *tribulation* occurring, followed by the action of *prayer*—the idea being that a son is going to make haste [or make the shortest time possible] to commune with his Father about it in some intelligent sonship *prayer*.

- *Instant* expresses the strongest degree of immediate action—so strong, in fact, that the idea is that the succeeding action (*prayer*, in this case) is taken **in the very moment** of the event that requires it (*tribulation*, in this case)!

- And this kind of terminology (*continuing instant in prayer*) is altogether proper and perfectly fitting to the inherent **danger** that exists with something like *tribulation* that has the power to ‘separate’ or kill your loving desire for continuing on with your sonship education!

- The intelligent sonship prayer (in the context of this 4th Component of our *instruction of wisdom*) is the issue of—by *continuing instant in prayer* you now want (desire) to immediately take the opportunity to engage (Labor) in the sonship communion & fellowship with your Father ABOUT the particular situation (the particular *tribulation*) - and **immediately gain the benefits** from it that the application of the knowledge that’s being learned from the Curriculum is designed to produce—and is able to produce — as it’s intelligently applied to the *tribulation* situation.

- So what you’ve got here is that—by Laboring together with your Father in some intelligent sonship prayer—an assessment will be made whereby you will honestly identify the variety of the *tribulation* (suffering) - then the application of the knowledge learned from the Curriculum will be made as you are *patient* in it—and the gain & benefits get realized as *all things work together for good*—and

conformity to the image of Christ takes place—which is cause for **even more rejoicing in hope!!!**

- And this is what I talked about when I said that it's at this point where sonship prayer takes on a new, exciting, and delightful dimension! — and why the LABOR Aspect of this 4th Component is something that you should now **greatly desire to do!** — because it's in that Laboring with your Father in the intelligent sonship prayer that the whole *tribulation* issue gets sorted out; where your soul and spirit gets settled (and settled down) - where the learned information from the Curriculum gets applied to the *tribulation* situation—and where an intelligent understanding and appreciation of the gain and the benefits are obtained!

- Therefore even though the *continuing instant in prayer* is “Labor” — it's NOT “LABORIOUS”! (i.e., wearisome, oppressive, burdensome, unbearable) [I'm not talking about “returning thanks” for dinner!]

- And the truth is—sonship prayer is to be something you take absolute delight in—you look forward to it—and it's like you just don't want it to end (you want to ***continue instant*** in it)!

- To a son—prayer **isn't** a chore—it **isn't** a ritual—it **isn't** something you occasionally do—but to a son, prayer is his “**lifeline**” - it's his “**labor of love**” with his Father—it's **vital** to his **success** as a son—and it literally **saves** his life! (his functional life) - [because of what gets 'settled-out' in sonship prayer, a son knows that it's there that he gets saved from being *separated from the love of Christ*—it's there that he's saved from the 'love-killing' affects of the Adversary's separation tactics!

- And folks—this should take the issue of intelligent sonship prayer to an new level of importance & appreciation—and it should now be understood to have such incredible VALUE to it that your TIME spent engaged in it should undergo a marked **increase** (in fact, it should be that you just about have to be 'torn away' from it)!

- And this is really only the beginning of understanding and appreciating what sonship prayer is for; what it can accomplish; and the value it has for the success of your sonship life!

- And this is a **further exercise** of sonship prayer—and that’s why it’s “*continuing instant in prayer*” - that’s not the simple, ongoing regularity of sonship prayer that would be normally taking place night & day (so to speak) — rather, this is the issue of sonship prayer taking place *instantly* in connection with a *tribulation* associated with putting your sonship life into practice in the world ‘at-large’.

- And that’s one of the benefits of the Godly Optimism that has you *rejoicing in hope* (operating in your mind) as the information in the Curriculum gets sorted out and applied to the troublesome situation of either the *sufferings of this present time* or the “separation tactics” of the Satanic Policy of Evil.

- Because one of the fundamental benefits of Godly Optimism in connection with those *tribulations* is the increased intimacy of fellowship & communion with our Father.

- (There’s that *immediacy* effect that’s designed to take place.)

- And there’s a Fatherly Exhortation that corresponds with this particular issue at this particular point in our *instruction of wisdom* that’s sitting back in the 3rd Chapter of the book of Proverbs that describes some of the immediate benefits of *Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer.*

- Proverbs 3—the first 4 verses are very familiar to us because they are the fundamental Post-Doctrinal Exhortation that a father gives his son at the end of every Component and every Form of doctrine he receives — and the issue there is that Positive & Proper response to the body of information the son has just learned.

- But the next Fatherly Exhortation that comes up is just as fundamental and just as ongoing as the first one is —

(:5-6) - (read)

- What I’m after here is that—when the Father starts off by saying, *Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding* — and when you think of what the Father says to you as His son here in connection with the particular Component of wisdom we’re dealing with in Romans 12:12 —————

— when a *tribulation* comes along — because of the way in which we’re ‘**wired**’ (so to speak) [primarily from our past—before we were justified—and the way in which this world works—and from the wisdom of this world that we learned (and that we’re un-learning from the Curriculum; and that we’re jettisoning and is being replaced as the “epistle of Christ” gets written on the fleshy tables of our hearts)] — until that is well underway and has gotten well-established — **our initial response (anytime a *tribulation* occurs) is going to be to handle it the way we’ve always handled it in the past!**

- Handle it on the basis of the wisdom of men;
- Handle it on the basis of human psychology;
- Handle it on the basis of the accepted norms and standards of our culture and what it says is right and wrong; etc.

- And therefore the tendency is going to be for us to *lean unto our own understanding*—(and it’s going to be a **POWERFUL** tendency)!

- And that’s going to be true, not only for a *tribulation* situation, but in just about ALL of sonship decision-making!

- And one of the **benefits** that the Curriculum is dealing with here—when it comes to *tribulation* in general (which includes *the sufferings of this present time* as well as the things in Rom. 8:28-39) - is that, when we apply the **Godly Optimism** to *the sufferings of this present time* (which occur frequently and with varying degrees of measure in the details of our lives; every day of our lives) or any other variety of *tribulation*-type suffering—the issue is—that as our sonship education is taking place—and we get (by the effectual working of Rom. 12:12), we get a ‘sensitivity’ (so to speak) to them; and a more intelligent recognition in connection with them—and one of the **benefits** of that is that it produces that immediacy of a Godly response!

- The effectual working of (:12—taking the Godly Thinking of *rejoicing in hope*—and then especially the Godly Conduct & Behavior of being *patient in tribulation*—and even more especially the Godly Labor of *continuing instant in prayer*) - it equips us to **respond immediately with Sonship Godliness!**

- And instead of immediately throwing the typical ‘switch’ of the typical human response—to instead realize that this education is giving you the ability to do something different!

- (“*Conformity to the world*” is the issue of flipping that ‘typical’ switch that we’ve always flipped—but the *renewing of our mind* is coming along now and giving us the ability to flip **another** ‘switch’ - and turn on **another** response!)

- And that “other” response is first and foremost to be patient **WITH** it (which is what the *rejoicing in hope* is **initially** designed to produce, and **does** produce as we are *rejoicing in hope*) — but then the **Godly Optimism** is able to therefore ‘kick in’ because the *rejoicing in hope* enables it to ‘kick in’ (and we’re not panicking; we’re not full of anxiety; we’re not running around crying, Why? O Why?) - rather, all that is dismissed and all that is shoved out of the way—and all that *imagination* and high *thinking that exalts itself against the knowledge of God* is *cast down*—and we’re **stable**—and therefore the Godly Optimism (8:28-39) can now ‘kick in’ and so we can then come along and be *patient IN* this thing and be the *more than conqueror* that God’s designed us to be!

- And then the way that’s done is: you **continue instant in prayer** — and on that “*instant*” you immediately deal with that issue and you immediately set in motion the application of what’s been learned in the Curriculum at whatever given point you’re at—and you then intelligently commune and fellowship with your Father about applying it!

- You intelligently do it because you have been given some information in the Curriculum that address it.

- And therefore you have something to talk to your Father about (intelligently) in taking that information and applying to the troubling situation/circumstance.

- And then you intelligently make the request you would make—and if you’re still in the situation where you don’t know what to request (8:26-27) - then you operate upon Romans 8:26-27 (there’s still no need for panic or anything along those lines because the *intercessory* issue takes place) and you’re **relaxed & stable** in connection with that—and all along this process you’re continually operating upon that **Godly Optimism** that got established in you from Romans chapter 8! (That POWERFUL “HOPE-DOCTRINE”!)

- The truth is—a whole bunch of benefits are taking place that are contributing to, and are part of the issue of us being *conformed to the image God's Son* —

— and one of those issues of *conformity* is that issue of **immediacy** of our communion & fellowship with our Father.

- And there's fascinating examples of that issue in connection with the Lord's own Sonship.

- Ex.: Matthew 14:22ff—in connection with the close of one phase of the Lord's earthly ministry during the Climactic Stage of God's program with Israel—and in preparation for the next phase of His earthly ministry.

- Note that the tempest has arisen because the Adversary has been given the right to intensify the opposition as the 3rd phase of the Lord's earthly ministry gets underway.

- (And note that this happens on **water**—on the sea of Galilee) [connection of Satan with water]

- And the Lord went up in the mountain and prayed all night in connection with that—not coming to them until the *fourth watch* (the darkest part of the night, just before dawn) — and as a Son with His Father, He went over the program —and He reviewed the entire program up until that point—and He communed with His Father about exactly what was coming up in the next phase (and the intensification that would be coming up) — and when He came down from the mountain [after having been in prayer all night long] - He looked out across the Sea of Galilee and He sees that the boat is still there (not that that was surprising to Him) - but He knew the opposition was going to intensify—He knew they didn't get across and so He walks out to them to help them in their situation.

- All I'm after here is an example of the Lord operating as a Son in facing *tribulation* and His utilizing sonship prayer in connection with the advancements in the program—and His response to it was the **immediacy** of communion & fellowship with His Father in preparation for dealing with it.

- And there are times in the Gospel accounts where you find the Lord in a troubling situation (and especially when the disciples are in a particular *tribulation*) where it says He ‘lifted up His eyes to heaven’ and speaks to His Father — and it’s recorded that He says something along the lines of, “I SPEAK NOT THESE WORDS FOR MY SAKE, BUT FOR YOUR SAKE”
 - and He was perfectly content and perfectly calm with what was going on and perfectly understood why it was taking place—and therefore what He said to His Father was not so much for His benefit, but it was for **their** benefit ...

- John 11:41ff

- John 12:27-30

—and it’s fascinating that in the *tribulation* situation they were facing, they didn’t know how to respond to it—they didn’t know what to “say” about it—and so He said it for them—and in a sense, He functions like the Holy Ghost does for us there in Romans 8:26-27—and He made the *intercession* (in a sense), but He made it with the words, and they heard it.

- But again—that’s another example of when that *tribulation* situation had arisen—and then there’s that **immediacy** issue of *continuing instant in prayer*—and that’s how He responded—that’s how a Son is supposed to respond (especially in the early stages of sonship)!

- And that’s one of the benefits and one of the skills that we acquire as we Labor together with God in this issue of *continuing instant in prayer*.

- There’s not only the immediate benefit of the ‘peace of God’ in the situation and the stability it brings to our inner man, and the rest of the Godly Thinking that would develop out of it—but there’s also the EXPERIENCE of it—and the PRACTICE of it—and the TRAINING in connection with this *continuing instant in prayer* issue.

- And when you recognize what’s going to be going on as sonship education goes on throughout the Curriculum and throughout the course of the whole thing—especially when the Policy of Evil comes along—and it’s able to produce its own *tribulations* — **that’s** when it’s going to be so essential that a sons’ response is one of: **NOT** *leaning unto his own understanding!!!*

- The Adversary's going to COUNT on the son *leaning unto his own understanding*—and operating upon how HE thinks or imagines he should respond.

- And that's where you end up getting into trouble (like the Corinthians did) - and that's why when you go through II Corinthians and are dealing with *the sufferings of Christ*—that's why you **have to be taught** that information—and why, for instance, 10:3-5 says what it says —

— because the natural tendency (if left to our own devices to respond to a *suffering of Christ*) our natural tendency is that we would not respond like we're TAUGHT to respond there!

- Rather, we would respond in our own manner—in a way that we think would be proper and good—in a way we think is beneficial and all this kind of thing: **and we would be playing right into the Adversary's hand: EVERY TIME!**

- So—because of who we are by nature—and because of the inroads that the *wisdom of this world* has already **deeply** made upon us—because we're wired to almost automatically respond to *tribulation* in a way that is acceptable and pleasing to the world (and the Adversary that runs it) — in other words, because we've already been through the 'training program' of the world, there's a **real need** for us as sons to go through the 'training program' of our Father in order to PROPERLY handle all the common *tribulation* situations and circumstances we find ourselves in at this stage in our sonship education.

- There's a need to be trained on the basis of our Sonship Establishment to respond to *tribulation* **properly**—i.e., in a **Godly manner!**

- And that's not just for fundamental *sufferings of this present time* and the 'tribulation of life' issues—but especially in anticipation of the tribulation OF the Policy of Evil.

- Because that's where the becoming the *more than conqueror* gives God the GREATEST GLORY!

- He certainly gets glory out of our positive & proper response to the *sufferings of this present time* in connection with the *tribulations* of this world—but when it comes to our “tit-for-tat” confrontations with the Adversary—when it comes to pitting his wisdom against God’s wisdom—the greatest glory to our Father comes when we’re *more than conquerors* based upon the application of the Godly Optimism & utilizing the **power and might** of the Curriculum for our Sonship Education AGAINST those *tribulations, persecutions, famine, nakedness, peril, sword* issues there in Romans 8:35ff.

- And so if we don’t get the initial training here in Rom. 12:12 as a part of our initial *instruction of wisdom*—then when those *tribulations* of the Policy of Evil come along, then we’re not going to have enough ‘frame of reference’ to think that it’s a wise thing that we respond to them God’s way instead of our way! (or that the *wisest* thing would be to respond to them **exactly as God says!**) — **and to trust it completely** (*trust in the LORD with all our heart, and not lean to our own understanding!*)

- And the thing that will make that the ‘ready thing’ that we do is when we’ve already & always been *patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer* in connection with the fundamental *tribulations* of life in general out in the world ‘at-large.’

- And that’s what makes this part of our initial *instruction of wisdom* the critical and essential thing that it is!

- In fact—the last thing that is said in (:16) when our initial *instruction of wisdom* comes to an end is not only true about the 6th Component itself—but in a sense, it’s true about all the Components of wisdom when Paul says, *Be not wise in your own conceits*.

- If that’s what we are—then that’s when we **will lean to our own understanding!**

- We’re not supposed to be *wise in our own conceits*—we’re supposed to be wise in the education God’s given us! (Our wisdom is His wisdom!) - that’s why He’s **instructing** us in wisdom—He’s teaching us how to be wise.

- Interesting—the next 2 times that the issue of this ‘continuous’ concept of prayer comes up in the Curriculum—is in the last epistle

of Level II Sonship Education (Col. 4:2) - and then in Level III (I Thes. 5:16-18) —

- In Colossians—they're under the intensified form (or Round 2) of the Policy of Evil—and when you're in the Thessalonian epistles you're under Round 3 of the PoE.

- And if you don't learn the fundamental reality of Romans 12:12 at the **beginning** of your Sonship Education—then you're not going to have much ability to handle the intensified things that take place out in Level II & Level III!

- In fact—things get so intense out there in Level II & III that there's a need for you to have to be **reminded** to *continue in prayer & pray without ceasing*.

- And that's why you get passages like Phil. 4:6-7.

- At this point we arrive once again at one of those Sonship Volition Testing Points where you've completed another Component to the doctrine of *receiving the instruction of wisdom*—and that calls for the Father to ensure that His son is responding to this 4th Component both Positively & Properly.

- And as we've come to understand and appreciate—the format or methodology that our Heavenly Father utilizes in teaching us as sons calls for a Post-Doctrinal Exhortation—and therefore since the Positive & Proper response is what the Post-Doctrinal Exhortation is all about—we need to therefore re-visit the Positive & Proper response recorded there in Proverbs 3:1-4.

- Proverbs 3:1-4—REVIEW POSITIVE & PROPER RESPONSE.

- Any QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?

- With the effectual working of the first 4 Components to our *instruction of wisdom*—and the evidence of it being operational within the realm of our own local assembly, and within the realm of our job or *business* world—and in the common circumstances & situations out in the world 'at-large' — (and with these 4 Components being '*written on the fleshy tables of our hearts*' - **you** should be confident & satisfied (and **your Father** should be confident & satisfied) that you can now move on to the next Component of doctrine that makes up your *instruction of wisdom*. (So are you ready to move on?)

- Romans 12:13-15—The 5th Component to the son’s instruction of wisdom.

13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.

15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

- Introduction & Pre-Doctrinal Exhortation —

- One of the functions of a Pre-Doctrinal Exhortation is for a father to make his son aware of the **earnest** and **dire NEED** to get the information he’s about to give him (on the positive side of things) - and to make his son aware of the **foolishness** that it is if he doesn’t receive his father’s instruction and respond positively & properly to it (on the negative side of things).

- Therefore we have such things being said to the son in the book of Proverbs such as: *1:7-9; 24-33; 2:1-5*

- And by now you should be very familiar with this—in fact, it should be just ‘second nature’ to expect to hear something about that earnest and dire NEED for the up-coming information—to not be surprised by what comes up next, but rather to **expect** it as the next, natural thing to be brought up (which if that’s not in your thinking, the Exhortation will make you aware of it) - and also a basic understanding and appreciation for WHY you’re being told the things you are in the up-coming information even before you’re told it.

- But as you get along in the Curriculum—(as we are now) - there’s another important function that the Pre-Doctrinal Exhortations have — and that is that they also function, and are designed to function so as to **countermand the effects of the Policy of Evil’s attempt to neutralize or stop the progress of the son’s Sonship Education.**

- And as we go on—the Exhortations begin changing in order to accommodate the nature of the attacks of the PoE.

- Therefore, when it’s done properly—the Introduction & Pre-Doctrinal Exhortation should “prime” your “inner man” to make it ready to receive the information so that it “sticks” - it has ‘staying power’ whereby once it gets written on the fleshy tables of your heart, it becomes a permanent & sensitive part of the ‘book of your soul.’

- And also—in view of the efforts of the Policy of Evil to stop your progress—the Pre-Doctrinal Exhortation should make it so that no matter how much pressure of opposition you're under—**to generate the capacity to keep moving forward in spite of the pressure of the opposition!**

- Or as one Navy SEAL (Richard Machowicz) put it— “To achieve success really comes down to one thing: *How bad do you want it?* There's no magic formula to it—it's just the consistent progress or moving toward the thing you want to do, *regardless* of whatever thing comes up—and I call that thing “quitting.”

“That quitting conversation will show up a hundred different ways. You can say to yourself, ‘This is crazy, I can't believe I'm doing this’ - or you can imagine things like ‘I'm just not good enough’ or whatever. But I'm telling you that in the fight, *quitting sounds very reasonable*. It's a very simple process of getting on target and moving forward vs. the conversation that leads to quitting. And those conversations show up every day for people. And really, that's the battle. That's the war.”

“The majority of people who get selected to SEAL training will quit, drop out, or simply go away. You've got to be able to generate within yourself the mind frame that you must always be going forward. And you've got to want the thing bad enough to be willing to do anything to get there, regardless of and in spite of all the obstacles, in spite of all the hurdles, in spite of all the doubts that get in—the stress and the pain—you've got to keep going forward.”

“It's very binary. You're either going forward and accomplishing or you're not. It's very clear under pressure, under stress, under doubt, under hesitation, under pain, under intense fear, to make that clear decision. You're either going forward toward the target, or you're not. It gets all the excuses out of there.”

“I'm telling you: Quitting is very reasonable. I can have a million reasons to quit. But can you find the one reason to keep moving forward? And literally, by saying, ‘Well, I'm going to keep on going until I die’ — as long as you're still *breathing*, as long as you have a *single* pulse in your body, you can still go forward. I think it just makes it very easy to distinguish whether you're going forward or not.”

“Under stress and pressure, you think about doubt ... and it’s just self doubt. I think everybody has self doubt. Everybody has those things that occasionally creep in. I don’t care how strong you are. You’ve still got to be able to go one step further. And as long as you can breathe, you can still go one step further. You’re not dead. And so I live by the axiom, ‘Not dead. Can’t quit.’”

“I got a quote that really drove me forward when I was trying to get ready for the SEAL team and getting ready for BUD School. It’s a six-month course and people get badly injured. We had four broken necks, broken legs, broken arms in the class. It’s a severe, intense course. And they have this thing everybody knows about called Hell Week in which 80% of the participants fail. I think we had a class of about 140 people and eventually we finished with 23 or 24 people graduating. That’s a significant drop off, especially considering the screening process you had to go through just to qualify for the class. I was like 150 lb. soaking wet at 6 ft. I was desperate to have some kind of advantage. Some kind of thing that would give me an edge. When it was going bad, I needed something to keep me going forward.”

“I was fortunate to have a friend whose brother had made it through SEAL training. I didn’t know the guy personally, but what happened was he sent me a picture. On the picture was his platoon jumping out of an airplane. It gave me a visual representation of what I wanted to be able to accomplish. But more importantly, when I turned the picture over, there was a quote. On the back of this picture was a quote that said, ‘A man can only be defeated in two ways: if he gives up, or if he dies.’ That radically shifted where I was ever going to go from that day to the day I die. A man can only be defeated in two ways—he gives up or he dies. I carried that quote with me until the ink disappeared off that piece of paper.”

- That’s the Navy SEALs—but folks, your Heavenly Father and His word (the Bible) **was 2000 years ahead of the Navy SEALs!**

- You have a target (to be placed as your Father’s son in a position of rulership in the heavenly places—to liberate the creature from the bondage of corruption—to be conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ—and to become a joint-heir with Him)—in a word, you have a GLORY or a HOPE so grand that nothing compares with it!

- And you have a double-enemy — Yourself and the Adversary, Satan himself—and from those enemies you're going to encounter all kinds of resistance and opposition that's designed to make you do ONE THING: QUIT!

- But as long as you are alive—your Father has given you the ability (by the effectual working of the power & might of His living word living in you) to keep moving forward toward that target!

- And I want you to think of that Grand Hope—and the power and might of His word and His Curriculum for Sonship Education to work together with any and all opposition that comes your way **for your good** (*for your benefit as a son*) whereby we get to experience something no Navy SEAL, no Ranger, no Green Beret, no military personnel or special forces personnel of any kind has, can, or will ever experience by their training—our training provides for us to be **more than conquerors through him that loved us!**

- And that's the kind of desire—the kind of dire need—and the kind of confidence you should have as we get here a **skill-set** that will enable you to (as our apostle Paul said) *fight the good fight of faith [1 Tim. 6:12]!*

- And you should be THRILLED and DELIGHTED to be receiving from your Father: WISDOM—and the skill-set of being able to make wise sonship decisions in every area and every detail of your life!

- You've been trained by *the wisdom of this world* long enough (even if you're a child here, it's been **long enough!**)

- You're not getting just any old wisdom—you're getting **THE WISDOM OF GOD!**

- And that's the kind of enthusiastic approach we should have for getting this 5th Component to our *instruction of wisdom*.

- Now as we've come to understand and appreciate from when we first introduced the form of doctrine that makes up our initial *instruction of wisdom*—(that runs from Romans 12:3-16) — the 5th Component is found in vs.13, 14, and 15. So let's remind ourselves of the context and the Sense & Sequence for this body of information that instructs us in our Father's wisdom.

- As we noted before—the 6 Components that make up our *instruction of wisdom* can be looked at as occurring in ‘couplets’ - or in 3 Groups of 2 Components each:

- Components 1 & 2 give us the first 2 Features of Godly Love (Selflessness & Kindness).

- Components 3 & 4 takes us to that ‘landing’ (so to speak) that we talked about when we made the analogy of going up flights of stairs — and for the 3rd & 4th Components, we are at that ‘landing’ - meaning, there’s no more advancements being made to the Godly Love here in these 2 Components, but they are designed to take that Godly Love and **do** some things with them.

- Components 5 & 6 then have us moving on up the next flight of stairs (so to speak) - and there’s going to be another advancement to the Godly Love in the final 2 Components.

- The 1st Component (in :3-8) and the 2nd Component (in :9-10) gave you the initial and fundamental issue in *wisdom* and making *wise* sonship decisions—and that issue was Godly Love.

- Those first 2 Components brought Godly Love into existence in your inner man for the first time—& gave you the fundamental issue that stands behind every decision your Father makes Himself—and that is: He makes decisions based upon what He **values and esteems**.

- And those first 2 Components generated in you the first 2 features or characteristics that God’s Love has—and that have to be in place in order for Godly Love to be utilized by you as a son for the purpose of decision-making.

- And of course, those 2 features were: 1) Godly love is **Selfless**; and 2) Godly love is **kind**.

- Or to combine them (and put it simply): Godly **Selfless Lovingkindness**.

- Or you could say simply: **lovingkindness**—since *lovingkindness* demands that selflessness is first of all in existence—lovingkindness by nature is a combination of selflessness + kindness.

- And there were (and still are) Aspects of Godliness that had you operating in both your Conduct & Behavior and in your Godly Labor WITHIN the ‘friendly confines’ of the local assembly in which you gather together as *one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*
- Then the 3rd & 4th Components to your *instruction of wisdom* came along and provided more godly Thinking/Living/and Labor that took the now-existing *lovingkindness* and moved it out from the ‘friendly confines’ of the local assembly and into the world ‘at-large.’
- And the issue was not to further expand the features or characteristics of Godly Love—but rather, to utilize the sonship decision-making skill of *lovingkindness* in the realm of your job or *business* world (:11—the 3rd Component) and then in the common situations and circumstances you find yourself in out in the world ‘at-large’ (:12—the 4th Component). [naturally enough].
- So now we come to the 5th Component in (:13-15) - and just as we noted in our “stairs” analogy—Godly Love is now going to move on and get an advancement to it—and another one of those features or characteristics is going to be generated and added to the *lovingkindness*.
- And I want you to appreciate the Sense & Sequence in these 3 Couplets of doctrine that make up our *instruction of wisdom*.
 - The first Couplet (the 1st & 2nd Components) had you as a son dealing with **a whole bunch of people** (those other sons & daughters of your Father that gather together with you in the local assembly in which you gather).
 - But then a ‘**shift**’ took place in the second Couplet (the 3rd & 4th Components) in which the focus of attention was upon **you yourself** and how you Conduct & Behave and Labor with your Father in your job environment and in the world ‘at large.’ Granted, other people are in view, but not in the sense of you doing anything to them—rather, the focus is upon how you, yourself deal with situations & circumstances in your business world and in the world ‘at large.’ The emphasis us upon how YOU personally Think, Live & Labor in those situations & circumstances.

- But now—beginning in (:13ff) another ‘**shift**’ takes place where **we’re back to dealing with a whole bunch of people, once again**—we’re back to the focus being one of you **doing** some things TO these people as you interact with them.

- And the people that you are dealing with in your sonship life can be put into 2 distinct Categories: (What are they?) (Do you see 2 groups of people being dealt with in :13-15?)

1) “*saints*” - (Believers) [:13]

2) “*them which persecute you*” - (Unbelievers) [:14]

- In the first part of (:13) you have *saints* (believers) in view — then in the last part of (:13 [*given to hospitality*]) you don’t necessarily have *saints* in view (although it could include *saints*) - but the issue is that one of the Categories of people that you’re dealing with are believers and you’re doing something to them: *Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality* (dealing with a whole bunch of people).

- Then clearly from what (:14) says: *Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.* — the “*them*” which *persecute you* are not “*saints*” but unbelievers—and again, it’s dealing with a whole bunch of people.

- And so, in order to give a name or description to this 5th Component of *wisdom* in view of its Context and its Sense & Sequence—the thing that distinguishes it from the previous Component (as we will see) isn’t so much the people that are in view—but what the Godly Love is now DOING to the people in view!

- And it’s in what the Godly Love is doing that you’re going to have to have that advancement of the Godly Love—that next major feature or characteristic that comes from the *lovingkindness* and how it has been operating in your business world and in the world ‘at large.’

- *Lovingkindness* is what’s behind all that’s going on here—even in connection with the *saints*—because they’re being treated in a different manner than what was spoken of them back in (:3-10).

- Therefore the godly love has returned to dealing with people — and now it's going to do **more** than what it has been doing with them already.

- (For example, it's not going to just deal with the *saints* in a way that provides for a local assembly— and it's not going to just deal with *saints* in a way that provides for them to be treated *kindly* and for *brotherly love* to be displayed and for that tightening up of the relationship to be going on—but the godly love is going to move into another area as well).

- So it says—*Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.* — and so now you've got *saints* that would have a *necessity*, that, based upon the godly love and charity would have you *distributing* to it—but also dealing with ones in a particular way, and that particular way, of showing *hospitality* to them (and not just showing it, but being **given** to it).

- So, the godly love and charity has now **branched out** to an area in which *saints* certainly **may** be dealt with, but that also may include other people who are NOT necessarily *saints*.

- Because when you're **given** to *hospitality*—the way that is stated has in mind **more** than just the other *saints* that you will come into contact with.

- In other words, there's **no qualification** that says that's only to be done to saved people!

- And what's going on here is that this next component to the doctrine comes along and **extends** that godly love—first to the *saints* but then to other people who are in a **lost** condition. (*given to hospitality* bringing or leading your thinking to include others who are **not** *saints*, i.e., the **lost** people as well)

- And that word *hospitality* in that phrase, *given to hospitality* is a 'trigger' mechanism that causes your thinking (about this godly love that has been produced in you) to move out to not only *saints*—and to think about them (*saints*) in a different way than you have before; but to also includes folks who are NOT of the *saints* variety! (the unjustified)

- And sure enough—both verses 14 & 15 go on to describe some things in connection with those who are not necessarily *saints* (lost people) — and describes godly love existing in some other particular ways and put on display in some other particular ways.

- My point in all that is to say—that because of having 2 groups of people clearly in view—because of bringing both believers and unbelievers together under the same Component—this 5th Component is a little bit different from the previous 4.

- And the truth is—because of what the 5th Component is dealing with concerning the Godly Love (and the *wisdom* that comes from it), or to put it another way—because of the Godly Thinking involved in the 5th Component—it demands that the 2 categories of people (both believers and unbelievers) **have** to be involved and **have** to be dealt with by the kind of Godly Thinking that this 5th Component operates upon.

- And that leads us nicely into looking at the fact that there's also something else about this 5th Component that's **different** from the previous 4 (and even the final component).

- And what I'm after is the way in which (:13, 14, & 15) present their information.

- At this point—with Godly Love now operating with Selfless Lovingkindness—and with making **wise use** of that Godly Love in your business world and in the world 'at-large' — by the time you get to this 5th Component, **there is an expected development to have taken place in connection with the Godly *lovingkindness* that's already in existence!**

- And this “development” that I refer to—actually develops from the **use** of *lovingkindness* in both the local assembly and the saints in it; and in your business world and the people in it; and in the world 'at-large' and the common circumstances you find yourself in, in it.

- And what I'm after is—you have to recognize that by the **wise use** of lovingkindness—it **naturally** does (and it's designed to naturally) bring ANOTHER feature of Godly Love into existence.

- Because lovingkindness has got **more** to it than just what its **name** says! It's got more to it than Selfless Thinking (that values & esteems others more than itself) - and it's got more to it than Kindliness as the characteristic response to the ones it values & esteems more than itself.

- And that's very apparent when you go back and look at the passages in God's word where His *lovingkindness* is mentioned—and you see Him (on the basis of His *lovingkindness*) doing a whole bunch of things.

- And that means that we, as sons, should have been aware all along that (just as it is with our Father, so also with us) - and that therefore our sonship lovingkindness is going to naturally develop into some further things (just as His does).

- Because God's own *lovingkindness* has more features & characteristics than just what that **name** includes: **Love** and **Kindness**.

- And so—when we look at the information presented to us in (:13-15) — we recognize that there's some Conduct & Behavior being presented—and we recognize that there's some Godly Labor involved in it—but where's the Godly **Thinking**????

- And the truth of the matter is—(you know that we're still dealing with edification—with godly, sonship edification) - so you know that the Godly Thinking **has** to be there (and **it is** there) - but since there's no information about it—that can only mean one thing: **the Godly Thinking Aspect of the 5th Component of our instruction of wisdom is already there by the time we get to it!** (And therefore, it doesn't have to be stated!)

- The Godly Thinking of the 5th Component doesn't get generated by further information contained in the 5th Component—rather, the Godly Thinking you have to operate upon in the 5th Component got generated in your thinking by the **wise use** of the first 4 Components!

- And you're not left in a lurch to try to come up with it on your own—but all you have to do is to go back and look at how God's own *lovingkindness* is described back in God's program with Israel to find out what that Godly Thinking is. (And to use the very term God Himself uses to describe it.)

- And when you arrive at this 5th Component—it's going to deal with an issue that's 'ripe' to be dealt with—and that's fitting to be dealt with—because by the time we get here, our Godly Lovingkindness (if it's been effectually produced within us—and has been effectually

exercised by us—and we’ve been receiving the benefits by the Godly Labor that each of the previous 4 components has talked about) - then our Godly Lovingkindness is going to be **maturing**—and growing— and developing — and it’s going to come to the point where its going to be able to manifest its next most prominent characteristic—and (:13, 14, & 15) deals with it.

- And that’s why this feature of Godly Love—this Aspect of Godly Thinking is NOT directly taught to us in (:13-15).

- The Godly Thinking is expected to be **known already!** (It’s taken as a “given” [so to speak]) — because the Godly Lovingkindness is supposed to have already developed into it at this particular point.

- And just so you don’t think that I totally misstated the issue when we first went through the general Outline and breakdown of (:3-16) [our *instruction of wisdom*] - The truth is—it’s not entirely wrong to say that the Godly Thinking is in the first sentence (or :13) - because there is a word in (:13) that does direct you to this further characteristic of Godly Love—and that the Godly Thinking is sensitive to ... [that word *necessity*].

- But this is one of those areas where you have to be following the Curriculum properly—you can’t just grab a verse here and a verse there and teach the Bible topically or systematically or categorically or anything along those lines.

- But you have to follow the **exact** Sense & Sequence and have the full, effectual working of each Component or else what is supposed to take place here just won’t take place!

- That kind of Bible study simply will NOT produce godly edification!

- This is one of those places where following the Curriculum **exactly as God designed it** becomes manifestly obvious!

- This 5th Component of our Godly Wisdom as members of the new creature of the church, the body of Christ (being *conformed to the image of God’s Son*) is dealing with the next, logical, natural development of the characteristics of Godly Love in us—that will only come into existence **naturally**—and be something that is a

constituent part of the ‘fabric’ of our Godly Thinking so that it’s a part of our natural Godly Conduct & Behavior and is part of our natural Godly Labor—will only transpire when the Godly Lovingkindness that the first 2 Components are effectually produced within us MATURE to the point where they become ‘sensitive’ to something else in life.

- And when they become ‘sensitive’ to this other thing in life—then the Godly Lovingkindness has **matured** and has acquired this 3rd major characteristic. [of 7]

- And when that’s there—that’s when a son who possesses it begins to read and to have it taught to him what (:13, 14, & 15) says—**he responds to it!**

- And that’s not ‘mystical’ or anything along those lines—but that’s just part of the natural effectual working of the Curriculum within us—and that’s why it’s so important that each and every Component IS effectually working within you!

- And the big reason why the Godly Thinking is not simply stated here in (:13) is because the Godly Thinking is expected to be a ‘given’ — it can’t be produced simply by saying it! — because it **requires** the Godly Lovingkindness to *already* be in existence in order for it to be generated—it develops out of it!

- God could just say it—but there’s no effectualness in that.

- It’s kind of like the Godly Lovingkindness is a ‘breeding ground’ - a fertile field—and resident in the soil of it are the other ‘seeds’ that are the other characteristics of His love.

- And by the **wise use** of that Lovingkindness, these other ‘seeds’ are allowed to germinate. And the next one that’s going to ‘sprout’ is this 3rd major characteristic. And (:13-15) are dealing with it.

- And by what the beginning of (:13) says—*Distributing to the necessity of saints*—is a concept that is the very thing that this 3rd major feature of Godly Love responds to—and when this 3rd feature of God’s Love sprouts and becomes part of the Godly Lovingkindness, it becomes ‘sensitive’ to a certain thing that’s out there—and it responds to it!

- So I think the wisest thing to do at this point is to go back and look at what God says in His word in those instances where His *lovingkindness* is mentioned and see what is said about it MORE than simply what its name includes—and see another **feature** about God’s *lovingkindness* that comes about **naturally**, once Godly Selfless love and Godly lovingkindness operates together as they should.

- Psalm 25:1-6
- Psalm 40:6-11
- Psalm 51:1
- Psalm 69:14-17
- Psalm 103:1-5
- Psalm 119:156-159
- Isaiah 63:7-9

- And the issue that we’re after—and that gives us this next, natural major feature or characteristic of Godly Love—and is an issue that gets described in these passages of God’s word as one of the **further developments** of *lovingkindness* when God operates in such a way in which He is being both ‘loving’ and ‘kind’ to the members of the remnant of Israel in many of the situations and circumstances they find themselves in—is that oft-used expression tender mercies.

- And what we’re after in that expression is the adjective: **TENDER!**

- What we’re after, therefore, is God’s **TENDERHEARTEDNESS**.

- That’s the attribute of *lovingkindness* that is expected to be developing—and on the verge of being able to become a reality—and to be able to come into existence when we get to Romans chapter 12 and verse 13—**godly tenderheartedness!**

- And it’s an attribute of godly love that therefore has **compassion upon a necessity situation!**

- And godly tenderheartedness **can’t ignore** that *necessity*—and it doesn’t want to just let it go by—but it wants to **respond** to it—and do what it can do to help alleviate it!

- Let’s note that in that 69th Psalm—David is speaking prophetically here in connection with what his ‘greater’ Son was going to say regarding the cross — (read Psa. 69:16-29)

- The appeal that's being made here is based upon the LORD having as part of His being, *lovingkindness* by nature.

- And His *lovingkindness* is "**good**" - which is what the 2nd Component of our *instruction of wisdom* dealt with—(Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is **good**.)

- And David has experienced the '**goodness**' of God's *lovingkindness* as a 'first things first' type of thing—but the issue now is: there's a *troublesome* situation (:17) - and even though the word *necessity* isn't being used here—in view of what a *necessity* is—this 69th Psalm is describing a *necessity* that both David had some understanding and appreciation for; and his 'greater Son' would appreciate to the 'nth degree in connection with the cross!

- Therefore there's an appeal to the Father—on the basis of His *lovingkindness* being "*good*" — to "**turn unto me according to the MULTITUDE of thy tender mercies.**"

- There's far more to that *lovingkindness* than merely being 'loving' and 'kind' — but there's a *MULTITUDE* of *tender mercies* associated with it.

- It's got this feature of being 'tenderhearted' — and David knows it—and therefore the appeal now is: 'Father, turn to me according to it!'

- And that's why you've got this immediate 'list' of things (so to speak) that are an accounting of the LORD's actions that immediately swing into action on behalf of David (and by that prophetic outlook, on behalf of the Lord Jesus Christ and His work on the cross)!

- But the issue is that since God's Love is not only Selfless and Kind—but strictly because **it is** those 2 things—it's also 'tenderhearted' - and therefore because God's *lovingkindness* is directed at David (and his 'greater Son') - this aspect of Godly Love that's '*tenderhearted*' **simply cannot overlook the trouble that David (Christ) is in!** [That's why :17 says, hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble.] —

- David appeals to the '*tender mercies*' (or tenderhearted) aspect of God's *lovingkindness*—and tenderheartedness can't shield its eyes from the trouble and say, "I don't want to look at it!" - **no**—tenderheartedness won't let you do that!

- And the issue of being **tenderhearted** is the issue of your heart being 'tender' - it's not 'hard' - and *tenderheartedness* is the exact opposite of being "hard-hearted"!

- *tenderhearted* = your heart is 'tender' - it's easy to be touched by something—or as the OED says: "it's easily moved by fear, pity, sorrow or love; compassionate; loving; impressionable."

- *tenderhearted* = your heart is very sensitive—all you have to do is just 'touch' it: and it immediately responds! (it's easily moved into action!)

- And 'tenderheartedness' is the aspect of Godly Lovingkindness that comes next—following the issue of **goodness**—and wanting to "*abhor that which evil* (and harmful and detrimental); *and cleave to that which is good* (and do things that are "good")".

- And once that first measure of *lovingkindness* is in effect—(having been generated properly and having been expressing itself as it should—and 'flexing its muscles' [so to speak] and becoming the norm) - then as it feeds off its experience, it's designed to grow and mature (especially in its intensity& frequency) - and since it's part of Godly Love, it has that "Abounding" Feature to it—and it strengthens and intensifies over time and over its **WISE USE**.

- And when *lovingkindness* grows in that way—then there's a **transformation** that takes place in the heart!

- And that 'heart of flesh' that we became recipients of in connection with our Justification & Sanctification on the basis of the New Covenant—that 'heart of flesh' becomes **very tender!** — it becomes very **sensitive**.

- And it starts looking at—first of all, other members of the new creature of the church, the body of Christ—especially within the local assembly of *saints* in which you gather—and it not only looks at them as 'members of your body' - and in

view of what the 1st & 2nd Components of the *instruction of wisdom* has put into effect—but because of how it’s **grown** and been put to **wise use** as it *abhors that which is evil; and cleaves to that which is good*—that ‘heart of flesh’ that you now have **starts taking notice of the details of the lives of those saints that you gather together with in our local assembly.**

- And that *tenderhearted lovingkindness* especially starts taking notice of any “necessity” type situation that the other members of the body find themselves in.

- And therefore this actually serves as a “Marker” of progress that you as a son can ‘measure’ yourself by—and this “Marker” is supposed to make it so that you can ensure that you’ve really got the effectual working of those first 2 Components (and their corresponding godly Thinking; and their corresponding godly Conduct & Behavior; and their corresponding godly Labor) - and as they are put to their **wise use** — that godly *lovingkindness* is designed to LIVE and GROW .

- And as soon as you become conscious and sensitive and conscientious about the situation you see your fellow members in—and begin to be ‘touched’ by *necessity* situations of the *saints* when you see them—well, that’s when you KNOW that the effectual working has come to the point where this next logical, natural and purposed Aspect of Godly Lovingkindness (i.e., *tenderheartedness*) is beginning to develop within you!

- A ‘tender’ heart is developing within you—and godly compassion is beginning to be generated within you.

- And again—that’s why, in all of (:13-15) of Romans 12—there is no expression that particularly describes the Godly Thinking.

- Everything that’s said in those 3 verses **assumes** that the Godly Thinking of the Lovingkindness has developed to the point that the son is now thinking about the situations and the circumstances that other members of the church, the body of Christ are in.

- That’s why it falls immediately upon the heels of the 4th Component that dealt with the son’s own personal, general circumstances & situations.

- (Where you, **personally**, encounter *tribulation*—where **you're** in a 'troublesome' and bothersome situation & circumstance—and therefore in need of 'help' because of a *necessity* **you, personally** are in.)

- (And where you would be *Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; and continuing instant in prayer* **on a personal level.**)

- Well then—the next logical and natural thing to take place—(once you're doing that about yourself) - is to begin to do that with **other saints** or other members of the 'body of Christ' that you assemble with, in particular.

- And as soon as you begin to do that—the first thing you're going to take notice of are the *necessity* situations that the other *saints* are in, in our local assembly.

- Because that's the first area in which you're going to naturally Labor with God to do something about it!

- And so this 5th Component comes along—and it naturally, therefore, falls on the heels of that 4th Component—and the issue now is: your 'tenderheartedness' in connection with OTHERS—and their circumstances and situations—especially the *necessity* type situations.

- And the expectation is—that at that particular point—that you'll be genuinely 'touched' by them in a godly manner—your heart will be genuinely '**tender**' towards them.

- And when you see *saints* that you fellowship with in *necessity* situations (with your heart being 'touched' by it) - your sonship Thinking will be: "I want to help out" — and your sonship Conduct & Behavior will be to *distribute* to it—and your godly sonship Labor will be **relieving** it as much as you're able to!

- And if you harbor any thinking that this isn't any big deal—(see **Eph. 4:32**)!

- And then the rest of (:13), and (:14 & 15) go on and deal with a son's godly 'tenderheartedness' now in existence—and your compassion growing & developing within you when it comes to **THE UNSAVED**.

- And because of their **singular situation**—your Godly Conduct & Behavior is going to be: to *give yourself to hospitality*.

- And then—based upon the response you get from the unsaved to your *hospitality*—(especially if it’s a Negative response) - then you will respond as it says in (:14) “*Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not*” — and to “*Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.*”

- And you’ll be Laboring together with God in that as well.

- So—with all that said—and with the general ‘gist’ of what’s going on here in this 5th Component to our *instruction of wisdom*—and having an appreciation for the Sense & Sequence of it—we can then give this 5th Component a simple & general description:

- The 5th Component of our *instruction of wisdom* is the issue of Godly Sonship Love **among both saints & lost people**.

- 2 Categories or groups of people are in view: 1) Saints (or Saved/Justified individuals within the local assembly in which you gather and fellowship); and 2) Lost people (or the Unsaved/Unjustified people you will come into contact with).

- And that means that there’s going to be 2 sets (if you will) of Godly Thinking; Godly Living; and Godly Labor in connection with each of those 2 groups.

- So we’ll have some Godly Thinking/Living/ and Labor for the *saints* in our local assembly that are in a *necessity* type situation.

- And then we’ll have some Godly Thinking/Living/ and Labor for the Lost/Unjustified people we come into contact with as we are *given to hospitality*.

- And this also makes this 5th Component unique from the other 5 Components that make up our initial *instruction of wisdom*.

- So having a good ‘grip’ upon the general Sense & Sequence of Romans 12:13-15—it should make it evident that the foundation for what goes on here is that—because the Godly Lovingkindness has developed to the point (and matured to the point now) where ‘Tenderheartedness’ is now in existence — and because the ‘tenderheartedness’ is now in existence, **a necessity situation MEANS something**—whether it belongs to another *saint*, or whether it belongs to the Unsaved.

- **(Recap)** - 5th Component to our Sonship Curriculum as we *receive the instruction of wisdom* (for acquiring wise sonship decision-making skills—and receiving the basic & fundamental wisdom of our Father) is found in Romans 12:13, 14, & 15.

- The general and basic issue that the 5th Component deals with is: **Godly Love among both saints & lost people.**

- One of the unique features of the 5th Component is that we have 2 distinct groups of people in view: 1) By what (:13a) says: *Distributing to the necessity of saints*; — one of the groups of people are “*saints*” or those who are saved from the debt & penalty of their sins (or justified unto eternal life) - and especially those *saints* or believers who are members of the local assembly in which you gather and fellowship.

2) By what (:14) says: *Bless them which persecute you*: - the other group of people in view here are “*them which persecute you*” - or those who are NOT saved or justified unto eternal life—i.e., lost people.

- So while past Components have had *saints* in view at one point; and then lost people in view in others—the 5th Component is a combination of both *saints* and lost people.

- Having Godly Love now existing in it’s first 2 major features or characteristics—(i.e., Selflessness & Kindness—hence, *lovingkindness*) - we once again are going to have a furtherance to the doctrine of Godly Love whereby we get the 3rd major feature or characteristic of it as the matter that is to be our Godly Sonship **Thinking** for this 5th Component.

- The Godly Thinking that’s going to be operating in dealing with **BOTH** groups of people (saved & unsaved) is NOT stated anywhere

in this 5th Component—rather, it is assumed and expected that the Godly Thinking (and the further feature/characteristic of Godly Love) that’s *transforming* you as a son *by the renewing of your mind* is the next, natural ‘outgrowth’ of the already-existing *lovingkindness*.

- And one of the things that *lovingkindness* **is** (more than what its name means) - and is a feature or characteristic that God, your Heavenly Father possesses Himself—is the issue of Him having “tender mercies” - or one of Him being tenderhearted.

- **Godly Tenderheartedness** is the Godly Thinking that is required of a son in order to wisely deal with—(and to make wise sonship decisions in connection with) BOTH *saints* who are in a *necessity* type situation—AND with lost people who have one particular type of ‘necessity’.

- The point being that in order for proper Godly Edifying to take place in this 5th Component—the prevailing Godly Thinking is to be: **TENDERHEARTEDNESS**.

- The remaining aspects of the Godly Conduct & Behavior and the Godly Labor in connection with both *saints* and lost people will be filled in as we go through the details of the passage.

- And I have taken enough time (over the past 5 Bible classes and some 2 weeks) - that by now you should have come to recognize the validity that Godly Tenderheartedness IS the next, natural feature or characteristic of Godly Love; that it DOES naturally grow out of the existence and wise use (frequency & intensity) of Godly Lovingkindness—and most of all, that Godly Tenderheartedness IS effectually working in your ‘inner man’ and comprises the very fabric of your thinking (just as much as the Selflessness did; and just as much as the Kindness did)!

- **Any Questions? Any problems with that?**

— (it’s critical because Godly Tenderheartedness is the Thinking that stands behind ALL of the Conduct & Behavior in dealing with both *saints* and lost people in the 5th Component—and it’s what stands behind ALL of the Godly Labor that you’ll be engaged in as you deal with *saints* and lost people in this 5th Component).

- Let's then begin looking at the details of (:13) - and especially focus upon what it **first** deals with—and that's the issue of wise sonship decision-making in connection with *saints* who are in a *necessity* type situation.

13 *Distributing to the necessity of saints;*

- First of all—my understanding is that this first clause (6 words) is the **only** part of the 5th Component (the only part of :13-15) that deals with *saints* (saved persons) especially.

- And you might not see it now—but as we go through this, you'll see that “*given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. is all dealing with the Lost, especially.*”

- And if that's true—then it should be very clear that the bulk of the information that makes up this 5th Component deals with the **lost**—and therefore the bulk of what we're going to be dealing with here are the lost and how we wisely go about dealing with them!

- But for now—the issue is to take your Godly Thinking of Godly Tenderheartedness and Conduct yourself accordingly—and then Labor accordingly among other *saints* in the (our) assembly that find themselves in a *necessity* type situation.

- “***Distributing***” - (from the Greek κοινωνέω = communion/fellowship) — used 8x— “be partaker” 5 — communicate 2 — distribute 1

- “*Distribute*” = (what does it mean?) - to give [which is something we've already become familiar with back in (:8 — *he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity*) - it means, to bestow; to dispense; to administer; to deal out among a number of recipients.

- And here is a great example of the power of the King James Translator's VOCABULARY CONTROL—because both the word *distribute* and the word *necessity* have shades of meaning that make them the most excellent choice of words for the context here—(unlike the modern Trns. that say ‘communicate’ or ‘share’ or contribute.’

- And the truth is—although we have dealt with ‘giving’ prior to this—the truth is, the context here is not the exact same as it was back in (:8).

- And that’s because — for one thing the Godly Love has developed more than it was back there—and for another thing, the reason behind the ‘*distributing*’ is different than it was back there.

- In (:8) we were putting our Godly Labor into effect in a particular Operation of God that had to do with meeting the Practical Needs of the local assembly.

- But here, the context has shifted here to our Conduct & Behavior towards those *saints* in the loc. assem. that are in a very particular situation—(one that comes to our attention; and one that when it **does** come to our attention is met with the further feature of Godly Love of Tenderheartedness)!

- So it’s not the same thing that was going on back in (:8) - and it’s not a revisiting of that issue or a re-hash of it! (and a different Operation of God is in view!)

- The excellency of that choice of the word *distribute* is found in that it is perfectly in keeping with; and perfectly fitting for the particular Godly Conduct & Behavior of Tenderheartedness towards *saints* who have a *necessity*.

- For example—when you *distribute* something you always have in view the PURPOSE of the action—and because the purpose here is to relieve a *necessity*: that demands the word be *distribute*.

- Also, *distribute* carries the shade of meaning that the personal interest of the recipient carries more weight in our actions than anything else—(than even our own interest)!

- Truth is—this is one of the pivotal points in the development of Godly Love (i.e., tenderheartedness) that will make it so that Godly Love will one day become that even more further developed issue of: CHAIRITY!

- The problem with the word ‘share’ is that it has both your interest **and** the interest of the one you’re sharing with in view.

- “*Distribute*” is very **specific** and very **particular**—what is *distributed* is something very particular—and the one to whom it is *distributed* is very specific.

- It has a certain quantity in view that’s to be *distributed*—and a certain quality of persons in view that’s going to be the recipients of what gets *distributed*.

- And this is one of the reasons why the King James Translators did not include the definite article “the” in this clause before the word *saints*.

Distributing to the necessity of saints;

NOT

‘Distributing to the necessity of THE saints;’ (adding the word “the” here is just sloppy translation—and shows you’re not qualified to translate!)

- The absence of the definite article is a technique of grammar that focuses attention upon **quality and quantity**!

- In other words—this isn’t the issue of simply thinking, “Hey, some of the folks in the assembly might be in some trouble (or have a need) - so I’m going to just give a whole bunch of money or food or clothing or stuff (in my attic) in hopes that it somehow can be used by somebody!”

- WRONG—this says, *Distributing to the necessity of saints* — and you know (almost by nature; by being an English speaking person) that the issue here is knowing with real intelligence the **specific necessity** that a **specific saint** is in; and then seeing to as best you can, to relieve that **specific saint’s specific necessity**!

- Now let’s look at that word **necessity**.

- **Necessity** (from the Greek word χρεία) - used 49x: need 39—necessity 3—use 2—needful 1—necessary 1—business 1—lack 1—wants 1 = the constraining power of circumstances; a **condition or state of things compelling to a certain course of action**.

- It touches upon the issue of *tenderheartedness* because

tenderheartedness is a heart that is so sensitive to the circumstance that another is in—that it simply **cannot overlook it—it can't turn away from it**—therefore *necessity* carries the additional meaning of something that has **irresistible power and compulsive force!**

- (You're *tenderheartedness* makes it so that the *necessity* of a *saint* is **irresistible**—and you're **compelled** to go into **action!**)

- Furthermore—(just as George Crabb points out) - one of the discriminating differences between the word *necessity* and the word *need* is— “**Necessity is more pressing than need—necessity places us in a positive state of compulsion to act**” (*need* doesn't necessarily do that!) “**it is said to have no law, it prescribes the law for itself.**” “**It is applied indiscriminately.**” “**Necessity expresses more than needy!**” (*need* is a weaker term than the word *necessity!*)

- We even use the word *necessity* as in: “The *necessities* of life” - meaning a list of some very important and very specific things that are **indispensable** in order to **live!** (Without them, you die!)

- Again—this underscores the issue that a *necessity* (and the issue of relieving it by *distributing* to it)—**is PURPOSE DRIVEN!** (It's specific in what it is that's *distributed*; and it's specific to the one who receives it!)

- So now—in the case of dealing with the 1st group of people that this 5th Component of Wisdom has us wisely dealing with—(which are other *saints* [saved/believers in the loc. assem.]) — we can now fill in and address the 2nd Aspect of the Godliness (the Godly Edifying) - which is the Aspect of our Godly Living (our Godly Conduct & Behavior):

- With the *tenderheartedness* Thinking that makes it so that we're conscious, sensitive, and conscientious about the situation the fellow members of your “body” are in—and being genuinely ‘touched’ (tender) to those situations in a godly manner—your Sonship Thinking will be: “I want to help out” — and your Sonship Conduct & Behavior will be **‘Distributing to their necessity!’**

- So the Godly Living is just exactly what that first clause of (:13) says—exactly **as** it says: ***Distributing to the necessity of saints;*** — that’s the Godly Conduct & Behavior of a son who has his Father’s wisdom in this 5th Component!

- And then the Godly Labor Aspect is again (just as the Godly Thinking is) — the Godly Labor isn’t stated—it’s just the expected thing to take place:

- And the Godly Labor will be: **RELEVING *the necessity of saints as much as you’re able to do!***

- Now that we’ve got the first 3 Major Features/Characteristics of Godly Love generated and operating in our ‘inner man’ — that is:

- We have the feature of Godly Love being **Selfless**.

- (Generated by the last 12 words of [:3] - *according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.*)

- We have the feature of Godly Love being **Kind**.

- (Generated by the last 11 words of [:9] - *Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.*)

- And we have the feature of Godly Love being **Tenderhearted**.

- (Generated by the wise use (both in frequency and in intensity) of those first 2 Features of Lovingkindness.)

... now that we have those first 3 Characteristics of Godly Love operating within us as sons—(having now about a whole year of our instruction in Godly Love as the sonship decision-making skill for making wise sonship decisions) — it should now be very apparent (**and a deeply appreciated reality in your understanding**) that the more you get of these Godly Features of what God’s Love is—and as one is added to another and then added to another—you should now clearly see how that God’s Love looks less and less of what we naturally would define as “Love”!!

- And more and more you should appreciate your ability to emulate God’s Love naturally simply cannot take place—that man, by **nature**, simply **cannot** and **does not** love like God does; you cannot produce God’s Love naturally—and that God’s Love isn’t what you possess as a human being by nature—but rather God’s Love really is SUPERNATURAL!

- And it **really is** “supernatural” because it takes the Godly Thinking contained in the written word of God in our Sonship Curriculum—and then by our Positive & Proper response to it—the Holy Spirit then writes that upon the fleshy tables of our heart—which is a **supernatural** operation!

- Godly Selfless Love in our Thinking produced the Godly Conduct and Behavior of being *one body in Christ, and every one members one of another*.

- And then that made it so we could Labor with God in one of those ‘offices’ described in (:6-8) - which verified that Godly Selfless Love really has been written on the fleshy tables of our hearts.

- Then the Godly Thinking of Godly Lovingkindness produced the Godly Conduct & Behavior that has us being *kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love*.

- And that then made it so we could Labor with God as we possess His Lovingkindness in our Conduct & Behavior *in honour preferring one another*. (Godly Lovingkindness then gets written on the fleshy tables of our hearts.)

- And then, by the wise use of Godly Lovingkindness producing the Godly Thinking of Godly Tenderheartedness—we can then Conduct & Behave ourselves among the *saints* in our local assembly as God Himself would by *distributing to the necessity of saints*.

- And that makes it so we can then Labor with God as we (by our Tenderhearted Thinking and Living) **relieve** the *necessity of saints* as much as we’re able to. (Godly Tenderheartedness then gets written on the fleshy tables of our hearts.)

- Again—this just points out how **different** our human, natural love is from God’s love. And that God’s Love really is super-natural!

- (Read the article from “Enjoy the Bible Quarterly” - (2nd Quarter, 2006) by Keith Blades.) [first 3 sections; pg.1-2]

- Now that we’ve come to understand and appreciate the effectual working of the Godly Edifying for the 1st Group of People described in Romans 12:13a (*Distributing to the necessity of saints*;) [i.e., what the Godly Thinking is; what the Godly Living is; and what the Godly Labor is] — let’s just note the ‘kicker’ to all this—which is the Operation of God that stands behind it.

- With the Thinking now of Godly Tenderheartedness—you're going to now be on the lookout for other saints in the assembly who are in a *necessity* type situation—and you're going to be *tenderhearted* toward it—you're not going to 'look the other way' - rather, you're going to be 'tender' towards it and want to do something about it.

- Your heart is going to be sensitive to that situation—because you've just gone through some 'troubling' situations yourself in your own life (in the 4th Component of our Wisdom in :12)— so it's only natural (if you're operating on the basis of Godly Lovingkindness) to then naturally start looking at the 'troubles' or *necessities* of other sons in the assembly and begin to be Tenderhearted and concerned about those *necessities*—and be genuinely touched by them.

- And then immediately say to yourself, "I'd like to help them out in that situation." (a wise choice!)

- And when that's a reality in your life—that's one of those 'Markers' built into the Curriculum that tells you that these Features of Godly Love (and the Wisdom they produce) has really begun to live and grow in you!

- You are supposed to become sensitive and conscious of the situations and circumstances that other saints in the assembly are experiencing! (And to be tenderhearted toward them!)

- And when the Godly Thinking of Tenderheartedness is there—and then the natural 'outlet' for that Thinking to be put into action in your Conduct & Behavior by *distributing to the necessity of saints*—and your Godly Labor will be one of relieving it to the best of your ability—the 'kicker' is found in the Operation of God that gets accomplished by you as your Father's son.

- And to get this Operation of God—you have to think for a moment back to something we talked about when we went through Sonship Orientation and Sonship Establishment back in Romans 8:14-39.

- And it's something that we were actually alerted to back when we came to understand and appreciate God's word 'rightly divided' - and when we came to appreciate the significance of what God is doing and how God is conducting Himself in this dispensation of Gentile grace in which we live.

- Simply put—we know that in this dispensation of grace, and especially with us as sons—(that is, in sonship, God has determined to be to us a REAL Father, and deal with us as REAL sons) - we know that God **doesn't intervene** by His omnipotent power and manipulate the situations and circumstances of our lives.

- No external miraculous workings going on as He did in His program with Israel.

- And oftentimes—when all you've got is a basic understanding of that issue—is to just kind of come along and 'leave it at that' type thing—which oftentimes makes it so that when you talk to someone about it—or you get 'pinned down' by another believer as to God's miracles happening today—you often don't have much more to say about it than the FACT of it.

- And that's really **not satisfying**—either to you, personally, and especially to the person you're talking to!

- In fact—if you don't have this further Operation of God understood—the truth is, some folks will just conclude that what you're saying is that God just doesn't care about the situations and circumstances we're in!

- And it's quite possible for even other grace folks to think: "Well, if God's not concerned about relieving the physical situations and circumstances other folks are in—then I'm not going to be concerned about it either!" (I'm off the hook!)

- But even if you can talk about and describe (rightly and properly) the more excellent power of God working in your "inner man" - which is an absolute must to understand and appreciate—and a valid answer to the issue of God not doing physical miracles today in the dispensation of His grace—the truth is, **that's not all there is to it!**

- Because in perfect 'fittingness' to Sonship Edification—God has NOT overlooked the physical *necessity* type situations and circumstances saints find themselves in today!

- In fact—God's Tenderheartedness is NOT marginalized by **not** putting His omnipotent hand between a saint and his circumstances—it's just that He's determined to deal with them in a wholly fitting & proper & appropriate **sonship type** way!

- The truth is—God is very much Tenderhearted about the *necessity* type situations & circumstances you, as His son, find yourself in—and He’s actually done something about it—He’s got a Sonship Operation that addresses it and does something about it, to relieve it!

- But instead of Him laboring Personally to relieve the *necessities of saints*—He’s built into the Sonship Curriculum an Operation that has you as an educated, intelligent son, laboring together with Him to put Godly Wisdom into practice—and YOU as a son get to do that!!!

- And for one of the very first times in your sonship life—you get to experience (and you get to be trained in what it’s like) to be “LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON!” (in an active way)

- YOU get to experience a very critical sonship issue—and that is that God has reserved some things that He **could** do (and even in “*time past*” **has** done) to **not** be done by Him, personally, but by His sons who have been educated and trained by Him—and for them to do it in His stead!

- And this strikes at the very heart of what sonship is all about—which is the issue of imparting the Father’s heart into His son’s heart—and having adopted you as His son in the first place — to be educated and trained so as to labor together with Him in all His business.

- And folks—that’s what you’re going to be doing out in the *creature*—you’re going to be conducting Operations of your Father—and performing certain tasks and labors that your Father could easily do Himself—but you’re going to do it yourself (as His educated & trained son)!

- And it will be as if the Father did it Himself—and the angels won’t be able to tell the difference of if the Father did it, or one of His sons did it!

- So the truth is—in this dispensation of grace—and in Sonship Education—God’s omnipotent power isn’t marginalized—we’re not making God out to be “little” or “small” or whatever the criticism is from most folks—but rather God still IS tenderhearted about these things—He still IS tender & sensitive & caring about them—and He certainly has done something about it—and instead of “*manna*” coming down to *distribute to the necessity* - He has determined for His educated sons (who have His **heart** on the matter) to do it!

- And really—there’s a greater GLORY for God in that—and there’s a greater manifestation of His POWER in that—and a greater testimony and impact that is made upon the angelic principalities, powers, mights, and dominions in doing things that way!

- And this should make this 1st Issue of dealing with this 1st Group of People with Godly Tenderheartedness an incredibly EXCITING AND DELIGHTFUL THING!

- And if that doesn’t produce Godly ambition and Godly enthusiasm—I don’t know what will!

- You’re getting to participate in an Operation of God concerning His “goodness” - and putting God’s *goodness* into effect! (Deut. 8:16)

- So we have the 1st Part of the 5th Component—or the 1st Group of People it deals with taken care of: ***Distributing to the necessity of saints;*** —

— the Issue of Godly Love (Tenderheartedness) among the *saints* in the local assembly in which you commune & fellowship.

- Now let’s turn our attention to that 2nd Group of People in view in this 5th Component to our *receiving the instruction of wisdom*:

Godly Tenderhearted Love among Lost People.

Romans 12:13— *Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.*

14 *Bless them which persecute you: bless and curse not.*

15 *Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.*

- **BREAKDOWN** of the remaining ASPECTS OF GODLINESS:

- My understanding is that the last clause of (:13) and then all of (:14) and all of (:15) go on and deals with your sonship lovingkindness and it’s tenderheartedness that’s now in existence—and that has godly compassion now growing within you—being the issue now when it comes to THE UNSAVED.

- And because of their SINGULAR “necessity” situation—your godly Thinking of “tenderheartedness” will naturally find its ‘outlet’ in your Godly **Conduct & Behavior** in which you’re going to be *given to hospitality*.

- And when it comes to dealing with the unsaved with godly sonship *wisdom*—the unsaved really have only one situation or one condition that ‘fits the bill’ (so to speak) as not merely the weaker situation of having a ‘need’ - but rather that far more critical/grave/serious/perilous and compelling situation that demands the far more powerful word “*necessity*”.

- When it comes to a situation or circumstance that the unsaved are in that can be properly described as a *necessity*—they really have only ONE, SINGULAR *necessity* that godly lovingkindness & tenderheartedness is compelled to act upon.

- The unsaved are in a **critical** situation & circumstance that ‘**necessitates**’ an important, specific, and indispensable thing be given to them!

- Which (of course) is **the CLEAR and PLAIN
GOSPEL OF CHRIST!**

- It’s a matter of MORE than their physical life or death—it’s a matter of their **spiritual life or spiritual death!**

- Every physical ‘want’ that an unsaved person has is only a *need*—the unsaved has only ONE, SINGULAR ‘want’ that can be properly called a *necessity*: and that’s their own **SALVATION!**

- And the proper and godly Conduct & Behavior that properly provides for an environment in which that unsaved person’s singular *necessity* can be relieved—is the environment of *hospitality*—and a son (wisely) isn’t just occasionally ‘hospitable’ to the unsaved—rather his godly Conduct & Behavior is to *give* himself *to hospitality*.

- (We’ll deal with this more as we look at the details of it, but for now I just want to get it ‘on the table’ [so to speak] as to my understanding of what the Godly Conduct & Behavior is.)

- And so what you’ve got (:13) doing is taking the already existing Godly Thinking of Tenderheartedness—and in its one sentence, it addresses the 2 Groups of People in the ‘crosshairs’ (so to speak) of that Tenderheartedness—and it sets forth the 2 Aspects of Godly

Conduct & Behavior in connection with each of those 2 Groups of People—and it does so by being divided up into 2 Clauses:

- The Godly Conduct & Behavior of the 1st Group (*saints*):
Distributing to the necessity of saints;

- The Godly Conduct & Behavior of the 2nd Group (Lost):
given to hospitality.

- And that then leaves us with 2 more verses—and 2 more complete sentences—(one in :14) and (one in :15).

- And there are 2 for a reason! — And both (verses 14 and 15) are dealing with the Godly **Labor** involved with dealing with the Lost by being *given to hospitality*

- And the reason why there are 2 Aspects to the Godly Labor — and the reason why there are 2 verses that deal with it—
is because there are only 2 possible responses that you will get from an unsaved person to your *hospitality* that requires Godly Sonship Labor that you're not previously aware of.

- And I say it that way because there are really 3 possible responses you can get from an unsaved person who you give your *hospitality* to—but one of them you already know perfectly well how to handle and what to do—and of course, that response is that of a POSITIVE type—in which case you already know what your Godly Labor is: GIVE THEM THE GOSPEL!)

- But you have 2 verses of (:14 & 15) because one deals with a NEGATIVE response — and one an INDIFFERENT response.

- (:14) deals with your Godly Sonship Labor with an unsaved person who responds to your *hospitality* in a NEGATIVE way. (Which is to *Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.*) [And you'll be laboring together with God in that as well.]

- (:15) deals with your Godly Sonship Labor with an unsaved person who responds to your *hospitality* in an INDIFFERENT way. (Which is to *Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.*) [And you'll be laboring together with God in that as well.]

- And whereas you've had a whole bunch of information given to you about "The Gospel of Christ" and the entire fundamental doctrine of Justification unto eternal life—in Romans 1-5—dealing with the 3 Parts of the Gospel) - and in that information you received an education into your Ambassadorship (Ambassador Training 101, so to speak) —

— but when it came to dealing with the lost (unsaved) **with real godly wisdom**—(in order to create and preserve an environment for your Ambassadorship to be able to keep the door of opportunity 'open' so that that lost/unsaved person can be exposed to the Gospel and can be appealed to by that Gospel of Christ for the longest possible period of time in order for it to do its job) — when it comes to creating that kind of 'preserving environment' to get that lost person saved—it's going to take real godly wisdom—and it's therefore going to take the effectual working of Godly Lovingkindness having matured and developed into Godly Tenderheartedness in order to be to that lost person a "son" who is *given to hospitality*—and then will Labor with God in either their NEGATIVE response—or in their INDIFFERENT response.

- And Godly Tenderheartedness **has to be in existence** in order to do that!

- Godly Tenderheartedness will be your *wisdom* in dealing with Lost/Unsaved people—it will be what forms your decision-making skill when it comes to dealing with them just like your Father does—and it will be the reason and the means for doing the wisest thing of all in connection with those lost/unsaved folks that come under your *hospitality*—which is to create an environment that keeps that door of opportunity OPEN for them to hear and to respond positively to the Gospel of Christ—(which is one of the **Primary** and **most important** functions you have as a son)!

- Let's now begin looking at the details of the doctrine of our Godly Wisdom in connection with the Lost/Unsaved People we come into contact with.

- Once again, every wise decision we make with them will be governed by our Godly Thinking of **Tenderheartedness**—of being 'tender' and sensitive and compassionate to the One, Single *necessity* they have—and that tenderheartedness naturally seeking a natural 'outlet' for some godly Conduct & Behavior. So godly tenderheartedness will **rule** every decision/action you make in this case!

- So the Godly Thinking in connection with our Sonship Wisdom as we function as sons among the lost people we come into contact with is: Tenderheartedness.

- (Which has been generated in us by the wise use of Godly Lovingkindness—and is therefore the unstated Godly Thinking of the 5th Component of our Sonship Wisdom).

- That takes us to the Godly Living in regard to how we are to Conduct & Behave ourselves as sons according to that Godly Tenderhearted Thinking—and the Godly Living among lost people is:

- **“given to hospitality”**

- Before we deal with that word *given*—let’s first of all get an understanding and appreciation for what that word **hospitality** is all about.

- **hospitality**—(from the Greek φιλοεξία = “love” to strangers— used only 2x in the Bible - 1x here; 1x in Heb. 13:2 *Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.*) - but other forms of the word are used in I Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8 [bishops & deacons]; I Pe.4:9.

- So LOVE is at the core of *hospitality*—which points up once again the powerful decision-making skill that love is (especially in connection with making wise decisions as a son)!

- (Of course, the love here is Godly Love which has 3 Major Features to it now having been generated & brought into existence in your inner man as a son— all 3 being expressed in one word: Tenderhearted).

- But outside of that—what does **hospitality** mean?

- Dictionary Meaning: *hospitality* = the act or practice of receiving and entertaining strangers or guests without reward, or with kind and generous liberality. Being kind to strangers & guests; disposed to treat guests with generous kindness; kind, generous & inviting to strangers/guests. OED = the reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers, with liberality and goodwill.

- Now that's a Dictionary definition—but really that won't do here because what we're after here is what *hospitality* means to **Paul**—and what it means to **God**! (What it means in this particular context!)

- And because of the way it's worded: *given to hospitality*—because you're supposed to be “*given*” to it—that indicates to me that you're already supposed to know what this means before you get here!

- Again, this is one of those instances where God doesn't define or describe or analyze what *hospitality* is.

- The truth is—*hospitality* or being ‘hospitable’ is much more than what most folks think it is!

- In fact—a lot of people don't really know how to be *given to hospitality*!

- And really—many Christians don't know how to be *given to hospitality* because all they do is ‘mimic’ the world's ideas of *hospitality*—and they just bring the world's idea of it into the church environment!

- Truth is—being *given to hospitality* as **God** uses it; and as **God** thinks about it—is really only understood and appreciated and actually put into practice by a SON!

- And my understanding is that there really is something that sets the biblical use, (and the sonship use) of *hospitality* **apart** from the way it's normally understood—[being kind to strangers or visitors; or being welcoming and wanted and comfortable in your home; enjoying the company of people; welcoming others to participate in your home life; etc.].

- My understanding is that that kind of definition really LACKS something—and it really lacks the most distinguishing and discriminating thing that makes *hospitality* or being ‘hospitable’ **different** from either merely being polite, or courteous, or friendly, or generous, or gregarious or any other term that encompasses the normal definition of *hospitality*.

- And to get at that difference—maybe the best question to ask is: Why is a building called a ‘Hospital’?

- Knowing why a building is called a ‘Hospital’ gets at this distinguishing feature that we’re after that makes *hospitality* different from all those other words that we use to define it!
- People go to a ‘Hospital’ because they have a **dire NEED!**
 - And if you look up the word ‘Hospital’ in a dictionary that’s dedicated to the Etymology of the word (the origin of the word) - you’ll find that a ‘Hospital’ (first and foremost) is a “shelter for the needy.”
 - Any building that’s called a ‘Hospital’ is a **place where people go who have a dire need that they cannot handle themselves!**
 - Generally, it’s a physical need—but it could also be a mental one (which is why there’s ‘Mental Hospitals’).
 - And a ‘Hospital’ is an **environment** in which there are people dedicated to dealing with the needs & *necessities* that other people have that are of a particular nature that they cannot cope with or deal with on their own—and in which, to continue with the need or necessity would be **dangerous** or **devastating** to them!
- Therefore, *hospitality* (or when someone is ‘hospitable’) - they’re not just being ‘polite,’ ‘courteous,’ or ‘friendly’ or ‘generous’ or ‘gregarious’ — rather, **they’re being ‘hospitable’ because they recognize a SERIOUS NEED (a *necessity*) that someone has—and they care about that need; they desire to address that need; and they, (by what they do in their Conduct & Behavior), create an environment around themselves and around the person who has the need—that invites the person who has the need to let them service it!**
 - And when someone is **given to hospitality**—then they go out of their way in connection with that—and they go out of their way to contact people who have the need that they know exists: even though the people who have the need might not know them!
 - And that’s why Paul didn’t need to repeat the word *necessity* when it came to the Unsaved here—because it’s inherent in the word *hospitality*!

- **Hospitality is a tenderhearted, compassionate response to a NECESSITY**—originally, to someone who you didn't even know, had. (But it could include ones that you do know as well).

- But it's being used here pretty much in the sense of ones that you DON'T know—at least that you don't know in the sense of them being *saints*—and you're not in constant fellowship with them; and communion with them like you are with the *saints* in your assembly.

- And so in recognizing the *necessity* that an unsaved person has—(you know it; but they might not know that they have it) - or they might think that they're dealing with it based upon a perversion of the Gospel — but YOU know that the *necessity* still exists!

- And when the Tenderheartedness of your Lovingkindness develops to the point that it's real 'tender' towards them—then it's only natural that your Godly Conduct & Behavior (based upon that Tenderheartedness) is to *GIVE* yourself to *hospitality* towards them!

- (Go out of your way to create that **environment** that's going to make their relationship with you an 'inviting' one in which they have every reason **TO** respond to you—and you can then address with them the issue of their *necessity*—and so you can 'service' it [depending upon the response you get from them].)

- And if you get that **Positive Response**—you don't need to be told what to do—go ahead and 'service' it—give them the Gospel.

- But if you get that **Negative Response**—that's when (:14) comes along and says: Here's your Godly Labor—(keep the door of opportunity open to service that *necessity*).

- And if you get that **Indifferent or Non-Committal Response**—then keep 'going out of your way' with that *hospitality*—and that's when (:15) comes along and says: Here's your Godly Labor in that case—when they *rejoice, rejoice with them*—and when they *weep, weep with them*—and you're going to be Laboring together with God in what He's doing with them!

- But my point here is—understanding what *hospitality* is — and making sure that you see that it’s **more** than just friendliness, politeness, courtesy, generosity, etc.— really helps out in this context of Romans 12:13.

- Because rather than being so broad that it almost loses any real meaning and impact—it has far more specific-ness to it.

- In the context of Romans 12:13 (*given to hospitality*) - *hospitality* has a specific response to a serious need!

- Which is why a *hospital* is a *hospital* — it’s an **environment that addresses serious needs!**

- And “*hospitality*” is the creation of that environment!

- And that explains why a Bishop has to be “*given to hospitality*” - (he’s supposed to create an environment in the local assembly that addresses the most serious needs or *necessities* that any person could ever have: **SPIRITUAL NEEDS!** (the assembly is a ‘spiritual hospital’ in a sense!))

- So a son’s Godly Wisdom (in this 5th Component of his *instruction of wisdom*) in dealing with the Lost/Unsaved with Godly Tenderhearted Love—is to Conduct & Behave himself in view of, and with that Tenderheartedness — by creating **an environment** in which he can address the One, Single, serious *necessity* that that Lost Person has: being ‘spiritually dead,’ that Lost Person needs the clear & plain Gospel of Christ and to respond positively to it—and by grace, through faith alone in Christ alone (without any works of any kind), become **saved** from the debt & penalty of his sins and **justified** unto eternal life!

- Note: that ‘hospitality environment’ doesn’t necessarily have to be **in your home/house** — (it doesn’t say, ‘given to hospitality in your home’) — it can be wherever you find yourself—(granted, more often than not it will be in your home) - but it can also be wherever you are!

- And so your Sonship Conduct & Behavior will be one of being **given to hospitality**.

- **given** = διώκω—interestingly, that’s the same Greek word used for the upcoming word in (:14) - the word “*persecute*”.

- And this is the only time in the Bible where [dioko] is translated “*given to*” - because (much like we will see with the word *persecute*), to be *given to hospitality* means that you’re going to “**PURSUE**” with **great intensity** that environment of *hospitality*!

- And because of your function as an Ambassador for Christ, and as a wise son, you’re going to **go after** that *hospitality* environment with the kind of passion and enthusiasm and intensity that is fitting of Tenderheartedness—much like a Doctor or Surgeon or Nurse would in a Hospital Emergency Room! (Everything else is secondary next to that **saving environment** of *hospitality* toward that Lost Person!)

- (You’re going to keep a ‘sterile’ environment).

- And when you’re **given to** something that means that **you turn to it immediately!**

- (You don’t fool around; you don’t play around or entertain other possibilities or anything like that.)

- When you’re **given to** something: that’s what you do—you’re expected to immediately see to it; immediately tend to it—you immediately go into action as that Ambassador for Christ!

- So in connection with Lost People in this 5th Component to our *instruction of wisdom*—your Sonship Thinking will be Tenderheartedness—and your Sonship Conduct & Behavior will be **given to hospitality**.

- That then takes us to the Aspect of the Godly **Labor** in connection with the Lost People you are among as a son—and because of the fact that there are 2 possible Responses you will get from them that you have not yet been informed or instructed as what to do in these 2 cases—(1. The Negative Response; and 2. The Indifferent or Non-Committal Response) - you get the Godly Labor of the Negative Response in (:14) and the Godly Labor of the Indifferent Response in (:15). So let’s look now at the Godly Labor in connection with a Negative Response from the Lost, Unsaved Person in (:14).

14 *Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.*

- Notice that you have a statement made followed by a colon (:) - and then you have another statement made that is somewhat repeating what the first statement says - (but with some additional information).

- In this case, the colon is being used as a major **pause** in which the first statement is supposed to be **CLEARLY** understood and appreciated before moving on.

- But you have a repetition of some information followed by some additional information.

- Therefore my understanding is that this colon (and the nature of these 2 clauses that make up our Godly Labor in connection with a Negative Response—it tells you to not only have a **FIRM, CLEAR** grasp upon what the 1st Clause says—but that colon (and the information that follows it) comes along and acts in a way of saying something like: **“Make VERY SURE that you do the one thing—and make VERY SURE that you DO NOT do the other thing!”**

- It’s a feature of English Grammar and English Punctuation that can underscore the **IMPORTANCE** of the 1st Clause—and act as a “Red Flag” (so to speak) for drawing your complete and undivided attention to the **DETAILS** of some particular kind of Godly Labor! (not to be missed!)

- It’s an English Grammar technique that sees to it that the reader gets the details clear and straight—and to alert the reader to the **Critical Nature** of how they are to work or act or Labor!

- It’s a way of saying, “Whatever you do, **DO** this, and **DON’T DO** that!” (short, but very powerful!)

- It tells you that something is in this context that’s so vital and so critical that you simply cannot afford to miss it! (There’s a very ‘delicate’ situation or circumstance here—and **if it’s not dealt with properly**, it will have **devastating consequences!**) — that’s why the 2nd Clause is cut down to the fewest possible words: *Bless them which persecute you: (make very sure that you) bless, and curse not!*

... because if you **do** “*curse*” and **don’t** “*bless*” you’re going to **ruin** that ‘sterile’ environment of *hospitality* and the consequences will be DEVASTATING to that Lost Person!

- **Life & Death depends upon it**—spiritual life and spiritual death are at stake! — and the stakes just don’t get any higher than that!

- **Bless** (εὐλογέω) = to speak well of.

- Which tells you that the central feature and core element of what consists of your being *given to hospitality* is largely going to be: **what comes out of your MOUTH!**

- And while your body language; and your physically welcoming environment may be important—that’s **nothing** compared to what you’re going to **SAY** to that Lost Person!

- This ‘hospitable environment’ is largely going to be created by your WORDS!

- **And it can be DESTROYED by your words!**

- *Bless them which persecute you:*

- **persecute** (διώκω) = this is the major way in which this is used in the Bible.

= Just as the word indicates = to pursue, chase, hunt, drive; to pursue with the intent to harm; to pursue in a manner to injure, vex, or afflict; to harass; to inflict pain from hatred; to cause trouble to someone.

= To ‘go after’ you; to display hatred towards you—to ‘go after’ you with hostility.

- Now we’ll talk more about this later—but for now, I just want to say that “persecution” that comes from the Unsaved Person is **NOT the same thing** as what happens when that Unsaved Person comes to the point of being a ‘Self-Opposer’ - (as we dealt with in Romans 3:7-8) - and before we’re finished with this Component, we’ll re-examine that issue of the Unsaved ‘Self-Opposer’ just so you’ll be clear on that subject. (but for now, they’re NOT the same thing!)

- An Unsaved Person can throw a lot of *persecution* your way—without ‘Opposing Himself’ - in other words, they can do a lot of *persecution* type things and still not be in the position of where they ‘mentally snap’ (so to speak); harden their heart; and dishonestly deal with incontrovertible truth; and LIE TO THEMSELVES, thereby ‘opposing’ themselves!

- (At which point, God expects you to ‘cut off’ your Ambassadorship to them.)

- So the nature of the Godly Labor in connection with the Unsaved Person is one of *Bless them* (speak well of them) *which persecute you* (when they ‘go after’ you with hostility—when they respond Negatively to the Gospel of Christ and/or to your *hospitality*): —

- And it’s such a natural thing for your flesh to rise up and do anything else but ‘speak well’ of them that this first clause of (:14) ends with a colon—and it tells you that this is so radically different from what your flesh naturally wants to do, that you have to be squarely confronted with the GODLY LABOR of a properly educated son!

- You really do have to PAUSE and allow that to ‘sink in’!!!

- But again—because of what’s at stake here—and the **high stakes** of what’s at stake here—that all of your Godly Labor is going to depend upon the Godly Tenderhearted Thinking—and your Godly Labor is going to do everything it can to preserve that environment of *hospitality*—in order to keep the door of opportunity ‘open’ so that the communication of the Gospel of Christ can still take place—even in the face of strong *persecution* from that Lost Person!

- So after that 1st Clause of (:14) is not only understood and appreciated—not only understood and appreciated for the truth of it; and for the radically different approach of a wise son—but understood and appreciated for the GRAVITY of it; and the WEIGHTYNESS of it in connection with preserving that environment of being given to hospitality—then Paul reiterates it all with that final clause: ***bless*** (speak well), ***and curse not***.

- ***curse*** = of course is, again, something you **SAY** = to utter a wish of evil against someone; to call for injury to fall on someone.

- **Curse is the exact opposite of “*bless*”!**

- And that serves to kind of define what the Lost Person will be doing when he’s *persecuting* you— for the most part, (certainly not entirely), but for the most part, he’s going to be *cursing* YOU!

- And when *persecution* is met ‘in kind’ (by *cursing*) - a ‘switch’ (so to speak) can be flipped in the heart of that Lost Person who has already responded Negatively to the Gospel of Christ—to the tune of him cutting off any further dealings with you! (His heart may become so hardened that he never will even give the Gospel of Christ another hearing!)

- Let’s come back, now, to that issue that I talked about before—and that is: that THIS issue of being *given to hospitality* with Godly Tenderheartedness and in the case of the Lost Person, you recognize their one, single serious *necessity* (of hearing the Gospel of Christ and getting Saved) - and you immediately create the environment that meet and services that *necessity*—but you get (from that Lost Person) a NEGATIVE RESPONSE in which you end up getting *persecuted* by them and their Negative Response—it’s critical that you understand and appreciate that the Negative Response (and the *persecution* that comes along with it) IS NOT THE SAME THING AS GETTING THE RESPONSE OF THE ‘SELF-OPPOSER’!

- And that Negative Response can come from either your expression of *hospitality*—or from when you begin to express to them WHY you are as *hospitable* as you are—(which is to say, you are being *hospitable* in order to address their *necessity*—and therefore, at some time you’re going to bring up the issue of their *necessity*—and eventually you’re going to have to come along and ‘broach the subject’ with them of the fact that they’re going to DIE and pay the debt & penalty of their sins themselves if they don’t get justified unto eternal life!)

- And that means that you can get a Negative Response either at the mere expression of your *hospitality* in order to get the opportunity to talk to them and get the Gospel to them — or you could get the NR as soon as you do begin to talk to them about their *necessity*—or you could get the NR at some particular point **within** the Gospel (at any one of those 7 Volitional Testing Points)! (see #45)

- But the simple matter is—your first Neg. Res. would hardly ever be of the nature of the Self-Opposer where you would come along and have to say, “*your damnation is just*” “I just can’t deal with you any more!”

- And so—when they do “*persecute*” - that’s like them ‘closing the door’ in your face (so to speak) — **but it is NOT the issue of them ‘locking’ it!!!**

**** NOTE **** At this point we went back to Romans 3:1-8 and did an extensive review of the Self Opposer. (Especially Pages 40-79)

- Now at this point—having reviewed the doctrine concerning the Self Opposer—and making sure that we **don’t** confuse that with this issue in Romans 12:14 and the kind of *persecution* we can receive when we get a Negative Response to our Tenderhearted Wisdom of being **given to hospitality** to a Lost Person and servicing their *necessity* of being Lost—and then as wise Ambassadors for Christ, presenting them with the Gospel of Christ — in view of all that we’ve covered in the past several Bible classes, ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS/COMMENTS?

- Well—once again—the natural ‘outlet’ for the Godly Thinking of Tenderheartedness is to be **given to hospitality** as a matter of your Godly Living (Conduct & Behavior) - and then the natural ‘outlet’ for Tenderhearted Hospitality towards a Lost/Unsaved Person as you Labor with God in what He’s doing with the Lost Person is: 1) **when you get a Negative Response** from them in which they *persecute you*—(more often than not, by *cursing* you) - the natural ‘outlet’ for Tenderhearted Hospitality towards an Unbeliever who responds Negatively to your *hospitality* is to do exactly what (:14) says— **14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.**

- That’s your Sonship Labor—in other words, your Sonship Labor (and the WISE thing to do when you get a Neg. Resp. from that Lost Person) is to **BLESS**—TO SPEAK WELL of them and at all cost, NOT to respond “in kind” (so to speak) by *cursing* them back!

- Actually, there’s a passage sitting back in the book of Proverbs that addresses to this very issue (and is indicative of the kind of Godly Sonship Labor that [:14] describes: (see Proverbs 15:1)

A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.

- And if there's any vestige of 'honesty of heart' within them, that's what your *soft answer* will do—it will *turn away* their *wrathful persecution*—and the environment of your hospitality will be preserved—and even though they do *persecute*, the door of opportunity still remains open when a son responds **wisely** as he's taught by his Father to do here!

- And the issue always is: that you want to provide that Lost Person with another opportunity to 'knock on that door' and have it opened!

- And that's what you do when you *Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.*

- And folks—the truth of the matter is—at this point in your sonship education, your Father is now inviting you into one of the greatest and most honourable areas of Laboring with Him in one of His greatest Operations of all: BEING AN AMBASSADOR FOR CHRIST!

- And if all the sound doctrine from Romans 1:1-12:13 has effectually worked within you—the truth is, **no other Operation of your Heavenly Father that you are privileged to participate in as a son should bring you more joy, more zeal, more enthusiasm, and more godly ambition than being an *ambassador for Christ!***

- “Ambassador” - What is an ambassador?

= (Webster's 1828) A minister of the highest rank employed by one prince or state, at the court of another, to manage public concerns of his own prince or state, and representing the power and dignity of his sovereign.

= (OED) An official messenger sent by or to a sovereign or public body; an envoy, commissioner, or representative. A minister of high rank sent by one sovereign or state on a mission to another.

- Features or Characteristics of an Ambassador:

1) An ambassador does not appoint himself.

- One of the most thrilling and phenomenal aspects of our grand privilege of being an *ambassador for Christ* is the fact that God our Heavenly Father granted us this privilege **at the specific request of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself!** Our Lord, out of His great love for us, asked His Father that we be given the privilege of being His

spokesmen and representatives. Jesus Christ actually wants us to personally represent Him and help Him. And the truth of this is found in the reason for why we are not called “ambassadors **OF** Christ,” but rather, “*ambassadors FOR Christ.*”

- (Let’s once again look at Acts 26:22-28)

- II Cor. 5:11-6:2

- We’re not called *ambassadors for Christ* simply because we represent Him (true as that is) - nor because of any inability on Christ’s part—but especially because the Lord specifically requested that we be honoured with the privilege of helping Him.

- And just as the members of the remnant of Israel were given the privilege of representing the Lord and speaking for Him during their prophesied ‘*accepted time*’ and during their ‘*day of salvation*’ (in the opening chapters of the book of Acts) - we, too, have the thrill and privilege and honour of being His ambassadors in this present dispensation of Gentile Grace in which we live!

- And **we** get the honour of laboring with Christ to bring to pass the Operation of God for our “*accepted time*” and “*day of salvation.*” (He didn’t ask for the angels to do it!)

2) An ambassador does not support himself.

- All of the support we need is provided for us—and the support we need is all “inner man” type support which is contained in the Curriculum for our Sonship Education. (Paul will later on state it in a succinct way over in Phil. 4:19—*But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*)

3) An ambassador does not belong to the country where he is sent.

- We are no longer of *this world*—but of a heavenly kingdom—we are a *new creature* of the church the body of Christ!

4) An ambassador’s instructions are in written form.

- So are ours—God’s complete, written word—and especially the Curriculum for our Sonship Education in Romans-Philemon.

5) An ambassador does not represent or speak for himself.

- An ambassador does not enter a country for his own personal interests—he represents the One or the Country that sent him.

- And what we are privileged to “speak” has to do with what God is now doing in this unique and distinct dispensation of Gentile grace in which we live.

- (see II Cor. 5:14-17)

- And even though *persecution* can come our way (in a charge like, “You’re nuts!” or of being “*beside ourselves [:13]*” — what we are given to speak and preach is PERFECTLY SOUND! In fact, in view of what God has done through, with, and in Christ, it’s the ONLY message that is perfectly logical and sound! (So we **don’t** have to be intimidated by any *persecution* or criticism or reproach or even slander [blasphemy] that comes our way!)

- Therefore

6) An ambassador does not take an insult as personal.

7) Recalling an ambassador to his home country is tantamount to war!

- And that’s exactly what will begin to take place when we are “*caught up together... to meet the Lord in the air*” - and then the Lord’s Day of Wrath will commence!

- Now if you perceive what’s going on here—your Father has already taught and trained you in “Ambassadorship 101” (so to speak) in the first 5 chapters of the book of Romans.

- But He now gets back to this issue at this particular point—as a matter of your Sonship Wisdom in this 5th Component—because now that you’ve got a basic understanding and appreciation for what the local assembly is (and beginning to appreciate what it can do) - [i.e., being *members of one body in Christ, and every one members one of another*) — then you should realize the critical nature of doing the work of an Ambassador—because it’s from that work and that Operation of God **that is where other members of the body of Christ comes from!**

- Therefore, with the proper ‘weight’ of the responsibility of your Ambassadorship being ‘felt’ - then as you go about doing it—when you get a Negative Response you’re expected to give that “*soft answer*” - and your Father wants you to recognize that He still wants you to Labor to get another opportunity—He wants you to pursue a course of action that keeps that ‘door of opportunity’ OPEN!

- And what you as a son are supposed to understand here is that once this all effectually works within you—and becomes part of your thinking in connection with your Ambassadorship—is that later on, (as you go through such things that are set before you in II Cor. 5) - you become aware of the fact that you are intelligently and knowledgeably (and with realization of why you're doing it & what it means and everything) - **you're responding just as God the Father Himself would respond, if HE was the One who was telling that person about His gospel!**

- And just as He would not immediately 'walk away' - just as He would (if He was *persecuted* and *cursed*), would *bless*—just as He would do all that's involved in maintaining that 'sanctified' environment that provides for that person to respond favorably and to give the Gospel an honest hearing—just as He would make every effort **to make that environment LAST until that person himself DESTROYED it—that's what a wise son is supposed to do (and what we're supposed to do, ourselves)!**

- And that's the depth of being suitably impressed with this Godly Labor—and when they *persecute*, we *bless*—the words that are coming out of our mouths is that “*soft answer*” that's designed to “*turn away wrath*” - and we're to understand that we are saying the very same words our Father would say in our place!

- Because the issue is just as Paul says there in II Cor. 5 — *as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*

- This is really the beginning of understanding just how **authentic** our Ambassadorship really is!

- And that's why the word “*ambassador*” isn't used until you get to II Corinthians 5—because you first have to have the effectual working of Godly Lovingkindness & Tenderheartedness—and have it developed to the point where you are *given to hospitality*—and to the point of knowing how to respond to a Positive Response and a Negative Response and a Non-Committal Response—and only when those things have become a reality, then you can come along to II Cor. 5 and say, Yep, that's the perfect designation for what we are: **AMBASSADORS!**

- And that's why there's far more to being an Ambassador that just being a 'representative' - (that's why the House of Representatives isn't called 'The House of Ambassadors')

- Now the truth of the matter is—by the time you get to the end of Romans chapter 5 you are provided with all that is necessary for you to function as an Ambassador for Christ—and, indeed, your Father expects that you are doing just that.

- And really “Evangelism” is the very first Operation of God that you are able to function in.

- And “Evangelism” *is* the Operation of God that stands behind what is going on in Romans 12:13b-15!

- But as you get to the issue of your Sonship Status and all of the Orientation and Establishment that you go through in 8:14-11:36—and then because of what has effectually worked in your inner man as you've entered the Curriculum for Sonship Education from Romans 12:3-12—**there has been an increase** in the area of Godly Love and Godly Wisdom that has a direct bearing upon how you go about Thinking and Conducting and Behaving yourself as a son with the decision-making skill of Godly Wisdom when you inevitably will be interacting with (and coming into contact with) both saints and Lost People. (which calls for making wise decisions)

- So because there are aspects about our Ambassadorship that come into play in connection with our Sonship Education—and that, when we begin to be educated about it and encounter it in the Curriculum — the Curriculum begins to “**fine tune**” our Ambassadorship—and begins to ‘augment’ our foundational **zeal** we had for it (that Romans 1-5 provided for) - and with the increase of our Godly Love (godly value & esteem) - and with the increase of our Godly ‘sensitivity’ or Tenderheartedness—it all provides for an **increase** to our **desire** to deal with the *necessity* of the Unsaved.

- And say all that just to say that this is the reason **why** you have the further information of Godly Wisdom in connection with carrying out your Ambassadorship toward those Unsaved people who come under your *hospitality* as you're *given to it!*

- And so (:14) gives you the Godly Sonship Labor with your Father as you and He desire to pursue a course of action that keeps that door of opportunity ‘OPEN’ when you get a Negative Response!

- And although much will be said and dealt with later on in the Sonship Curriculum—I just want to once again, reiterate and stress the importance of what this Component of Godly Wisdom is doing (at least partially doing) - and that is for you as a son to produce and protect an **environment**—and here, an environment of *hospitality*.

- And all I want to say about this at this point is that there's more going on here than meets the eye (so to speak) - and it's really one of the very first times we get to Labor with our Father to produce a particular kind of environment.

- And later on in our Curriculum we'll be confronted with much more details about this—but for now—just to get you to begin seeing it—you could say that what you're doing is, by the particular Labor of (:14), [and even :15], you're providing for a “sanctified environment” (so to speak) for that Lost Person to come into to, when they come into your periphery (or your area of *hospitality*).

- And it really is “sanctified” - because not only is God the Father involved in Evangelism (and your Ambassadorship), and not only is God the Son involved in it—but God the Holy Ghost is involved in it as well—(and He is the Member of the Godhead involved in “sanctifying” something)!

- (see once again II Cor. 5:18-20) [all 3 are there!]

- Even though the Holy Spirit is not mentioned by name—He IS there!

(He's in YOU as the Ambassador!)

- And folks—this is what is so critical about the way in which you're made aware of your Sonship Status (and what is so critical about the very words God uses to tell you about it) in Romans 8:14-15 — (*For as many as are **led by the Spirit of God**, they are the sons of God. 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.*)

- This is one of the reasons why you are **led by the Spirit**, and why your Sonship Status is described as having received **the Spirit of adoption**—because one of the Holy Spirit's jobs is to, (as he *dwells* in you), provide for a sanctified environment that will be generated in you by Him!

- And as He, (as the “*Spirit of adoption*”), has **led** you through the Curriculum of your Sonship Education—He has taught you to emulate your Father AND the Lord Jesus Christ when you function as an Ambassador!

- And that’s His “sanctifying” work! (So that all that’s left for that Unsaved Person to do is to believe the truth!)

- Now that’s a little much here—because you’re not supposed to understand that ‘sanctifying’ work of the Holy Spirit here in Romans 12—but that’s a little preview of coming attractions—and that gives you some insight into the glory and the grandeur of being an Ambassador for Christ as a son!

- Let’s now look at (:15) and the **Indifferent or Non-Committal Response** of the Unbeliever to your being *given to hospitality* and your Ambassadorship.

15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

- Here you have 2 words that evoke emotion: ***rejoice*** and ***weep***.

- Or maybe a better way of saying it—you have 2 words that describe you as being **SYMPATHETIC** to that Lost Person.

- And when you do get an Indifferent Response from that Unbeliever, the Thinking of Tenderheartedness and the Conduct & Behavior of being *given to hospitality* has a natural ‘outlet’ of Godly Labor for a Lost Person who responds in a Non-Committal way—your Labor will be one of producing **SYMPATHETIC EXPEDIENCY**.

- (“EXPEDIENCY” = actions that are appropriate and fitting to the purpose at hand.)

- And if you get that Indifferent Response—the Labor is: that you keep on going with that *hospitality*.

- And when they’re *weeping*; then you *weep* with them—and when they’re *rejoicing*; then you *rejoice* with them.

- And with your ‘sympathetic expediency’, it will make it so that there’s any ‘honesty of heart’ in them—then they’ll eventually respond Positively to it—and you’ll then get the opportunity to give them the Gospel and lead them to a saving knowledge of Christ.

- *Rejoicing* with them and *weeping* with them—those are all expressions of you doing everything you can to retain a relationship with them by your interaction with them.

- And there will be times when a person won't respond positively right away—(they're not at all negative to it in the sense of outright rejecting it) - [and that can be for numerous reasons] - but in a situation like that, it's not uncommon for an Ambassador to hear that person come along and say, "I know that I've heard you talk about this before ... And I know that I didn't respond to it right away ... But your persistence, **and the fact that YOU SHOWED YOU CARED eventually made me come along and give it another serious hearing.**"

- (Not that they're going to say it *exactly* that way—but that's the general idea).

- And frequently enough—(mostly after the fact) - someone will come along and say, "One of the reasons why I eventually listened to you more than once and more closely than they did in the past—was because your persistence with me made it obvious to me that you genuinely CARED!"

- And that you weren't just trying to "recruit" them—you weren't just 'proselytizing' (trying to get more converts) - they weren't just a number in a book to you (or a 'notch in your belt') [so to speak].

- Rather, your **genuine care & concern** really did make an impact upon them—there was no 'sham' pretence about it at all! (No other ulterior motive other than their never-dying soul!)

- And that's what the "*rejoicing with them that do rejoice, and the weeping with them that weep*" is doing!

- And that's all part of that APPEAL of the *beseeking* (II Cor. 5:20) - and what the environment of *praying in Christ's stead* is about—(**those are emotional words!**)

- **There's passion there!** (Not disingenuous passion, but it's genuine passion that comes out of a genuine care & concern that's based upon **genuine Tenderheartedness!**)

- Therefore, when you do get a Non-Committal or Indifferent Response to your *hospitality*—the Wise Sonship Decision is to Labor with your Father in evangelizing that person by your genuine, Godly Care & Concern—which allows for that ‘door’ to be left open and the invitation to be responded to.

- You’ll Labor in order to maintain contact to that one to whom you’ve been sent (as an Ambassador).

- Now before we leave this 5th Component—and since it applies to both (:14) and (:15) - I want to say something more about that passage we looked at back in the book of Proverbs (15:1 *A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.*)

- This passage (and verses or sayings in God’s word like it) are oftentimes treated as if it’s just a “Maxim of Every Day Life” (so to speak) — that any Philosopher of the Ages has said or has said something similar to it.

- But when **GOD** says that in Proverbs—He’s **not** talking about that as a ‘maxim’ or an ‘adage’ to operate upon—He’s **not** talking about that as just a generality in human existence that when people in general give a “soft answer” to someone who’s expressing “wrath” to them, that it will “turn away” the wrath. (not that it couldn’t do that, because it could)

- But when **GOD** says that in the context of the Proverbs—He’s saying it to one’s who are **His own people**; who are **representing Him** as **His sons**; and who are dealing with ones who are being confronted with what **HE** has to say (that is, with **HIS** very own **WORDS**)!

- And because of that—there’s Godly *effectual* working in God’s method and in God’s actual words in giving a “soft answer” in the face of a man’s “wrath.”

- And so when you do what Romans 12:14 & 15 says—and you employ that “soft answer” to “turn away the wrath” directed at you—then what you’re doing is Laboring with God in **utilizing the very words and the very principles that HE HIMSELF can operate upon** and can **effectually** turn away wrath with by that *soft answer* principle.

- And my understanding is that this is far more precise and more specific than a general psychological principle type thing!

- This (in Proverbs 15:1) is *effectual*—but when employed by the wisdom of men, it's merely 'effective' — this follows GOD's own WORDS and GOD's own methodology which has been crafted to perfectly 'fit' the human heart (which God created to perfectly and *effectually* receive it)!

- And that's why, as an Ambassador for Christ—regardless of what you think or imagine—you have to **stick with your written instructions**—(found in Romans, and in the **order** it's given) - and you don't concoct your own system, or your own approach, or your own idea about the 'steps to the Cross' or whatever!

END OF THE 5TH COMPONENT:

(Review the Positive & Proper Response in Proverbs 3:1-4).

- Romans 12:16—The 6th Component to the son's *instruction of wisdom*.

16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

- Introduction & Pre-Doctrinal Exhortation —

- For the final time we arrive at a Component that makes up a Form of Doctrine for our Sonship Education—and this 6th Component that makes up our initial and fundamental *instruction of wisdom* (just like all the previous Components) has a reason for **WHY** it has to be included in our Sonship Wisdom—and **why** it occurs last and 'caps off' or completes the Father's *instruction of wisdom* to His son.

- And the truth is—initial, fundamental Sonship Wisdom would be incomplete without this final 6th Component—and therefore, as is true with any Pre-Doctrinal Exhortation, there is an **earnest and dire need** for you as a son to get the effectual working of the information your Father is about to give you in Romans 12:16.

- It will challenge the Thinking; the Conduct & Behavior; and the Actions you have naturally acquired as you have been *conformed to this world*—and by it's effectual working in your inner man, it will *transform you by the renewing of your mind* so that you may *prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God*.

- And this means that at the end of (:16) you will have been (in a **major** way) *conformed to the image of God's own Son*, (the Lord Jesus Christ Himself) - and you will have the initial, basic, fundamental *wisdom* of God your Heavenly Father (the very wisdom that He Himself possesses in His own heart) - and that *wisdom* will have been **permanently installed** into your heart as it gets *written on the fleshy tables of your heart* in the 'book of your soul.'

- And just as that *wisdom* makes up your Father's basic decision-making skills—so, too, it will be **your wisdom** (as His son) to make wise sonship decisions yourself (exactly as He does).

- And Godly Wisdom **is** one of the most POWERFUL decision-making skills that there is!

- And in a major way, you will be: LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON! (in **reality**, not merely in theory!)

- Therefore, if this all works effectually as it should—there should be a new wave (so to speak) of Godly ambition and Godly enthusiasm and **zeal** of crying "*Abba, Father*" all the more, upon completing this first '**Form**' of doctrine of your Sonship Education.

- And with that Grand & Glorious Hope of being placed in a position of rulership in the heavenly places when we liberate the *creature* from its *bondage of corruption*—and knowing that this body of information that makes up our *wisdom* will be utilized by us as sons in the creature (*having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come [I Tim. 4:8]*) - you really should be **thrilled & delighted** to complete this first form of doctrine to your Sonship Education!!!

- And as is true for any Pre-Doctrinal Exhortation—it should be brought back to your attention that you not only have a natural and dire need for this final Component of Wisdom—but it should also be brought back to your attention that if you **don't** get this 6th Component of Wisdom (just like the other 5 Components) - then you'll be just what Proverbs 1:7 says you are: (a **FOOL**!) *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.* — and the last thing you should want as a son, is to be a **fool** in your Father's eyes!

- Now at this point let's just once again review the first 5 Components that make up our *instruction of wisdom*. (#41)

[Godly Love = what God VALUES & ESTEEMS]

- Now once again, there is a natural reason for why this 6th Component **has** to be a part of our *instruction of wisdom*—and a **natural** reason for why it comes last—and while we can only mention those reasons in general at the outset, the fullness of why will be grasped when we deal with the details of (:16).

- But for now—let's look at the overall structure or design of (:16) and complete our introduction and Pre-doctrinal Exhortation.

- First of all—when you read the verse, it's obvious that we have 3 complete sentences—but the King James Translators have wisely perceived that all 3 sentences are supposed to be gathered together into one verse.

- And the reason why that's important is because it tells me that even though you've got 3 sentences—the CONTEXT is the same in all 3!

- And that matters in appreciating that the context that is set forth in the first one is carried on throughout the other 2.

- So look at the first sentence—*Be of the same mind one toward another*.

- What's the context? **Who** are we talking about when Paul says, "*one toward another*"?

- That phrase "*one toward another*" tells me that we're now talking about **other saints in our local assembly!**

- In (:16) we've returned to thinking about and dealing with each other as saints in the local assembly in which we gather—and so the context has shifted one last time to bring us back 'full-circle' (if you will) to what was begun back in (:3-8).

- So we come back once again to having to have in our thinking all that "BODY" type thinking that we learned about back when we were first informed that we are not just individual "sons" who happen to be gathered together in one room or in one building—but rather, *we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another!*

- And we, indeed, are returning to that issue one more time. But now, there is a **big difference!** Because now we have 3 Major Features or Characteristics to Godly Love effectually operating in our inner man (Selfless; Lovingkindness; & Tenderheartedness) - along with all the Godly Conduct & Behavior and Godly Labor that goes along with them.

- And therefore that means that (:16) isn't a review of (:3-8), nor is it a restatement of it (or a re-hash of it) - but what you've got here is actually an **ADVANCEMENT** upon all that doctrine—and that's natural and necessary due to what God has designed for a local assembly to do—and for what we are going to be educated in later on in our Sonship Education.

- So this not only finishes off our initial *instruction of wisdom*, but at the exact same time, it provides for this entire form of doctrine to be 'attached' to the next form of doctrine, and the next, and the next.

- And while that may seem 'foggy' and vague right now—it will become crystal clear as we go on.

- But my point right here is to get you to see that a particular group of people are being dealt with in the context: SAINTS in the loc. assem.

- And since all 3 sentences are gathered into this one verse; *saints* are in view in all 3 sentences.

- Meaning that *being of the same mind one toward another* has to do with us as saints being *of the same mind one toward another*.

- And then when it comes to *Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate*. — my understanding is that the "*men of low estate*" are SAINTS as well! (We're not talking about Unbelievers or Lost People that are of "*low estate*")!

- And *Being not wise in your own conceits*—is talking about YOU as a *saint* being not *wise in your own conceits* **in regard to other saints** in the local assembly where you gather together!

- So all of (:16) is dealing with an **advance** (now that we have the Selfless, Kind, Tenderhearted Godly Love) - (:16) is an advance on how we Think, Live, & Labor with other saints in the local assembly.

- There are some other things that need to be addressed; and some additional information that needs to go with our 3-fold Features of Godly Love—that, by their effectual working will bring to a completion our initial *instruction of wisdom*.

- There's one other area of wise, decision-making skill-sets that you have to have in order to be able to make wise sonship decisions in every detail of your life. (And this 6th Component is it!)

- And really—this final Component takes every element you've learned about Godly Love as a Wise decision-making skill-set—and by means of the instruction you get here in (:16), we're going to put that Godly Sonship Wisdom to use—and now all these things can be incorporated into some particular situations whereby, due to how you've already been taught by the course of this ungodly world, your natural inclination is to just naturally come along and handle some saints (in these particular situations) in a completely UNGODLY manner because you DON'T *condescend* to their *low estate*!

- And this final component is going to instruct you on how to Think, Live, and Labor with saints of *low estate*—which, even though you may not be able to completely get a grip on what that all means in this introduction—it tells you that there are those saints that you're going to deal with that maybe lacks the understanding you have—or maybe they don't learn as quickly—or maybe they're feeble-minded—or one of those *weaker brothers*—but the truth of the matter is, and to kind of put it in a 'nutshell', **this is an advanced issue of how to deal with each other in difficult circumstances.**

- And it's going to take **work** on your part—and **effort** on your part to deal with them—and there's a **godly viewpoint** you have to have in order to, (as a son), properly deal with them that are of *low estate*.

- And in order to *prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God* in this case—it's going to take **everything** you've learned in the first 5 Components (in addition to this 6th Comp.) in order to deal with these saints properly and after a godly manner!

- And that means that if you **didn't** get those other 5 Components effectually working in your inner man—**this 6th Component has NO CHANCE of working!**

- So therefore the *instruction of wisdom* completes a circle whereby you come back to some advanced issues of how to wisely deal with each other in a very particular and difficult circumstance (naturally difficult).

- And the doctrine of our *instruction of wisdom* begins with how you are to think about yourself (properly viewing **others** *and* yourself as a **body** and **members of the body of Christ**) to whom God has *dealt to every man the measure of faith*—and it ends with *not minding high things* (just like not thinking too highly of yourself) - but there's going to be members of the assembly that are of *lower estate* than you.

- Whether it's because they haven't received the education as readily—or because they have a natural deficiency in their intelligence—or whatever—but that's something you're going to encounter.

- So we can go to our Simplified Outline of our *instruction of wisdom* Chart (#42) - and put the 6th Component on the board:

- And when we first outlined (:3-16), we had: that the 6th Component is designed to deal with:

Godly Love among others in difficult circumstances.

- but we can now make that a little more precise by saying that the 6th Component deals with:

6) Godly Love among other saints of low estate.

(or GL in our dealings with other saints of low estate.)

- (That's something that was missing from our *wisdom* in dealing with one another in the 1st Component—but now [after getting the first 5 Components effectually working], our Father can now address it—and give us His wisdom for dealing with this issue that completes the last detail of our initial *instruction of wisdom*.)

- And for the 6th time—since Godly Edification is still in view—we know that (:16) is going to address each of the 3 issues involved in **godliness** (or God-like-ness).

- And (:16) has those 3 complete sentences—and my understanding is that each of the 3 sentences addresses one Aspect of Godliness:

(#44) 1) The Godly Thinking:

Be of the same mind one toward another.

2) The Godly Living (Conduct & Behavior):

Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate.

3) The Godly Labor:

Be not wise in your own conceits.

- Here in (:16) you're taught the Godly way to Think (*Be of the same mind one toward another.*); the Godly way to Live (*Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate.*); and the Godly way to Labor with your Father for the benefit of that individual saint (*Be not wise in your own conceits.*)

- [Rather than to marginalize that individual—or prefer not to deal with that individual!]

- And one of the major reasons why it comes last in the *instruction of wisdom* is because everything else has to be in place in order to properly Think, Live, and Labor in connection with those individual saints that are in these particular kinds of circumstances. (*being of low estate*).

- Now to kind of finish off this introduction and the Pre-Doctrinal Exhortation that it needs to be—I'm going to do something a little bit different than what we've previously done—and that is, when you look at the 3 sentences that make up the 3 Aspects of Godliness (& Godly Edification), we have a bit of a problem with some vocabulary that we haven't ever encountered before.

- And that never-before-encountered vocabulary is sitting in the 2nd sentence (or the 2nd Aspect of Godliness: The Living Aspect).

- We have the words **“high things”** (never encountered before in the book of Romans).

- We have the word **“condescend”** (which is the only time in the entire Bible that that word is used).

- And we have the words **“low estate”** (which have never been encountered before in the book of Romans).

- And my understanding is that there is something that's sitting in (:16) that everything else kind of 'revolves around' (so to speak) - and that's that issue of what it means to be *of low estate* in the middle section dealing with our Conduct & Behavior.

- And therefore it would seem (& rightly so) that the exact opposite of that is what is wrapped up in that expression of minding "**high things**".

- And just by the vocabulary used here—the *high things* and the *men of low estate* are kind of like being on two opposite ends of a pole.

- And so when it comes to being able to know exactly what the Godly Thinking of the 1st statement is going to be 'zeroing' in on—(that makes a DIFFERENCE from anything we've encountered already) — and when it comes to appreciating just what the Godly Labor will be all about—(that also makes it a bit DIFFERENT from anything we've encountered already) — it seems like that unique terminology that is descriptive of something about **us** (in contrast to **other** members of the body of Christ) that's wrapped up in this "*high things*" and/or "*low estate*" situation—it seems like that's the **vital concept** that we need to make sure that we understand and appreciate it precisely.

- And if my understanding is correct—that not only 'seems' to be the case—but that **IS** the case.

- And by doing it this way—it's not that we're skipping over the Godly Thinking of *being of the same mind one toward another*—but it's just that there is some information and some unique terminology that we have never encountered yet that is going to be very **helpful** when it comes to describing what the Godly Thinking is going to be about here that leads to this Godly Conduct & Behavior —

— because when Paul deals with that middle expression about our C & B, he doesn't describe what "*high things*" are; or what it is for a man to be "*of low estate*" — that's just assumed to be understood as soon as it's said.

- So if it isn't something, therefore, that we already have a clear recognition of—then it's not a matter of 'taking things out of order' to deal with it first and foremost—in fact, it's a matter of Vocabulary Control—it's a matter of making sure that we understand the terminology that's being used **before** we get to it and have to deal with it in its placement within the context.

- So what we're going to have to do at this point is to get a proper understanding and appreciation for what it means **IN THIS CONTEXT** to be "*men of low estate.*"

- What does the word "*estate*" mean?

- ***Estate*** = (Webster's 1828) - the radical root [from the French & Latin] means "state" - also, to "set" or "fix."

- This is one of those words in our English Language that, over time, has **lost** a lot of its meaning—and has been narrowed down to almost mean only **one** thing:

- Today, we most commonly think of *estate* as meaning a person's interests or holdings—a person's worldly possessions; his fortune; such as his real estate; his money, his houses, lands, and possessions — a man's *estate* is commonly only thought of today as what a person owns or possesses that gets divided up upon his death to those in his will (for an inheritance), or to be seized by the state (if he doesn't have a will). [Ex., "An *estate* sale." "*estate* planning"]

- But *estate* can mean more than that—in fact, that isn't even its most basic and fundamental meaning at all.

= in the general sense, fixedness; a fixed condition or state.
= the condition or circumstances of any person or thing, whether high or low.

OED = A state or condition in general, whether material or moral, bodily or mental.

= A person's status, standing, position in the world; degree of rank or dignity; his class, order or rank in a community.

- And more often than not—the way in which we most often think about that word *estate* is in connection with the material possessions that might belong to a person—and if they have a lot of possessions, then we talk about them as being of "**high estate**" - or if they have only a few possessions, we talk about them being of "**low estate.**" But that really doesn't handle adequately enough the way in which the apostle Paul uses this word. [and what it means to GOD!]

- (In fact, Paul only uses this word **one** other time in his writings [over in Col. 4:8] - although he does use it one time in his “defence” at Jerusalem in Acts 22:5).

- [Paul uses the word “*state*” 4x; 3x in Phil. and 1x in Colossians].

- And—it’s interesting the way the apostle Paul uses both the words *state* and *estate* in those 2 adjoining epistles of Philippians and Colossians (under Level II Sonship Education) —

- Paul talks to the Philippians about sending Timothy to them and he will naturally care for their *state*—and Paul wants to know their *state* — and yet, when it comes to the Colossians, and what he’s concerned about in connection with them—he wants to know about their *e-state*!

- And the 2 words **are** slightly different—although they come from the same root—and therefore there is a great deal of commonness to them—in fact, the word *state* is utilized in defining the word *estate*. (And there’s nothing wrong with that).

- And so what has to be recognized is that: someone’s *state* is actually **part** of their *estate*.

- Therefore, your *estate* is **bigger** than your *state*!

- So with that basic recognition—(and just to pick up on something we saw in the definition of the word *estate*) - and that being that an *estate* really is **more** than material possessions—but it is also the moral, bodily, or mental state of a person—and that gives the word *estate* a much **broader** use than it normally gets.

- And that needs to be taken into account here in Romans, and in the way God uses the term in His word.

- So when Paul talks about “*men of low estate*” - especially when he puts it in contrast to the ‘polar opposite’ of it in the first phrase of that middle sentence—when he talks about “*Mind not high things,*” - Paul already, therefore, has a plural concept in mind with the “*high things*” - and therefore when he says to “*condescend to men of low estate*” it’s supposed to automatically be understood that: **there are numerous things that could therefore qualify a man to be considered in a “low estate”**.

- Now at this point—there’s something **important to recognize** here about the way in which this 6th Component is being taught to us—and by the way in which God expects its effectual working to effectually work within us—(as I pointed out: you have these 2 ‘polar opposites’ [so to speak] of “*high things*” being on the one end; and then “*low estate*” being on the other end) - and our Father gives us this information in such a way that **we are always to recognize ourselves as being IN THE MIDDLE!**

- In other words—you’re going to always be encountering other members of the church, the body of Christ that are, (for whatever reason), are of a HIGHER ESTATE than you; and you’re always going to be able to encounter other members of the church, the body of Christ that are of a LOWER ESTATE than you!

- And therefore everything that (:16) says is being said, **relative to ourselves!**

- And therefore EVERY member of the church, the body of Christ is going to be able to APPLY IT!!!

- (For example—someone who I look at as being of a *lower estate* than I am, looks at me as being of a *higher estate* than he is—and he may see someone else as being in a *lower estate* than himself—etc., etc.)

-So what’s being said here is going to be applicable to every member of the church, the body of Christ in a local assembly situation—no matter if they are of a *higher estate* themselves or if they are of a *lower estate* themselves! (Because there will always be some saint that you’re going to encounter at sometime that will be either *higher* or *lower* than you are.)

- Now getting back to the issue of the “*men of low estate*” issue—again, it’s a much broader concept than what is most commonly recognized—and just to kind of put a ‘working definition’ on it (and bring it into the kind of context we have here in Rom. 12:16) — someone’s *estate* is **a condition that someone is in; or the state that someone is in because of things that either pertain to him; belong to him; and/or are possessed by him, that you have to deal with when it comes to you dealing with him.**

- And that's really the distinguishing issue in connection with someone's *estate*—and utilizing the word *estate* as distinct from (and more comprehensive than) their *state*.

- Because you can know someone's *state*—and not really ever have to **deal** with them—(or at least not have to deal with them at the present time that you know about [or are informed of] their *state*).

- But whenever you are dealing with someone's *estate*—you're dealing with their *state*, (the condition they're in), by means of whatever pertains to them, belongs to them, or is possessed by them—and you're going to have to deal with them: and as you do, **all these things become factors in your dealing with them!** (or could become factors in your dealing with them)

- And even though we most often don't think about this word *estate* having this distinguishing feature to it of **personally having to deal with someone** by means of what pertains to them; belongs to them; and is possessed by them — even though we commonly don't think about that issue of personally having to deal with them—especially in a financial or legal way—it's still there, latent in the word *estate*.

- For example—when someone is planning their *estate*, or when an *estate* is being settled—you're dealing with the person who possesses the *estate* (who owns it—or used to own it if he died) — and you now have to deal with the person based upon what he possesses (or possessed).

- If you're the executor of the will—or the attorney, or the Judge in a court of law (or whatever) — the word *estate* is not only describing the things that pertains to him/belongs to him/are possessed by him — but it's also describing the fact that you now have to **deal** with that person on the basis of these things!

- And that's the **real critical issue** here!

- And that's why it's used here in (:16)! (Because we're back once again to dealing with the issue of some further Godly Thinking; some further Godly C & B; some further Godly Labor when it comes to dealing with *one another* as saints in a local assembly situation!)

- And we not only have the issue of us being *members one of another* ‘in play’ — but at times (and more times than not) our dealings with other saints in a local assembly situation is going to involve us dealing with them on a basis of their *estate*!
- There’s going to be things about them—genetically or physically; culturally; of a social nature; of an educational nature; intelligence-wise—and all sorts of things that make up matters that pertain to them; belong to them; are possessed by them and so forth—that can become **factors** in our dealings with them.
- And the general ‘thrust’ of what (:16) is going to provide for us to be able to **wisely** do—(regardless of the *estate* that any member of the church, the body of Christ is in, in relation to ourselves— *higher* or *lower* [it makes no difference]) — is that **we will be able to deal with them without those *estate* issues causing problems!**
 - (Or if there are *estate* issues that could cause problems, they can be overcome!)
- And if you think of it—that IS something that we need to have some **wisdom** with respect to—because *estate* issues **are inescapable!**
- And there are times when *estate* issues can become BIG issues!
- And in order for a local assembly to continue to function as God has designed it to function—and for it to be able to **advance**—and for it to be able to acquire the capacities to be able to do **more** than just the fundamental, foundational Operations that God has designed an assembly to do—every member of the church, the body of Christ in the assembly has to know how to **wisely** deal with *estate* issues with the rest of the members in the assembly!
- And that’s why this issue is dealt with **last**.
- When you consider the general Sense & Sequence and flow of the wisdom that we’re being given—it’s come in a very particular manner—it not only started with the natural, first-things-first issue of Selfless Love unto Godly Lovingkindness—but it’s also going to conclude now, with the most natural thing that it needs to conclude with, and to ‘round itself off’ with, so that all of the fundamental Operations that God has designed a loc. assem. to participate in with

Him—and to accomplish with Him—in its initial existence: can get accomplished.

- And this last issue is the one that provides for the **full capacity** for us (the saints) in our assembly to bring the Godly Lovingkindness to its first level of maturity as far as a ‘point’ or ‘level’ of attainment is concerned—which will enable our wise Lovingkindness and our local assembly to therefore to be able to take on further Operations that will be coming up and be introduced to it as our Sonship Education proceeds on.

- And this last issue of us as sons and saints in our local assembly to be able to cope with/ properly handle/ and deal with/ and not get ‘tripped up’ by or impeded by *estate* differences that will naturally exist among us—when by the effectual working of this 6th Component, that issue is all dealt with—then there will be a level of maturity that an assembly of saints reaches and attains unto—and a level of **smoothness** of Operations amongst ourselves that enables us to therefore ‘flex some muscles’ (so to speak) - and take on some more Operations.

- And this issue being the final one within the Sense & Sequence of *wisdom* that we’re given here in our initial *instruction of wisdom* — and wrapping up the package (so to speak) of the Form of Doctrine that it is—that makes it so that once that’s all accomplished, the corresponding Exhortations that apply can be realized and grasped (found back there in the book of Proverbs) - and once the Positive & Proper response is there for the full, initial *instruction of wisdom*—it provides us with the ability (as individual sons AND as a local assembly as a whole) to be able to go on—to have acquired skills and capacities to take on more sonship responsibility.

- And this is something we’re going to have to get used to as a general issue in Sonship Education—

—and that’s the general issue with us in this Dispensation of Grace and the environment in which we exist (individually) as well as being in a local assembly situation—because our Sonship Education not only provides for a “son” to go on in his individual edification; but at the same time, it provides for our assembly to go on in its edification—and when an assembly goes on in its edification, it takes on the further responsibilities of some further Operations to participate in **as an assembly!**

- So this issue of ‘differing *estates*’ that saints have—God’s got His way of handling that—and the world (Dr. Phil; Oprah; psychologists) have got their way of handling it, too—even so-called “Christian Psychologist” have got their way of dealing with ‘human relations.’

- The *world* has its way of coping with things that make people ‘different’ - and that come under the umbrella of people’s *estate*.

- But the issue for you is—your Father doesn’t want you (as His son) *conformed to this world* and utilizing **its** methodology!

- Because that simply **won’t cut it**—it won’t work in connection with being able to function as a son (here on earth), or in one of those positions of intelligentsia in *the creature!*

- So we need to understand God’s methodology—and He’s got some particular Thinking that produces some particular Con. & Beh. that provides for some Laboring together with Him in a **particular way** when it comes to dealing with **estate differences** amongst the saints in a loc. assembly.

- Now before dealing with the details of (:16) - I think it would be profitable for us to just look at some examples of these ***estate differences*** that would be more common ones for us to encounter that the apostle Paul deals with in his epistles—on out in our Curriculum for Sonship Education. — And Paul will oftentimes address these ***estate differences*** without ever using the word *estate*—because once you know what one’s *estate* is (and is to God), you know, therefore, that these things are features of, or components of, or things that come under the umbrella of someone’s *estate*.

- First of all—later on in the book of Romans—when we get to our *instruction of Equity* in chapter 14—the whole issue of dealing with a “weaker brother” is the issue of dealing with a member of the local assembly **that has a number of estate differences between you and him**—based primarily upon the fact that you have learned an awful lot more than he has.

- (read Romans 14:1-8)

- And what's going to primarily be focused upon over in our *instruction of Equity*—(especially in connection with a “weaker brother”) - are: **Edificational ‘Estate Differences’**.

- And it doesn't take very long for an assembly to be in operation before Edificational Estate Differences begin to manifest themselves. (and they can cause some problems!)

- And (by the way) - this is one of the reasons why this has to be dealt with in our *instruction of wisdom*—because (as I've said many times already) - in the order of *Wisdom, Justice, Judgment, & Equity*—that order **has** to exist, because the last thing that's dealt with (*Equity*) - in order for someone to conduct themselves in an equitable manner with other people, it requires them to be exercising *Wisdom, Justice, and Judgment*.

- Those 3 things are necessary for *Equity* to be exercised!

- And part of the *Wisdom* that's going to enable the *weaker brother* to be handled properly by ones who are *strong in the faith*—is that he already has in operation the effectual working of some Godly Thinking that is NOT going to make a big issue out of Estate Differences—and that's going to produce some Godly C & B that is going to have him ‘**unrestrained**’ in his dealings with other saints in the assembly, regardless of whether they are of a “higher estate” than he is—or whether they are of a “lower estate” than he is.

- And that's going to produce within you as a son, the capacity to Labor with God with **all** of the saints in the assembly—**without a ‘tinge’ of conceit!**

- And with *Wisdom* already effectually working within you as a son—and then with some particular aspects of our *instruction of Justice* (that will be applicable even to a *weaker brother*) - and then especially with the things that you learn in connection with your *instruction of Judgment*—then that “*strong one in the faith*” is going to be able to look at a *weaker brother*, and to not only be able to AVOID “*doubtful disputations*” - but actually do things that **promote** (and can even ‘**fast-track**’) that *weaker brother's* Godly Edifying!

- (And that's what the goal of the Equitable treatment of the *weaker brother* is!) [And that's a marvelous privilege that the son who is “*strong in the faith*” has!]

- And so the magnitude of the roll of this 6th & final Component to our fundamental *instruction of Wisdom* (here in :16) is the beginning of all that—it deals with the fundamentals regarding Estate Differences—and it deals with them as an overall ‘scope’ of what can be involved in it all. (broad & general)

- And Edificational Estate Differences is one of the most common Estate Differences of them all. (that is, in a local church setting)

- But there can be many more Estate Differences:

(see I Thess. 5:14)

- A Mental Capacity Estate Difference—there’s just slower learners than others—even if they start off at the exact same time, learning the exact same subject matter) - and the truth is, some saints are *feeble minded*—(that can be an Estate Difference of a spiritual nature or of a mental nature).

- It doesn’t have anything to do with how much money they’ve got; how big of a house they’ve got; or anything along those lines.

- It’s one of those ‘intangible’ type Estate Differences.

(see I Timothy 6:6-10; 17-19)

- A Society Estate Difference (high or low) - that is, how society looks at us (or how they ‘pigeonhole’ us) or how they describe us.

- And your **job** can come under this category of Estate Differences—(because some are going to have a far better paying job than others).

- Societal Estate Differences are like: “White-Collar Workers; Blue-Collar Workers” - [and that’s an Estate Difference in the estate of society.]

- In fact, we have an expression: The 5 Estates of Society—1) The Church or Clergy; 2) The Nobility or Ruling Class; 3) The Common People; 4) The Press or Media; 5) The Underclass—trades, unions, (some consider the electronic media as the 5th)

- Those are all based upon the educational and the job-related professions that people have within a society—and those differences can come under someone's *estate*.

(see Galatians 4:13-15)

- Physical Health Estate Differences—There can even be Estate Differences where Health is concerned—and in fact, Paul's own health could have been the cause of problems were it not for some effectual working of Godly *wisdom, justice, judgment, & equity*.

(see Titus 2:1-8)

- Age Estate Differences—and sometimes you've got some Estate Differences where children are concerned; where young people are concerned; and where the 'aged' are concerned—that all have a bearing upon how much and how well a person can learn; can comprehend; and can even apply the doctrine being taught in the local assembly.

- Limited physical capacities and limited mental capacities can all become *estate* issues of either a "high" or "low" nature.

- Age-wise, a person may be in the "prime" of their life—but maybe they've got Multiple Sclerosis—or are wheelchair bound—or whatever.

- And these things—(if not dealt with properly—if not *wisely* dealt with, with Godly *wisdom*) - they can all cause problems in and with the assembly—and can cause that assembly to NOT be the close-knit entity that God has designed it to be!

- So all these things—and even more than this—can come under the 'umbrella' of someone's *estate*—which (again) is primarily the condition that someone is in, because of things that **pertain to him; belong to him; or are possessed by him—and that can become a factor in your dealings with them!**

- Now—are there any Questions—or any problems with this issue of what Paul means (and what it means to God) when it comes to the "*high things*" and the "*men of low estate*" issue in (:16)? [We'll deal with the other new terminology as we go through the verse itself].

- Now with just this much—you should be greatly encouraged and greatly Exhorted to get this final, 6th Component of Wisdom!

- Because, for one thing—every single one of you have some kind of an “Estate Difference” that’s going to need to have this Component of Wisdom effectually working **in someone else** in this assembly—so that when it comes to dealing with **you**, those Estate Differences **WON’T BECOME A FACTOR** in dealing with you as a son!

- And just to reiterate what I said before—by saying it to us the way our Father does—it puts our perspective in the MIDDLE of the “*high things*” and the “*low estate*” - and therefore, every single one of us (even the children) can APPLY this Wisdom to and in our own local assembly!

- And that’s my Exhortation to you—that’s the natural and needful reason for why our Father (as the last Component), included this 6th Component in His *instruction of wisdom!*

- And the really exciting thing is—that if you go back to what we were told about *the creature* in our Sonship Establishment — we were told that it was “**made subject to vanity**” — and I’m beginning to understand and appreciate that there’s far more to that expression than ‘meets the eye’ (so to speak)!

- Because out in the *creature* are all these various levels of administrative and government and rulership positions (principalities; powers; might; thrones; dominions) — **and Estate Differences are a real thing in that realm!**

- And right now (with the characters that are occupying those positions) there is NO GODLY WISDOM when it comes to those Estate Differences! (There is nothing but **rulers of darkness** out there—nothing but **spiritual wickedness in those high places!**)

- And when it comes to *being made subject to vanity*—what is the most powerful and intensified form of *vanity*? (What’s one of the synonyms for *vanity*?) — **CONCEIT!!!**

- All of those angelic beings that make up the intelligentsia of *the creature* at this present time are a bunch of CONCEITED beings! (being the cohorts of the Adversary that they are!)

- And when you're talking about a BODY that has intelligent, structured organization—that has positions of rulership and administration—the truth is: **CONCEIT WILL KILL OR RENDER TOTALLY INEFFECTIVE (and ineffectual) A BODY OF ORGANIZED RULERSHIP FASTER THAN ANYTHING WILL!**

- That's one of the major reasons why our Government has been, is, and will continue to be ineffectual & ineffective to properly rule and govern our country!

- Can you imagine what it would be like—and what could be accomplished—if every person in Congress (and every body of Congress) were *of the same mind one toward another—minded not high things, but condescended to men of low estate—and were not wise in their own conceits????* (from the lowest 'dog-catcher' all the way to the President of the United States?)

- In fact—there is one form of our Government's Establishment that puts this issue of having no *conceit* at a **premium**—and that's our Military Establishment!

- The Military attempts to (as much as they can, and *worldly* as they are), neutralize Estate Differences!

- Which is why—when you enter the Military Service, everyone gets the same hair cut—gets the same clothes—the same shoes/boots—sleeps in the same place—eats the same food—gets up at the same time—exercises the same—etc. (Regardless of who your 'daddy' is—or how rich you are—or how poor you are).

- And the Military has a phrase for this thing: they call it, "Unit Cohesiveness" — **and it's a Life or Death issue on the battlefield!** (And it may not seem like a 'big deal' to the average 'grunt' [or enlisted man] - but it IS a big deal to every Officer/Leader who are going to lead those men into battle!)

- You may be a 'Rockefeller' and your Commanding Officer may be a dirt farmer from Iowa—but he may have to order you into a 'spider hole' to kill the enemy!!!

- And if Estate Differences and **Conceit** ‘rule the day’ in that Unit—**men are going die!** and battles (and possibly the war) are going to be lost!!

- And God has His own terminology for what it means for us, the members of the church, the body of Christ to *not be wise in our own conceits*—and when those Estate Differences have been overcome by means of His Godly Wisdom:

- He says that we are **TEMPERED** together (I Cor. 12:24) — we are **COMPACTED** (Eph. 4:16) — we are **KNIT** together (Col. 2:2; 19)!

- *** And this means that when it comes to us being placed in and occupying those positions of ‘intelligentsia’ out in the *creature* (whether it be a position of a *principality, power, might, or dominion*) - from “top” to “bottom” (or from “high” to “low”) - **there will be NO CONCEIT—no arrogance, no ungodly pride, no inordinate ambition, no jealousy, NO VANITY** — there will be absolute and perfect **smoothness** of operation when we as the *new creature* of the church, the body of Christ *liberate* the *creature* from its *bondage of corruption!* ***

- And that’s a bit more understanding and appreciation to what we were told in our Sonship Establishment (Rom. 8:30) when we were told that: *Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, **them he also glorified*** — You’ve been **glorified** as a son in whatever position in the *creature* you occupy! (In other words, you’re *glorified* as a son (and *joint-heir with Christ*) in a “low” position, and you are *glorified* as a son (and *joint-heir with Christ*) in a “high” position!)

- Now let’s be sure that we don’t make a mistake here—(and get confused) — remember that illustration I used about the Military Establishment dealing with Estate Differences? — well, they have their way of doing it—and they have their methods for doing it—and they have their terminology for it—AND GOD HAS HIS! — **and God’s methodology** (as well as His terminology) **is totally different than the Military’s (or than *the world’s!*)**

- I only used the Military as an illustration of a group or body of people that still recognize Estate Differences and the need to not allow those Estate Differences to become problems or factors in reaching the aims, goals, and objectives of that organization.

- Again, that illustration **has a bunch of problems with it** if you try to make it fit into what you're being taught here by your Father as His son! (That's NOT the way a "son" handles Estate Differences!)

- Because—for instance—can you imagine a Drill Sergeant or Drill Instructor ever "*condescending*" to those Estate Differences???

- Truth is—God's methodology for dealing with Estate Differences within the local assembly is **RADICALLY** different from that—(it's almost the exact **OPPOSITE** of it) — and it certainly runs totally counter to the *wisdom of men* and the *wisdom of this world!!!*

- Now do you see how critical this is? And are you now exhorted to get this Component of Wisdom? Are you crying, *Abba, Father* all the more? (well then let's look at the further details of this final, 6th Component of Wisdom).

- The Aspect of Godly **Thinking** of this 6th Component is that first sentence of (:16) — ***Be of the same mind one toward another.***

- Now although this may sound similar to what we were first taught back in the 1st Component of Wisdom—(back in :3—*For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.*) — the truth is, this is a **MAJOR ADVANCE** upon that issue!

- For one thing—by the time you get to (:16), you now have 5 other Components of Wisdom effectually working within you. (5 Aspects of Godly Thinking / C & B / Labor)

- Plus, you now have 3 Major Features of Godly love effectually working within you—(Selflessness; Lovingkindness; and Tenderheartedness).

- That being said—we do, however, have some terminology that does indeed take us ‘full-circle’ — and that terminology is that phrase: ***one toward another*** — and that **does** take us back to dealing with *one another* in our local assembly (unlike the way we were dealing with *distributing to the necessity of saints* as we did in [:13]), but really in an advanced way of dealing with *one another* as a BODY (with all that “body” type thinking, living, and labor).

- It’s an **advancement** upon the Body-Type Thinking; the Body Attributes of Conduct & Behavior [Usefulness; Cooperation; Servant; Welfare]; and the Laboring in one of the Edificational or Practical Needs Offices.

- So now with all that in view—and with the additional 4 other Components now effectually working—we arrive at this Final Component and we know that it’s designed by our Father for the purpose of getting us as sons to utilize His Wisdom in order to wisely deal with other saints/sons in our assembly who (for whatever reason) find themselves in the **difficult circumstances** of being in a **different Estate** than you are—and not allowing those Estate Differences to become a **problem** or a **factor** in dealing with them as fellow members of the *one body in Christ* that you yourself are.

- And the Godly Thinking—the **radically different** Thinking from what you received from *this world* (that *conformed* you to it) - the Thinking that *transforms* you by the *renewing of your mind* and challenges your old thinking from the *world* is: ***Be of the same mind one toward another.***

- Now—if you take just this statement alone (all by itself) - you’d be hard pressed to be able to say (or answer the question), “How is this an advance upon the 1st Component?” - or - “Just how am I to be *of the same mind one toward another?*”

- And if all you had is this one statement—you might be inclined to think that what God is saying is: ‘Have the same mind toward everybody.’ — or, in other words, ‘Treat every person in the assembly as **equals.**’

- But that is NOT what this is saying at all! In fact, it’s just the **opposite** of that!

- In fact—treating every person as “equal” is the thinking and the wisdom of *this world*!!!

- This is actually one of those instances where the first sentence or first statement can only be understood as a part of a ‘**package**’ of information—and it can only be understood and appreciated as it is defined by the remaining information in the whole ‘package.’

- And to be more specific—that first statement (the sentence that makes up the Aspect of Godly Thinking) has to be understood strictly by what sits in the second or middle statement (of the Godly Living Aspect) - that is, ***Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate.***

- And that’s one of the reasons why we had to cover some of that information first—before we addressed the first statement of ***Be of the same mind one toward another.***

- You just can’t pin down, “In what sense are we to be *of the same mind one toward another?*” without the information contained in the middle section.

- So when we are told to *be of the same mind one toward another*—that’s NOT the issue of thinking of one another *as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith* (as was stated back in :3).

- When we’re told to *be of the same mind one toward another*—that’s NOT saying to think of one another as “**equals**”!

- And the truth is—*mindings not high things, but condescending to men of low estate*—(that Conduct & Behavior) actually describes in terms of our C & B what the Godly Thinking is really all about.

- And therefore the “**same mind**” we are to have “**one toward another**” - that *same mind* is that your *same* wise Thinking and my *same* wise Thinking is to always recognize that there are those in our assembly that have Estate Differences, (different than yours and different than mine)—and our *same mind* is to recognize those differences in others Estates as being either of a “**high things**” nature or of a “**low estate**” nature.

- Which means that our *sameness of mind* is to recognize that those Estate INEQUALITIES exist and are real—and the *sameness* of our Thinking (*mind*) is to be the **same** in *mindings not high things*, and to be the **same** in *condescending to men of low estate*.

- And if those Estate Differences were not wisely addressed and wisely dealt with—they would cause problems, divisions, or space between saints or lack of fellowship or ‘clicks’ being formed.

- (The “body” is NOT supposed to have “space” between its joints and body parts!) — it’s supposed to be “*compact*” and “*knit together*.”

- The issue with us as sons, therefore, is that we are to have **complete equality of Thinking** regarding those who are of UNEQUAL Estate.

- In connection with those already in our assembly—and especially those who arrive “new” to our assembly once our Sonship Education has already gotten itself underway.

- An assembly is going to have these Estate Differences—but we are not to think one bit differently about those saints with regard to **who they are** as being fellow members of the church, the body of Christ—or in regard to **what they can do** in the church, the body of Christ any different than yourself or anybody else!

- And this **is** a uniquely *wise* way of Thinking—because the *world* teaches you that the “politically correct” way to think is to just think that all persons are equal—and it attempts to teach that you’re to think that there are no such things as Estate Differences—or that, by just waking into a class room in a public school, or university, that “In here, we’re all equal” — and the result is to modify the curriculum to the ‘lowest common denominator’ or something like that.

- Which is where something like “Affirmative Action” makes a mess of things because it says that the ‘politically correct’ way to think is that there are no such things as Physical Estate Differences—(which is where you get such things as someone who is far physically inferior who wants [for example] to be a fireman, is supposed to be allowed to be one simply because that’s considered “equal treatment.”

- That’s not *wise* Thinking; that’s **absurd** thinking!!!

- Your Father’s Thinking that’s being installed now in your mind is that, Yes, these Estate Differences are very real—I’m in the middle of those of a higher Estate and lower Estate—but I’m going to purposefully determine that these Estate Differences are not going to be a problem/factor in any of my dealings with these other saints.

- Your determination is that these Estate Differences are NOT going to produce division; discord; distance or any other inconsistencies with what you've already learned is true of you (as a son, and a body member of the church, the body of Christ) and every other saint as a fellow member of this body!

- Unlike the carnal Corinthians— I Cor. 1:10; 3:1-3 (:3); 11:17-19 (:18); 12:25
 :14-20 = Usefulness
 : 21-22 = Cooperate
 : 23-24a = Servant
 : 24b-26 = Welfare

- Being “*of the same mind*” recognizes that these Estate Differences do exist (and not ignoring them and not pretending that they're not real) — but rather, you choose to NOT allow them to impact your Thinking and your Fellowship with those other saints! (or the way that you're going to work together)

- (And it's **not** that “*high*” is better or superior and “*low*” is worse or inferior) — it's just that that's the **reality** of those Estate Differences—and you're going to determine that those Estate Differences won't hinder or be a problem or be a factor in your being able to fellowship with and work with that saint.

- And that can sometimes be much more difficult for those of a Higher Estate—because you may want to naturally gravitate towards them—and envy their High Estate—and for whatever reason you tend to fellowship with them more than others of a Lower Estate.

- Are there any questions with the Godly Thinking Aspect?
 (I think those of you in this assembly will have the biggest issue in regard to those Estate Differences that are of the Edificational variety more than any other—[more than the Educational or Societal \$\$]).

- I think that before we leave the Aspect of the Godly Thinking of this 6th Component of Wisdom that says: ***Be of the same mind one toward another.*** — defining what it means to *be of the same mind* in this particular context, I think needs to be stated more clearly and a bit more precisely than we've been able to say it up to this point.

- This final Component of our *instruction of wisdom* is having us confront Estate Differences that really do exist in our local assembly. And the Godly Thinking that challenges our natural thinking that has been for so long *conformed to this world* is that instead of either ignoring Estate Differences or seeking to get rid of Estate Differences by force (Military), or by coercion, or by psychology, or by any other means that the *wisdom of this world* utilizes—the Wisdom of our Father is that, as a “son” you DON’T get rid of those Estate Differences! — rather **you allow the Estate Differences to exist**, but by wisely *being of the same mind one toward another*, you do not think one bit differently about those saints with regard to **who they are** as **fellow members** of the church, the body of Christ—or in regard to **what they can do** in the church, the body of Christ, any different than you, yourself, or any other member of the church, the body of Christ!

- Now with that kind of Godly Thinking—it’s going to take some work and skill on your part to figure some things out in connection with this.

- Because (for example), some Estate Differences may be of a permanent nature (such as Physical or Mental EDs) - but some may not (such as Edificational Estate Differences).

- And in the case of Edificational Estate Differences—you’re going to allow those differences to exist until the **word of God itself** does the work to eliminate those Edificational Estate Differences! And until it does—your Godly Sonship Thinking towards them will be of the *same mind* you have toward yourself and every other member of the assembly.

- And far from being the ‘end’ of it—this is only the beginning—because some more Sonship Decision-making Skills are going to come along and latch on to this basic, fundamental *wisdom*, and provide for that saint to be smoothly integrated into the body of the loc. assem., and to give the word of God the opportunity to *transform* them just as it has had to *transform* you!

- So in view of all the kinds of Estate Differences that can be found in the members of the local assembly of the *one body in Christ*—the Wise Godly Thinking toward them all is: ***Be of the same mind one toward another.***

- In any case—regardless of what the Estate Difference is—your wise Sonship Thinking is to determine that you are going to **deal with** and **fellowship with** that other member of the body of the loc. assem.—and you purposefully determine to not allow any Estate Difference to be a problem or a factor when it comes to dealing with him.

- You're going to take the Wisdom & Godly Love contained in those first 5 Components—and you're going to deal with a saint with Estate Differences by *being of the same mind toward* them as you have toward every other member of the loc. assem. in which you gather—and whatever Estate Differences there are, you determine that they will NOT be a problem or factor in your dealing with them.

- And that's sufficient to get the effectual working of the Godly Thinking of the 6th Component—(that's not the end of it)—but that's sufficient for the Wisdom of your Father's heart to 'live' in your heart and to deal with *one another* just as He Himself does!

- Questions?

- Now with the effectual working of the Godly Thinking of *Be of the same mind one toward another* in the local assembly—that's now going to have a natural 'outlet' for some Godly Living or Godly Conduct & Behavior which is stated in the 2nd sentence of (:16).

Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate.

(That's the Godly Conduct & Behavior)

- We've already said a lot about this statement, but let's look at some details we haven't talked about yet.

- The sentence is divided into 2 phrases —

- The 1st Phrase: ***Mind not high things,***

- When you're talking about *mind*ing something (or *not mind*ing something) - what does the word "***mind***" mean in that sense?

mind = to have your attention attracted to it; to place value on; to desire something; to pay heed to something/someone.

- When you “*Mind not high things*” - the nature of the Conduct & Behavior that we’re to have *one toward another* in the loc. assem., is that our behavior toward those in the assembly who are of “*high things*” or of a *high Estate* is that we are not to either be impressed with their *high Estate*; nor are we to admire it; nor be envious of it.

- And while that seems to describe more of the thinking rather than the Conduct & Behavior— “*mind*” is a thinking term—but it also is a term that expresses where our Behavior comes from—and therefore there’s an awful lot of Behavior that can come from and be described from this kind of terminology.

- For instance—those who are looked upon as being of a *high Estate* by others with admiration or envy or with favor over others ends up demonstrating that Ungodly Thinking by ‘**cliquish**’ Behavior. (Or by forming a **clique**—a small, exclusive group!)

- And church cliques are formed by the exact opposite of this: (by ‘Minding high things’!) — that is, it starts by ungodly admiration—and ungodly ambition. (A ‘mutual admiration’ society!) [you give undue/inordinate attention to that person!]

- And it is quite easy to recognize how you could think: “I sure wish ‘So-and-So’ came here and were a part of our assembly—just think how much money or how much prestige we would have if that person belonged here?!?!” (like a celebrity)

- But a “son” doesn’t think like that!

- When a son *Minds not high things*—he doesn’t see a person as better suited for the “body” [or the assembly] over another, just because they have a High Estate!

- And a son’s Conduct & Behavior, therefore, doesn’t “cater” to those of High Estate in the assembly—he doesn’t give particular attention to or solicit those of High Estate in the assembly—a son’s C & B isn’t patronizing—he doesn’t ‘curry favor’ of those of a High Estate.

- All those things are just fertile ground for *divisions* and *schisms* to form in the body!!! (And that’s **DEATH** to that body’s **functional life!**)

- That’s NOT body-type thinking or Behavior!

- Just remember—those who are of a High Estate could easily find themselves in the condition of being *of low estate* in the ‘blink of an eye!’

- Someone of who is rich or who has great wealth and finances could easily experience a financial reversal whereby the next time you see them in the assembly, they could be of the *low estate* category!

- And a “Sonship Body” or “Sonship Church” sees that person just as useful and just as important and just as beneficial even AFTER the financial reversal as it did before it! (How often do you think that happens in most churches today?)

- The exact same person could easily at one time be of a High Estate, and then at another time be of a Low Estate!

- So the “*mind*ing” in this middle sentence—while seeming to speak of the thinking—actually describes the son’s Conduct & Behavior—because if you’re *mind*ing a certain thing, it’s drawing your attention to it and there’s going to be a whole BUNCH of things you would DO in light of that.

- And if you DON’T *mind* it—your C & B is going to be **TEMPERED** from fawning or admiring or gravitating to (or avoiding) or whatever towards a person.

- A son never thinks or acts as if someone who is of a High Estate is far better to deal with than those who are not of a High Estate!

- Then the 2nd Phrase of that Middle sentence is:

... *but condescend to men of low estate.*

- What does *condescend* mean?

- **condescend** = (Webster 1828) To descend from the privileges of superior rank or dignity; to do some act to an inferior, which strict justice or the ordinary rules of civility do not require. Hence, to submit or yield as to an inferior, implying an occasional relinquishment of distinction. [quotes Rom. 12:16]

- *Condescending* is a term that can be used in both a good sense and a bad sense (like, “Don’t be condescending to me!”)

- (Charles Smith) - *Condescending* is a term which denotes no more than such a stooping to the condition of inferiors as is compatible with either humility (the good sense) or pride (the bad sense). There is a moral and practical *condescension* which is in the highest degree virtuous and graceful, as when the strong *condescend* to the weak; the wise to the ignorant; the bold to the timid; the up-right and self-controlled to the defects and infirmities of others. And there is a formal and ceremonious *condescension* which is compatible with a great amount of pride—carrying with it an assumption of the elevated or meritorious, and is in short an arrogant politeness.

- And this is NOT an issue of ‘pity’ - as if the one in a Lower Estate needs for you to show pity to him.

- OED = to come down voluntarily; to depart from the privileges of superiority by a voluntary submission; to sink willingly to equal terms with inferiors—[quotes Rom. 12:16]

- (Charles Crabb) - *Condescension* marks the act of *condescending* from one’s own height to yield to the satisfaction of others, rather than rigorously to exact one’s rights. — The infirmities, the wants, the defects and foibles of others call for *condescension*.

- A son’s wise *condescending to men of low estate* is to make sure that none of those Lower Estate Differences ever gives an **inkling** to that Lower Estate Saint, that there’s a problem between you and him — or a hindrance; or an obstacle; or a ‘wall’ or anything like that because of those Lower Estate Differences.

- *By condescending to men of low estate*—you’re ensuring that that saint never feels as if they are not important to the body; or not as welcome; or not as useful to the body!

- We’re to adopt a course of action to NOT allow any Estate Differences to present any problems to our fellowshiping with that person or any hindrances to the proper function of the body of the assembly.

- When a saint knows that his Low Estate Differences are well-known to others in the assembly—and then when a course of action is taken by others in the assembly that withdraws fellowship from them—when they are treated differently in light of their Low Estate—that’s not only harsh treatment—but it’s a very serious condition of the assembly.

- Because when that happens, the fully functioning Operations of God in that assembly no longer fully function!!!

- And again—you’re not given a whole bunch of examples and ‘cases’ of the kind of Conduct & Behavior you’re supposed to have—as an Adult Son, you’re supposed to figure that all out on your own!

- Any Questions about the Conduct & Behavior?

- With the Godly Thinking of *Be of the same mind one toward another*—and then with the natural ‘outlet’ of that Godly Thinking to be the Godly Conduct & Behavior of *Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate*—that then has a natural ‘outlet’ for you; and provides for you to Labor together with your Father *with* those saints in the local assembly to the full extent to which God has designed every saint in the assembly to function mutually together (*one with another*) without any hindrance occurring whatsoever with the cooperative efforts of the saints in it—by you *not being wise in your own conceits*.

- The Godly Labor is: ***Be not wise in your own conceits.***

- What is *conceit*?

- ***conceit*** = (Webster 1828) That which is conceived, imagined, or formed in the mind; idea; thought; image—Opinion; notion; fancy.

- OED = that which is conceived in the mind; a conception, notion, idea, thought; device—a personal opinion, judgment, or estimation that has been ‘colored’ by an overestimation of one’s own qualities; personal vanity or pride.

- (Crabb) - *Conceit* is a term that expresses the working of the imagination in its distorted state—*conceit* is the most severe expression of *vanity*—what we *conceit* is preposterous! (It is a species of *invention*.)

- And God doesn't think highly of "*inventions*" —

(Psa. 99:8 *Thou answeredst them, O LORD our God: thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their **inventions**.*)

(Psa. 106:29 *Thus they provoked him to anger with their **inventions**: and the plague brake in upon them.*)

(Psa. 106:39 *Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own **inventions**.*)

(Pro. 8:12 *I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty **inventions**.*)

- *Conceit* is nearly akin to INSANITY!

- (Crabb again) Some *conceit* themselves to be kings and queens (when they are not); some *conceit* themselves very learned while they know nothing; or very wise and clever, while they are exposing themselves to perpetual ridicule for their folly; or very handsome while the world calls them plain; or very peaceable while they are always quarrelling with their neighbors; or very humble while they are tenaciously sticking for their own.

- *Conceit* is a very offensive, disgusting and serious matter!

(Pro. 28:11 *The rich man is wise in his own **conceit**; but the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out.*)

(Pro. 26:16 *The sluggard is wiser in his own **conceit** than seven men that can render a reason.*)

[and my personal favorite] (Pro. 26:12 *Seest thou a man wise in his own **conceit**? there is more hope of a fool than of him.*)

- (again Crabb) (read from pg. 100)

- Now—with all that said about *conceit*—let's make sure that we're not just taking a Dictionary type understanding and forcing it upon the word of God—but rather that we get a more 'working' understanding of it in light of the **context** in which it sets!

- Sure enough, being *conceited* is the issue of pride and vanity of your own mind—[“a legend in his own mind?”] — and you’re just full of yourself and what you think you bring to a relationship or to the assembly.

- But in this CONTEXT—being *wise in your own conceits*—being that it’s the **very last thing** your Father tells you in this whole *instruction of wisdom*—my understanding is that it’s talking about you as a son, to NOT be *wise* in your own thoughts—that is, that you are to never think that YOU’VE been the one to **conceive this wisdom!**

- That is—that you are to never think that this body of information you’ve just *received* is somehow **your own wisdom**—it’s not God’s wisdom.

- And true enough, part of the context is that you are to not think that you have some natural special usefulness that you’re bringing to the assembly; or some special ability; or some special assignment because you have a Higher Estate than someone else (none of which is wrong).

- But as this **ends** the *instruction of wisdom* (and the very last word of it is that world *conceits*) — the Godly Labor is: now you have this fundamental package of Godly Wisdom that allows for you to make wise sonship decisions in every area of your life (starting with Godly Selfless Love; and then Lovingkindness; and then working with that Godly Love in your job and in the common circumstances in the world ‘at-large’; and then wisely dealing with saints & lost people with Godly Tenderheartedness; and finally dealing with these Estate Differences) - you now have this packet of Wisdom.

- And my understanding for this final Labor issue when Paul says *Be not wise in your own conceits*—as the Godly Labor in this final Component—my understanding is that the Operations of God can now be carried out by the assembly (you’ve *received* all this *wisdom*—we’ve even dealt with the Estate issues that can ‘trip up’ an assembly) - so now **go and Labor with your Father without an ounce of conceit involved!**

- (None of your own wisdom—none of ‘what you imagine’ should be done—not ever thinking for one instant that it’s your thinking and your wisdom).

- And now, for the first time in your life, you have the ability to *not be wise in your own conceits!* [That’s all you could be, before Rom. 12:3-16!]

- Your Godly Labor is to use what your Father just taught you—and what has now been *written on the fleshy tables of your heart*—and never ever inject into all that **your** wisdom; **your** imagination; or **your** preferences!

- And the Godly Labor is—now go out and function with this *wisdom* without any *conceit*!

- POST-DOCTRINAL EXHORTATION TO THE INSTRUCTION OF WISDOM:

- First of all—it's important that you realize that, indeed you have received the *instruction of wisdom* in 6 Components—but what's critical is that you understand and appreciate that these 6 Components are NEVER to be thought of or comprehended as 6 “categories” of doctrine—that is, these Components that make up your initial *instruction of wisdom*—the expectation is that as you have learned it; and as you go about applying it in and to the details of your life (and make wise use of it) - that you **do** use it as the “FORM” of doctrine that is it!

- Because it's NOT designed to operate as ‘categories’ of doctrine—or in a *compartmentalized* manner that doesn't have each of the individual Components being ‘linked’ to all of the others!

- Rather, it's designed to have each of those 6 Components ‘interfacing’ with each other—it's designed as **one big PACKAGE of initial wisdom!**

- And the Exhortations are designed to have in view the **whole** ‘package’ of initial wisdom—and the expectation is that you're (as a son) going to utilize it *as* a ‘package’ (as a whole)!

- And so you kind of have to ‘shift’ your thinking at this point away from viewing Romans 12:3-16 as individual Components—to now having received all 6 Components—to view the **whole** body of information as one big ‘package’ of wisdom.

- And by doing that in the Post-Doctrinal Phase—you're supposed to kind of ‘gauge’ or measure the usefulness of the whole package of *wisdom*—and ensure you're getting all of the benefits out of it that all of the effectual working of it has for you—and in so doing, prepare yourself (and provide for yourself) to be able to fully benefit from the NEXT form of Doctrine—which is our next *instruction* for our Sonship Education: our *instruction of Justice*. [Which is designed to follow immediately after *Wisdom*—and to attach itself to it—so that at the end of it (at the end of 13:7), then those 2 Forms of Doctrine (*Wisdom & Justice*) join together—and that then produces what's later on called “*sound wisdom*” and “*discretion*”.]

- REVIEW THE POSITIVE & PROPER RESPONSE of (PRO. 3:1-4).
- (after that) - Read all of Pro. 3:1-20 (the Post-Doctrinal Exhortation for the entire “Form” of doctrine of *receiving the instruction of wisdom*).
- (for :5-6 — see & review notes—from pgs. 579-586 of Ch.12)
- The proverbs contained in the Book of Proverbs and Chapter 3:1-20 are all designed to be Post-Doctrinal Exhortations and Encouragement from the Father to His son when His son has *received the instruction of wisdom* — and especially in light of the kind of potential problems or hindrances or opposition that the son is likely to encounter as the Father’s heart and *wisdom* begins to live in His son.
 - (:1-4) = The Positive & Proper Response of the son to the doctrine he’s just learned. (And this will be done for every Component to, & every Form of doctrine he learns from his Father). [It’s absolutely critical and essential and vital for Godly Edification to take place—and to make it so that the Living Words of the Living God, Live in YOU!]
 - (By the way—in connection with [:3 & the *mercy & truth* issue—see 14:22-23)
 - (:5-6) = Due once again to how we’re ‘wired’ by being for so long *conformed to this world*—once you as a son have received wisdom from your Father, the temptation will be: for you NOT to rely **totally** and **completely** upon the wisdom your Father has given you—(which is why you have the word “*all*” twice: once in :5 & once in :6!) — And the temptation will be to ‘integrate’ your Father’s wisdom with the wisdom of this world!
 - This isn’t supposed to be an education that ‘enhances’ or ‘supplements’ the one you’ve already had—this is full-on REPLACEMENT Education — and complete reliance upon it!
 - And one of the great ‘messes’ you’ll make of your Sonship Education is to try to mesh it with (or mate it up with) or combine it with the wisdom of this world! (The Corinthians did that in a big way! & it got them nothing but trouble!)
 - It’s not good enough just to do a right thing! (to give to the poor; to be a zealous worker; etc.)

- (:7-10) - [This one (especially :7) is very near to having just finished our *instruction of wisdom*—and what was said to us at the very end of it in Romans 12:16—*Be not wise in your own conceits.*]

- Now when David is talking about *health to your navel, and marrow to your bones*—while this issue will have effects upon your physical health—what is in view here is actually **your spiritual wellbeing**—and not just any wellbeing (or general spiritual wellbeing) - but it's a particular spiritual wellbeing that's in view—which involves the issue of a particular distress that comes from what is stated there in in (:7) - *Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.*

- "**fear the LORD**" = the issue of NOT wanting to ever disappoint your Father in light of all that He's invested in your education; and understanding all that He holds out for you—and not wanting in any way to *fail* to take advantage of that—and it's the **fear** of failing or being foolish in His eyes! (Even more than 'fearing' what anyone else thinks—especially a stranger; or someone who is not even a member of the church, the body of Christ!)

- And there's a particular **inner man distress** in connection with the *evil* at the end of (:7).

- And the simple issue that's in view there is that, when you conduct yourself as a *wise* son (making wise sonship decisions), and one who is **not wise in his own eyes**—but rather, functions upon the information he's receiving in the curriculum as he's going through it and benefiting from it's effectual working—(especially that aspect of *wisdom* that's going to identify evil for what it is and allow for him to make a *wise* sonship decision, therefore, **to leave it alone and to have nothing to do with it**—to discern it's enticements and not fall for them) — **that's** going to be *health to your navel*—(which is your 'guts').

- And that's a simple description of the fact that the normal emotional distress that you're going to end up with & find yourself experiencing as a son if you're **stupid** enough to go and participate in that *evil*—**this will spare you from that!**

- And it will be *marrow to your bones*—and Job tells you about having bones that are moistened with *marrow*—and the kind of **encouragement** that is.

- And this describes exactly what's supposed to take place—every exercise in connection with the beginning of our sonship education where we are receiving the 4 categories of sonship decision-making skills—every exercise of one of those sonship decision-making skills is designed to not only produce the affect it's designed to produce (which in this case is *departing from evil*) - but it's also designed to produce a corresponding **encouragement** on our part **for** the effectual working of that information—and to therefore become more skillful on our part to utilize it and apply it in **other** situations!

- And that's the “*marrow to your bones*” issue.

- Even Job knew that the *marrow* in the *bones* is what produces the **blood**—which is, in turn, what produces the life (*the life of the flesh is in the blood*).

- Therefore the very ability to live your life, physically, is in your blood— (but we're talking here about **functional** life) — and the growing, functional life of a son under Level I Sonship Education comes from **not** merely acquiring, but **exercising** his *instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity*—and to be gaining the skills and the skill-sets that come from that and the experience and the confidence that comes from that—and to broaden it beyond the original parameters in which our Father puts it into **other** useful places.

- And that's because our Father gives those things to us in the form of **Principles**—and a Principle (which is built upon the word “Prince” = which is a top-level Ruler) - **and a Principle is a top-level decision-making capacity!**

- And our Father gives us in our *instruction in wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity* a series of Principles—and we first get experience with them within the very context and confines in which He puts them—but then the issue is for them to become *marrow to our bones*—and to produce more of the life-blood of the sonship life!

- And as our heart gets enlarged, it gets a greater capacity to “**pump**” that and to engage in more and more and more of godly thinking and godly living and godly labor.

- Those 2 issues of (:8) are the 2 things that are necessary for a son to NOT stop his sonship education, and to go on.

- He doesn't stop it because he wisely applies it (*departs from the evil*) - then it produces the *health to his navel* (and the distress isn't there) - and it produces the *marrow for his bones* (he's able to go on to greater capacity)!

- And this is something that you will find in the exact same way in our sonship education—because isn't one of the tactics of the Adversary you learned about in Romans 8 not only *tribulation*, but also *distress*? — and you can handle the tactic that character brings against you to try to *separate you from the love of Christ*—and you can become the *more than conqueror* in that situation—it's going to be *health to your navel, and marrow to your bones*, too as you gain the experience that comes out of that battle with the Adversary.

- And you'll be able to come along and shake your fist in the face of the Adversary and say, That was nothing! What's your next tactic?

- And you won't do that with any carnal bravado—you'll do that as a result of the godly edification coming along and **giving** you the capacity to do that very thing!

- And that's what those concepts are about—and of course, they apply to the members of the remnant of Israel and in their sonship too.

- (:11-12) - As you begin to function as a **wise** son (w/ sonship *wisdom*) - the likelihood is that sooner or later **you're going to slip up and make mistakes**—and therefore you need to honestly face the fact that at some times throughout your Sonship Education, you and I **will be “chastened” - and when you are, you're NOT going to “despise” it!** And furthermore, you're **not going to grow weary of your Father's correction!!!**

- A son (especially an Adult Son) realizes that that's just a major part of your Father *loving* you and *delighting* in you: that He cares enough to correct you & to *chasten* you—and your going to determine that, when that comes up, you're not going to resist it or *despise* it or grow *weary* of it.

- As a son—you're going to actually **benefit** from this Fatherly *chastening*—and a son knows that and prepares himself for it in advance so that he can benefit from it to its fullest extent! (Sometimes there's going to be some tears; some pain; some repenting—either from a simple lack of interest, or from some disobedience, or from not responding to the doctrine properly—but it's all beneficial!)

- And it's critical the you understand & appreciate that this is NOT the kind of chastising that the 'children' of Israel endured (or will endure) in God's program with Israel—but rather **this is Adult Sonship type chastening!** (This is NOT 'childhood' chastening!)

- And you're therefore going to be disciplined or chastened as an **ADULT** and **not** as a child—and that means that the Father is (at times) going to rebuke or reprove and/or correct you.

- NOT with a 'whip' or with some kind of physical pain—but rather your Father has actually **BUILT INTO THE CURRICULUM** the chastening for you as His son!

- (You see that—just as soon as Romans ends and I Corinthians begins!)

- And "Sonship Chastening" or "Sonship Discipline" is something most Christians **never** understand properly! (if at all!)

- One of the differences in Sonship Chastening (different from Childhood Chastening) is that if the chastening is **ignored**, then as an Adult, the son bears the consequences of that himself! (far different from childhood)

- And there's **not** an 'increase' in the chastening or an increase in the punishment! (that's for children!)

- Under Sonship Chastening: **you're warned ONCE!** (You're an Adult!) - You're told **ONCE**—and if you don't respond—then *if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant!*

- And **you** suffer the consequences of your ignoring ignorance!

- But the issue is that's all that is built in to the curriculum!
[Even sons, themselves, are instruments of God's chastening.]

- What your Father expects is that you as His son understand & appreciate the VALUE of that Sonship Chastening before you ever have to experience it—so that when you DO have to experience it; you've got a 'frame of reference' for it that provides for you to respond properly to it (in a Godly manner)—and NOT have an immediate CARNAL response to it!

- (:13-18) - The added benefit you acquire by responding properly to the instruction of wisdom and making **full use** of it (as a whole).
[bonus material]

- Benefits from you responding: Positively; Properly; Confidently; Enthusiastically; even when chastened.

- Spiritual money—spiritual merchandise.

- And when you do make FULL USE of that information as God has designed for it—then He can 'unleash' the full benefits of it to you!

- (:13-20) is the full benefit "Package" that a son can acquire by making full use of the doctrine he learns! [2 parts]

- (:13-18) = full and complete GODLY CONTENTMENT and SATISFACTION!

- (:19-20) - Another benefit that comes out of Godly Wisdom—(especially that the members of the Remnant of Israel are going to appreciate) - the Godly Wisdom that is now possessed by the son is now also able to perceive some "other" matters in connection with God's Wisdom in what He's doing in the outworking of His plan and purpose!

- It has to do (primarily) with the 5th Inst./ 5th Course of P. — and it's some wisdom in connection with the way in which God has constructed creation!

- And so (:13-20) describe the 2 additional benefits that a son receives when he makes full use of the Father's wisdom:

1) (:13-18) - The adjustments of the inner-man's value system so that happiness/pleasure/peace are all oriented to Godly happiness & pleasure, peace, etc.

2) (:19-20) - The fundamental Godly wisdom to begin to provide for a further opening of the son's mind into **other** areas of his Father's wisdom that pertains to the outworking of His particular program.

- ROMANS 12:17-13:7—The Instruction of JUSTICE.

- Read Romans 12:17-13:7
- Read the Post-Doctrinal Exhortation—Proverbs 3:21-35

- We know (by consulting our “Table of Contents” in Proverbs 1:2-6) that Level I / Phase 2 Sonship Education has 4 major parts or courses to it—and all 4 have to do with receiving from our Father the 4 initial, basic, and fundamental **Sonship Decision-Making Skills**.

LEVEL I—PHASE 1

2 To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;

LEVEL I—PHASE 2

*3 To receive the instruction of **wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;***

- Therefore, before we even begin Romans 12:17-13:7—we already know what that body of information is going to instruct us in: THE BASIC SONSHIP DECISION-MAKING SKILL OF **JUSTICE**.

- So our 2nd Course of basic and fundamental *instruction* is all going to deal with the issue of Justice (our Father’s own Justice) - and to install His Just decision-making skill into our heart so that we can make basic & fundamental “Just” decisions just exactly like He does Himself.

- And we also know (from the very first verse of the corresponding Post-Doctrinal Exhortation in Proverbs 3:21) - we know something about the overall aim, goal, and objective of *receiving the instruction of Justice*—

*(Pro. 3:21) My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep **sound wisdom and discretion:***

- Our fundamental *instruction of Wisdom* is now to attach itself to our *instruction of Justice*—and the combination of them will now produce what is called *sound wisdom*—and together they will produce another important and helpful decision-making skill: **discretion**.

- And even though *discretion* will be a big issue in Phase 2 of Level II, Sonship Education—the truth is, *discretion* gets itself underway as Godly Wisdom gets combined with Godly Justice.

- *discretion* = the action of separating or distinguishing—the ability to critically discern or judge or distinguish what is correct and proper, always directed by caution and circumspection.

- (Smith, pg. 336) - *Discretion* is a species of discernment, and has for its results **the avoidance of such errors as come from want of self-control.** It refers to matter of self-control. *Discretion* is a virtue with it regards the interests of others, but when it is confined to ourselves **it is a social instinct of self-preservation.** The word *reserve* may be said to represent the negative and passive side of *discretion*, for *reserve* knows only what NOT to do and say—*discretion* knows also **how to act and how to speak.**

- *Discretion* is a term that is used to give cautious attention to all the facts & circumstances of a particular case with a view to avoiding danger in order to **regulate the conduct of men.**

- And Justice has a lot to do with **regulating the conduct of men!**

- (We'll see just how this all fits in to our *instruction of Justice* later on.)

- JUSTICE (or godly just decision-making skills).

- **Definition:** What is right or lawful in the eyes of someone or some thing that has the authority to declare what is right and what is wrong.

- Now in *receiving the instruction of justice*—since we know from our definition that we're dealing with what is right and what is wrong in the eyes of some kind of **authority** (in our case, God's word—and especially that portion of God's word that deals with us as members of the new creature of the church the body of Christ [Paul's letters]); since we know that much—you know that we're dealing with our norms and standards that reside in our inner man—specifically in our conscience.

- Hence, in any situation where *justice* needs to be applied—there's a moral certainty concerning that decision to be made—because *justice* demands that there's an **authority** that has the **right** (if you will) to declare what's right & wrong; lawful, & unlawful.

- This is where there's this existing authority that has a set and already determined right and wrong—or lawful and unlawful—and you can actually appeal to that authority.
- And once you've got that right or wrong, lawful or unlawful understood and appreciated, that becomes, (in your inner man, or in your conscience), your norms and your standards.
- And even though you have some kind of understanding of what is right and wrong in your conscience by nature—generally speaking, if left to our own conscience, it is woefully lacking in determining right and wrong on its own.
 - It's not that there's nothing operating there—because the Bible tells us that there is—but its very limited and shallow in its development, and natural conscience can't be relied upon much past the knowledge of the basic reality of God; (that recognizes that you'll face Him in judgment; that you're worthy to receive His wrath; that you do sin and are a sinner); but that's about the extent of what's operational in the natural conscience.
- And you certainly recognize that the world—even the greatest legal systems ever developed (Israel, Greek [Solon], Roman, British, United States, many other lesser-knowns) — don't give you the kind of norms and standards of God your Heavenly Father—especially in regard to how you're to function as His son in this dispensation of grace with the view to reigning/laboring with Him in His business in the heavenly places!
- Therefore you **need** your Father to **instruct** you so that your conscience is fortified with what is right in **His** eyes and what is wrong; what **He** says is lawful/unlawful, and so forth.
- And I believe that we have enough appreciation of that word *justice*, so that you know, generally, what it's going to deal with—it's going to deal with others, with family (marriage/children), community, society, government, police, military, — even the very structure of the local church is going to have issues of justice.

- **Summary Statement:** *to receive the instruction of justice* means receiving instruction for making sound godly & sonship decisions regarding what is the right or wrong; or what is the necessary and/or needful; or what is the responsible and/or amenable thing for us to do — especially as it pertains to responding to the activities or actions of others in our dealings with them.

- We're going to be given information that establishes norms within our conscience and standards within our conscience — and a father imparts those things to his son: and on the basis of these things his son now understands are “norms” (or normal conduct & behavior on his part) - and “standards” (for standard conduct & behavior on his part) - the son is now going to have the capacity to make responsible decisions as a son regarding issues that are right or wrong—but many decisions aren't going to deal, necessarily, with what is right or wrong—but might come down to what is needful or what is necessary to be done—or certain situations or circumstances he may find himself in would more demand what is the responsible thing for him to do; or what's the amenable thing for him to do.

- “*Amenable*” = a cow that can be driven with the appropriate call or shout — being led or guided — a legal term which means liable to some thing or person which has an inherent power to bind or compel; as laws, rules, authority, a parent, a governor. It sometimes further bears the sense of a willingness to recognize such power, and then becomes descriptive of one's moral conduct or character, as when one is amenable to discipline, advice, or reason. To be amenable is to be accountable so far as one is bound by laws and regulations. (*Smith's Synonyms Discriminated*)

- And when dealing with these kinds of decision-making, they often are going to deal with the course you're going to pursue as being one that, as a result of it; or at the end of it all—it's really going to provide for PEACE in a situation—and not ‘fuel the fire’ or produce bitterness or animosity or things along those lines.

- But just in the general nature of the word justice—you've got built into that the norms and standards that go beyond just an individual as a person—but are also issues that get dealt with as a society and what it operates on; or what a nation operates on; or that various institutions within a particular society operate on—the peaceable living within all these various governmental structures/organizations.

- *Receiving the instruction of justice* involves the making of sound sonship decision about what are the conscientious or upright things to be done in connection with institutions and customs of nations, societies, and organizations within a society.

- Meaning, this *receiving instruction of justice* involves receiving instruction by which you're going to make wise decisions in regard to the government in which you live and operate—the rules & regulations that that government puts into effect in which you have to follow and conform to in connection with, for instance, business in which you have to operate in; or institutions you have to operate in, like marriage and family and even the customs of a society and things along those lines.

- As well as certain establishments within a nation, such as the military establishment—or the criminal-justice or law-enforcement establishment. (police, SBI, FBI, ATF, etc.)

- The word *justice* comes into play in all those areas as well.

- And you can appreciate that in the sense of any old father instructing any old son—but much more than that, it has a major bearing on our godly sonship edification from God our Heavenly Father as it pertains particularly to us in this dispensation of grace in which we live.

- Because we are going to have to be instructed about making *just* decisions as members of the church the body of Christ **that isn't known about by natural men** or even by Christians who haven't received the sonship education they're supposed to have received.

- Our Father has instituted certain *just* issues for nations in connection with having established the nations in the first place, and how they are to operate— and certain things He's ordained for civil society within a nation—and He's instituted marriage, and He has things to say about it and about the family—and He has some things to say about how a husband and a wife operate; and children and their parents operate—and in this dispensation, He's instituted the local church; and there's organization to it; and He's established the office of a bishop and the office of deacons — and therefore there's things He's said in connection with all these institutions that have right and wrong to them; and that He has authoritatively declared.

- And *receiving the instruction of justice* for us as members of the new creature has to take all those things into account as well.

- So when it comes therefore to us in this dispensation of grace and our education by God our Father as His sons (in our curriculum for sonship education) — when we *receive the instruction of justice*, my understanding is that our instruction in justice involves us receiving instruction for making sound sonship and godly decisions regarding what is the right or wrong thing for us to do; or what is the necessary and/or needful thing for us to do; or what is the responsible and/or the amenable thing for us to do—especially as it pertains to us responding to the activities of others in our dealings with them—— — and it also involves us receiving instructions for making sound, sonship and godly decisions about what are the conscientious and upright things for us to do in connection with what God has ordained for the nation in which we live (as a nation); for our civil society; for marriage; for families; for the local church; for the local customs we will encounter; for businesses we will deal with (employer-employee relations [union or non-union?]; should you work or not work? how should you treat work?) and the like.

- Those are the kind of things you are going to encounter when you *receive the instruction of justice* (in the body of information that is formed for justices' sake) - it provides for those kind of norms and standards for our inner man to operate upon as we interact and have relationships with others—and that includes when we witness to them as unsaved people; when we deal with even members of the church the body of Christ if we deal with them on a financial level, or where the laws of the land could have something to say about it as well; and our decisions about the government under which we exist and how it may encroach upon us or not or its actions in connection with our daily living [taxes, regulations, the draft, etc.] (and we're going to be able to make sound, godly, sonship decisions along those lines as we respond to that), as well as the divine institutions we become a part of (marriage, family, the local church).

- And when you think about it, that involves an awful lot of things!

(And this is going to take some real keen insight and skill in order to make the proper decisions you're supposed to make as a son of God your Father!)

- And this *instruction* is really important to us - and we should recognize that we really **do need** this instruction of *justice*—and we need to ask ourselves, “As a son of God, what **is** my responsibility in regards to government and the divine institutions?”

- Because this is a **hot-button** topic among most Christians (whether they understand sonship or not) - especially at this election time in our nation—but there’s always this debate concerning a Christian being involved in politics or government, or in law-enforcement, or in the military—or should Christians vote? or should there be a death penalty? or should a Christian picket at an abortion clinic?

- And if you look at it, you’ll see that there’s really a huge amount of **ungodly decisions** being made along the lines of what we will know as godly, sonship *just* decision-making because the vast majority of the body of Christ has **never received the instruction of justice** from their Heavenly Father!

- And it’s very easy to read what the apostle Paul says in Romans 12:17-13:7—and all you get out of it is that God is telling us something about the way we are to be kind of ‘non-violent’ and get along with our neighbors — how we are to view paying our taxes —how we’re supposed to submit to government & have respect for the police department and the criminal justice system — and really, this isn’t commonly viewed as being what you might call “advanced” information at all! (All 12 verses should be easily covered in one sermon/Bible class!)

- So—in order to make sure that this body of information carries the kind of ‘weight’ that it needs to have—and in order to recognize that this ISN’T something that you’re already familiar with so that you can just ‘breeze’ through it—and as I said before, you’re going to have to be **instructed** about making *just* decisions as members of the new creature of the church the Body of Christ: **decisions that are NOT known about by natural men or even by Christians who haven’t received the Sonship Education they’re supposed to have received** — the thing that gives this body of information that proper ‘weight’ and to properly recognize the critical nature of it as something that no natural man operates upon (and that most Christians don’t operate upon) - is that our Heavenly Father must **INSTRUCT** us as to what *Justice* is to Him, and how we are to make *Just* sonship decisions!

- And what I’m after here is that word “**instruction**” - we are to *receive the **instruction** of ... justice*. And it’s been a long time since we looked at it—but reminding ourselves of what *instruction* is, will ‘set our bearings’ (so to speak) so that we do have the proper approach to this next Form of Doctrine & get started on the right foot!

- So in (Pro. 1:3) we have, “*To receive the instruction ...*” — and we need to really understand and appreciate what that means beyond just getting the education.

- “*instruction*” = when you basically think of *instruction* or *instructions* you most often think of a set of directions (like the directions on how to build a model—or directions on how to put a bicycle together—or something like that).

- Or directions or teaching on how to do something.

- An instruction book; an instruction manual.

- OED Definition: *the imparting of knowledge or skill; making known to a person what he is required to do.*

- And really that’s one side of the coin (so to speak) - but there’s another aspect to *instruction* that’s vital to coming to a real understanding and appreciation of it—especially in the context of this sonship education you’re now getting from your Father.

- Because this other side of the coin is what *instruction* implies or a shade of meaning of what *instruction* is driving at.

- And it’s this other implied meaning that is significant to the word *instruction* that really makes the impact on (or sets the stage for) just what you’re to expect as you get taught those Sonship Decision-making skills.

- And it’s important that you appreciate that *instruction* isn’t merely teaching—because teaching can be an informing of the understanding about things you may already know, but just how to use it differently.

- Also, teaching is the more proper word to use when dealing with strict academics (science/art)—not to mention the fact that you don’t even need a person at all to be taught—for example, history can teach you things.

- But *instruction* is personal—in fact it is the most excellent and proper word to use when referring to a child be taught by his parent/parents—a son is properly *instructed* by his father!

- The critical issue that *instruction* is driving at (a shade of meaning, if you will) - is that when you dealing with *instruction*, you're dealing with a body of information **that you do NOT innately possess** and you're going to be getting knowledge that you do NOT just automatically know—and you're going to be taught, therefore, things that do not necessarily or naturally fit in your thinking—and so adjustments are going to have to be made—and that's the concept we ran into there in Romans 12:1-2 —the mind is going to start being renewed.

- And really the critical thing about *receiving instruction* is that you are now going to get information that up to this time you are **ignorant of!**

- And we need to put both concepts together in order to really get the appreciation of what it means for us to *receive instruction* in all 4 of those following areas of *wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity*.

- So when you're talking about *instruction*—and *receiving instruction* in this context of our sonship education - it's:

1) The receiving of directions or a body of information on **how to do something that you don't know how to do**; with the ability to do something that you don't naturally have the ability to do; and,

2) This body of information (or instruction that I'm receiving) on how to do something— is information that prior to me receiving it, **I was totally ignorant of!**

- And when it comes to “*receiving the instruction*” — you need to realize that the information your Father is going to give you is information that you are ignorant of, and it's going to provide you with the ability to do some things. (And without that information, you **won't** properly do the things you're supposed to do—[you won't be able to put all the parts together—in the right order] and so forth).

- And that makes that information contained in the “*instructions*” not merely ‘helpful’ (as most Christians—and some non-Christians view it) - this is **ESSENTIAL** information/*instruction* that has to be precisely followed—followed in the right order—and not one part of it taken lightly or set aside just because YOU don't see how it works, or YOU see/imagine a better way to do it (translation: a short-cut)!!!

- Now the main reason why I have gone back over this—and reviewed this issue of *instruction*—is because the **nature** of what we're confronted with in our *instruction of Justice* is somewhat different than what we received in our *instruction of Wisdom*.

- And what I mean by that is—the “difference” I'm talking about is what is different about YOU and ME—something different about who we are by nature that makes the information in *Justice* a little bit different (in the way we approach it) than it was in our instruction of *Wisdom*.

- In our *instruction of wisdom*—what was the first thing we were taught? — the issue of Godly Love being Selfless (Selflessness) — and it was rather easy to see that all men (by nature) are SELFISH! And Godly Selflessness had to be produced & brought into existence by God's word effectually working in your inner man. (Because it's completely **contrary** to who we are by nature!)

- But we have to be very careful about this issue of Justice—**because there IS an element of a ‘sense of Justice’ that does operate in all men, naturally!**

- (And that's one of the reasons why we're going to have to go back to Genesis 9 and get an understanding of how that came to be—in some ‘adjustments’ God made to man's heart just after the Flood).

- The truth is—you (and all men) naturally have a ‘sense of Justice’ (even Lost People do) that God put in you (and in all men) — HOWEVER, it's **NOT Godly** Justice (not that it's entirely wrong); **but it's not sufficient for Godly Sonship Edification (that will emulate our Father and conform us to the image of His Son!)**

- And we'll explore all that later on—but for now—as you approach the *instruction of Justice* you need to recognize that even though you DO have a natural sense of Justice—when we *receive the instruction of Justice*, we're going to learn from our Father the right and the wrong—(and learn it from HIM!); and the necessary and/or needful (and learn it from HIM); and the responsible and/or amenable thing for us to do in regard to our relationship with each other (and learn it from HIM!)

- GENERAL BREAKDOWN of Romans 12:17-13:7.

- There are a couple of critical things that tells me that the next form of doctrine we receive from our Father not only covers the issue of receiving the *instruction of Justice*—but that it runs from Romans 12:17 down through 13:7.
- One of the things that tells me that (:17) of ch.12 is the beginning of it—is because of the flow of the Context, and especially the way in which our *instruction of Wisdom* **ENDS**.
 - Just as we noted before—the *instruction of Wisdom* begins in (:3) and ends in (:16) having come ‘full circle’ (so to speak) — that is, it comes back to the issue of how you think about yourself—but now, in view of the entire form of initial Godly Wisdom effectually working in your inner man.
 - And to me, that’s an indicator that we have come ‘full circle’ - or that we have come to the end of a body of information.
 - Therefore, just by the context, we see that something different (maybe not altogether different) **does** begin to get addressed in (:17).
- Another indicator that (:17) is the beginning of another form of doctrine—and another thing that tells me that a “shift” has taken place and that something different is being dealt with in (:17ff) is that very first word of (:17).
 - 17 **Recompense** *to no man evil for evil.*
 - **Recompense** is a JUSTICE-TYPE word = to compensate or make a return of an equal nature for anything given to you—usually for a wrong done to you—(an ‘eye-for-an-eye’ type thing) - [which is a **just** or **justice** type concept!]
 - So by the first word of (:17) we’re given a ‘red flag’ that we’ve now ventured into a different form of *instruction* than we’ve been in before.
- Now as to the END of the form of doctrine of our basic *instruction of Justice*—it’s clear to me that we have another “shift” in the context and in the terminology that takes place at the end of Ch.13:7 and the beginning of (13:8).

- The strict issue of dealing with *Justice* ends at (:7) - and the next verse goes back to the issue of Godly Love, once again—but this time it does so to introduce another issue (the issue of Judgment) - and the following ‘words of logic’ indicate that even when you get to (13:11— “*And that,*”) it indicates that what is said there is supposed to be connected to (:8-10). [And then 14:1, you have another 4th issue getting underway there {Equity}.]

- So my understanding is that our basic & fundamental *instruction of Justice* goes from Romans 12:17-13:7.

- Now, if there’s no problem there—the next thing to do is to look at these 12 verses, and see just how many major parts or Components there are to it.

- The entire body of information that makes up our basic, initial, and fundamental *instruction of Justice* is made up of 12 verses.

- Let’s then get a very Simple & General Outline of the number of **major** Components that make up our *instruction of Justice*.

- You may see some sub-components—but all we’re after right now are the Major Components.

- My understanding is that this section of information just naturally falls into 3 Major Parts or Components.

- And one of the reasons why I say that is that it just **naturally** has 2 major breaks to it—that is, within the overall information, there are 2 major “**thought breaks**” (so to speak) that exist in the natural wording and logical flow of the information. (it just reads that way)

- For example—as you’re just naturally reading it—you don’t have any reason NOT to think that when you read (:17), that (:18) just naturally goes along with it.

17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

- And then when you start reading (:19) and it starts off, “*Dearly beloved,*” - you’ve got a natural ‘thought break’ there, just by the way in which (:19) begins.

- So just from a basic reading (and paying attention to the structure of what it says—and the words that are used) — makes you think that (:17-18) go together and forms the 1st Major Component to our *instruction of Justice*. (and it does)

- That means that (:19) begins the 2nd Major Component—and as you read on down through it—(:20 and :21) just naturally ‘follows suit’ with it.

- Granted, you’ve got a “*Therefore*” in (:20) - but because of what (:19) says, there’s a need to make a concluding-type statement. (and :20 is it)

- But that doesn’t necessarily mean that the whole issue that (:19) began dealing with *ends* with (:20) - because the last part of (:20) says some things that lets you realize that when (:20) says what it says, (:21) actually **belongs** with what (:20) ended up saying.

- And that’s just all ‘part & parcel’ of the natural flow of the passage—the words just convey that.

- Therefore, (:19, 20, & 21) seem to form a Major Component—and the Translator’s chapter break helps out here—but also the very first words of (:1) of Chapter 13 (*Let every soul be subject to the higher powers.*) — and you know by that, that the subject matter has ‘switched’ — you’ve ‘shifted gears’ (so to speak).

- But you also know that the overall context of dealing with **Justice** is still what’s being addressed—(because that issue of “*the higher powers*” fits right in to that.

- And then you keep on reading down—and you’re still dealing with the “*higher powers*” until you get to the end of (:7).

- And then beginning in (:8) you begin dealing with something new—a “shift” takes place there—and you’re no longer dealing with the issue of Justice-type issues.

- And so our original parameters of dealing with *the instruction of Justice* holds true—and so we have the 3rd and final Major Component to Justice running from 13:1-7

- Therefore our Simplified Outline to our *instruction of Justice* has 3 Major Components (unlike the 6 we had in our *instruction of Wisdom* — we have half as many).

Instruction of Justice:

1st Component: Romans 12:17-18

2nd Component: Romans 12:19-21

3rd Component: Romans 13:1-7

- And that's what I call the 'natural' breakdown of the information. (Or the breakdown or Outline that we get from the way it just naturally reads.) — and that's all fine and proper.

- But there's actually another reason for why you have 3 Major Components—and why it's these 3 and no more (and no less).

- And why the ORDER of the 3 Components are what they are—or why the Sense & Sequence of the Components are what gets addressed in each of the 3 Components.

- And the order of the progressive development of them—and the sense & sequence of them are really **more critical** to the makeup of the Components than even the natural reading of the information.

- And what I'm after here is—just by virtue of dealing with the issue of Justice—and that Justice (God's Justice) is something that's dealt with in God's word long before you ever get to Romans 12:17—and therefore if you have a 'Biblical' Theology (as opposed to a Systematic Theology) - my understanding is that there is something that's sitting back in God's Program with Israel and in His dealings with them—there's something back there that ought to have put something in your 'frame of reference' in connection with any time God talks about JUSTICE.

- As God has dealt with the issue of Justice (in the overall context of His Justice and just any old justice), especially in His program with Israel—it's interesting that when He deals with that issue, He most often will deal with it in **3 general areas**.

- And since we're talking about how God dealt with the issue of Justice in His program with Israel—the most often thought of place where God deals with Justice type issues is found in "**The Law**."

- And when God gave to Israel The Law (the Law of Moses) - and when He gave it to Israel in 'covenant' form—**He laid it out in 3 sections!** (Or in 3 Codex's)

- By the way—even when a person who wants to be a lawyer goes and studies the law—at some time they have to study the basic concepts of basic jurisprudence—and they look at a bunch of different systems of jurisprudence throughout history—and one of the ones they look at (and rightly so) is the Judeo System (or the Mosaic System) - the Hebrew System of Law.

- And when you go through the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy—and you look at the overall way in which the Law was set forth in covenant form—a person (even a rank unbeliever) will quickly recognize that there are 3 Major areas to it.

- In other words—there are 3 major areas of FOCUS that makes up that law.

- And those 3 Major areas that the Law focuses upon are:

- 1) The Individual Person.
- 2) The Individual Person's Relationship to Others.
- 3) The Individual Person's Relationship to Established Authority.

- And when God deals with Justice—that's what He deals with.

- You have:
- 1) Justice in connection with your personal thinking about **yourself** and the society in which you exist and the people who you come into contact with.
 - 2) Justice in connection with your **dealings** with people in regard to how they treat you; and how you treat them.
 - 3) Justice in connection with the Established Authority that the Divine Institutions possess within the society in which you live.

- And that's what we've got in Romans 12:17-13:7!

- So in our Simplified Outline for our *receiving the instruction of Justice* —

Romans 12:17-13:7—**GODLY JUSTICE**

- 1) 12:17-18—Godly Justice as it deals with you, personally as a son. (Personally thinking about yourself.) [Personally thinking about yourself and the society in which you exist and the people who you come into contact with.]
- 2) 12:19-21—Godly Justice in your personal dealings with other people—how you treat them; how they treat you.
- 3) 13:1-7—Godly Justice in connection with Established Authority within the Divine Institutions. (Your relationship to established authority.)

- And that’s the major reason for why we’ve got 3 Components that make up our Godly *instruction of Justice*. (Because God always thinks of Justice in those 3 areas as He deals with mankind.)

- Now before we begin looking at the details of our passage—we need to recognize that there is a feature to this *instruction of Godly justice* that we’re going to have to acknowledge—and in a sense is going to be taken as a “given” that the awareness of it is there; and a measure of effectual working of it is there—simply because, when we’re dealing with the issue of Justice: there’s something that God has already done in connection with His dealings with man—that has instilled some fundamental, **natural** concepts about Justice in the human heart.

- And the reason why that has to be faced up to and acknowledged is because that when you deal with the 3 Components of Justice—the things we’re going to be told about here are designed to take into account that this “natural” concept of Justice **does exist** in the human heart—and that it exists there because of what God did in the past—and this information is going to work with it—but at the exact same time, it’s going to (by its effectual working) make all the necessary adjustments to make it so that OUR Godly Thinking/Conduct & Behavior/Labor with God in connection with these 3 Components of Justice **is FULLY brought into line with His!**

- And it’s going to make it so that we, therefore, do NOT operate upon the “natural” concepts of Justice that are the result of what God has done so that man **does not just destroy himself**.

- And, indeed, God **did** do something to the heart of man at a particular point in history so that man does not destroy himself, per se. (That is—my understanding is that there came a time when God ‘augmented’ [so to speak] the issue of man’s “sense” of Justice—and that “time” was just after the Flood, during Noah’s lifetime in Genesis chapter 9.)

- Therefore it’s also my understanding that Romans 12:17-13:7 is often viewed by most Christians who read it (and treated by most Bible teachers who teach it) as pretty much **something we already know about**—and therefore it’s usually so lightly ‘skimmed’ over that almost **none** of it ever effectually does the job God designed for it to do in a son’s inner man!

- And in a sense—there is an inherent “danger” to this passage—and that “danger” is the danger of **assuming** or **imagining** that **you already do pretty much everything that described here!**

- And the truth is—there *is* some cause for you to think that!

- But just by reading this passage it’s very easy for you to think: “I don’t return evil for evil done to me—and I’m an honest person in the sight of men—and I live in peace with my neighbors—I’m not a ‘vigilante’ - (I don’t know about that ‘feeding my enemy thing’) - but I kind of like the ‘kill ‘em with kindness’ strategy—and I’m very respectful of police officers, and I pay my taxes—so, check, check, check, I already do most of this, so let’s just move on to the next thing!”

- And like I said—there IS some cause for you to think that. Because you DO have a “natural” and “general” **sense** of Justice (of basic right and wrong) by virtue of being a man or woman born AFTER the Flood!

- But the truth is (the “rub): the things your Heavenly Father **INSTRUCTS** you in here as to Godly Type Justice issues **are completely OPPOSITE of what you naturally know and think and do from your “natural” and “general” sense of Justice!**

- By virtue of this being “**instruction**” (*receiving the instruction of justice*) means that you **DON’T** naturally or

innately possess the kind of Godly Just Thinking, Just Living, and Just Labor that's dealt with in Romans 12:17-13:7!

- And the challenge is going to be—Just how does what is said here **differ** from what I already understand about the issue of Justice?

- Well—in order to get a proper understanding and appreciation for all that's going to be received by you as a son in the *instruction of Justice*—it's going to be critical that you have at least a sufficient minimal understanding of what men were like (Justice-wise) prior to the Flood, and then this 'alteration' that God made to man just after the Flood took place.

- And to start off—you should have a certain amount of understanding and acknowledgment that God views the world and the world of men on this earth (when you're talking about the Flood) in 2 distinct ways:

- And to get those 2 distinct ways—it's good to get some of God's own terminology for describing that time before the Flood; and the time after the Flood.

- II Peter 2:1-11 (:5) - ***“the old world”***
“the world of the ungodly”
 - II Peter 3:3-7 (:6) - ***“the world that then was”***

- At a minimum—you must have an understanding & appreciation that the *“old world”* was GREATLY DIFFERENT than the 'New World Order' that God set forth just after the Flood.

- So God sees *“the old world”* as that which existed before the Flood—and the world that exists after the Flood—which we will see is a New World Order—and there are differences and alterations that God intentionally & deliberately made to man (and to other realms as well) that set 'controlling' features into effect that so regulate the conduct of men that makes it so that **man** will NEVER be able to destroy himself! (or the world, for that matter!) [only God can/will do that!]

- Now let's begin to get an appreciation for this **“given”** that Paul expects you to have as you approach Romans 12:17-13:7.

- And by a “given” - I mean that there’s something that’s assumed or taken for granted that you already possess that’s going to be focused upon—and in our context, we’re going to have to kind of remove and jettison everything down to that “given” and then rebuild/replace Godly Justice on top of it.

- First of all—let’s notice some things about man, prior to the Flood, but **after** sin entered the world.

- Genesis 1:26-27—it should be understood that when God originally created man—He did so “in His image; and after His likeness” — and therefore, since God Himself (as a part of His Character & Essence) is “Just” - it naturally follows that man, too, was originally created to be “just” and to have a sense of Justice, just as God does.

- And what I’m after here (and all I’m after here) is to say that my understanding is that man **wasn’t** totally void of **any** sense of justice before the Flood—however, (just as it was with the issue of the knowledge of “*good and evil*” [which, by the way are justice-type & conscious-type issues]) - when man acquired a nature of sin from Adam, the fullness of his sense of justice was ‘stunted’ (so to speak).

- In other words—God never got the chance to fully develop man’s sense of justice to perfectly match His sense of Justice any more than He could do with wisdom or judgment or equity. (as in Sonship Education)

- And what I want to do is to simply run some verses that point up the fact that even though you could say there is some small measure of a sense of Justice that man possessed prior to the Flood—it was vastly different than his sense of Justice after the Flood (due to God making a necessary adjustment to it). (A great contrast exists before & after the Flood)

- Genesis 3:1-5 (:5); (:7); (:22-24 [:22])

- Genesis 4:1-5 (:8); (:9-12 [:9 {definite **lack** of a sense of justice as we know it!}])

- Note: (:12) - “*fugitive*” = someone who runs from **justice!** = running from the law!

- Genesis 4:17; (:19-24)

- Then beginning in Genesis chapter 6 and on through chapter 9 you have the record of God bringing judgment upon *the world of the ungodly—the old world*.

- (see Genesis 6:5-8) (:5)

- Then in Genesis chapters 8 & 9—we have 4 major sections dealing with God establishing His “New World Order” once the *old world* had been judged and destroyed. (Judged & destroyed before it got to the point where all mankind destroyed themselves.)

- And those 4 major sections are:

- 1) Genesis 8:15-19
- 2) Genesis 8:20-22
- 3) Genesis 9:1-7
- 4) Genesis 9:8-17

- And of primary concern to us are the last 3 sections. Because they deal with God making a deliberate and intentional ‘adjustment’ to man so that he now has an **innate awareness** regarding **Justice!**

- And all I’m after here—is that for now you see (in very basic and very general and very simplistic terms) the difference or the contrast of man’s **sense of justice** from what it was **before** the Flood; to what it is **after** the Flood.

- And that simple difference/contrast is most easily seen in the 3rd major section (in Genesis 9:1-7), and especially in (:4-6).

- (read Gen. 9:1-7 and then [:4-6])

- And even though the thing that is most commonly focused upon in this passage is the issue of ‘capital punishment’ - the overall issue here is that God is making an adjustment to man’s natural, innate sense of Justice!

- Simply put—think of it, if you will, like this—(#41) what is that? (a lego)

- (see “Lego” illustration in #42 & 43)

- And so it isn't like our *instruction of Justice* is starting from a 'blank page' (so to speak) - and even though the information in Romans 12:17-13:7 makes the necessary 'adjustments' to our natural/general sense of Justice [in order to make it Godly Justice] — (and some of those adjustments are “radical”!) — nevertheless, it has to be acknowledged that there are some justice-type and fair-dealing type of concepts that **are** naturally resident in men's minds (Lost or Saved).

- And a basic understanding and appreciation for some things God did back in Genesis 8 & 9 helps you to not only acknowledge the reality of that—but it also helps you out in that 3rd Component to our *instruction of Justice* when we deal with our relationship with Established Authority—especially with the *powers* that are *ordained of God*; and what that phrase “*the ordinance of God*” is about, and what it means to “*resist*” it.

- (Because Rom. 13:2 tells you that you've got an *ordinance* in effect—and when something is *ordained*, it doesn't necessarily mean that an *ordinance* is established—but in this case, when God *ordained* the *powers*, an *ordinance* was established.)

- And that's also something that's just intrinsically in man—and just part of his environment — & that also makes you realize that there's a big difference in man, Post-Flood along these lines.

- Now before we look at Genesis 8 & 9 in a little more detail—I want to say something so that no one misunderstands what I mean about this “difference” or this “adjustment” God makes in man. (And right now all I'm going to do is simply say it without going into any real proof of it—but it needs to be said to head off any wrong assumptions that might get started).

- And that is—(to be clear/precise) - we know that just after the Flood, God tells Noah that He “*will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake*” - “*neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done*” - “*neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth*” - and then God sets His *bow in the cloud* as a reminder of this issue—and He says, “*the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh*” ...

- Now what I'm after here is—God didn't do all that **because He made men “better”!!!** — that is, —this “adjustment” (that I'm calling it) that God made to man is NOT making man a better person by nature (and therefore that's the reason He won't have to destroy him off the face of the earth by a flood any more)!

- Because (just as God says in 8:21), *man's heart is evil from his youth*—so when it comes to man being evil, he's still just as evil as he always was—(which is also evident from what took place just after the Flood at the end of Genesis chapter 9—as well as what quickly took place in Genesis 10 & 11 [Nimrod & the Tower of Babel incident])!

- In fact, to do that would violate the ‘rules of engagement’ (so to speak) for the contention between God and Satan when it comes to who will be, “The God Most High, Possessor of Heaven and Earth.”

- So this ‘adjustment’ isn't (and can't be) one of making man better—but God did have the right to do something so that man would not so easily and so quickly **destroy himself!**

- And that's what this ‘adjustment’ is all about—it makes an adjustment to the very being of man—that gives him a greater intrinsic sense of Justice—(and Justice [or the conscience] is the appropriate part of man that God can ‘adjust’ and that needs ‘adjustment’ to it—because Justice [& the conscience] all has to do with regulating the conduct of men).

- And so all God had to do (and did do) was to give man a greater intrinsic sense of Justice (as well as to establish or *ordain* some particular “power” and “powers” so as to be able to so regulate men's conduct so that the human race would **not** destroy itself. (It has nothing to do with making men “better” - it has to do with God legally doing something to His creation that “checks” the evil/violence/chaos that if left unchecked, would ultimately and quickly destroy itself.)

- And what I wanted to give you a *little* appreciation for (in going back to just note a couple of things in Genesis 3-5) — is for the kind of **wild and violent and evil** place it was—with angels co-habiting with women—with “*giants*” - and with dinosaurs—the earth was just **full of violence and chaos!**

- And so God does make some changes—and those changes are dealt with in Genesis chapters 8 & 9, especially.

- God's going to make changes in the animals (and how they interact with man) - in man himself (and how he interacts with other men) - and even in the angels (and how they interact with man)

- (**see Jude :6; :14-15**)

- Let's now go back and look at some things back in Genesis chapters 8 & 9 that let's you know that God did, indeed, make these changes or alterations to man's conscience (and to his sense of Justice) following the Flood—and recognize the reality that God created a “New World Order.”

- Genesis 8 & 9 are what we're primarily after—

— but just to note that ch. 10 sits in a kind of unique position—and it tells you about what happened to Noah's 3 sons and their descendants.

- And you get information there about how they generated and spread out and got divided—and went to various places.

- And really, what you're looking at there is some information that indicates that things are **quite different** than they were before the Flood took place.

- And you get some new and interesting terminology that comes up there—

- (read Gen. 10:1-5 [:5])

- “*isles of the Gentiles*” - the first time the word *isle* is used = (most commonly, a land-mass surrounded by water); but it actually came from a root concept from our English word, **isolate**—and the word *isle* can be used to indicate lands that are beyond the sea—so the Bible isn't necessarily saying that all these people are dwelling on little islands, but rather that they have begun to isolate themselves into particular groups and divisions (probably along a particular coast-line).

- Then we have the first time the word *Gentile* gets used in God's word—and it's interesting that Gentiles are mentioned **before** Abraham (before the Jews/Israel were created)!

- Now while we commonly think about *Gentiles* as being any and all nations OTHER than the Jewish nation (Israel) - it's really a word that has more meaning to it than that—especially since you encounter it BEFORE the word Jew or Israel!

- Our English word *Gentile* has, as it's radical root element, the issue of one being 'generated' - and more specifically, one who is generated from among the heathen or pagan people.

- And that tells you that some 'ominous' or sinister things are beginning to happen to these people (these *sons of Japheth*). — And when you think about the names of some of these *sons of Japheth*—it makes you think about some of the various Gentile Peoples who became worshippers of false gods—(which is what the *heathen* are!) [Hence, the name!]

- And you can verify that as you go on down through Ch. 10 where at (:6) you get the listing of Ham's descendants—and more than that, at (:8) you encounter this character named NIMROD! (whose kingdom was BABEL!)

- (So just by the terminology God uses, you know that something 'not good' - something bad was beginning to happen already!)

- But then you get some other new terminology in (:5) that kind of indicates to you that there are these new and unheard of things that act as kind of what you might call '**counter-measures**' to this ungodly activity.

- For example, you have in (:5) the very first time ever in God's word that the words *tongue, families, & nations* are used.

- Q: Where did "*tongue*" come from? Didn't God *confound the language* in Genesis 11?

- A: This is a classic example of what I call "looping parallelism" - because Ch. 11 "loops" back to Ch. 10 and gives you further details about what got set forth in chapter 10.

- But this issue of the Gentiles being *divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations*—(and especially the issue of them being *divided* in their *lands, after their families & nations*—those are issues and concepts that God Himself put into place after the Flood; and are results and developments that occur due to the kind of ‘adjustments’ He made to man after the Flood)!

- And then Ch. 11 gives us the further details of the kind of ‘nose-dive’ that the Gentiles took shortly after the Flood in which they became totally useless and unfit for God’s use in repossessing and reconciling the earth back to Himself from the Adversary, Satan himself.

- But it should be noted that even though the Gentiles are ‘given up’ by God and ‘given over’ to their pagan worship of false gods (the Satanic Policy of Evil)—**notice that they do NOT get into a position whereby they once again are in danger of destroying themselves from off the face of the earth!**

- God’s ‘counter-measures’ worked! (Those ‘adjustments’ God made to man’s sense of Justice worked! ... and continues to work!)

- But when it comes to the bulk of the information that focuses upon these ‘adjustments’ that God made just after the Flood—all that information sits in 4 Major Sections that run from Genesis 8:15-9:17.

- And again those 4 Major Sections are:

- 1) 8:15-19
- 2) 8:20-22
- 3) 9:1-7
- 4) 9:8-17

- And the last 3 primarily concern this innate awareness that men will now have (Post-Flood) regarding a heightened sense of Justice, and Just dealings, and Injustice and Unjust dealings, and so forth.

- And a lot of your understanding and appreciation for all this is going to (to a large extent) come out of what God Himself says about the world **post-flood**—because it really is a **different** world!

- And you also gain that understanding by paying attention to what God says about man (now in the world)—and some alterations He makes, not only in man’s dealings with one another, but also in man’s dealings with even the animals and the rest of creation.

- And then you’ve got that issue of a **Covenant** (9:8ff) that God says He makes between Himself and the Earth.
 - And that Covenant is rather fascinating. Because God says that it’s a Covenant between Him and the earth (9:13) - and yet, He informs man about it!

 - And as He tells Noah and his sons about it—He tells them that it’s not only something that they’re going to be aware of — but it has this “*perpetual*” nature or feature to it (9:12) that will be passed down through their children, grandchildren, generation after generation, — which indicates that there’s an affect that this Covenant has throughout all of the upcoming generations.

 - So that even though a man might be born—and **never** has an awareness that God ever made this Covenant—yet there’s something in connection with this Covenant that’s just a part of ‘**life**’ in this world now.

- And that’s what we’re after here—those things that are just a part of this world (and life in this world), Post-Flood. (They’re just part of the nature of man and man’s environment and his relationship to his environment.)
 - And as man and the things of man and this world start to progress and emerge—they’re all just a part of this New World Order that God established here just after the Flood.

 - And that’s why, for instance, in Chapter 10 & 11, you’ve got the issue of “*nations*” coming into existence—and a “nation” (by nature) has to have some semblance or some structure of a Justice System to it!

 - And because of what gets set forth in Ch. 8 & 9—those “*nations*” can come along and get developed **naturally** and **seamlessly**!

- In other words—God doesn't have to come along and make any great changes in the world-system 'at large' to accommodate nationalism—because He's already made that adjustment—and nationalism just seamlessly fits into it!

- And all of the ramifications that come from being a nation (and what all takes place within a nation) just naturally goes into effect—(a nation is, in essence, a corporation that has an affect upon a particular territory on the earth, and a particular group of people that dwell within that territory) - it's an authoritative corporation that has all kinds of 'systems' within it. (Legal systems; governments; etc.)

- And it makes it so that other nations can come along and adopt this other nation's system of government—and for other nations to dislike other nations—and for nations to adopt other forms of government.

- And all the provisions for that get established back in Genesis chapters 8 & 9.

- And in the New World Order—man now has a natural 'bent' toward all that kind of Justice—all because of what God did just after the Flood.

- And I'm saying all this—just to underscore just how many things get changed and get brought into existence—and all that is compacted into just a few number of verses (in 17 to 20 verses)!

- (This information is the 'seed-bed' for all the many ways in which government, nations, and Justice type issues grow up and branch out—and all the many variations that get developed as time goes on and as history unfolds!)

1) In that 1st Major Section (read Gen. 8:15-19) - you basically have God (after He gives the order to Noah to leave the ark) - you have a near repetition of some things that God originally said when He first created life on this earth—(the animal life; and man and his life on the earth) - God makes it clear that what He originally provided for establishing when He created the earth in the first place, is going to be in effect again! — and when God originally established that issue of going forth and being *fruitful, and multiplying upon the earth*—that's the issue of establishing the ORDER of the earth!

- (That's the issue of the Orderliness of the earth—or the World Order for the earth).

- And that **needs** to be **stated** and **re-established!** Because (just as God said back in Ch. 6) He was going to destroy what presently existed—and He ends up destroying a present World Order that had come to a particular point of offensiveness to Him—and God destroyed a heinous and ungodly World **and** World System!

- Again—note II Peter 3:5-6 (read)

— even though Peter has reason to only focus upon the major astronomical & geological change that took place at the Flood—but because the changes that took place at the Flood were so drastic; and were so far-reaching (to make it so that there's little-to-no comparison between the *heavens and the earth, which are now, and the heavens and the earth that were of old*) — well, that same kind of drastic change and those same kind of drastic differences exist between the World System itself (that man's a part of in his relationship with the world in which he lives; and the society that he's expected to be a part of in connection with men in this world) — all of that goes through dramatic changes as well!

- And so now—the only thing this New World System is going to have in common with the Old World System is that **it is** a WORLD SYSTEM! (and it has men involved in it; and it has the animals involved in it—and it's on the same place or space: the earth).

- And the reality of all that gets set forth in that 1st Major Section of Gen. 8:15-19.

- So then in then next 3 Sections—you're given the fundamental, foundational “differences” between this New World Order and the Old one.

- (And a lot of those differences are perceived not just by what is said here—but as you think about how the differences that are spoken about here can grow and develop and branch out in a whole bunch of ways.)

2) The 2nd Major Section (Gen. 8:20-22) - (read—esp. :22) - Noah builds an altar and offers *every clean beast, every clean fowl* as a burnt offering to the LORD—(which was all God's idea, not Noah's)

[in fact, God Himself made this provision before the Flood took place] - and so Noah knew that those particular 'additional' animals were specifically for a "burnt offering" - (notice that you've got the issue of an "altar" and "clean" animals and "burnt offerings" and a "sweet savour" offering—all BEFORE the Law; before Israel comes along!

- The Burnt Offering was always something that brought great joy and delight to God—in the burnt offering, everything was burned on the alter—God got **everything**; man got **nothing!** (Why? Because man does not and cannot provide anything that can justify or sanctify himself!) [man receives the benefit]

- And it was a marvelous depiction of the kind of sacrifice it would take (by the Lord Jesus Christ, God's own Son at the Cross) - where, when the provision for our sin-debt was paid, then the joy and delight of God was expressed.

- (Note—this is the **first** "sweet savour" offerings [or burnt offerings] in God's word!)

- And so even though all of mankind is destroyed down to just 8 persons—since those 8 persons are still naturally 'sons of Adam' - and since they are going to produce more natural 'sons of Adam' - God makes it clear (both by the burnt offerings and by what He says about man in [:21]) that God hasn't changed or altered man's sinful nature (i.e., He hasn't made man 'better') - and so God re-establishes the fact that Genesis 3:15 is still 'marching on' (so to speak) - [marching on to the Cross!] {And the New World Order still has that issue to it!}

- (By the way—the "sweet savour" sacrifice is an issue, even in this dispensation of grace {Phil. 4})!

- Notice (:21-22) - that the LORD smelled the sweet savour, and then He said something—but He only said it to Himself (*in his heart*) - but He determined to record it so that we know what He said in His heart.

- (:22 read) - this acts as a kind of 'addendum' to what He says in (:21) - but what He says in (:22) is now **part of this New World Order!** - in other words, what He says here is going to be part of the New World Order standard operating procedure **from now on!**

- And even though what He says in (:22) is part of the environment and the ‘cycles’ of the earth now—it’s also an integral part of the New World Order!

- And the obvious issue here is—that as long as this New World Order is in effect—**Genesis 8:22 is going to be part of it!**

- And that means that God Himself has so made these ‘adjustments’ to the New World and its Order (and to man himself) that makes it so that neither man himself, nor the earth, nor this world system will ever be destroyed by man! (Man **won’t** do that; man **can’t** do that!)

- But the genius of God in making this statement and this **provision** for the New World Order He establishes Post-Flood—is that by establishing the environmental issues He does in (:22) - that all has a huge affect upon man (and even upon man’s Just dealings with others and with Established Authority) - even as (and especially as) man multiplies upon the face of the earth—and as man ends up getting spread abroad across this earth—it makes it so that man is going to have to deal with those geographical and environmental ‘laws of nature’ (so to speak) changes.

- And God is therefore going to expect man to **cope** with them—and based upon ‘coping’ with them, God’s going to implement some things that, regardless where man is in this world (where he is on the face of this earth) - **he’s going to be accountable to God!**

- In fact, Paul will make reference to that when he deals with the issue of man’s accountability to the light of God-Consciousness in Romans 1!

(It doesn’t make any difference where man is on the face of this earth—there’s some things that God did in preparation for ‘spreading’ man abroad, that regardless of where he ended up being [north pole or south pole—or the further distance away from the original Eden] - there would be no dis-advantage to him!

- (By the way—you don’t get all that from [:22] - but you get it by what God says later on.)

- But the truth is—God has made it so that He can hold men accountable—even if they’re out there in the *isles of the heathen/Gentiles*—and the reason why He can hold them accountable is because of Genesis 8:22 AND some other things He says between it and the end of Genesis 11.

- But God is able to say and do to those people what He says and does all because when He established the New World Order, He established the ‘laws of nature’ for this New World Order that made it so that, regardless of where man is on this earth—there are some fundamental things **that would not cease while the earth remains.**

- And in view of that—wherever man is on the face of this earth is accountable for those fundamental things. (And accountable that **GOD** was the One responsible for them!) - **and if you’re dealing with being held ACCOUNTABLE—you’re dealing with being held to answer for your responsibilities and conduct! - and if you’re being held to answer for your responsibilities & conduct, THEN THAT DEMANDS A SENSE OF JUSTICE!**

- But one of the important and critical things you need to appreciate is that (:22) - if nothing else, **establishes an ORDER!**

- And really, THAT’S where I get the word “Order” from when I talk about this “New World Order” that God established after the Flood.

- Peter calls the world before the Flood the *Old World*—so it’s safe to say that what you’ve got Post-Flood is a “New World” - and then Gen. 8:22 tells you that God deliberately Ordered it in a particular way—(at least geographically and environmentally). [but there’s more to the “Order” issue coming up in chapter 9].

- So on the basis of God first of all taking Noah & his sons (& their wives) off the ark and re-stating and re-establishing and making it clear to Noah that what He originally provided for establishing when He created the earth in the first place is going to be in affect again (and establishing the ORDER of the earth) - and that this New World System is, in fact, going to once again be a World System/Order (as God lays it out in the 1st Major Section of Gen. 8:15-19) and then

in the 2nd Major Section of Gen. 8:20-22—you have Noah offering the *burnt offerings* unto the LORD and the *sweet savour* put God in a “good mood” (so to speak) - the LORD records what He said in His *heart* in (:21) and especially what He said in (:22) is now going to be a permanent part of this New World Order—and by what God **does** and what God **says**, it makes it so that the ‘seeds’ are planted that will grow & branch out as man himself spreads abroad upon the face of the earth—whereby man becomes **accountable** for the provision God made in (:22) - and man’s adjusted & heightened sense of Justice will have to respond to his accountability factor—

— but then after Chapter 8 is over, God’s going to go on in Chapter 9—and He’s not done talking yet—He’s not done responding to that *sweet smelling savour!*

3) The 3rd Major Section—read 9:1-7

- (:1—*And God **blessed** Noah*) - so He’s going to say something else now—and being still in that ‘good mood’ [because there’s nothing yet to put Him in a ‘bad mood’], He’s still ‘**speaking well**’.

- And in this 3rd Major Section that deals with the adjustments, alterations, and changes God makes just after the Flood so that man will have a higher sense of Justice than he had before—and so that therefore man will not destroy himself from off the face of the earth—you now go from the ‘**general**’ (the **earth**) to the ‘**particular**’ (**man on the earth**).

- And so God says to Noah and his sons— “*Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.*” — Q: Didn’t God already tell him this when He told them to get out of the ark? (8:17)? — yes, He did.

- But now the focus isn’t just upon ALL of the living creatures that are leaving the ark—now the focus is upon the living creatures that are leaving the ark **that are created in the image of God!**

- The focus now is upon those living creatures that are designed to be GODLY!

- (In fact, that’s why God uses the terminology He does on down in [:6] in connection with the ‘life-for-life’ issue— (read) [note espec., *for in the **image of God** made he man.*

- The focus now is upon MAN as that unique, distinct, separate-from-all-other-living-creatures! (he's in the "image" of God!)

- **And some fundamental changes are now going to take place in the nature of man**—and that's what you've got in this 3rd and 4th Major Sections.

- (:1-7) and (:8-17) set forth some fundamental changes in the nature of man in his relationship to God; in his relationship one toward another; and as men on this earth—fundamental changes that are going to be part of this New World Order!

- In (:1-7) - the 2 most obvious changes that are brought about, occur there in (:6) — [1. The issue of Capital Punishment; 2. The issue of Human Government (or a Justice System required to meet out or dispense Justice - the Established Authority to Justly Execute "capital" crimes and offences).]

- And again—it's amazing just how much (in terms of Justice, Civil Authority, Governmental Establishment, Law Systems, Courts and Juries, Penal Systems, and on and on and on) all stem from and grow out of this basic & general Justice issue!

- It's about as impressive as DNA—for how much information is **packed** into just a very few words!

- But there are some 'not-so-obvious' changes that God made to man's relationship with the animals—(:2 read) - and these, too, are going to be issues that go to heighten man's sense of Justice.

- (Now though I admit that my understanding is not at all where I would like it to be) - my understanding is that the original roll that the animals played before sin entered the world (which was that of aiding man in his tasks and all his labor in perfect obedience and submission) was greatly altered by sin entering the world—but here (after the Flood), God makes an adjustment in man's relationship to the animals whereby the *fear and dread* of man will be *upon every beast, fowl, fish* and so forth.

- And this, again, was a Just 'counter-measure' that God put in place to prevent man from becoming destroyed off of the face of the earth.

- And that *fear and dread* of the animals had a couple of significant effects upon establishing God's New World Order and the heightening of man's own natural sense of Justice:

- For one thing—the breeding and reproduction of the animals is quite a bit more **rapid** than that of men—therefore the threat of the animals to overtake and kill off huge segments of the population of men was abated by God taking this action! (It's one of those counter-measures to ensure that man isn't destroyed off the face of the earth).

- Now my understanding is that even though the animal's *fear and dread* of man was put into effect—that didn't mean that the animals would just run in terror from man any time he approached—but rather, it's the issue that by-in-large, the animals natural *fear and dread* of man will make it so that whenever man 'moves in' to their area or territory, the animals just simply won't live in the same area that man does. (As a general rule)! [and it's like that to this day!]

- In other words—this 'counter-measure' God put into place here didn't mean that some of the animals wouldn't try to kill a man if they could—(but this measure greatly reduced that issue).

- For example—(see/read Exo. 23:29-30)

- And so really, the issue of "**hunting**" is now put into effect in God's New World Order—which, by the way, was one of the reasons why Nimrod was a "SuperStar" in his day—(a "*mighty one in the earth*") — his "superstar" status was due to him being "*a mighty **hunter** before the LORD*" - and that's the significance behind that legendary 'saying' about him: *Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD.*

- Nimrod gained a great reputation for hunting down vicious & dangerous animals that when provoked, (even though they had this *fear and dread* of man), would nevertheless attack man. Nimrod ridded the world of wild beasts & monsters!

- But for another thing—with this *fear and dread* that the animals now have for man—that makes it therefore that when men move into the animal's territory in enough numbers — that makes it so that the bigger, predatory animals simply won't stay where numbers of men dwell—and what kind of an affect does that have on men?

- A: Men start 'bunching up' - and when men 'bunch up,' what happens next? They develop into **towns** and **CITIES!** And when men 'bunch up' into cities, they develop GOVERNMENTAL SYSTEMS!

- And in that way—even by the measure of action God takes in Gen. 9:2, it ends up heightening man's sense of Justice! [Genius!]

- (By the way—that's exactly why, by Nimrod's actions, he began for the first time ever in the Bible, a **kingdom!** — and if that's not got a bunch of Justice type issues, I don't know what does!)

- Then in (:3-4) God institutes 'hunting'! (which, today at least, has a whole bunch of Justice issues surrounding it [like hunting & fishing license, etc.] — and this is a marvelous provision and 'counter-measure' to man not being destroyed off the face of the earth—but at the same time, it's also a marvelous way in which God established another Justice type issue to man's general sense of Justice—and that is by man now being allowed to eat *meat*, (to eat the meat of animals), it permanently provided a Godly, God-Instituted BARRIER between animals and man!!!

- It set up a permanent DIFFERENCE between man and animals (that is recognized by both Saved men and Lost men!)

- And it made it so that man would NEVER recognize animals as being EQUAL TO MEN! — (which was to insure that man always recognize that he was created *in the image of God!*) [And even though the devolution of man tries to tear that barrier down ala PETA and other such 'animal rights' groups—by in large, the majority of the world's population still recognizes that men are NOT equal with animals!)

- And then—based upon all that—we get to (:5-6 [read]) - and in view of exactly what God says and how He says it—it therefore **MUST** mean that there **really is** this ‘alteration’ taking place in the very nature of man himself!

- (Which is why he says, at the end of (:6), “*for in the image of God made he man*” — God’s making a change in the nature of man himself, because man is **MADE** in the image of God.)

- And this New World Order requires a change in the nature of man himself.

- And what you have here is the ‘seed-bed’ for the whole of human government to get built and established as man spreads out upon the face of the earth!

- (By the way—notice there in [:5], “*And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it* (in other words, when a beast kills a man, that beast is to be put to death), *and at the hand of man;* (and then you would think that that’s enough said on the matter, but God goes on to add that additional clause — *at the hand of every man’s **brother** will I require the life of man.*”

- Why do you think He said that? A: This is a Justice type ‘counter-measure’ to heighten man’s basic and general sense of Justice that marks a big difference between this New World Order and the Old World Order that existed back (for instance) in Genesis chapter 4 when Cain killed his BROTHER Abel!

- The last time you encountered that word *brother* was Genesis 4:9— “*And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother’s keeper?*”

- So this (like no other issue) points up that great change God makes to the sense of Justice man had before the Flood, verses the sense of Justice man has after the Flood (and the alterations God makes to man’s sense of Justice)!

- And notice that word “*require*” in (:5) - that’s a **Judicial** term! It’s a term used by a judge who exacts a severe penalty for the infraction of a sacred law!

- And (:6 [read]) [as is obvious], this institutes the issue of “Capital Punishment” - in essence, this is a command to establish a formal system of human government based upon man’s heightened sense of Justice—it establishes a formal mechanism for the punishment of crime in order to ensure that Justice is carried out—especially in the case of murder!

- And again—from there, a whole bunch of other ‘lesser’ crimes will get dealt with in a manner befitting man’s heightened, general sense of Justice. Because many of the ‘lesser’ forms of crime and criminal behavior oftentimes, and if left unregulated could soon lead to murder (for example, robbery, adultery, usurpation of property boundaries).

- And in this way—all God had to do is to establish this one, simple and fundamental Justice issue, and it becomes the basis for all human legal and governmental institutions! (Genius!)

- By the way—notice here in (:6) you have the word *sheddeth* and the word *shed* — “*Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: ...*

- As those are the very first time those word are used in God’s word they are forever linked up with the word “*blood*” - (even though they will be used for other things later on) — but here it sets a precedent for our thinking about *blood* being *shed* (or poured out) - and as the Lord Jesus Christ would say on the cross, “*I am poured out like water*” (Psa.22:14) - this therefore stresses not only the sacredness of human life—but it points toward God’s Son who would be perfectly and eternally *made in the image of God* and Whose blood would be shed judicially (though totally unjustly), by human governmental authority—making Him the perfect and acceptable offering for sin! (Isa. 53:10) — you don’t get all that here! but you do get it later on!

4) The 4th Major Section — (read 9:8-17)

- Recap: (1) 1st Major Section (Gen. 8:15-19) - God moves Noah & Co. off the ark and then restates and re-establishes that what He originally provided for establishing when He created the earth in the first place is all going to be in effect again. (Simply put: God re-establishes the original purpose of the earth).

(2) 2nd Major Section (Gen. 8:20-22) - God provides for and establishes the ORDER of the New World—which itself has an affect of heightening man’s sense of Justice—and due to the nature of this ORDER of the New World, God can hold man accountable for His provision.

(3) 3rd Major Section (Gen. 9:1-7) - God establishes Human Government and changes the nature of man’s sense of Justice. — **God makes further fundamental and personal changes in man, himself, and to man’s relationship to the other living creatures that are on this earth.**

- Now once that was accomplished—God then spoke again (read :8-10) — and now God brings in the issue of a “*Covenant*”.

- And it wouldn’t have been appropriate to bring this up before doing what He previously just did—this *covenant* acts as a kind of ‘capstone’ to the realization on Noah’s part, & on his son’s part, (and on our part when we come back and read about it) — that it’s the ‘capstone’ to these fundamental, foundational changes that makes the New World Order the New World Order that it is!

- And this *covenant* makes for an awareness on our part of what can now take place from this point on—and what indeed **does** take place from this point on.

- And simply put—this covenant legally describes, and legally contracts for God’s general attitude towards the world ‘at-large’ as He’s establishing this New World Order from this point on.

- (Which is why in [:12] you’ve got that issue of “*for perpetual generations*” concept).

- And you've got God talking about the issue of *setting my bow in the cloud*, and it shall be for a **token of a covenant between me and the earth** (:13) - and that's why God talks about the fact that when He *brings a cloud over the earth*, that He will **remember His covenant** — and what you've got here is God starts talking in a way that's designed to make man aware that God is doing something that is going to GOVERN the way in which He deals with and responds to man on this earth, from this point on!

- And all that terminology that God uses here—(viz., *I will remember my covenant*) - that's terminology that indicates far more than merely the 'obvious' issue of Him no longer destroying all flesh by flood waters! (Which is true enough) But you're supposed to perceive that God has now made this change in man's nature and in the nature of the living creatures upon the earth—and God Himself recognizes that and remembers that every time HE sees that bow in the cloud when HE *brings it over the earth*!

- It's fascinating that the **perspective** of the *bow* (or rainbow) in connection with this *covenant* is from **GOD'S perspective!** In other words—it's GOD that's supposed to see the bow, not man! Man is supposed to understand and appreciate that every cloud is first of all something that God Himself *brings over the earth*—and whether or not man sees any kind of a bow, he's supposed to understand that God sees a bow in every single cloud HE brings over the earth!

- Nowhere in all the Bible does it talk about man seeing the rainbow! In fact, all man has ever done with the rainbow is to make something 'magical' and 'mystical' and 'religious' about it! It has for a long, long time been a symbol of ungodly, pagan religion—as well as becoming a symbol of those who worship the earth—and even more recent it has become the major symbol of homosexuals, lesbians, bi-sexual, and trans-gender people!

- But every single cloud contains a rainbow—and even on the darkest night, even the dimmest light from the farthest star will create that bow in the clouds ... and God sees it and He remembers this covenant He made with the earth! (This has nothing at all to do with man seeing it!!!)

- However, that said, this doesn't mean that when weather conditions are right so that we, too, see that rainbow, that we're not supposed to think about this *everlasting covenant* God made—for the truth is, we **are** to think about that! (But more importantly, every time we see a *cloud*, we are supposed to recognize that God sees His *bow*, and it 'jogs' His memory (so to speak) in regard to this *covenant*!

- This is the issue of man being aware of God Himself recognizing that the Higher Order of Justice is now in effect in the New World Order that God has made—and the adjustment and change that God has made to the nature of man's sense of Justice is all part of that—and that New World Order is how God will deal with and respond to man on this earth from now on!

- And just by virtue of the **length** of this passage—it becomes very apparent that God is going to **great pains** to underscore to man that this *covenant* that speaks of what this New World Order is all about is something that is EVER before the face of the LORD! (:16-17)

- (ex.: in [:17], for the **3rd time**, God uses that word *token*)

- And as a 'capstone' issue—this is culminating all that God wants understood and appreciated regarding the fundamental reality of what this New World Order is all founded upon—and the fundamental changes that are now in place that are going to govern everything with respect to man's life on this earth, from this point on!

- And to put it simply, this 4th Major Section that deals with the changes and adjustments that God has just made to man's natural sense of Justice—God sets down in the form of a written *covenant* (as a binding, legal contract) that this New World Order (with man's Higher Sense of Justice) is the way He has determined to **govern** all His dealings with, and response to man on this earth, from now on!

- Those 4 Major Sections that deals with the changes God makes just after the Flood takes place—those basic issues we noted are the basic & fundamental things to have as a 'frame of reference' for understanding and appreciating what man's basic, but different sense of Justice is (different from what it was in the Old World).

- And it's a good idea to read on through 9:18-11:32 and think about what God records that historically took place from the time Noah and his sons went forth from the ark; and they and their wives began to fulfill what God says about 'multiplying in the earth' - and man begins to live under the New World Order with it's new regulations, and it's new 'laws of nature' and all the alterations to man's sense of Justice.

- And just as we noted, (for instance), there in Chapter 10:5 *By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his **tongue**, after their **families**, in their **nations**.* — all of which are just natural developments of this New World Order. [even geographically]

- And then you have that character Nimrod coming on the scene (descended from Ham) - and he establishes a *kingdom* (with all kinds of heightened Justice type issues that go into it).

- And then as you read in Chapter 11 you 'loop back' to get some details about what happened in Chapter 10—and you read about Nimrod & Co. building a *city* which, after God Judges the people by *confounding their language*, that city was called **Babel!** (And, again, that *city* concept has a whole bunch of Justice type issues associated with it that are a reflection of this New World Order [ungodly as it was]!

- And really—everything man does—even as wicked and ungodly as it was—everything he does in connection with this New World Order God established just after the Flood — and if you pay attention, man and man's dealings with other men are quite **different** than they were **prior** to the Flood!

- Now all that we're after here—in all the past several, several Bible Classes we've had in introducing our *instruction of Justice* in Romans 12:17-13:7 — has one simple 'frame of reference' type issue that you must have (as a minimum) — and that is to recognize the reality that man naturally and innately has a God-given basic 'sense of Justice'.

- And more than that—that man's basic 'sense of Justice' was **far different** (and almost non-existent) before the Flood—because God deliberately altered it just after the Flood so that

man **will** not and **can** not destroy himself from off the face of the earth.

- And that's critical to our *receiving the instruction of Justice* because our *instruction of Justice* is GODLY JUSTICE—which must tear down and replace all of the ungodly, worldly justice concepts that we have had built upon our God-given, basic, New World Order, altered, heightened sense of Justice we innately possess.

- Man does, indeed have a fundamental, natural 'bent' towards JUSTICE **because of what God has done in the past!**

- And you must recognize the reality of that.

- And the reality of that begins to immediately be manifest by the way in which man conducts himself (the way in which the sons of Shem, Ham, and Japheth conduct themselves) from the moment they come into existence.

- In fact—due to the way in which we're given all of the genealogies of Noah's 3 sons (their descendants) - that makes it evident that this fundamental change God made to man in connection with his heightened sense of Justice—it makes it evident that it's a GENETIC change!

- In other words—you have recorded that a number of generations pass—and then you get some details about their conduct and behavior—and their conduct & behavior and thinking is CONSISTENT all the way through!

- And that underscores the fact that these are legitimate changes to the nature of man—and that they exist, and will be there in man's perpetual generations, *while the earth remaineth!*

- Now before going back to Romans—Are there any Questions? Comments?

- **Receiving the instruction of Justice**—due to our innate, natural and general ‘sense’ of Justice: we already possess (in our conscious) a general sense of right and wrong, of fair and unfair, and even some things by which we determine what is responsible or irresponsible and even what is needful or not needful.

- But at the outset of receiving our *instruction of Justice*, it’s critical and necessary to acknowledge that all that our ‘sense of Justice’ is at present is that ‘sense of Justice’ that we naturally and innately possess — and further, to acknowledge that the ‘sense of Justice’ we naturally and innately possess is nothing more than the result of the change and alteration God made in man (and therefore in us) that has kept man from destroying himself from off the face of the earth—and that has hampered and slowed the devolution of man.

- And we should recognize by now that the natural, innate and general ‘sense of Justice’ we currently possess is nothing more than what **every natural man possesses** (lost or saved)!

- [Which is why it’s possible to have an Unbeliever as President, or Governor, or Mayor, or Police Chief, or Sherriff, or Judge — who is fantastic when it comes to dealing with ‘Just’ issues!]

- (And hopefully the background work we’ve done in Genesis 8 & 9 has made that a reality in your thinking!)

- But furthermore, we have to recognize that everything that has been built upon and developed upon that foundation of our general, innate sense of Justice (of right and wrong and how we are supposed to respond to personally being ‘righted’ or ‘wronged’) has come from *this world* (parents, community, culture, society, even the ‘time’ in which we live) - it’s all come from *the wisdom of this world and the course of this world* (good as it is; or bad as it is, **it’s still ungodly**, i.e., it’s simply NOT God’s Justice [your Father didn’t teach you that])!

- But as **sons**, we now have the privilege of not having to operate on that natural, innate ‘sense of Justice’ that keeps this world from being destroyed—but rather, our Heavenly Father is going to give us the ***instruction of HIS Justice***, that allows us to Think like He does; Conduct and Behave ourselves like He does; and Labor with Him in His Justice-type Business dealings—and thereby receive a “**Higher**” **Order of Justice!**

- And receiving the *instruction of Justice* from your Father should be a very **exciting and thrilling thing** for you to get! Because it has a great bearing on your proper function in the *creature* (in the Heavenly Places) and the carrying out of many of the Operations of God out in the Heavenly Places when you're placed there as His sons! (Again, this information that produces true, genuine, Godliness & godly Justice has [just as Paul says to Timothy] ***promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.***)

- And it should be a **great concern** to you if you DON'T get this *instruction of Justice* because of how it will make it so that you CAN'T carry out those Operations of God in the *creature*. — In fact, this is one of the areas in which the Corinthian saints were having tremendous problems!

- This is the “point-blank” (so to speak) issue—(or the ‘spot-on’ problem) Paul addresses with the Corinthians in that passage we have so often referred to in I Corinthians Ch. 6!

- Paul is directly addressing their FAILURE to get their Sonship *instruction of Justice* and the **mess** that it has caused in their own local assembly
(see/read I Cor. 6:1-11)!

- Now with all that background under our belts—I want to extend my Exhortation to you, to get this *instruction of Justice* because of how it naturally builds upon the *instruction of Wisdom*; and because of how *wisdom and justice* go together to give you a side-benefit or sub-decision-making skill of **discretion**—which in Level I Sonship Education will give you a level of Godly Self-Control, and to regulate your conduct just so as to **match** the conduct & behavior of both your Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (as you are further *conformed to the image of Christ*) — and in the end, avoid the kind of Sonship-type danger of NOT conducting yourself consistent with who you are “in Christ” as an adopted, properly educated son!

- By the way—you're NOT *conformed to the image of Christ* simply by “going to church” or by “prayer” or by “Bible Study” or by doing a bunch of “good deeds” or by “keeping the 10 commandments” or by going to conferences or Camp Meetings or Revivals—you are *conformed to the image of Christ* ONLY by the effectual working of the Sonship Curriculum! (By the living words of the living God living in you!)

- Furthermore, you will NEVER be able to attain the Sonship Decision-Making skills of *Judgment and Equity* without properly receiving the *instruction of Wisdom and Justice!* (You have to have them in order for Judgment & Equity to effectually work!)

- And since you have already appreciated the fact that your current sense of Justice has been formed by *this world* (and since you told your Father at the Sonship Checkpoint of Romans 12:1-2 that, as a son, you are NOT going to be any more *conformed to this world*, but rather you're going to be *transformed by the renewing of your mind*), ... then (exhortation-wise), you should, by now, have a healthy sense for the DIRE NEED to get this *instruction of Justice!*

- So let's begin looking at the details of Romans 12:17-13:7.

- (read 12:17-18) - THE 1ST COMPONENT

- As we approach the 1st Component in Romans 12:17-18—as a son you're supposed to already know (from the Table of Contents sitting back in Proverbs 1:2-6) that you're now going to receive *the instruction of Justice*—moreover, you're also supposed to know how many Components go into making up your *instruction of Justice* (3); and what each Component is designed to do.

- (Knowing ahead of time what each Form of Doctrine is designed to do—and what each Component to each Form of Doctrine is designed to do makes it so that you can 'measure' yourself and intelligently know that all the aims, goals, and objectives have been met!)

- So when it comes to the 1st Component—it's going to deal with the 'First-Things-First' of how God Himself Thinks about and Conducts Himself and what He Himself Labors to do when it comes to His own Godly Justice.

- And when God focuses upon the issue of Justice—the 1st thing He deals with is: THE INDIVIDUAL PERSON.

- Therefore, this 1st Component for our *instruction of Justice* deals with YOU, personally as a son. It deals with how you personally think about yourself and the society in which you exist and the people who you come into contact with. (And that's exactly what we've got in Romans 12:17-18!)

- Now when it comes to this 1st Component—you know that what is still in view is the issue of “Godliness” - (God-like-ness) - and the issue of Godly Edification — and that means that each of these Components (just as it was in our *instruction of Wisdom*) - each of these Components will have and will address the 3 Godliness Issues (Godly Thinking; Living [Conduct & Behavior]; Labor).

- And since Romans 12:17-18 contains 3 complete thoughts or sentences—it’s very likely that each of those 3 sentences addresses 1 of those Godliness Issues each—(and my understanding is that they indeed do just that).

- So the first sentence in (:17) deals with the **Godly Thinking**:

Recompense to no man evil for evil.

- Then the second sentence in (:17) deals with the **Godly Conduct and Behavior**:

Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

- And that leaves all of (:18) [the third sentence] to deal with the **Godly Labor**:

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

- So let’s begin dealing with that **Godly Thinking** Issue in (:17).

- It’s made up of only 7 words (2 of which are the same), and only 1 of which we may have to look at more closely than the others. (And that’s the very first word.)

- **Recompense**—What does that mean?

= the “*compense*” part is from what we in English know as the word “compensate” - which is the idea of “to offset” or “counterbalance” and is what we most often think of when we want to describe the issue of making a satisfactory payment (we even talk about our pay for our work as “compensation” or reimbursement) — and *recompense* does mean to “compensate” - but the English prefix “*re*” most often means *again*—hence, (Webster) *recompense* = to make return of an equivalent for any thing given, done or suffered; for services, fidelity, or for sacrifices of time, for loss or damages.

- To put it simply (but accurately) - *recompense* = **signifies the thing paid back as an equivalent.**

- And since we're dealing with such concepts as 'payment' and 'compensation' of things of 'equal' value—it's quite obvious that what we're dealing with here (with the word *recompense*) are JUST / JUSTICE TYPE ISSUES!

- In fact, to *compensate* is, itself, **an act of Justice!**
(A "fair" day's wages, for a "fair" day's work!)

- In our day, more commonly than not, instead of using the word *recompense*, we will use that more colloquial expression: **PAYBACK!**

- When the term is 1st used in God's word, it's used in connection with the LAW, viz., "*atonement*"! (**Justice issue**) [Num. 5:7-8]

- But in your KJ Bible, there is a variation of the word *recompense* that is spelled with a "c" on the end—*recompence* — and I only bring it up because it's very interesting what God says the very next time He ever uses this word in the Bible —

Deut. 32:35 (The Song of Moses) [speaking of Israel and the apostate VRS of Israel that inhabits it]
35 To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence: *their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.*

- And from this comes the concept that *recompense* is used in some cases as a "requital" or a return of evil or suffering as a punishment! (and that fits the way it's used in our passage!)

- So then, by the very first word of (:17) - you can tell that a 'shift' has taken place from dealing with Wisdom, to now dealing with Justice.

- And so our Godly Thinking in this 1st Component of our *instruction of Justice* says, *Recompense to no man evil for evil.*

- And it seems simple enough— Don't "payback" evil for evil to any man! Simple, Right? Most of you already do that, Right? WRONG!

- You know that, since this is “*instruction*” that you’re going to be given information and ability and skill-sets that you DO NOT innately possess!

- Even though you DO have some sense of Justice that you DO innately possess and that you DO innately operate upon and that all men in this world operate upon.
(and we saw that back in Genesis 8 & 9 — which could be called “**Survival Justice**”)

- So the question is: How is this **different** than what we naturally and innately know and operate upon (Justice-wise) - and how do these 7 words make up our Godly Thinking in connection with God’s sense of Justice?

- And the truth is—NO man innately, naturally does either what (:17-18) says; or what (:19-21) says; or what (13:1-7) says!

- So why—when it comes to being members of the *new creature* of the church, the body of Christ—why isn’t the natural, innate knowledge of Justice “good enough?”

- And if you think about it—if all God was ever going to do with us is to make it so that we would merely Survive in this world until we get Heaven (mark time until death/rapture)—and in the meantime **not** get into a position where we would end up destroying ourselves— then there really would be NO need for any of this!

- In that case, your innate knowledge of Justice would do just fine—because that’s what it’s purpose is!

- And obviously, that’s not what God’s concerned with here!

- God’s concern is (just as all of Sonship Education is) with us being *conformed to the image of His Son*—and right at this moment, His Son (along with Himself) is thinking about Justice in a **greater** way; or a more **substantial** way—or with matters and features about it that go **beyond** fundamental “Survival” Justice!

- And that needs to be recognized at this point.

- We need to recognize that we're going to be given information that's going to bring our Thinking (so that it can bring our Conduct & Behavior; and so it can bring our Labor) INTO LINE WITH EXACTLY how the Son of God and God the Father are looking at Justice, right now!

- And the truth is—they ARE looking at it in a different manner; or in a more developed and more significant manner when it comes to us, (the members of the new creature of the church the body of Christ)!

- And it has NOTHING to do with us merely *Surviving* in this world!

- It has to do with the issue of the training, and the experience, and the preparation, and the qualifications that we're getting out of our Sonship Education in order to occupy those positions of intelligentsia out in the Creature, yet to come!

- Because "Justice" there, is NOT going to be for the simple Survival of the Creature! (It's going to be for something far greater and far more significant than that!)

- In fact, once the Creature has been *delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God*—**survival is not going to be an issue at all!!!**

- **BUT "JUSTICE" IS STILL GOING TO BE AN ISSUE!!!** (We're going to be 'judging angels' - we're going to be 'judging this world') — [the Creature destroying itself won't be an issue then—and in fact, it's not an issue right now!]

- And I say all this—just to say that in view of what we're going to be doing in connection with our Sonship function within the Creature—we're going to be functioning in it in connection with a HIGHER ORDER OF JUSTICE!

- And what we're taught here in Romans 12:17ff provides for us to be able to Think, Behave, and Labor in connection with that HIGHER ORDER OF JUSTICE.

- But that still doesn't answer our question of "How is this different

(especially how is “*Recompense to no man evil for evil*”) different than the sense of Justice we naturally, innately know? [In other words what is it that makes this true “*instruction*?”]

- Note that even though it was good, proper and necessary (for the sake of accuracy) to do a ‘word study’ of that word “*Recompense*” — notice that that doesn’t even get us close to answering this question!!! (Greek or English!)

- And what we’re going to go after here—before going any further—is to not only answer our question—but to also answer another question: Why, of all the things God could say about Justice—why does He address this first???

- And we’re going to see and identify that there is at least 1 Major Life-Giving Issue in each of the 3 Components that make up our *instruction of Justice*!

- What we’re going to see is—that Rom. 12:17-18 is NOT that natural or innate or “Survival” Justice—in fact, (:19-21) is not natural, “Survival” Justice, and (13:1-7) is not natural, “Survival” Justice! (It’s ALL **Godly** Justice!)

- The issue here with our Sonship *instruction of Justice* is NOT designed so that we just continue to conduct ourselves according to what our natural sense of Justice is for—but rather it has to do with us Thinking, Conducting ourselves, and Laboring with God in connection with what Godly Justice is for **in perfection!**

... and with what it’s going to be doing in connection with the *creature* when it’s delivered—and in connection with the way the *creature* will respond to and connect with the kingdom of God on this earth when it gets established.

- Because Godly Justice will function in BOTH realms (which is why we are going to judge both the angels *and* this world)!

- And that has to become your ‘mind-set’ as you approach (:17ff) - and that’s going to, therefore, make it so that the individual 3 Issues of Godliness that make up all 3 Components of our *instruction of Justice* become the meaningful, “*transforming by the renewing of your mind*” edificational things that they’re designed to be!

- And that's why it doesn't do one bit of good for a saints to come to these passages and treat them as something that's 'on par' with typical, natural Justice!

- Now to answer our questions: 1) How is this Justice different than what I already naturally know? (How is Godly Justice different than natural Survival Justice? ... and 2) Why (out of all of the things God could say about it), why does He address the things He does here? And why does He address *Recompense to no man evil for evil* first?

- Well—obviously, God could have said pages & pages about these issues of Justice—(He could have, for instance in the 3rd Component of 13:1-7 said a bunch of things—He could have described every form of Government that would ever be developed!) - but all that's immaterial to what He's after here.

- But what God's doing here is—He's dealing with **the essential, 'you-can't-do-without' understanding & appreciation** when it comes to being able to Think Godly; Conduct yourself Godly; & Labor with Him in what He's doing when it comes to Justice in any of these 3 Components!

- The reason why God deals with the 3 Components the way He does; and the reason why God limits Himself to *only* the things He says in these verses—is that they are **the essential, indispensable matters when it comes to getting this Higher Order of Justice** as part of our Thinking; part of our Conduct; so that we can Labor together with God in accordance with the implementation of it!

- And there is at least One Major LIFE-GIVING Issue to God (that, to Him gives "life" to Godly Justice) when it comes to each of these 3 Categories of Justice.

- And when they effectually work within us—they will provide for all the other **variations** or forms of all of the various applications of Godly Justice in all of the potential ways these 3 Categories can be utilized.

- And in that way—this is much like that "seed-bed" issue we noted back in Genesis 8 & 9!

- Truth is—these seemingly 'small' matters have HUGE potential to expand and grow and branch out!

- And when you're dealing with Justice—*God's Justice*—there's always a fundamental core-type or nucleus-type issue that everything else springs from or revolves around. (And that's what these 3 Major Life-Giving Issues are).

- They're "**Seminal**" issues—(*seminal* = they have the power to provide for a basis for further development—they're the "seed" that contains the possibility of future development!)

- And when they effectually work within us—they provide for us to be able to 'fill out' the wholeness of Godly Justice in all 3 of it's Categories or Components!

- And the rest of our sonship life provides the opportunities for that to take place!

- And getting this Godly Justice education is going to then go towards qualifying a member of the church, the body of Christ to function in one of those High Ranking positions of Authority within the intelligentsia of the creature that **demand**s a greater and more complete & thorough understanding of Justice.

- It may well be that David had all this in mind when he chose the men he did to fill the positions of the Government of Israel—(it seems that he chose men who had a Higher Order of understanding and appreciation for that Law contract).

- But the point is—that you've got at least these 3 core, **seminal** issues that, when you come to possess it—and when it *renews your mind* so that it becomes what you operate upon in each one of these 3 Areas of Justice that you have to operate upon in your daily lives—it elevates you beyond that natural sense of Justice (for the survival of the human race) - and puts you into the Godly realm of Justice that enables you, (by especially the Laboring together with God that you're going to do) — to gain the full skills, and profit, and management acumen that's required in those greater positions of intelligentsia that exist in the creature!

(s-l-o-w-l-y-!)

- To put it simply—our *instruction of Justice* takes each one of those 3 Components of Justice—and it “zeros in” on a particular, seminal issue within each Component—and that particular, seminal issue has something that **elevates our Justice** (in Thinking, in Con. & Beh., and in Laboring together with God) **OUT of the ordinary, and it puts it INTO the realm of conforming to the image of Christ!**

- Our whole *instruction of Justice* is the issue of elevating our sense of Justice out of the ordinary, into the extraordinary—and the ‘extraordinary’ is the issue of looking at it EXACTLY like God does—and so that our sense of Justice in each of these 3 Components is going to be a perfect reflection of God’s Justice!

- And you can see this ‘difference’ between Survival Justice and Godly Justice when God gave His Law to Israel (His own people) vs. what the nations were operating on. (Deu. 4:8)

- So now let’s answer the question of, Why is *Recompense to no man evil for evil* the fundamental, core, seminal “you’ve got to have it” Thinking when it comes to “Personal” Justice (& not something else)?

- When it comes to this 1st Component of Godly Justice—(*Personal Justice*—Justice as it deals with you, personally as a son—how you personally think about yourself in the society in which you exist and the people who you come into contact with) — [this 1st Component being different from the 2nd Component in the sense of: there’s no *enemy* mentioned; no *enemy* involved {like there is in the 2nd Component}].

- The Godly Thinking of the 1st Component is: *Recompense to no man evil for evil*—and this is the Godly Thinking that deals with situations that arise where there has been some wrong or some “*evil*” committed against us.

- But the 2nd Component starting in (:19) also deals with wrongs committed against us—but one of the major differences is that it now involves those who are your “*enemy*”.

- As far as the actual words of the Godly Thinking of (:17) - *Recompense to no man evil for evil*. We know that **recompense** signifies the thing paid back as an equivalent = PAYBACK (a return of evil or suffering as a punishment).

- *Evil* = the opposite of ‘good’ - it’s the most general and comprehensive expression of disapproval, dislike, or disparagement—it’s being used in a very general and broad sense of suffering harm, injury, or wrongdoing.

- Therefore a son’s Godly Just Thinking is, above all, (and most fundamentally of all): **Do Not recompense (or pay back or return an equal amount of) evil (or wrongdoing) to any man for evil (for the wrong done to you)!**

- And I bring that out simply to say that this 1st Component is more GENERAL—in fact, it’s the most general, basic, and fundamental of all issues that deals with Godly Justice!

- And the importance of recognizing that is to make it so that you don’t “jump ahead” or don’t read into this more than is really there.

- For example—This is the most basic, fundament, and general issue in Godly Justice—and it’s supposed to (and it’s designed to) deal with YOU, PERSONALLY!

- So don’t take this as the ONLY issue in Justice—and I mean by that—don’t attempt to take this one issue and think that, for example, that this is the only [compartmentalized] way that Godly Justice works.

- And I point that out here just to head off any thinking that if you’re (for example) wronged in business (evil is done to you), that because of what’s said in (:17), you can never exercise you legal rights to deal with that wrongdoing.

- In other words, where (:17) is concerned, this isn’t saying that you should never exercise your legal rights in a particular human judicial system! — or that you should never go to war — no, this is merely the first General Issue of Justice that is going to be (as all edification is) interfaced with 2 more Components—and some of these issues will get dealt with later on.

- The truth is—this 1st Component is dealing with the most fundamental way in which you (as a son) deal with ALL men in general (*to no man* = all men) - and then you’re going to take this Component into the next 2! [building upon it].

- Truth is, what you've got going on here is:
 1st Component = The Godly General Justice Principle
 2nd Component = Narrowed Justice Principle
 3rd Component = Narrows that Justice Principle one more time.

- And you're going to **carry over** each Justice Principle into the each of the next Components!

- And especially in that 3rd Component—you're going to find that you **do** have a recourse for *evil* that's done to you that human government **does** provide a response for!

- Now let's answer that question of: How does this differ from any old natural, innate understanding of Justice—and Why does God address this issue first? (What makes *Recompense to no man evil for evil* different than saying, 'Always be fair in all your dealings with men'?? [it doesn't say that!!!])

- IDENTIFYING THE 1ST SEMINAL ISSUE.

- Well—since everything we get from Rom. 12:3 on is designed to *conform us to the image of God's Son*—and since Godliness (or Godly Sonship Edification) is what is taking place—there's a particular aspect of God's own Thinking that's in effect **right now** with respect to fundamental Justice that God the Father wants generated within us so that OUR Thinking is *conformed* to His Son's Thinking on it!

- For example, if the Lord Jesus Christ was here on this earth right now—the very things that are spoken about in (:17-18) would be what He would Think/Conduct Himself in accordance with/and recognize as an aspect of His Father's business!

- Rom. 12:17a is going to instill in us (and generate within us) by its effectual working, the most fundamental Thinking that God the Father has right now with respect to General Godly Justice in this present dispensation of grace!

- And everything else that concerns General Godly Justice **stems from it!**

- And from that Godly Thinking about General Justice, there's some Conduct & Behavior that corresponds with it.

- And then in connection with this Godly Thinking about General Justice & its corresponding Con. & Beh., there's the recognition that there's an aspect of God's business today that is DRIVEN by this! (and :18 is the issue of us participating in that business that's **driven** by that Thinking and that Behavior!)

- So what you need to appreciate right now is that the core, seminal issue here (and in each of the 3 Components) **is a direct reflection upon the fundamental Godly Thinking in this dispensation of grace in each one of these 3 categories!**

- So when we get (:17a) effectually working within us so that it's just part of our 'natural' Thinking with respect to any *evil* that comes our way under the general category of our dealings with men—we're Thinking EXACTLY like the Lord Jesus Christ Thinks!

- Because when He sees an *evil* come our way (to us, one of the *members* of His body): HE THINKS THE VERY SAME THING!

- The moment *evil* is done to you—the thought that occurs in His mind (as He **feels** it, because we're His *members*—[and it comes against Him, too, therefore]) — He Thinks, “I don't want to *recompense evil* for that!!!”

- And the next thing He says is, “I want my *members* to *provide things honest in the sight of the men who did that!*”

- Then He says, “I want them to do that because my Father has a business that involves me *living peaceably with all men!*”

- Therefore, the core, seminal Issue is: This is the FIRST THOUGHT that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself Thinks!

- And it provides for it to be the producer and developer of all the other Thoughts He will Think in connection with ANY other “Just” issue within the other 3 Components!

- The fundamental Thinking of Godly Just is: that when *evil* is received—**there's no desire to recompense it with the same!** (There's really a desire to *recompense* it with something **entirely different!**)

- And this Fundamental Thinking of Godly Justice—this 1st Major Seminal, Life-Giving Issue is indispensable—and it **HAS** to be in effect—and it has an effectual work to do in your inner man—that makes it so that the natural ‘outlet’ for it will be: *Provide things honest in the sight of all men!*

- Without the effectual working of the Godly Thinking, the desire for, and the naturalness of the Godly Conduct & Behavior simply will NOT be recognized by you!

- This **IS** the fundamental and foundational Thinking that stands behind ALL of God’s Justice and Just ‘doings’ (so to speak) in this present dispensation of grace in which we live!

- But the ‘danger’ here is: the **failure** to really understand & appreciate the Radical (fundamental as it may be) *renewing of your mind* that this is!

- So often a statement such as “*Recompense to no man evil for evil*” - or the idea that it’s merely saying “Don’t do bad things to people who do bad things to you” — so often the *world’s* rationale goes something like this: “If you do, then you’re no better than they are!” or “If you do the same bad thing to the one who did a bad thing to you—then you’re just as bad as he is!” or “If you do, then you’re just lowering yourself to his level!”

- But by failing to understand and appreciate this from GOD’s perspective; and failing to grasp the Seminal, Life-Giving Issue of this Godly Thinking—You’ll never recognize or realize that this is NOT talking about the danger of **lowering** yourself—rather, this (again) ELEVATES our Godly sense of Justice out of the ordinary and into the extraordinary—(it puts it into the realm of *conforming to the image of Christ!*)

- Now I want to pick up on something I talked about earlier—and that is that: The fundamental Thinking of Godly Justice is: when *evil* is received—**there’s no desire to recompense it with the same!**

- Notice: there’s no DESIRE to do that! - this Godly Thinking actually produces a **desire**—but the desire of a properly educated son is just as his Father’s desire is ...

... and that is to *recompense* that *evil* **with something entirely different!** (By it's effectual work; you're going to MATCH your Father: **desire for desire!**) [This is DRIVE-PRODUCING!]

- And this takes you right back to the very Thoughts that God the Father Thinks; and that the Lord Jesus Christ Thinks—to produce that Godly response of Conduct & Behavior of *providing things honest in the sight of all men.*

- And that IS characteristic of the Father and the Son's Thinking IN this present dispensation of grace!!!

- In fact—you were taught something about that way, way back in the book of Romans! — but you weren't taught it there FOR this particular reason—rather, you were taught it for another reason!

- **see Romans 2**—(The 3rd Volitional Testing Point: The Self-Defense Tactic of Relative Righteousness)

- (read Rom. 2:4)

- You've got 3 Issues here: *goodness; forbearance; and longsuffering.*

- And the reason why there's 3 Issues there is because God shows Himself to be **Just** (and **more than Just**) in connection with all 3!

- And the issue of God's Justice and God being Just is a HUGE issue in the doctrine of Justification—
(see Rom. 3:24-26 **[26]**)!!!

- And notice that 1st one: *goodness*—(that's what I asked you to 'docket' in the back of your mind when we talked about *evil* being [in general] the exact OPPOSITE of **GOOD!** (As a 'son,' you're now **matching** your Father's Just Thinking, **thought for thought!**) [basic as it is!]

- In this present dispensation of grace—God's Justice shows itself (**not** in **wrath** or *vengeance*), but first and foremost in *goodness* in the face of *evil* being done to Him! — and then in *forbearance*, and then in *longsuffering!*

- And what you've got 'encapsulated' there in (:4) is the very characteristics of God's Justice in this dispensation of grace towards man in general.

- And because it's there—(because that's what it is) - when it comes to the “gospel of Christ” coming to a man—and a man responding positively to the light of God-Consciousness—and then responding positively to the light of Wrath-Consciousness—but then, immediately putting up his Self-Defense Tactics—God's *goodness, forbearance, & longsuffering* comes along and does NOT want to, or desires to leave him in that position.

- God's Justice desires NOT to let him 'stew in his own juices' (so to speak)!

- Rather, God's desire is that through His current (dispensation of grace) Justice—His desire is to operate upon *goodness, forbearance, & longsuffering* in order to lead that man to a 'change of mind' (or *repentance*)!!!

- Again—the context is different—but all I'm after here is that, it's because of that fundamental, foundational **Thinking** of Godly Justice!

- And that fundamental Thinking—(because the dispensation of grace is characterized [or marked] by God being *longsuffering* in grace—and God is **holding back** His WRATH **by nature** as far as the nature of this dispensation is concerned; and as far as His ATTITUDE towards man is concerned) — that fundamental Just Thinking of God **involves God actually holding back His execution of Just Judgment!**

- And therefore, in the context of God's dealings with man on a 'day-to-day' basis—**your average man does God “dirt” every day! ... and does God “*evil*” every day!**

- But God's Attitude is: “I'm NOT going to recompense evil for evil!” - No—rather, He says, “I'm going to be true [*honest*] to who I am!” (especially Justice-Wise)

- In fact—that “gospel of Christ” is still out there—God hasn't withdrawn it—God hasn't changed or altered one little bit His Attitude of Justice as it exists in this dispensation of grace for over 2,000 years now!!!

- That “gospel of Christ” still has *the **power** of God unto salvation to every one that believeth* (Rom. 1:16) — it still has the exact same effectual working to it—God didn’t pare it back at all—He didn’t come along and say, “Well, you did this to me, so I’m going to take away a little of the *power* of that gospel” — NO — none of that business!

- And after 2,000 years of abuse—God still offers it to man with the exact same *power unto salvation* that it always had!

- And the power of God-Consciousness and the power of Wrath-Consciousness still does its effectual job in the **rankest Atheist** and the **rankest hater of God!!!**

- And all that is due to that Fundamental Thinking—that fundamental Godly Just Thinking! (Really, it’s a fundamental Thought!)

- And that fundamental Thought is: **When evil is done to me, I don’t want recompense in kind!**

- And if you think about it—in men (the men of this *world*) - when ever *evil* is “paid back” with *evil*—what is the central, core for **why** someone ever does that?

A: It’s a fleshly response of **PRIDE!**

- The reason why you would want to respond *evil for evil* is really due to human pride—it’s the old, “Hey, nobody gets away with that!” — “Nobody does that to ME!”

- The normal, natural, human, worldly, fleshly reaction to a wrong done to you is (more often than not) based upon **wounded pride!**

- Wounded pride says: Nobody gets the best of me; nobody does me ‘dirt’ and gets away with it! (Our wounded pride doesn’t like it when a wrong is done to it; it doesn’t like being taken advantage of; it doesn’t like losing; it doesn’t like being tricked, etc.)

- And really—this issue really is 180 deg. OPPOSITE of how we are by nature—and the Godly Thinking of Justice really is **radically different** than what we Think according to our ‘natural’ man!

- And just to put it in perspective—you could ask the question: **Could God recompense evil for evil** in a **Just** way? Well, yes He could, and in fact, He will—God will, one day, execute His WRATH upon this earth and upon the ungodly that live on this earth—but the issue now (in this present dispensation of grace) is that there is something far GREATER that God has in mind—and until that greater thing gets accomplished, His present Just Thinking is to HOLD OFF or **Hold Back His WRATH!**

- And that greater purpose is to create this “*one new man*” of the church, the body of Christ—(the *new creature*)!

- There’s something greater to be accomplished by God now in this disp. of grace—and we’re to **share** His Thinking **EXACTLY as He Thinks**—but we recognize that this disp. of grace is limited, and at present He’s building this Body of Christ—and this Body of Christ is going to be the instrument He utilizes to bring order and perfection to *the creature*—and right now He’s putting the *excellency of His power* on display through the effectual working of His word in those members (those properly educated sons) that make up His Body of Christ.

- And until this disp. of grace is over (which will be determined by God’s *longsuffering*) - God’s **Just** Thinking (and your Just Thinking along with Him) is that He’s going to operate upon His ***goodness, forbearance, & longsuffering.***

- And the sum of it is: that it’s far more important for you to Think that same exact way now—and not to think that Justice should be *recompensing evil for evil!*

- Therefore—the fundamental, foundational, basic, general Aspect of Godly **Justice**-Type Thinking in connection with **YOU, personally**; and with men in the society that you personally come into contact with and deal with on a daily basis is: *Recompense to no man evil for evil.* — Since your Father is currently (in this dispensation of grace) operating upon His ***goodness, forbearance, & longsuffering,*** as **THE** fundamental characteristic or feature of His Godly Thinking as He (right now) deals with men [and to **use** that characteristic to *lead* men to change their thinking (*repentance*); to acknowledge their need for the Redemption of the Lord Jesus Christ (and to trust/believe in Him) as their Substitute Redeemer—therefore that fundamental, seminal issue is to be our Thinking too, as a son *receiving the inst. of Justice!*

- Both God the Father and God the Son, rather than pouring out their Wrath, (which is totally compatible with Justice—it's what this world Justly deserves) but rather, for the duration of this disp. of grace, have instead determined that their Justice will operate (as the fundamental, core element) in:

- **goodness** = doing men *good* by holding off the pouring out of Wrath—operating in *lovingkindness* and mercy, even toward those who do them wrong every day.

- By the way—this really puts Godly Love (Wisdom) on display!!! — You simply have to have a mind for Godly Love in order to properly do this!

- **forbearance** = “not” + “to bear” = to withhold = to not do a thing to others when we LEGALLY otherwise might!

- **longsuffering** = patient endurance of provocation (being provoked) - bearing injuries or provocation for a long time.

- By the way—this is the Major Issue for answering the question, “When will this dispensation of grace end? When will the Rapture take place?”

- Now you're going to have to take some time with this and think about how all of this (as the 'seminal' issue that it is to Godly Justice) think about how all of this 'branches out' (so to speak) and has the potential to spread out and develop and grow into many different areas of the details of your life!

- (We simply can't run a whole 'case-book' study of it—that's **your job** as a son!)

- But to kind of 'meet you halfway' — this is **far more** than thinking: Ok, I'm not going to pay back any wrong done to me with the same wrongdoing—but the whole thing comes down to the WHY behind it! And that's because currently my Heavenly Father Himself thinks this way, and His Son currently thinks this way!

- And since my will is to be *conformed to the image of God's Son*—then my thinking should MATCH theirs perfectly! (And God will further develop that thinking as my sonship life continues on!)

- Instead of *recompensing evil for evil*—my **mind-set** is that I'm going to Think just like God does—I'm not going to desire wrath towards that person, but rather *goodness*—and I'm going to *forebear* any Wrath towards that person—and I'm going to patiently *suffer long* with them! Because that's what God's doing towards all men today who wrong Him on a daily basis!

- I know that the day will come when God's Wrath will be poured out on men—and I know that the day will come when God will take *Vengeance* and will *repay*—a day is coming when God will 'balance the scales' of Justice and will destroy all *evil*—**but that day is NOT TODAY!!!**

- A “son's” desire that MATCHES his Father's (in this 1st, Fundamental Aspect of Godly Just Thinking) is: **I want *goodness to lead that man to repentance!!!***

- None of this means that if you have someone (for example) break into your home and steal your TV, that you're not going to call the Police and seek to have him caught and put in jail (see Justice served)!

- “Justice served” does NOT mean that you are *recompensing evil for evil*—(I don't know any law that says, Ok, he stole your TV, so you go steal his!) — no — rather there are just consequences for breaking the laws of the land, and there's nothing wrong with just, criminal punishment being dealt to those who break the law!

- Truth is—that's not what the word *evil* here is referring to (exactly).

- And by taking a thing like robbery to the criminal justice system, the truth is, you're NOT *recompensing evil for evil*, rather you're allowing the government to function to protect you **and your neighbors**—which is why God set it up in the first place!

- If you “took matters into your own hands” - ***then*** you would be violating *recompensing to no man evil for evil*.

- But again—**it's up to you** to figure out on your own the many, many ways this fundamental Thinking of Godly Justice ‘branches out’ and spreads into the various situations and circumstances of all the many details of your life!

- Any Questions about the Godly Thinking of (:17a) and the core, Seminal Life-Giving Issue that lies at the heart of Godly Just Thinking?

- Does this **profoundly change** your Thinking?

- Do you recognize that this **really is instruction** to do something that you did not know (before) how to do?

- Do you see how the “mind-set” of your Father makes all the difference in the world as to how this statement is to be properly understood and appreciated **as a son**?

- Can you answer the question: How is this **different** than what you already know from your innate sense of “Survival” Justice?

- Can you answer the question: Why, of all the things God could have talked about, why is this **the first thing He addresses**?

- You should be able to recognize that—no man (including you/me) would ever have the thought occur to him that the core, fundamental, seminal issue in Godly Justice and Just-Type Thinking would be: Because God, right now in this present disp. of grace, is **NOT** pouring out His Wrath and Judgment upon man—but has determined to **hold back** His Wrath for the duration of this dispensation of grace—and instead of *recompensing evil for evil* done to Him, His core, fundamental, seminal Thinking concerning Justice and His Just dealings with men is to operate upon His *goodness, forbearance, & longsuffering* (with a view to *leading them to repentance*).

- You should be able to recognize that that kind of thinking just doesn’t naturally, innately occur to any man (Lost or Saved) - even most Christians never think that way—but a properly educated “sons” DOES think that way!

- Therefore, this IS radically different Thinking than you innately possess—and it IS a direct challenge to your innate Thinking—and you really ARE *receiving the instruction of Justice* from your Father!

- That proper Godly Thinking of the 1st Component of our *instruction of Justice*—by it’s effectually working in your inner man—produce a **DESIRE** for putting it into practice, therefore, in some Godly Conduct and Behavior.

- That is, it should be seeking a natural ‘outlet’ (so to speak) in order to put that Godly Just Thinking on display in every detail of your life.

- And so the next, natural thing to do is to take the Godly Just Thinking that was generated in you by the effectual working of (:17a) and move that into the natural, corresponding Sonship Conduct and Behavior of (:17b). [which is where it **desires** to go].

- THE GODLY LIVING (CONDUCT & BEHAVIOR) ASPECT of the 1st Component to our *instruction of Justice* —

17b ... Provide things honest in the sight of all men. (9 words)

- This, again, is a passage that is almost always quickly gone over and the assumption is that this is really good advice—it’s kind of what my parents and my teachers always harped on—I kind of already know this—so thanks, Paul, for the reminder, now let’s move on!

- And when this passage is often dealt with (without any regard to the **context** in which it sits) - it’s most often taught that this is saying that we’re to always be an honest person in all our dealings with men. (Basically, BE HONEST!)

- And the kind of things said about this is (more often than not) - that Paul is telling us here to not cheat people; do all things ‘above board’ (or in a transparent manner) so no one can accuse you of cheating or stealing or any kind of misconduct — don’t let your emotions get the best of you; don’t get excited or mad; don’t let your temper get the best of you— “Remember, God gave you 2 ears, but only 1 mouth so be careful little tongue what you say!”

- And to make matters worse—all of the modern English Translations make a total mess out of this verse! Not one of them (that I can find) uses the word “*Provide*” - all of them translate this along the very lines I’ve stated (assuming that all Paul is saying here is: ‘Be an honest person in the sight of men.’ - and most of them put a comma at the end of *evil*, making (:17) only one sentence!

- But it DOES NOT say, “Be honest in the sight of all men” - it says, ***Provide things honest in the sight of all men.***— and there’s a BIG difference in the 2—especially bearing in mind the context in which it sits!

- So what's going to save you from being as unintelligent as the modern Greek Scholars and modern Bible Translators—and save you from being as unintelligent as the Commentary writers is simply **paying attention to the context!** (Which is what an intelligent SON always does!)

- In fact—in light of what was just said in the previous sentence of (:17), “Being transparent and not cheating people” is just plain senseless—it makes no sense—and all you're left with here is that God is just throwing out some ‘random thoughts’ for the day....

- But when we're talking about ***Provide things honest***—there is a very specific way in which that is being used—in other words, there's a specific and particular **thing** that that phrase is going after.

- And it IS where the fundamental Thinking of Godly Justice DESIRES to go—it's the natural ‘outlet’ for the Godly Thinking to go and **live** and be **put into practice** in a son's Godly Conduct & Behavior (in light of the newly acquired Thinking)!

- And when you will know that you've “Got IT!” is when you can understand and appreciate how the Thinking in (:17a) ‘shakes hands’ (so to speak) or perfectly joins up with (:17b)!

- It will be like a ‘switch’ where it all ‘clicks’ and the ‘light goes on’ (so to speak)!

- **“Provide things honest ...”**

- **“Provide”** = L. *pro videre* = to see before—to look after, to attend to—to exercise foresight in taking due measures in view of a possible event.

- When you *provide* something—there is always a certain degree of calculation, contemplation, or thoughtfulness that goes into it—(like providing a dinner) — to get in a readiness state for a future use.

- And much like a “dinner” the idea is to make certain, prior preparations because you figure on certain persons coming to partake of it—so too, because of this Godly Thinking, you calculate that there are persons who are going to be partakers of (or witnesses to) this corresponding Con. & Behavior!

- The point is—**calculation** is always necessary in *providing* any thing!
- And one *provides* against ALL contingencies (or possibilities)!
- Therefore the expectation is that your Thinking (Mental Attitude) of Godly Justice is going to seek or desire to be put into practice in your Conduct & Behavior with the expectation that you're going to **put on display** for **all** to see something specific and particular!
- And the Godly Just Thinking of *recompense to no man evil for evil* just **naturally desires** to do this! So as a son, you're going to take that Godly Thinking and by its effectual working—it will be the basis for (or the 'seed-bed' for) a very particular & specific thing to be *provided* for, or to be set before the eyes (or *sight*) of those who you come into contact with (i.e., *in the sight of all men*)!
- And the emphasis here is *in the sight of all men*—that is, the men and women of this world (especially those who do you *evil* or who wrong you) are to **'bear witness'** (so to speak) of something—something very specific and very particular. [but **ALL** men are in view!] (Saved & Lost; those who have done *evil* to your or not!)
- And the very specific and particular thing that you're to *provide* for (by means of the effectual working of the fundamental Godly Thinking of Justice) is: **things honest**!
- It's what's called here **"honest"**.
- What does Paul mean by *"things honest"* - what does that word **honest** mean here? (in this context?)
 - Hint: He's **not** talking about **being honest**; or being an honest person (one who is fair; not a cheater; sincere; reputable; a 'square dealer'; ethical; aboveboard; decent; upstanding individual, doing things so that no one can ever accuse you of doing wrong, etc.)
- The truth is—*honest* is far more specific than that—and it IS the specific and particular **"thing"** that I've been talking about—it's kind of encapsulated in this one term: *honest* .. but what **exactly** is it???

- "**honest**" = (1st time we encounter this word in the book of Romans) while it is true that *honest* or *honesty* means upright; fair in dealing with others; not a sham or a fraud; etc. — *honest* also carries the meaning of: **suitable or TRUE!**

- *honest* = something that is 'unvarnished' (so to speak) '**genuine**' - and in connection with your actions (or your Conduct & Behavior), it means **TRUE TO WHO YOU REALLY ARE!**

- Hence, **true to who you really are as a son "in Christ"!!!**

- And this sets the precedent (so to speak) for the ways in which Paul will use the word *honest* later on in the curriculum for Sonship Education —

- Romans 13:13

- II Corinthians 8:21; 13:7

- I Thessalonians 4:9-12 (:12) - (walk TRUE to who you are "in Christ"!)

- I Timothy 2:1-2

- Therefore, the idea of *provide things honest in the sight of all men* is the issue of living (conducting and behaving yourself) by what is suitable, consistent, and TRUE to who you are as a son "in Christ"!

- TRUE to who you are as a son "in Christ" **in this present dispensation of grace in which you live!!!**

- (Which MATCHES the Justice Type Thinking and the Justice Type Conduct & Behavior of God the Father and God the Son **right now** in this dispensation of grace!)

- This Conduct & Behavior of this 1st Component of the *instruction of Justice* is that you are to Live consistent & true to God's sense of Justice as it now exists in this disp. / grace!

- That's what the word *honest* means when you're being told to *provide* it!

- When you *provide* something *honest*—you're conducting yourself in a way; and doing things that are TRUE to who you really are!

- (Or TRUE to a 'virtue' that you're operating upon!)

- And that's a valid concept in connection with us, as son, in this disp. of grace.

- Because before we ever got to this point in our Sonship Education, we were taught about an **IDENTITY** that we have "in Christ"!

- So the issue in this Conduct & Behavior Aspect of Godliness in connection with Justice is the issue that—we are *providing* by every thing that we do, in response to *men*—(especially when we don't get from them, fair dealings, honest dealings: and have been *evil* to us or harmful, detrimental, un-beneficial to us and so forth) — the issue is, we've got a sanctified position "in Christ" that is DESIGNED (by virtue of its very nature) NOT TO follow that course of action—but to follow an entirely DIFFERENT course of action (one that is 180 deg. different than that)!

- A course of action that is designed for *good works*—one in which we are to *yield our members as instruments of righteousness*!

- And the issue of us *providing things honest in the sight of all men* is the issue of us, as sons, putting on display the TRUTH of who we really are "in Christ."

- **BUT**: there's a fundamental **Thinking** that **HAS** to be in effect **before** THAT becomes the natural response of our Conduct & Behavior.

- And the fundamental Thinking is: that when *evil* is received—**there's NO DESIRE to recompense it with the same!!!**

- In fact—there's really a DESIRE to *recompense* it with something entirely DIFFERENT: *goodness, forbearance, & longsuffering!!!*

- And that takes you right back to the very first Thought that the Lord Jesus Christ thinks to produce that very response in His Conduct & Behavior (to suffer it) - and that ***is*** characteristic of the Father and the Son's **Thinking** in this dispensation of grace!

- To “*Provide things honest in the sight of all men*” is the issue of you, as a son having received from your Father the *instruction of Wisdom* and the 1st Component of the *instruction of Justice*—it’s the issue of you as a son Conducting and Behaving yourself **consistent with who you really are “in Christ” (especially sanctification-wise) as a member of the body of Christ** (a dispensational issue)!

- Because while the men of this world (Lost men) and a great amount of Christians (uneducated sons) have a natural, innate sense of General, Survival Justice—and would see nothing wrong with *recompensing evil for evil*—a properly educated son knows that the fundamental Justice Thinking of both God the Father and God the Son is to *NOT recompense evil for evil to any man*—and because God currently *recompenses* something entirely different (*goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering*); and because it’s God’s design & purpose that by His holding back His wrath today, He allows for man to be *led to repentance*—the only **consistent** thing for a son to do in his Conduct & Behavior is to Behave himself consistent with his Identity with Christ and all that God has made him to be “in Christ.”

- Hence, a properly educated son (as far as basic, fundamental Justice goes with himself, personally, and with those he comes into contact with) — a properly educated son will “*Provide things honest*” (he will exercise some perception & foresight and ‘see to it’ and be ‘prepared in advance’ for the times when he has *evil* done to him)—that by means of the effectual working of the Godly Thinking, he will put on display the TRUTH of who he really is “in Christ” *in the sight of all men* which is the only consistent thing to do when he *recompenses to no man evil for evil!*

- And this is (more often than not) the **exact opposite** of how the men of this world think and act—(which is why, for example, one of the most successful and money-making movie genres is the Justice/Revenge/Pay-back films [“Outlaw Josey Wales” or “Tombstone” or “Taken”] - and who doesn’t enjoy that? that idea of, “He’s been wronged: and now he going to get his “pound of flesh”!)

- And in our natural thinking—we think of this as an ‘honorable’ thing—defending one’s honor!

- But you're taught here (by your Father) that defending one's 'honor' in a Godly way is to **provide things honest in the sight of all men**—to Conduct & Behave yourself as a son TRUE to who you really are "in Christ" — and to do that, you're going to NOT respond with the Conduct & Behavior of 'getting even' or 'getting your pound of flesh' or whatever.

- And you should see how **different** this is from that natural, innate sense of Justice and the Behavior that the men and wisdom of this world has built upon that—the worldly accepted form of Behavior erected upon your natural Survival Justice.

- Because it's quite easy to see how that someone would accuse you of being '**dis**-honest' and full of 'bravado' or only pretending to be courageous (a big talker) if you didn't GET EVEN if somebody wronged you!

- In fact, most of the school-yard fights start just this way— "He said (this) about you—and if you're the tough-guy you say you are, then you're going to go take it out on him (get even)!"

- And if not—then you're **dishonest** when you said you were a 'tough-guy'!

- The world's sense of Justice says: You have to go and *recompense* for that—**get even** for that wrong done to you!

- But the only "*honest*" thing for a son to do is to NOT *recompense* for that—we're NOT to get that carnal "payback"!

- Any questions or problems with the Godly Conduct & Behavior? Does that make sense?

- THE GODLY LABOR ASPECT of the 1st Component to our *instruction of Justice* —

18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

- When the Godly Just Thinking is effectually working; and the Godly Con. & Beh. is there—this is the natural 'outlet' for those 2 Aspects of Godliness to **Labor** with your Father in some of His business in this dispensation of grace in which we live.

- First of all—notice how God puts this in those first 2 phrases: ***“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you,”*** — this is not only comforting to know, but it also sets up a ‘precedent’ for some things that will come up later on throughout your Sonship Education.

- The actual Labor is to ***live peaceably with ALL men***—but that is qualified by 2 things (or 2 phrases) —

1) ***If it be possible***—which tells you that there are times when *living peaceably with all men* **simply cannot be done.**

- It recognizes the fact that even a quiet and peaceable “***Christian***” life (or simply living out the truth of who you really are “in Christ”) in this present evil world will sometimes be met with inescapable trouble.

- Even the apostle Paul seemed to encounter inescapable and unavoidable trouble most everywhere he went! (As did the Lord Jesus Christ Himself in His earthly ministry!)

- And I say that that’s “comforting” in the sense that if He said, “Live peaceably with all men.” — that would be an IMPOSSIBLE command! And the truth is, it’s simply NOT possible to “*live peaceably with all men*”.

- But what this does is to (for the first time in your Sonship Education) set up a ‘**precedent**’ (so to speak) [i.e., an initial act or instance that will be used as an example in dealing with similar instances later on] where things like this are concerned.

- And this is a CRITICAL precedent—and the core of this precedent is: **IF IT BECOMES IMPOSSIBLE FOR THIS TO BE DONE: IT IS NEVER BECAUSE OF YOU, IT’S BECAUSE OF THE OTHER PERSON!**

- In other words—if the opposite of “living peaceably” (or trouble) does take place—***YOU*** are NEVER to be the **selfish, fleshly cause of it!!!**

- The truth is—you were told something that should have made it so that this issue comes as no ‘surprise’ whatsoever!

- You were given a whole range or scope of things that were going to happen to you as you lived out your Sonship life on this earth (Romans 8:35-36 [:36])! [Go back and review that Godly remedy, if necessary!]

- The truth is—someone may, indeed, cause you trouble or seek to harm you, (or do *evil* to you) - simply because you **do** put on display the **truth** of who you really are “in Christ” — they may cause you trouble if you simply witness to them (or give them the gospel of Christ) - or because you simply stand for Godliness and live a real Godly life (and they may sense that it’s because of that [for instance] that you’re not going to ‘vote’ like they want you to)—or whatever ...

... but the issue always is: THEY are the initiators of the trouble or the aggression or the *evil*, and NOT YOU!

- They can always simply walk away and ignore you! (But some times they will take action to cause trouble to you.)

- But the **precedent** is: If “peace” is impossible—it is to never be because of your fleshly, selfish, wounded pride!!!

- And if God simply said, “Live peaceably with all men.” (with no qualifier) - that would make this Labor with God to be a frustrating thing—because there are simply going to be times when you run into people in your life that are flat-out NOT going to live “peaceably” with you no matter what—but that’s to NEVER be your fault!!!

- So the 1st Qualifier kind of looks at the OTHER person—but the 2nd Qualifier looks directly at YOU.

- Then the 2nd Qualifier is:

2) ... **as much as lieth in you**, — you are to do everything you can do to make “*living peaceably with all men*” a possibility!

- You are to do **everything in your power** to cultivate and maintain *living peaceably with all men (ALL men)*.

- (You can see how this is going to be ‘fertile ground’ for a great deal of Sonship Decision-Making SKILL!)

- ... *as much as lieth in you* puts the onus of responsibility upon you as a son, to heighten your perception of your daily interaction with men—and to recognize both the effectual working of the doctrine of the Sonship Curriculum (all of it; but especially the doctrine of Godly Justice that you are currently *receiving the instruction of*) - and to Labor with your Father so as to cultivate and maintain a favorable environment of “*peace*” that promises or holds out the greatest possible advantage for accomplishing the Operation of God that would *have all men saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth*—or that would *lead all men to repentance*.

- And just as you will set forth and put on display the TRUTH of who you really are “in Christ” Justice-wise on this earth—so, too, (at least at the beginning of your reign in the Heavenly Places), you’ll do that very thing there—(where great *evil* has been done, and where no Godliness has yet been put on display)!

- So then—the Godly Labor is to *live peaceably with all men*—but that’s qualified with 2 “qualifiers” (so to speak) - or with 2 discriminating exceptions: 1) *If it be possible* and 2) *as much as lieth in you*.

- And on the one hand, the way other men respond and react to you as you put on display the truth of who you really are “in Christ” makes it so that there will be times when that environment of “peace” just isn’t possible (but that’s NOT because of your actions, rather, it’s because of THEM and their actions — and then on the other hand, the focus is upon YOU and your ability and skill to be able to discern and perceive (by the doctrine of the Sonship Curriculum effectually working in YOU) in the situations and circumstances of your daily life how to cultivate and maintain the environment of “peace” for the accomplishing of the Operations of God with you as His son in this present world.

- And there are some great examples of that (ensamples) in the life of our apostle, the apostle Paul.

- see Acts 22:22-23:10; 23:31-24:27

- Now the actual GODLY LABOR is stated in the last 5 words of (:18) ...

... *live peaceably with all men.*

- “**peaceably**” = the root issue is “*peace*” - and it has 2 (or a double) suffix: 1) *able* [peaceable] (the *e* is dropped off for the 2nd suffix) = the *able* suffix means “that way” or “is to be” - hence you are to live in such a way that is to be at *peace* with all men — then the 2nd suffix “*ly*” = like.
- “*peace*” = (in a general sense), a state of quiet or tranquility; free from disturbance, agitation, terror, anxiety; quarrels; dissension or the like; calmness; harmony; concord; free from commotion and disorder; a state of friendliness.
- The double-type suffix therefore indicates that we are to *live* in such a “*way*” that “*is to be*” *peace-like*—that is, we are to **cultivate, maintain, and keep** a *peaceful* relationship with *all men* (at least as qualified by *I*) *if it be possible*, and 2) *as much as lieth in you.*)
- Putting it all together—*peaceably* (with its double suffix) tells you that this is an **environment** of *peace* that is to be **cultivated and maintained** by a son *with all men* (*if it be possible; and as much as lieth in you!*)
- And it IS to be *with ALL men*—that is with the Lost men of this world (which may be challenging) - and with Saved men [Christians] (which also may have its own set of challenges)!
- Now the question is: **Why** is this the Godly Labor???

- A: First of all—it goes to what the Godly Thinking is—and that ‘Seminal Issue’ that we dealt with so much—and when it comes to Justice, God’s Thinking is fundamentally NOT pouring out His wrath; NOT *recompensing evil for evil*—but rather His desire today in this present dispensation of grace is to *recompense* (for *evil* done to Him) *goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering*—and the purpose or the “Why?” behind all that is so that men may be *led to repentance!*

- Or as I Timothy 2 puts it—*that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” (I Tim. 2:2-4)*

- As a matter of God's Justice as it's put on display in this disp. of grace—God the Father and God the Son are both exercising *peace*; and are in the business of cultivating and maintaining an environment of *peace*!

- Which sounds a bit strange, what with all of the war and crime and violence that occurs in this present world—but the particular *peace* that God is concerned with isn't the peaceful co-existence of man ['man-to-man' (so to speak)] - rather, it's the issue of His great Wrath that had reached its 'tipping point' in Acts 7 — but instead of having His "Day of Wrath," He instead has temporarily suspended His "Day of Wrath" (or any kind of Just & Righteous Judgment of men on this earth) for the duration of this disp. of grace—having a particular business or Operation that He is currently getting accomplished by means of that environment of *peace*.

- Viz., that the *goodness of God would lead men to repentance*—and that *all men might be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth*.

- Which is one reason why the book of Romans started off the way it did— *To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and **peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*** (Romans 1:7)

- The particular "ripe" or proper environment for men on this earth to respond to God-Consciousness; Wrath-Consciousness; and to the Gospel of Christ is one of **PEACE**.

- And *peace* is also the "ripe" environment in which God desires to carry out other Operations in this dispensation of grace!

- Which is why God will come to be known as "*the God of peace*" — "*And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.*" (Romans 16:20)

- The dispensation of grace is characterized by (or one of its major features is) God holding back His Wrath — "amnesty" (so to speak) — or a time in which you're not going to be punished, but rather having time to avail yourself of what God offers you contained in the "Gospel of Christ!"

- And the right or fitting or proper environment of the Operations of God where His desire is for men to be *led to repentance* and *be saved* is: peace—and therefore the right, fitting, & proper environment for YOU to Labor with God the Father and with God the Son in their business to this same end is: **PEACE!**

- And that takes this issue of the Godly Labor OUT of the realm of simply being a “pacifist” (knowing that men will continue to be violent, hateful, and hostile [man against man]; and that nations will continue to be warring [nation against nation]— and it elevates it to a Godly level and an intelligent understanding and appreciation for the particular KIND of peace and *living peaceably* that is to mark & characterize a “son” of God the Father and a “brother” of the God the Son!

- Intelligently understanding & appreciating the CONTEXT puts it in the realm of—and gives it the particular and significant features of what God intended when He wrote this— which is the Godly Labor of a son who has properly received the 1st Component of *the instruction of Justice!*

- An environment of *peace* creates the most likely environment that has the **best chance** (so to speak) for *all men to be saved* when you are *honest* and true to who you really are “in Christ” *in the sight of all men!*

- It may not always be *possible*—but it’s more likely for a man to get saved in an environment of *peace* rather than when there’s friction and hostility and conflict!

- And so with the Godly Thinking of *recompensing to no man evil for evil*—and the Godly Conduct & Behavior that comes from that in which you *provide things honest in the sight of all men*— the Godly Labor in connection with fundamental, General Justice for you, personally, in your dealings with others is: When it comes to the things that YOU can control—***If it be possible*** (and if it’s not, it’s because of the **other** person—**never** because of your fleshly, selfish, wounded pride), ***as much as lieth in you*** (you do everything within your power to cultivate and maintain an environment of peace), ***live peaceably with all men*** (because the business and Operation of your Father is, while holding back His Wrath and instead providing an environment of peace Himself, is to have all men saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth).

- Right now in this disp. of grace, God the Father and God the Son are *living peaceably with all men* (**during their physical existence on this earth**)—God’s done everything on His part to provide for that peace!

- And again—that’s “peace” in the sense of not *recompensing evil for evil*—it’s “peace” in the sense of not pouring out His Wrath on men who deserve it!

- (Even Romans 5:1 isn’t talking about present time on this earth—but the future time in which God does Righteously Judge men who have rejected His *goodness, forbearance, & longsuffering!*) [At the Great White Throne Judgment]

- And this is far different from the way most Christians think about what God is doing today—(such as Righteously Judging individuals, businesses, cities, nations, etc.) — and the sad part of that is, that because of the erroneous, corrupt doctrine that most Christians operate upon—sometimes you find them wanting to “go to war” against other religions, or ungodly nations, or certain groups of people (homosexuals, liberals) or whatever.

- And that’s a powerful by-product of corrupt doctrine being incorporated into their natural, innate Survival sense of **Pay-back** Justice. (They weren’t taught that by their Father!)

- But a “son” has been taught about Justice by his Father—and it’s far different than that!

- (Notice: Proverbs 12:20—Level I Sonship Education Doctrine for the remnant of Israel.)

- “*counsellors*” = not only means one who advises, consults, or gives counsel—but it also means one who purposes, plans, or devises to do a thing—that is, one who labors to get a purposed thing accomplished!

- And really, God not *recompensing evil for evil* today—and *living peaceably in the sight of all men*—that **environment of peace** is the basis for which He’s doing what we were told back in Rom. 11:15 — *reconciling the world* unto Himself—and why, as Ambassadors for Christ, our message to the world is: **be YE reconciled to God!**

- And the way we're going to Labor with God to get that Operation accomplished is to *live peaceable with all men* — it's the right and Godly way to deal with men now on the basis of fundamental Godly Justice. — (however much that may 'grate' against your natural sense of Survival Justice)!

- Where Justice is concerned—a properly educated son says, “I want to function exactly like my Father—and His business right now is being done from a position of Him being at “*peace*” with the world (temporarily) and likewise (like Him), I want to create *peace*—I want to live *peaceably* with all men because I want God's Operations to be accomplished, and a *peaceable* environment is going to be the fertile ground for that rather than a hostile environment!”

- And one of the real delightful things about all this is—that since this is Vocational Training for your future positions in the Heavenly Places—you know from Rom. 8 that there is NO peace in the creature—and by means of this training, you will bring peace to the creature!

- And hopefully over the time in which we've dealt with this, you can see how this is a “seed-bed” type issue—where a great deal of implications are going to grow and stem from just this 1st Component of the *instruction of Justice*.

- Any Questions? Comments?

- POST-DOCTRINAL EXHORTATION (Pro. 3:1-4)

- THE 2ND COMPONENT of our Sonship *instruction of Justice*.

(read Romans 12:19-21)

- First off—just a word of warning or caution—since this is Godly Sonship Edification and Education, (and not systematic, categorical Bible study; or some even “lower” form of that, such as “topical” Bible study) - this isn't to be 'compartmentalized' - but rather it's to interface and connect with all that has gone before it.

- And I say that because you're going to have to bring (along with the entire form of the Wisdom doctrine you got in [:3-16]), you're going to have to bring the 1st Component of Justice (in :17-18) to this 2nd Component and make sure of how it properly attaches itself to the 1st Component.

- Truth is—**all** of the Aspects of Godliness contained in the 1st Component are at work in the 2nd Component.

- Secondly, let's remind ourselves of our 'over-simplified' outline for *the instruction of Justice*—and identify what this 2nd Component is designed to deal with.

- Component #1—Godly Justice as it deals with you, personally as a son. (Personally thinking about yourself).
- Component #2—Godly Justice in your personal dealings with other people—how you treat them; how they treat you.

- Now this 2nd Component is going to have to be stated a little better (a little more precise that it currently is stated) - but I want to point out something that we didn't say anything about when we introduced our *instruction of Justice*.

- And that is—I intentionally worded it this way because I wanted you to see that: there are some **close similarities** between the 1st and 2nd Components! (And they're supposed to be similar!)

- In other words—the Godly Thinking, Living, and Labor in this 2nd Component is going to be closely similar to the Godly Thinking, Living, & Labor of the 1st Component.

- The Godly Thinking, Living, & Labor of the 2nd Component is similar to the 1st because it, too, is going to deal with the **dispensational issue** of what God the Father and God the Son are thinking and doing right now in this present dispensation of grace in which we live.

- And so what's going on here—is that the 'shifting of gears' here that goes from dealing with the 1st Component to the 2nd, **simply goes from the GENERAL to the PARTICULAR!**

- The 1st Component of Justice is EXTREMELY general! (And it covers just about all of your dealings with man in a very general way.)

- But this 2nd Component greatly narrows your focus down to only dealing with your **ENEMIES!**

- And your “enemies” have got a **determined agenda** when it comes to **aggravating** you!

- And when I say that this 2nd Component deals with your “**enemies**” or your “**adversaries**” - I’m talking about someone who you can come along and properly label as one!

- In other words, we’re NOT talking about a disgruntled neighbor that just can’t get along with you, and one who causes you grief and trouble and is bothersome. (He still falls under the 1st Component, even though he may indeed treat you like his enemy!)

- What this 2nd Component deals with is an “enemy” that’s an enemy toward you because you’re a member of the Church, the Body of Christ!

- **This is an “enemy” within the framework of the Satanic Policy of Evil against you!**

- **This is someone who is an “enemy” of God Himself!!!**

(And not just because he’s an unjustified man—[all unjustified men are, by definition, “enemies of God”]).

- But these people are ‘**active**’ enemies (so to speak).

- And that’s seen and proven to be so because of the 2 passages from God’s word that are quoted by the apostle Paul in these 3 verses —

19 ... for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

- (Quotation from Deuteronomy 32:35—The Song of Moses—[primary passage])

- see also Deu. 32:43

- Psa. 94 [whole psalm] - notice the way the focus of attention is shifted from just the average troublesome person to the real, determined “enemies” and “adversaries” of God and of the remnant of Israel!

- And that should make far more sense out of (and give far more meaning to) the Exhortation sitting in Pro. 3:21-26!

- see also Nahum 1:2-3

20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

- (Quotation from Pro. 25:21-22 [read])

- The ‘**active**’ **enemies** of God is the CONTEXT of these passages—that’s the context type environment of these passages in connection with the remnant of Israel’s Sonship Education—and it’s very plain and clear who these enemies and adversaries are.

- And as you deal with the Psalms as they lead up to the Proverbs—you’ll deal with a singular “enemy” and plural “enemies” —

- And as you go through the 5 books of the Psalms, the Psalmists repeatedly talks about the “enemy” and the “enemies” of God and of the remnant.

- And as you progress through the 5 books of the Psalms and go through the 5 Mandates of the Davidic Covenant—a particular education takes place for the members of the remnant of Israel in connection with the development of their proper viewpoint concerning “the enemy” and the “enemies” —

and the “enemy” & “enemies” join forces—and there’s a political alliance & confederacy; and a national alliance & confederacy—which all fits in with how God’s program with Israel will run in the 5th Install. of the 5th CoP — and you get information about when that Adversary is cast to the earth—and he gives his authority & throne & power to the Beast so that that Assyrian King (with all the other kings that join in alliance with him) are all to be acknowledged by the remnant as an “enemy” and “enemies” — and all I’m after in all this is: that the CONTEXT of these passages is viewing everything **from the context of the Policy of Evil!**

- And with that in mind (before you ever get to Romans 12:19-21) - you learn that you don’t just come along and apply the word “enemy” (or “enemies”) to just average people who cause you trouble for some carnal reason!

- And that very thing applies also to US in this dispensation of grace!
 - (You can have a neighbor who just can't stand you—but it might be for a reason that has **nothing at all** to do with you being a Christian—and he may make life miserable for you — but that's NOT an “enemy” as God [your Father] uses that term in THIS context! — even though you could use the term that way in a very broad sense — but that's NOT what Romans 12:19-21 is talking about!)

- The 2nd Component of the *instruction of Justice* is talking about the issue of ones who are responding negatively towards you **AS** a member of the church, the body of Christ that you are—in connection with what you DO as a member of the church, the body of Christ!
 - And have therefore become a **determined enemy** within the context of the Satanic Policy of Evil's **opposition!**

- Now, granted, in our initial Sonship *instruction of Wisdom, Justice, Judgment, and Equity*—in Phase 2, Level I Sonship Education—we don't get a deep and through education into the Satanic PoE itself— (in fact, Satan's name doesn't come up until you get to ch. 16) — but we do get terminology like this [i.e., *enemy*] (and some more that will come up in our *instruction of Judgment*) - and we have that *enemy* terminology coming out of Pro. 25—which makes you realize that within this 2nd Component of our initial *instruction of Justice* (with it's 3 Components) — it let's you realize that there's a reason WHY you have (not just 2 Components), but 3 Components when you're dealing with God's own people!

- Because when all you're dealing with is the common people 'at-large' — 2 Components pretty much covers everything (if all you're going to do is to deal with people as human beings, so to speak).
 - All you need is the 1st Component (personal, everyday, common man's Justice) that doesn't have the authority of Human Government (necessarily) behind it. [or doesn't have Laws written about it—or statutes, ordinances, and judgments in place about it].
 - But then there is that other realm (that 3rd Component) - Governments—with it's Laws, statutes, ordinances, judgments and so forth.

- And when you think about it—when even you deal with Atheistic Unbelievers and their philosophical thinking about Justice in connection with human society—pretty much all they’ve got (or all they ever talk about) is “Natural Justice” and “Civil Justice”! (even Military Justice comes under the realm of “Civil Justice”)

- But when God looks at things (Justice-wise) - He’s got **3** Components! Because there’s also the realm of Justice in connection with HIS “enemies” — and there’s a realm of Justice that HAS to deal with the Adversary (and those who are in ‘league’ with, and aligned with him)!!

- And in BOTH of God’s programs—He’s got a **TRI-FOLD** Justice System!

- Therefore in this 2nd Component—you know that when “enemies” or an “enemy” is being spoken about—it’s the “enemy” within the context of the Adversary and his Policy of Evil—(even though he’s not ‘named’ in particular—and even though he’s not going to personally come up as a figure or entity with a personality behind him and a determination behind him until you get to Ch.16) - but when he does come up in Ch.16, you’re not going to be scratching your head and wondering who in the world Paul’s talking about! (Because there are some things about him that you’ve already been exposed to!)

- So this 2nd Component of Justice—sandwiched between Personal Justice and Civil Justice that’s common to all men—is the kind of Justice that is NOT common to all men—**it’s only common to God and His own people!**

- Now—with all that in mind—and in view—the “shift” that takes place in this 2nd Component of Justice that makes it **different** from the 1st Component (even though you can see, [like I pointed out], some ‘similarity’ between the two) - is that, there’s a **SEPARATE ATTITUDE and “First-Thought” Response** that God has in connection with The Policy Of Evil! and in connection with those that are ‘aligned’ with it!

.... and towards all those that participate in any of the tactics and stratagems and ploys & devices and acts & deeds that are done within the framework of the PoE, to be an irritant; and a trouble; and a bother to God’s own people!

- And God's "Separate Attitude" in connection with His enemies that are aligned with the PoE against Him and His people (whether it's the remnant of Israel in His program with Israel; or with us, the members of the church, the body of Christ in this disp. of grace) - it has to do with the fact that: **He's going to "avenge" Himself—and He's going to "avenge" His own people, against the Adversary and his cohorts!!!**

- And that's a different kind of Justice (or a different aspect of Justice) - and that's clear from the context of Deut. 32:35 — because in the context in which God declares, *To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence*—that's NOT said within the context of dealing with everyday, common Justice or Civil, Societal Justice—but that's said within the context of the overall outworking of the 5 Courses of Punishment in God's program w/ Israel—and looking out at the time when the 5th CoP comes upon them and they become the Adversary's *lawful captive*—and when the zenith of his hateful mistreatment of God's own people arrives and as he strikes out at God Himself—it's within that context that God talks about the issue of taking *vengeance!*

- And He specifies the time in which it's going to be done—and He specifies the actions He's going to take leading up to it—and the 'meekness' He shows leading up to it —

— **(read Ezk. 21:25-32)**

- Note—(:25) and the pronouncement God makes: *whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end,*

- Here the focus is upon the Climactic Stage of God's Program with Israel culminating in the Lord's Day of Wrath—and God says that *iniquity shall have an end*—(notice He doesn't say "sin" shall have an end; or "wickedness" or "evil") because that doesn't have an "end" at the Beginning of His Day of Wrath.

- But "iniquity" does! - And "iniquity" is the word God uses to describe the **offensiveness** of sin & evil & unrighteousness & ungodliness—and the offensiveness that it is to Him that BURNS within Him—and that His Justice (in a sense) 'cries out' to deal with it! and to put it down & get rid of it!

- And that's what the Day of His Wrath is all about! And that's why there's "WRATH" involved in it! (It's like a 'dam' bursting with all that righteous indignation; and all the righteous retribution; and all the righteous 'righting of the wrongs' that have been done to Him & His people comes pouring out!)

- And you have to make sure that you think about all that— (and to borrow an expression from our passage in Romans 12:19) you have to make sure that you 'put wrath in its proper **PLACE**' - at the TIME and PLACE when all the wrongs that have been done to God and God's own people gets righteously dealt with by GOD HIMSELF! (*Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*)

- And the issue for us in the 2nd Component of Justice—the Aspect of it that deals with the Godly Thinking in (:19) is so that WE think the EXACT SAME THING God the Father & God the Son thinks when the Adversary and one of his 'cohorts' that's **our enemy** comes along and **mistreats** us (and delights in doing that! [whether we see them delighting in it or not isn't the issue, but the issue is that the Adversary delights in it]) — and God the Father's response is: "I've got My **DAY** — it's been pre-determined; I've declared it; I'll deal with you then!!!"

- And God the Son thinks that EXACT SAME THING!

- And what we're taught in (:19) is to enable us to think that EXACT SAME THING TOO!

- The 'form' of GODLINESS of the 2nd Component of Godly Justice:

- The Aspect of the Godly Thinking: (:19)

- The Aspect of the Godly Conduct & Behavior: (:20)

- The Aspect of the Godly Labor: (:21)

- And once the Godly Thinking of (:19) is effectually working and *wrath* given its *place*—God the Father & God the Son come along — and the next thought they think is: "This is the dispensation of My grace" — and that *enemy* had an opportunity to disassociate himself with the Adversary—and no longer be a 'pawn'; no longer be his willing servant—

— and God’s response is to put the *wrath* in its *place*—and if he’s still around when the Day of Wrath takes place, then I’ll deal with him then!

- But the issue right now is to give him the opportunity to no longer be one of those ‘children of disobedience’ in whom the ‘spirit of the Prince of the Power of the Air’ is now working!

- And that opportunity for your *enemy* to no longer be a ‘pawn’ of the Adversary exists throughout the duration of this dispensation of grace in which we live—and therefore a particular course of action needs to take place **whereby the *enemy* may look at us differently!**

- And there’s a Principle that comes into play by which we are to Conduct & Behave ourselves according to the Godly Thinking of (:19) — and that Principle that’s stated in (:20) actually comes from Proverbs 25:21-22.

- There’s a particular Principle of Godly Conduct & Behavior in which an *enemy* can be dealt with that provides for the *enemy* to give honest consideration to why he’s doing what he’s doing!

- And that’s what the issue of *heaping coals of fire on his head* is about!

- (:20) describes a particular course of action that can be taken with an *enemy*, that, when it is taken—it is of such a nature **that it puts the *enemy* in the position of being able to honestly examine why he’s doing what he’s doing—and if there’s any vestige (or trace) of ‘honesty of heart’ there, his ‘coldness’ to us can begin to melt!**

- And then that Godly Conduct & Behavior is what actually leads into the Laboring together with God that (:21) talks about—(*Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*)

- That’s what God, Himself, IS DOING!

- Actually, everything that God is doing in this disp. of grace — (by means of holding back His wrath; by means of things He put in motion when this disp. of grace began that have a ‘retarding’ effect upon the devolution of man throughout this dispensation) — everything He has done and is still doing is of this ilk—He’s *overcoming evil with good!*

- And in so doing—He’s providing opportunity after opportunity after opportunity for His enemies to change their mind!

- Take (for example) a person who stands at the Great White Throne Judgment who has lived in this disp. of grace and who never got themselves justified unto eternal life (for whatever reason).

- When they stand at the GWT and the “books” are opened and the “book of life” is opened — (Rev. 20:11-12) — and he’s judged by the things that are written in “the books” — the “book of life” is easy to und. & app. just by its name (if he has JUEL, his name is in it; if not, his name is NOT in it).

- But the “books” are opened and he’s going to be judged by the things that are written in them—and there’s a number of things written in those “books” - there’s not only a record of all his sins that are going to be imputed to him (because he never got his sins remitted and forgiven—they’re all listed there; they’re all written down) - but also written in those “books” (interspersed within them) are all the opportunities that the person had to respond honestly to something, whereby if he had done so, it would have been a ‘start’ (so to speak) on the road to ‘redemption’ rather than on the road to perdition!

- And my point in bringing this up—(it’s part of the issue back in Romans 2—the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance) - it’s the issue of God’s goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering—and there’s going to be a record of those times in those “books”!

- That’s why it says later on in Romans 2 (:16) that God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ—and there’s not only going to be judgment of a person’s own overt conduct & behavior—but a judgment of the secrets of the persons’ heart!

- And the secrets of the heart has to do with how the heart responded to the “riches” of God’s “goodness, forbearance, & longsuffering.”!

- And all those opportunities—all those times when God can point to the “books” and say, “On June 30th, 1977 you had a perfect opportunity to respond, but you didn’t ... instead, you hardened your heart against it!”

- And it's going to be made abundantly manifest at that time—not only is that person going to be worthy of the Wrath—but also **GOD 'BENT OVER BACKWARDS' TO TRY AND GET THAT PERSON TO CHANGE THEIR MIND!!!**

- And what I'm getting at in all this is: THAT'S ALL PART OF GOD'S ATTITUDE where His Justice is concerned!

- God 'bends over backwards' and does all those things that are indicative of His *goodness, forbearance, & longsuffering* because He's NOT *overcome of evil, but He overcomes evil with good!*

- And He does that endeavoring to get that person to change their mind! (Or to respond to some aspect of the seamless "light" that runs from the light of God-consciousness on to the appeal to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ unto justification unto eternal life!)

- That's God's ATTITUDE towards His determined enemies right now and throughout the duration of this disp. of grace!

- And that's also WHY the Adversary responds like he does—for instance, as Paul describes at the beginning of II Corinthians chapter 4!)

- (see/read II Cor. 4:1-4)

- It's directly due to the Adversary knowing full well what this ATTITUDE of God the Father is concerning His Justice—it's directly due to the Justice Attitude of God the Father (that 'bends over backward' to try to get that Lost person to change his or her mind and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for their JUEL) - because even though that Lost person has rejected the "light" God gave him, the truth is, **God's NOT done with him yet!!!**

- Paul says that he's already NOT believed—so why then does the Adversary come along and *blind their mind???* — because he knows that even though they've rejected the gospel once ... **God's NOT done with them!**

- When it comes to God's Justice right now in this disp. of grace—God's Attitude of Justice is: to continue to deal with that Lost person in *goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering*—to keep on giving that person opportunity after opportunity after opportunity to be *led to repentance*!

- That's why (:4) says, ***lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ ... should shine unto them!***

- And the Adversary ***blinds their minds LEST*** they should believe! (at a further 'opportune' time!)

- And that's all just consistent with this Justice Attitude that God possesses—(that would first of all have been learned back in Romans so that what's described here would make perfect sense)!

- And the Godly Thinking of (:19) leads to the Godly Conduct & Behavior of (:20) - and with that Godly Thinking and that Godly Con. & Beh. with respect to a Godly Just response to our *enemies* and to our adversaries—you can then (intelligently, and with full cooperation with our Father), Labor together with Him as we deal with our *enemies* and our adversaries—and intelligently overcome their *evil* with the *good* that we're giving them—and intelligently commune & fellowship with our Father in some sonship prayer because this is where we naturally **desire** to continue our Ambassadorship.

- And by doing so—intelligently figure out what actions to take that would be the best way to overcome that *evil* that was just done to us—and then go out and DO IT!

- And if this 2nd Component of Justice doesn't become as STRONG of an issue in our Level I Sonship Education as it's designed to become—then your Ambassadorship for Christ will suffer greatly!

- Because you WON'T be dealing with and treating that *enemy* the way your Father does—or the way in which your Father taught you—you'll instead be dealing with your *enemy* the way in which this world (and its sense of justice) taught you!

- You won't be providing that individual opportunity after opportunity to, (by your *goodness*), be *led to repentance*!

- This is God's fundamental **Attitude** when it comes to *overcoming* something in a person that would normally elicit a response of His Justice [or Just Judgment or Wrath] (in this case, the *enemy's evil*) - and put that individual in a position to change his mind & be *led to repentance*—to bread down and break through that 'blockage' that exists in his mind!

- And until the time comes (and it will come) when God makes the pronouncement that "I've had it with you" - "You're determined at all cost to be My *enemy*" - "My attitude of Justice—My *goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering* is at an end" — and until that time, God's **Attitude** is, "**I'll do anything I can to make you NOT My *enemy*!!!**"

- And that's the CORE, **SEMINAL ISSUE** or THOUGHT in this 2nd Component of the *instruction of Godly Justice!*

- And with that kind of 'frame of mind' or context—that core, seminal issue is what makes the Godly Thinking of (:19) and the Godly Conduct & Behavior of (:20) and the Godly Labor of (:21) **easily understood and appreciated!**

- The CORE, SEMINAL ISSUE for the 1st Component:

When *evil* is received, there's no desire to *recompense* it with the same—but to *recompense* it with *goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering* for the duration of this disp. of grace. (Knowing that *the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.*)

- The CORE, SEMINAL ISSUE for the 2nd Component:

Where my *enemy* is concerned: Until the time comes for God to end this disp. of grace and administer His "Day of Wrath," I will do anything and everything I can NOT to make you my *enemy*.

- Now with that 'overview' of the 2nd Component of our *instruction of Justice*, and with that 'frame of mind' - we should now be in a position to be able to look at the details that make up this 2nd Component—so let's start off in (:19) with the **Godly Thinking** —

19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

- Notice that (:19) starts off with a phrase of extreme tender affection: **“Dearly beloved”**.

- That is the very 1st time in Paul’s epistles (and the 1st time in our Sonship Curriculum) that we are addressed as *Dearly beloved*.

- Paul will address us a total of 6 times this way—and he will address Timothy and Philemon this way 1 time each—for a total of 8 times.

- And Peter will use this expression 1 time for the remnant of Israel.

- And this *is* terminology of **extreme tender affection**.

- **Dearly** = (the adverb of “dear”) = when something or someone is described as *dear*, it’s very often because it is either scarce, or rare, or close—hence it bears a high price; or is costly—of high value; greatly valued; precious.

- And then it says, “*beloved*” - it doesn’t say, ‘Dearly loved’ but *Dearly be-loved*.

- **beloved** = our English Prefix “be” = make or made, and is used as an ‘intensifier’ - hence, it is one who had been made to be GREATLY or INTENSELY Loved (as opposed to, and set apart from objects of love in a more general sense) — **greatly or highly valued & esteemed**.

- That is, there are those who are objects of your love in general, but then there are those who are of such a nature as to be especially ‘pleasing’ to you, or are ‘highly approved’ by you.

- It’s a shame that this word has almost fallen out of use in our English language!!!

- Therefore *Dearly beloved* is an intense expression of great love and affection—of being highly valued and esteemed as a rare thing!

- But the question is, **Why** is that particular designation significant right here (for the very 1st time) - and just before giving us the Godly Thinking of this 2nd Component to our *instruction of Justice*? Why does our Father address us right here as *Dearly beloved*?

- Why now? Why is it so fitting and perfect that right now (for the very 1st time) our Father addresses us through the apostle Paul as *Dearly beloved*?

- (Truth is, we've been called *beloved* before [1:7
To all that be in Rome, beloved of God ...])

- But right here—preceding *Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath ...* what is the significance of God calling us ***Dearly beloved***?

- Why does it matter now? Why didn't God just say, 'Avenge not yourselves,'? — why does God couple that with this expression of intense, affectionate, godly love? Why is that so perfectly placed, right where it is? (by the way, this is often missed by most Bible teachers)

- Well—one way to help you out here is to know that of all the times in which God uses this expression (as we noted earlier) - (we noted a total of 9 times that God uses this phrase) — but there is **one other time** God uses it (a 10th time) ... but it's not the 10th time, it's the VERY FIRST time God ever uses the phrase.

- **Jeremiah 12**—The prophet Jeremiah (a.k.a. The Weeping Prophet) is a 5th CoP prophet who is actually living in the 1st Installment of the 5th CoP. And here in Ch.12, Jeremiah is continuing a scathing indictment of the nation Israel that began back in Ch.11 where God indicts the nation for their apostasy, their disobedience, and their breaking of that Law Contract. And Jeremiah is indicting them for being worthy of the Lord's Wrath when He has "His Day."

- (read 11:1-4)

- (read 12:1-7 [:7])

- Granted the context here is different than that of Romans 12, but it's telling that when God first uses this phrase of *dearly beloved*—He's not just simply talking about Israel as a whole, but even the remnant (as it existed then; Jeremiah being one of them) - and when He uses that phrase *dearly beloved*, He connects it with a specific situation in which those who are God's *dearly beloved* are going to have to live in the very midst (or *hand*) of their **ENEMIES!**

- Again the context is different—they are going to be put in the *hand of their enemies* due to going under that 5th CoP — but we’re going to be put in a position of living and existing with our *enemies*—not because of any judgment of God, but simply because of who we really and honestly are as sons who are members of the church, the body of Christ!

- But it’s fascinating that in the “first use” of that phrase *dearly beloved*, a group of people (God’s own people) are called that in the very face of having to deal with and exist with their *enemies*!

- And because of the background work we’ve done—you know that the *enemy* that we’re going to face here in Romans 12:19-21 has nothing to do with a neighbor who just doesn’t like you, or a co-worker that causes you problems (for whatever reason) - but this **exclusively** deals with those who oppose you for who you are “in Christ!”

- Your Father has an *enemy*, and you have an *enemy* that **is** your *enemy* because you are a son of your Father—and these *enemies* are men on this earth who actively participate in the Satanic Policy of Evil.

- And it’s so important and so significant that, just before you’re told to *avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord* — because people will hate you for your Father’s sake; they’ll cause you harm and trouble you and bother you for your Father’s sake—but right now, you’re NOT going to *avenge yourself*.

- In other words—right now, you’re going to have to “take it” — you’re going to have to “endure” it—**and your Father’s not going to do anything to intervene and stop it!**

- And the BIG THING that I’m after here—(though the word isn’t used here, but it is implied) - the big thing I’m after is: you’re being told here in no uncertain terms that **you’re going to SUFFER!**

- And that’s the parallel concept even back in Jer.12:7— (though for a different reason) - but nevertheless, when God uses *dearly beloved* it’s used in contexts in which God’s *dearly beloved* ones are going to SUFFER at the hands of their [and God’s] *enemies*!

- And the Adversary has men on this earth that cooperate with the PoE to actively oppose and withstand your Father and His business on this earth—and they will actively oppose and withstand **you** when you labor as sons with your Father in His business on this earth!

- And it's so important to perceive that this instruction that's going to teach you that you're not to 'avenge' yourself, but *rather give place unto vengeance* — this information that tells you clearly that you're going to have to '**suffer** it' and to endure that enemy opposition when the seemingly Just & Righteous thing would be for God to take **immediate** vengeance on those *enemies* (but He won't)—that that's all preceded by this endearing, powerful, intense expression: *Dearly beloved!*

- The wonderful thing about that expression is that even though you're going to suffer at the hands of your, (and your Father's) mutual *enemy*—**THAT DOESN'T MEAN THAT YOUR FATHER'S HEART IS NOT TENDER TOWARD YOU!**

- It doesn't mean that your Father's not affectionate towards you—or that He's not 'keeping score' (because He is!)

- And it doesn't mean that your Father hasn't done something for you in order for you to be able to handle it—because He has!!!

- Remember Romans 8:37—*Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

- Romans 8:28—*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

- We are to understand & appreciate that when *enemies* of your Father victimize you and injure you and bother you, oppose you, resist you, etc., for who you really are "in Christ" — and your Father doesn't intervene to stop it — you are no less **beloved** of your Father—in fact, even in the midst of such suffering, you are always most **dearly beloved!!!**

- And there is coming a day in which all that will be dealt with by your Father—and satisfaction will be had!

- So in the context of this 2nd Component of our *instruction of Justice*— you, as your Father’s son who will one day face your *enemy*—(a human being that, for no other reason than for who you are as a member of the church, the body of Christ is hostile towards you) - but just before giving you the *instruction* of the Just way your Father would have you suffer that *enemy*—your Father addresses you for the first time as *Dearly beloved*—and by doing that, (in the face of the suffering you’re going to have to endure at the hands of your *enemy*) your Father gives you the dearest term of endearment (and what you mean to Him) that he can give you.

- This is actually the first time your Father is acting towards you as what He will later on be called (and come to be known as): *the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort* (*II Cor. 1:3*)

- And that endearing phrase is a reminder to you of how **precious** you are to Him—and of the fact that He hasn’t abandoned you to the *enemy* without fortifying your “inner man” with the doctrine you’ll need to have that enemy’s activities toward you *work together for good* (with that doctrine contained in the Curriculum) - and as a result, be *more than a conqueror* whereby that *enemy* and his activities to oppose and resist you will work to advance, better train, and better qualify you for your Sonship Heavenly Vocation!

- And the issue behind the Godly Thinking is—that you’re NOT supposed to just kind of shrug and say, “Well, in the scope of eternity, it’s really no big deal” or “When I look at what Christ went through, it’s no big deal what I’m going through”— or to try to do some kind of ‘mind over matter’ type of psychology trick in order to marginalize the suffering at the hands of your *enemy*—because that’s NOT what this teaches you!

- Romans 12:19 teaches you that *Vengeance WILL be taken*; that Justice will be meted out—and you’re to *give place to wrath* until the time in which your Father and His Son will take *Vengeance* and will *repay*!

- And that means that you intelligently understand and appreciate that one day **satisfaction will be had—and there’s nothing sinful about that**—in fact Justice DEMANDS satisfaction!!!

- And it would be a LACK OF JUSTICE if we were told, “Hey, you’re going suffer at the hands of your enemies—but remember that the *sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us*—just keep eternity in sight—it’s no big deal.”

- All those sorts of things that so many Christians and so many “good” people think are ways to cope with this kind of suffering (without God teaching us how to think about it).

- But God DOESN’T think that way—the reality is, that even though you don’t avenge yourself right now, and that God is currently bending over backwards to not avenge right now in this disp. of grace—the reality is, that He’s aware of every injury done to you by His/your mutual enemy—it hurts Him when that happens—and it doesn’t say that He **won’t** get vengeance— in fact, it says the exact OPPOSITE!

- It’s just that God has determined to NOT avenge right now—but He will avenge one “Day”! (When He has “His Day”!)

- And it’s far better for Him to avenge than you— (He’s got all the facts!)

- And then the **Godly Thinking** begins:

19 ... *avenge not yourselves,*

- *avenge* = (Webster 1828) To take satisfaction for an injury by punishing the injuring party; to vindicate by inflicting pain or evil on the wrong doer. *Avenge* implies that the evil inflicted on the injuring party is a **satisfaction** or justice done to the injured.

- ‘Vengeance’ = the righteous retribution for a wrong done to you.

- But your thinking (that matches up with your Father’s thinking right now) is to **NOT avenge yourself**.

- And it’s not that your enemy ‘gets away’ with anything—because the Godly Thinking doesn’t end there ...

19 ... *but rather give place unto wrath:*

- First and foremost—*giving place unto wrath* is NOT DISMISSING IT!

- This tells you that when it comes to your *enemy*—the Just & Righteous retribution of *wrath* owed to your *enemy* will, in fact, **BE paid back!** (There will be righteous and just **satisfaction!**)

- But the point is: NOT BY **YOU**; AND NOT **RIGHT NOW!**

- When you “*give place*” to something—what are you doing?

A: You’re putting it in it’s **proper place!**

- And *wrath*’s “proper place” is that God says, “I’ll do it!”

- And though you *give place unto wrath*—and put it in it’s proper *place* (which is in God’s hands) - it’s important to understand and appreciate that God IS NOT coming along and simply telling us to just ‘forget about it!’

- But in a sense—it’s certainly not worth ‘keeping score’ yourself—or it’s not worth ‘brooding’ about it—or worrying about it—or any other carnal type response to it that would be inconsistent with giving it it’s *proper place*—and looking forward to the time when the Lord will *avenge!*

- And the idea is **to be satisfied and content with that**—waiting for that to occur.

-And that’s not being ‘blood-thirsty’ or anything along those lines—because **it’s God’s *own Attitude!!!***

- And you have to understand and appreciate that GOD IS **NOT BLOOD-THIRSTY!** — when He finally takes *vengeance*, He’s not doing it with a ‘smile’ on His face, or a ‘snarl’ on His face—and just ‘can’t wait’ to tear into people! NO! This is a perfectly *righteous* and *just thing*—and more than that: **it’s a needful thing** to be done! (Justice, by it’s very nature **demand**s satisfaction—especially when wronged!)

- And because you have your own innate, natural sense of Justice—the immediate, carnal reaction of your flesh is going to be: “Well, the only rational thing to do here is to take *vengeance* myself—it’s really the only right thing for me to do!” (and you can justify to yourself the taking of vengeance, because your sense of Justice demands satisfaction when it’s been wronged—and furthermore, this world expects you to do that very thing!)

- And it may not be a sinful thing or an unjust thing for you to do—**but that’s not the point in this Godly Thinking!**

- The point is that God says, “**I’M GOING TO DO IT!**”
“**AND I’VE GOT MY OWN TIME FOR IT!**”

- So the issue is—*avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath*—and it’s with great precision that God uses that preposition **unto** *wrath*, and not simply “give place TO wrath” — and that use of the preposition *unto* (rather than *to*) tells you that we’re not simply talking about **not being ‘wrathful’** (because that’s not “Christ-like” as some would say) - but you know by the preposition *unto* that a TIME PERIOD and a specific PLACE is what is in view—that is, **wrath will, indeed, take place**, but there’s a specific TIME & PLACE reserved for that—and until that TIME of God’s Wrath, you’re not to pour out your own *wrath*, *but rather give place unto wrath!*

- **wrath** = violent, hot anger; the just punishment for an offense or crime—and when talking about God’s *wrath*, it’s holy, righteous, and just! *Wrath* is anger in action! It’s the bursting out of anger that consumes with Just punishment those worthy/deserving of it!

- And when you put *wrath* in its proper *place*—you not only put the *wrath* in it’s proper *place*—but at the same time you keep what’s going on right now in it’s proper place! (and you think about it properly as well!!!)

- And that takes you right back to that Seminal Issue—that for the duration of this disp. of grace, God is ‘bending over backwards’ to try and get that *enemy* to change his mind! And where my *enemy* is concerned—until the time comes for God to end this disp. of grace and administer His “Day of Wrath,”
I will do everything I can NOT to make you my enemy!

- And we're not left (in [:19]) with just this negative command (so to speak) of *avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath*: but we have a colon (that makes it so that you pause long enough to get the effectual working of what has just been said) - and then you have one of those stylistic nuances of our English Language in which a statement is made that has an unwritten question of "why?" that's begging an answer—and the answer is:

19 ... for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

(Quotation from Deuteronomy 32:35 — *To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.*)

- And since this is a "**for**" *it is written* (and not an "**as**" *it is written*) quotation—we're to go right back to where that quotation sits in God's word and recognize that the EXACT issue that's sitting back there is the SAME issue that's sitting right here!

- And even though that comes from God's Program with Israel—that means that this issue is true in BOTH programs!

- When the remnant of Israel picks up the Song of Moses and declares it to be in effect—they will be **suffering** wrong doing and evil from their (and God's) *enemies* (because of who they are "**in Christ**" too!)

[I Peter 3:16; 5:14; Jude 1:1]

- **Vengeance** = (though we've defined this word before, it's interesting to note what Noah Webster said in his 1828 English Dictionary) - The infliction of pain on another, in return for an injury or offense. Such infliction, when it proceeds from malice or mere resentment, and is not necessary for the purposes of justice, is revenge and a most heinous crime. When such infliction proceeds from a mere love of justice, and the necessity of punishing offenders for the support of the laws, it is *vengeance*, and is warrantable and just. In this case, vengeance is a just retribution, recompense or punishment—and is used in Scripture, and frequently applied to the punishments inflicted by God on sinners.

- But there's an aspect of God's ATTITUDE towards this world **today** that makes *vengeance* 'out of character' (so to speak) for Him.

- It's not 'out of character' in the overall plan and purpose of God—but it's 'out of character' with the **entire** disp. of grace.
- And that's why it would be 'out of character' for the members of the body of Christ to act as if they're not connected with the "Head" - and aren't Thinking like the "Head" Thinks — and would go ahead and operate inconsistent with how the "Head" Thinks about things!
- And for now—you put your thoughts of just vengeance and wrath in the place where they belong—you relegate them to Who and Where they belong—and your job is to keep on thinking about what's going on **right now** (just as you're supposed to think about it)!
- Your desire is to pursue a particular course of action that makes it so that you do everything you can NOT to have that *enemy* remain your *enemy*—and instead provide him the opportunity (over and over again if necessary) to repent and change his mind concerning the gospel of Jesus Christ!
- So the Godly Thinking of the 2nd Component of Justice that deals with you personally having to deal with an "**enemy**" that **is** your *enemy* for no other reason than that you are a member of the church, the body of Christ—the Godly Thinking is:

19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is **min**; I will repay, saith the Lord.

- Now for **all** of you right now at this moment—it's highly unlikely that you have an *enemy* like this—this is one of those instances in our Curriculum for Sonship Education where you get information and instruction BEFORE THE NEED!
- Therefore, this may only be 'theoretical' or not practical at the moment—but this is one of those instances where you have to be given some information ahead of time in order for you to utilize it later on.
- And sometimes things have to start off 'in theory' (so to speak) and then come into reality when the time comes.

- And the time **will** come when you are going to SUFFER at the hands of an *enemy* (a human being that is a cohort or pawn of the Adversary—one who is in full cooperation with the Satanic Policy of Evil).

- So this information really is the first time you get taught and instructed by your Heavenly Father in anticipation of, and to prepare you for undergoing the “*sufferings of Christ!*”

- But there’s something else going on here that I believe we need to talk about and get some real appreciation for—and this issue needs to begin to gain some real STRENGTH in your thinking and in your inner man!

- And that is—that one of the things this entire 2nd Component of our *instruction of Justice* does (the 1st Component does it to some degree, but the 2nd Component really brings it into sharp focus) — and that is: that at this point you are to really begin **thinking dispensationally** to a much greater degree as a son, than ever before!

- You are to really begin to appreciate what is going on now in this disp. of grace that’s **far different** than what will immediately begin taking place when this disp. of grace is over!

- And that is—that since this disp. of grace began, and until this disp. of grace is ended—God has been holding back His Wrath—and for now, He is NOT *recompensing evil for evil*, and He is NOT taking *Vengeance* on any person, business, government, nation, etc. — but rather, He’s *giving place unto wrath*—and that’s to be our thinking as properly educated sons.

- But God is NOT just forgetting about the wrongs and evil and injury done to Him and His people (you) today—He’s very much aware of it—He records it in the “books” - and one day He will, indeed, satisfy the demands of His offended and injured Justice!

- For He says at the end of (:19), ***I will repay, saith the Lord.***

- And something MORE than just the issue of giving wrath its proper *place* is going on here—there’s something else beginning to get generated in your thinking (more than it ever has before)!

- And it's really a 'two-sided' coin (so to speak) — and what's supposed to begin to get some real strength in your intelligent Sonship Thinking is:

- On the one hand, there's nothing wrong or sinful or fleshly or carnal about having the confidence, and the satisfaction, and the godly contentment that God will do just what He says He will do: HE WILL **REPAY**—HE WILL TAKE **VENGEANCE** in Righteous Judgment upon every one of His and your *enemies*!

- But on the other hand—one of the things that's also supposed to begin getting generated in your mind is the **TIMING** issue of this dispensation of grace!

- And what I mean by that (for now) is that you're supposed to start getting a healthy and godly respect for the fact that this dispensation of grace **will, one day, END!**

- And since the only thing that will determine the end of this disp. of grace is God's own *longsuffering*—the end of this disp. of grace (and the end of God holding back His wrath) is **IMMINENT** (it could occur at any moment!) — and folks, that makes a HUGE difference upon the way in which you view Lost people in general; and your *enemy* in particular!

- And my understanding is that you're to begin to have a far greater understanding and appreciation for an issue you were first confronted with back in “the gospel of Christ” (in Romans Ch. 1-5) - and that is that the ‘window of opportunity’ that this disp. of grace offers (i.e., for a man to NOT have to undergo God's wrath) is going to close—and that means that you've got to start feeling the dread of God's wrath befalling those Lost persons (and even your *enemy*).

- In other words—the Day of God's Wrath and what men will experience in it (that they could avoid altogether, if they get justified unto eternal life right now) - should begin to really **PRESS** down upon you—**and should deeply impress you!**

- You should begin to feel God's Day of Wrath pressing upon you in the sense of how you function as an ambassador for Christ right now! (Matching your Father's desire that *all men be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth!*)

- And in preparation for the Godly Conduct & Behavior in (:20); and in view of the Godly Lovingkindness & Tenderheartedness that we have come to have living and operating and effectually working within us from our *instruction of Wisdom*—and in speaking to that issue of having Godly contentment when it comes to God’s *vengeance* and *repaying* with His wrath — we, oftentimes, don’t understand EXACTLY what is taking place in an unjustified man as he persists in his ungodly state.

- That is, we don’t normally think about him or her the way **God** does!

- And there’s only one way you can learn what’s going on—and that’s by God telling you what’s going on!

- There’s no psychologist or psychiatrist or even your own imagination or reasoning that is going to get you to realize that there is something **horrifying** taking place in that man!

- It’s **not** going to show on the outside—in fact, he can be sweet and smiling—you can have an 80 yr. old grandmother with a smile on her face (who’s never been justified unto eternal life) who has persisted in either an atheistic approach, or pursued a ‘relative righteousness’ approach, or whatever — but she’s not a justified woman; she’s the sweetest looking picture of a grandmother, bouncing her grandchildren on her knee, and going about doing all sorts of wonderful things for her children & grandchildren—but there’s something **horrible** taking place within her!

- And that’s what’s oftentimes LACKING in a member of the church, the body of Christ’s understanding of what’s going on in unjustified people.

- And to be honest about it—that’s not supposed to be fully understood and appreciated here in Level I Sonship Education—but it gets addressed in Level II. (Eph. 2:1-3; 4:17-19 — his ungodliness is actually becoming ‘satan-liness’!)

- But some fundamental things do get underway here in Romans—and this is at one of those ‘points’ (so to speak).

- (see Romans 2:5-9)

- But the issue is—even as bad as it gets—and until this disp. of grace ends (or until they die), there's still an opportunity for them to change their mind!

- And with this current knowledge and instruction we've received right here in this 1st & 2nd Components of our *instruction of Justice*, we know that if that Lost person doesn't change his/her mind, by what takes place in their thinking—they can come to the point where they actually join 'hand-in-hand' with the Adversary!

- And they have "taken sides" (so to speak) - and they may not even be consciously aware of that—but that's what they've done!

- And when an unjustified person persists in their 'un-justification' (after a certain point), that's how they're looked at by God!

- And that's really more 'flesh on the bone' (so to speak) or more of the background for that passage we looked at over in II Thessalonians.

- (see II Thess. 1:3-10)

- And all I'm saying in all this is—that there's a whole bunch of things that are going to be built upon this fundamental understanding and appreciation of our fundamental Justice that will make it so that we have God's own thinking and perspective when it comes to the 'Just-ness' of God in taking *vengeance* and *repaying* those *enemies* with His *wrath*!

- And a son will develop an understanding of (that's consistent with God's own understanding of) what an **abhorrence** there is that's a part of the **iniquity** concept in regard to yours and God's *enemies*.

- (**Iniquity** being the word God uses when He looks at things that are **abhorrent** to Him—and that describes sin, wickedness, evil [and the like] when it becomes that personally offensive thing to Him [not just generally offensive but **personally** offensive to Him] - in that it strikes at and violates actual aspects of things He's doing and Operations that He's involved in—that is, all that God is 'bending over backwards' to do in order to get that person justified and no longer be God's *enemy*!)

- And what I'm after in all this—is that when you think about God taking Vengeance and repaying with wrath those enemies—that at this point it may seem like what is often and mistakenly thought of about God doing such a thing—(that is, that He is 'blood-thirsty') — but the truth is, no unbeliever, and no Christian without a proper Sonship Education will ever understand and appreciate the iniquity aspect of that unjustified person—and how abhorrent and how vile and how disgusting and how repulsive and how satan-ly they have become.

- And as you progress through your Sonship Education—you're going to go from this fundamental aspect of Justice whereby you're content to *give place unto wrath*—to being able to fully sympathize with and emphasize with and say with full conviction of heart, the same things that are said by Paul in Level II Son. Edu., and in Level III Son. Edu., and on out in the Pastoral Epistles.

- Ex., I Timothy 6:13-15 — Paul, along with Timothy, is just **waiting** for the Lord to *shew who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords* — it's like they just can't wait for that to happen! (nothing sinful or fleshly or carnal about it at all!!!)

- Now all that's NOT supposed to be produced right now in Romans 12:19-21—but this is where it all gets underway in earnest!

- But this should make it so that you have a better appreciation for just how BIG if a DEAL it is if you **do** *avenge yourself* and if you **don't** *give place unto wrath!*

- And that takes us back to that 'two-sided coin' — the intelligent Sonship thing to think Justice-wise is — to *give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord*— a son knows that he's to put *wrath* in its proper *place* (out in the Lord's Day of Wrath) - and he's perfectly content to do just that knowing that the Lord will *repay* with proper *vengeance* in that Day, and until then, he will, with godly contentment do everything he can to NOT make his *enemy* an enemy any longer—desiring, rather, that his *enemy* change his mind and become justified in God's sight.

- But on the other hand—he lives in constant recognition that the end of this disp. of grace is pressing to end and therefore he desires to one day see the Lord's Justice vindicated when God *will repay* all that has injured Him and His people.

- **THE GODLY LIVING (Conduct & Behavior)** of the 2nd Component of our *instruction of Justice* and receiving Justice-type Sonship Decision-Making skill.

- The Godly Thinking:

19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.

- The Godly Conduct & Behavior:

20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

- Once the Godly Thinking of (:19) has effectually worked to radically change your Thinking toward your (and God the Father's and God the Son's) enemies—and once that Godly Thinking has become sufficiently **strong** enough to create a powerful DESIRE to put it into practice—it's going to do what all of the Godly Thinking in all of the Components of Wisdom, Justice, Judgment, & Equity does: **it's going to seek it's natural 'outlet' to be put into practice in some Godly Conduct & Behavior.**

- And in this case—the natural 'outlet' for the Godly Thinking of (:19) comes in the form of a **Principle**—a Principle comes into play by which we are to Conduct & Behave ourselves according to the Godly Thinking of (:19) - and that Principle is stated in (:20) - [which is a Quotation from Proverbs 25:21-22].

- A *principle* is the foundational **course of action** derived from a general truth or doctrine — a *principle* serves as a **rule of action** (it serves as a 'ruler' or '*prince*' - it's the "prince-ruler" of a particular course of action or conduct & behavior) - and as such, a *principle* will rule or govern a whole range of conduct and behavior based upon the general truth or doctrine from which it comes.

- And for us (as sons) there's a particular Principle of Godly Conduct & Behavior in which an *enemy* can be dealt with — **that provides for the *enemy* to give honest consideration to why he's doing what he's doing!**

- And if (:19) has worked properly, (:20) is the most natural and most **desired** course of action you want to take as a son with your *enemy*!

- Hopefully—if, when you first read this passage and there was an “eeeeuuwww” factor—if you kind of ‘recoiled’ at it—by now (if :19 is effectually working), you should look at (:20) and say YES! That’s **exactly** what I **desire** to do now!

- And it’s not just that—but it’s an **intelligent** desire—you should see that this is the only **natural** and **proper** course of action to take in light of the Godly Thinking!

- And I’m saying this to point out the fact that if (:19) has done it’s job—(:20) **isn’t** going to be forced or contrived or “*Ok, but I’m going to have to grit my teeth and take this like castor oil—but God says to do it, so I’ll just hold my nose and do it!*” NO—WRONG! (If that’s the case, then you should NOT proceed on to [:20], you should go **back** and get [:19] effectually working!!!)

- The **power** and the **strength** of (:19) is that it actually produces a real change of heart—(a change in the way you think; and a change in the way you feel about your *enemy*!)

- (:20) is a Principle that describes a particular course of action that can be taken with an *enemy*, that, when it takes place—it is of such a nature **that it puts the *enemy* in the position of being able to honestly examine WHY he’s doing what he’s doing—and if there’s any vestige of ‘honesty of heart’ there: his ‘coldness’ and ‘hardness’ of heart can begin to soften and melt!**

- Now (:20) is a near word-for-word Quotation from Proverbs 25:21-22—

21 If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink:

22 For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee.

- This is something that applies to BOTH programs: to God’s program with Israel, and with us as members of the new creature of the church, the body of Christ in this dispensation of grace.

- The **difference** is that for the members of the remnant of Israel, there is a particular Time Period within their program where they are to take this course of action as sons—but with us in this disp. of grace, it is the course of action we take as sons FOR THE ENTIRE DURATION OF THE DISPENSATION OF GRACE!

- For us, in our program, there's never NOT a time in which we operate differently towards our *enemy* than what is described here in (:20)!!!

- And there is a real 'appropriate-ness' for this Quotation from Proverbs 25:21-22 here in this 2nd Component to our *instruction of Justice*.

- When the members of the remnant of Israel receive their Sonship Education (out in the 5th Install. of the 5th CoP) - they are actually ***in*** the Day of the Lord's Wrath—the Time Schedule has now once again 'kicked in' - but especially at the beginning of the time in which their program resumes—they are **not** to take any particular course of action with respect to dealing with their *enemies* and their adversaries in a retributive manner until God Himself does!!!

- The Lord Jesus Christ Himself prepared them for this in the Gospel accounts during His earthly ministry.

- And if you take the whole scope or span of the 5th Install./5th CoP (which is more than just 7 years) - they're not going to be dealing with their enemies and their adversaries **as** enemies & adversaries to be "glad" (so to speak) of the retributive Judgment of God—or to be "happy" that it's coming upon them, until it actually, physically starts!

- Rather, they've got instruction (as part of their Sonship Education) to respond in a particular way with respect to their *enemies* and their adversaries in a Non-Avenging type Attitude; and a Non-Avenging type Manner—and they're instructed to do that UNTIL the issue in Deuteronomy 32 actually begins to come to pass for them!

- And they're going to be on this earth when it does come to pass (but we're NOT going to be on the earth when it comes to pass).

- But that issue of "*Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord*" is appropriate for BOTH the members of the remnant of Israel in the

5th Install/5th CoP, *and* for us in this disp. of grace—based upon the fact that the BACKDROP of the worthiness of the world for God’s Wrath is the same for BOTH!

- And both of us are instructed to have a particular Thinking/Co & Be in connection with our adversaries and our enemies—and that doesn’t alter until the Lord actually begins to execute His *Vengeance*.

- And our own Attitude towards it won’t change until we begin to actually see it take place from ‘top-side’ in the Heavenly Places when it takes place on the earth (II Thes. 1) —and the members of the remnant of Israel who are here on the earth during the 5th Install/5th CoP: their Attitude toward it won’t change for them until God’s execution of His *Vengeance* actually begins to take place here on this earth.

- Therefore it’s perfectly fitting and appropriate for the Godly Thinking and the Godly Conduct & Behavior to be the same in BOTH programs!

- And the Time Frame for the time in which the Lord executes His *Vengeance* goes from when what is commonly called the “Great Tribulation” period begins—and runs all the way through the Great White Throne Judgment at the end of the 1,000 years when the Kingdom of Heaven gets established on the earth.

- Because as Paul says, *For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. (I Cor. 15:25-26)* — and this takes into account the next 2 Mandates of the Davidic Covenant (Deliverer & Avenger) - but also since *death* gets destroyed as the *last enemy* (which will be at the end of, or the final matter of the Great White Throne Judgment) - therefore it’s not until the totality of that GWTJ when the Lord has put *ALL enemies under his feet* (Rev. 20) that the Lord’s *Vengeance* will be complete and God’s Justice will be totally vindicated!

- Simply put—the Lord’s *enemies* will be dealt with when He first ‘stands up’ at the Father’s right hand and begins to make His *enemies* His footstool—and His *enemies* are dealt with until death is destroyed and the 2nd Death takes place at the end of the GWTJ.

- And to be more specific—those in this dispensation of grace who have experienced having to deal with their *enemies* and the suffering they have endured at their hands (which is NOT going to be the majority of Christians who have lived during this disp. of grace—because most Christians are not properly educated sons and have not been *edified unto godliness which is in faith*, and have therefore never encountered a Biblically defined and Biblically described *enemy*) — but for those of us who do suffer at the hands of our *enemies*, (from the apostle Paul on) - we won't see the *vengeance* taken upon the *enemies* we experience until the end at that GWTJ.

- And in connection with God having the apostle Paul quote (almost verbatim) that passage back in Proverbs 25—it's fascinating that as far as Sonship Education is concerned, **this quote doesn't come from where you'd expect it to be!**

- Proverbs 25 is NOT in the portion of the Proverbs that lines up perfectly with the *instruction of Justice!*

- It's in the portion of the Proverbs that lines up with Level III Sonship Education!

- It's in the portion of the Proverbs that's for the *man of understanding* who can give *wise counsels* — and that's just what Paul's doing with it!

- He's coming along and saying, “I'm taking this out of Proverbs 25 as a *wise man's counsel*” — and he's giving *counsel* to ones who are NOT as wise as he is!

- And so Paul's taking it and sticking it in here, and he's saying, — “Here's the *counsel* you need when it comes to your *Wisdom* and your *Justice* when it comes to dealing with the *enemies* and the cohorts of the Policy of Evil against you!”

- So with all that said—let's begin looking at the details of the Godly Living (or Conduct & Behavior) of the 2nd Component of our *instruction of Justice*.

- Notice that (:20) is one complete thought or sentence—but it's divided up into 2 Major Clauses or sub-thoughts —

- And the first one is: *Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink:*
- And the second one is: *for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.*
- And that 1st Major Clause starts off with a **“Therefore”**
 - This *Therefore* is acting as a kind of conclusion—but it’s critical to fully understand and appreciate the Godly Thinking in (:19) - especially when it says, *but rather give place unto wrath* — because when you put *wrath* in its proper *place*, then you keep what’s going on right now in its proper place!
 - And you think about what’s going on right now in its proper place as well.
 - And this *Therefore* says—in light of properly thinking about what’s going on right now—putting *wrath* in its proper *place* (which is out in the Lord’s Day of Wrath) in accordance with *Vengeance is the mine, I will repay, saith the Lord* — it means that you don’t muff up what you should be thinking right now with those thoughts of Just Vengeance and Just Retribution — no — you put those out there where they belong—and relegate them to that place & time—and you keep thinking about what’s going on right now! (Just as you’re supposed to think about it!)
- The **“Therefore”** is NOT that, since God will take *vengeance*, then treat your *enemies* a certain way in order that you can aid in *treasuring up wrath* for them!
 - And if you’re not careful, it can be taken that way!
 - You can take it to mean that—since my Father will *repay* and I know that, and I’m going to get satisfaction—then I’m going to conduct myself in such a way that makes that *wrath* WORSE on them—(which is often the way it’s taken when you have a complete IMPROPER understanding or Misunderstanding of what that expression *heaping coals of fire on their heads* is all about!)
- But the **“Therefore”** says, since the place for *wrath* isn’t hear and

now—and since God is dealing with His *enemies* differently (extending grace and *goodness* and *forbearance* and *longsuffering* & peace toward them) - then we are to conduct ourselves differently (which is exactly the way He does—and for the exact same reason He does)!

- So we have: *Therefore if thine enemy hunger, ...*

- **enemy** = not a friend; a hostile person; a foe; one who hates you and wishes you injury; an antagonist, opponent.

- Now while it is true that an *enemy* can be engaged in either active or passive opposition—(unlike an adversary who is always actively engaged in opposition and attempting to get what his opponent has) — the power in the term *enemy* lies in that an *enemy*, while not necessarily actively engaged in opposition, **can be an enemy in spirit, or in action, or in relation!**

- (For Ex., the North & South during the Civil War)

- An *enemy* can have all the marks of a friend, but still be called an *enemy* due to his spirit or his relation!

- But what makes the word *enemy* so excellent and so effectual in this passage is that an *enemy*, while most commonly is seeking to injure its opponent, (usually from a sentiment of hatred), **it is the HEART that is more or less implicated!**

- And in the context of this passage—**the HEART of your enemy is what this course of action of your Godly Sonship Conduct & Behavior is driving at!**

- And the course of action that the Godly Thinking drives you to desire is: *Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink:*

- And I know that lifted out of its context—this is a very well-known and often pursued course of action that a whole bunch of folks in this world and throughout time have embraced and taken. Men of this world (some unjustified, some justified) have lifted (stolen) this concept and used it for their own ends!!!

- There are now—and have been in history—many men and women; many “movements” (religious, philosophical, civil, political, or otherwise) that have pursued a course of “non-violent” action in order to attempt to sway or change the hearts of men, of societies, of nations, and even of the whole world itself.
- (like Buddha, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcom X, Cesar Chaves, etc., — and very often Jesus Christ is lumped in with them).
- But the reasons behind their non-violent actions are almost always NON-BIBLICAL and UNGODLY—(such as “world peace” or stamping out evil or other such things).
- And very often this is why when you first read this verse, (without it’s context and without the effectual working of the Sonship Curriculum up to this point [especially without the effectual working of [:17-19]) - very often you’re first impression is “Oh, no—God is telling me to be a ‘bleeding-heart Liberal!” (sickening!)
- This passage often times seems to cut ‘across the grain’ of our natural, innate, Survival sense of Justice!
- But when (:20) is understood and appreciated in its proper **context**, it not only **makes perfect sense**—but it’s the **DESIRED** course of action that a son wants to take with his *enemy*—**VIEWED IN ITS CONTEXT, AND WITH THE EFFECTUAL WORKING OF (:19), THIS COURSE OF ACTION ISN’T ‘YUCKY’ - it isn’t a ‘bleeding-heart’ type of thing—it doesn’t go ‘against the grain’ of your personality at all!!!**
- You have the Sonship Intelligence to know WHY this course of action is both desired and necessary—because the Attitude of your Father right now is one of holding back His wrath and extending *goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering* in order to give that *enemy* the opportunity to change his mind and NOT be an *enemy* any longer by responding positively to the Gospel of Christ and becoming justified unto eternal life.

- (just as you were treated—see **Rom. 5:8-10**)

- So the Principle for the Godly Conduct & Behavior is ... ***if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink:***

- And this IS said in “Principle Form” - which means that even though the literal action of the Principle should, indeed, be taken if that situation arises—but since this is a Principle of Conduct & Behavior, that means that the general Principle that stands behind the action described here can apply to a whole bunch of situations and circumstances where your *enemy* is concerned.

- And the General Principle that stands behind “*if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst give him drink*” is that: **when your enemy is in need, do him GOOD!** — That is, operate upon the very same exact Attitude that God the Father and God the Son operate upon in connection with their *enemies*—*goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering—knowing that the goodness of God may lead him to repentance!*

*** But more than that—the issue of this Principle for Godly Just Conduct & Behavior to do **good** to your *enemy*—is to take a course of action that will make an **impact** upon his **heart** so that he might give honest consideration to WHY he’s doing what he’s doing!!! ***

- Now—again, this is very GENERAL—(it’s not a ‘case book’) - and that means that it’s going to be up to YOU as a son to figure out on your own the course of action you take; and in which situations and circumstances you take it—that would consist of doing *good* to him, and that would (by the doing of that *good*), put him in the position of being able to honestly examine why he’s doing what he’s doing—and if there’s any vestige of ‘honesty of heart’ there, the remainder of (:20) will do it’s job! (that means Comm. & Fell. in Sonship Prayer!)

- Now I want to stress something here—this is one of those areas where you’re going to have to TRUST and BELIEVE what your Father tells you is the truth of the matter—and what I mean by that is—this course of action may be something ‘yucky’ to you (something you don’t want to do); it may be that you IMAGINE that there’s some other way to deal with that *enemy*; you may try to ‘psycho-analyze’ the situation and come up with a different course of action; you may think you know better how the inner man works than God does—or whatever ...

- But you are going to have to implicitly TRUST in the words of your Father that they WILL do the job they're designed to do—(no matter that the wisdom & course of this world has taken this concept and used it for ungodly pursuits—and no matter if sometimes your course of action and the world's seem to match up—because the truth is, they DON'T match up, and you know it and your Father knows it!)

- You (as an intelligent, properly educated son) pursue a course of action of *goodness* (Godly Justice) towards your *enemies* based upon the effectual working of those 24 words of (:19) [the Godly Thinking]!

- And you are to have **full confidence** that if there is any small remaining vestige of 'honesty of heart' in that *enemy*, you can confidently know and expect that this Principle of: *if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: will* make the desired IMPACT upon his heart!

- That's your Godly Just Conduct & Behavior toward your Biblically defined & described **enemy!** — and you have a whole lot of room to utilize a bunch of Sonship Decision-Making because of it! (It's a **powerful** sonship decision-making SKILL!)

- So now we come to the 2nd Part of (:20) - which describes the 'counter-measures' (so to speak) of the horror that has been taking place in that unbelieving *enemy's* heart.

- And it's great that God didn't just end (:20) at the word *drink* — but He went on to describe the reality of what will be taking place in the heart of your *enemy*, IF (and it's a big IF), if there's any honesty of heart left in him.

20 ... for in so doing (being faithful to carry out the course of action just described) ***thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.*** (and not your own concocted course of action! *Be not wise in your own conceits!*)

- First and foremost—this is NOT describing some way of bringing PAIN upon your *enemy*!!! (That's NOT what this figure of speech is about!)

- It's not the issue of increasing his wrath or his punishment or bringing Judgment down upon his head! or anything along those lines!

- The analogy of *heaping coals of fire on his head* describes the issue of—when *coals of fire* are ever “*heaped*” on something (and they can be *heaped* for a whole bunch of reasons) - but one of the most common reasons for *heaping coals of fire* on something was to SOFTEN IT; or to MELT IT; or to THAW IT; or to MAKE IT MORE PLIABLE!

- If it was ice—then you wanted melt it—if it was a frozen object—then you wanted to thaw it—if it was metal and got hard to work with, then the blacksmith would put it deep into the *coals of fire* and *heap* more *coals of fire* on it, in order to soften it and make it more pliable!

- You put the *coals of fire* on it so that the **heat** would **penetrate the object** and make it more pliable.

- And that’s what you’re trying to do with a “**head**” (the *head* of your *enemy*) — you’re trying to apply heat to the object in order to thaw that icy, frozen attitude towards you—you’re trying to make his **mind** towards you ‘pliable’ to the point that what you’re going to say to him can begin to ‘**shape some thinking** in his heart that’s of a godly nature!

- And that’s what’s going on when you keep *heaping coals of fire on his head* **in it’s proper context!**

- That *enemy* (that’s in union with the Policy of Evil against you) — that *enemy* has ‘**hardness of heart**’ right now **as** your *enemy*—and as part of the horrible things that have gone on in his heart in his state of unbelief!

- And what you’re doing is—you’re pursuing a particular Godly & Just course of action that is specifically designed by God Himself to soften the hard heart (or the hard *head*) of your *enemy*.

- **You’re NOT ‘getting even’ with him!** No. You’re softening, thawing, and making more pliable his head (his hard heart) — you’re making it so that he ‘warms up’ to you so that he will be responsive to you, and will desire to be responsive to you—that’s what you’re doing when you do *good* to one who is doing *evil* to you!

- And that course of action (done the right way and for the right reasons) — that has the **capacity** to make it so that there is an ability **to produce a more civil attitude in someone based upon responding to him in a way that directly contradicts the very thing he’s trying to do to you!**

- It’s a course of action of actually ‘**turning**’ him towards you—and in that way, it becomes an issue of that “*more than conqueror*” concept—in which the one that’s trying to do you ‘dirt,’ actually ends up changing his mind and becoming your friend!

- And that’s what the issue of—*for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head* is all about— and we’re expected to take advantage of it as sons—because our Father’s taking advantage of it — (everything He’s doing is in the *riches of his goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering* in order to, by His *goodness, lead that person to repentance*) - it’s all designed to make that person/enemy change their mind.

- And the Godly Conduct & Behavior is not simply, therefore, one of ‘ceasing hostility’ (so to speak) - [which is actually more proper to the 1st Component of *living peaceably with all men*] — but here, you’re after **more** than that!

- In this 2nd Component—you want the opportunity for this individual who’s cooperating with the Policy of Evil to change his mind and be delivered from that—and for the “*light of the glorious gospel of Christ to shine unto him*” **(and you’re the one whose got that in your possession!)**

- Questions? Comments about the Godly Just Conduct & Behavior of (:20)?

- **THE GODLY LABOR** of the 2nd Component of our *instruction of Justice* that deals with how you, as a properly educated son of your Heavenly Father (in a Justice type manner) personally deal with your *enemy* (who cooperates with the Policy of Evil in order to oppose and injure you for no other reason than that you are a member of the church, the body of Christ).

- With the effectual working of the Godly Thinking of (:19); and the Godly Conduct & Behavior of (:20) - the desire now is to Labor with your Father in an aspect of His business ...

- The Godly Labor is:

21 *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*

- In only 10 words, God describes an aspect of His business (of the business He's engaged in throughout the entire dispensation of grace) — in which He is actively Laboring in, in order to accomplish one of His Operations—and the Operation of God that stands behind this Labor (this work that He's engaged in) is to '**turn**' His *enemy* from being His *enemy*—to being Justified unto Eternal Life and therefore no longer being His *enemy*—but more than that, becoming His **friend**.

- And my understanding is that He's not merely setting out to get this *enemy* JUEL—but that's kind of like 'Part A' to a 2-Part issue — and 'Part B' (so to speak) is to do more than just Justify him, but to **turn** him into being an adopted, properly educated son, just like you are!

- And the reason I'm persuaded that that's the case is because of something I said earlier—and that is that it's really here in the Godly Labor that the issue of that *more than a conqueror* comes into play.

- And my understanding is that even though you've only got 10 words here—**they are 10 very carefully chosen words!**

- (And to change even 1 of them will lose the meaning and the 'punch' or strength of what's being said here)!

- And by the exactitude of what is said—and the way in which it's said—all lends itself to my understanding that what God's after here in Laboring together with Him in this particular Operation of His business — is not only the Salvation of this *enemy*, (which, if that's all that happens, then so be it—at the very least, he'll escape the Lord's wrath, just as you will) — but the goal or final objective of it (if you will) is to get that *enemy* turned into a properly educated and beneficial son himself!

- And I believe that that is found in those 2 preposition: "**of**" (*Be not overcome of evil,*) and "**with**" (*but overcome evil with good.*) — and in addition to that, it's found in that repeated term "overcome".

- And if you're not careful—you'll end up making a mess out of what's being said here—and losing the meaning of it—and worse, putting a whole **different** meaning to it that God NEVER intended for it to have!!

- Which is exactly what most (not all) but most of the newer, “better/easier to understand” modern English translations have done—(thank you, Bible Scholars! ... you just **weakened and confused** the word of God!)

- Most of the modern English translations have something like: ‘Do not be overcome BY evil, but overcome evil with good.’ (NIV, NAS, RSV, NRSV, ESV) — and the NLT screws it up even more by saying, ‘Don’t let evil get the best of you, but conquer evil by doing good.’ (what a mess!)

- That’s **NOT** what God says here—and that totally destroys the **context** of what is said here!

- So let’s look at the details of what’s said here in the Godly Labor Aspect to this 2nd Component of Justice.

21 Be not overcome ...

- Two times we have that word *overcome*—

- *overcome* = (νικάω from the word νίκη = to conquer; to be victorious — to conquer or defeat an enemy in battle)

- God uses here a term that indicates the issue of “conquering” - and we already know that in God’s thinking (especially in the context of Sonship Education) it’s not merely the issue of being a winner or a conqueror by defeating the enemy in battle—but whenever a situation arises where victory or *overcoming* an enemy is concerned (especially one connected with the S.PoE against you), the issue is always being **MORE THAN A CONQUEROR!**

- (ὑπερνικάω - or ‘hyper-conqueror’ [Rom. 8:37 *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*])

- Therefore the issue of *Be not overcome ... but overcome* — is the issue of (as I say) ‘turning’ that *enemy* from being your *enemy* to being your friend—to being not merely JUEL, but to him becoming a properly educated and functioning SON, just like you are!!!

- And this Laboring with your Father in this aspect of His business in which you get to experience being *more than a conqueror* (since we're talking about **suffering** under the "*sufferings of Christ*") comes in 2 Parts—

- The first is: ***Be not overcome OF evil,***

- And that's different than saying, 'Be not overcome BY evil'!

- Being overcome BY evil merely indicates the generic issue of not being *overcome by evil in general*—as if you're not to be *overcome* by any *evil* IN YOU — in other words, Don't get mad; don't let evil thoughts well up in your thinking; don't start imagining a whole bunch of ways to kill off the guy; don't let bad emotions get the best of you; etc., etc.

- But rather, that preposition **OF** is **possessive**—it's the *evil* or the harm or injury possessed by your enemy!

- And in the **context**—it's talking about **not** being *overcome* or conquered by the *evil* of your *enemy* so as to make it so that your desire is to *Avenge* yourself right now—to see *Vengeance paid* to that *enemy* right now—but rather, to now Labor with God (just like He's doing) and **suffer** the *evil* and *give place unto the wrath* at the time and place when that **will** take place!

- In other words— 'Be not overcome of the evil of your enemy' (or possessed by your enemy) so that you would desire God's Just and Wrathful Vengeance to be poured out on him! (no—you Labor with God in a way that is consistent with giving place unto wrath!)

- Being *not overcome of evil* is the issue of not allowing any thoughts or actions of vengeance coming into either your thinking or your conduct & behavior—and then going about to (or Laboring to) avenge yourself—

—being not overcome by evil simply says to not allow yourself to be as evil as your enemy (or not to do to the enemy what he's doing to you—which is not what this 2nd Component is about! [that's what the 1st Component was about!])

- The issue here isn't one of 'Don't be as evil as your enemy is' — but it's the issue of Laboring with your Father (exactly like He does) right now in this disp. of grace—and that is to have God's own fundamental Attitude when it comes to *overcoming* something in a person that would normally elicit a response of His Justice [such as Vengeance or Just Judgment or Wrath] - desiring the destruction of that enemy or adversary!

- The Labor of: *Be not overcome of evil* is that when your enemy or adversary does something *evil* to you that would normally elicit a response of God's Just Vengeance—you don't be *overcome* by that desire or **course of action**!

- It has nothing to do with you being evil yourself! It has nothing to do with being overcome BY evil!

- (It's a subtle difference, but it is a difference!)

- That's the 1st Part of the Godly Labor.

- The 2nd Part is— ***but overcome evil with good.***

- The **good** is the *goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering* that God Himself Labors to do towards His enemies and adversaries.

- (It's not 'any old good' - or unintelligent goodness—rather, it's the **intelligent** understanding and appreciation of the **course of action** that the Father takes in *goodness* towards His enemies during this disp. of grace!)

- It's the course of action that comes from (:20) and the Godly Conduct & Behavior of *if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.*

- And that's what God Himself is DOING right now—He's doing a whole bunch of things that can fall under the heading of **good** that consists of holding back His wrath—and providing opportunity after opportunity after opportunity for His enemies (by means of that *goodness*) to change their mind and no longer be His *enemy* and allow for the *light of the glorious gospel of Christ to shine unto him!*

- And your Labor with God is to intelligently figure out what actions you're to take that would be the best "good" way to deal with your *enemy* so that he **does** repent and change his mind and become JUEL (with the view to him becoming an intelligent, functioning son just like you are)! — and then to go out and DO IT!

- And that's going to take some WORK—(it's going to take some intelligent fellowship & communion in Sonship Prayer; as well as some perception and insight into just what course of Labor-type action you'll take in *goodness* towards your *enemy*.)

- Granted—it may not always work—because that *enemy* may have so hardened his heart to the point that he is 'past feeling' or so hard that he just won't change his mind—but Laboring with the Godly Thinking and Godly Conduct & Behavior that's described here gives him the **best** and **only** opportunity to give real thought as to why he's doing to you what he's doing — it gives him the opportunity to break down and break through that 'blockage' that exists in his mind!

- It's the Attitude and the Labor (or course of action) that says, I'll do anything I can to make you NOT my enemy any longer!

- In this disp. of grace—the excellency of God's power is NOT going to be seen by God, in power, getting *Vengeance*—in fact, He's NOT going to do that!

- But what **would** be a display of the excellency of His power over that of His adversary or His enemy is to get that person who not only is not justified, but is actively cooperating with the Satanic PoE—to get JUEL, and to ultimately become a properly responding, properly educated son himself—**THAT WOULD DEMONSTRATE THE "POWER" OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST OVER THE POWER THAT SATAN HAS TO BLIND HIS MIND (and to use him as one of his pawns or cohorts)!!!**

- **And you have to recognize and BELIEVE that the power of the Gospel (and the strength and power of this course of action) really does possess that kind of power! (Because it really DOES!)**
(it can do that to that enemy's *head/heart*)

- No matter how much *evil* is done to God, God isn't *overcome of* it so that He takes *Vengeance* upon His *enemy*—and that Labor or course of action is to be conducted by **you** towards your *enemy* just like your Father does towards His—(with intelligent understanding for **WHY** you're doing that!)

- And the truth is—this is the very course of action God Himself took with Saul of Tarsus (the apostle Paul)! [Saul of Tarsus was God's *enemy*—he was a pawn of the Adversary as that Pharisee who was part of the Vain, Apostate Religious System of Israel!!!]

- (see Acts 9:1-6; 26:1-18) - [note the issue of *persecuted* = that's an *enemy* of God!]

- Notice that phrase — “*it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks*” — a *prick* is a ‘goad’ — a stick or a pointed rod that was used to drive cattle or oxen (to get them to go where you wanted them to go).

- However—just as with *heaping coals of fire on one's head* isn't taking about *fire* in the sense of bringing **pain** upon the person (but rather, a softening or melting or thawing or making it more pliable) — so too, the *prick* isn't used in the sense of making Paul feel **pain** (or any of the garbage theology of Calvinism that would say that since Paul was predestined to salvation, so God ‘pained’ him into it)—**but rather it describes taking a course of action that would cause the mind (or heart) of Saul of Tarsus to consider why he's doing what he's doing—and to ultimately CHANGE his mind!!!** (“*kicking against the pricks*” is an analogy similar to “*heaping coals of fire on ones head*”)!]

- This is one of the greatest displays of what it means to *be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good!!!* (It's not the issue of being “non-violent” in order to cause “peace on earth” or “peace among the races” or whatever!)

- There was some ‘honesty of heart’ there—and this course of action WORKED!!! (it worked to the tune of God being **more than a conqueror!**)

- Any Questions? Comments? to this 2nd Component of Justice?

- **REVIEW: 6 Components of Wisdom.**

(These 6 Components have a ‘perfection’ to them that so encompasses your life—[it touches upon every aspect of your life] - so that you can make Wise Sonship Decisions in every area of your life!)

- The *instruction of Justice* is the next Sonship Decision-Making skill.

- Justice deals primarily with what is RIGHT and what is WRONG; what is NECESSARY and/or NEEDFUL; what is RESPONSIBLE and/or AMENABLE thing to do—especially as it pertains to responding to the activities or actions of others in our dealings with them.

- We all have a sense of Justice—and God, Himself is JUST.

- Our sense of Survival Justice was altered immediately after the Flood so that man’s devolution was ‘retarded’ or slowed down so that he would not devolve to the point where he would destroy himself off the face of the earth.

- But that natural, innate sense of General/Survival Justice has had a whole Justice “structure” built upon it by the ungodly course of this world—and that has to be torn down and replaced with our Father’s Godly sense of Justice.

- And the fact that there are 3 Components to Justice — it has a ‘perfection’ to it—(there’s not 2 Components, or 4, or 10, but 3) — it’s PERFECT, in that those 3 Components give you the foundation from which ALL the Right & Wrong Thinking and Decision-Making will be based upon!

- They give you the skill-set to determine & decide that; while living in an Ungodly and Unjust world—what would be the Right thing to do; what would be the Wrong thing to do; how to make Just decisions based upon how God Himself is operating in Justice today (right now).

- And in view of the upcoming 3rd Component—to intelligently know WHY you are going to support an ungodly, unjust system of Government that promotes wicked things against God and God’s word—(and any ‘idiot’ can pick up Rom. 13:1-7 and by just reading it, know that you’re not supposed to resist Government—[and pay your taxes, etc.]!)

- And just by a shallow reading of (:1-7), you know that it's **absurd** to resist Government!

- But WHY is that the Right thing to do? How is it Just for me to support an unjust, ungodly Government?

- But in light of all of the many, many areas of what's Right and what's Wrong—WHY do these 3 Components **perfectly** make up the whole of our *instruction of Justice*? — (because **everything** in your life that can be a Right or Wrong decision can **grow** out of these **3 Components**!)

- Note: Currently, there are so many laws in the United States Government that there is no estimate available to even know how many there are—at best guess there are 10's of Thousands of them!

- But God boils all issues of Right & Wrong down to just 3!!

- Answer: Because there are only 3 basic areas in which evil injustice can be done to you!

1) You can have evil injustice done to you on a personal level—people can do evil to you; and treat you unfairly on a personal level in which the actual 'laws of the land' don't come into play—where no "laws on the books" address it, but it's evil, unjust, unfair treatment nonetheless.

- And the 1st Component of Romans 12:17-18 addresses that.

2) Unique to you as a believer in Christ and as a member of the church, the body of Christ—you can have evil, unfair, unjust things done to you by one (an *enemy*) who is cooperating with the Satanic Policy of Evil against you for no other reason than because you are a member of the new creature of the church, the body of Christ.

- And the 2nd Component of Romans 12:19-21 addresses that.

- And before we move on to the 3rd Component—I think we need to just underscore an issue here — (or review it) —

- Since this is an issue of JUSTICE—and in this case (in this 2nd Component), it's an issue of **GOD'S** JUSTICE—it's an issue of the Justice of God being impugned, violated and offended—(because, since, when you suffer *evil* at the hands of your *enemy* because you are a member of the church, the body of Christ—the *evil* done to you is the same as doing *evil* to God Himself) — and since that's the case (since the Justice of God has been offended), then Godly Vengeance **needs** to take place (it **MUST** take place, or God's Righteousness and Justice means nothing!)

- But God the Father and God the Son are NOT doing that right now—and your Thinking, Cond. & Beh., Labor matches that of the Father and the Son—and you, instead of seeking vengeance—you *give place unto wrath*; you do *good* to your *enemy* knowing that it is the best and only opportunity for him to have his *head* softened/made pliable so that he might change his mind and become justified; and you're going to Labor with your Father in a course of action that, rather than pouring out wrath, instead would 'turn' that enemy into a justified, sanctified, functional son, just like you are.

- Now my point in all this is to underscore the fact that none of this means that God ever allows offences to His Justice to just 'go away' — in other words, you're never to think that, "Well, I'll just let it go for now, and when I get to heaven, then everything's going to be ok."

- THAT IS NOT JUSTICE!!!

- And injustice has been committed against you and your Father's business—and justice **must** be satisfied!

- And where your *enemy* is concerned—there's only **2 options**—(and in this passage, you're taught about both of them!) What are they?

- (in each of the 2, God's Justice gets **satisfied** by means of His avenging wrath!)

- **OPTION #1**—This individual gets saved/justified by God's Wrath being borne by a Substitute (Redeemer).

- **OPTION #2**—This individual bears the Wrath of God by himself (at the Great White Throne Judgment)!

- When you're talking about God's Justice being **satisfied**, it's not the issue of 'satisfied' in the sense of 'feels good' - but this is 'satisfaction' in a **legal** sense—this is talking about the issue of PROPITIATION = legal satisfaction—Justice demands that iniquity, sin, evil, wickedness, etc., be punished to the full satisfaction of the Justice of God!

- And this individual has 2 Options—

1) God's Justice will be satisfied because of the propitiatory work of the Lord Jesus Christ where God's Justice was satisfied by Christ taking upon Himself the **wrath** of God's Justice as the Substitute Redeemer of that individual!

- And by his faith/belief in Christ's Substitutionary, Propitiatory Work—that individual received **JUEL** because God's Wrath was poured out on a Substitute—(but the issue is: **it was still poured out! — Justice still had to be satisfied!**)

2) God's Justice will be satisfied because God Himself will take Vengeance and pour out His wrath upon that individual (imputing all his sins to him; and suffering eternal punishment for them) at the Great White Throne Judgment! (**and Justice will be satisfied!**)

- But the Father's great desire is to have that individual trust & believe in the One that has already taken the full brunt of God's Justice—and fully paid the debt & penalty of that person's sins to the full satisfaction of God's Justice—and not in taking vengeance upon that *enemy*.

- God's desire—and your desire (as a properly educated son) is for Option #1 — but either way, Justice will have to be satisfied—it will never go overlooked, unnoticed, forgotten about, or unpunished!

- REVIEW: 1st & 2nd Components of Justice.

- POST-DOCTRINAL EXHORTATION (for the 2nd Component to the *instruction of Justice*):

- We're at another one of those Sonship Volition Testing Points.

- Review the Positive & Proper Response (Pro. 3:1-4).

END OF THE 2ND COMPONENT.