

- So when you look at this 2nd probing question—you're to understand and appreciate that you are NOT at any disadvantage whatsoever.

- And that should dispel any doubt, or any pessimism or any lack of confidence that the curriculum for your sonship education hasn't taken in to account any and all the peculiarities of your life (or what you feel or imagine as peculiar), and the limitations of your life (or what you imagine are limitations) - that's all to be rooted out by this probing question and gotten rid of by the Father telling you, 'Look, I didn't even spare my own Son, how shall I not with him freely give you all things? Do you really think it's even within the realm of possibility that I go through all that personal cost to adopt you as my son, so that you could be left in a position whereby you could never even achieve the objective for which I adopted you in the first place? (Which, according to Rom. 8:28-30, is "*to be conformed to the image of his Son*").

- That's all been dealt with—and all those things are taken into account—and all those things are provided for—by the power and might and strength that's been built into that curriculum you now hold in your hand!

- You're not limited; you're not at a disadvantage!

- What CONFIDENCE that gives you!

- So again, the 2nd probing question:

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?

- And the answer is (the INTELLIGENT answer is):

He shall freely give us all things we need to succeed with our sonship education and sonship life—it's all in the curriculum itself! (all the tools I need & skills I need)

- And questions? Comments? about this 2nd probing question?

- Do you see how that these first 2 probing/provoking questions go together?

1) *If God be for us, who can be against us?*

2) *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?*

- Now we can move on to the 3rd probing/provoking question.

- But before we do—(or as we do)— we have noted before how that all 5 of these probing questions are designed by their sense & sequence so that as each one is dealt with and as each one is able to be intelligently answered—each one **naturally opens a door that leads into the next question.**

- And what I'm after here is to see if you can see why this next question is the only natural next thing to be brought up and dealt with?

- And we've already stated that there is a 'shift' that takes place here at this 3rd probing question.

- We now move to what I've called the "*Who*" questions.

- But before we even look at them—there are still some things that need to (and naturally need to) be addressed—especially if you want to get full confidence, full assurance, full conviction that this curriculum for your sonship education will succeed with you, and you will succeed with it.

- And that 1st probing question drew your attention to God our Father Himself—and He probed your heart so as to see if you had any doubt or any question or any problem with His capacity to make it so that you will succeed in being educated as His son—and to make it so that *all things work together for good* to you as His son in view of those 'links' in His 'chain of provision' for your success.

31 ... If God be for us, who can be against us? dence, full assurance,

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?*

- Therefore, I have full confidence in this curriculum to take even me and even my circumstances of my life—and it can *conform me to the image of his Son*—and I have confidence that *all things do, indeed work together for good* to me as my Father’s adopted son!
- But Paul doesn’t end it here—he doesn’t jump to (:38-39) and end it with that full persuasion of mind and heart—why?
- Why are these “*Who*” questions brought up—and why are they brought up now?
 - (There is a natural & necessary reason why they’re brought up; why they’re brought up only after the first 2 probing questions have done their job—and reasons why they are in the order they’re in.)
 - *Make sure that you haven’t slipped back into that frame of mind of a son receiving the education—in other words, you still have to be viewing each one of these questions from the Father’s point-perspective when He put the whole thing together (and how He put the whole thing together)!*
- Also, you’ve got to keep in mind that it’s the Father who is doing the probing here—and He knows exactly what He’s going after.
 - And you, (the pro-bee), you really aren’t aware of what needs to get brought out of your heart, but the Father (the prob-er) does.
 - And the reason why the son’s heart has to be probed is because there are some things in his heart that are going to cause him snags and problems at certain times in his education (once it gets underway), and now (in this final aspect of sonship establishment), now is the time for the Father to probe His son’s heart and really dig down deep into it—and to dig up those problem areas and get them exposed to His son—and to remedy them—dismiss them—and get them permanently out of His son’s heart!
 - And I say all that again—just to say that it may be very likely that you **don’t** see clearly what this next probing question is really going after—but the question (by what it asks—and by viewing it from the Father’s perspective) - the question is supposed to draw to your attention what the Father is now going after in your heart.

- And at the exact same time He goes through these probing questions—and brings them to our attention in the order that He does it—He’s intelligizing us as to what He’s going after—so that we can intelligently work together with Him and recognize along with Him what He’s going after.

- And by doing it that way—we are able to make an **intelligent** response to the question—and not just a logical response, or a theological response (false science), or a guess, or anything along those lines.

- And for this 3rd probing question—you really have to pay close attention to what is being asked (and the **way** it’s being asked) so that there is this kind of an ‘agreement’ of minds: (you with your Father), and you see along with Him the problem it is going after—and as you think about it carefully, you really do see how **big** of a problem it is and how it could potentially (not only shake your confidence), but wind up **destroying** your sonship life!

- And as I said, there is a ‘shift’ that takes place with this 3rd probing question.

- Because these questions are now going to go after some individuals; or some other intelligences (so to speak) - that in view of what (:31 & 32) have already dealt with—would come to our mind as areas of potential problems.

- And to help us out here—what is it that all this is doing?

- (Producing in us the attitude of godly confidence, assurance, and conviction—[that’s right & good] — but confidence to do what? — to **succeed** with our sonship lives.)

- The issue with this whole final component in our sonship establishment in essence is the issue of our confidence to succeed with our sonship lives—and everything it’s saying is to get it so that we don’t just theoretically realize that our Father has geared us for success, but that we’re fully convinced & persuaded that we **can** succeed if we’ll just implicitly operate upon what the curriculum says.

- So since the overall issue **is** convincing us that we **can** succeed (and **will** succeed) if we operate upon it like we’re supposed to—then the natural bend of your mind is to start

making sure that **all known sources of problems have been accounted for by** the curriculum—and can be addressed by the curriculum—and can be overcome by it!

- So as you get to this 3rd probing question—the natural bend of your mind is start off with a very general “*who*” (:31 *If God be for us, who can be against us?*) — and by now you’re supposed to be thinking at this point—that after those first 2 probing questions have done their job—you should now move on to some very specific and particular individuals (that you can ‘put your finger on’) who can cause you a great deal of problems.

- And the final 3 “*Who*” questions of (:33, 34, & 35) deals with them.

- And by now you should see that **as** these 5 question go along—you’re moving **from the general to the particular**—and your focus is **narrowing** each step along the way.

- And as your focus gets narrowed down to some particulars—with each step (with each question & intelligent answer) what you’re doing is **eliminating a unit every step along the way.**

- And what I’m trying to get across is—not only is that what is actually taking place here—but that’s only the **natural** thing to take place—it’s a natural progressive development.

- Because by those first 2 probing questions—and by their probing action—you’ve **eliminated the 2 most general areas (or sources) of problems** that you can conceive of first & foremost when it comes to the possibility of not succeeding in your sonship education.

- 1st—If my Father isn’t up to the task—if He’s a delinquent Father—or a bum of a Father—or a thoughtless, unwise, inadequate, incapable Father—then there’s just no way He’s ever going to be able to educate me through this thing!

- But, no, in light of His ‘chain of provision’ of (:28-30) - *If God be for me, who can be against me?*

- He’s none of those things—He is a faithful, wise, able, capable, loving Father who has forged this whole education for my success!

- 2nd—If there's something wrong with the curriculum in the area of what it provides for and what it has the power/capacity to do—if it isn't completely geared for my success, then I'll either fail to have the opportunities I need to have in order to demonstrate skillfulness with it, or when I need sound wisdom to operate upon, it won't be there—and either way, I'll be a **failure** in my sonship education.

- But, no, in view of my Father's 'chain of provision' as given to me in (:28-30) - this curriculum is going to *freely give me all things* I need for me to be successful as my Father's son—to the tune of being *conformed to the image of his Son*—in fact, the **extent** He went to, to insure my success with this curriculum is that *He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for me!*

- Therefore my Father is going to *freely give me all the things* I will ever need **in that curriculum** for me to succeed in being fully educated as His son!

- So again, those first 2 probing questions address and eliminate the 2 most general sources of problems that you can conceive of—and would most naturally conceive of first & foremost when it comes to areas where you would think you wouldn't be able to succeed.

- **But there's more sources of problems than that**—because that doesn't deal with any **particular individual** that could be the source of your failure as a son—but those first 2 issues dealt with the nature of curriculum itself and the Father who wrote it (to 'cover all bases, so to speak) - and make it therefore that everything that needs to take place within the whole scope of sonship (for its objectives to be reached) has been thought of, taken into account, & dealt with.

- So your confident now that 'nothing's missing' (so to speak) - in the curriculum.

- Well now, since any problems with the curriculum and its capacity are now out of the way—the issue now comes down to **one's who can throw a 'monkey-wrench' into your success!** — **one's who could 'trip you up'**— one's who could (not so much make a problem with the curriculum), but make **YOU** be a problem — (with doing with it what you want to do with it!)

- And my point in all this is to show you that—that's what you would **naturally** expect to have happen at this point.

- These first 2 questions **have** taken care of anything that would arise in my mind—and that I can think of now—and that my Father **wants** me to think of now—with respect to the capacity of the curriculum itself—and the completeness of all of the provisions He's made within in it—for me to succeed in my sonship life.

- All that has now been taken care of.

- So now let's get to the issue of, (not so much the curriculum itself—because it's been demonstrated to me to be perfect, it's got no problems at all, it's perfectly geared for my success) ... but I know someone who does have some problems... and I know someone who would like to cause me some problems—and now I've got to deal with the provisions that's been made for when these characters come together and collaborate to thwart & prevent my success in my sonship life!

- And so now the questions shift to: **Who, Who, Who.**

- And in those 3 "*Who*" questions—you deal with your 2 enemies!

- One of your enemies, you already know about very well—and I've even talked to you about him and about which one of these "*Who*" questions is all about him:

- The 5th probing question:

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ...

- And that character is the **Adversary**, Satan himself!
(and his cohorts)

- But who is your other enemy? (And really this is the only other enemy you have).

- It's **YOU**—you are your own worst enemy!

- And the 3rd & 4th probing questions (:33 & 34) deal with **YOU!**

33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?

34 Who is he that condemneth?

- And you **are your own worst enemy!**
- Because you'll do something that could be **laid to your charge**—and you'll be so stupid that you'll do something by which **you could be condemned!**
- And you need to recognize & operate upon what God has done in ***justifying*** you—and you need to recognize & operate upon what Christ can do as your ***Advocate!*** (**So that you can overcome your own stupidity!**)
 - And if you carefully go through those exhortations back in the book of Proverbs—you know (if you paid attention) that the BIGGEST problem a son will ever have is with **HIMSELF!**
 - The biggest problem and hindrance and obstacle that a son ever has in succeeding with his sonship life is **himself!**
 - (**The Adversary is a second-rate enemy!**)
- And to put it this way—when, at the Judgment Seat of Christ, our sonship lives are evaluated—and the 'unacceptable' aspects of it (just to put it that way, generically, for now) all get burned up and destroyed—**the cause for all those things will be ourselves!**
 - Judgment Seat of Christ:
Rom. 14:10
I Cor. 3:11-15
II Cor. 5:10
- And the unnamed focus of attention (the elephant in the room) in verses 33 & 34 is **you!**
- And the "*charge*" of (:33) and the "*condemning*" of (:34) isn't just a bluff—it's not kidding—it's real — because you **will** do something that you can be *charged* with—and you **will** do something that can mean that you're *condemned* ... **as a son!**
 - But this curriculum is so well thought out—and so well put together—and has such power & might & capacity—that even **that** has been provided for in it—and there is a remedy for that that will make it so that even your own stupidity & muff ups won't prevent your success as a son!

- Now something takes place in (:33 & 34) in connection with you and I being **our own worst enemies**—and our own worst stumbling blocks—and our own biggest ‘pit-diggers’ - when it comes to thwarting our own success in our own sonship lives.

- And that is what’s going on in the next 2 probing questions.

- **That’s** what the Father is getting at.

- Those 2 questions: “*Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect?*” and “*Who is he that condemneth?*” — even though I know you know it, but it’s critical that you **do** know it and recognize it especially here at these 2 verses: that those questions are being asked strictly within the context of what (:28-30) have said!

- With all 5 of these probing questions, it’s very easy to get lost and get off track if you don’t keep in mind those things that make it so that you don’t get off track — but of these 5, the 3rd & 4th probing questions **are especially vulnerable** to getting off track just by the terminology they use: “*charge*” & “*condemneth*” - and “*justifieth*” and the issue of Christ’s *death, resurrection, & intercession*.

- Again, the controlling & governing factors that make it so that you don’t get off track:

- 1) The Context: sonship establishment;
- 2) Viewing it from the point-perspective of the Father;
- 3) The Controlling question of (:31) *What shall we then say to these things?*
- 4) The Naturalness of this question being asked due to the previous question & it’s answer.

- This is a great example of what I talk about when I say that what goes on as you get to the end of sonship establishment gets very involved and gets very intricate—or it’s very complex (not complicated).

- Now I bring all that up just to point out that when you come to this issue of (:33) of *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect?* — **that issue is NOT simply a ‘recap’ of Romans 1-5!!**

- Nor is the issue of (:34) of *Who is he that condemneth?* a simple ‘recap’ of Romans 1-5!! — even though the answer to (:33’s) question is *It is God that justifieth*—and the answer to (:34’s) question is the everlasting effectual working of the propitiatory sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ!

- Granted, those are Romans 1-5 issues—but the issue here is NOT: “Don’t worry, you can’t be unjustified; and don’t worry, you can’t be re-condemned!”

- You knew that before you ever left Romans 5!!!

- The issue in these next 2 probing questions is one of how you as a son are going to **react**—when, in the course of endeavoring to succeed with your sonship life—you **do**, in carnal stupidity, do something whereby a “*charge*” could be laid against you as *God’s elect*—or you could be “*condemned*”!

- In other words, you need to realize (and **carefully think** about) your judicial standing in God’s sight, **and the capacity of the propitiatory sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ**—to make it so that you respond like you ought to (and need to) when those times do occur.

- And what I’m after in saying that is that you need to carefully think about the kind of self-induced **failures** that can occur on your part (without describing it too much here, because I want you to think about it more on your own), but you need to think hard about those times when you do stupidly muff up—and I want you to think about the **serious toll** that a thing like that can have upon you in connection with your sonship life!

- But as I said—I do recognize that the issue of being justified in God’s sight is what gets stated as the remedy for the 3rd probing question—and the effectualness of the propitiatory sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ gets stated as the remedy for the 4th probing question—but those 2 things are brought up in this context of our Father’s ‘chain of provision’ for the success of your sonship life even when you **experience** (actually experience) the dramatic, serious, grave toll that your own failures will have upon your heart & your soul & your spirit (your inner man)!

- But you need to realize that in all this—this isn’t talking about some sin that you commit (necessarily) - whereby you come along and say, ‘This isn’t how a “son” would act—this isn’t consistent with who I am as my Father’s son—so maybe this thing doesn’t work for me.’ — [that may be hitting the target—but really that isn’t hitting the ‘bulls-eye’ of what these 2 probing questions are really getting after—(serious as that may be, and real as that may be).

- Because just as this isn't a mere 'recap' of Romans 1-5, neither is this a mere 'recap' of Romans 6:1-8:13! (Where you are taught about being *dead to sin and alive unto God*—and where you're taught about how God expects you to deal with sin in your life when it does occur).

- And, (just to put it this way for now), what these 2 probing questions go after **is something even more serious than that!**

- When it comes to *why* these 2 questions get brought up here and deal with you being your own worst enemy—you have to think on that with some real '**insight**' that goes **beyond** the issue of your own failings in connection with sin—(stupid as that is, and even harmful as that is).

- Because even though foolishly yielding to the '*lust of your flesh*' and committing a sin does fall under the category of what we're dealing with here—that's still not what's really in view here.

- But the kind of failure on your part—or the kind of 'muffing up' or botched up, fouled up, messed up action that's in view here is of such a nature that **you, yourself become an enemy to your own success as the son that you are!** (do you see what I'm after?)

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

- It's going after the times in which you have actually messed up or mauled up the use of the information contained in the curriculum to such a degree—that becoming your own worst enemy is the *nature* of (or *kind* of) action that in the course of dealing with the curriculum for your sonship edification and living your sonship life and working it all out in the details of your life and applying it (and everything like that) — that we fail to, either respond like we ought to; apply like we ought to; make use of what we're being taught and deal with what we're being educated to do; and deal with it like we're being taught to deal with it, and so forth—and in view of all that, being **CRUSHED** by the reality of how we're impeding our own selves and hindering our own selves.

- And having all that result in being **spiritually devastated** by it!

- And what I want you to realize right now in saying that to you is that **that can take place!** (even if you can't imagine it right now)

- And when that does take place—that is, (and that has a potential for being) **a disaster to us as sons!!!**

- Because if we don't respond to that properly (and by properly, I mean respond to it by each one of the remedies our Father gives us here in each of these 2 probing questions) — if we don't respond to that properly, we will follow a course—in which we will not only 'shoot ourselves in the foot' - **but we'll shoot ourselves in the head!**

- And it will cause us REAL PROBLEMS—far more serious problems than I think you're aware of—or far more serious problems than I think you've ever even thought about until now!

- In fact, you should be familiar enough already (if you've been reading and re-reading Paul's epistles) with some things that occur later on in the curriculum (once you get past Romans) — that, under the umbrella of problems that can occur in a son's life—certain problems can occur that make it so a son IS **devastated**—and can get **CRUSHED**—even to the point where the apostle Paul will come along and talk about one being “*swallowed up with overmuch sorrow*” for what he's done. (II Cor. 2:5)

- And to use the more modern terminology—you can be thrown into a state of absolute **depression!**

- And depression that is of the nature that you would say, “I just can't go on—and in light of how much of a botched up mess I've made of things, I shouldn't go on!”

- And those are some of the kind of things that can take place when we, as sons, start functioning **as our own worst enemies!**

- And the only thing that can 'snap' you out of that—and/or prevent you from going down to the **abyss of despondency** that you can end up going in to—is the issue concerning your judicial standing in God's sight **with respect to your sonship!**

- and that the provision is there (and not only is the provision there, but even more importantly), the **expectation** is there, given to you from your Father, **to pick yourself up & dust yourself off AND GET GOING AGAIN!**

- And that's the kind of stuff verses :33 & :34 are dealing with!

- And that's what these words that are used in the 2 probing questions with respect to ourselves being our own worst enemy are designed to do.

- They're designed to bring that kind of realization to our realization—and to our mind.

- I've tried to be very careful in how I'm presenting all this to you because **you can't take any of these questions lightly**—you have to allow them to **'bore in'** on you and do their surgical job of laying bare your heart and bringing to your attention just what is in there, or what can be in there that can trip you up—and trip you up in ways that you may not even be aware of until that scalpel or that probe touched on something that 'opened your eyes' to it (so to speak).

- And you should now have (maybe) a new-found respect for how you are to keep these questions (and now the remedies for the questions) within the parameters they're supposed to be kept in—so that when you think about them (and spend time with them), your mind and your thinking will be taken to the very area in your heart where sources of problems with the success of your sonship life **can** and **will** occur.

- And it takes time—and it takes careful thought—because sometimes it's difficult to get the full extent of the thinking that we need to have in connection with ourselves being our own worst enemies **as sons**—because sometimes we don't want to be as honestly analytical as we need to be with ourselves when it comes to being our own worst enemy.

- It's one thing to acknowledge the fact that that is true—but it's another thing to acknowledge how disgustingly true that is!

- But the great thing here is that we are—(at this final stage in our sonship establishment) - we are given in advance the provision to do that kind of honest analysis—and it gives us therefore the ability to, (once we start the curriculum), and do end up failing to make full use of what we're being given—and we get into a mode of botching up and making a mess of things—and our great zeal and enthusiasm meets up with the fact that we oftentimes are standing in our own way (and, as it were, become ones who *oppose ourselves*) - well when genuine heart-felt zeal confronts being an opposer of our own self: that can be a 'heart-rending' experience—and that can be a dejecting, despondent experience (that can lead to even more serious things)!

- The kind of things being our own worst enemy can do is devastating—it can produce great discouragement, which can in turn produce loss of hope, loss of confidence, loss of courage—and a whole bunch of things like that!

- Therefore these 2 probing questions concerning us being our own worst enemy—they are 2 of the most powerful questions you've been confronted with so far in your entire life!

- They're designed to make us appreciate, in connection with that (with that deep understanding of just how disgustingly true it is that we are our own worst enemy—the worst we'll ever face as sons) — but not only that, but to make us appreciate in connection with that, that our Father has made provision for it—and the expectation of our Father is that **we get up and we get going**—because that's exactly what our Father has designed this curriculum to do with us—even in such failures as us being our own worst enemy!

- HE 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!)

- In fact, if you never had any real and deep appreciation for the advocacy of our Lord Jesus Christ (like :34 talks about), this is what will do it for you!

- In short—our Father has designed this education so that even you and I can't stand in the way for it's success unless we want to just abandon what He's provided!

- Because if we'll operate upon what He provided—even ourselves as our own worst enemy can't stop succeeding with our sonship education & sonship life!

- But some of these things are matters of experience—and when you do experience them—nothing else in your life is going to attempt to tear up your heart like these kind of things—and they can break you down and reduce you to tears & heart ache like you can't even imagine right now—but that's when you really appreciate that you can come back to the answers of these 2 questions and thank the Lord for never running out of the ability to do that—and that advocacy of Christ will become the most precious thing in your life! (Because you never would have gone one step on with your sonship life without that—you would have just given up on the whole thing!)

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- And the truth is, you may not be able to go much more beyond what I've just described to you right now—but the time will come when you're going to have to operate on this to its fullest degree.

 - Well—just as it took 2 Parts (so to speak) for the 1st & 2nd probing questions to go after the sources of potential problems & snags & hindrances that they go after in connection with the Father and His curriculum, so too do you have these 2 Parts for the 3rd & 4th probing questions that go after your #1 Worst Enemy of all: **YOU!**

 - And when it comes to you being your own worst enemy to your success as a son—there are 2 probing questions because there are 2 major sources of problems & hindrances that can occur that would end up making it so that you would 'throw in the towel' and just quit and walk away from your whole sonship edification.

 - And in one instance, you, as your own worst enemy, can get yourself into a position whereby a *charge* can be laid against you (**as a son**); and in the second instance, you, as your own worst enemy, can get yourself into a position whereby you could be *condemned* (**as a son**).

 - And both of those things are **real**—they're not just language of accommodation—as if they're just trying to scare you, but you really couldn't be *charged* and couldn't really be *condemned* — because the truth of the matter is, were it not for the remedy your Father gives you for each of those probing questions—**those things can really happen to you!**

 - And although you have 2 questions—or 2 parts—& each question is profound in its own way—and you're not supposed to come along and make a contrast between the 2—but I want to just make one distinction along these lines—and that is, that of the 2, the answer and the remedy that's given in the 2nd (or the 4th probing question) - that question & remedy of (:34), is to deeply make the most profound impact upon you of all!

 - So then, my understanding is that this 3rd & 4th probing question is to be handled as a 'Part-A' & 'Part-B' type thing—and they need to be handled that way.

 - And again—they're both dealing with the issue of us, ourselves being our own worst enemy—but more than that

... they're dealing with us, ourselves, in connection with us being our own worst enemy, getting ourselves in situations in our sonship life where—if we don't have in place what we need to have in place (through the full, effectual working of :28-30—that these 5 probing questions are designed to have working in us) — then we can get ourselves into a frame of mind in which—based upon our own stupidity and foolishness and muff-ups—we get in a frame of mind that ends up thwarting our ability advance and go on in our sonship lives—either temporarily or permanently.

- (But more times that not, temporarily—especially at the outset).

- (It takes the Adversary & his tactics a bit on down the road to have their effects upon you where, along with this frame of mind, and the kind of intensity of the policy of evil against you, you would throw in the towel permanently.)

- But you do need to recognize that you can get yourself into this kind of a frame of mind of pessimism and being a failure and therefore just giving up on the whole sonship education based upon the disgustingness of what you may do in connection with either some kind of rebelliousness; or disobedience; or neglect and ignoring our sonship life—and just get so far off track where discouragement and despondency and depression sets in to where you just give up.

- Well—it's in view of all that being a real possibility whereby you become a 'weak link' in God's chain of provision—where these 2 questions (#3 & #4) provide us (right now) with the ability to expose that concept/issue within ourselves—and to get something settled within our heart (right now) - that acts as preventive medicine—and preventive maintenance—which can 'vaccinate' us in advance for being able to handle those times when they do come up in the course of our sonship lives—once we actually get underway, dealing with the curriculum—and experience getting in the position of failing, and end up experiencing, therefore, the reality of becoming discouraged, and despairing, and despondent—because of a **charge** that could be laid against us for some stupidity on our part—or a **condemnation** that could be brought upon us for a similar type thing.

- So we've got these **2 issues**—and what I'm after in bring all that to your attention once again—**is that there is a reason why: 2 issues have to be addressed** in connection with us being our own worst enemy.

-
- And it's in having to answer **why** there has to be 2 issues dealt with that I want to bring up this other feature (so to speak) - or an obvious peculiarity about these 2 questions.
 - Do you see anything else kind of peculiar about these 2 questions—or something especially about the answers?
 - 3rd probing question: you have **God the Father** mentioned.
 - 4th probing question: you have **God the Son** mentioned.
 - And there is a reason why you not only have to have 2 issues that have to be addressed—but there is a reason why one question pertains to God the Father; and the other pertains to God the Son!
 - And before you can adequately deal with the details of either one—and be assured of the effectual working of the probing question with respect to both the Father in (:33) and the Son in (:34) - you've got to know **why** there's 2! And why they're **both** involved!
 - Any ideas why there's these 2 issues—and both the Father and the Son have to be involved when it comes to dealing with us as our own worst enemy?
 - Well—there's something you've already been taught (in connection with sonship) that has a bearing upon this. [and you might come down here and see this and say, Oh yeah ...]
 - And I mean, Oh yeah, that's the natural thing to bring up in connection with the Father (He's *justified* me)—and Oh yeah, that's the natural thing to bring up in connection with the Son (because... of something ...)
 - So where were we told about something in our sonship establishment that involved both the Father and the Son?
 - **Romans 8:16-17 (:17)** - both the Father and the Son are involved with our inheritance!
 - And there's something in connection with our inheritance that we may not have seen—and that I didn't really appreciate myself because at the time, I taught the issues concerning our inheritance as 'The Doctrine of Our Inheritance' - and not as how the Father and the Son view us as being an *heir of God* and *joint-heir with Christ*.

- And what I mean by that is—when I taught the issues of us being *heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ*—I basically taught it from the viewpoint of us, as sons, **receiving our inheritance**—and I went into some of the basic differences between a *child of God* who will receive an inheritance as an *heir of God*—and then I talked about some of the basic issues involved with being an adopted son who qualifies to receive an inheritance as a *joint-heir with Christ*.

- And it may be that there's really nothing wrong with that—(even though it clearly wasn't taught well enough) — but there's really no harm if we can come up to this point and realize that there's **another important issue** we need to get an appreciation for that will allow for us to see the naturalness of why the 3rd & 4th probing questions that deal with us as our own worst enemy—why they have to be in 2 parts and why both the Father and the Son have to be involved.

- And really we should have had a stronger appreciation for having our Father's point-perspective — even at the very beginning of our sonship establishment—rather than kind of building up to it as we went along.

- Because now we have to go back to that issue of where both the Father and the Son are involved in something together—and that something is the issue of our inheritance.

- And instead of just gaining an appreciation for the doctrine of it; we now have to gain an appreciation for our inheritance—**so that you see how both the Father looks at you as His heir—and how the Son looks at you as an heir**.

- And Romans 8:33 & 34 wants you to have thought about that—and to have an appreciation for that!

- And really the problem with what we've done so far in regard to 'The Doctrine of Our Inheritance' is that—we've only looked at it as a doctrine— and we haven't looked at it **as what it means to the Father with you as His son — and what it means to the Son with you as a son with Him!**

- And what that means is—that we haven't looked at the issue of **our** inheritance with **THEIR ATTITUDE** towards it!

- And when you get down to (:33 & 34) — that's why (in :33 for instance) when that question comes up it says:

33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?
(the issue is) — ***It is God that justifieth.***

- It's almost like, "How dare you think that God would let anybody do that!"

- And that's an **ATTITUDE** ISSUE!

- That answer or remedy to that question—that's an attitude of God the Father towards you as His son in connection with you being His heir!

- And the same thing in connection with Christ in (:34)!

- Remember a while back when I told you that when you go through sonship establishment—the main goal in everything that takes place in Romans 8:16-39 is to develop within the son the **attitude** that he needs to have as a son—with respect to what his Father has done for him—with respect to what his responsibilities are—with respect to the commitment he needs to have—with respect to the confidence and the assurance and the convictions and the enthusiasm and all those things ... it's his **attitude** that gets adjusted, developed & established.

- And that attitude doesn't just come 'out of the blue' — that attitude comes because he derives it from his Father—and from the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

- And it begins right there in the first aspect of sonship establishment when the issue of 'inheritance' comes up.

- Because the information that's contained in those verses doesn't just teach the son that he's got an inheritance!

- It teaches him to **look** at his inheritance like his Father does; and to think about it and have the same **attitude** towards it that his Father has—and to **look** at it like the Lord Jesus Christ does, to whom he is a *joint-heir*—and have the same **attitude** towards it that the Lord Jesus Christ has!

- And one of the fruits that that bears later on—down in the final component to sonship establishment (where we are in the 5 probing questions) - is the issue of: **When I *do* mess up—my Father does not want me to look at what I’ve done from MY attitude, but from HIS!**

- He doesn’t want me to look at the damage that’s been done and the hindrance that’s been produced in my sonship life **from my attitude—but from HIS!**

- Because the truth of the matter is—if I look at it from my attitude, I’ll stay in the **deepest, blackest depression I’ve ever been in**—and I’ll never get out of it!

- But if I look at it from His attitude, He’ll say:

“Get on your feet, son, and get going!”

“I’m not playing games, here!”

“You do understand that I was the One that put this whole thing together—and you think you’re going to thwart it?”

- And really the beginning of what leads to these 2 probing questions (and the answers to them) — that all begins back there with the issue of our inheritance and how we were taught to view it from our Father’s perspective!

- And as you think about how you were given the information that comprised your 1st component of sonship establishment—when you first were presented with the information about your inheritance—it was given to you kind of like a lawyer would give it to you (in the reading of a will, so to speak) - there in (:16-17).

- But then as you deal with that issue of your inheritance and begin thinking about it from the perspective of your sonship—you start to think about it as your Father does—because your Father has invested you with this.

- And then you get all that information about the actual vocational aspect of your Father’s business (out from which will come your inheritance)—[:19-25] - and you begin to see that this isn’t just some legal entitlement that I’ve got—**but this is something that belongs to my Father!**

- And He's invested in this thing—and I have now been brought in to it with Him—and it's become mine WITH Him!

- That's why you've got the terminology stated the way it is there — "*heir OF God, and joint-heirs WITH Christ;*"

- And the issue, by default, in sonship is—that you think about it **like your Father does!**

- And that's why, when we're taught about the details of our vocation back there in (:19-23) - all of a sudden our inheritance goes from being this abstract thing (something just in theory)—to this living, breathing, tangible, concrete thing that you can see with the 'eyes of your understanding' **with respect to the *creature*** and your involvement in it and your roll in it and so forth.

- And by now you know full well what your inheritance is as both being an *heir of God* and a *joint-heir with Christ*—and therefore you know full well what it means to either **succeed** or **fail** in connection with your sonship life as defined by (or in view of) your inheritance!

- And that's what your Father has wanted you to be thinking all along.

- And as you come to the end of your sonship establishment—a lot of things are now weighing heavily upon you.

- You now know what your sonship life is for—and you now know how your Father has both geared you and geared the curriculum for sonship education for your success.

- And you should be able to define what "success" amounts to.

- And so when it comes, therefore, to probing your heart in order to bring to the surface any problems, hindrances, snags, or obstructions to your being successful as God's son—and when the Father beings probing and going directly after the enemies to your success (and you being your own worst enemy as the first one He deals with)— it shouldn't be a puzzling thing that there are 2 Parts to it: 1 Part dealing with God the Father, and 1 Part dealing with God the Son.

- Because when it comes to thwarting your success as a son; (even when that failure comes from you, yourself as your own worst enemy) — it's not just merely thwarting your success to live as a son here and now—but even more to the point—it's **thwarting your success to function in and with your inheritance as an heir of God your Father and a joint-heir of God the Son (the Lord Jesus Christ)!**

- And by means of the effectual working of Romans 8:16-25, at the end of all that—one of the major results of that is that **you've got your Father's attitude** towards you as His *heir* in connection with His business—and with respect to the vocation He says He's given you because you're now a member of His *new creature* (in connection with providing for the creature's *deliverance* from the *bondage of corruption*.)

- And you need to have **His attitude** therefore concerning the **investment** He's making in you as His son—to be able to function in that business & fulfill that vocation.

- And then in connection with His own Son (whom He's already declared His particular roll in His business with respect to the *creature*)— you've got the privilege, (in your sonship status—& through your sonship education), to become a *joint-heir with Christ*—in that structure of the *creature*—in its management & administration structure—and to be *glorified together with Him* in His position as the “*Head*” of it—and the Administrator of all of its functionality.

- (Which **is conditional & contingent** upon the **success** of your sonship life).

- And you therefore end up with not only the **exact same attitude** of God your Father as He sees you as His *heir*, but you've also got the **exact same attitude of God the Son** (the Lord Jesus Christ) as He sees you as a *joint-heir with Him*!

- And I say all that just to underscore the fact that when it comes to how to handle these 2 probing questions (the 3rd & 4th) of (:33-34), it's only the **natural** thing (and the **proper** thing) to recognize that they deal with a part A & part B as you being your own worst enemy—and the natural thing to do is to think about them in connection with where you were given the information about **both** God the Father **and** God the Son in connection with your *inheritance*!

- So therefore the issue of you and I being *heirs of God* and *joint-heirs with Christ* **is** directly connected with what is being spoken of here in Romans 8:33 & 34.

- And when you now get to (:33 & 34) - and you've messed up—and because of that, your attitude is now dragging you through the **mud**—the Father can say, and the Son can say, “Look at it from our perspective—and get going!”
“Neither my Father, nor I, have gone through what we've gone through to let you fail on your own account!”

- And 'what they've gone through' can be found in each and every one of those 5 'links' in the chain of provision that was given to you in Romans 8:29 & 30!!!

- And now is the time—and now is the place in these 2 probing questions where you're supposed to haul out that **attitude** that got developed in you by the time you got to the end of (:25) - and when it now comes to failure that's due to you being your own worst enemy—you view your mess-ups and muff-ups and screw-ups **as the Father looks at you as His heir—and as the Son looks at you as an heir along with Him.**

- And when you view your inheritance in connection with what it **means** to the Father with you as His son—and what it **means** to the Son with you as a son with Him—it's only then that you'll see both of their **attitudes** reflected in each one of those 'remedies' to part A and part B of those probing questions concerning you being your own worst enemy to your success as a son!

- And when you're able to answer each part of these 2 probing questions of (:33 & 34)—as you answer them **back** to what was told to you in (:28, 29 & 30) — you can answer with some real INTELLIGENCE — some SONSHIP INTELLIGENCE! (And that's the only satisfactory way to answer these 5 probing questions!)

- Now the reason for going over all of this is to, once again, get that **attitude** brought to the forefront in order to intelligently deal with these 2 probing questions—because each remedy that's given **isn't** one of an academic nature—they're remedies of that stem from an **attitude** that comes out of a particular doctrine—(in this case, the doctrine of our inheritance as sons).

- And really—this is one of those times where you're going to find yourself in need (in fact, in a **great need**) of help from God your Father—and get this: your need is going to be *dire*—but what saves you from failure and destruction is **NOT** going to be a doctrine—what saves you from failure and destruction is going to be an **attitude** that your Father has, and that you now have in connection with Him as His son!

- Ok—at this point I want to make sure that you see, once again, why, when it comes to this final aspect of establishing us as sons, our Father would, in connection with producing this final attitude of confidence, assurance, and conviction in Him and in His curriculum He's written for our success—why, after declaring how that curriculum is going to *work together* with *all things* for our *good*—and then giving us His 'chain of provision' that makes that issue the living reality in our lives that it is—you should now see in light of all that why it would be needful & necessary to probe your heart in order to bring up the issue of you, yourself: as your own worst enemy—and when He does it, it has to be dealt with in 2 Parts (Part A & Part B).

- Because, for one thing, you **do** have 2 questions that goes to fully resolving the issue of you as your own worst enemy.

- And for another thing, you have one question dealing with God the Father—and the other question dealing with God the Son.

- And you should understand & appreciate (at least to enough of a degree) that the reason why you have both the Father and the Son being brought up is because both the Father and the Son were brought up back when you were informed all about your inheritance!

- And for you right now as a son in this aspect of sonship establishment—failure or success hasn't got anything to do with either keeping or losing your justification/salvation—but now, as a son, failure or success has to do with your **inheritance** in that creature as an *heir of God* and *joint-heir with Christ*!

- Now, the picture may still be a little fuzzy for now—but at least the vertical hold shouldn't be going crazy—right? — (we'll get the picture in focus as we go on, but I just want to see if you're seeing that much for now).

- Well, at this point, I think the next thing to do—and the logical thing to do—is to look at that 3rd probing question of (:33) [Part A] in more detail.

Probing Question #3:

33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

- Now the answer to this one—though it may look easy, really is quite a bit more involved.
- And that's because there is an answer to the question (that's not given—just as with the 1st & 2nd Probing Questions) — but there is a **godly remedy** that is given (**unlike the previous questions**)—**and the correct answer *must reflect that remedy.***
- So the answer to the question is:
No one—that is, no one who can make the charge “stick” to where you would **fail** to get your sonship inheritance as an *heir of God*.
- Now that's the **correct** answer—but it may not be an ***intelligent*** answer yet—and we have to make sure that we not only are able to answer the question correctly, but more importantly, **intelligently**—with **sonship intelligence!**
- “**Who**” — well, this is the 1st of 3 “**Who**” questions that deal with our enemies to our success in our sonship lives—and as we've noted, this is the 1st of 2 “**Who**” questions dealing specifically with you, yourself, as your own worst enemy.
- And my understanding is—the issue in either of these 2 “**Who**” questions that deal with us as enemy #1—the issue isn't to identify who the “**Who**” is—as if what this is asking us to do is to focus upon anyone who could *charge* you with something.
- But the **way** it's worded and the **way** it's presented to you—it's coming along and having you focus upon **you, yourself**—and those times when someone (even some unidentified person) **could lay a legitimate charge against you as a son.**
- And most importantly, it's a **legitimate charge**—it's not some ‘trumped-up’ fraudulent charge—it's a **real charge**—in other words, the “**Who**” in this case is an actual eye-witness account of you failing to utilize the sonship curriculum properly **to a degree where it would affect your inheritance!** (*and call into question you receiving your inheritance*)

- “*shall lay any thing to the charge*”

- Notice “*any thing*” — notice how that’s stated, “*any ... thing*” — that’s very broad—in fact, that about as broad as you can possibly state it. (deliberately so)

- That lays open any charge that you can possibly think of—or that anyone could possibly think of or charge you with in connection with some sonship failure on your part that would make it so that you would no longer receive your inheritance as an *heir of God!*

- And even though these are 2 very simple English words, they are very powerful—because if it’s true that the answer to the question is “No one” — by saying “*any thing*” that implies that the truth of the matter is, **NO THING** (nothing) can be laid to your charge that would make it possible for you to fail to receive your inheritance as an *heir of God!*

- And that’s why this is—(as I’ve said)—God our Father going after the **SOURCE** of any and all problems in your heart in connection with your failing to succeed with your sonship life (as you being your own worst enemy)!

- By simply stating it in this very broad and all-encompassing way—our Father is going right after the source of any and all charges that anyone (including God, Himself) could bring against you that would specifically cause you to **fail** in receiving your inheritance as His **heir!**

- (Simple, yet profound! — and makes a big impact!)

- *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect?*

- “*charge*” = from the Greek (evgkale,w) = a legal term, meaning to accuse, as in a court of law; to bring a charge against another—to charge, fault or blame someone for actually committing a crime or wrongdoing or specified offence— ‘a load of blame’.

- And again—if my understanding is correct—this is talking about a real fault or wrongdoing or offence on your part: but specifically in the area of failing to have the effectual working of the sonship curriculum in the details of your life!

- ... *of God's elect*?

- "*elect*" — This is the 1st time Paul ever uses this word—and the only time it occurs in the book of Romans.

- And this word *elect* is the proper and most excellent way in which God your Father wants to refer to you as His son in this context.

- And we're not supposed to get thrown off here by a seemingly tough theological term or concept—and go off in the woods and try to teach the 'Doctrine of Election' from stem to stern as a systematic category of Bible doctrine—because if you do, you're going to end up not only lost, but making a mess out of a very simple issue!

- So why is that word *elect* the most proper and the most excellent expression to use here to describe what you are as God's son?

- And to understand this word—you don't have to go to any Greek dictionary or lexicon or any ancient manuscript at all—because you have in your hand a faithful copy of God's word that has inspiration extended right into that faithful English copy.

- So all you have to do is to think, What does our English word, *elect*, mean—and I mean in its non-context affected meaning? What does the simple word *elect* mean, regardless of what context you're talking about that it could be used in—what's the lowest, common denominator meaning to the English word *elect*—when someone is called an *elect* one?

- The lowest common denominator to what it means when someone is called an *elect* one is: YOU ARE CHOSEN TO FULFILL A PURPOSE!

- Because when you elect someone to an office, that's what you do—you choose them to fulfill that office.

- Well now—under the context of sonship—because you now know what God has '*purposed*' with respect to you (which is why that word *purpose* was used there back in (:28), [you are *the called according to his purpose*] — and now here in (:33) you are now recognizing yourself as one, who, in connection with having believed that gospel of Christ and been justified and sanctified with the capstone of sonship now—**has been chosen to fulfill the purpose of sonship!**

- And that's why the probing question asks, "*Who shall lay any thing to the charge of (you, the one whom God has chosen to do this)?*"

- And that's the excellency and the power of using that word *elect*: God's saying to you: Look, I chose you to do this—to be my son, and to fulfill the purpose of sonship, and to be my heir to my kingdom (this thing you now know as the creature)!

- This is another great example of how God teaches you a concept and then develops it and then comes along and tells you what it is in a single word!

- Because if you were reading along here, probably none of you said to yourself, Hey, that's not what I am! - no—you read that word and may have said, I'm not sure exactly what that means—but you probably didn't think you weren't God's *elect*. [because He told you you were back in (:28)!] (you already have a frame of reference for this word!)

- All 11 words of this 3rd probing question is a remarkable display of superior vocabulary control! (Simple, short, profound, and makes a powerful impact upon the human heart!)

- "*Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?*"

- Now is there any question as to what this 3rd probing questions is asking?

- You should have a pretty good grip on what it's going after.

- Now we need to turn our attention to the godly remedy—because it's there that we will find the kind of intelligence we need - to be able to adequately and intelligently answer this as a son!

- The godly remedy: *It is God that justifieth.*

- And really, there's nothing technical (word-wise) to explain here at all—and really, there's nothing even technically doctrinal to have to explain here at all—because the *justify* issue here is the issue of being justified unto eternal life—and you should know all about that doctrine—so that only leaves you with what I've been talking about all along as the solution to Part A of you being your own worst enemy to success in your sonship life: **Your Father's Attitude!**

- Notice, however, how this godly remedy is in strict keeping with the ‘controlling question’ of (:31) — because that very issue of being *justified* is sitting right there in one of those ‘links’ in the Father’s ‘chain of provision’ of (:29-30)!

- Now what we have to do is to make sure that we know **why** “*It is God that justifieth*” is the godly remedy to the 3rd probing question.

- And really, 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 isn’t 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 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 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!** (What a **joy** that is!)

- And what's so important here is that you can now look at these probing questions—at least the first 3 now) - and while the first 2 are relatively easy to get a grasp upon (because even though they deal with things yet future as we get underway in the curriculum, they are of a nature that isn't as personal [so to speak] as they are when you get to the 3rd & 4th probing questions) — but now at (:33-34) you've got to get real personal because **you** are now in view as your own worst enemy.

- And what's so important here is that you can now look at this 3rd probing question and begin to think about (and have a frame of reference for) that time in the future when your sonship education gets underway in earnest—for the times in which you **will** experience such things as muffing up to the degree that a legitimate *charge* can be laid against you.

- And I say that's so important because what's happening here (or should be happening as you have given time to thinking about all this) is that your thinking is moving from what's supposed to be taking place, to the actuality of it taking place.

- And you should be beginning to perceive the way in which, **when the time comes** where you're going to need this information and need the effectual working of this part of sonship establishment and need your Father's perspective — your realization of these issues should now be going from the theoretical to (even though you're not actually in this situation yet) - to perceive **what it would be like** to be in such a situation like this!

- And therefore there should be occurring in your thinking a ***sober*** realization of what our Father **wants** us thinking about when we're in such a situation that—based upon us muffing up—we'd be ***internalizing*** everything based upon our disobedience or our failure or whatever we've done that we're going to be obsessing over—and instead of internalizing all that & continuing on in self-pity and self-destruction (dejection, despair, depression, etc.) - the greatness and the power of what you're being given here (and probed about) is that your Father comes along and says,

“Look at it from my perspective, son, — because I'm not depressed, I'm not dejected, and I'm not devastated—and all that kind of business — and here's the issues that make it so that that's not how I am—and if you'll only think about these things, that's not how you're going to be either!”

- And that's the kind of transition I'm (as your pastor) looking for in your thinking (and that your Father is looking for) in your thinking.

- Your thinking should now start having some **solidity** to it—so that you're not slipping back into your own frame of reference in connection with dealing with each probing question [and with each answer and each remedy to each answer]—(**which, in this situation, blocks your ability to think about it like your Father does!**)

- It's critical that you understand & appreciate that as soon as you begin to **internalize** all those thoughts & feelings—and all that heavy toll that comes upon your human heart from muffing things up and making a mess out of your usefulness of the sonship curriculum — as soon as you internalize all that—**that's the exact point at which you do become your own worst enemy!**

- Because now you're no longer listening to and thinking with your Father—you're no longer viewing things from His perspective—but now you're thinking from your own human, carnal perspective and viewing things from, really, your own imagination!

- And I want you to realize that internalizing all that despair and anguish over your own muff-ups with the curriculum is an **extremely powerful motivator unto self-destruction!**

- And your Father knows it—and that’s why this has to take place **now** as part of sonship establishment—so that you know exactly what to do when these situations DO become a reality!

- In a sense, this is like **training in advance**—because you’re (like I said before) it’s like you’re in a psychological game that a therapist would do with you by ‘roll-playing’ — and saying, Let’s put ourselves in this situation in advance—and let’s think about what it’s like so that when that situation does actually come along—instead of you throwing up your hands and saying, What do I do now? - you’ve got a frame of reference already there and some experience already there to fall back upon.

- And that really *needs* to be done! — it’s something that **has** to take place in connection with our sonship establishment (and that’s why it takes place last) - because by the time you get to this 3rd component of sonship establishment, there’s supposed to be enough of a frame of reference (not only for what the sonship *status* is about—but for what living the sonship life **is going to be like**) - there’s enough of a frame of reference for what it’s going to be like, to begin to therefore realize some things about it **that are going to be true**—and you can appreciate them right now—even though you aren’t necessarily actually dealing with the curriculum or the living out of the details of the curriculum yet—there’s actually enough of a frame of reference so that you can begin to ‘taste’ it (so to speak) without actually being engaged in it just yet.

- And that’s really what—when it comes to the full measure of ambition and enthusiasm and eagerness and everything—to get underway—(and that needs to be the attitude we need to have at the outset of starting to deal with the curriculum later on—and that we want to have sustaining us throughout the entire course of going through the curriculum) . . . well, when it comes to first of all establishing that attitude within us—through the effectual working of (:28-39), verses 28-30 once again, in connection with viewing our entire sonship life from the perspective of our Father’s preparations for it and predestination of us unto it—that’s what sets our mind upon the issue of the fact that WE’RE GEARED FOR SUCCESS!

- And that’s the 1st issue when it comes to getting the sonship enthusiasm and ambition and eagerness, etc., to be the **kind** of ambition and the **kind** of enthusiasm and the **kind** of eagerness that it needs to be—on par with our Father’s!

- And then the issue is to go through these 5 probing questions that we're going to give answers to based upon what (:28-30) say—to root out within our inner man—and to do the open heart surgery (as I say so often) - to surgically expose the issues that are in our heart that are going to be damaging and detrimental and devastating to that enthusiasm, ambition, and eagerness that we want to have continually operating within us—on par with our Father's—throughout our sonship life.

- And we have to go through all 5 of these questions, once again, to deal with the 5 areas in which problems can occur—and when you get here to (:33 & 34), we deal with ourselves as our own worst enemy in view of the internalization that will take place—and all the self-pity that we'll operate upon—and the 'tail-between-the-legs' attitude that we'll come up with—and the destructive course that we can all end up in if we continue to follow it when we do fail and louse up.

- And what we're gaining here right now is the ability to appreciate the reality of that taking place—in order to get a kind of 'foretaste' of what that's going to be like—but most importantly of all: **to be able to forestall the issue of internalizing it**—and to get wrapped up with the issue of a particular charge being laid against us (or being condemned) - and getting the idea in our minds on the basis of that, that it's not worth us going on; we don't deserve to go on; we're a lousy son and our Father should just throw us away; etc., etc.,

- granted—we could do some things that would cause us to be full of such self-reproach—and I'm not saying that there shouldn't be any reproach and rebuke and sorrow in connection with our stupidity of lousing up, and so forth.

- But the issue is that **our own attitude toward ourselves is going to talk us into a black depression** if we're not careful!

- And that's the very thing that this is all designed to get us to be aware of—and also to realize that it doesn't have to be that way—and our Father is providing us with the remedy so that it doesn't become that way:

- And the remedy is to look at it from His perspective!
(*It is God that justifieth.*)

- And what I'm driving at right now is that you should now have (by now) the successful realization of the effectual working of **HIS ATTITUDE** as your Father towards you as His son in view of the provision He's made for you as His *heir* in connection with His business—to be able to pick yourself up; ...

... dust yourself off; and go on!

- And **He's** got **an attitude of a particular kind** in connection with that—the **Son's** got **a particular kind of an attitude in connection with that** (which is sitting in :34) — **and the combination of those 2 attitudes together** make it so that (to put it this way) we've got no right to be full of self-pity—we do not have the right to do that!

- If we do it: it's because we're **STUPID!** — it's because we're **IDIOTS!** — it's because we're turning our back upon what our Father has told us to think!

- And what you should now be able to perceive is that you don't just have your Father's perspective—but that perspective can now be appreciated as a **VANTAGE POINT** (= advantage or superiority in a contest or conflict)! [Your Father, in this last component of sonship establishment {along with everything else} is giving you His perspective, which in turn gives you a vantage point!]

— Now at this point we should be able to adequately and **intelligently** understand & appreciate:

- what the 3rd probing question is asking (and why);
- what it's probing is going after;
- what the godly remedy is (and why);
- and what the correct, intelligent answer to the probing question is.

33 *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?
It is God that justifieth.*

Probing Question #4:

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.*

- Now we come to 'Part-B' of the 2-part probing questions (Probing Question #3 & Probing Question #4) that God our Father is going to ask us about and probe our hearts about in regard to the **first** of our **2 enemies** that will attempt to thwart the success of our sonship education, edification, and sonship lives.

- Of all 5 probing questions, this one is the shortest: (just 5 words).

Who is he that condemneth?

- And (just as it's been all along) the answer to this one looks easy, but just as we've already seen—it is really quite **involved**—and it's because of just how involved it is (as is true with each of the 5 probing questions), that all that 'involvement' (so to speak) is what gives each question the 'punch' or 'kick' to just how **deep** the probing goes into your heart to expose the kind of snags/obstacles/hindrances/impediments that are there that would cause you problems and could very easily end up with you giving up on your sonship education (or parts of it), and in the end, giving up on your sonship life!

- And it's in all that's deeply involved with each simple question that—once it does it's probing work—and once it's done it's exposing of the problems—and once that heart of yours has been probed by your Father—and once the answer to each one has become intelligently perceived and answered with real sonship intelligence—once all that's been done, that when you go away from each of these questions with the kind of godly attitude that matches your Father, and the kind of godly confidence, assurance, and conviction that makes it so that your commitment to your sonship education is one that means that **you will never abandon the curriculum for your sonship education no matter what!**

- And I say that just to point up the fact that having to go into all that's involved in each question is highly beneficial for us—if we're going to get out of each question what we're supposed to—and have each one do it's job.

- Now, again, unlike the 1st & 2nd probing questions, beginning with the 3rd question—and on through the 5th—we have, at the end of each of these last 3 questions a **godly remedy** that is given—and the correct answer **must reflect that godly remedy!**

- Once again, the answer to the 4th probing question is: **No one**—but what exactly is this issue of being condemned, and why is the information contained in the godly remedy information that makes it so that we would answer “no one” with some real **sonship intelligence?**

- (That's what we have to find out!)

- Of the 2 parts that deals with us as our own worst enemy—just by the nature of the critical word (as I call it) in each question [*charge* in (:33) & *condemne* in (:34)] - and by how much is involved in each of the godly remedies — it should be apparent to you **that of the 2, this one is the more serious issue!**

- And it *is* the more serious issue—and the one that you will go back to time and time again as you go through your own sonship education and sonship life!

- Well—as we begin—since we’ve already brought this issue up (and necessarily so) in dealing with the overall effectual working of these 2 probing questions as Part A in (:33) and Part B in (:34) — we already know why there are 2 parts and we already know why Part A in (:33) deals with God the Father and Part B here in (:34) deals with God the Son—right?

- Because each one has a the imposing threat or impending danger or peril or risk—some kind of failure brought on by us as our own worst enemy that would cause us to not only fail to succeed in our sonship education/edification—but ultimately fail to receive either the reward of our inheritance as an *heir of God* or fail to receive the reward of our inheritance as a *joint-heir with Christ*.

- So if we’re going to go about dealing with this 4th probing question in a ‘first things first’ manner—then the only natural thing to do is to first of all deal with this short question—and make sure that we really have a crystal-clear (HD) understanding and appreciation for exactly what it’s saying and what it’s asking.

- And really, (word-wise), it’s not only the shortest, but the simplest of the 5 questions. — *Who is he that condemne*?

- And we can almost say, that of the 5 words that make up this question—the first 4 need very little comment at all— but it’s that last word that needs a lot of comment and a lot of clarity!

- “*Who*” — again, by the way it’s worded, and by the way in which it’s presented to you, we know that the issue in this question isn’t one of having to uncover & discover who the *Who* is—because by nature of the way it’s worded, the identity of the *Who* is really irrelevant—it’s not asking us to identify the *Who*—but the real focus is upon you, yourself—and those times when you have done something for which you would stand condemned!

- And so the first 4 words should be clearly understood—and that leads us to that final word of the question: condemneth

- And we've got these 2 critical words—*charge* in (:33) and *condemneth* in (:34) — and some of you have already come to realize that just by the nature of those 2 words, there is an intensely more serious thing going on in (:34) than was in (:33).

- And so we need to ask the question—What's the difference between (:33) & (:34) when it says:

33 *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?*

and the issue in (:34) of

34 *Who is he that condemneth?*

- What's the difference between 'laying a *charge*' and being '*condemned*'?

- And we could go to the “original” Greek and say that the word *charge* is **evgkale,w** = to come forward as an accuser against someone; to bring a charge against someone as in a court of law — and the word *condemneth* is **katakri,nw** = to give judgment against someone; to judge worthy of punishment; to adjudge someone guilty—(by the way, it's used 19X in the KJ: 17x *condemn*, 2x *damn*) — and in the Greek construction it's used in an absolute sense here.

- (But really none of that is getting us anywhere as to what's really going on here!)

- And before we even consider nailing down the difference between the 2 words—I just want to draw your attention to the most obvious thing of all about them—and that is that they are **not** the same words, neither are they just close synonyms that are going about just saying the same thing—only in a slightly different way.

- They are not the same words—and they are not saying the same thing at all!

- And if you're not careful and **precise** here—you're going to wind up with these 2 questions saying pretty much the same thing—only with maybe a little more clarity or explanation in (:34) than you have in (:33) - and that NOT the case!

- And it's important we do this—and make this distinction—because it's in that distinctive difference between these 2 words that you will realize the great difference between the CONCERN for you as a son at the beginning of (:33) and the CONCERN at the beginning of (:34).

- (So because you can't deal with the remedy unless you've first of all got the 'problem' framed up properly, we need to get this clear.)

- Well—we already have a good definition and working definition of the issue of what it means to have a *charge* laid against you in (:33).

- “*charge*” = from the Greek (*evgkale,w*) = a legal term, meaning to accuse, as in a court of law; to bring a charge against another—to charge, fault or blame someone for actually committing a crime or wrongdoing or specified offence— 'a load of blame'.

- But even with that definition—we had to make it a working definition by saying that while this is talking about a real fault or offence or **legal** wrongdoing—in our context it's talking about it specifically in the area of failing to properly and/or fully use the sonship curriculum because of sin, misuse, abuse, misunderstanding, misapplication or whatever.

- So let's now come along and look at the issue of *condemnation*.

- (Condemnation **in this context!**) — because you can pick up an English dictionary and look up the word condemnation and find that that word can be used in a **legal** context as well.

- And we've already said that what God is doing here is **NOT simply restating the same thing over again.**

- Because if you're *condemned* by a court—you're **legally** condemned to death—and so that's a **legal condemnation**.

- And even “the gospel of Christ”— before you believed in Christ as your Saviour, comes along and **legally condemns** you to death! — eternal death before the bar of God's justice. (Much like the Lord said back in the gospel accounts ... *he that believeth not is **condemned** already [John 3:18]*).

- And that's a legal condemnation—because it's talking about you being condemned to eternal death by God's justice.
- And my understanding is that just simply because you've got the word *condemned*—it doesn't necessarily mean that you're dealing with something legally—granted, in the most common way, it does, but we have to be **precise** and **pay close attention** here—and remember all those things that keep us on track and 'out of the woods' where we would end up getting lost. [the 4 things]
- But my understanding is that this context here does (more or less) move the issue of *condemnation* **out** of the legal framework of things.
- And that's because (:33) has pretty much covered the legal framework of things.
 - Because not only did (:33) deal with the issue of being legally *charged* for something—but within the godly remedy you have **as** the remedy, another legal issue—the issue of God *justifying* you.
- So what you've got to do here is to think therefore of condemnation in this context of sonship—and not only that but in the context of how we will be responding (or liable to respond) to failures and inconsistencies and downright disobedience in our sonship lives.
 - And that IS the context here.
- And so you need to think of what it means or what you would think about in what might be called "**SONSHIP CONDEMNATION**."
- How would you define 'sonship condemnation'?
- Actually—we do have a parallel to this kind of condemnation that we've already encountered in our study of the book of Romans.
 - Romans 8:1
 - (And while it's not *exactly* the same thing—there is a parallel issue about the nature of the condemnation that exists back there—that gives us an understanding & appreciation for the nature of the condemnation that goes on as a son when you become your own worst enemy to where you have done something so that you could be *condemned* **as a son**.)

- And I say that it's not *exactly* the same thing because the issue of sonship hasn't been brought up yet in Rom. 8:1.

- But what I'm after is the parallel issue of the **nature** of what it means to be *condemned*—which is found in both the Rom. 8:1 passage, and our passage here in Rom. 8:34.

- Back there in Romans 8:1—in the initial doctrine regarding putting our sanctified position that we have in Christ into practice—how is it [**initially**] that we are supposed to do that?

- And by “initially” - I mean even before you learn about *walking after the Spirit* and *minding the things of the Spirit* and thus being *spiritually minded*—what was it **before** that that you learned concerning how you are to put your functional, sanctified life in Christ into practice?

- Answer: Romans 6:14

For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

- So when we learn to understand & appreciate that we can **only** put our sanctified position in Christ into practice by walking after the Spirit and not after the flesh under the law — when (:1) of Romans 8 says, *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.* — what kind of *condemnation* is Paul talking about there?

- Answer: The **area** of condemnation is your functional life; but what's the **source** of the condemnation?

- Answer: Walking after the flesh under the law.

- So who's doing the condemning?

- Answer: The law itself.

- So therefore—what do you **FEEL** when you're *under the law*, and the law condemns you? — and I'm not talking about an unbeliever—I'm talking about **you** as a justified, sanctified member of the church the body of Christ trying to do what Romans 7 (and the latter half, especially) talked about by Paul's example—putting yourself *under the law* and trying to put your position in Christ into practice—and the law **condemns** you when you do it — what do you feel?

- Answer: What does (:24) of Romans 7 say?
 24 *O **wretched** man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*

You'd feel **wretched!**

- And that's the exact same thing you'd feel over here in Romans 8:34 — because if you're *condemned* in connection with living your sonship life on the basis of your own stupidity, what are you going to **feel**? — you're going to feel like a **wretched failure!!!**

- Keep in mind what's going on here—you're going to be your own worst enemy to your success as a son—and when that time comes, you're going to start thinking a thought process in which you're going to **internalize** everything—and every fiber of your being is going to turn **against** you—to **condemn** you in your sonship life!

- Now that's not the full-blown understanding that we're after yet, but that's getting our thinking where it's supposed to be in order to begin dealing with the nature of the *condemnation* of (:34).

- And just like **the law**—(in connection with your fundamental sanctification) - if you *walk after the flesh under the law* trying to put your position in Christ into practice thereby—and it *condemns* you—and based upon its *condemnation*, you become a wretched man like Paul talked about there in (7:24) by an honest response to that *condemnation* — well then, what's your viewpoint in view of becoming so *wretched* in your thinking?

- ??? — (keep in mind that this is **your** attitude in contrast to the Son's attitude) - you're feeling *wretched* in view of what you've done (or in view of an accumulation of a whole bunch of failures) - and you're under self-condemnation—and what I'm after here is what your viewpoint is going to be under such self-condemnation?

- And by “viewpoint” — a viewpoint is what are you going to do from here on in?

- Answer: **I QUIT!** — You're either not going to want to go on—or you're not going to think that you should go on—or you're not going to think it's worthwhile going on—or whatever!

- In other words, that *condemnation* is going to materially affect your **viewpoint** concerning: **going on!**
- And that's in keeping with the whole context here of this 3rd & final component of sonship establishment—and that is: the issue of maintaining the attitude & ambition & enthusiasm & eagerness that (:28, 29, & 30) gave you!
- And if you're under *condemnation* (self-condemnation) - and you're *wretched* in your thinking and so forth—what kind of ambition & eagerness & enthusiasm do you have to go on? **NONE!**
- And this is why what we're after here is how you **feel** about it; and how you're going to **respond** to it; and what your **viewpoint** is going to be—and all that — because when you look at the godly remedy to this 4th probing question (just like the godly remedy in [:33]) you don't just have some doctrine coming along and fixing the situation, but you've got the Son's **attitude** being put on display as the One who *died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*
- So now we need to take this much and begin to put the whole package together to this 4th probing question.
 - (:33 & 34) are 2 sides to the same coin (so to speak) — and that's because **there are 2 main ways in which we will respond (being our own worst enemy to ourselves) when it comes to muffing up in our sonship lives.**
 - 1) Has to do with the legalities of what we've done from the perspective of God's justice, and His holiness, and His righteousness — because we have disobeyed—we have gone contrary to the way in which we should be living our sonship lives—especially if that involves sin.
 - But the remedy to that (once again) is: the legal position our Father has put us in having justified us.
 - But not every failure necessarily involves us yielding to a sinful lust of the flesh — and not every failure, therefore, is necessarily going to provoke the legal connotations to it that (:33) provides the remedy for.
 - (Because not everything in our sonship lives—when it comes to failing; being disobedient; not following through like we ought to—is a sinful thing in the sense of it being a yielding to a sinful lust of the flesh).

- And I say it that way—because you have to now be able to see both sides of the coin (to you being your own worst enemy) clear and sharp—and that’s the kind of differentiation that has to take place as you get the effectual working of each of these probing questions that deals with you being your own worst enemy. (:33 &34)

- Because when it comes to the issue of living our sonship lives—and when it comes to the issue of the effectual working of the curriculum within us when we actually start dealing with it—(to put it this way for now) — there’s an equal number of things within the curriculum for our sonship education that are issues that we are expected to engage in, and involve ourselves in, and participate in—which are NOT the issue of: not doing sinful things; or not getting wrapped up in the works of ungodly men or the ungodliness of this world or something you would normally think of and denote in your mind as a sinful work of the flesh type thing.

- But they are some things **that are unique to sonship** and the *nature* of living the sonship life—like what might be called **the sonship graces** (or sonship features—attractive, pleasing qualities or activities that further develops & sharpens the son’s skills to a fuller pleasurable form) .. that are offered to us to participate in.

- And the truth of the matter is—because they’re in the context of sonship—and because, therefore, God is dealing with us as **adult** sons—He beseeches us; urges us; entreats us; exhorts us—to avail ourselves of them; **participate** in them; **partake** of them and so forth.

- ... **but He doesn't come along and TELL US that we HAVE to do it!**

- And really I’m bringing this issue up now to simply illustrate how some things in sonship (and some failures in sonship) fall outside the realm of sinful works of the flesh type issues—but at the exact same time can be serious failure-type issues to you as a son.

- But because these kind of things do exist in the sonship life—and you already should have some awareness of the reality them (because they were touched upon back in sonship orientation)—these, therefore, are things that you and I can make the decision in our sonship lives, based upon either our LIKE or DISLIKE for them—to either choose to participate in them... or choose not to!

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- And when you choose NOT to—you make the sonship decision (which you are given the freedom and the liberty to do as a son) to NOT do it!
 - It's not our Father's will that we make that decision—because He **wants** us to do it, otherwise He wouldn't have put it in the curriculum!
 - But you make the decision whether to participate in it or not.
 - And there are consequences to **both** the positive and the negative response to them.
 - And eventually—in connection with a negative response—(especially when you are so earnest and desirous of living your sonship life) - the consequences of that negative choice you made in connection with an issue of one of those sonship graces that's in the curriculum—it's going to become apparent to you that it's going to cause you **a problem!**
 - Now that's as far as I'm going to go in describing that issue to you for now—but it has to be brought up right now (at least that much of it) because those are particularly the kind of failures, disobediences, inconsistencies, and muff-ups that we're talking about when it comes to the issue of the *condemnation* that (:34) has in view here.
 - Whereas the sin issue was an issue in (:33) - even though I played it down quite a bit—but still it was a legitimate issue—but here in (:34) the far bigger issue in **sonship condemnation** is along the lines of what we've just described.
 - (:34) isn't talking about you going out and fornicating, or getting drunk—it's not 'legally' muffing up (to put it that way) — it's not what you would normally consider and put under the umbrella of sinful disobedience as a son.
 - And really—to put it in contrast—it comes under the umbrella of: **SONSHIP STUPIDITY**—not that you're not stupid when you sin (you are) - but this is sonship stupidity in connection with failing to take advantage of the things in our sonship lives & in our sonship education that are 'part & parcel' of being able to get everything out of our sonship lives & be able to attain the aims/goals/objectives of it.

- And these are the things, especially, that when we are confronted with, and sober up to the COST of those acts of stupidity—these are the things that actually produce the *condemnation* that’s spoken about in (:34) - [especially the self-condemnation—and that wretched man affect that, as far as a son is concerned would make him come along and say, “I’ve failed so much that I might as well just stop and not go on any more.”

- Or say, “I see this aim or goal or objective out there, and I now realize that in order to attain that goal I should have participated in that sonship grace opportunity back there, and now on top of that I didn’t do this and didn’t do that and ignored this other thing my Father wanted me to do” and that’s the kind of self-condemnation and self-reproach—and misery and dejection and the wretchedness that all comes about from that.

- And that’s why the **remedy** for this isn’t the legal remedy of it as “*It is God that justifieth.*” — but rather it’s the remedy of Christ and what gets spoken about in the rest of (:34) in connection with His death, *yea rather*, His being *risen again*—who in connection with that is *even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

- So my understanding is that this is the kind of issues we’re dealing with here in (:34) when it comes to Part B 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 been talking about.

- Because they are failures in the sense of not wanting to (or being not 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.

- But my understanding is—these are the kind of issues that are involved in (:34).

- 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!!!**

- Because it can be described far more graphically than that—but to do so would take someone who has been in that kind of anguish of soul for these exact reasons of being his own worst enemy in connection with standing *condemned* in his own mind (for real and legitimate reasons of failing to participate in the sonship graces) - but to describe it in more detail—it could not be done without being done in tears and heart-wrenching turmoil!

- But even then—the reason for a son to get up, dust off, and go on—even in light of miserable failures of just this kind of *condemnation*—is because of the rest of what (:34) says! Because of *Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession* for me when I messed up like that!

- At this point we need to stop for a moment and make sure that we're properly understanding and appreciating this 4th probing question:

- 34 *Who is he that condemneth?*

- Are there any questions as to having a firm and good grasp upon exactly what this question is asking and why?

- (Having **sonship intelligence** to know what's being asked).

- You should know what this particular aspect of this *condemnation* issue is all about—and the kind of self-condemnation that's in view here.

- Well the next logical thing to do is to begin dealing with the **godly remedy**:

- 34 ... *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.*

- Now there's a lot of information contained in this lengthy remedy—and it may (at first glance) seem that if you **do** have any problem at all with what's said here, your problem area (or where you're not really grasping an issue as clear as you'd like) is with that issue of Christ *who also maketh **intercession** for us.* — right?

- Because you might be asking—Why is Christ doing that?, and what's He doing for?

- But that's the **last** issue in a string of 4 issues presented about the Lord Jesus Christ—so I think the wise thing to do is to look at the **first** issue—and possibly there is something about that that you might not have as good a grasp in your thinking about as you think you do!

- And before we deal with any of the details of the godly remedy, the first thing we need to clearly understand & appreciate is—in view of the kind of *condemnation* and self-condemnation that can take place as you being your own worst enemy—where you would choose to opt out of the sonship graces (opportunities, honors, & privileges) that can bring your sonship life down to a miserable failure where you would end up in that 'wretched man' state and just decide to give up and quit—we need to have a clear understanding & appreciation of why the remedy for this involves the Lord Jesus Christ and not God the Father—i.e., those first 3 words: ***It is Christ** ...*

- Again—there's a reason why the remedy for (:33) *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?* is *It is God that justifieth* — referring to God the Father Himself.

- And there's a reason **why**, when it comes to the other side of the coin (Part B) (:34) *Who is he that condemneth?* that the remedy is to look at our situation under such condemnation **from the perspective of the Lord Jesus Christ.**

- So the question is—Why would you think that the Lord Jesus Christ's **attitude** would be the remedy for **this** kind of failure?

- And we've got to be able to answer this question first—before we can begin to deal with any of the details—otherwise the details won't make the sense that they're supposed to make.

- Any ideas?

- And just to help you out—you don't have to try to come up with this out of the blue (so to speak) - but you've already got the information given to you from what you've already gone through up to this point—the answer to the question is somewhere previous to (:34) in your sonship establishment.

- So, why the Son?

- (By what we've come to understand & appreciate about how we are supposed to go about dealing with all this information, you should be able to find it—just like you found where the godly remedy for (:33) came from!)

- Think about all those things that govern & regulate & control how we think about all this information—viz., “31 *What shall we then say to these things?*”

- And (:33) is easy to connect to (:28-30) - *It is God that justifieth* — and that connects to that 'link' in the Father's chain of provision: *them he also justified:*

- So in that chain of provision, where is the Son mentioned? ... *he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son* — we're supposed to be **conformed to His image!**

- The whole objective of your sonship education & life is to be *conformed to His image!*

- And all those things that you're going to "opt out of" **are all things that are supposed to and designed to conform you to his image!**

- So the natural One whose attitude you need to have when you stupidly and foolishly choose NOT to be *conformed to his image* is the One whose *image* you're supposed to be **conformed** to!

- And to put it in a 'nutshell' — what (:34) says when it says, *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* — is to make it so that you have the exact same attitude He has in connection with what He did (and the investment He made) **for you to be conformed to his image!** — and if you think that you're opting out of certain aspects of it (and the grief you have over it) is enough to make so that you ought not go on: **YOU'RE NOT THINKING ABOUT IT FROM HIS PERSPECTIVE!**

- He **died** so you **could** be *conformed to his image*;

- He was *raised from the dead*, and is *at the Father's right hand*, and *makes intercession for you in connection with each one of those things that you're failing on and that you're refusing on and that you're balking at*—**those are all 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 anything along those lines] — but that they can have communion & fellowship about it).

- And there's **sympathy** on both or 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?!?)

- No. There is, with the Father and with the Son, the issue of **genuine** (godly) **sympathy** and **genuine empathy** for us!
- And there's the issue of **encouragement** 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 the further skills and fuller developed skills that they are designed to give us that *conform us to the image of Christ!*
- And that **encouragement** is there—and more than that, **neither the Father nor the Lord Jesus Christ 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 that's what's involved in answering the question Why the Son? And that's what's involved in all that's going on in the godly remedy to this 4th probing question.
 - That **intercession**—that's not legal intercession at all— (because the legal issue has been taken care of in [:33]) — that's the *intercession* of **encouragement**—and the *intercession* of **help!**
 - (Just like it was back there in [:26-27] in sonship prayer when *the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered*— that's **HELP!**)
 - And all that is designed to get it so that we come back and enter into sonship prayer with our Father and we DEAL with the issue—and we don't come to Him like a dog with our tail between our legs— fearing we're going to be 'whacked' or that He's going to laugh at us and ridicule us and chewed us out or anything along those lines!
- And that goes for this issue here in (:34) when Christ *makes intercession for us* in connection with our condemning failures to opt out of sonship graces that are designed for us to be *conformed to his image!*

- Therefore an intelligent understanding and appreciation of the 4th probing **question** that deals with ‘Part B’ of us being our own worst enemy to the success of our sonship lives: *Who is he that condemneth?* — along with an intelligent understanding & appreciation of **why** the godly remedy is the issue of the 2nd Person of the Godhead (God the Son): *It is Christ ...* — we should have some real appreciation for the nature of this sonship *condemnation* —

- It’s not a condemnation in the legal sense.

- Rather it’s a self-condemnation that takes place when you ‘opt out’ of the sonship graces—the 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.

- Well, this kind of sonship *condemnation* does have a godly remedy—but it’s actually the final stages of a particular ailment that every son is susceptible to and should be aware of—and should be aware of both what it is and how it’s cured! — It’s called: ***STRAITENED IN YOUR OWN BOWELS!***

- So let's take a very brief look at this ailment called being "*straitened in your own bowels.*"

- II Corinthians 6:11-13 (:12)

- Is this some kind of gastro-intestinal problem or disorder? Because there is a real physical problem that can occur in your intestines that can be called being "*straitened in your own bowels.*"

- But this is a Biblical way of using terminology of your anatomy—and very real disorder that can occur in your physical body—but here it's using that physical disorder to refer to & describe a spiritual problem or spiritual disorder.

- It refers to something being not right or not functioning properly in our *inner man*.

- And just as with any problem in which a physical malady is used to describe a spiritual malady—the spiritual malady is the one that is **far worse** than the physical one!

- And just as the health and proper functioning of our physical bowels are vital to the welfare of our physical lives, so the health and proper functioning of *the bowels of our inner man* are vital to the welfare of our sonship lives and to our godly edifying in this present dispensation of God's grace.

- And the truth of the matter is, if this ailment is left untreated and not cured, it can do more to interfere with our sonship lives, and can do more to wreck havoc with the success of our godly edification, than just about any other affliction we can possibly experience!

- And it's because of just how **serious** the danger that this ailment posed to the sonship lives of the Corinthians—and because Paul knew they were already suffering the affects of it that he informs them that they indeed had the ailment in (:11-13).

(especially :12) - *Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels.*

- Paul recognizes that the Corinthian saints had this ailment—and the truth is, he knew that they had to for quite some time—which is why so many of the problems associated with it were dealt with back in I Corinthians.

- But now Paul recognizes that their condition had gotten worse to the point where a more serious kind of damage was being done in connection with their godly edifying—because their ailment was now putting a serious strain on their relationship with Paul himself (just as Paul says).

- And in doing that—it was causing them to **strongly balk at participating in some highly important and very necessary aspects of their sonship edification!**

- And in doing so it was causing them to no longer follow Paul's own sonship example and pattern for us—and ended up bringing their own sonship edification and lives to a halt!

- And in view of that they now have to face up to this ailment that they have brought upon themselves—and they have to be cured of it, otherwise it will be impossible for them to make full progress in their sonship edification and in living out their sonship lives.

- So this is serious business!!!

- Let's take a look at these **bowels** of our inner man.

- What we normally call the bowels of our physical bodies are also what we generally refer to as our digestive system. (Usually talking about our small and large intestines.)

- And our physical bowels are really a wonder of how God has created our physical bodies—because not only do they provide for the complicated and complex activity of digesting our food (absorbing water & nutrients and so forth), but also for getting rid of waste material.

- But there is another wonder about the bowels—and that has to do with the fact that of all the organs in our physical bodies, few (if any) are more sensitive to our **emotional** make-up as are our bowels.

- And in that way (and this is critically important) - in that way, the bowels are highly sensitive to, and highly stimulated by what we **LIKE** and what we **DISLIKE!**

- (Sensitive to/stimulated by stress and/or by what is pleasant to us).

- Therefore the *bowels* of our *inner man* were understood by the Greeks (as well as how the Bible deals with the concept) as ‘the seat of our sensitivity, affection, and emotional response to what we face in life—**based upon our personal likes and dislikes.**’

- The Bible refers to our *inner man bowels* in a number of different ways and in a number of different contexts:

- Philippians 2:1

If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

- Colossians 3:12

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

- Philemon 7

For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.

20 Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord.

- I John 3:17

But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

(dealing with proper godly affection for other saints, along with sensitivity and responsiveness to their needs.)

- But the issue we're concerned with in being *straitened in our own bowels* is the issue of the bowels of our inner man being sensitive to and emotionally responsive to the will, or wishes, or desires that **another person** might have for us—and since we have our own personal table of likes and dislikes, we are particularly sensitive to things that **do not** conform to our table of likes & dislikes—especially when they are the likes & dislikes of some other person!

- And the real ‘kicker’ to all this is—we are the **most** sensitive to any attempts that **another person** might make to alter or change our own personal ‘likes and dislikes’ in order to *conform* them to his!

- So our inner bowels are very responsive to the expressed will, wishes, or desires that **another person** might have for us—and depending upon whether or not the other person’s will or desire for us conforms to our own personal ‘likes and dislikes,’ — **this is what determines whether or not we become *straitened in our own bowels* towards him — or in other words, this is the very cause of this ailment of being *straitened in our own bowels!***

- Granted, I do recognize that it is possible for us to be *straitened in our bowels* towards someone in a good sense, (for example if his desire for us is unrighteous or sinful) - but that’s not the issue here at all. (we’re taking about our Heavenly Father)

- Simply put—if we are *straitened in our own bowels*—then we are not receptive to something that another person desires for us—and we are not willing to therefore go along with it because it is not agreeable to us.

- We object to bringing ourselves into line with his expressed desire or will for us because we take exception to what he is exhorting us to do, or to partake of, or to participate in, or the like—and we then object because it does not agree with what we like, or what we want, or what we desire.

- And the end result is that we resist complying with his desire for us and so we become *straitened* or constricted, in our fellowship or dealings with him—choosing to limit or confine our fellowship and dealings with him **to only those things with which we do agree.**

- And the issue of **NOT** being *straitened* in our bowels is the issue of being receptive to his desire—and we are willing to go along with it, because it does not disagree with us—we don’t take any exception to what he exhorts us to do, or to partake of, or to participate in—and so we do not decide to limit our fellowship with him.

- Now that’s a simple understanding & appreciation of it—but it’s sufficient enough to enable you to understand its basic function.

- Now this ailment of being *straitened in our own bowels* becomes something that we are particularly susceptible to once we are taught about our sonship status (Rom. 8:14-15)—and it's when that status of a son is made aware to us and when we begin to live in accordance with it, that we can 'come down' with this ailment—and it can start to cause us problems.

- And this is directly due to the fact that from the time God our Father teaches that He has given us "*the adoption of sons*" - He specifically begins working to **conform** the various components and operations of our *inner man* to that of His **AND** to that of the Lord Jesus Christ's!

- And it's this issue of being *conformed to the image* of the Son (the Lord Jesus Christ) that's at the very core of **why** the godly remedy for Romans 8:34 *Who is he that conedmneth?* the issue of *It is Christ...* that is, why it is God the Son and His attitude as our intercessor that provides the remedy for those times when we have become *straitened in our own bowels* and *condemned* in our own minds and *wretched* and wanting to **give up**.

- And that's why Paul will later on talk about having the same "*bowels*" of the Lord Jesus Christ (**see Phil. 1:1-11 [:8]**)

- Note that this is also the very **opposite** of what those "Sonship Commitments" are all about!

- And what that means is—that it's very possible that, even though we aren't involved with the actual receiving the instruction of the sonship curriculum yet (Rom. 12:3ff) — there are still some things in sonship orientation and in sonship establishment whereby you can actually begin to be *straitened in your own bowels* by, but the ailment really hasn't become 'full-blow' yet—and the symptoms might not be manifesting themselves to any high degree yet. (it's lying dormant)

- But your first encounter with this ailment will probably happen as you go through all these adjustments to your inner man attitude as your Father brings your attitude in line with His & with His Son's.

- In short, in accordance with our Father's purpose of *predestinating us* as sons *to be conformed to the image of His Son*, He works to make it so that we have "*the bowels of Jesus Christ*."

- He therefore works to give us the Lord Jesus Christ's own 'likes and dislikes,' and thereby causes us to have the same *bowels* of sensitivity, affection, and emotional responsiveness to His will and desires for us in our sonship lives **as that which belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ in His sonship!**

- However as our Father does this, we might resist it and object to bringing some aspect of our lives into *conformity to the image of Christ*.

- Because based upon our own *unadjusted* 'likes and dislikes' we might find some aspect of *conforming us to the image of Christ* to be **embarrassing** to us—or to be **intimidating** — or we might find that something makes us **fearful**—or we might consider it to be **too costly**—or to be **distasteful**—or to be **disagreeable** to us for some other reason.

- Now what we need to understand is this:

- Whenever we find some aspect about our *conformity to the image of Christ* to be unpleasant to us—or offensive—or disagreeable—or when we are disinterested in it—or are less-than-enthusiastic about it—and we decide to **resist** it, or **ignore** it, or somehow **avoid** it altogether—**then we have become straitened in our own bowels** towards our Father's expressed will and desire for us.

- Our own 'likes and dislikes' cause us to object to some aspect of our Father's expressed desire for us, and so we **straiten** (or narrow or constrict) our dealings with Him because of it—limiting or confining our cooperation with Him & fellowship with Him to **only those things with which we have no objections**.

- Do you see how this ailment is indicative of sonship? of **adulthood** type dealings & relationships? and not of the variety of childhood type thinking and dealings? (because you'd simply **order** the child to comply and if he didn't, then you'd **force** him to!)

- Well this, once again is the gist of what it means for us to be *straitened in our own bowels*—and even from this simple scope of it, we can see that it is indeed a **self-induced ailment!** Which is why Paul puts it the way he does to the Corinthians...

12 Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. (II Corinthians 6:12)

- This ailment of being '*straitened in your own bowels*' begins much the same way any physical ailment begins:

- It has a definite history to it—as well as a typical pattern of development.

- For us, as sons, it usually begins at the time when God teaches us about our sonship status and how to live in accordance with it.

- However, much like a physical ailment, it often begins silently with only mild symptoms—which means it can either go undetected by us or easily ignored by us—because we can easily consider the symptoms to be rather insignificant.

- And that means that when the ailment does show up and manifests itself in a clear way—the truth is, by that time the ailment is already well established within us.

- Don't forget that the ailment of being *straitened in your own bowels* has as its core issue the issue of your 'table of likes and dislikes' being adjusted by God your Father to match His own 'table of likes and dislikes.'

- And that adjusting of our 'table of likes and dislikes' begins from the moment we are taught about our sanctified position in Christ in Romans 6—but the vast majority of the work of adjusting our 'table of likes and dislikes' gets underway when our Father tells us He has given us "*the adoption of sons.*"

- And that's because our sonship status not only comes with great liberties, privileges, and honours — but it also comes with great **responsibilities** which require solid commitment on our part!

- So the onset of being '*straitened in our own bowels*' can occur right from the 'get-go' in sonship orientation where we are supposed to cry, *Abba, Father*—and there's a great deal that we can talk about in connection with sonship orientation and all that goes on there—especially involving our Father going to work in our inner man and working on our 'table of likes & dislikes' - and in connection with the kind of **value** we place upon our sonship education—and in connection with the sonship **commitment** levels—and so forth.

- But for now (especially in light of the kind of sonship *condemnation* of Romans 8:34), I want to focus upon some of the worsening symptoms in the later stages of being '*straitened in your own bowels.*'

- And it often takes a father's examination (just like a doctor's examination) to make a proper diagnosis of the ailment — and you can see the apostle Paul (acting as a father) do this very thing with the saints in Thessalonian...

- I Thess. 2:10-12

- Even with those Level II & Level III sons, they are never completely immune to this ailment—and Paul (acting as a father to his children) deals frankly with them—and through intelligent and insightful '*exhorting, comforting, and charging,*' he purposely probes their inner man and deals with what he finds there—looking for any *straitening in their bowels* where their 'table of likes & dislikes' are not in harmony with God their Father's.

- So now let's look at the **worsening symptoms** that can occur beyond sonship orientation and sonship establishment.

- Once our sonship education/edification gets well underway, (with the result that our *conformity to the image of Christ* starts to become manifest and evident in our walk), we then begin to encounter more and more occasions to become *straitened in our own bowels*.

- Because as our *conformity to the image of Christ* becomes manifest in our walk, this naturally provokes a negative reaction from the ungodliness and unrighteousness of this world as it registers its disdain for our godliness.

- This happens especially when we get to Romans 13:12-14 (read).

- Here we '*cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light,*' — and purposely start '*walking honestly as in the day.*'

- And in doing so we go on the **offensive** (so to speak) in our sonship living—we start to directly repudiate the mainstays of this world's iniquities and ungodliness—and thereby also **purposely provoke the Adversary to respond!**

- And this makes us subject to numerous forms of rejection and opposition—including such intimidating things as ridicule, mockery, scorning, ostracizing, defaming, cursing, despising, and the like — as well as persecution, abuse, hatred, and other expressions of this world's disdain for godliness.

- And none of those kind of things are things that we would just naturally find **pleasant**—but we would naturally find them very **unpleasant**—(and due to that, we would naturally desire and choose to ‘opt out’ of them)!

- Those are all things we don’t naturally ‘like’ - but ‘**dislike**’!
(And so we would not want to experience them).

- **That is: Unless you possess “the bowels of Jesus Christ!”**

- So when we experience such unpleasant things—we can easily become ‘*straitened in our own bowels*’ in connection with them—and also toward our Father, (who has designed that we **do** experience such things as part of our being *conformed to the image of His Son*).

- And this is the very thing that happened to many of the Corinthians when they began to receive such tribulations and persecutions.

- Being *straitened in their own bowels* they decided that they had had enough—and they chose **not** to participate any longer in those aspects of their *conformity to the image of Christ* that provoked such unpleasant things.

- And therefore you have Paul reproving them—as a father would his sons —

- I Corinthians 4:8-13 (read)

- Again—being *straitened in their own bowels* the Corinthians chose to court the world’s approval and to be accepted in its sight—instead of suffering the consequences of manifesting *conformity to Christ*.

- They preferred and chose to be “**wise in Christ**” in the eyes of the world by doing such things as making God’s word subservient to the wisdom of this world—instead of being “**fools for Christ’s sake**” by denouncing the “wisdom of this world” and ignoring it.

- They preferred and chose to be “**strong**” in the world’s midst by operating upon its own sources of strength, instead of being looked upon as “**weak**” by operating upon God’s.

- And they liked and desired to be “**honourable**” in men’s eyes, which they did by adjusting their Christian lives to “the course of this world,” instead of being willing to be “**despised**” by men for repudiating the iniquity of the world’s ungodliness.

- So these believers at Corinth ‘opted out’ of suffering for godliness’ sake primarily because **at the time of their sonship establishment, and at the beginning of their sonship education,** they failed to adequately conform their own bowels to “*the bowels of Jesus Christ.*”

- Therefore they wanted nothing to do with being “*made as the filth of the world*” and with being “*the offscouring of all things unto this day*” — **even though they had been taught and knew that it was an integral part of their sonship education and of their conformity to the image of Christ!**

- And so after reproofing them Paul gave them a firm, but loving fatherly admonition and charge: I Corinthians 4:14-17.

- Now this ailment (if left untreated) can grow **even worse and even more serious complications can occur.**

- So far—these are some of the ordinary things that every son will experience as he naturally goes through the process of Level I and Phase 2 of sonship education.

- But then—after you get past Romans doctrine—you are going to have to face “*the sufferings of Christ*” where the more serious kind of becoming *straitened in your own bowels* can occur.

- And this is very serious—because partaking of “*the sufferings of Christ*” is also an integral part of our being *conformed to the image of God’s Son.*

- And this more serious *straitening in the bowels* also happened to some of the saints in Corinth—for although some of the saints **did** respond positively to Paul’s fatherly reproof, admonition, and charge in I Corinthians 4—and so ceased being *straitened in their own bowels* at being “*made the filth of the world,*” - **others did not!**

- And for those that did not, they certainly did encounter the more serious complications later on in connection with “*the sufferings of Christ*” — in fact, they even took offense at partaking of a number of those privileged sufferings—siding with the contrary opinions and carnal criticisms of unbelievers and false brethren, who based upon their own ungodly ‘table of likes and dislikes’ found fault with the notion that God would (or even could) desire that His people experience such things!

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- So, for example, Paul contrasts his own sonship life with the life of those Corinthians who had balked at partaking of “*sufferings of Christ*.”
 - II Corinthians 4:7-12
 - Again, many of the Corinthians did not want anything to do with the “*life*” Paul speak about here—because in order to be a partaker of this “*life*” they needed to *‘bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus’* - but unfortunately they had little, or no taste for it.
 - Because their inner man’s ‘table of likes and dislikes’ was not only out of alignment with God’s, but it was now **AT ODDS** with His likes and dislikes!
 - And they had come to actually espouse the criticisms and objections of unbelievers regarding this ‘suffering of Christ,’ which now had them not only strongly disliking it—but even **questioning its validity!**
 - So after teaching the Corinthians about this privileged ‘suffering of Christ,’ (and also after dealing with some additional matters to which they took offense and at which they balked because of their ‘less-than-godly likes and dislikes’), Paul goes on to boldly assert that there was nothing for them to take offense at whatsoever:
(see II Corinthians 6:3-5)
 - Therefore the Corinthians had no real reason to take offense either at Paul and his own partaking of any of “*the sufferings of Christ*,” or at his ministry of teaching them to be partakers of these sufferings as well.
 - Instead they should have counted it a privilege of God’s grace to be a partaker of these particular sufferings—not only because they are “*the sufferings of Christ*” - but also because they are a necessary part of our vocational education and training—and as such are a vital part of our *conformity to the image of Christ*.
 - But sadly they did take exception to partaking of this ‘suffering of Christ’ and also of partaking of others, which made it so that Paul had to go on and say what he does in (II Cor. 6:11 & 12) [read].

- Now this has only been a brief ‘scope’ look (very simplified) of this troublesome ailment—of its cause and general symptoms—but it should be sufficient for you to diagnose whether you might be *straitened in your own bowels* to some degree.

- And you don’t want to ‘just live with it’ - because it **will** interfere with your sonship edification—but the good news is that you don’t have to ‘live with it’ - there is a cure—a cure that not only can rid you of the ailment, but that also can provide for repairing the damage that it has caused.

- And that’s why Paul says what he does to the Corinthians in (:13) of II Cor. 6

- 13 Now for a recompense in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) **be ye also enlarged.**

- Therefore the ‘*straitening*’ can be replaced with *enlargement!*

- So before we leave this doctrine—let’s take a brief look at the cure for being *straitened in your own bowels*.

- And we **do** need to take the cure for this ailment because of just how serious it is to so many different aspects of our sonship life.

- Because all the while that it is interfering with our godly edification and causing disruptions in our sonship life—**it is seriously impairing our vocational education and training as God’s “new creature!”**

- And on top of that it is also robbing us of the full measure of godly joy, happiness, satisfaction, and contentment that God our Father has designed for us to have as His sons.

- And as sons in this dispensation of grace, we have been given the unprecedented honour to live our sonship lives with the very ‘*heart and bowels of Jesus Christ*’ operating within us—and to enjoy the fruits thereof!

- Our Father has designed to reproduce in us the very same kind and same measure of joy, happiness, satisfaction, and contentment in our sonship lives that the Lord Jesus Christ has experienced, (and still does experience), in His own sonship living!

- But we're robbed of all that when we foolishly choose to 'stick' with our own worldly 'heart and bowels' - instead of acquiring the '*heart and bowels of Jesus Christ*' by means of our sonship education.
- And when we stupidly operate that way—(upon our own 'heart & bowels) - we then become '*straitened*' at the very things, (and the only things) by which our Father has purposed for us to experience the full measure of His joy, happiness, satisfaction, & contentment as we live our sonship lives.
- Now the cure for being *straitened in our own bowels* is known and is readily available—because since the **cause** for this ailment is having a heart whose 'table of likes and dislikes' does not properly or fully conform to our Father's 'table of likes & dislikes' for us as His sons—then the obvious way this cure is going to work is to **remedy this discrepancy**.
- In other words—we'll not be *straitened in our own bowels* at either the demands of sonship living, or at being "*made the filth of the world,*" or at partaking of any of the *sufferings of Christ* (or any other sonship matter), **if we truly like these things!**
- And we will *like* them, if we have come to see 'eye-to-eye' with our Father on them!
- And the core of the matter in having our 'table of likes & dislikes' not matching our Father's is the problem that **we simply don't think about them exactly as our Father does!**
- And because the 'table' of our heart is the core of the matter—then we're going to have to have some kind of spiritual surgical procedure done by our Father's word upon our hearts.
- And that surgical procedure is what Paul gives to the Corinthians there in II Corinthians 6 —

11 O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged.

12 Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels.

13 Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged.

- The cure for being *straitened in your own bowels* is to **enlarge your heart!**

- Now when we speak of someone being 'large-hearted' or having a 'large heart' - we mean to say that he is affable, sociable, friendly, welcoming, as well as generous and kindly in his dealings with others.

- But this is not the only meaning—because we can also speak of someone having a 'large heart' or an 'enlarged heart' in the sense that he is very agreeable & sympathetic to the wishes or desires of another person—so that he gladly goes along with those wishes and desires—and also works to promote them (even at the expense of some of his own desires.)

- Simply put—a person is said to have 'an enlarged heart' because he has **selflessly filled his own heart with the desires and wishes of another!** — he has brought the desires of another person's heart into his own heart, and in so doing, he has embraced them, making them his desires too.

- And this is exactly what God our Father is after in our own sonship education and sonship life—and actually, it's an ongoing process throughout your life as a son.

- And in accordance with this— a father is supposed to intelligently work to purposely 'enlarge' his son's heart at strategic points in his sonship education—just as described (for example) in Prov. 23.

26 My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways. (Proverbs 23:26)

- And each time the father works to enlarge his son's heart—it's a critical issue to his son because it's what makes it possible for his son to go on and take the next step in his sonship life! — it makes it so that his son will **strongly desire** that next step—preferring **it** to any of the powerful worldly desires and seductions to opt out of it and opt for something it offers instead!

- **Psalm 119** — notice here that the remnant of Israel (when they receive their adoption as sons) - will want their heart to be 'enlarged' as they progress through their sonship education during the final installment of God's program with them—and in that day they will fulfill the words of the Psalmist, saying to God their Father ...

- (:25-32) (:30-32)

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- Not only will those wise sons of the remnant of Israel understand that God their Father works to ‘enlarge’ their heart with His will and desires—**but they also will want Him to do this!** — in fact, they will make the enlarging of their heart a matter of their sonship prayers—especially when they know they are in need of it!
 - And they **will** be in need of it as they have to meet the ever increasing demands pertaining to their sonship lives in the final installment (5th/5th)!
- So how do we get our heart *enlarged*? and effectually cure the ailment of being *straitened in our own bowels*?
- First of all it’s a very common thing for a father to have to enlarge his son’s heart—it’s not uncommon at all—due to the nature of what sonship is all about—the imparting of the father’s heart into the son’s.
 - Simply—and very generally put—the way in which God our Father goes about enlarging our hearts **is by the effectual working of His word within our inner man**—but (and this is critically important), it isn’t just any old part of His word or any old truth—because the truth is, our heart needs to be operated upon and ‘enlarged’ by the effectual working of ***specific doctrines that are purposely designed by our Father to make adjustments to our heart and in our heart*** so that we can fully embrace our Father’s will for us instead of shun it!
 - And all that is built into the curriculum for sonship education — and that’s another reason for how critical it is to view Paul’s letters as a curriculum—because you have to follow it precisely, and in the order you find it in your Bible, or else you run the risk of screwing up all these built-in ‘first-things-first’ features of the curriculum that’s going to have to get it’s job done in our heart before going on!
 - And the truth is—from the time that God our Father teaches us that He has given us “*the adoptions of sons*” He goes to work on effectually dismantling the structure of worldly desires and carnal standards that naturally exist within our hearts—and then he begins to restructure our heart’s desires and standards after the pattern of His own heart!
 - And the degree or extent to which we are *straitened in our own bowels* determines **what specific corrective doctrines** we need to hear so that we can begin to embrace and welcome what we have been refusing or opting out of.

- And because of that—it makes it a little difficult to talk about specifics (or specific areas in God’s word [in our curriculum]) where we would need to go to get our heart enlarged.

- But we can talk about getting the cure, and how the cure effectually works to *enlarge our hearts*.

- I just want to mention that there are indeed many ways in which your *bowels* can become *straitened* as you go through your **initial** stages of sonship—sonship orientation & sonship establishment.

- And because of that, we have (as we have looked at in the past) all those exhortations in the book of Proverbs that help us understand and appreciate how our hearts are, (even in those early stages), being adjusted and enlarged to match that of our Father’s.

- And so you have the exhortations—the commitment levels — and the producing of the proper, godly, virtuous attitudes of our Father during sonship orientation & establishment.

- And a lot goes on there—and there’s a lot of things that you can get *straitened in your bowels* about there for sure.

- But let’s go on and just talk a little about the worsening and tougher forms of the ailment and getting our heart *enlarged* in respect to curing those forms of the ailment.

- One of the strategic points in our sonship lives, later on as we begin to actually go through the curriculum—is when we become eligible to partake of what may be called, our ‘**prescribed sonship sufferings**’ like those we talked about before.

- This was where the Corinthians had demonstrated that they had become *straitened in their own bowels*.

- And we need to realize that in connection with our ‘prescribed sonship sufferings’ — our Father makes appropriate provision in the curriculum for sonship edification for further *enlarging our heart* so that we can embrace those ‘sonship sufferings!’

- And it all starts with us learning to be impressed with just how great an **honor** and **privilege** it is for us to partake of the suffering—and once that happens our heart can begin the process of being *enlarged*.

- So if the case with us is like that of the Corinthians—and we are *straitened in our own bowels* at suffering opposition from this ungodly world for living godly sonship lives in its midst—then we need to avail ourselves of the cure that's sitting in I Corinthians 4:8-17.

- Because of that, Paul says ...

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

- And when Paul says that—he actually begins providing for us to be cured of our ailment—because when he says specifically, “*we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men*” that’s describing the special honor and privilege that belongs to this brand of sonship suffering!

- And it’s that “spectacle” aspect of it that causes us to realize that this sonship suffering for godliness’ sake **truly is a privilege**.

- And it’s not simply an issue that we become a ‘target’ or the object of this ungodly world’s contempt for godliness.

- But it’s also the issue of us being **a showcase for God** — one in which He is able to visibly display **through us** His great longsuffering and His graciousness and His lovingkindness to this world in the face of its contempt for Him and for His righteousness & holiness.

- And that ‘point-perspective’ viewpoint indeed makes suffering for godliness’ sake a **privilege**, to say the least!

- And then in accordance with this special & privileged aspect of being “*made a spectacle*,” Paul goes on to describe his corresponding participation in it when he says what he does in **(:11-13) [read]**.

- And the truth is—that in connection with us being conformed *to the image of God’s Son* through our sonship education—(and also in accordance with the issue of us putting our conformity to Christ on display to our Father’s glory)— this sonship suffering is one of our most phenomenal sonship graces!

- Because when we suffer for godliness’ sake—(and in response we display the very same graciousness and lovingkindness that our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ have)— God is able to showcase how that through the effectual working of our “godly edifying” He has been able to reproduce within us a very significant amount of likeness to

... Himself and to the Lord Jesus Christ.

- So then if we are *straitened in our own bowels* at suffering for godliness' sake — (preferring that men would think of us as being “*wise in Christ*,” instead of being “*fools for Christ's sake*”; or preferring to be looked upon as “*strong*,” instead of “*weak*”; or desiring to be “*honorable*” in men's eyes, instead of “*despised*” by them, etc.) — then we need to learn the basics of the privilege of this sonship suffering—because only then will you begin to get cured of this ailment.

- And then we need to honestly deal with all that God our Father has Paul teach us in I Corinthians 4:8-17 [don't read] — because we need to become **fully impressed** with this great privilege—so that the process for effectually dislodging and fully displacing our heart's 'dislike' for this suffering can occur.

- And this, in turn, will pave the way for us to sincerely appreciate this sonship suffering, and our former 'dislike' for it to be replaced with a strong '**godly like**' for it!

- And the final result will be that when our heart is properly *enlarged* to embrace this sonship grace—we will no longer be *straitened in our own bowels* at partaking of it—and instead we will be able to fulfill Paul's fatherly exhortation ...

16 Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

- Now that's the issue of sonship sufferings—and while those are tougher forms of the ailment of being *straitened in your own bowels*, the **toughest forms of the ailment** of all occur when we undergo “*the sufferings of Christ*.”

- And those are described by Paul over in **II Corinthians 4-6**.

- And they are very discomfoting—and they can have serious intimidating consequences to them that would naturally cause any person to balk at them without the proper sonship preparation.

- But even the toughest form of being *straitened in your own bowels* can be cured—beginning with us becoming suitably impressed with the privilege that it is for us to partake of “*the sufferings of Christ*.”

- And partaking of “*the sufferings of Christ*” is a tremendous privilege (as well as a sonship grace to us) because our Father has actually designed (in partaking of them) for us to experience sufferings **of the very same nature as the Lord Jesus Himself experienced!**

- We have the ultimate privilege of being able to operate, therefore, upon **the very same kind of effectual working of God’s word within us as that which the Lord operated upon in His sufferings!**

- It is the greatest privilege of our sonship education!

- But it is a ‘no-holes-barred’ full-on, all-out war with the Adversary and with his policy of evil against us!

- Here we will experience the brunt of Satan’s policy of evil along with a host of strongly intimidating and discomfoting aspects of it.

- And those are designed to make it so that the ‘dislikes’ of our heart are very tenacious and difficult to dislodge!

- And the nature of becoming *straitened in our own bowels* in regard to the *sufferings of Christ* are going to be the toughest forms of it—and it comes as no surprise that the cure for it has much more to it than any of the previous kinds of being *straitened in our bowels*.

- But our Father has mercifully provided for dealing with this situation, too—and so **as** He teaches us about “*the sufferings of Christ*” he also supplies us with a number of very powerful **Fatherly probings of our heart** — and these probings are designed to pointedly attack the powerful influence that the policy of evil has upon us, and so work at overcoming the strong ‘dislikes’ that it has produced.

- So if we are (like the Corinthians) *straitened in our own bowels* at partaking of “*the sufferings of Christ*” due to the ungodly opinion and carnal criticisms of unbelievers, or false brethren, then in order to counteract them and appropriately ‘enlarge’ our heart—we too need to benefit from the effectual working of **II Corinthians 6:14-18** [read].

- **Notice there are 5 specific questions** (sound familiar?) — whereby God provides for our heart to undergo a very penetrating analysis!

- And these 5 questions are not simply rhetorical questions for which the obvious answer is “None.”

- Instead they are highly thought-provoking questions, which when honestly dealt with by us are designed to effectually penetrate our heart and to work within it in a very special way.

- Because by means of the specific *kind* of thinking that they generate in our minds, they are able to ‘cut us to the quick,’ (so to speak), as they reprove us for foolishly giving heed to the worldly opinions, estimations, sentiments, reactions, and the like, of ungodly men.

- And those 5 probing questions also rebuke us for allowing the Adversary to successfully do damage to our sonship lives by deceiving us and intimidating us into complying with thinking and living that is completely contrary to the godly aims, goals, and objectives of our sonship lives.

- So very simply put—when we respond honestly to the specific thinking that each of these 5 questions generates within us—our Father is able to work in our hearts and not only to reprove us and rebuke us—but also to **neutralize**, **nullify**, and **undo** the defiling, polluting, and damaging influence that ungodly men and the Adversary have had upon us.

- And therefore, when all that has been successfully accomplished, we will then be able to fulfill Paul’s charge to us in II Corinthians 7:1 ...

I Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (II Corinthians 7:1)

- And that’s a brief survey of what that crippling ailment of being *straitened in your own bowels* is—and how it’s cured.

- Back to Romans 8:34

- *Who is he that condemneth?* — we should now be able to intelligently understand and appreciate the question as sons who are having our hearts probed by our Father as to us being our own worst enemy to the success of our sonship lives—the sonship *condemnation* is not a legal condemnation due to some sins, but the kind of self-condemnation that occurs as a result of

... opting out of the 'sonship graces' and the kind of havoc that can take upon our inner man—becoming *wretched* in our minds—to such a degree that we would just **give up** and **quit** on our education as sons.

- Any questions there?

- The 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.*

- We should also now be able to intelligently answer the question of why the Son (*Christ*) is the issue in this remedy when those times arise that we would stand *condemned* in our own mind.

- Not only is the Son the issue where this 'Part B' of us being our own worst enemy is concerned—because the thing that's at stake here is failure in connection with receiving our joint-inheritance as a *joint-heir with Christ*—

- But the matter of the Son being the issue in the godly remedy (in light of "*What shall we then say to these things?*" of [:28-30]) is in connection with that 'link' in our Father's 'chain of provision' whereby He *predestinated us to be conformed to the image of his Son.*

- And all those 'sonship graces' we have the opportunity to participate in—all have to do with us being *conformed to the image of Christ.*

- Now let's conclude the godly remedy of (:34) —

- Notice the progressive development of the 4 things mentioned:

- 1) *It is Christ that died,*
- 2) *yea rather, that is risen again,*
- 3) *who is even at the right hand of God,*
- 4) *who also maketh intercession for us.*

- All 4 of those things are things about the Lord Jesus Christ **AFTER** His earthly ministry was concluded!

- Therefore, what our Father is having us view is the Lord's **propitiatory sacrifice**—and He's driving at getting us to look at this final thing He mentions in connection with it: He *maketh intercession for us.*

- In the progressive development—the first 2 are pretty easy to grasp, but the sense & sequence of them are leading our thinking to a very critical issue that makes us recognize the **power** and **capacity** of the godly remedy to effectually work in our inner man so that we will **never** find ourselves in a position when we'd be *condemned* in our own mind and become wretched in our thinking and just quit.

- *It is Christ that died* (Calvary), *yea rather* (an older English expression that is used to introduce a phrase far more stronger and more emphatic than that immediately preceding it) *that is risen again*, (and then we get taken to this issue of something that happened to the risen Christ) *who is even at the right hand of God ...*

- What is it about that phrase (*who is even at the right hand of God*) that is important to us—and to all this kind of sonship condemnation and the godly remedy for it—that would end up with us intelligently answering the probing question correctly: “No one.”???

- Where does that phrase take your thinking?
(Where in God's word?)

- There is something very particular that our Father wants us to look at concerning the death (and especially) the resurrection of His Son.

- Something that it took the first 2 steps in this sense & sequence to arrive at ...

- (And He does it this way because you can look at the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ in a whole bunch of ways—because His redemptive work on the cross accomplished a whole bunch of things—but here He goes step-by-step for a very particular reason—and wants our thinking in a very particular position in order to fully grasp the remedy)

- So, again, what is it about Christ *that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God* — what is it about Him being “*at the right hand of God*” that would ‘click’ in our thinking, or make a connection in our thinking with the context here in Romans 8:34?

- Any ideas???

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- What is that phrase describing about Christ?
 - Psalm 2: (:6-8)
 - When Christ was risen, He was, (as a Son), **placed** as a Son in connection with His successful completion of His sonship life and sonship education and sonship vocational training—He was placed as a Son (with all that behind Him) in connection with His inheritance and His function in the final phases of His Father’s business!
 - This describes the fact that He’s already received His **promotion** as a Son—and that’s a critical issue to us because that means that He’s already experienced all of those sonship graces—He participated in all of them—even the most dangerous ones—even the most searing, turmoil-producing ones (that can produce such stress and turmoil in our inner man) - **and He’s successfully withstood them all!**
 - And because of His successful sonship life (culminating in His death, burial, and resurrection) — because of that, and in connection with that, God his Father has given Him his sonship promotion.
 - And there is a prophetic aspect of that—so that when He lived His sonship life, and fulfilled that last aspect of His sonship life on this earth—which was to function so as to fulfill the 1st Mandate of the Davidic Covenant (the Redeemer & His redemption) — and then He was raised from the dead—He sat down at His Father’s *right hand* — and then just as Psa. 2 says, the Father said to Him: *Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee* — and that’s His promotion as a son!
 - And being promoted as a Son, He’s now in the position to begin to function in connection with His **inheritance**.
 - And that’s important to us because when we need a godly remedy for being *condemned* as a son in our sonship life—especially in connection with the Part (part B) that has us being our own worst enemy to the point where it would jeopardize our *joint-inheritance with Christ* — it immediately connects us with Christ as the One who has successfully completed His sonship life on earth, and more than that as the One who is now promoted to the position where He now functioning in connection with His inheritance—so therefore He’s the **ONLY** one who has the ability and capacity to **HELP** us when we foolishly opt out of those sonship graces and assume that by doing so, we’re *condemned* from ever receiving our joint-inheritance with Him!

- But ... as I said, this is prophetic to what's going to happen in God's program with Israel — however, God suspended His program with Israel and revealed a **secret purpose He has in Christ**—in connection with His accomplishments at Calvary and on through His receiving His sonship promotion as “*the Christ*” — and God revealed the provision He made for being able to deliver *the creature* from *the bondage of corruption* (not just the earth).

- And now in this dispensation of grace is where God has been making that known—and the heir-ship of the Son that is now in function is His heir-ship in connection with *the creature*!

- And that's what we now have participation with in this dispensation of grace! (And that sets our thinking in the proper position to think of Him in His sonship promotion as One who has the capacity to HELP us in connection with the very same kind of things He went through [successfully] when we're confronted with these sonship graces that are designed to conform us to His image!)

- We **don't** have the possibility of becoming *joint-heirs* with Him as 'King of kings, and Lord of lords' on this earth— (that's the prophetic program) - (that's for the son's of Israel).

- Therefore that phrase: *who is even at the right hand of God*—that is designed to put our thinking in the position God wants it in, in order to bring up that last phrase that contains the **help** we need to have—and ever rely on that help—to remedy our *condemning mind* when we've stupidly opted out of participating in the sonship graces that would *conform us to His image*!

- Now, that's not the full remedy—(the final phrase contains the full remedy) — but that gets us (properly gets us) to the point where we can have generated some things in our thinking that makes the godly remedy the **powerful** and **effectual** thing that it is!

- I mentioned that Christ “sat down” at God's *right hand*— and that issue of being *at the right hand of God* is in our passage—and that should have made you think of another familiar passage where that gets declared—and again it's done in connection with Christ's sonship promotion:

- **Psalm 110:1-3** — (see Keith's Quarterly article) [2nd/2009]

- And this (this 3rd phrase especially) - this is why, when all of the information you've gone through throughout all of your sonship establishment (from Rom. 8:16 on) — this 3rd phrase of this 4th probing question really brings to your attention that this isn't just talking about a 'doctrinal remedy' ... BUT IT'S A REMEDY CONTAINED IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST'S **ATTITUDE** — it's setting our thinking upon a particular **attitude** that the Lord has as an *heir*, Himself—one that 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**)!!!

- So we have for the 4th probing question: *Who is he that condemneth?* the godly remedy—and that remedy comes to us in these 4 steps (so to speak):

1—*It is Christ that died*, 2—*yea rather, that is risen again*,
3—*who is even at the right hand of God*,

- And that 3rd step gets us thinking about the Lord Jesus Christ strictly in connection with His sonship—and more than that, in connection with his sonship promotion as God's Son who has received the reward of His inheritance—and now that inheritance—because of the revelation of the *mystery* and this present dispensation of grace—that inheritance specifically has to do with the *creature* and the function of the intelligentsia—and the ruling and governing and managing of the creature by Himself as the 'head' of the new creature of the church, the body of Christ—with us being *joint-heirs* with Him functioning in all those operations of it.

- Therefore the 3rd phrase of (:34) — ... *who is even at the right hand of God*, ... — is a **critical** ‘step’ because it actually **prepares your thinking** for the ‘punch’ of the core-issue of the godly remedy to ‘click’ in your thinking—and to attach itself to your thinking and to your inner man—so that you’ll never forget it—and so that you’ll have it ever ready ‘at-hand’ to rely upon and to act upon when those times occur in your sonship life where you would become *condemned* in your own thinking as your own worst enemy to the success of your sonship life.

- And this means that when it comes to the issue of (and the very real possibility of) you failing to receive your *joint-inheritance* with Christ in the governing/ruling aspects of the creature—Christ Himself is the natural One who would have something to say about it—and the natural One who could have any thing to do about it—and to provide a remedy for us about it—because He’s the One who is now in possession of His inheritance in connection with the creature’s governmental/ruling/intelligentsia structure!

- So if there is a remedy to our sonship condemnation—He’s the One who can provide it! (And there is a remedy that He does provide!)

- So with all those proper and necessary steps behind us—we can now look at that godly remedy to sonship condemnation: *It is Christ, ... who also maketh intercession for us.*

- Now this is one of those areas where we can easily get lost—and more importantly, we can easily miss out on the effectual working of this godly remedy: **if we look at this issue of Christ’s intercession as a doctrine (a category of doctrine)!**

- Because the doctrine of Christ’s *intercession*—or the facts of it—or the details of it—totally **misses** the point of how it remedies our sonship condemnation!

- The godly remedy isn’t in the facts or doctrine of Christ’s *intercession* work—the godly remedy is in the Lord Jesus Christ’s **ATTITUDE** as He goes about *making intercession for us!*

- So let’s remind ourselves of what we’ve already come to understand and appreciate about this issue of Christ *making intercession for us* in connection with us being *condemned* in our own minds as sons.

- Remember to make sure that you've got in your thinking that: 'Part 'B' of this 4th probing question 'links' up with that issue in our Father's 'chain of provision' in (:29-30) with the issue of us being *predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son*.

- And you've also got to keep in mind that what constitutes *condemnation* here as your own worst enemy is when you choose to 'opt out' of those 'sonship graces' that are designed to conform you to the image of Christ.

- And thirdly, you have to keep in mind that what's at stake here if you do fail in your sonship life in this regard—is that you won't receive the reward of your *joint-inheritance with Christ* in the governing and ruling structure of the creature.

- So when we experience the kind of *sonship condemnation* that is in view in (:34) - to where we would become *wretched* in our own mind and therefore quit and give up on our sonship education—the godly remedy for that is (that is, **the core element** of the godly remedy is): *It is Christ ... who also maketh intercession for us*.

- 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 condemning-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!

- Now that's basically what we've talked about before—a few lessons ago, but you still may not have this core element of Christ's **intercession** for us 'clicking' in your thinking—or making the impact upon you to the degree you would like (or that you know it should be making).

- And one reason for that is probably because you're 'hung up' on that word: ***intercession*** — and perhaps there is something you're trying to assume or impose upon that word that, in your thinking, just doesn't fit—or just doesn't give you the 'punch' of the effectual working of why that's the remedy for this kind of sonship condemnation.

- And this is where doing a 'word-study' from the "original Greek" isn't going to help you at all—I know, because I've done it!

- But there is something about our English word *intercede* that makes it the most excellent choice of words.

- What does it mean to *intercede*?

- (Usually, the most common way it's thought about is in a legal sense—as a lawyer who 'stands in' for us in a court room case.)

- It means to be a 'go-between' — to put oneself in the position of acting on another's behalf.

- But there is a shade of meaning that the word *intercede* has that **isn't** the most common way it's normally thought of—and that shade of meaning has a great bearing on the power or 'punch' that this godly remedy is to have upon our inner man.

- And what I'm after here is that when one acts as an *intercessor* for another—in doing so, **he becomes a surety for that one who he is *interceding* for!**

- So then the question becomes: What in the world is a "**surety**?"

- *Surety* = a condition of being sure; safe & secure from danger or from an enemy; the condition of being beyond doubt; a certainty.

- *Surety* is the certainty of an end or a result aimed at—in order to make sure of or ensure something.

- *Surety* is a formal engagement entered in to, a pledge, bond, guarantee, or security given for the fulfillment of an undertaking—a bond entered into for the maintenance of peace between parties.

- Therefore when God the Son (the Lord Jesus Christ) functions in those times when we experience sonship *condemnation* in connection with our possible failure to receive our *joint-inheritance with Christ*, and He *maketh intercession for us* — that *intercession* He's doing is actually providing for (by His actions in our behalf) for our *joint-inheritance* to be **safe & secure** from us as our own worst enemy!

- By His work—and by His **attitude** in doing that work—He's making a certainty of the end or result aimed at (which is our successful sonship life and our *joint-inheritance* with Him)!

- And in doing so He's maintaining the peace between us and our Father—and from that fellowship & communion with Him, instead of our Father being mad at us, or 'hiding' us, or giving up on us—far from that, and to the contrary, both the Father and the Son are actually **encouraging** us to get up, dust off, and go on and get those sonship graces and participate in them for our benefit of being conformed to the image of Christ!

- Therefore, it's from that less common shade of meaning of what making *intercession* is all about—that comes the godly remedy: and it's a remedy that's based upon and rooted (not in the academic understanding of Christ's intercession for us), but in His **attitude** as our *intercessor*!

- When we 'opt out' of those sonship graces and all that toll that that takes upon our inner man comes crashing down upon us—so that we would (if something didn't happen to prevent it) - it would cause us to become *condemned* in our own mind to the point of being so *wretched* we'd be convinced to just quit and give up on going on in our sonship education — we, instead, have this godly, gracious remedy:

- 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 *joint-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!

- So therefore when it comes to the issue of our enemies to our sonship life; and especially with us being our own worst enemy, we have the 3rd and 4th probing questions:

- Part A—Romans 8:33

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

Answer to *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?* — In light of the godly remedy, No one, not even me as my own worst enemy!

- Part B—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.

Answer to *Who is he that condemneth?* — In light of the godly remedy, No one, not even me, myself as my own worst enemy!

- And just to once again underscore the issue—you can't answer these questions by simple logic—or by systematic theology—or by theology at all — but you have to answer these questions with real sonship intelligence!! (By the **attitude** of the Father and by the **attitude** of the Son—you have to see yourself from their point-perspective!)

- WHAT CONFIDENCE THAT PRODUCES IN YOU!!!!

- That should take us to the final, 5th probing question—but before we go there, are there any questions with the first 4?

Probing Question #5:

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.

- The final series of the last 3 probing questions (questions 3, 4, & 5) are all confronting us with our **enemies** to our successful sonship life.
 - And — since we're dealing with the **sources** of the problems we're going to encounter that would seek to cause us to become failures in our sonship life and cause us to doubt and lose confidence in and therefore not operate upon the truth of Romans 8:28 — when it comes to our enemies: there are only 2 enemies we'll have to face.
 - The first, being ourselves as our own worst enemy—and it takes 2 probing questions to fully root out any/all problems we have in our heart in connection with ourselves as our own enemy to our sonship lives—and that takes care of the 3rd & 4th probing questions. (Romans 8:33 & 34)
 - And now we come to our other enemy to the success of our sonship lives: Satan himself, the Adversary — and the final 5th probing question is going to deal with him and what he **can** and **will** do to you in order to get you to **quit** and **give up** and **fail** in your sonship life. (Romans 8:35-37)
- Basic structure of (:35-37) —
 - Obviously, we have the probing question given in (:35).
 - Even though you have 2 question marks, it's only 1 question that's being asked.
 - According to the English rules of punctuation, a question mark can be used after only a *part* of a whole question when you want the reader to pause and contemplate one part of the question first, and then the remainder of the question last—but at the same time, you want the reader to understand that the both parts are supposed to be linked and connected together to form one complete question.
 - And then we have the godly remedy given in (:36-37).
 - And there are 2 verses to it—and there are 2 sentences to it — and there are 2 parts to the godly remedy:
 - **Part A**: Quotation from Psalm 44;
 - **Part B**: The concluding godly remedy based upon the effectual working of the quotation from the 44th Psalm.

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- And, obviously, this is the most lengthy of the godly remedies—and therefore it's the most **involved** of all the godly remedies.
 - And in the sense & sequence of the 5 probing questions, (and the progressive developmental order of them) - this one is the most **personal** of them all—and it is the most **emotionally charged** one of them all!
 - Here our Father makes His deepest 'cut' with the scalpel of His word into our heart—and since this final probing question really is **the most involved** question and **most involved godly remedy**—it, above all the others, is designed to make the **deepest inroads** into our heart and to make the **deepest impact** upon our inner man—and it's designed to produce some of the most profound, far-reaching, and sobering thinking that we've done as sons so far in our sonship life!
 - This is the only one of the 5 probing questions that actually lists for us the actual, identifiable things that we are sure to face in regard to our 'other enemy' to our sonship lives.
 - Therefore this is the most serious and most severe of all of the 5 probing questions—and it is, (by design), intended to 'touch a nerve' (so to speak) in your heart and cause some sober thinking and some serious responses from you as a son to this sonship life unto which you've been called.
 - And this is the final probing of your heart—where, by means of this 5th probing question, our Father is going to expose any snag, or obstacle, or hindrance, or impediment that's in your heart that would cause you problems in your sonship life—and unless those get exposed and remedied and dismissed from your heart, you would end up getting into a situation or circumstance that would have you quitting and giving up on your sonship education.
 - But the designed purpose of this 5th probing question is, (just like all the other 4) - to probe your heart and get you to intelligently face what the probing question is asking (with real sonship intelligence) - and then, once it's exposed any and all problems in your heart by its effectual working, to then intelligently perceive the godly remedy in order to arrive at the point where any & all the 'heart problems' have been dealt with and dismissed—and replace those problems with the effectual working of the godly remedy in order to finally arrive at the correct answer to the question with real sonship intelligence.

- The truth of the matter is—since this is the **final** probing question in your sonship establishment—really, as far as your *heart* (your *inner man*) is concerned—and the kind of adjustments your Father wants to make in your heart—and the kind of attitudes He wants to produce in your heart—the truth is, by the time you get to the end of this 5th probing question, outside of some additional and necessary information you have to have in chapters 9, 10, & 11 that deals with you properly “*perceiving your words of understanding*” for this dispensation of grace in which you live—aside from that, after this question has done its job—you should be ready to face that biggest sonship checkpoint you’ve faced so far—out there in Romans 12:1-3, where you’re going to “*present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*”

- Simply put, by the time we get finished with this 5th probing question, your heart (inner man) should be **perfected** as to all that sonship establishment is designed to do to it!

- You can then say that you are a properly oriented and properly established son of God your Heavenly Father!

- And that’s something to celebrate!!!

- And with the accomplishment of this 5th probing question doing its job in your heart—you should have had take place in you all of the adjustments to your attitude, and all of the producing of your Father’s attitude, and the producing of God the Son’s attitude in you so that those **godly attitudes** and **godly virtues** of sonship confidence, assurance, and conviction have produced a level of commitment to your sonship education and edification whereby **you will never abandon the curriculum for your sonship education, no matter what!**

- In short, a full *persuasion* will have taken place, where you will be able to say, along with the apostle Paul, “*For I am persuaded*”

- Now the first part of the 5th probing question is going to be one of the most challenging aspects to the entire final probing issue—due to the fact that a **major assumption** is made about it whereby a **major and common mistake** is made concerning **just exactly what it is asking** — but on the other hand, it is a simple question—and just like the previous 4 questions, the answer to this 5th question is quite easy to correctly come up with —

- (1st Part) *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?*

- (Not, 'What' shall separate us from the love of Christ? like the dishonest New Schofield Reference Bible changed the word to say!)

- And the correct answer to the 5th probing question is:
No one — but in order to answer that, you have to clearly understand and appreciate what this question is asking **within the context** of sonship establishment—but on top of that, you have to clearly understand and appreciate **why** the information contained in the godly remedy of (:36-37) would make it so that we would answer “*No one*” with real, genuine sonship intelligence!

- “*Who*” ... — identifying who the *Who* is:

- When it comes to the issue of dealing with these “*Who*” questions—and you recognize by the nature of how our Father asks us these 3 “*Who*” questions—you realize that what He’s after is to bring to our attention the fact that we’re going to have to face some determined opposition and resistance to the success of our sonship life—and that opposition and resistance is going to be brought upon us by our **enemies** to our sonship life—and after dealing with ourselves, there really is only one other enemy that has declared his open opposition to us as God’s sons—and that is Satan himself!

- Even though you could talk about a whole bunch of things that could be talked about as our enemy, (viz., the course of this world, religion, other ungodly powers, etc.) — really they all fall under the umbrella of that one Adversary.

- And when you **do** turn your attention to having to deal with the enemies to the success of your sonship life—after you have dealt with yourself as your own worst enemy—by simple process of elimination, there really is only **one other enemy** you **can** think of—and when you do think of that enemy, there is a particular character (a “*Who*”) that you can think of that would do anything and everything in his power to trip you up and throw a ‘monkey wrench’ in the works (so to speak) of your sonship life: that Adversary, Satan himself!

- But we want to make sure that we’re not just guessing at who the “*Who*” is in (:35) - and while a simple process of elimination does provide us with an answer, we don’t have to ‘hang our hat’ on just that alone.

- Actually, there has been enough said to you already, throughout your **sonship orientation** and your **sonship establishment** that makes it so that you realize and recognize that you **are** going to have to deal with this enemy of Satan, the Adversary!

- In sonship orientation you were made aware (back in those exhortations in the book of Proverbs) that as a son, you're going to face both *the evil man* (the wisdom & ungodly evil of this world) and *the strange woman* (Satan's own Policy of Evil, with emphasis upon using false doctrine and corrupted doctrine within the world of Christianity itself) - again, while not exactly the description of the Adversary, per se, they do fall under the umbrella of Satan and what he can do to you to 'trip you up.'

- And in sonship establishment you've already been made aware that in order to receive the reward of your inheritance as a *joint-heir with Christ*, you're going to have to *suffer with Him*—and along with that you were taught about the privilege of laboring with your Father in His business of *delivering the creature from the bondage of corruption*—(and those expressions like *deliver, bondage, corruption, liberty*; as well as that issue of being *saved by hope*) — all that terminology began generating in your thinking that this is going to be a **fight**—maybe even a **war**—and if you're engaged in a fight/war, then you definitely have **an enemy** in view!

- But even that's not the only reason why we can safely say that the "*Who*" in (:35) is the Adversary—because both the rest of the probing question (the 7 things listed in the 2nd Part) as well as the 1st part of the godly remedy in (:36) - [the quotation from the 44th Psalm] — clearly indicates to us that the "*Who*" is a character that we can 'put our finger on' (so to speak) - and that is none other than Satan himself.

- Therefore in light of all of this, my understanding is that it's safe to say that the "*Who*" of this final probing question that deals with our only other enemy to the success of our sonship life is our common Adversary (common to us and to our Father and to His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ), Satan himself.

- Now if that clear, let's go one and get an intelligent understanding and appreciation of just what this 1st part of the 5th probing question is asking!

35 *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?*

- Now I realize that I've already said some things about this question that has biased your thinking in connection with it.

- Because I know that I've said that this isn't talking about what most Bible teachers and Bible commentary writers say it means—but that it means this other thing that I've said before.

- And I'll tell you right now—that what I've said that this question **is** talking about—even though it's not wrong—it has to be said a whole lot better than I've ever said it before! (in other words, what I've said about it up to now is NOT nearly good enough!)

- But first—what is your understanding of this question?

- Or maybe I should ask, what is the most common way in which this question is handled by most folks? — (also in connection with the similar passage in [:39] ... *shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

- Most commonly, this opening question of Romans 8:25 is handled by saying something along the lines of—this is talking about Christ's great love for us—that is, the very **attribute** of Christ's love (or the **attribute** of God's love) for us.

- And usually some appeal is made to John 3:16 (*For God so loved the world, ...*) - or to a host of other verses that indicate **God's unconditional love** for us—and that it is so strong and so powerful that nothing we could ever face (even all the junk that life brings our way—and all the really bad stuff) that could ever happen to us—even in the midst of all that, we're supposed to remember that 'God loves you!'

- We may not know why all this crap happened to us—but "Farther Along" we'll know all about it—and "In The Sweet, By and By" we'll understand why ... and a whole bunch of ways most Bible teachers try to salve hurting souls with a bunch of nonsense, unscriptural, doctrinally corrupted songs!

- Worse yet—this passage—(Romans 8:35-39) is often used as a "proof text" for the doctrine of our eternal security—it often gets cited in many "Doctrinal Statement" or "Statements of Faith" as proof of our eternally secure status once we've been justified unto eternal life).

- And these erroneous ideas of what being *separated from the love of Christ* means are erroneous because of some very common ways in which God's word is commonly **mishandled**.

- Such as not paying attention to the **context!**

- Or having no appreciation of **sense & sequence!**

- Or the common grammatical affliction/disease of not being able to think about words in about the right way.

(Thank you for your interest in the Greek word

studies; And we do not have an effectual word ever

that would be separated from

the love of God's love (of Christ's love) for us!]

Attenly

and with Him Amen

- I'm not saying that once you get past Romans 5, God never has any reason to talk about His love for us— or Christ's love for us—or to further develop or amplify on that issue— because there are a whole bunch of times when God does, indeed talk to us about His love for us.

- But I am saying that God has no need to come along and tell us that we ever have to **fear** for His love for us to be taken away from us by circumstances or situations that we may face in life—or that this “*love of Christ/love of God*” is the same thing as talking about our eternally secure status as justified saints who are permanently ‘at-one’ with Him, but that permanent ‘*at-one-ment*’ could be somehow in jeopardy and in need of improvement in our thinking or in need of further ‘settling’ in our thinking in light of life’s hardships!

- Now—does that make sense? do you see that?

- Do you see how, if that’s the case, it just doesn’t fit with the context of sonship establishment—or with the sense & sequence to these 5 probing questions if that’s the way you take it?

- Because if you make that assumption, you have to ‘jump ship’ from this context—and force this to revisit a context and a doctrine that has already been fully developed and fully settled!

- Not to mention the fact that it doesn’t answer to the ‘controlling question’ of (:31—*What shall we then say to these things?* of [:28-30]).

- So do we have any problem settling our thinking on what this question, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?* is **NOT** talking about?

- Well then, the next logical thing to do is to find out just exactly what it **IS** saying—and to make sure that we’re **precise** and **accurate** in our understanding and appreciation for what it is saying.

—Note to self: —

- {At this point—make sure (if you already haven’t) that you’ve summed up the way in which I said what this “*love of Christ*” **is** talking about. }

- On those occasions in which I have said some things about this question, I said that when it comes to what it **is** talking about—

... is that, instead of talking about Christ's divine attribute of unconditional love **for** us, rather, it's *the love of Christ* in the sense of a *love* that Christ has for something—or something that Christ loves that could be called 'the love of His life' (so to speak) — or 'the thing that Christ loves' — which is the issue of the sonship life.

- And what this phrase *the love of Christ* is talking about is actually the sonship life, itself.

- Therefore, being *separated* from *the love of Christ* is talking about the possibility of being separated from the sonship life.

- And there really is a "*Who*" (Satan, the Adversary) who is going to be able to do a whole bunch of things that, if he can do it, will result in *separating* you from your sonship life, which is the thing that Christ, Himself, *loves*.

- (Does that about sum up what I've said in the past?)

- Well, my understanding is that—when it comes to taking this phrase to be far different (even radically different) from how it's commonly taken—you have to be far more **precise** than that (and far more **accurate** than that) - and in fact, that's simply not good enough to fully settle the matter in your own mind.

- And while it may be that what I've said isn't entirely wrong or anything like that—at the same time, when you're first trying to get a grip on this issue—the truth is, describing it that way ... just isn't very satisfying (so to speak) - that's just not very convincing.

- So what I want to do now is to pick up with the issue that we've been able to honestly handle about this phrase—and to have come to have settled our thinking upon— which is the fact that by an honest handling of this passage, we've determined (Biblically determined) that it's **not** talking about Christ's (or God's) divine attribute of unconditional love **for** us—and then, let's just kind of 'erase the blackboards' of our minds and not think at all about what we've said it does mean—but now lets go ahead and, by continuing to deal honestly with the text (and the context), let's build our understanding and appreciation upon that, and come to a Biblical conclusion of what, **precisely**, it **does** mean.

- And again, this is an issue that you simply have to have a good measure of satisfaction or conviction about—simply because

... whenever you're dealing with a '**developmental doctrine**' - (and that's what's going on here—you're dealing with a doctrine which is **developing**—it has a progressive development to it) - and not all of the information God gives us is designed to develop something—but this is — and everything that's going on in sonship orientation and sonship establishment (hence, everything from Romans 8:14-39) has **development** involved in it —

— and it has development involved on a conceptual basis in connection with all of the issues that are being brought up—and it has development in regard to the numerous issues that are being dealt with in that they are designed to build upon one another, and progress, and come in a certain sense & sequence.

- And the tendency in people's thinking is that when they aren't used to, and don't have much experience with, or don't have much of a frame of reference for a developmental body of information (or layering of information) that produces certain 'mind sets' and certain thought patterns, and certain convincements and certain persuasions of mind — when your not used to doing that, most folks have a tendency not to let the context in which something is being said **always be the determining factor as to how an expression or a phrase is to be taken!**

- And that expression in Romans 8:35 (*the love of Christ*) - because it **can** mean Christ's love for us, in a certain context—and has been used that way—just like the love of God can be used **for** us in the gospel of Christ — the tendency is to have that be the first thing that comes to your mind.

- And because of that—there's almost this **natural resistance** that people have, to not let you come along and tell them that that expression isn't referring to that very thing.

- It's almost like they immediately think that it's **sacrilegious** to think otherwise!

- And really—for us — or rather, for me — this is one of those places that, because of the nature of this *developmental style* of God our Father presenting this information to us — this is really one of those places where I'm going to find out just how well things have gone with your understanding and appreciation of things up to this point!

- And, (just like I found out about myself), we may find that you have some areas that did not get fully settled, or fully clarified, or fully thought out—in matters that either pertain to sonship orientation or sonship establishment— previous to this.

- And I'm carefully going over all this this way—because this is a very sensitive point (& because this is a very sensitive expression) - and something like this is going to have to rely heavily upon how well these type things have been going in your thinking—and this is a classic point at which you can get an indication as to how well the context in which everything is taking place here (in sonship orientation/sonship establishment), how well its gripped your mind.

... and how well everything in this context has come to form the basic 'fabric' (so to speak) of all that your thinking is going to be from this point on—and through the rest of your "Christian" life.

- And, as you well know, sonship is the 'capstone' of our sanctified lives—and our sanctification is designed, by the nature of what it is, to materially affect the way in which we think about every detail of our life—from the moment we become aware that we're not just justified unto eternal life having believed the gospel of Christ; but we are sanctified unto functional life.

- Sanctification doesn't exist 'in a closet' — we don't live it 'in a closet' — it's not a 'bottled' concept or a compartment of doctrine that we just 'put on a shelf' (so to speak) - and then take it out on occasions when we want to utilize it.

- And one of the very first things you learn (back in ch. 6) is the fact that you've got a brand-new **identity** "in Christ" - you're no longer who you used to be.

- And it's not an issue of getting a new set of clothes—and putting them on and taking them off when we want to—but it's the issue of **your whole being**—you're not who you used to be.

- And throughout the entire scope of the doctrine of our sanctification, (from Romans 6:1-8:39) - there is a complete re-working & re-vamping of our understanding and appreciation of ourselves in connection with who we are "in the Lord Jesus Christ", being sanctified by our Father (through the baptism of the Holy Spirit).

- And when sonship comes along and gets put on the 'capstone' of our sanctification—and it's put on top of the issue of being *dead to sin* and *alive unto God* in righteousness, and being a *servant of righteousness* and no long a servant of sin, and *bearing fruit unto holiness* and no longer bearing fruit unto death—sonship becomes therefore the channel and the avenue through which we live our sanctified lives—we're going to live it as the sons of God who are training & preparing for a vocation that He has for us in His business.

- And what I'm stressing here is that all of that starts off as (more or less) as an academic concept—but as you go along in it, you get that initial euphoria concerning being adopted as a son, but then that euphoria gets replaced by some real soberness of thinking—and that sober thinking is supposed to then start **spreading** throughout your mind—and it becomes more and more pervasive—and you find it affecting your thoughts more and more, just like it's designed to do.

- Now, while it may seem that I've gone far a-field of what we're after here, I'm not—because you have to realize that, in general, the kind of thing that you need to realize is how (over a period of time) all this doctrine has affected your perspective, your mind-set, your attitude (equal to that of God the Father and equal to that of the Lord Jesus Christ) and has gotten established in you—and you realize what it took in all those components of sonship establishment to produce that full-blown attitude—and you need that—as well as, you need a perspective, an outlook, a viewpoint, and so on and so forth.

- And the more and more they do their job—and the more they do their effectual work in your heart—the more they have an affect **upon what's being said in this context**—and therefore what's being said more and more becomes **perceived and interpreted by this context**.

- And to bring it back to where we are in (:35) - this is going to serve as a kind of a test (so to speak) of just how well all those things are going in your heart.

- And I'm saying all that—to say that when it comes to this expression *the love of Christ*—it's not at all uncommon for you to first of all read that and to think of that most common way in which most people think of it—and that's not wrong, in fact, that's to be expected—because that genitive expression should have an initial response to the most common and most expected meaning to an expression like that.

- But what I'm after is that the context here (and all that progressive developmental nature of the information you've received from way back at the beginning of your sanctified position in Christ) - really, the normal thing is

... that you would almost by reflex action, think about that most normal way that expression is commonly thought about—but then, if all has gone well with you—that thinking should get ‘arrested’ (so to speak) by the context and sober thinking you have as a son—and by how your thinking has been transitioned over to thinking as a son— and because of that, you should stop short of that and realize that that’s not what’s going on here at all—because that is incompatible with what’s been generated in your heart by means of the context of the entirety of your sanctified life in Christ—and more specifically, by those things that have now spread their way into so many recesses of your heart that you have come to understand and appreciate since you were oriented as a son, and even more specifically, as you have gone through sonship establishment.

- And what I’m saying in all that is that simply put—when you first read in (:35)

- And my point, once again in all this is—that if everything has been going well in your understanding—the truth of the matter is, by the time you get down here and are dealing with this 5th probing question of (:35) - when the question comes up *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?* — even without any prompting, and even though you would tend to think at first that this is talking about Christ’s love for you—the control of the context over every word and phrase—and the context that regulates every thought you think in connection with every word and phrase—all that would cause you to realize that, Ok, I’m now involved, as a son, in **loving** things that the Father and the Son have been telling me about in my sonship orientation/establishment, **that they love**.

- And the issue in connection with success in your sonship living—(as far as the Adversary is concerned) - and as far as this other area of resistance and opposition that there could be to you being successful to live your sonship life—and attain all of the aims, goals, and objectives that there are to it—in connection with this other area of resistance & opposition: **the only thing that’s left that it could work on** (and it could work in) - **would be to make it so that you would lose your love for the same things the Father and the Son love!**

- And therefore that would make it so that you no longer love what Christ loves—and no longer love what the Father loves—in connection with what His purpose is with you **as His son!**

- And that’s what should be naturally and immediately in your thinking—because, if everything up until (:35) has done its job within you like it’s supposed to—you are actually supposed to be in a position of anticipating the need to address that issue!

- And that’s why it comes last!

- In the developmental sense & sequence of these 5 probing questions—they have made it so that everything else that could possibly cause you to fail in your sonship life have all been eliminated.

- And when it comes to opposition and resistance and the enemies to our sonship life—it’s not only (or merely) because we have to first deal with ourselves as our own worst enemy first because that’s the enemy that we will most often be confronted with and then the Adversary comes last because he’s this second-rate enemy—(which is perfectly true) — but there’s far more to why this comes last than that!

- Because the issue also is the fact that—the **nature** of the opposition is **different**—you, yourself, and I, myself, and all sons, themselves—in connection with being our own worst enemy—it’s not because we **DON’T WANT TO** participate in our sonship lives as a whole — (you’d simply never get this far, if that’s your problem—you’d be rebelling all the way back up in sonship orientation) —

— but when it comes down to this point here—the issue is the matters that pertain to being our own worst enemy are issues and matters that pertain to being our own worst enemy in connection with our success to live out our sonship lives—and the only reason we’d be our own worst enemy is because of our **failures**—and not because we consider all this sonship stuff a bunch of ‘bunk’ and go out and just do something else altogether (or not want it in the first place).

- And I say that just to underscore that the order to the 5 probing questions have the sense & sequence and developmental issues within them that they do—not only because there is order to the probings that need to take place—and the kind of issues that need to be addressed in your heart in a logical and sequential manner — but also because, when you deal with the Adversary—his methodology for going about endeavoring to thwart our sonship lives—and throw a ‘monkey wrench’ into the gears of it—**is of a different nature!**

- And it has to do with the issue of doing things that would cause us **to change our original viewpoint and perspective and attitude** (original in the sense that it was those attitudes and perspectives and viewpoints that were produced in us, originally, in our sonship orientation/establishment).

- And he endeavors to **change** those original viewpoints & attitudes when it comes to **committing** ourselves in engaging in our sonship lives—and seeing it through—and especially changing our viewpoint in the area of **valuing and esteeming** our sonship life like our Father does, and like the Son does—and counting it worth ‘all costs’ to pursue it, and to attain all of the aims, goal, and objectives of it—and to come out on the end of it with the **‘prize’!**

- And one of the main things we’re going to have to perceive when it comes to that Adversary who *shall* do everything in his power to *separate you from the love of Christ*—is to make sure that you appreciate the nature of, or the **way** in which the Adversary’s policy of evil against us in connection with our sonship lives is going to work—because it’s going to go after a particular ‘chink’ in our armor (so to speak). [any opening, small crack]

- That Adversary's policy of evil is going to go right after any and every 'chink' in our armor that *he* perceives that he can exploit—and that can, (if successful), **be** successful (as far as he's concerned), **in causing us to choose of our own volition**—at some particular point in the progress of our sonship education—to voluntarily choose to **suspend it**—or to **cease** making progress in it—**and to actually be content and satisfied in doing that!**

- (Now that might not 'click' right now, but that's what's going on).

- Now to get back to this main issue—that expression *the love of Christ*—that's a context sensitive phrase—it's not talking about Christ's attribute of love for us—and you can say that it's the thing that Christ loves (that is, the sonship life) - but that doesn't describe it nearly good enough, and it has to be described and understood far better than that—and to get that better understanding and appreciation for what it is describing, you have to get that better understanding out of the context (and by following the context) from all that's been effectually working in your heart from (:14-34).

- And that better understanding has to do with the nature of what has been developed in you viewpoint-wise, and perspective-wise, and attitude-wise that has all been ongoing throughout sonship orientation & establishment.

- (And this picks up on that issue of a **progressive developmental doctrine**) — because there's information that you've already processed and that's already been effectually working within you that has developed thoughts, and attitudes, and perspectives, and viewpoints—and that has developed certain ways in which you value and esteem things — and all that has come by way of the terminology and phraseology that's been used up to this point in your sonship orientation & establishment that ought to make it so that you realize that what your dealing with here is something that the Lord Jesus Christ values & esteems and loves (and you're involved in it) — and with something that God the Father values & esteems and loves.

- And in view of all that—you should be able to describe what *the love of Christ* is in Romans 8:35.

- Notice that there's a reason why the final probing questions doesn't say: 'Who shall separate us from our determination to live our sonship lives?'

- Even though, (in a sense), that's what's involved in the question; there's a reason why that question doesn't say it that way.

- And in order to really come to understand and appreciate this 5th probing question with some real sonship intelligence—you have to be able to discriminate and distinguish that 'sense' of an answer and a fuller, better, 'sense' of it in view of what has been produced in you as a son and the nature of what this other enemy (the Adversary) is going to attempt to do to you as a son.

- And to help you out (see chart #45) - you need to get an appreciation for what has happened in your inner man (heart) development-wise over the course of sonship orientation/establishment.

- Because the truth of the matter is, before you ever get here to (:35), the effectual working of everything that's taken place from Romans 8:14 down to this point, has produced within you: ***the love of Christ!***

- It started off with an awareness of your adopted sonship status—and in the orientation phase of it, that all produced within you a measure of euphoria, and zeal, and novelty—and by means of that, an attraction to it all began to powerfully come to bear upon you.

- Then as you went into sonship establishment that awareness was, (by those things you were told about), nurtured into an intense desire—and along with an enlivened delight and zeal and godly ambition, along with that you began the process of settling down with these things (and having them settle down in your thinking) - and a real soberness of thinking began to be developed—so that you weren't simply operating upon pure emotion, but upon serious, deep, and grave thinking—and that desire was fostered into a deep and intense desire for those things of your sonship life.

- But it didn't stop there—because as you went on through the 2nd and 3rd parts of your sonship establishment, those things that were told to you there, and those doctrinal issues that were brought up and did their effectual job in your inner man—all worked together to bring that intense desire to the point at which your valuing and esteeming of your sonship life is a full-blown LOVE! And now not only do you have an intellectual desire, but a deep passion for sonship living!