

- Romans 8:14-15

Sonship Prayer - In Connection with Being "*led by the Spirit of God*" - by Pastor Keith Blades.

- As was stated earlier, because we are God's adopted "sons" in this present dispensation, of all of God's people we should be the ones to whom prayer is the most meaningful and the most intimate. This is not only because of the close personal nature of our sonship relationship with God, but especially because of the edification in godliness that God has for us as His "sons." In truth, our edification in godliness demands that we have close, intimate communion with our Father. So if we deeply appreciate our sonship edification, then we should also deeply appreciate prayer.

- In view of this, let's briefly note a few things about our sonship edification.

- In Romans 8:14 the apostle Paul states the dominant feature that characterizes and distinguishes sonship for what it is, which is the issue of being "*led by the Spirit of God.*"

*14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.
(Romans 8:14)*

- As "*sons,*" therefore, in this present dispensation of grace we are being "*led by the Spirit of God.*" This is in direct contrast to the issue of being under "*tutors and governors*" when one is a "*child,*" and to the issue of the elementary and limited education that one receives when he is a "*child.*" As such being "*led by the Spirit of God*" has specific reference to the nature of our education as "*sons*" and to the advancement that it is upon the education belonging to childhood. And indeed sonship education and edification is advanced, for its course of learning provides for "*sons*" to actually become like their father, not just know things about him.

- In view of what "the adoption of sons" is all about, being "*led by the Spirit of God*" is not an indefinable or indescribable matter. It is not some mystical or mysterious activity of the Spirit that defies being put into words. Nor is it the issue of Him doing something with us that either overrides the use of our own mind and intelligence, or that bypasses it.

- Rather, being "*led by the Spirit of God*" is a clearly definable activity of the Holy Ghost in connection with the "*adoption of sons.*"

- When a father adopts his child and he becomes his "*son*" the father personally takes over his son's education for the purpose of his son becoming like him in mind, in lifestyle, and in occupation.

- Through direct, close, personal fellowship and communion, (no more "*tutors and governors*"), he provides for his son to emulate him and to be an help meet for him in his business.

- Through personal teaching, fellowship, and communion he educates his son so that the two of them are of one mind in their thinking, attitude, and viewpoint; are of one accord in their manner of living and conversation; and are one in how they spend their time and to what purpose they use their talents and skills.

- Sonship edification at a father's hands provides for a "*son*" to become one with his father, and for both of them to enjoy and delight in the fruits of the fellowship of that '*oneness.*' Moreover that '*oneness*' is designed to make it so that in every good sense of the expression it can said of the "*son,*" '*like father like son.*' This is the father's ultimate aim.

- Now this is exactly what being "*led by the Spirit of God*" - "*the Spirit of adoption*" - is designed to do with us as God's "*sons.*" It is the means by which God our Father provides for, and accomplishes, our sonship education and edification.

- Being "*led by the Spirit*" is the issue of Him leading us through a curriculum for our edification that has clear purpose to it; that has known levels of edification, training, and corresponding attainments to it; and that has a definite objective and end in view.

- Furthermore being "led by the Spirit of God" has the Spirit of God intelligently utilizing our spirits/ minds and hearts for the very purpose that God created them - i.e. godliness.

- And the Spirit does this in fulfillment of the very thing that the Lord Jesus Christ provided for Him to be able to do with us when Christ established the new testament through His blood and made us beneficiaries of it. (see II Corinthians 3:1-18, for example)

- The issue, therefore, in us being "led by the Spirit of God" - "the Spirit of adoption" - is one of Him leading us through a clearly defined course of sonship learning and edification that our Father has prepared for our "godly edifying" in this present dispensation of His grace.

- This course for our sonship edification is set forth for us in Paul's epistles to us. More specifically in the very order of those epistles from Romans through Philemon. They are the specific curriculum for our "godly edifying."

- By being so "led by the Spirit of God" we are taken through the course for our "godly edifying." We are thereby progressively taught godliness by our Father and we learn to be godly; i.e. to think like God does, to live like He does, and to occupy our time and use our acquired skills and talents with Him in the operations of His business.

- In a nutshell such is the basic nature of our edification as "sons."

- And when we understand and appreciate it for what it is, all the more it should make us not only crave the opportunities to engage in intimate communion with our Father about our "godly edifying," but also make us realize the necessity of doing so.

- Wherefore as "sons" we should readily recognize that our "godly edifying" at our Father's hands demands that we be in constant and close touch with Him. It demands that we have a level of intimacy of fellowship with Him through which we can engage in direct heart-to-heart communion with Him as our Father. For as we are educated by Him we need to express to Him our understanding, appreciation, and application of what we have learned, as well as needing to have Him `search our hearts' for the benefits thereof.

- As "sons" we need to have with our Father the fullness of the interchange and exchange of the father-son relationship, for we cannot do without it. And as "sons" we not only have it, but are able to avail ourselves of it, through prayer.

- Specifically for us, therefore, prayer should be the issue of us intelligently, deliberately, and with great focus, communing with our Father as `son to father and father to son.'

- By prayer we should have intelligent and thoughtful heart-to-heart and mind-to-mind fellowship with Him about the education we are receiving from Him and the application of it in our lives, as He educates us as His "sons."

- We should thoughtfully, intently, and intelligently express to our Father matters of our own minds and hearts, being ones whose very minds and hearts are being brought into conformity to His mind and heart through the effectual working of His word within us.

- Indeed this is something we should do intelligently, having keen awareness for what is taking place through prayer, along with having great desire for it taking place. We should understand and appreciate that through prayer, as we express our hearts to our Father, He `searches our hearts,' just as a father does when he communes with his son. He `searches our hearts' with the pure delight that it is for a father, who when he is educating his son, looks for and wants to find in his son's heart the effectual working of that education, and to hear from his son's mouth the fruits of it.

- Indeed in the same way that Proverbs 23:15-16 expresses this particular delight for a father who is educating his son, so also is it with our Father and us.

5 *My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine.*

6 *Yea, my reins shall rejoice, when thy lips speak right things. (Proverbs 23:15-16)*

- Moreover our Father `searches our hearts' desiring not only to have such a level of intimate fellowship and communion with our own hearts and minds and to rejoice therein, but also to monitor and to gauge the progress of our edification in godliness and to respond to it accordingly.
- He `searches our hearts' to know them and thereby to be able to give to us what our edification merits.
- By the same token we also should engage in this intimate communion through prayer, because as "sons" we likewise should possess the eager desire to express to our Father what is on our minds or in our hearts.
- As "sons" whom He is educating, we should want to prove to Him the effectual working of His word within us; tell Him what our mind is with regards to the issues of our lives and how precious His thoughts and His doctrines are to us.
- Moreover we should want to benefit from Him `searching our hearts.'
- Wherefore as "sons" prayer should be a most natural and indispensable part of our personal sonship relationship with God in this present dispensation. By it we should eagerly take the time in our daily lives to intelligently commune with our Father, both to enjoy and to profit from the benefits thereof.
- We should be "instant" in prayer at the best of times, and at all others it should be an auto-response on our part. Engaging in it should be close to, if not, instinctive to us as "sons," as we desire intimacy of communion with our Father and His searching of our hearts thereby.
- Such is the basic understanding and appreciation that we as "sons" should have for prayer. Indeed the fundamental effectual working within us of the knowledge of our adoption as "sons," (which ought to have us "crying, Abba, Father" in the first place), should initially produce within us the eager desire for having such a level of engaging communion and fellowship with God our Father. The lack of such communion, or desire for it, is just plain unnatural for us as "sons."
- So then we should not only crave being edified by our Father through His word to us, we should also crave intelligently communing with Him about it through prayer. Such fellowship and communion is virtuous to Him, and He desires it with us being our "Father." We too, being His "sons," should possess the same Godly virtue of engaging in consistent, intelligent fellowship with Him.

BASICS OF INTELLIGENT SONSHIP PRAYER - (Romans 15:30ff; II Corinthians 1:3-11)

- PRAYER AND ITS USE WHERE SUFFERING IS CONCERNED.

- Romans 15:30-32

- Prayer, as it is to be understood and appreciated in this present dispensation of Grace, it is to be understood and appreciated, looked upon and engaged in by a member of the church, the body of Christ, as a natural product of the sonship relationship he understands he has with God, and the sonship education he's receiving from Him.

- And, granted, that is not a revolutionary concept - but it puts prayer in the proper position it is supposed to be in - and allows it to be understood and appreciated as a naturally different thing compared to what the members of the remnant of Israel were taught in connection with prayer (regarding all they were going to be going through, and the PROVISIONS THEY HAD TO CALL UPON: miraculous included), when it came to the things they were going to be experiencing and the things that they will encounter in that 5th and final installment in God's program with them.

- That doesn't mean that we, ourselves, don't have any benefits to receive from prayer that are special, personal, and so forth - but they fall within the overall category of prayer being a natural product and extension of the fellowship and the communion that we have the privilege of having with our Father, that includes the sonship education we are receiving and the reciprocal response on our part (so to speak) - which I call sonship prayer.

- What is especially important to understand in saying this, beyond putting it in its proper perspective and its proper position is to allow you to appreciate something that Paul says in Romans 15:30ff that precedes what he says he's asking them to pray about.

Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me; (Romans 15:30)

- Before he says "that ye strive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me;" and then goes on with what he is particularly concerned with, by Paul stating those two prefacing remarks that precede his request - (especially occurring in Romans at the first place [not that it is the first time prayer has been mention, for it was first dealt with back in chapter 8] that Paul sets forth an issue that he's praying about and that he is now beseeching them to pray about), Paul prefaces it with those two remarks that put prayer in the context of natural communion and natural fellowship with God our Father.

- And for now, what needs to be recognized is how issues of prayer are stated by Paul in the context of passages that you're dealing with that are designed to instruct us in connection with the products and fruits of our sonship relationship - prayer being one of them.

- And when you're thinking about your sonship relationship as you are supposed to - and especially when the doctrine of Romans, up until this point has done its job and that sonship mentality is there, and that appreciation for sonship communion and fellowship with God in prayer is there, and as that natural edification takes place, they're aware of things that God is doing. They're getting educated in His operations. They're getting educated in the things He's doing with ministries that He has (in this case, the apostle Paul in particular).

- But they're also getting educated in the things that are going on in their assembly. For from back in chapter 12 they learn how to look upon each other as members one of another - and when they are told about their offices, etc., they know how to look at them. And all the while, throughout it all, they're learning those operations of God, and they're learning what He's doing in this dispensation of grace - and they're learning about how He's going about doing the things He is doing.

- And it's that kind of intelligence that now makes it so that those saints are able to look at other members of the church, the body of Christ, and they're able to intelligently pray in connection with them.

- And it's these issues that comprise those two prefacing remarks to what Paul asks them to pray about in connection with him are really all about. (Romans 15:30)

- They're supposed to be praying "*for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake*" and "*for the love of the Spirit.*"
- There are things that the Spirit 'loves' that they are learning about - and the issue in prayer (and the issue of communion and fellowship with our Father in prayer) is the issue of reflective sonship education.

- And through prayer we reflect that back to Him by verbalizing to Him and articulating to Him the things we know He, too, values and esteems; and that He's involved in; and what His operations are in connection with what He is doing. And prayer with requests that we would make, and supplications that we would make, would all have to do with laboring with Him in what He's doing.

- What all this boils down to, as far as saints knowing what to pray for is, until saints are 'intelligized' (so to speak) through sonship education in the things God says He's doing, and in the things He says He has operations in connection with, they aren't going to know exactly what to pray for! and how to pray for somebody, or a ministry, or something along those lines.

- And the truth of the matter is, until saints know intelligently what to pray for in view of knowing what God's operations are, and knowing what He's laboring to get accomplished and knowing how you can labor with Him in connection with that: in a sense, your best response when someone asks you to pray for them is to come along and say, "Tell me what I can do for you."

- Instead of asking God, or expecting God to supernaturally do something, members of a body are supposed to be, as members one of another, helping one another - not expecting the Head to supernaturally intervene, but to, through the intelligence of the Head's thinking operating in you, you go and do it!

- And all this really can do is to get you to realize in a beginning-type way the kind of things that go on in intelligent sonship prayer that are almost foreign concepts to most Christians when they have no realization of right division, have no realization of what it mean to be a member of the church, the body of Christ, and have no sonship education taking place with them that would even start a train of thinking along those lines.

- And for now it should be understood that the issue with prayer in this dispensation of grace involves the issue of me, as well, as a member of the church, the body of Christ being a laborer together with God in what He is doing, and by prayer, intelligently communing with my Father about what I can do as a member to help another member out.
- And not having God, supernaturally, or by-passing the 'member of the body' principle, doing something on His own. Because that is NOT the method of operation He's chosen to utilize with the members of the body.
 - That's why Paul says, "**that ye strive together with me**"

- Note again those two prefacing remarks.
 - When Paul beseeches "**for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake**" - that's being said in the context of the fact that as sons, we're being conformed to His image. And the members of His body ought to think like He does, and ought to be doing the things that He wants done - and want to be involved in it.

 - And "**for the love of the Spirit**" is in keeping with all that Paul has been saying about the Spirit in connection with our sonship education. The fact of the matter is, that from Romans 8:14-15 on, every time Paul talks to the members of the church, the body of Christ about the Spirit and His operation within them, or to them, etc., it is done in the context of Him LEADING them as the "**Spirit of adoption**" that He is!
 - And this is an issue now in which His education of them through the sonship doctrines that they've been learning; they now have His love operating within them. And they ought to, therefore, be communing with their Father about the things that they now know that He loves.
 - **And they ought to want to be involved in that!**

- Now, they can't go with Paul to Jerusalem, but they can pray to their Father about the very same thing Paul himself is going to be praying about in connection with it. (That's the issue of 'striving together with me'.)
- And just as we know from Romans chapter 8, Paul is not going to be praying that no 'suffering of this present time' or no 'suffering of Christ' occurs to him! (Remember that from back in Romans 8, he knows and has already set forth the principle in connection with any of the perils he (and any son) would face [in the latter part of the chapter] that it is through this very mechanism: that we are "*more than conquerors*"!

- And therefore, you've got to come to look at those sufferings of Christ, and those sufferings of this present time as being beneficial and profitable to you! And because of Paul understanding and appreciating that, he's not going to be asking the saints to be praying that none of those things happen to him!

- So the issue in the next verse (Rom. 15:31) "**That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea**" is that he, (Paul), himself won't get wrapped up within and about the circumstances and situations, but rather that he will be, within the circumstances and within the situations of 'those who don't believe' (because he knows they're going to come after him - he knows they're going to persecute him), that he would RESPOND to it as that '**MORE THAN CONQUEROR!**'

- You need to see that everything is being requested and beseeched and spoken about in the context of the education that has taken place up until this point that has you looking at things like the Lord Jesus Christ does, and has you loving the things the Holy Spirit teaches you to love, and has you, therefore, laboring together with your Father in what He says He's doing and how He's going to operate!

- And He's not going to operate in the external circumstances or situations. But, in general, his Father is going to operate with him just as He's going to operate with every member of the church, the body of Christ throughout the dispensation of grace.

- And that is to operate WITHIN him for the purpose of producing that kind of stability and fortification and ability to stand and endure regardless of what the circumstances and situations are.

- II Corinthians 1:3-11

- This passage, too, is to be understood to be based upon the same principle of Romans 15:30-32.

- Note that from (:8) we know that this issue of suffering, and especially the "*sufferings of Christ*" (:5) is one of the key doctrines that is selected out by the Adversary for special attack in this dispensation of grace.

- This shows some of his "*cunning craftiness*" to deceive the saints, not only because of our Heavenly Father's shift in His operations where suffering is concerned in this dispensation of grace in contrast to His program with Israel, but in the process it collects up a few other doctrines that go along with the issue of suffering and brings deception, distortion, and error to them as well.

- Prayer, being one of them.

- Here, if you are not careful to pay close attention to the context, and even closer attention to the doctrine that is supposed to already have been learned from Romans - I Corinthians, just reading through these verses could cause one to think that Paul had a 'near-death' experience in Asia and by his prayers along with the prayers of the saints in Corinth, he was supernaturally delivered from his circumstances and situation that was about to kill him.

- But there are some very important issues of sonship doctrine and sonship education that, at a minimum, must be grasped before the truth of what is being stated here can be understood and appreciated.

- One of the keys to this passage is to understand what Paul means when he talks about being "*delivered from so great death*" in verse 10.

- The 'deliverance' that Paul talks about in (:10), based upon what he just described in (:8-9), is that this particular situation that took place in Asia comes under the category of "*the sufferings of Christ*" (:5) - but it was a very particular one.

- And it was one that Paul came to learn that when it occurred, and how God handled it (so to speak) - or how God let it go to a particular extent and allowed it to occur beyond measure or "*out of measure*" as Paul says in (:8), it really put it into a very select and specialized event.

- I Cor. 10:13 - Paul makes reference to the way in which Satan's policy of evil is able to go about dealing with us in general as members of the church, the body of Christ.
 - That is in the context of the overall temptations from the Satanic policy of evil.
 - But the Corinthians had only been experiencing, at that particular time, temptations that were "*common to man.*"
 - There were temptations that were within the realm of the policy of evil's ability to exert that are NOT "*common to man*" - that go beyond that.
 - The Corinthians were not yet in a doctrinal position where they were WORTHY of those. They had not learned enough to acquire the edificational understanding yet, or to be put in the position of being able to provoke the policy of evil to the point of making themselves worthy of receiving anything beyond temptations which were just "*common to man.*"
 - The point is, that the principle that Paul is referring to there applies throughout the entire scope of what any member of the church, the body of Christ could ever experience from the policy of evil.
 - And that principle is that God doesn't allow the policy of evil to tempt beyond or "*above that ye are able.*" It can only operate on 'tit-for-tat' kind of basis. That is, if the edificational capacity is there for a member of the church, the body of Christ to make a particular impact, and have a particular influence to God's honor and glory, then the policy of evil can respond commensurate with that to try and defeat it.
 - But the policy of evil can't unload its entire arsenal all at once; it can only respond 'in kind,' so to speak, or 'in measure.'
 - And when a member of the church, the body of Christ successfully weathers that particular storm, for example, and moves on in his godly edifying and attains to participating in the graces that advance on next, then the policy of evil is able to ratchet up a notch the intensity of opposition, and increase the temptations, or utilize another kind of temptation.
- Therefore we see coming out of this a 'measure for measure' means of escape that is provided by God so that "*ye may be able to bear it*" or so that it can be borne.
- And it is a very important point to realize in this verse that "*escape*" does n't mean that you don't experience it! "*Escape*" means that you will be able to BEAR it! "*Escape*" means that you do not have to succumb to the goal that the policy of evil has through the temptation! You're going to be able to endure the temptation and bear it and come through it - it does not mean that God will put his hand between you and the temptation and you don't experience it.
- When God looks at "*escape*" He does not look at it in the sense that you don't experience it. He means that you escape being victimized by it, and having the policy of evil have its way with you. (But you're still going to go through it!)
- When Paul was in Asia, God stepped out of (with Paul) the 'measure for measure' principle!
 - And God did that because of what Paul is: Paul not only is the apostle of the Gentiles, but he's also our "*example.*" - I Cor. 4:9-16 (:16); I Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17
- II Cor. 1:3-4 - God makes Paul our example when it comes to ANY of the "*sufferings of Christ.*"
 - And as our example, Paul goes through them ALL! And he goes through every single one of them that could ever occur in advance!
 - And in view of that, and because of that, there is at least one time in which, in order for that to occur, God had to allow Paul to be put into a situation that was beyond or "*out of measure*" in which he was "*pressed out of measure, above strength*" in which he did not really have the pre-doctrinal capacity to deal with it in advance.

- And because of that he said, “*we despaired even of life.*”
- “**But**”, he goes on to explain, “*we had the sentence of death in ourselves*” for a particular reason: “*that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.*”
- And you’ve got to be familiar with the way in which Paul describes ‘trusting in God’ from the initial trust in the gospel of Christ on, in order to appreciate that what he is describing here.

- For what Paul is describing here is the fact that he was put in a situation in which he did not have any edificational doctrine to really fall back upon and call upon in this situation.

- And God put him in it; allowed him to go through it; because when it came to **teaching** the entire scope of what God provides for (and the PROVISIONS THAT COULD LEGITIMATELY BE CALLED UPON BY SAINTS IN THIS DISPENSATION OF GRACE), when it came to teaching the scope of what God provides for, ‘comfort-wise’ throughout the entire scope of the “*sufferings of Christ*,” from what Paul went through when he was in Asia, he was able to experience the entire scope of the “*sufferings of Christ*” from the most mild form to the most extreme form, and realize that there was a provision that God would make for every particular suffering of Christ throughout that entire scope, and He could be trusted in connection with it, even when the policy of evil would be able to produce ‘the sentence of death’ in you where you would ‘despair of life.’

- And in connection with Paul doing that, and **trusting** “*in God which raiseth the dead*,” THE **‘DELIVERANCE’** TOOK PLACE!

- The issue is not one of physical deliverance, the issue is one of **delivering his soul from despair!** (Even under a foretaste of the most extreme mental temptation the Satanic policy of evil can produce!!!)

- And Paul was given a foretaste of it, and a foretaste of the deliverance. And that is why he said in (:10), “*Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us*”; because Paul knows the end result of his ministry and him being faithful to sonship education will be a return to “**the sentence of death.**”

- He knows that the end result will be the policy of evil delivering him unto death - and in a ‘despairing’ manner! And now he knows that even that most extreme form of the suffering of Christ has a deliverance available in connection with it.

- And Paul trusts right now, as he writes to the Corinthians, that he will be able to operate upon it, when he himself is, for the final time ‘delivered unto death.’

- Now that is the context in which this all occurs. And there is no way to fully appreciate what he says in (:11) without at least some measure of an appreciation of all of that.

- II Cor. 1:11 - “*Ye also helping together by prayer for us, ...*” There was one other thing operating in Paul’s mind when he was “*pressed out of measure, above strength*,” despairing even of life - and that was that there were other saints who were **intelligently** praying for him in connection with the effectual working of God’s word in him, in view of all that he would go through.

- Now, none of them knew that he was going to go through this!

- But what they were praying for is what is known as the mutual edification principal of intelligent sonship prayer - and Paul understood it.

- And the issue of the mutual edification of other members of the church, the body of Christ, intelligently praying about you and for you, effectually worked in the apostle Paul and ‘helped together’ as he said, along with what he was being taught, in that situation.

- And the two of them together produced the full measure of comfort and consolation for him in that situation, and delivered his inner man from the end result of ‘despairing even of life.’

- Now while this may be somewhat beyond you now, this is just a glimpse into the wonders of learning all about it as a natural part of sonship education!