

¹⁴For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

¹⁵For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."

¹⁶The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

¹⁷and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.

We are going to focus again on the idea of Sonship. Last week we talked about the fact that we were both adopted and we were born again. I hope we haven't missed the implications that has to our lives.

This week we are going to talk about some of the things that go along with this truth of sonship.

1. First we will look at the truth that being God's children means we have some similarities. We have to be careful here. We can't let our mind go off on it's own creative way here. We must keep our application in the bounds of revealed scripture.

So we have similarities. A. The first similarity is that we now share **God's spiritual perspective.**

I Cor 2 12-16 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

13These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. 16For "who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

Look at what this is saying. Romans 8 talks a lot about the Spirit and being led by the Spirit. Here in I Corinthians Paul shares another perspective on what that means. Because we have the Holy Spirit in us, we have that, which is of God, living in us. So we have a perspective on everything that no one in the world can know anything about. They cannot relate to us. We make no sense to them.

We are given this according to verse 12 **that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.**

It is the Spirit that has seen to it that the things that have been given to us freely by God were written down. The word for "know" here means basically to understand. The Spirit was given to us so that we will understand what we have as believers. And even that is a process where we compare spiritual truth with spiritual truth to gain more and more understanding.

As Sons of God we have a different viewpoint, a different world view. We see life through God's eyes. We have an insider's view of what God is doing on this planet. We see what God is doing in our lives from His perspective. We can truly answer the question, "What would Jesus do?" because our minds have been enlightened to understand what scripture says. We have the mind of Christ.

In the trading of stocks there is something called "Insider trading". That is what Martha Stewart was locked up for. Insider trading is when you know some inside secret about a company that lets you know whether the stock is going to go up or go down before it actually does. So if you knew that the company was going to go bankrupt you would sell all your stock. But it wouldn't be fair because you knew the inside story. That is what every believer is doing. We know the mind of God. As a son of God we are privy to God's heart and mind on everything that is important. We don't know everything, but we know everything we need to know to live our lives.

So when we look at the crowd at the Autumn Glory Festival we know how to see them. Jesus saw the masses as sheep without a shepherd. He had compassion on them. And he knew that most of them were destined for judgment.

When God blesses us with children, we don't express wonderful flowers to blossom out of their innocent psyches. We expect sin and selfishness because we know they were born of Adam.

When we see the nations come together for peace we know that this will not happen until they come together with a common enemy. And that enemy will be Christ.

When we wake up in the morning, we don't expect that our lives will be lived according to the Spirit by default. We know that our bodies will give us a battle that we will need to fight.

We know that when we stand for Christ we are not likely to win accolades from the world. We are likely to receive persecution because they like dark and we are bringing light.

We could go on and on. We take this knowledge for granted sometimes. But it is inside trading. We know something about God that cannot be known and understood except for the Spirit of God being in us. We are children of God and as such we have the mind of Christ. We are similar with our Father in that we share some of His outlook.

B. The second similarity is that we share some of His behavior.

Matt 5:44-48 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? 48Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Here we see Christ telling his audience in the sermon on the mount about Sons of God type of behavior. He is telling the crowd that the behavior that comes out of a believer is different from the self serving behavior that comes out of the world. They

would love those who love them and hate those who hate them. But our behavior is different. If someone stands against us because we stand for Christ, these people are to be pitied. They are to be targets of our ministry. Our regard for those people should be that we do anything we can to bring them to Christ. Often we have little opportunity. But our behavior will show a similarity to Christ's. He ministered to the Sadducees and Pharisees. The ministry was very direct and brutal at times, but He told the truth to them so they would be left without excuse. We as sons should show the same kind of behavior.

And what is our motive for this type of behavior? To behave as a child of the Father. It is family behavior.

Eph 5:1-2 Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

So why should we be imitators of God here? We should do it as dear children. This is the motive for Godly living.

When I worked for my dad I used to show up for work late. I never thought it was a big deal. One day my brother took me aside. I'm sure Butch hadn't read the counseling books popular at the time. He didn't ask any questions. He just told me that I was putting Dad in a bad spot and that, as his son, I had to represent Dad's interest better. I was making him look bad to his other employees.

When I thought about it from that perspective my behavior changed. I didn't want to do any harm to my Dad. And I didn't see my behavior as harming him in any way. Once I did it changed. Eventually I even grew to wanting much of what he wanted.

That is the kind of thing Paul is appealing to. We are to act in a way that is congruent with a person who has been rescued from judgment and is now blessed with being a child of God. We are to act in a way that pleases Him because of what He has made us. We were forgiven much. We should love much. We are now bonded to God in a child/father relationship. That is our motive for living. Our motive is not to be happy or to be successful or to be

secure or even to have victory over sin. Our motive is to live before our Father as dear children.

Think about your week this week. Think about the way you lived? Did you live as a dear child? Was your life spent looking after your Father's interest, living in a way that pleases him?

So, as God's sons we have similarities- we have a shared spiritual perspective and we have some shared behavioral traits.

Now what else do we have as God's child?

2. The assurance of a unique loving relationship. Think about this. We know that God is good. We know that He sends the blessing of rain on the crops of those who love Him as well as those who hate him. So God is good and He truly is generous to humans in general. But we are participants in a much better relationship than just this human being/God relationship. We have a special relationship with God. Again, we are children of God. We have a Father/Son relationship.

Carla teaches kids at the college. As the year goes on Carla becomes endeared with some of her students. Her heart goes out to them. And she would do a lot to help them pass her class. And if they flunk, she would feel bad for them. But I can assure you that there is still little comparison between how Carla would feel if one of her students flunked to how she would feel if one of her children flunked. There is something infinitely more personal in the progress of her children than the progress of her students.

I think that is why God uses the relationship of child to describe our relationship with Him. We understand the specialness of that relationship. We understand the unique obligation that the Father has to His children and the complete dependence that the son has to the Father. We don't regard this as a scientific term. It is a term just ripe with relationship. God wants us to understand this. He wants us to regard Him as our heavenly Father, in close loving relationship to His children.

God will treat his children different than He will treat all the rest of the human beings inhabiting this planet. God takes a very special interest in our well being. He is very involved in our

progress. When you feel like life is meaningless and futile, ponder this truth. God has chosen to be your Heavenly Father. And you have the glorious privilege of being called God's son. Really- how can you beat that?

What else is true of us because we are God's children?

3. God has plans for us Heb 2:10

For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. 11For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12saying:

**"I will declare Your name to My brethren;
In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You."**

13And again:

"I will put My trust in Him."

And again:

"Here am I and the children whom God has given Me."

14Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. 17Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

We see in verse 10 what God's intent is for His children. **For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory**

That is the plan that God has for us. It started before we were able to do anything. Just like the plans you may have had for your infant. Maybe you started putting money away for his or her college education. Well before we could do anything God called us to Himself and enabled us to respond to His calling. Then we see here what God's ultimate plan for his children is. He is going to glorify them.

Have you ever wondered what God's will for your life is? Well one part of His will is a certainty. You may not know much else, but you can know for sure that He has plans to glorify you. And I guarantee you that that is much more important than what major you have in college or what job you get or what person you marry. God has a plan for your glorification. And He will complete that plan. In fact He loves you us so much the completion of His plan may be uncomfortable for us.

Heb 12:6-11

5And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons:

**“My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord,
Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;
6 For whom the Lord loves He chastens,
And scourges every son whom He receives.”**

7If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? 8But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. 9Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? 10For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit (always fitting, always right), that we may be partakers of His holiness. 11Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the

present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Here we can see that God takes his plans for His children seriously. Do you see how heavily this passage refers to our relationship as children. This is all about how God cares too much about us to allow us to go down the wrong path too far. And it is on the basis of His Fatherhood that He moves to correct us. God will never allow us to interfere with his ultimate plan for our lives. Isn't that a relief to you. You can do wrong things. You can fail to honor him as your Father. You can fail to quickly put to death specific deeds of the body. That is all bad and pathetic. But those failures will not cause God to jerk the family rug out from under you and disown you. No. It will cause Him to actively cause you to reconsider the sin you are participating in. He will take you to His unpleasant woodshed. Why? Because you are His child and He will not allow His children to ultimately fall.

Most of us have had toddlers who would reach for things that would harm them. We commanded them not to touch. When they disobeyed we spanked. The toddler's peace was disrupted. They faced painful consequences. And a portion of their time was spent completely miserable. We watched and we knew- this child would be much happier if they didn't try that sinful behavior. This child would be much more content if they would just say yes to their parents and move on. But no, the toddler just had to do the thing that his desires told him he wanted.

We have got to ask ourselves this morning- why are we sometimes like those toddlers? Why do we pursue those things that God has not given us? Why do we think our ways will bring us what we really want? They never do. Never! Every good and perfect gift comes from our Father. Everything else is just going to bring pain. Are you doing things this morning that you know are going to cause God to take you to his woodshed because He loves you. I urge you- just give it up. You will be much happier for obeying God. And you will honor your father.

Now the fourth thing that is true of us because we are God's children.

God leads us. Psalm 32:8,9 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;

I will guide you with My eye.

9 Do not be like the horse or like the mule,
Which have no understanding,
Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle,
Else they will not come near you.

Isn't it good to know that if you are a child of God, God is in the active process of teaching you how to live and how to make the decisions that honor Him. He promises that. We may not learn as fast as is possible, but God is teaching us which way to go.

He says- I will guide you with my eye. What does that mean? Have you ever watched a well trained animal with a trainer or a well trained child with their parent? Have you ever watched their eye contact? A well trained animal or child will look at the face of the trainer. They will get all their clues from how and where the trainer looks. They only focus on one thing- what does the trainer want me to do. If training is done properly the animal knows that not doing what the trainer says will hurt in some way and doing what the trainer wants will be rewarded in some way. So the eyes become the source of the animal's future position in life.

That is how we should live in relationship to our Father. He will guide us with His eye. Notice that He does not guide us with his CLUB. He does not guide us with his lightning. He could. But he does not. It is our relationship with our Father that provides us with the marching orders. It is knowing what our Father wants and what will please Him that gives us our next step. That is what walking in the Spirit is all about. We actively involve our wills in the process of doing that thing which our master wants. We apply all diligence to doing the right thing. But we do that right thing because of the relationship the Master has already given us.

Now there are some who would say, oh no. That is not how God leads. God is sovereign and we cannot resist His will. So He

leads by forcing a Christian to do the right thing. He in essence does it for Him. And if God does not do this for us, we cannot possibly do the right thing.

Yet look at the next verse. It deals that idea a death blow.

**Do not be like the horse or like the mule,
Which have no understanding,
Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle,
Else they will not come near you.**

Here we are told not to be like the person who will only do something if God MAKES us do that thing. This is not being led by God's eye. It is exactly the opposite. It is being put in a position where we can do nothing but the thing that the master wants us to do by force. That kind of obedience does not honor God like a child of God should honor God, any more than that kind of obedience in a toddler shows any regard that he has for his parents. That toddler has not yet been trained.

No- Our text tells us that as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God. This leading is not by brutal force. It is not done by inactivity of our wills. It is done by the hearty exercise of our wills directed in a way that only a new life could cause. We feel compelled to know what our Father wants. And we feel compelled to DO what He wants. And we also feel desires to do what our bodies want. Yet the new life in us will have a victorious effect in that process over time. And we will be found, as a whole, being led by the Spirit of God.

Is your life led by the Spirit?

The people who are not children of God are not led by the Spirit. They may be led by their crude base animal desires. This appeals to some sinners but not to all. Some see themselves as being superior to this kind of lifestyle. But they may be led by the world's influence around them. What they wear, how they spend their time, how they carry out their relationships is all based on opinions of those around them. But there are some non believers who will go even farther than that. These people may live by human reasoning. They may use logic and philosophy to live the human existence in an orderly and principled fashion. But from God's point of view there isn't a dime's worth of difference in all

of them. They all stand condemned for their sin. Christ will not know them at judgment. They are not Christ's children. He did not guide them with His eye. They guided themselves. He did not lead them by His Spirit. They hated His Spirit because His Spirit brings light and they prefer darkness. No- this is all just living in the flesh.

But believers march to a different drum. Do you? Again, I'd like to quote a simple question from Martin Lloyd Jones.

Is the main direction of your life being determined by the Holy Spirit of God?

Let me ask that again.

Is the main direction of your life being determined by the Holy Spirit of God?

Is the Holy Spirit your directing force?

Is what God wants the most important consideration in the decisions you make about your life?

If you can answer yes to these questions I can tell you on the strength of God's word that YOU ARE A CHILD OF GOD.

And if you are, let's please our Father this week. Let's honor him. If you could not answer yes to these questions, do business with that problem. Because it is by far the biggest problem you have in your life. If this problem bothers you, that is very good. Because it is a problem that can be solved. Let someone help you with that this week. Do business with God.