
Sonship Checkpoints

*And the Issue of Us Intelligently
Presenting Ourselves to Our Father*

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Throughout the entire course of our lives as the “sons of God” that we are in this present dispensation of God’s grace, and as we are progressively “led by the Spirit of God” through the full scope of the curriculum for our sonship edification, we are regularly brought to a number of prescribed way-points, or designated checkpoints along the way. These are specific points within the progress of our edification at which the ‘measure of our godly edifying’ is taken, so to speak, and in a sense an assessment is then made of our fitness and readiness to go on. Since we are involved in edification — i.e. “godly edifying which is in faith” — it is only natural that we should encounter such checkpoints.

Moreover we should not only expect such checkpoints, we should even desire them. For our sonship edification is both a building project and a process, just as the word ‘edification’ denotes. And as with any building project there is not only a blueprint that defines and describes the building that is being built, but there is also a construction plan that defines and describes the process by which the building is to be erected. Not only this, but the construction plan is broken down into all of the various stages of construction that are necessary in order for the building to be constructed properly. Moreover within the construction plan, (and in direct connection with the prescribed stages of the construction process), there are a number of scheduled points, or times, at which the building is inspected. It is inspected not only by the builder himself, but also by a qualified inspector, to ensure that the building is being constructed properly and to ensure that the

next stage of construction can go ahead as planned.

Now these times at which the building inspector comes by are times at which he checks up on how the ‘edification of the edifice’ is progressing, so to speak. Hence they are prescribed ‘checkpoints’ that are encountered along the way as the building project takes shape. At each of these points, the inspector specifically evaluates the work that has been done so far at any particular stage in the construction process, and he determines whether or not that work has been done properly. If so, then the next stage in construction can proceed on as planned. But if not, then wherever he finds fault the appropriate steps must be taken to correct the faults before the building process will be able to proceed on successfully. For in an edification project each stage in the process is interconnected, making them dependent upon each other. Hence the success of each stage in the process is dependent upon the success of the previous one.

For this reason points of inspection are not only needed and incorporated into the project, but they should also be desired. For they ensure all parties, including the builder, that the building is being built in a sound and lawful manner, and that when it is fully built it will be able to fulfill its purpose.

Prescribed ‘checkpoints,’ therefore, are a natural part of any edification project and process; whether it be a physical or material one, or a spiritual or educational one.

Wherefore we should not think it strange to find a similar thing in the ‘overall construction plan’ for

our sonship edification. For in designing and composing the curriculum for it, our Father has actually ‘drawn up a blueprint,’ so to speak, for the building that we are to build, and He has given it to us so that we can build the building properly. And in connection with doing this He has also incorporated into the blueprint/curriculum all of the various points of inspection, or checkpoints, that are necessary for us to encounter, (as well as to pass), in order to provide for us to be able to succeed with our sonship edification and to obtain the full benefits from it.

“Wherefore *sonship checkpoints* are exactly what we do find strategically placed throughout the curriculum for our sonship edification. And God, being our Father, has clearly purposed that we encounter these points of assessment. For they are integral components to our edification. And being such, it is not only important for us to understand and appreciate them, but also to clearly recognize them. However it is even more important that we give heed to them. That we honestly deal with them. That we let them effectually do their evaluating work, and then be wise “sons” who respond to their assessment positively and properly. For our “godly edifying which is in faith” depends upon this.”

An Example

The apostle Paul fully understood and fully appreciated these God-designed ‘checkpoints.’ And so as he conducted his ministry, he did not overlook them at all. Nor did he endeavor to circumvent them in any way, or minimize them. Instead he did the exact opposite. He not only gave proper heed to them, knowing their importance and their essential function in our sonship edification; but he also enforced them, knowing that the success of godly edifying depended upon them.

Now in I Corinthians we have an easy-to-recognize example of one of these

sonship ‘checkpoints’ and its importance. For Paul makes specific reference to it as he describes how it is that he dealt with the Corinthian saints both when he was with them, and also when he wrote to them regarding the state of their edification. And by taking a brief look at it, we can make sure that we have at least a basic understanding and appreciation for the role of these important elements in our sonship edification.

1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ.

2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able *to bear it*, neither yet now are ye able.

3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I *am* of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

(I Corinthians 3:1-4)

As Paul said to these saints, he ‘could not speak unto them as unto spiritual.’ And he says this to them not as a compliment by any means, but as a reproof. For the truth of the matter is that he should have been able to ‘speak unto them as unto spiritual,’ if they had fully responded positively and properly to “the testimony of Christ” that he had taught them and had confirmed to them when he was with them. However they did not fully respond as they should. And for this reason they did not receive all of the benefits from it that they needed to receive, and because of this Paul limited his ministry to them.

Now Paul did not limit his ministry simply because he just thought it best to do so, but because he knew that he *had* to do so. Faithfulness to the curriculum for our sonship edification demanded that he do so.

As Paul says, he ‘could not speak unto these saints as unto spiritual’ because they were not “spiritual.” Instead, they were “carnal.” And as he goes on to say, being “carnal” these saints “were not able to bear” the “meat” doctrines that are fit for saints who are “spiritual.” Rather they could only deal with the more basic and fundamental and easy-to-digest “milk” doctrines. (And even at that they were still having some problems with those.) So as Paul says, they were not able to bear the more advanced “meat” doctrines when he was with them, and they still were not able to bear them at the time he was writing to them. For they were still “carnal,” just as he says and proves to be the case.

Wherefore Paul did not give these saints any of the “meat” doctrines when he was with them. Moreover he had no intention at this time of giving them any of those doctrines in this epistle to them. For they were not ready for them. And it was not going to do them one bit of good to try to teach them any of those doctrines.

Now as was just said, the reason Paul limited his ministry to these saints was because he *had* to. He knew that the curriculum for our sonship edification demanded this. For the truth of the matter is that these saints had come to one of the early ‘checkpoints’ in their godly edifying, and when it evaluated them, they were found wanting. They failed to ‘clear the checkpoint,’ so to speak. They did not possess the necessary credentials, (or the prerequisite knowledge and understanding and comprehension), to go on. And Paul knew it.

For as Paul had said earlier on in chapter 2, though he had wisdom to speak, he only spoke it “among them that are perfect.” And that’s the ‘checkpoint’ these saints could not yet clear. They were not “perfect” yet.

In order to be “perfect” these saints needed to have all of the establishment doctrines of “the testimony of Christ” that Paul had taught them effectually working within them. And by their effectual working within them they needed to be

brought to the status of being “spiritual,” as Paul goes on to describe in the balance of chapter 2. For only by being “spiritual” saints would they be able to deal with the specific kind of “wisdom” that Paul had for them in the next portion of the curriculum for our sonship edification.

Now, once again, meeting this criterion of being “perfect” was not something that Paul himself just made up, or imposed. Rather it is something that God our Father established. And He imposes it and enforces it in our edification, just as Paul goes on to declare as he describes the Holy Ghost’s teaching ministry within us as we deal with our sonship curriculum.

Therefore the *sonship checkpoint* that determines whether a saint is “spiritual,” or is “yet carnal,” is the particular checkpoint that these saints in Corinth failed to clear. And so since these saints were not “spiritual,” and were not ‘judging all things,’ (as ones who are “spiritual” would naturally do), Paul did not, and he would not, ‘speak unto them as unto spiritual.’ Therefore they could not, and they would not, be able to proceed on in their sonship edification until they were no longer “carnal.” Hence the reason for all of Paul’s reproofs, corrections, and instructions in righteousness, throughout the whole of I Corinthians.

Now this has been only a simple consideration, and quick example, of a *sonship checkpoint*. What’s more this particular ‘checkpoint’ is just one of the many that there are throughout the full course of our sonship edification. Nevertheless it serves as an example of the very important and essential elements that they are within the curriculum for our edification, of their purpose, and of their particular effectual working within us when we encounter them.

For this reason it bears repeating that when we encounter them we need to give heed to them, and respond positively and properly to them; even if, as with the Corinthians, they reprove us, and they tell us that we cannot truly go on until

we remedy some problems or address some shortcomings.

The Most Important of Our Sonship Checkpoints

Though all of our sonship checkpoints are important and vital to us, the ones that occur at the beginning of our edification, and during its opening stages, are by nature the most important and vital of all. For they are the ones in which God our Father is concerned with making sure that our edification gets going properly, and that it is also able to keep going properly. Especially during that most vulnerable time in our sonship lives when we are most likely to find ourselves either inadequately prepared for the work of edification, or else easily subject to being waylaid by the various forms of opposition that there are to our godly edifying.

Wherefore when it comes to looking at any of these points of sonship assessment, the early ones should be looked at first. And of the early ones, the one to look at first and foremost is the one that checks to make sure that we are *genuinely* ready to get our sonship edification underway in earnest, after we have received our sonship establishment. And that particular checkpoint is what we have in Romans 12:1–2, where Paul beseeches us as “sons” to present ourselves to God our Father *in a very particular way*.

Romans 12:1-2

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

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

(Romans 12:1-2)

This is the first major ‘beseeching’ that Paul gives to us as the saints that we are; as the “sons of God” that we are; as the “new creature,” the church the body of Christ that we are; in this present dispensation of God’s grace. And though this is readily acknowledged, and its general exhortative tone is understood, often times we fail to understand and appreciate that this is specifically a *sonship beseeching*. It is beseeching that is in perfect accordance with exactly what a father naturally looks for from his “son,” desires from his “son,” and also needs his “son” to do, so that both he and his “son” are ensured of being ‘on the same page’ before actually beginning the son’s edification.

And indeed this is the nature of this ‘beseeching.’ For it does not stand alone, nor does it appear out of nowhere. Rather it occurs within the context of our establishment as God’s saints and as His “sons.” And it is specifically given to us immediately after we have received all that God has deemed necessary to establish us in our sonship status, and which has been designed by Him to enable us to begin living our sonship lives with Him.

Wherefore this ‘beseeching’ in Romans 12:1–2 is a particular kind of ‘beseeching.’ It is one that serves as one of our sonship checkpoints. Indeed, it is one of our very first sonship checkpoints.

Now before we look at it any closer, we need to make sure that we understand its nature a little better. And we will do this by noting the fact that what it ‘beseeches’ us to do is the very thing that a father wants his “son” to do, having established him in his sonship.

A Son’s Intelligent Presenting of Himself to His Father

There are a number of fundamental expectations that a father has after he has ‘adopted’ his child into sonship, and after he has taught his “son” what his sonship status is all about. For as a father teaches his “son” about sonship; and as he

establishes him in the knowledge of its glory and grandeur; and as he tells his son about its prospects, goals, and ultimate objective; the son is given to realize that he has entered into the most fascinating and meaningful and important time of his life. For everything that the father has been looking forward to since the moment his child came into the world has been geared to this time — to the time when he would give his child “the adoption of sons,” and his sonship life would get underway.

Wherefore the father naturally expects that once his “son” is given to realize these things, and understands them, that he will respond in an appropriate way. That he will respond by “crying, Abba, Father,” and will have all of the appropriate desire, enthusiasm, and ambition for living his sonship life; and that these things in his “son” will correspond to his own great desire, enthusiasm, and ambition for taking his “son” through his sonship education, and for living with his “son” from now on in that most cherished and glorious relationship of ‘father and son.’

Accordingly as the father establishes his “son” in his sonship status, he fully prepares him for his sonship life. He teaches his “son” all of the things that are specifically designed to effectually generate within him each of the essential sonship virtues that need to be in place *before* his sonship edification should actually get underway.

For example, the father provides his “son” with all the fundamental knowledge that he needs to have so that he has the proper viewpoint and perspective on his life from now on. Likewise the father makes sure that his “son” understands and appreciates the nature of the new intimacy of fellowship that has now been established between the two of them, and the unprecedented features that are now available to them both, and how the “son” is expected to take advantage of them and use them to their fullest degree.

Furthermore the father makes sure that his “son” has the full fundamental measure of confidence

and conviction that he needs to have in the power, and in the effectual working, of the education that he is going to be receiving. For the father wants his “son” to be fully persuaded that he has thought of everything, so to speak, when it comes to providing for him to be a successful “son.” And being so persuaded, his “son” can then confidently and optimistically enter into his sonship education, having no qualms whatsoever.

All of these things, and more, a father does as he establishes his “son” in his sonship status, and as he prepares his “son” for entering into his sonship education.

Wherefore once these things have been accomplished, a father naturally expects that his “son” will respond accordingly, and will show himself to be ready, willing, and able to get underway with his sonship education.

Now it is in connection with his son’s ‘readiness’ that the father looks for his “son” to be able to intelligently *present himself* to him as one who knows that he is truly ready to begin his education. For having fully prepared his “son” for his sonship education, the father has brought his “son” to one of his first *sonship checkpoints*. Specifically he has brought his “son” to the particular sonship checkpoint that will determine whether his “son” is *truly* ready to get his sonship education underway or not.

If the “son” has indeed learned what his father has taught him about his sonship status and what it means; and if he has realized the grandeur of it all; and if he has responded positively to it so that he loves his sonship, and this has effectually produced within him a corresponding enthusiasm for his sonship education, and the commitment to get it; and if he has understood what his father has taught him about the power that there is in what he will be learning; and most importantly, if he has an appropriate measure of confidence and conviction from what his father has taught him so that he knows that if he will fully rely upon what he will be taught that he can succeed with his

education, and that he can meet its goals and fulfill its objective; then he will *present himself* to his father as such. He will present himself to his father — yea, even dedicate and offer himself to his father — as an *intelligent* “son,” who understands what his sonship is all about, and who now wants nothing less than to get his sonship education underway.

This is what a father naturally expects from his “son” after having sufficiently established him as his “son.” And this is what God our Father naturally expects from us as His “sons,” after He has done the same with us.

Intelligently Presenting Ourselves to Our Father

By the time we doctrinally arrive at Romans 12, God our Father has provided for establishing us in our sonship status. He has thoroughly prepared us to get our sonship edification underway through the effectual working of all that He has taught us in Romans 1–11.

But now as Paul beseeches us to present ourselves to God as ones who are ready to get our sonship edification going, our Father has also designed this to serve as a *sonship checkpoint* for us. For by the very way in which God has Paul “beseech” us, He clearly holds us accountable for making sure that we are *genuinely* ready to go on. For we are not simply beseeched to present ourselves, but we are beseeched to present ourselves *in a particular way* — in a way that manifests that we are ready to go on because it requires us to *intelligently* present ourselves to God. And it is only when we can intelligently present ourselves as described, that we are truly ready to go on.

The Checkpoint

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

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

(Romans 12:1-2)

A very simple analysis of this beseeching shows that if everything God has taught us in chapters 1–11 is effectually working within us, then the first thing that should make it evident that we are ready for our sonship edification is our state of mind. Our minds should be awe-struck at this point. That is, we should be overwhelmed, so to speak, by the knowledge of all of “the mercies of God” unto us. As “the vessels of mercy” that we are, whom God “had afore prepared unto glory,” we should be so impressed and so thrilled by what God’s mercies have done for us that we cannot contain ourselves. They should be compelling us to respond.

In particular God’s mercy in giving us our sanctified position “in Christ,” (with its ability to ‘live unto God’ and with its sonship glory and grandeur), ought to fill us with great enthusiasm and ambition for getting our sonship edification and our sonship lives underway. For by the time we arrive here at Romans 12 we should clearly ‘see’ ourselves in our “bodies” to be exactly what Paul says — i.e. “a living sacrifice” and knowledgeable “sons,” who know that we have been enabled to ‘live unto God’ and have been enabled to ‘serve’ Him as His “sons.”

Indeed this is exactly how we should see ourselves at this point. And this is what our Father is now specifically using as the checkpoint to determine whether or not we are fully ready to get our sonship edification underway.

Hence as we are beseeched to present ourselves to God, we should ask ourselves the following questions: Do we truly know what it means for us to be “a living sacrifice”? From what we have been taught up until this point, do we clearly understand and appreciate that this is what we are? And do we clearly know what our sonship “service” to our Father amounts to? Do we have the appropriate measure of commitment, or dedication, to it that we need to have? Do we understand what is involved in the work of edification, and what its objective is? And also, do we have the full measure of confidence that we need to have in the effectual working of what we are going to be taught, so that we will completely rely upon it come what may?

In view of how we are expected to present ourselves to God at this point, it is only natural that these questions should arise in our minds, and that they should function as a sonship checkpoint for us.

Submitting to The Checkpoint

We should be able to answer “yes” to each of these questions at this point in Romans, if we are *genuinely* ready to go on. For the ability to do so comes from knowing what God has previously taught us.

For example, as we were taught in Romans 6:1–8:13, we have ‘died with Christ and have been resurrected with Him’ by being baptized by the Spirit of God “into Jesus Christ” and are thereby personally identified with His death, burial, and resurrection. And with this being so, we have now been enabled to ‘live unto God,’ no longer needing to serve sin and unrighteousness. For we are no longer ‘alive unto sin and dead unto God,’ as we used to be by nature. But now having believed “the gospel of Christ” and being justified unto eternal life and sanctified unto functional life, we are ‘dead unto sin and alive unto God’ “in Christ.”

Wherefore we are indeed “a living sacrifice” in Christ. And as such we can now bring forth ‘fruit unto holiness’ in the details of our lives by ‘walking after the Spirit,’ just as Romans 6:1–8:13 has taught us. The members of our bodies are now able to be “instruments of righteousness.”

Therefore when we doctrinally arrive at Romans 12:1–2, we should already clearly understand and appreciate that we are “a living sacrifice.” And so as Paul beseeches us to present our “bodies” unto God as such, dedicating ourselves to living in accordance with our fundamental sanctification “in Christ,” we should be able to intelligently do so.

Likewise we should also clearly understand and appreciate the sonship aspect of our sanctification “in Christ.” And this should enable us to intelligently present ourselves to God as “holy” and “acceptable”; and as ones who know what our sonship “service” amounts to.

For as we were taught in Romans 8:14–15, we have been given “the adoption of sons.” And as such God has taken us unto Himself to be personally educated by Him in preparation for our vocation in His business. Along with this, and in preparation for receiving our sonship education, in Romans 8:16–39 and then in chapters 9–11 God has fully ‘intelligized’ us, so to speak, as His “sons.” That is, He has equipped us with all of the virtues that we as “sons” need to possess before embarking upon the work of receiving our sonship edification, and before actually engaging in the work of serving with our Father in the present aspects of His business.

These sonship virtues include such things as having the proper holy and godly viewpoint and perspective on what is presently going in our Father’s business, and what our role and vocation in it is. Along with this we should possess the virtue of highly prizing the intimacy of the relationship that we now have with our Father, so that as part of our “crying, Abba, Father,” we

cherish it and make use of it, especially through the fellowship of sonship prayer.

Moreover, by the time we arrive at Romans 12 we should also be possessors of the sonship virtue that fully realizes the measure of commitment, or dedication, that is required from us in order to receive, and succeed with, our sonship edification. Likewise we should understand what the overall work of sonship edification involves; what the blueprint/curriculum for our godly edifying looks like; what the stages of construction are; and what the purpose for the building is, both for now and for when this present dispensation is concluded.

Furthermore from what we have been taught about the blueprint/curriculum for our edification, we should possess the virtue of being instilled with absolute confidence in its power to effectually work within us unto fulfilling the objective of our sonship lives.

Now knowing all of these things provides us with the ability to *intelligently present ourselves* to our Father as ones who are ready and zealous to begin the life-transforming work of ‘not being conformed to this world’ any longer, but rather being ‘transformed by the renewing of our minds’ by means of our sonship edification; and thereby ‘proving what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.’

Clearing The Checkpoint?

Obviously Romans 12:1–2 is a very important *sonship checkpoint* for us. And it behooves us to not only give heed to it, but to do so honestly; letting it effectually evaluate our readiness to go on, and then responding honestly to its evaluation.

Wherefore when we arrive at this sonship checkpoint, if we cannot *honestly* present ourselves to our Father as is described; if we do not clearly understand and appreciate what we are doing as “sons” when it comes to ‘presenting our

bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God’; and if we do not clearly recognize that in view of being “sons” doing this is our only “reasonable service”; if we do not possess the measure of commitment that is required from us to deal with our sonship curriculum and to thereby actually bring about the renewing of our minds; and if we do not have full confidence in the effectual working of what we are going to be taught; then the truth of the matter is that we are not ready to go on. We are not *truly* ready to begin our sonship edification. Rather we are actually ill-prepared for what it involves. We lack the adequate preparation for it, along with the proper measure of commitment to it, as well as full confidence in it. And we lack these things not having sufficiently benefited from the effectual working of what we have been given to learn particularly in Romans 6–8, and most especially in 8:14–39.

If this should be the case with you, then instead of beseeching you to go on, in essence this sonship checkpoint beseeches you to go back. To go back especially into the doctrine of your sanctified position “in Christ,” and into the doctrine of your sonship status, and into the doctrines that are designed to give you your essential sonship virtues and to fully produce your sonship establishment; so that you can learn what you have not yet fully learned. For just as with any building project, work on the actual edifice cannot begin, or should not begin, until the foundation for it has been properly and sufficiently laid. And the foundation for our sonship edification is our sonship establishment, which is what the effectual working of Romans 1–11 produces within us.

Another Consideration

Moreover the very *nature* of our sonship edification demands that we be fully prepared before we begin it. For our sonship edification is not simply the issue of us learning a bunch of Bible data. It is not the issue of us learning

Biblical facts and figures. It is not the issue of us learning a systematic theology, or a series of topical doctrines, or any other such thing.

Instead our sonship edification is much more, and much greater, than any of these things that often masquerade as edification, or try to pass themselves off for it. For our sonship edification is the issue of “godly edifying.” It is the issue of us being led by the Spirit of God through a carefully planned and constructed curriculum that was personally developed by our Father for us, and that has been specifically designed by Him to actually renew our minds with the very same kind of information and thinking capacity that operates in His mind, so that we ourselves can think like He does, live like He does, and can labour with Him in the operations of His business.

Such is the unique nature of our sonship edification. And because of this we must be adequately prepared by our Father for what it entails, and we must be dedicated to engaging in the work necessary to accomplish it. Which is exactly what the sonship checkpoint of Romans 12:1–2 checks to make sure is true of us before we begin.

The First of Many

As was noted at the outset, Romans 12:1–2 is only the first of many sonship checkpoints for us. We encounter others at strategic places throughout the entire course of our sonship edification as we progress from Romans 12 on. In fact, we encounter another major one before we even leave Romans.

All of the sonship checkpoints are indeed integral and important elements within our sonship curriculum. And as they scrutinize our fitness to go on, they do this in a way that makes it very personal, which is exactly what we should expect from our Father. For this reason we should not treat them lightly when we encounter them, or worse yet refuse to respond honestly to them. Rather in truth we should desire them, and look

forward to their evaluation of us. For their effectual working is lovingly designed by our Father to make it so that we do not miss out on any of the benefits of our sonship edification. —
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