

Module : Firstborn Sonship

Session 5 : Stages of Sonship

Focus : From Nepios to Huios



INHERITANCE CANNOT BE ACCESSED BY AN IMMATURE SON

Although a son is poised for inheritance, so long as he is an immature 'child', he cannot practically receive it until he exhibits a maturity in sonship that in essence positions him to give practical expression to it.

Gal. 4:1-2 : Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father.

The issue of growth into mature sonship is a crucial one, for without it, our inheritance in its totality cannot be fully received.

Galatians 4:1-7

- 1 Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything,
- 2 but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father.
- 3 So also we, while we were children, were **held in bondage under the elemental things of the world**.
- 4 But when the fullness of the time came, **God sent forth His Son**, born of a woman, born under the Law,
- 5 so that He might **redeem those who were under the Law**, that we might receive the **adoption as sons**.
- 6 Because you are sons, God has sent forth the **Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"**
- 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God

The passage must be interpreted literally and symbolically.

The literal interpretation of this passage would be something as follows:

So long as the son – who is the heir – is a child (immature), he does not differ from a slave who has no legal claim to the father's estate. **A slave is literally in bondage to another, in whom he has no inheritance.** At one time we were enslaved to the law. Law-based religion will keep you in bondage. The law revealed sin and the inability of man to keep it in his own strength. The law could not save us, and so being slaves to **sin, we were submitted to a life of sin and thus alienated from God.** This life of sin made us subservient to principles opposed to God that govern this world. By faith in Christ Jesus, who fulfilled the requirements of the law, we broke out from slavery into sonship in God. Being sons, we now have the opportunity to break out from the 'elemental things' (v.3) – evil and carnal elementary principles that regulate and govern the world (kosmos). The challenge then is to not revert to the slavish lifestyle of being governed by principles of the sinful adamic nature that are typical of this world system. As sons, we can overcome the world (1 John 2;13,14; 4:4).

So long as we are immature, inheritance is deferred. Hence the need for guardians and managers, which in context, represents the Old Testament Law of Moses that failed to bring us to maturity as a son of God. Only when the child matures is his inheritance granted at the time set by the Father. Again, contextually, this occurred when Jesus was sent 'in the fullness of time' 'to redeem us out from under the law', bringing us into sonship. We now, by faith and belief in Him, have the Spirit of the SON within us crying 'Abba Father'. In this respect we are qualified by the Father to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light (Col.1:12). Hence the first step into maturity is acceptance of Christ as Saviour and Lord by faith. Those who accept Him are legally and technically sons of God. But these legal and bona fide sons are to mature in their relationship with God.

The spiritual symbolic interpretation of the passage could be understood in the following manner:

Guardians and managers may also refer to any principle or mechanism designed to shape us into the nature of Christ (the law was powerless to do this). This could also then relate to spiritual fathers who are placed over us, who through the Word, facilitate the formation of Christ in us. This process must not be despised nor underestimated. At 12 years old, Jesus thought He was prepared to do His Father's business. After a reprimand from Joseph and Mary, He subjected Himself to them for 18 years, and only at 30 years old at His baptism, did the Heavenly Father affirm and validate His sonship by declaring, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased".

LEVELS OF SONSHIP LEADING TO MATURITY AND RIGHT OF INHERITANCE

In the New Testament, the word 'son' or 'child' may mean different things dependent upon which Greek word is used. Five distinct levels of sonship are evident from a study of these words. These words denote a progressive development from infancy to mature sonship over time. The words are ...

- ✓ **nepios / brephos**
- ✓ **paidon**
- ✓ **teknon**
- ✓ **neaniskos**
- ✓ **huios (or uihos)**

As sons of God we are 'born from above' (John 3:6-7) through the experience of the new birth. We are in Christ and are new creations in Him. We are 'OF' God (1 John 4:4) – which in the Greek ('ek') means we proceed out from Him and thus have His DNA within us. The 'son is given, but the child is born' (Is. 9:6), and must grow up into Christ in the fullness of His measure and stature. We all must grow up fully in what is given to us, viz. mature sonship.

Here below is a brief indication of the most significant characteristics of each stage of the development into mature sonship. The initial description of each stage is presented first from the Greek etymology of the word, as described by the Greek scholars, James Strong, Spiros Zodhiates, and Joseph Thayer. Following that, in text boxes, is Dr Sam Soleyn's succinct description of the key traits associated with each stage. These are extracted from Dr Soleyn's website, www.soleyn.com, and are used here with permission. I encourage you to listen to the audio teachings on his website. Thereafter, I provide further elaboration on additional key characteristics attendant with each stage.

1. NEPIOS SON

Greek Definitions

- Zodhiates** : One who cannot speak, hence an infant, child without definite limitation of age.
- Strong** : An infant; figuratively, a simple-minded person; immature.
- Thayer** : Little, child, childish, untaught, unskilled.

Note : The Greek term, '**BREPHOS**' (babies) is akin to 'NEPIOS';
1 Pet 2:2 "like newborn **babies**, long for the **pure milk of the word**, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation"

NEPIOS - Infant, baby not old enough to speak or function.

"This infant of God's house will make **sounds of selfish whining** concerning his own **provision and protection**. The child is in the house and an heir, but not mature enough to have a **right to the inheritance**. This child is easily influenced **by various circumstances, teachings, and schemes of men**. He is given to **jealously, quarreling, divisions, and boasting**. He is in desperate need of tutors and guardians to agree with the Spirit and unveil his/her maturity." **[Sam Soleyn]**

Key Verses: Galatians 4:1-7; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Corinthians 3:1-3; 1 Corinthians 13:11

(In the natural, this describes an unborn child or an infant of between 0-2 years old)

- (a) **Nepios sons have an inheritance only positionally**, but due to immaturity, have not appropriated this reality subjectively, personally, practically and experientially. He is poised to steward all things in Christ, but experiences none of it because he has not yet developed in specific character dimensions or expressions of obedience for him to be able to provide custody over aspects of the Kingdom relative to his assignment and calling in God.

Gal. 4:1-2 : Now I say, as long as the **heir is a child**, he does not differ at all from a slave although he **is owner of everything**, but he is **under guardians and managers** until the **date set by the father**.

Needed Action: Submit to spiritual fathers placed over him. These will teach and feed him the Word of Christ so as to form Christ in him as he receives and obeys the Word.

- (b) **This child is easily influenced by various circumstances, teachings, and schemes of men.**

Eph. 4:11-16

- 11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,

- 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;
- 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.
- 14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;
- 15 but **speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects** into Him who is the head, even Christ,
- 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the **building up of itself in love**

Needed Action: The child must ...

- (i) Be **exposed to valid/authentic five-fold ministry**.
- (ii) Be **assimilated into the ONE-ness** of the Body of Christ.
- (iii) Begin to **grow in LOVE** for the Body.
- (iv) **Embrace TRUTH** that forms the **stature of Christ within**.
- (v) **Commit to and declare this truth in a spirit of sincere love**.

By **embracing the Body of Christ** and seeing ourselves as an **essential part of the 'whole'**, and **speaking the truth in a culture of love**, we are able to GROW UP INTO CHRIST in all things. Error, the absence of love, and a poor estimation of the value of the Body of Christ, highlight our state as infants in Christ.

(c) He is given to jealousy, quarreling, divisions, and boasting – and thus is 'carnal' or 'of the flesh'

1 Corinthians 3:1-3

- 1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ.
- 2 I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able,
- 3 for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men
- 4 For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not mere men

When are we 'STILL FLESHLY' or 'CARNAL' (v.3)? When there is JEALOUSY and STRIFE among us. What is the effect of this? It restricts you to the milk of the Word, and hinders movement to maturity and the ability to receive and obey a mature 'meaty' Word. Outgrowing jealousy and strife positions and configures you for the reception of weightier WORD. Failure to overcome jealousy and strife relegates you to an identity of 'STILL FLESHLY' or carnal, able only to drink milk.

Note : The context of the above scripture is one in which the loyalties to spiritual leaders in the Corinthian church led to division of the city church based upon this. Immature 'nepios' sonship also manifests itself where there is idolisation of spiritual fathers to the point where ...

- (1) they eclipse the person of Christ in our lives, and
- (2) loyalty to one's own spiritual father breeds disregard/disrespect and isolation from another spiritual father in your city.

Needed Action:

- (i) Jealousy and strife must be deliberately overcome by LOVE for others.
 - (ii) One's spiritual father must be viewed in proper perspective and context. Spiritual fathering exists to mature you as a divine son of God. He/She is not God, but a representative father on behalf of Father God, and although must be honoured, loved and respected, they must not be idolised to a place where the pre-eminence of Christ in the spiritual son is undermined/displaced by him/her.
 - (iii) One's commitment to a specific spiritual father must not become a divisive element in that it prohibits you from supporting other apostles/spiritual fathers who are functioning in your city. John Mark was Peter's spiritual son (1 Pet 5:13), but was called by Paul to come to him (2 Tim.4:11), because he was profitable to his ministry. Spiritual fathers and sons must not become so territorial over each other that this becomes idolatrous, controlling, manipulative and thus prohibitive to God's purposes in a city or region.
- (d) **He is prone to seek excellence in spiritual gifts/ministry without excelling first in love.**

1 Corinthians 13:8-11

- 8 Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away.
- 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part;
- 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away.
- 11 When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things.
- 12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.
- 13 But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love

In the context of 1 Corinthians 13, childishness equates to operating with great proficiency in the gifts of the Spirit, but devoid of love. The absence of love invalidates any function in the gifts of the Spirit, no matter how powerful and skillful (see 1 Cor. 13:2). The **gift of prophecy** alluded to in the passage above functions 'in part', but **love is the more 'perfect' way**, that does away with the 'partial' or imperfect. This is not to suggest that prophecy or any other gift expression is rendered null and void, but rather, when these are motivated by and marinated in divine love, then the limitation of seeing 'in part' associated with that gift expression is removed – by the presence of divine love. There will also come a time eventually where all gifts will cease, but love remains.

The Nepios Son is focused on being used by God in terms of gifting and enablement, without

having developed a sincere love for and understanding of the strong relational dynamic of the Body of Christ. Development of and in divine love is a sure sign of maturity in Christ. We have no right to minister to someone we do not love. Any expression of skillful spiritual giftedness in any form of ministry, devoid of love, renders the practitioner of no or little spiritual authority nor Divine recognition. Indeed, it does not just render him/her as such, but reveals them to be spiritually infantile even with proficiency in the exercise of the ministry/spiritual gift.

Needed Action:

- (i) Seek to develop and excel in LOVE first as a priority.
 - (ii) Ensure that any expression of giftedness or ministry is motivated by a sincere love for those the ministry is intended.
- (e) He is only able to assimilate the milk and not the meat of the Word; He is 'untrained'/'unskilled'/'inexperienced' in the Word of righteousness; He has undeveloped spiritual faculties of discernment between good and evil.

1 Peter 2:1-3 Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn **babies**, long for the **pure milk of the word**, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

Hebrews 5:12 – 6:3 (NKJV)

- 5:12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have **come to need milk** and not solid food.
- 5:13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is **unskilled in the word of righteousness**, for he is **a babe** (*nepios*)
- 5:14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age (*teleios*), that is, those who by **reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil**.
- 6:1 Therefore, leaving the discussion of **the elementary principles of Christ**, let us **go on to perfection**, not laying again **the foundation of repentance from dead works** and of **faith toward God**,
- 6:2 of the **doctrine of baptisms**, of **laying on of hands**, of **resurrection of the dead**, and of **eternal judgment**.
- 6:3 And this we will do if God permits.

The writer of the Book of Hebrews contrasts two positions that relate to two specific levels of spiritual development, which I describe as a 'foundation' position on the one hand characteristic of the '**nepios**' son, and the 'mature' position on the other characteristic of the '**huios**' son. Here below, these two positions are contrasted using phrases in our text quoted above.

FOUNDATION POSITION (nepios son)**MATURE POSITION** (huios son)

'A babe'	(5:13)	→	'Full Age'	(5:14)
'Milk'	(5:12)	→	'Solid Food'	(5:14)
Students: 'Teach you'	(5:12)	→	Teachers	(5:12)
'First or Elementary Principles' (5:12; 6:1)		→	'Going on to Perfection'	(6:1)
Inexperienced/Unskilled in the Word (5:13)		→	Practiced Habitually in the Word (5:14)	

We are never to stagnate spiritually, but to always progress toward ultimate perfection in God. The Hebrew Christians seemed to have plateaued out at a specific level of spiritual growth indicated by the 'foundation position' in the illustration above. The writer of the Book of Hebrews exhorts them to reinforce the foundation of the elementary or basic principles of Christ and then to consciously **LEAVE** this position to **proceed to maturity**. Contextually then, the 'nepios' son is characterised by **inconsistency of personal engagement with the Word of God, and an inability to receive weightier or meatier Word because he has not mastered the elementary doctrines of Christ listed in Heb. 6:1-2**, both in understanding and as a lifestyle practice.

Also, he is '**unskilled**' in the **Word of righteousness**, i.e. he is inexperienced in both accurately dividing the Word of Truth, and has also failed to practically apply the Word and thus become subjectively and personally inexperienced in the 'Word of righteousness'. Doctrine, which 'is profitable for training in righteousness' (2 Tim. 3:16) has not yet being fully demonstrated in his life.

This then has the subtle effect of him not having a developed or heightened sense of discernment of good and evil, - which is something that only comes through habitual and consistent engagement of one spiritual faculties (your spirit through the Holy Spirit).

Needed Action:

- (i) Develop a deep love for doctrine and for the Word of God.
- (ii) Engage in the study and practice of the Word of God with great consistency.
- (iii) Master the elementary doctrines of Hebrews 6:1,2.
- (iv) Start to exercise your spiritual senses of discernment with greater regularity ('by reason of use' - Heb. 5:13).

THE NEED TO PUT AWAY CHILDISH THINGS

1 Cor. 13:11 When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things.

'did away with' = **katargeo** = to render idle, inactive or inoperative; to cause a thing to have no further efficiency; to deprive of force, influence and power; to cause to cease; to put an end to; to annul, to abolish; to be severed or separated from; to terminate intercourse with

We must deliberately '**PUT AWAY**' childish talk, reasoning and any other behavior which could be classified as a 'childish thing'. As indicated above, the Greek counterpart of this phrase implies a conscious setting aside and reducing to total inactivity any proclivity, or tendency to revert to childish

ways and thinking. Note in the passage above, this happens ‘when we become ‘a man’ – i.e. mature. You will naturally outgrow certain childish thought patterns and behaviours as you proceed toward maturity.

FOR YOUR OWN STUDY: WHEN A LEADER IS A ‘NEPIOS’, ‘PAIDON’ or ‘NEANISKOS’ SON

This issue is not the focus of the present study, but I raise it here for your enquiry and consideration. When a leader is inaccurately or prematurely installed into leadership, still being himself/herself at this nepios (or even paidon, neaniskos) sonship of development, the consequences can be disastrous for the context he is meant to influence and for those he leads. Consider this issue by studying the following passages: Eccl 10:16, 17; Isaiah 3:1-8; Isaiah 22; 1 Tim.3:6; Num.11:16.

2. PAIDON SON

Greek Definitions

Strong : Half grown boy/girl; figuratively, ‘immature’.

Thayer : A little child; of a more advanced child; metaphorically - ‘children in intellect’.

Paidion - A little child mature enough to **understand and proclaim**.

“This little child of God has matured **beyond themselves** enough to truly **know the character and nature of the FATHER**. Knowing both **His intimacy and sovereignty**. During this season of knowing, the child will be in a place to finally receive **the Father’s blessing on his life**. For the first time, he really begins to **enter/experience the Kingdom of Father**. During this season the child **grows in strength, wisdom, and grace**.” [Sam Soleyn]

Key Verses: 1 John 2:13; Matt. 19:13; Matt. 18:2-5; Luke 2:34-40; 1 Cor. 14:20

(In the natural, this describes a child of between 2-10 years old)

(a) The child starts to KNOW the nature and character of the Father and develops intimacy with Him.

1 John 2:12,13 I am writing to you, little children (**teknion**), because your sins have been forgiven you for His name’s sake. I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men (**neaniskos**), because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children (**paidon**), because **you know the Father**.

Just as in the natural, a child of this age starts to value relationships with their parents, not so much in terms of aspects of protection, provision and preservation, but much more for the loving and intimate nature of the relationship. And indeed, in this relationship is the recognition and internal awareness within the child that he is privileged and blessed to be a child borne to

loving and caring parents. The child starts to appreciate who the parents are, more than what they do for them. The same is true in the spiritual relationship between a 'paidon' son and their Heavenly Father.

(b) The child starts to become aware of and know the blessedness of his walk in God.

Matthew 19:13 Then some children were brought to Him so that He **might lay His hands on them and pray**; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, " Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the **kingdom of heaven** belongs to such as these." After laying His hands on them, He departed from there.

Hence the 'paidon son' receives blessings. The knowledge and reality of his blessed position in Christ begins to cement itself within him (Eph.1:3; Gal. 3:8; Deut. 28;)

(c) The 'paidon' son knows what it is to humble himself to gain entrance into particular Kingdom expressions of life – he learns to deal with pride.

Matthew 18:2-5 And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are **converted** and become like children, you will not **enter the kingdom of heaven**. Whoever then **humbles himself** as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me.

Humility is a sure sign that the nepios son has begun to grow. Humility includes being meek and gentle, which are traits of the heart our Lord expects of all his disciples to learn of Him (Matt 11:28-30). Humility ('prautes') is "mildness of disposition, gentleness of spirit, meekness". Humility is opposite to pride and anger and also incorporates divesting oneself of your own opinions or thoughts in order to receive God's thoughts and ways.

(d) For the first time, he really begins to enter/experience the Kingdom of Father.

Mark 10:15 Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a **child** will not enter it at all.

Note here that there is a childlike and extremely TRUSTING characteristic highlighted, with which the child RECEIVES the Kingdom and its expression. This trusting disposition starts to express itself by unquestioning, non-hesitant obedience to God's commands. He begins to silence the voice of reason and logic from the domain of the unregenerate areas of his soul, and simply obeys from the platform of his spirit. The paidon son begins to learn unswerving trust and faith, which is evidenced by willing compliance to God's word and ways.

(e) During this season the child grows in strength, wisdom, and grace.

This word is used to describe Jesus Himself from approximately 2 years to about 11 years old.

Luke 2:40 The Child (*paidon*) continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

At this stage the paidon son must engage the reading and the study of the Word of God (apostolic doctrine) more consistently and deeply, so as to grow in spiritual stature, wisdom and grace.

Aside Note : At 12 years old, Mary addressed Jesus as 'teknon' (Luke 2:48). He had an awareness that He must be about His Heavenly Father's business and thought He was ready for the task. However, after a reprimand by his earthly spiritual parents (Joseph and Mary), He subjected himself to them for 18 years, and emerged at 30 years old as a mature Son. The transition from nepios to teknon and ultimately huioi can potentially be a phase wherein many sons of God make shipwreck of their calling in God. Premature engagement with one's calling out of zeal or ambition can be disastrous. Hence the need for the son to submit to oversight spiritual fathering (more on this later).

(f) The child still needs development in his thinking, especially how to practically apply the gifts, talents and abilities the Lord has given him.

1 Cor. 14:20 Brethren, do not be children (*paidon*) in your thinking; yet in evil be infants (*nepiazō*), but in your thinking be mature (*teleios*).

'Nepiazō' implies innocence in the context above; 'teleios' means mature, perfect or complete.

Whilst the 'paidon' son exhibits knowledge of and developing intimacy with the Father, and can understand certain spiritual operations within the Kingdom and Church, his **spiritual mental** faculties are not completely/fully developed and as such needs greater maturation to the perfect state. The context of 1 Cor. 14 concerns the practical administration of the gifts of prophecy and speaking in tongues and interpretation of tongues, and Paul appeals for a mature (*teleios*) mindset in how this is done, especially when determining the appropriateness of the exercise of these gifts dependent on the context or environment. The son may have gifts but lacks wisdom to effectively administrate it.

(g) The child at times has difficulty in understanding the will of God attendant with his life in a specific season and the revelation of Christ to him in that season.

[Take the time to read the entire chapter of John 21]

John 21:4-6

But when the day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. So Jesus said to them, "**Children** (*paidon*), you do not have any fish, do you?" They answered Him, "No." And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat and you will find a catch." So they cast, and then they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish.

Jesus, after the resurrection, at His third appearing to His disciples who went fishing, called them 'paidon', perhaps alluding to the fact that they reverted to a wrong preoccupation (fishing) for ...

- (1) failure to understand how the will of God was playing itself out,
- (2) failure to comprehend 'how' and 'where' Christ is to be recognised, revealed and understood in the current disclosure of Himself to the earth,
- (3) failure to discern the dealings of God with them in that season of their lives – and hence they, in discouragement, went back to a former engagement – but one in which they could not manifest any fruit (no fish), until they reconnected with the risen Christ.

At times the paidon son might not fully understand a specific season of his life, how God is dealing with him in that season, especially in reference to God's purposes for him and how this should play itself out. More so, it might seem as if the Lord has abandoned the son, for the son is somewhat unaccustomed to the new revelation of Christ that is wanting to break through to the mind of the son in this time. Failure to fully understand these things may cause discouragement in the son; there is a sense of futility in regards to the time he has given himself to God's ways and will, and deems that all this has amounted to nothing (for the disciples it was three years). He may abandon his calling in God and the vigour with which he pursues it, although he is still in relationship with God. He might pursue a previous preoccupation or 'lesser' engagement (as in 'fishing') with little or no fruit of divine favour on it (they caught no fish).

I love the way the Lord deals with His disciples who displayed these tendencies. There is no harsh rebuke. Instead, He issues a command to cast their nets on the right side of the boat. They hear a familiar voice they knew for three years. They catch a massive haul of 153 fish, which in Jewish gematria signifies mega sonship – or mature sonship; this was symbolic of the standard of sonship to which they had been called – 'huios'. John recognises that such results borne to obedience to such a voice could only be the work of the Lord Jesus Himself. Peter then re-mantles himself – placing his garment back on which he had taken off in order to fish. This is symbolic of re-commitment to his role as an apostle of Christ. Peter is then challenged to feed the lambs and sheep as an expression of his love for Christ and hears again the familiar command, "Follow me".

At times God may respond with great provision in order to teach the paidon son who is called to significant levels of commitment to God's purposes (as Peter was) that He will take care of him and that he need not revert to dependance on his own way to provide for his own need. This great divine provision accomplishes much more than this. It signifies to the son the great love and mercy of our Father and thus evokes a response within the son to undistractedly and wholeheartedly pursue God's will at any cost (this is evidenced in John 21 where Jesus unveils to Peter the type of death he would die and Peter's willingness still follow the Lord in spite of this).

3. TEKNON SON

The main usage of this word stresses the fact of a **spiritual birth** and **relationship** with God.

Greek Definitions

- Strong :** A child (as produced).
- Zodhiates :** True children, genuine descendants (John 8:39; 1 Pet 3:6); Teknon is a more general designation for offspring and contemplates the individual who is parented, one who is born to another.
- Thayer :**
- The name transferred to that intimate and reciprocal relationship formed by the bonds of love, friendship, trust;
 - Pupil or disciple – who is instructed by their teacher to nourish their minds and mould their character.

Teknon - This child knows his sins are forgiven.

“Sin management gives way to grace. Love for others flourishes during this season. This is a time to **embrace the birth rite of the Father and find his place in his spiritual lineage and heritage**. This child **begins his Father’s business at this stage**. This child receives **the trans-generational promises and crawls on the altar to die to self-fulfillment**. This child matures quickly as he serves a lifestyle of sacrifice. During this season the child grows in **wisdom, and stature, and in favor.**”

[Sam Soleyn]

Key Verses: 1 John 2:12; 1 John 2:1; 1 John 3:18; 3:10; John 13:13; Ephesians 5:1; Luke 2:46-52; Romans 9:6-8; Galatians 4:28,31

(In the natural, this describes a child of between 10-17 years old)

- (a) The son is fully conscious that his sins have been forgiven – He has no guilt and condemnation.

MATT 9:2 And they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, “Take courage, son (*teknon*); your sins are forgiven.”

1 John 2:12 I am writing to you, **little children (teknon)**, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name’s sake

[Note: ‘teknon’ is the diminutive form of ‘teknon’]

Hence the son is not paralysed by feelings of guilt and condemnation (Rom.8:1-2; Heb. 9:14; Psalm 32:1,2).

(b) The teknon has a legitimate and valid relationship with His Father.

John 1:11,12 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children (*teknon*) of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God

Reception of Christ qualifies you to legally and officially be a part of His family. In a technical sense – you are his son and your sins have been forgiven. The emphasis in John 1:12 is not so much upon the stage of development in sonship as much as it is that the son of God has the RIGHT to be called so. Hence in this sense in which it is used, it stresses the issue that a legal, legitimate relationship with God exists.

Rom 9:6-8 But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; nor are they all children (*teknon*) because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "through Isaac your descendants will be named." That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children (*teknon*) of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants

'Teknon' also denotes the sense of someone legally part of a specific lineage or dynasty. Natural descendant of Abraham is not the true Israel of God, but rather anyone who, like Isaac was, is a son of promise through Christ.

(c) The son starts to live a life overcoming of sin and expressing practical righteousness

1 John 2:1 My little children (*teknion*), I am writing these things to you so that **you may not sin**. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous

1 John 3:10 By this the children (*teknon*) of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not **practice righteousness is not of God**, nor the one who **does not love his brother**.

(d) The son flourishes in love for others, thereby imitating God His Father

1 John 3:18 Little children (*teknion*), let us not **love with word or with tongue**, but in deed and truth.

1 John 3:10 By this the children (*teknon*) of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not **practice righteousness is not of God**, nor the one who **does not love his brother**.

Eph. 5:1,2 Therefore be **imitators of God**, as beloved children (*teknon*); and **walk in love**, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma

- (e) The son submits his own ambition and will in subjection to a spiritual father, who through instruction of the Word, matures the nature of Christ within him, thus facilitating his rapid progression to maturity – and a four-dimensional growth in stature, wisdom, favour with God and favour with men.

Luke 2:46-52

Then, after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. When they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, “**Son (teknon)**, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You.” And He said to them, “Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father’s house?” But they did not understand the statement which He had made to them. And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He **continued in subjection** to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And **Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.**

Jesus at this stage was aware He had a calling and had to be about His Father’s business. He demonstrates great knowledge and understanding, such that well-schooled teachers of His day were astonished at (1) His listening skills and capacity (2) His probing questionings (2) the wisdom and insight He exhibited by the answers He provided. Yet all of this was still insufficient to fully release Him into a practical expression of His Father’s will. He had to be in subjection to spiritual parents as represented in Joseph and Mary, who ‘put his life in right arrangement’ – (as suggested by the Greek word ‘hupotasso’ translated as ‘subjection’).

The spiritual father labours to form Christ fully within his spiritual son.

Gal 4:19 My children (*teknon*), with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you.

Paul used the term often to describe his spiritual son Timothy (2 Tim. 1:2; 1 Tim.1:2; 1 Cor. 4:17; Phil 2:22). Many believe, in this context, that it is also a term of endearment and love. It also highlights the teacher-learner relationship between the father and son. The teknon has an active learning experience with his father.

Consider how Eli trained Samuel to discern God’s voice:

1 Sam. 3:16 The Lord called yet again, “Samuel!” So Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he answered, “I did not call, **my son**, lie down again.”

- (f) The teknon must walk closely in the doctrine and ways of his spiritual father in the Lord during this time.

Probably more than at any other time, it is imperative that the teknon mimic the ways of the spiritual Father, so long as these are reflective of Christ in every way.

Eph. 5:1,2 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children (*teknon*); and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma

Imitators = mimetes = followers – we get the English word mimic from this word – i.e. it relates to ‘copying exactly’.

By imitating the ways and doctrine of an accurate and credible spiritual father in the Lord who has or is connected to an authentic apostolic grace, the son is actually imitating God Himself.

1 Thess. 1:6-7 You also became **imitators of us and of the Lord**, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an **example to all the believers** in Macedonia and in Achaia.

The power of the Thessalonian church to impact people far removed from them with such force was directly dependent upon the extent to which they accurately represented everything Paul stood for. Note that Paul stresses that they were imitators of the Lord and of them. To the Corinthians he said, “Follow me as I follow Christ”.

1 Cor. 4:15-17

- 15 For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus **I became your father through the gospel**.
- 16 Therefore I exhort you, **be imitators of me**.
- 17 For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my **beloved and faithful child in the Lord**, and he will **remind you of my ways** which are in Christ, just as **I teach everywhere in every church**.

1 Cor 11:1

Be **imitators of me**, just as I also am of Christ.

(g) The teknon begins to work in active support of his spiritual father in the Lord.

This support might express itself in a variety of ways (financially, practically, fellow-labouring, prayer, etc.)

Phil 2:19-22 But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition. For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. But you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a **child (teknon) serving his father**.

(h) The teknon lives in the hope and desire of his inheritance and reception of all the promises of His Father. He becomes conscious of the fact that he, as a co-heir with Christ, cannot be joined to any element of bondage.

Gal. 4:28,31

- 28 And you brethren, like Isaac, are children (*teknon*) of promise.
- 29 But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also.
- 30 But what does the Scripture say? “Cast out the bondwoman and her son (*uhois*)
- 31 For the son (*uhois*) of the bondwoman shall not be an heir with the son (*uhois*) of the

free woman.” So then, brethren, we are not children (*teknon*) of a bondwoman, but of the free woman

Rom 8:16-17 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are **children (*teknon*) of God**, and if **children(*teknon*) , heirs also**, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him

4. NEANISKOS SON

Greek Definition

Strong's : A youth (under 40)

Thayer : Young man, youth

Zodhiates : Young men in the prime and vigour of manhood up the age of 40 years or more.

Neaniskos - Young Man in vigor of manhood.

“In this son the **word of God is alive and sharp**. He has **overcome the evil one**. This son has **keen eyes** and can see what others can't. The spirit is poured out **to him** and **through him**. He is ready to claim the **victory over the largest obstacles** to maturing in his life.”

[Sam Soleyn]

Key Verses: 1 John 2:14; Acts 2:17; Matthew 19:20

(In the natural, this describes someone between 17-40 years old)

- (a) **‘Neaniskos sons’ exhibit a robust and consistent spiritual strength, have the Word dwelling in them in an abiding and a consistent way, and demonstrate a capacity to overcome the world and the enemy.**

1 John 2:14 I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, **young men (*neaniskos*)**, because you are **strong**, and the **word of God abides in you**, and you have **overcome the evil one**

- (b) **He has developed keen vision, for the Spirit has been poured out on him and flows through him.**

Acts 2:17 ‘ And it shall be in the last days,’ God says, ‘That I will pour forth of **MY Spirit** on all mankind; And your sons (*uihos*) and your daughters shall prophesy, And your **young men (*neaniskos*) shall see visions**, And your old men shall dream dreams.

- (c) **The son is ready to claim the victory over the largest obstacles to maturing in his life.**

Matthew 19:20 The young man (*neaniskos*) said to Him, “All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?” Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and **come, follow Me.**

To this ‘young man’ Jesus laid an expectation to give up all he has to overcome the pressing desire to self-preserve and self-protect; and obey to a degree where nothing binds him or inhibits him in his desire to ‘follow’ the Lord completely.

- (d) **The son learns to serve valid Apostolic ministry practically and spiritually.**

Acts 5:17 And immediately she fell at his feet and breathed her last, and the **young men** came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

5. **HUIOS SON :**

Greek Definition

Strong's: A son
Zodhiates: Huios refers to a legal heir and thus by implication, an adult.
Thayer : Those who in character and life resemble God, those governed by the Spirit of God, repose calm and joyful trust in God.

Huios - The fully matured son.

“This is a **perfected, matured son who represents his Father.** This son is proclaimed by the Father Himself to be His son. This son ushers in the **peace** of his Father’s government by **loving his enemies and forgiving debts.** He is **led by the Spirit** and **rules righteously** over creation. He experiences **true unity in maturity with other sons**, and does not **shrink from discipline.** He is ready to **take hold of his full inheritance.**”

[Sam Soleyn]

Key Verses: Matthew 3:17; Matthew 5:9, 44; Luke 6:35-36; Romans 8:19; Romans 8:29

(In the natural, this describes someone of 40+ years old; although Jesus was identified as huios by His father when he was 30 years old)

(a) The huios son is led by the Holy Spirit

Rom. 8:14 For all who are **being led** by the Spirit of God, these are **sons of God**.

To be led of the Spirit is to obey the Word of God.

(b) The huios son knows internally that he is a mature son because he has a witness from His Heavenly Father within.

Matthew 3:17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, " This is **My beloved Son**, in whom I am well- pleased."

The 'huios son' is declared by His Father to be His Son. He has demonstrated principles of consistent obedience, submission and humility. You will know this witness and declaration by our Father over you as His son. It will be a witness from the Holy Spirit to your spirit within you; you will know and discern this beyond any doubt.

(c) The Huios son has demonstrated consistent submission and obedience to his spiritual father.

Jesus, who was commended and validated by His Father at His baptism, exhibited a life of total subjection and obedience to Joseph and Mary as His spiritual parents. Thus the Heavenly Father recognised Him as His divine Son. The same principle is powerfully demonstrated in the book of Ruth, who being the representation of a spiritual son (Ruth 4:15), consistently obeyed Naomi (spiritual father) and came into intimate relationship with Boaz (Christ).

(d) The huios son excels in PEACE, LOVE and FORGIVENESS.

Matthew 5:9 "Blessed are the **peacemakers**, for they shall be called **sons of God**

Matthew 5:44 But I say to you, **love your enemies** and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be **sons of your Father** who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous

Luke 6:35-36 But **love your enemies**, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and **you will be sons of the Most High**; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. Be **merciful**, just as your Father is merciful.

The three verses above highlight how the 'huios son' excels relationally as a peacemaker and exhibits right responses of unconditional love, especially toward his enemies. He exudes the love of the Father profusely. He also lives a life of total selflessness and self-sacrifice, doing nothing for personal gain or out of selfish ambition. He only seeks to do His father's will.

It is interesting that the son who forgives sins against him is called the son of the MOST HIGH.

The phrase 'Most High' stresses the lofty and superior nature of God. Many times the 'huios' son is described as a son of light, son of the day, son of peace, son of consolation or son of resurrection (see additional note at the end of this study). Each term describes a unique quality associated with this mature son. Now, son of the Most High then could allude to the fact that a mature son who perfects relationships and excels in love and forgiveness has reached a noteworthy 'height' and 'ascendency' in his sonship expression.

Aside note: The son quickly forgives men of their sins against him. He is now eligible, on behalf of His Heavenly Father, to administer the forgiveness of sins generally, thus facilitating the entry of men into the Kingdom of God. [[John 20:23](#) - *If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained.*]

- (e) **The huios son is not offended by the discipline of his father, but receives it as a son who is loved, and so matures, producing evidence of fruits of righteousness in his life.**

Heb. 12:7-11 It is for discipline that you endure; **God deals with you as with sons (*huios*)**; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are **illegitimate children (*nothos*) and not sons (*huios*)**. Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the **peaceful fruit of righteousness**.

The 'huios' son is specifically contrasted with a person who is an illegitimate son - '**nothos**' in the Greek, which means '**an illegitimate or misbegotten child, one who is spurious**' - used here in Heb. 12:8. The mature 'huios' son has known the instruction and discipline of his Father. This usually is expressed through the discipline of an earthly spiritual father. This son embraces discipline as a necessary part of both his progression into maturity, as well as a significant feature of his ability to endure it, thus denoting him as mature.

- (f) **The 'huios' son embraces suffering or life experiences as an essential part of his fashioning as a mature son, who has learnt and become a standard of OBEDIENCE.**

Heb 2:10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many **sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings**.

Heb 5:8 Although ***He was a Son***, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

(g) The huios son overcomes sin, the flesh, self, etc. demonstrating maturity and his nature as a son of His Father

We do not overcome to become a mature son; rather we overcome demonstrating our maturity as a huios son, connected to, empowered by and reflective of our God, our Father.

Rev. 21:7 He who overcomes will INHERIT these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son (*huios*).

2 Cor. 6:17,18 “Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,” says the Lord. “And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you. “And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,” Says the Lord Almighty.

(h) Huios’ sons are often described in various ways to highlight certain characteristics associated with maturity, examples:

- Sons of the Kingdom (Matt 13:38) – not ‘son of the house’ or just ‘son of some spiritual father’. The huios son, whilst he is the ‘son of man’ exhibits behaviours, thinking and levels of commitment beyond his local house and spiritual father to incorporate the wider ‘Kingdom’. ‘Kingdom and sonship are inextricably linked – see Col.1:13.
- Son of Peace (Luke 10:6).
- Sons of the Day (1 Thess.5:5) – i.e. enlightened with true knowledge ‘Sons of Light’ (John 12:36) – who disclose the nature of God, the Light to men (Matt 11:27).
- Sons of the Resurrection (Luke 20:36) – meaning ‘partaker of the resurrection’. Hence the principle of ‘LIFE’ pulsates within this son, who ‘has LIFE within himself (John 5:26). This son, akin to the last Adam, is a ‘life-giving spirit’, not a ‘living soul’ like the first man Adam (1 Cor.15:45). This son gives life to men (John 5:21).
- Sons of the Highest (Most High) – (Luke 6:35-36).

(i) The huios son activates his FIRSTBORN status, privilege and function.

Romans 8:29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.

Ultimately our conformity to the image of THE SON is a conformity to His state as a ‘huios’ son. This huios son is poised to access all the executive privileges and divine functions attendant with his inheritance in and of God as the FIRSTBORN IN CHRIST. Hence it is critically imperative that sons of God mature toward the huios dimension of sonship as quickly as possible. It is not conditional upon time, but upon willing and obedient co-operation with the demands of the Lord. This is our destination and must always be kept at the forefront of our thinking. For this level of sonship, all of creation eagerly awaits. So do we.

Romans 8:19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.

A SIXTH LEVEL – ‘PATER’

The level of ‘Pater’ – FATHER – is possible to the huios son, who has the capacity to accurately represent His Heavenly Father well. It is every huios son’s responsibility, privilege and honour to do so. The name of the ‘Son’ is ‘Everlasting Father’ (Is. 9:6,7) – so in sonship the nature (name) and function of father can be expressed.

Also, there are some called to function as spiritual fathers who are given custody of God’s sons who may be in various stages of their development (either nepios, paidon, teknon, neaniskos or huios). This individual is to bring the grace of the Heavenly Father to these maturing sons and aid their development to maturity. This is a serious role and function for the one called to it and must be done soberly, sincerely and in the fear of God. (The present study does not focus on this issue). These individuals should know the Heavenly Father intimately and deeply, and be acquainted with His ancient, timeless and eternal ways.

1 John 2:13a I am writing to you, **fathers**, because you **know Him** who has been **from the beginning**

1 Thess 2:11,12 just as you know how we were **exhorting and encouraging and imploring** each one of you as a **father would his own children**, so that you would **walk in a manner worthy of the God** who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

YOU ARE QUALIFIED TO SHARE IN GOD’S INHERITANCE WITH THE SAINTS

Firstborn sonship is a corporate reality. Hence we must understand that the appropriation of our inheritance occurs as a corporate reality. This demands an appreciation for the brotherhood, a deep love for our brothers and sisters in Christ, and a desire to participate JOINTLY together with them in all God has given to all of us.

The Father has **qualified us** to share in the inheritance **with the saints in LIGHT (God)**.

Col. 1:12 giving thanks to the Father, who has **qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light**.

**Qualified = hikanoo = to enable, to render fit,
to equip with adequate power to perform duties of one.**

There is nothing you really do to qualify for an inheritance. To be an heir you must simply have the right identity (son). To **‘BE’** - and not necessarily work **to ‘DO’**. But **‘BEING’** demands maturity to which we must all come. This is not so much a factor of chronological time as much as it is a matter of willing obedience and swift co-operation with the work of the Lord in our lives.

THE URGENT NEED TO MATURE : There is an urgent need for sons of God to mature to the standard of functioning as Huios sons – mature sons in Christ. To attempt to access inheritance prematurely would be to incur wastage – like the prodigal son who requested his inheritance from his father. Our Heavenly Father will bestow upon us greater practical out-workings of the inheritance He has already given as we grow in our maturity. May you and I mature in God in our **firstborn sonship identity and so access our inheritance in God**.

Rev. 21:7 He who overcomes will INHERIT these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son (huios).

LIVE A LIFE OF OBEDIENCE : May I encourage you to at least ensure that you are LED of the Spirit daily through His Word and that you seek to OBEY every command and impulse from God. May we submit in obedience to the Word delivered by our spiritual fathers in the Lord, and so come into maturity. Obedience is Key.

Heb. 11:8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to RECEIVE AN INHERITANCE; and he went out, not knowing where he was going

LOVE ALL PEOPLE: If you carefully examine the stages of sonship as reflected in this study, one thread commonly weaved into all stages is the issue of how the son relates in love to all men. Thus we must seek to excel in love toward all men, even our enemies, and administer the ministry of reconciliation, which we have been given as sons. If in our inheritance in Christ is included that marvelous fact that in HIM, ALL THINGS, both visible and invisible will be reconciled (**Col.1:16-20**), then we must embrace also the issue of living a reconciliatory life with men (**Eph. 2:16**), that we position ourselves as peacemakers between God and men, men and men, and ourselves and all men.

God has given us all things that pertain to life and Godliness (**2 Pet. 1:3**) as part of our inheritance in Him. This includes the fact that He more than adequately takes care of us and sufficiently resources us so that our personal needs are met, and that we have enough to finance aspects of His will in the earth.

WE AS GOD'S FIRSTBORN ARE HIS INHERITANCE!

As we have an inheritance in HIM, He has an inheritance in us. Actually, we are His inheritance. IT IS HIS SHEER DELIGHT to see us come into the fullness of the stature and measure of Christ – to full maturity in our sonship in Him. I pray like Paul did, that our eyes be opened to see HIS inheritance in us as His Firstborn Sons.

Eph. 1:18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of HIS inheritance in the saints,

His inheritance in us is that we be His sons, sons of His love. Israel, symbolic of the church (Acts 7:38) is pictured as God's heritage.

Deut. 32:9 But the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage. (See also Psalm 87:2)

The present day church is described as 'Zion' and the 'church of the firstborn' in Heb. 12:22,23. We are God's portion and heritage.

(Refer to pages 24, 25 & 26 for a summation of the characteristics associated with each stage of sonship.)

ADDITIONAL 'STUDY' NOTE FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION:

EXERCISE GREAT CARE IN OVER-APPLYING THE 'TEKNON-HUIOS' DISTINCTION:

One cannot solely rely on the etymology of a word to isolate its spiritual meaning. The general use of the word in a variety of contexts must also be considered. Together with etymology, the context might decide a particular shade of meaning. In these instances, spiritual interpretation and application of the word rests with the Spirit of God within us, and not solely with the grammarian. (a grammarian is 'one who is an expert on grammar')

'Teknon' stresses the new spiritual relationship of life we enjoy because of our acceptance of Christ as Saviour and Lord (e.g. John 1:11,12), whereas 'huios' stresses the development of spiritual character in keeping with the nature of God, our Father (Matt. 5:44,45 – 'Love your enemies'). But this distinction denoting a progression in development is not uniformly maintained throughout Scripture, so one must exercise care in over applying the distinction.

NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

[I have interspersed my thoughts and insights here amidst some general principles from 'The Complete Word Study Dictionary', by the Greek scholar, Spiros Zodhiates]

- 'Teknon' denotes the more general designation for offspring indicating one that is born to another. It refers generally to posterity (Acts 2:39; Gal 4:28,31).
- 'Huios' refers to a legal heir, thus implying maturity or adulthood.
- We as sons are called 'teknon' of God. It is used many times as a general descriptor of our technical status as sons of God, who have issued forth from Him and who are a part of His family (see for example: John 1:12, Rom. 8:16,17,21; 9:8; Eph. 5:1; 1 John 3:1,2,10; 5:2).
- We are also called 'huios' sons of God, denoting our mature state as His sons. (Rom 8:14,19; Gal 3:26; 4:6,7, Heb. 12:7).
- 'Teknon' is often used by spiritual fathers to denote and identify their spiritual sons in the Lord. Timothy is often referred to as Paul's son in the Lord. The word 'teknon' is used here (2 Tim. 1:2; 1 Tim. 1:2; 1 Cor. 4:17; Phil 2:22). The same applies to Titus and Onesimus (Titus 1:4; Phil 1:10). The use of 'teknon' then in this regard alludes to the fact that the spiritual son issues forth from his spiritual father – in a symbolic sense, and that he is the one as a pupil/disciple under the training and mentorship of his father in the Lord. The word is also used to describe corporate sons (1 Cor. 4:14; 2 Cor. 6:13; 3 John 1:4; John 11:2).
- 'Huios' is used by Peter as a descriptor of John Mark as his spiritual son (1 Pet. 5:13).
- 'Teknon' is often used as a term of great affection and endearment – a tender term of address as in "my son" or "my child" (Matt 9:2).

The above is highlighted to indicate that 'teknon' need not be necessarily viewed as a stage of development in sonship that is inferior to higher stages. It can also be a legitimate expression that can be used to denote various aspects of sonship as is highlighted above. However, it must be borne in mind that the measure and stature of CHRIST, the Son to which we must all be conformed, is a 'HUIOS' son – a mature, perfected son (Rom 8:28,29).

SUMMATION OF CHARACTERISTICS OF EACH SONSHIP STAGE

NEPIOS SON

- (a) Nepios sons have an inheritance only positionally, but due to immaturity, have not appropriated this reality subjectively, personally, practically and experientially. (Gal. 4:1,2)
- (b) This child is easily influenced by various circumstances, teachings, and schemes of men. (Heb 4:11-16)
- (c) He is given to jealousy, quarreling, divisions, and boasting – and thus is ‘carnal’ or ‘of the flesh’. (1 Cor.3:1-3)
- (d) He is prone to seek excellence in spiritual gifts/ministry without excelling first in love. (1 Cor.13:8-11)
- (e) He is only able to assimilate the milk and not the meat of the Word; He is ‘untrained’/‘unskilled’/‘inexperienced’ in the Word of righteousness; He has undeveloped spiritual faculties of discernment between good and evil. (Heb. 5:12-6:3)
- (f) This child is usually self-absorbed – making sounds of selfish whining concerning his own provision and protection.
- (h) He is in need of spiritual fathering to unveil the mature measure of the stature of Christ within him. (Gal. 4:12; Luke 2)

PAIDON SON

- (a) The child starts to KNOW the nature and character of the Father and develop intimacy with Him. (1 John 2:12,13)
- (b) The child starts to become aware of and know the blessedness of his walk in God. (Matt.19:13)
- (c) The ‘paidon son’ knows what it is to humble himself to gain entrance into particular Kingdom expressions of life – he learns to deal with pride. (Matt.18:2-5)
- (e) For the first time, he really begins to enter/experience the Kingdom of Father. (Mark 10:15)
- (f) During this season the child grows in strength, wisdom, and grace. (Luke 2:40)
- (g) The child still needs development in his thinking, especially how to practically apply the gifts, talents and abilities the Lord has given him. (1 Cor.14:20)
- (h) The child at times has difficulty in understanding the will of God attendant with his life in a specific season and revelation of Christ to him in that season. (John 21:4-6)

TEKNON SON

- (a) The son is fully conscious that his sins have been forgiven – He has no guilt and condemnation. (Matt 9:2; 1 John 2:12)
 - (b) The teknon has a legitimate and valid relationship with His Father. (John 1:11,12; Rom 9:6-8)
 - (c) The son starts to live a life overcoming of sin and expressing practical righteousness. (1 John 2:1; 3:10)
 - (d) The son flourishes in love for others, thereby imitating God His Father. (1 John 3:18,10; Eph.5:2)
 - (e) The son submits his own ambition and will in subjection to a spiritual father, who through instruction of the Word, matures the nature of Christ within him, thus facilitating his rapid progression to maturity – and a four-dimensional growth in stature, wisdom, favour with God and favour with men. (Luke 2:46-52; Gal. 4:19)
 - (f) The teknon must walk closely in the doctrine and ways of his spiritual father in the Lord during this time. (Eph.5:2; 1 Thess.1:6,7; 1 Cor. 4:15-17; 11:1)
 - (g) The teknon begins to work in active support of his spiritual father in the Lord. (Phil. 2:19-22)
 - (h) The teknon lives in the hope and desire of his inheritance and reception of all the promises of His Father. He becomes conscious of the fact that he, as a co-heir with Christ, cannot be joined to any element of bondage. (Gal.4:28,31; Rom.8:16-17)
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NEANISKOS

- (a) ‘Neaniskos sons’ exhibit a robust and consistent spiritual strength, have the Word dwelling in them in an abiding and a consistent way, and demonstrate a capacity to overcome the world and the enemy. (1 John 2:14)
 - (b) He has developed keen vision for the Spirit has been poured out on him and flows through him. (Acts 2:17)
 - (c) The son is ready to claim the victory over the largest obstacles to maturing in his life. (Matt.19:20)
 - (d) The son learns to serve valid Apostolic ministry practically and spiritually. (Acts 5:17)
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HUIOS SON

- (a) The huios son is led by the Holy Spirit. (Rom.8:14)
- (b) The huios son knows internally that he is a mature son because he has a witness from His Heavenly Father within. (Matt.3:17)
- (c) The Huios son has demonstrated consistent submission and obedience to his spiritual father. (Luke 2; Book of Ruth)

- (d) The huio son excels in PEACE, LOVE and FORGIVENESS. (Matt.5:9,44; Luke 6:35-36)
 - (e) The huio son is not offended by the discipline of his father, but receives it as a son who is loved, and so matures, producing evidence of fruits of righteousness in his life. (Heb.12:7-11)
 - (f) The 'huio' son embraces suffering or life experiences as an essential part of his fashioning as a mature son, who has learnt and become a standard of OBEDIENCE. (Heb.2:10; 5:8)
 - (g) The 'huio' son overcomes sin, the flesh, self, etc. demonstrating maturity and his nature as a son of His Father
 - (h) Huio's sons are often described in various ways to highlight certain characteristics associated with maturity, examples:
 - Sons of the Kingdom (Matt.13:38)
 - Son of Peace (Luke 10:6)
 - Sons of the Day and 'Sons of Light' (1 Thess. 5:5; John 12:36)
 - Sons of the Resurrection (Luke 20:36)
 - Sons of the Highest (Most High) (Luke 6:35-36)
 - (i) The huio son activates his FIRSTBORN status, privilege and function (Rom. 8:29)
 - (j) The huio son can represent His Heavenly Father accurately.
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