



# Bible Student's Notebook™

## *The Herald of His Grace*

Issue 140

### *Due Benevolence*

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOME

(Part XXXVIII)

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

*“Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband” (I Corinthians 7:3).*

**P**aul’s marital instruction is very clear: the consummated husband/wife relationship is to function on the basis of a perpetual state of marriage (the uniting as “one flesh”).

*“The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife” (I Corinthians 7:4).*

#### **MARITAL BENEVOLENCE**

#### **MARITAL FRAUD**

The covenant (promise) of marriage (physical union), among other things, binds the husband and wife to the act of “benevolence.”

Because of this “conjugal duty,” if the husband or wife denies sexual intimacy, they defraud the other.

The word translated “benevolence” in the King James Version is Strong’s Greek Lexicon #2133 *eunoia*, which is a euphemism for “conjugal duty.” While the word translated “due” is #3784, *opheilo*, meaning “to owe... to be under obligation.” Thus the husband and wife are under a covenant of obligation to conjugal duty (sexual responsibility).

**“Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency” (I Corinthians 7:5).**

Noah Webster defines “defraud” as, “To deprive of right ... to withhold wrongfully from another what is due to him.”

The husband is responsible by the covenant of marriage to “render unto the wife due benevolence.” The wife is also responsible by the same union covenant to render to her husband “due benevolence.”

Our English word “defraud” obviously comes from the root “fraud,” which is defined by Webster as, “artifice by which the right or interest of another is injured.” For this reason “defraud” (Strong’s Greek Lexicon #650, *apostereo*) is also translated in James 5:4 of the King James Version as “kept back by fraud.”

*“Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband” (I Corinthians 7:3).*

*(continued next page)*

They are both in the bonds of sexual unity: as the wife’s body belongs to her husband, so the husband’s body belongs to his wife.

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## **Bible Student's Notebook**

ISSN: 1936-9360

No. 140 – June 11, 2008

This weekly publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7)
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11)
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25)
- true freedom and liberty apart from the law (Galatians 5:1)
- the organic nature of the church, the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12)
- the distinct ministry of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13)
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15)
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13).
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with ...
  - total forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14)
  - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6)
  - adult sonship position (Galatians 4)

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

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½ Year (26 issues) – \$25; 1 Year (52 issues) – \$50

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Remember that it is our responsibility as husbands and fathers to take the truths we learn from God's Word, the truths that we hold dear, and impart them to our families.

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At the core of the marital covenant is the union of two as one. Central to this union is the sexual bond of coitus. This is the meaning of "marriage" – "the act of uniting." Unless prohibited by genuine physical limitations, anything less than consistent sexual union between a husband and wife is a defrauding of the marriage covenant (the promise of physical union).

Much *fraud* takes place in marriage relationships. Many "marriages" could be scripturally declared *fraudulent* – the couple being in a state of fault (*i.e.*, "an omission of that which ought to be done"). Their relationship is merely a pretense of "marriage;" an upscale room-mate arrangement, a social partner – but not a biblical marriage.

### **SOLE EXCEPTION**

Outside of genuine physical limitations, there is only *one* scriptural exception for the suspension of regular sexual intercourse between a husband and wife. Consistent conjugal intimacy<sup>1</sup> is to be set aside only for the purpose of "*fasting and prayer*."

*"Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, **that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer**; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency"* (I Corinthians 7:5).

Clearly stated, "*fasting and prayer*" is the **only** biblical purpose for not actively engaging in marital sexuality. No other reason is given.<sup>2</sup> The principle therefore is quite simple: no sex, no food; no intercourse, no eating. I would dare say that if many couples followed this scriptural principle they would already be dead from starvation!

### **FASTING AND PRAYER**

This *fasting* is not for medical or health reasons, for it is coupled with "*prayer*" – "*fasting and prayer*." This is fasting associated with prayer. This type of scriptural fasting is a response to overwhelming grief, sorrow, and heaviness – all an atmosphere of a burdened soul.

1. There is no legalistic rule of frequency; an innate interval being established by the nature of the couple, and even then with degrees of ebb and flow.
2. Paul does not even validate the Mosaic Law's prohibition of sexual relations during the menstrual period. This ceremonial "uncleanness" has been done away by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This example given to us by Paul is of a couple who is overwhelmed and overburdened of heart and soul to such a extent that there is a mutual loss of physical desire and drive. They are in mutual harmony – “*with consent.*” They have agreed to devote themselves to working through their trials by giving their attentions to spiritual rather than physical matters. They will take the time that they usually spend in eating and intercourse and apply it to their struggles. This would be such a natural process for situations of extreme circumstances; but this unique time that they share together before the Lord is only to be “*for a time.*” The expression of their sexual intimacy will be resumed at the same time as their dietary life is reinstated. There is a clear correlation between the need and pleasure of eating and that of sex.

### MUTUAL CONSENT

“Defraud ye not one the other, **except it be with consent** for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency” (I Corinthians 7:5).

This abstinence for the purpose of “*fasting and prayer*” is to take place **only** by *mutual consent*. Both the husband and wife are to be in agreement to this purpose.

### FOR A TIME

“Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent **for a time**, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency” (I Corinthians 7:5).

Not only is this “*fasting and prayer*” and sexual abstinence to be by reciprocal approval, it is also to be for **only** a limited, agreed-upon period of time – “*for a time.*”

Even in the most extreme trials of agony, there comes a time to raise up from the sorrow and continue with life. This can be seen in the life of King David who, after his grieving process at the death of his young son, it is written:

“Then David arose from the earth, and washed,

and anointed himself, and changed his apparel ... and he did eat” (II Samuel 12:20).

### COME TOGETHER AGAIN

“Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and **come together again**, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency” (I Corinthians 7:5).

At the end of the mutually agreed upon period of time dedicated to “*fasting and prayer*,” the couple are to “*come together again.*” The word here translated “*come*” in the *King James Version* is *Strong’s Greek Lexicon #4905 sunerchomai*, meaning “cohabit (conjugally).”

The word “*again*,” *Strong’s Greek Lexicon #3825 palin*, is defined as “oscillatory repetition.” Webster defines oscillatory as “moving backward and forward like a pendulum; swinging; as an oscillatory motion,”<sup>3</sup>

This entire passage on the marital relationship is exceptionally plain: the consummated husband/wife union is to function on the basis of a continuous state of marriage (the uniting as “*one flesh*”).

Violating these principles places the believer in a state of rebellion to God’s most basic marital foundation. Other than for this rare exception of “*fasting and prayer*,” there is no place for sexual abstinence in the life of the married believer. Operating “*marriage*” in such abstinence is a contraction of terms; it is an oxymoron, denying the very biblical meaning of “*marriage.*” Couples living in such a state of fraud are breaking their marriage covenant – they are marital covenant breakers.

Intimacy of sexual relationship is designed by God to be the great *bond* of joy between husband and wife. This is not just a physical issue, but a spiritual one as well. Its importance and value are to be protected at all lengths – “*that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.*”

■

3. Noah Webster, *American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828.

# *The Divine Reckoning*

## SELECT READINGS ON *IDENTIFICATION IN CHRIST*

### (Part II)

*"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17).*

#### **GOD WILL ACCOMPLISH HIS GOAL**

Are you sometimes confused by your circumstances? Have you ever been emotionally depleted by things that have happened with your finances, parents, children, even your ministry? Have you ever felt like life is beating you down? Have you doubted God? You didn't want to doubt, but you did anyway.

When we feel like this (and we all do at times), just trust your Father. Even when you don't understand, trust Him. As you grow in your knowledge of your loving *Abba*, you will learn to accept events as they unfold. He is the Great Sovereign over the details of your life and will perform on your behalf, and for His own glory, all the things He has planned for you. Our impatience and frustration is born of our immaturity, but it is through those very trials we protest that God's Spirit will bring us into a greater maturity.

God will accomplish His goals for your life. Your only responsibility is to trust in His goodness and His wisdom. The destination which you will reach is not your concern. Your role is to cling to Him as the journey unfolds. His role is to ensure that you reach His intended destination. You bring trouble upon yourself when you confuse the two roles.

Relax, and enjoy your journey. Rest in your Father's sovereignty. Your life is an adventure, planned and performed by Him. We grow weary when we try to do what He alone can do. It is through our trials that He will lift our controlling need to be in charge. We must see that we are not in charge, but God alone determines and controls the unfolding of our destiny. Control is an arena for which we are not suited. Our Father, on the

other hand, is perfectly suited for that role.

Steve McVey  
*Grace Walk*

#### **YOU WERE CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST**

One of the things that you learned at Sunday school is that two thieves were crucified with Jesus on Calvary. [I]f you weren't in Sunday school as a kid, suffice it to say that you got the message. But there is much more biblical ink dedicated to the fact that *you* were crucified than there is to document the deaths of these two thieves.

This truth has been skipped over more times than an elementary-school sidewalk. It's been buried, denied, scoffed at, explained away, rationalized, or simply misunderstood by most modern theologians ...

Bill Gillham  
*What God Wishes Christians Knew About Christianity* (1998)

#### **THE ORIGIN OF YOUR ACTIVITY**

It is not the *nature* of what you are doing that determines its spirituality, but the *origin* of what you are doing. Not its nature, but its origin!

There was never a moment in the life of the Lord Jesus that was without divine significance, because there was never anything He did, never anything He said, never any step He took which did not spring from a divine origin – nothing that was not the activity of the Father in and through the Son. Thirty-three years of availability to the Father, that the Father in and through Him might

implement the program that had been established and agreed on between the Father and the Son before ever the world was.

Why did the Father give all things into His hands? Because Jesus Christ was completely Man. And He was completely Man because He was completely available! For the first time since Adam fell into sin, there was on earth a Man as God intended man to be!

Which of His activities were the more spiritual, the Sermon on the Mount, the raising of Lazarus from the dead, or the washing of His disciples' feet? The answer, of course, is that no one activity was more spiritual than another, for all had their origin in the Father, who acted through the Son. *"I do always those things that please Him"* (John 8:29).

The Lord Jesus summarized this in John 14:10 –

*"Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works."*

The whole activity of the Lord Jesus on earth as Man was the Father's activity in the Son, through the eternal Spirit through whom His body was presented to the Father.

Spirituality in man is his availability to God for His divine action, and the *form* of this activity is irrelevant. If it pleases you, always and only, to do what pleases God you can do as you please!

Major W. Ian Thomas  
*The Saving Life of Christ* (1961)

### **THE MEASURE OF CHRIST**

*"Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in*

*that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all"* (Ephesians 1:20-23).

We want immediately to focus everything in and upon the Lord Jesus Christ, for it is HE who is in view. What we have before us these days is not teaching or truth – that is, to be possessed with more knowledge of truth; it is not service; but it is the LORD Himself.

The object of the Father from first to last is that the Son, the Lord Jesus, shall fill all things ... and all things shall be filled with Christ. The value of everything in the eyes of God is according to the measure of the manifestation of Christ in it. It is from that standpoint that God determines the value of the thing. How much of the Lord Jesus is manifested through it – that determines the value of a thing. How much of the Lord Jesus is manifested through it ... determines the value from God's standpoint.

If we got focused there, it would make a great difference; much would have to go, because of manifesting something other than the Lord Jesus.

We must understand that the Father has set the Lord Jesus before His eyes, and the Father's eyes are full of only one object – the Beloved, His Son. In the eyes of God the value of everything is determined by the measure in which His Son is manifested and glorified; that is His end, and that is His object ...

God has singled out a Person and gathered into that Person all the Divine perfections. Everything is inseparably bound up with His Son. He has put all the fullness of the Universe into that Person and bound up all the fullness in Him. Not a fragment can be had apart from Him; that which is to characterize the New Creation is in Him. The predestined End of God is a full presentation of the fullness of Christ – every corner of the Universe speaking audibly of Jesus Christ – so that we shall not be able to go into a place or touch a life

without finding an expression of the Lord Jesus.

*“Christ in you, the hope of glory”* – this is heaven. You walk in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. Think of the whole Universe like that – a universal expression of His Son in fullness. That is the end God has in view – that Christ shall fill all things ... a looking into everything will mean finding it full of Christ ...

The Christian life is not by effort and not by struggle – not merely trying to put into practice certain maxims or to attain to a certain measure; but from beginning to end and altogether, it is a matter of knowing the Lord Jesus within. Of course, this implies response to Him and a continual yieldedness to His working within by His Spirit – so cooperating with Him in His purpose of conformity to the image of His Son.

T. Austin-Sparks (1888-1971)  
*A Witness and a Testimony* (September 1931)

### **CHRIST OUR LIFE**

*“When Christ, Who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory”*  
(Colossians 3:4).

One of the main objects of the Holy Spirit is to get believers really identified with Christ as the risen and exalted Lord, and to make His risen life real in their experience. As the age moves toward its consummation – the appearing of Christ – two features will become increasingly evident. On the one hand things, men, movements, institutions, organizations, etc., will predominate and draw multitudes after them, and will attach the crowds to themselves. On the other hand, with a growing disappointment and disillusionment over these, a minority will turn to the Lord Himself to find Him alone as their life.

Three elements will inhere in all this. One is the unmistakable development of the principle of Antichrist; that which will definitely supplant Christ, or intend to do so. The second is the alternative to the whole Christ in man-made Christianity,

an imitation life born and carried on by its own momentum. The third, a deep and genuine quest for reality, truth, and inward knowledge of the Lord Himself. In the first case it will be the naked worship of man in human power: a tremendous overflow of humanism, the wonder and glory of man. The third will be Christ altogether as the life.

If the Christian is attached to some thing, such as a teaching, a tradition, an institution, a movement or person, the end will certainly be a limitation of life and eventually confusion and disappointment, perhaps worse. Paul makes it unmistakably clear and emphatic that the destiny of all is to be Christ *“all, and in all.”* We must learn that a true work of the Spirit of God is to attach everything to Christ Himself. He, Christ, must be the life of our spirit, the *“inner man,”* so that we are strong in the Lord: not in ourselves, not in others, nor in things. We shall have to survive adversity by His strength within alone.

It is the Lord Himself, and for this to be so, it often has to be against a background of natural inability. The power of His resurrection is the law of union with Christ from beginning to end. Days of terrific pressure are upon the Lord’s people. Their enemy is taking very little off-time. The only sufficiency is in the Lord Himself as our life.

Barnabas exhorted the believers that *“with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord”* (Acts 11:23). There is an utterness about this that will be pressed upon us until the time *“when Christ, Who is our life, shall appear.”*

T. Austin-Sparks (1888-1971)  
*Christ Our Life*

### **THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL**

The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is a powerful Biblical model of the Law. As the Apostle Paul declared, *“The strength of sin is the law”* (I Corinthians 15:56). This is because it is through the Law that we derive our knowledge of good

and evil. We may wonder how this knowledge brings death until we see the fruit. The knowledge causes us to focus our attention upon ourselves. Sin is empowered by the law; not just because the evil is revealed but the good as well. It drives us either to corruption or self-righteousness, both of which lead to death ...

The good of the Tree of Knowledge has always been more effective in separating us from the Lord than the evil has been. The goodness of man can be the most ugly manifestation of his pride and rebellion against God. The entire Tree of Knowledge must be torn from our soul by the roots ...

Sin is not just a few wrong things we have done; it is the nature of what we are [were] – regardless of whether the guise is good or evil ... Paul clearly articulates this in his letter to the church at Philippi (Philippians 3:2-9).

Paul's righteousness based upon the Law brought him into direct conflict with the Truth. He was a persecutor of true worshipers, as is everyone who tries to live by the law. Just as Cain could not tolerate Abel, those who seek to stand by their own righteousness find the presence of those who stand by faith in Jesus intolerable. The righteousness of God, based completely on the atonement of the cross, strips away facades and lays bare the pride of man... When he [Paul] perceived the righteousness of Jesus, he counted everything that he has so valued in life as rubbish ...

The cross of Jesus utterly destroys every self-righteous presumption. There is no greater intimidation to the knowledge of good and evil than the cross.

Rick Joyner  
*There Were Two Trees in the Garden* (1986)

## HE IS OUR LIFE

Jesus Christ did not just come to show us the way: He is the way. He did not just teach us some

truth: He is the truth. He did not just leave us a manual to live by: He is our life. Whatever the need of the human heart, Christ offers Himself as the solution.

Much Christian teaching today is "ten steps to spiritual maturity," "the five-minute Christian parent," or "six ways to overcome grief." It is as if the Bible were nothing more than an instruction manual, a positive-thinking guide to success in any area of life, with just enough religious talk to calm our consciences ...

Rather than digging out of the Bible principles that we apply like a technician to repair our own lives, we are to go to the Word of God to get to *know the Person of Jesus Christ*, the living Word! ...

I'm convinced that the devil doesn't care what our eyes are on, as long as they are *off of Jesus*. And that includes any one of a hundred good things, like Bible knowledge, fellowship, service, giving or worship experiences. Anything we do that is not centered on the living Christ is a substitute for Christ.

Bob George  
*Growing in Grace* (1991)

## A FORM OF GODLINESS

*"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away"* (II Timothy 3:5).

The greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is Christianity ... They know that the message of fear, hate and confusion (which Evangelical Christianity preaches) is nothing more than "*sounding brass, [and] a tinkling cymbal*" (I Corinthians 13:1)! In simple terms, "the church" is making a lot of noise, and is a "*form of Godliness*" which denies the power of God!

The problem is not the:

MUSLIMS  
MASON'S

HOMOSEXUALS

CATHOLICS (or any other religion, cult, or denomination)

GOVERNMENT (who is in office)

MIDDLE EAST

TEN COMMANDMENTS (whether or not they are hanging on the walls in public places)

RIGHT TO PRAY IN SCHOOLS OR PUBLIC PLACES

The problem “is a form [mere appearance] of Godliness” with no power!

So what is the answer?

II Timothy 1:7 states,

“... For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind ....”

We have forsaken the power of God for the spirit of fear. We must stop preaching a “gospel of fear,” and start preaching the Good News! What good news? The good news

“... That God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself” (II Corinthians 5:19)

Instead of being just a form ... Let us be transformed (Romans 12:2)!

Thomas Kissinger

*The Glory of God and the Honor of Kings*

## **DO YOU BELIEVE IN GHOSTS?**

Do you believe in ghosts? ...

Daily I listen to Christians who still seem to be taking a beating by a phantom. They call it the “old man.”

Charles Trumbull

*Victory in Christ* (1991)

## **AN EXCHANGED LIFE**

God had no plan for making something beautiful of your life – that do-it-yourself life inherited

from Adam ... God did not *change* your life, He *exchanged* your life – your old life for Christ as life.

Bill Gillham

*What God Wishes Christians Knew About Christianity* (1998)

## **DENYING OUR IDENTITY**

The Christian who believes he’s a “sinner saved by grace” denies that his identity was changed through identification with the crucified and resurrected body of Christ ...

When you came to Christ, you were crucified as a sinner (Galatians 2:20) ...

Preston Gillham (Cited by Bill Ewing)  
*Rest Assured* (2003), pages 159

## **OUR BODIES**

Tragically, some dismiss the intricacies of the human body for fear that we might become overly fond of it. Centuries of old Puritan and Victorian practices have stained the intention of our Creator, marking the body as the enemy of the spiritual life. But no such thing is true. Our body was elaborately fashioned by God, created as the dwelling place where ... [we] reside with Him.

Contrary to common religious traditions, we are not to deny or despise the body. While speaking to husbands and wives, Paul matter-of-factly states, “no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it” (Ephesians 5:29). It must have brought God deep sadness to cover the beauty of Adam’s and Eve’s bodies with animal skins after they sinned.

... His glory is dimmed when we loathe or ignore the magnificence of the human body.

Bill Ewing

*Rest Assured* (2003), pages 136

