



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Presenting *every man* perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume VIII
Issue 191

Handfuls of Purpose

(Taken from Daily Email Goodies)

Part 1

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them ... (Ruth 2:16).

HIS UNMOVABLE SHADOW

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning (James 1:17).



Old Man – Our old (former) identity in Adam (not our physical body, which is the Holy Spirit's temple).

New Man – Our new (present) identity in Christ.

This verse contains one of my favorite descriptions of God's nature and character. Not only is there "no variableness" with our Father – He always being consistent and dependable, without the slightest variation from His faithfulness – but even His shadow doesn't move: "*neither shadow of turning.*"

Our Father is so steadfast and unwavering, that not only doesn't He move from His faithfulness, but there is not even the slightest movement of His shadow.

Now that's dependability!

For the Scripture saith, "Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed [confounded, disappointed]" (Romans 10:11).

TERMS OF IDENTITY

To better grasp the fullness of our union with the Lord Jesus Christ, it is important for us to understand related terms. Here are a few words related to our identification in the Lord Jesus Christ, along with their brief definitions.

Body of Sin – The collective unit of our sins (as in "body of evidence"; not our physical body, which is the Holy Spirit's temple).

The Flesh – Although our body is referred to as "flesh" – the term "the flesh" is a synonym for our former identity in Adam (i.e., the "old man").

FREEDOM FROM PSYCHOLOGY

The system of psychology is ultimately based upon old Adamic, "self-centered" solutions. We are encouraged by this philosophy to get to the source of our problems. We are to find the "root" cause. We accomplish this by some man-made method of sorting through our heart of hearts, our innermost feelings, our motives, and our pasts so that we may "know ourselves." The end result is that we are supposedly better able to pass the blame (i.e., judgment) for who we are, and for our behavior: on our childhood, on our parents, on our peers, etc. This is as old as Adam himself.

After Adam had been equipped with "knowledge" from the "*tree of the knowledge of good and evil*" ►

he professed his “problem.”

“... **The woman** whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat” (Genesis 3:12).

This is typical of Adam’s descendants; but this is not to be the norm for members of Christ’s Body. We have been taken out of Adam and placed into Christ. We have been freed from such psychological game-playing and bondage. We are free from this “know thyself” world-view. We are delivered by knowing the Lord Jesus Christ Who is our new identity.

*That I may **know Him**, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death* (Philippians 3:10).

The call of the believer’s life is not by human, self-centered psychology of “*know thyself*,” but by the divine, Christ-centered spirituality of “*know **Him***.”

DEAD WORKS

How much more shall the blood of Christ ... purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Hebrews 9:14).

These “works” referred to here are not “wicked works” (as in Colossians 1:21) but “dead works.” These “dead works” are “good works” which do not proceed from the life of God. They are lifeless – not the fruit of divine life.

Note carefully the contrast between “dead” works and the “living” God. The “living God” changes our dead-men-working into the divine-perspective of being dependent upon *Him*. His organic life in us makes us our Father’s vessels of mercy, His channels of blessing.

RELIGIOUS SERVICE IS NOT THE ANSWER

Religious service is not the answer to inner peace. When the world looks for a model of religious service, Mother Teresa of Calcutta comes to mind as an outstanding example. Few realized that she hid her inner darkness behind a mask. Her heart was empty and longed for something more – something real and genuine. ►

Bible Student’s Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

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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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Patriarchs

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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Her story of great struggle is revealed:

“I am told God lives in me – and yet the reality of darkness and coldness and emptiness is so great that nothing touches my soul,” she wrote at one point. “I want God with all the power of my soul – and yet between us there is terrible separation.” On another occasion she wrote, “I feel just that terrible pain of loss, of God not wanting me, of God not being God, of God not really existing.” – Rev. Brian Kolodiejchuk, *Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light* (2007)

Paul, apostle to the nations, knew all too well the vanity and struggle of such religious service. Paul could say concerning all his past religion,

Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ (Philippians 3:8).

Paul had rested in his “good,” moral character and “good” religious deeds. He took pride in his list of “do and don’t” performance. Paul could match his “self-righteous” lifestyle with anyone.

What was Paul’s conclusion to his great superiority? Paul counted it “*dung*” – refuse, waste. What caused the change in Paul’s value system? It was the living person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He met Him. He made the difference.

Religion has no divine person who can impart life. The Lord Jesus Christ did not come to establish a religion but to bring *life*. Religion is man’s striving after God. Jesus brought God to man, and man to God. We only need rest in that.

BEING MYTH-TAKEN

A LOOK AT “CHRISTIAN” MYTHOLOGY

Neither give heed to fables ... (I Timothy 1:4).

But refuse profane and old wives’ fables ... (I Timothy 4:7).

And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables (II

Timothy 4:4).

Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth (Titus 1:14).

Four times in Paul’s writings he uses the Greek word “*muthos/mythos*,” Strong’s Greek Lexicon #3454, meaning “a tale, i.e., fiction (‘myth’).” Our English word “*myth*” comes from this Greek word “*mythos*.”

Paul warned the believer about “*fables*” or “*myths*” that were being pawned off as “scriptural” teachings. As real as these threats were to the believer of Paul’s day, two thousand years have added a thick maze of twisted tales masquerading as the truth. The result has been that the overwhelming majority of Christendom finds itself being *myth-taken*. They are buried deep in the darkness of a “Christian” mythology.

It is no small task for the student of Scripture to study and sort through traditional “Christian” mythology and the actual truth of the Bible, but it is a noble and rewarding journey. It requires diligent and faithful dedication to the actual Words of God. The saints at Berea modeled this spirit of loyalty to what God had said:

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so (Acts 17:11).

What a life-long task every workman of the Scriptures has. It involves never allowing ourselves to be locked into *any* man-made creed or systematic theology, while cultivating an ever-adjusting heart and mind to what has been learned afresh from the Scriptures. It requires an attitude and spirit of adjustableness.

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth (II Timothy 2:15).

T. Austin-Sparks (1888-1971) wrote regarding the issue of adjustableness:



Many of the Lord's people stop short at adjusting to the truth. It very often means breaking with something that we have regarded as very important and very precious. We have come to see that, after all, that was only our conception of it. In God's view that does not occupy the place at all that we had thought it occupied, and it has to be left behind. We have to adjust to something higher and fuller than that, to a more spiritual and heavenly conception of things. – *A Witness and a Testimony* (May 1939).

Do not spend your life following the fables of Christendom, being *myth-taken*. Join the noble sons of God who are diligently searching the Scriptures to see if those things are so. *Be truth-taken!*

FAITH'S GOLDEN TRIO

Faith is that by which God has called us to live:

The just shall live by faith (Romans 1:17).

The just shall live by faith (Galatians 3:11).

The just shall live by faith (Hebrews 10:38).

Here is faith's golden trio. We who have been gloriously justified (declared righteous) are to live by faith. Faith is to be our lives. It is the essence of how and why we live. It is the basis of divine life freely operating in our daily walk – the manifestation of the life of God in our very members.

What Is Faith?

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1).

Faith is the absence of sight, or other human senses:

For we walk by faith, not by sight (II Corinthians 5:7).

Neither is it found in human intellect and wisdom:

That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God (I Corinthians 2:5).

The Father of Faith

Abraham is presented by Paul as our father in the area of faith.

*... that he might be **the father of all them that believe** ... who also walk in the steps of that faith of **our father Abraham*** (Romans 4:12).

This is rightfully so, for the Scriptures say of Abraham:

He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God (Romans 4:20).

What an example our father of faith has left us! He did not stagger. Instead he was strong in faith. It is not that he had strong faith, but that he found his strength in faith – he “*was strong in faith.*”

What does faith ultimately do? It gives God glory – “*giving glory to God.*” God is glorified when we believe Him over everything else beckoning us.

Faith is what *pleases* God:

But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).

In our spiritual warfare, faith is the victory!

This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith (I John 5:4).

Ultimately faith is not really about us. It is not about the quality or quantity of faith. Instead it is about the *source* and *object* of faith – the Lord Jesus Christ! Faith is simply looking to Him, trusting the Father for the very issues of life.

Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2).

FREEDOM OF FAITH

Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand (II Corinthians 1:24).

God has called us into a individual faith before Himself. No one has the right to have dominion over our faith. Our faith is to be personal – without constraint, without manipulation.

Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God (Romans 14:22).

Being strong in such personal faith is what brings glory to the Father.

*He [Abraham] staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was **strong in faith**, giving glory to God* (Romans 4:20).

Embrace true liberty; freedom from religion, to freedom of faith.

IF THEY KNEW GOD THEY WOULD LOVE HIM

God is love (I John 4:8, 16).

We love Him, because He first loved us (I John 4:19).

The reason the world does not love God is that they do not know Him. If they knew the Father in truth, as He really is, they would love Him. It is as simple as that.

Most of what the world thinks that they know about God is untrue. World religions have done a great disservice to mankind. They have misrepresented Him. Relatively few in the world really know God. If they knew Him, and of His great undying, unchanging, unconditional love for them, they would willingly and eagerly love Him in return. To know Him is to love Him. To not love Him is purely to be ignorant of Him and Who He really is.

Do not be discouraged by the situation though; for there will come a day when all will come to know God in the reality of His goodness and love. This will not be the result of any human effort whatsoever. It

will be the product of God's revelation of Himself.

*And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, "Know the Lord": **for all shall know Me**, from the least to the greatest* (Hebrews 8:11).

JOY HELPERS

*Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are **helpers of your joy**: for by faith ye stand* (II Corinthians 1:24).

Paul, the apostle to the nations, was a *joy helper*. His life was to assist others in *their* joy. This is a *divine* undertaking. We have the privilege of joining this Pauline ministry in our daily lives.

We can learn from Paul in this passage, from what is sandwiched within this verse, what it is that will bring real joy from God in their lives: "*but are helpers of your joy,*"

No Human Dominion

Paul starts by saying, "*Not for that we have dominion over your faith.*" The beginning of divine joy is found in freedom from domination in the area of faith. We are the helpers of others' joy by assisting them in their freedom from religious domination; for it is religious dominance that produces spiritual kill-joys. Help set others free.

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free (John 8:32).

Standing by Faith

Paul ends this verse with, "*for by faith ye stand.*" The cycle of joy begins with freedom from religion, and finds its completion standing by personal faith. We finish the cycle of being the helpers of others' joy by supporting them in their own personal faith before God.

To be a joy helper, we must allow others the freedom to follow their own heart of faith before God. If their studies and convictions would lead them differently than it has us, then we must encourage them in those things, as long as we see in them a genuine heart to honor the Lord with what they understand. This ►

is because there are to be greater principles that have preeminence in our own hearts – the principles of pure grace, unconditional love, genuine acceptance, individual faith and personal liberty.

Paul taught that believers with opposite understandings and practices (even if one may be weak in the faith) could both live their lives in honor unto the Lord. This does not mean that we could always walk with others in all things, but it does mean that we can support and encourage others to be faithful unto the Lord based on the understanding of their *own* hearts; “*for whatsoever is not of faith is sin*” (Romans 14:23).

Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God
(Romans 14:22).

Helping others in their freedom from religion, encouraging them in the freedom to follow their own hearts of faith wherever God may lead them, will enable us to be “*helpers of your joy.*”

In our daily lives let us bring joy to those around us.
Real joy. Divine joy.

THE MINISTRY OF A LOVING SMILE

A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance
... (Proverbs 15:13).

The attitude of the heart has an effect on one’s facial expressions. In the case of our passage, a “*merry heart*” makes for a “*cheerful countenance.*” Has the impact of the fullness of God’s good news in our Lord Jesus Christ, of His unfailing love to us, reached our hearts to make them “*merry*”? If so, have they then made their way from our hearts to our faces?

We live in a world that has much pain and sorrow, heaviness and loss, with mounting burdens and cares. Many are discouraged, depressed, aggravated, annoyed, upset, frustrated, defeated, irritated, disheartened, dejected, saddened, disturbed, gloomy, pessimistic, troubled, perturbed, agitated and cynical in their hearts; and it shows all over their faces.

Such need not be the case for those who know the Father, “*because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts*” (Romans 5:5). Such a divine operation is

even better than a “*merry heart*” – we have divine love shed abroad in our hearts!

These words “*shed abroad*” are but one single word in the Greek: “*ekcheo,*” *Strong’s Greek Lexicon* #1632, which is defined “to pour forth” and is translated elsewhere in the *King James Version* as “*poured out*” (John 2:15; Acts 10:45; Revelation 16:2, 3, 4, 8, 10, 12, 17), and even “*gushed out*” (Acts 1:18). Think of it! Our Father’s Own love is “*poured out in our hearts,*” even “*gushing out in our hearts.*” We should bask in the richness of His love in our hearts, and let it make its way to our countenance!

Could one truly estimate the value of a loving smile? There is a world all around us in need of such a countenance. What an affect such a divine ministry of a loving smile could have on the weary souls that we encounter. What a difference in the lives of our family, friends and acquaintances God could make in the simple expression of His love on our faces.

What a difference a loving smile could make!

THE SLANDER OF GOD

... Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you (Acts 17:23).

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free (John 8:32).

The nature and character of God has been shamefully maligned by the religious system. He has been perverted into a “god” who either cannot or will not carry out His stated purpose.

It is high time that the saints of God shake off the bondage of traditional teaching that has too long hidden the image of the true God from view.

Traditional religious teaching presents a “god” who:

Loves man ... but gives Him up to endless torture.

Sent His Son to make the payment of sin for every man ... but makes most men pay for their own sins.

Who allowed man to fall ... with full knowledge

that the result would be that He would not be able to redeem them all.

Who wants all men to be saved ... but will in fact damn most of them for eternity.

Who tells us to love and to do good to our enemies ... while He torments His enemies endlessly.

All of these are slanderous perversions of the God Who is ignorantly worshiped. Learn the truth of the true and living God and be made free from world religions.

THREE KINDS OF GIVING

There are three kinds of giving:

Grudge giving,
Duty giving, and
Thanksgiving.

The first comes from constraint;
The second comes from obligation;
The third comes from a full heart.

GOD'S MERCY VESSELS

*And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the **vessels of mercy**, which He had afore prepared unto glory (Romans 9:23).*

There is a lot of hurt in this world; a lot of sorrow, a lot of injustice, a lot of anger, a lot of disappointment, a lot of pain. This world is in dire need of God's mercy.

The word "mercy" is defined by Noah Webster as:

That benevolence, mildness or tenderness of heart which disposes a person to overlook injuries, or to treat an offender better than he deserves; the disposition that tempers justice, and induces an injured person to forgive trespasses and injuries, and to forbear punishment ... In this sense, there is perhaps no word in our language precisely synonymous with mercy. That which comes nearest to it is grace. It implies benevolence, tenderness, mildness, pity or compassion, and clemency, but exercised only towards offenders. – *The American Dictionary of the English Language*, (1828)

Vessels are simply containers. As "*vessels of mercy*" we are the containers of God's mercy. Divine mercy is resident on the earth – in us! This divine mercy that God has placed in us is wonderful beyond words; unceasingly refreshing, untiringly selfless.

As containers of this divine treasure, the mercy is not "ours." It does not originate from us, nor is it designed solely for us. Instead, the true source of this mercy is our Father, and is primarily resident in us for the benefit of those around us. This is the nature of vessels.

Take a bowl of fruit for instance. The fruit is not produced by the container; nor is the fruit "for" its benefit, "for" its consumption. Instead, it is simply an instrument for the fruit's availability.

We are God's mercy vessels. We do not create the mercy; we do not hoard the mercy. Instead, we are the Father's vessels of mercy to those around us – for their consumption. Let's never forget this amazing truth!

Ray Prinzing (1927-2005) spoke of this when he wrote,

God's mercy vessels minister His love, without condemnation, "*not imputing their trespasses unto them,*" but rather, proclaiming the grace of God which reconciles *all* to Himself. - *Daily Overcoming*

As we walk through our daily lives there will be ample opportunities to be God's channels of mercy; being merciful, gracious, kind, tender, loving and compassionate. We are God's refreshment to the weary world. Dare to be simply who God has made you to be and spread a little mercy around.

THE THRONE OF GRACE

Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

A throne is a place of reigning. God sits on a throne. The "*Throne of God*" is known as one of "*glory*" (Jeremiah 14:21) and "*majesty*" (Hebrews 8:1). Surely every believer has thought of these aspects of God's reigning – it is glorious and majestic. ►

What Is Reigning Forth from God's Throne?

Not only is the magnitude of God's Throne glorious and majestic, our text reveals that its very nature is that of "Grace." Such an amazing revelation, that God's glorious and majestic reign is one of "Grace" – *"the Throne of Grace."*

How many truly know that "Grace" is the genuine character of the Divine Throne? Many probably think of God's Throne as a "Throne of Wrath," but there is no such terminology to be found in God's Word. Instead, we find that His is *"the Throne of Grace."*

How Do We Approach God's Throne?

Oh, how our view of God has been skewed! God's Throne is a place unto which we can *"come boldly."* Is your view of the Father one that allows you the *boldness* to come unto His throne? Or, when you think of His Throne, do you think of timidly, shamefully and fearfully cowering before it? How desperately does such a perception need divine adjustment!

What Do We Receive from God's Throne?

How many know that God's Throne actually radiates with His undiluted "grace" and "mercy?" Not only do we see that God's Throne is one of "Grace" and that we can *"boldly come unto"* it, but we also learn that it is there – at His Throne – where we *"obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."*

The fact is, we are a needy people. We have been so designed by our Creator. What did you think such needy ones would get from the Throne of God? Wrath? No, it's not the "Throne of Wrath," but the *"Throne of Grace"* where we find our Father's endless "mercy" and boundless "grace!"

What a Father! What a Throne! What Grace and Mercy!

QUESTIONS THAT GENDER STRIFES

But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes (II Timothy 2:24).

From this verse we know that there needs to be some care applied to the area of questions. Questions are a great way to learn and glean from others. Questions are also good in the context of teaching. Paul often used the method of questioning, to move from point to point in his instruction.

Yet questions can also gender strife. Questions that are not related to the two areas just mentioned are referred to as *"doting about questions,"* which Paul warned would lead to *"envy, strife, railings, and evil surmisings"* (I Timothy 6:4).

These contentious questions are characterized by Paul as foolish and unlearned. These are questions that have no foundation of knowledge. Their underlying purpose is to be contentious.

So Paul's point is clear – there are some questions that simply are to be *avoided*. They only lead to strife, argument, and debate. These have no place in our ministry of the Lord. Paul says that *"debate"* is among the works of *"unrighteousness"*:

*Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, **debate**, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents (Romans 1:29-30).*

*For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be **debates**, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults (II Corinthians 12:20).*

We are called to live and share the truth in meekness, gentleness, kindness, and longsuffering. We must not allow ourselves to be drawn into conduct unbecoming of sons of God. We simply will not debate the truth we have seen; for if it is indeed the truth, it is not up for debate.

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.
Daily Email Goodies

