



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume XVII
Issue 403

Exercising Liberty:

The Guiding Principles of Faith, Grace, Expediency and Edification

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Liberty is not an isolated or standalone doctrine. In this study we will take a look at four guiding principles that will assist the believer in exercising his individual liberty.



For Sin shall not be lording it over you, for you are not under law, but under grace (Romans 6:14).

Who are you who are judging Another's domestic? To his own Master he is standing or falling. Now he will be made to stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand (Romans 14:4).

FAITH

The first principle that we will consider is the one of faith. Paul is clear that our walk before the Lord is to be one based on faith.

Faith is to be *personal*.

Let each one be fully assured in his own mind (Romans 14:5).

The faith which you have, have for yourself in God's sight. Happy is he who is not judging himself in that which he is attesting (Romans 14:22).

Faith is to be exercised without the dominion of men.

Not that we are lording it over your faith, but are fellow workers of your joy, for you stand fast in the faith (II Corinthians 1:24).

GRACE

God has called us to a life of grace, not law – a life that proceeds from the heart and love, not from externals.

EXPEDIENCY

All is allowed me, but not all is expedient. All is allowed me, but not all is edifying.

Here in I Corinthians 10:23 Paul introduces to us two principles in this verse: expediency and edification.

The *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* defines expediency as “appropriate to a purpose.”

Although all things were indeed lawful to Paul, he had the wisdom to realize that not all things were *appropriate* to the *purpose* he sought to accomplish. In other words, Paul lived *purposefully*. His actions were not mindless, but thoughtful “*as to the Lord*.”

Then, whether you are eating or drinking, or (see EXERCISE, page 3623)

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Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

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This free weekly electronic 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 law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (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 freedom from 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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EXERCISE (continued from front page)

anything you are doing, do all for the glory of God (I Corinthians 10:31).

Our actions should be deliberate and with forethought. This is what the believer's life is intended to be – rather than a mindless spur-of-the-moment “going along” – so that *any* action can be done “*heartily as to the Lord.*”

To this same end Paul exhorts the believer to a “*reasonable,*” rather than mindless life:

... *your reasonable service* (Romans 12:1, KJV).

Other translations of this phrase are helpful to see the thoughtfulness to which Paul was encouraging the believer:

intelligent service (Young)

logical divine service (Concordant)

rational divine service (Rotherham)

God's will for our lives does not involve the *mindless* following of this world's course. Instead, our lives are to be “*reasonable,*” “*intelligent,*” “*logical*” and “*rational*” (*i.e.*, well thought out, with purpose). The world's social, cultural, political, economic and religious courses will constantly pressure us to *conform*. Paul exhorts us not to give sway to this conformity (“*not to be configured to this eon*” – Romans 12:2).

According to Galatians 5:1, Christ freed the believer for the purpose of freedom! He freed us *to be free* – not to be entangled again into bondage. Christ did not die for *theoretical* liberty. He freed us to *experience* and *live* in freedom. Observe how various translations have rendered the first part of this glorious verse:

Christ has set us free in freedom; stand fast therefore (Darby).

For freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore (American Standard).

It was for freedom that Christ has set us free; therefore keep standing firm (Common Edition).

For freedom Christ frees us! Stand firm, then (Concordant).

For freedom did Christ make us free; stand fast, therefore (Weymouth).

It is in this context of personal freedom that Paul *then* considers what is the most expedient course of action in the details of his life. It is also in this context of this personal freedom that Paul makes *personal* determinations as to the value of any activity “*as to the Lord.*” Notice that he says, “*All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient.*” Paul was making *personal* assessments as to what things were expedient, and what things were not.

The Greek word *sumpherō*, rendered “*expedient,*” carries the meaning of “*profitable*” and “*beneficial,*” as can be seen in the following translations:

all are not profitable (Darby).

not all things are profitable (Rotherham).

not everything is profitable (Weymouth).

all things are not profitable (Young).

not all things are beneficial (Diaglott).

Although all things were lawful to Paul, not all things were profitable or beneficial. So it is with each of us. In our individual walk with the Lord we should not live mindlessly in our freedom, but thoughtfully and with purpose toward the end of expediency. This determination varies from situation to situation, and would also vary from person to person in their own fluctuating and unique circumstances.

One must be careful when dealing with others on this point, because, as we have already seen, underlying this principle is the clear issue of *personal* faith. Our view of expediency is then to be borne out of *personal* faith!

Tony Smith wonderfully describes this important principle:

Everything is permissible to me. So why should I take issue with a brother who decides that the ►

thing that I find not to be beneficial to me is entirely beneficial to him? For freedom Christ freed us, so why should I condemn a brother who exercises his liberty?

EDIFICATION

Paul's second principle I Corinthians 10:23 is edification.

The word "edify" means to "build up" and is akin to the word "edifice." This also is the meaning of the Greek word *oikodomeō*. Thus many translations use the words "build up" in this passage (i.e., "not all things build up"¹). It has also been translated by some as "constructive" (i.e., "but not all things are constructive"²).

Though all things were lawful to Paul, he did not find that all things were constructive to the *purpose* which he sought to accomplish. In other words, Paul sought to live *constructively*. His actions of liberty and freedom were bold, but not mindless. They were thoughtful and with purpose, "as to the Lord," "for the use of edifying" (i.e., for the purpose of building up).

Paul actively and boldly taught the truth of the believer's liberty ("all things are lawful," "there is nothing unclean of itself") that had been revealed to him by our risen Lord Jesus Christ; to the end that the believer would not be brought "into bondage."

Paul knew full well that there were "false brothers" who would be "smuggled in," secretly to "spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, that they should be enslaving us." Paul, however, would,

Not even for an hour ... simulate by subjection,³ that the truth of the evangel should be continuing with you (Galatians 2:4).

The truth of the evangel is centered in the believer's liberty.

For freedom Christ frees us! Stand firm, then (Galatians 5:1).

1. e.g. An Understandable Version, Common Edition New Testament, World English Bible, Worrell New Testament, Young's Literal Translation, Emphatic Diaglot, Montgomery New Testament.
2. e.g. A Conservative Version, Revised King James New Testament.
3. "submit to them" (Weymouth).

Paul knew that there would be no edification ("Stand"!) without liberty and freedom. He would not deny this glorious truth, and he also knew that it was only the exercising of liberty *in love* that would ultimately build up. However, he also instructed us that,

Knowledge puffs up, yet love builds up (I Corinthians 8:1).

In fact, he revealed to us that the Body of Christ actually "edifies itself *in love*" (Ephesians 4:16), and that the use of such edification "ministers grace" (Ephesians 4:29).

So, edification is the divine process of escorting one to their freedom in Christ through the indispensable means of *faith, love and grace*. These are the powerfully *constructive* principles of *edification* that are brought to bear in the details of daily life.

Let us always remember that we are God's chosen vessels of up-building, rather than down-tearing. ■



Pagan Christianity: Exploring the Roots of Our Church Practices

by — Frank Viola & George Barna
(#3106) 293 pages, Paperback
\$17.95 (\$21.70 with s&h)

Have you ever wondered why Christians do what they do for "church" every Sunday morning? Have you ever asked yourself any of the following questions: Why do folks "dress up" for "church"? Why does the "pastor" preach a sermon every Sunday? Why are there pulpits and pews? Why "church" buildings, steeples, choirs and seminaries? Where did all of these things come from?

This book proposes that what Christians do in "churches" has no root in the Scriptures! It rather has its origin in pagan culture. As shocking as that sounds, the authors prove their points by documenting every claim they make.

Fully footnoted, *Pagan Christianity* documents the story of modern church practices. If you are content with status quo "churchianity," then you will not want to read this book. It is reserved for those who are ready to embark on an eye-opening venture that challenges every aspect of their church experience.

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made it a habit to read your morning “Goodie” first thing when I get up, no matter what else in my life is taking precedence. This reminds me of my real vocation and my walk in it. It sets straight my priorities, where otherwise I might be depressed and down-trodden all day. With the “Goodies,” prayer easily follows. – *LA*

I would like to wish happy Memorial Day to a man who is on the front lines battling for our freedom in Christ. Man’s pride is in those who would destroy and kill in the name of patriotism. God’s memorial is yet to come ... So beautiful! – *AL*

I had a most wonderful weekend and was sad to see the day and a half go by so quickly. I feel very fortunate that my Author had me in Birmingham, Alabama, in Steve and Laura’s tool shop listening to Martin, Clyde and Dan. – *IN*

I thank The Lord for your ministry and encouragement. It was awesome meeting you, your sons, Martin, Dan and the other believers in Birmingham. – *GA*

Words can’t describe the wonderful days of the conference and fellowship I’ve just experienced with you all in Birmingham. Truly, Father’s family was in evidence, through the teaching, but also through the kinship that was palpable in all our contacts. How thankful I am to have been able to be there with you in person – to know the people behind the computer, so to speak. Thank you three (Clyde Jr., Clyde III, and Nathan) for ►

Your [Daily Email Goodies](#) continue to start my days in remembrance of Father and His Grace. How easy it is to awake in the mornings with the concerns and frustrations of life controlling my thoughts even as I first open my eyes. So, I have



The Deity of God

by – John Henry Essex (1907-1991)
Nottingham, England

(#7450) 84 pp., PB, \$9.95
(+ \$3.99 s&h = **\$13.94**)

Creation cannot help itself that all of its achievements are futile because of the slavery of corruption, but we take immense comfort from the fact that, in spite of all of its present “groaning and travailing,” it was subjected to vanity in expectation of the eventual realization of that glorious freedom which is now already being enjoyed by the children of God.

It is in the prison epistle of Paul to the Ephesians that we find the most absolute expression of the Deity of God in relation to the points we have been considering. Here we find the phrase which puts all other Scriptures into their perspective:

According to the purpose of the One Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will (1:11).

God is the captain of the ship of the universe; all of His creatures are its passengers. He is guiding the vessel across the ocean of time from the port that is called “All in God” to the haven that is termed “God in all.”

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being obedient to the calling of Father to share the marvelous evangel.

May Father continue the work He has begun in and through you – to reach so many, including me. I cannot express my gratitude to Him. The three Pilkington men truly blessed this heart! – *TN*

I so enjoy the [Daily Email Goodies](#). Do you have a book with all these Goodies in them? Thank you for your ministry. God is growing me a lot thru them. – *MN*

[Yes, we have compiled two books of Goodies so far. One of Goodies written by Clyde Pilkington (*Daily Goodies*) and one of Goodies written by other authors (*Daily Gleanings*). Both are available on our [website](#).]

What an amazing weekend! Thank you for all you shared. I mean, this is life changing stuff! I'll say it again, I know the truth shall set me free, I didn't know it meant THIS free! My mind is still reeling and I feel almost intoxicated, like a huge rock has been lifted off me and I can breathe so deeply,

now it's like I'm lightheaded!!

I alternate between laughing and crying and thanking God for all of it. Thank you again Clyde! – *NY*

This [[Daily Email Goodie #3501](#)] could not have come at a better time for me. I am trying to live a peaceful life and share my faith but am finding myself being attacked because I believe in a loving and gracious Father who WILL save all. What I am noticing is that there truly is a religion of mixed “law and grace,” and they will die for it and will threaten and brow beat for it, without even really explaining it. [According to them] I'm supposed to “Live it by faith and not ask questions! Otherwise you will be judged of the Lord for calling Him a liar and the punishment will be severe! Shame on you for not believing our doctrine of fear!” ...

I am so amazed that Father would call ME to hear and understand His mystery. Pray for me as I learn this information better and learn to love even those who are arrogant, proud and brutal. – *WA*



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Suffering: God's Forgotten Gift

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Two gifts given to the believer are mentioned by Paul in Philippians 1:29. The first is “to believe on Him.” This is a glorious gift. Every believer has been given this gift from God. Those who possess it may not even fully recognize it as a gift from Him, but indeed faith is God’s wonderful gift to us. Faith is a rich gift from God, but there is also another gift from God to the believer, mentioned by Paul in Philippians 1:29, that is equally as glorious. The second gift is “also to suffer for His sake.” This, too, is a glorious gift. Every believer has been given this gift from God as well, but those who possess it often do not fully recognize it for what it is. Indeed, suffering for His sake similarly is God’s wonderful gift to us. Paul teaches us to embrace this second gift as well as we do the first!

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