

Bible Student's Notebook The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume XVIII Issue 438

God's Servants Do Their Best Work Bound

by - Martin Zender

For the flesh is lusting against the spirit, yet the spirit against the flesh. Now these are opposing one another, lest you should be doing whatever you may want (Galatians 5:17).

THE SPIRIT OF GOD SABOTAGES OUR INTENTIONS

We almost always make this verse say that the spirit keeps us from doing all of the bad things that we want to do.

This is true; but it also keeps us from doing all the good things.

The key phrase of this passage is,

Lest you should be doing whatever you may want.

What do we want to do? Two things: fleshly things and good things; but if we could make a wish, we would want to do good continually. Oh, wouldn't we be saintly and spectacular.

A DESIRE TO BE PERFECT IS ALSO A LUST OF THE FLESH

It is in our best interests to be kept weak. II Corinthians 4:7 explains:

Now we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the transcendence of the power may be of God and not of us.

God keeps us weak so that we might constantly acclaim His power and not our own.

Remarkably, the same spirit that incites us to good works also keeps us from becoming moral super-people.

Can you learn to thank God for this, even when you are yet again failing Him?

You cannot do everything you want to do. You would like to be a better parent, a better employee, a better friend. It would help if you could make more money. You want to pay your bills, but you can't find a job.

You wanted to get a good night's sleep last night, but worry kept you up. Money vexes your life. It seems to be a measure of your success and failure. You try to save it, but you can't. There is always another expense – always. Someone always needs something. What about *your* needs? They burn on (see BOUND, page 3907)

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Bible Student's Notebook

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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
- 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).

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the altar of sacrifice - again.

My Christ

Still, there is more. Someone needed you yesterday, and you failed them. Today, you yelled at your children. The debilitating fatigue and accompanying impatience hit you in the late afternoon, after your son and daughter arrived home from school. You love them more than life itself; you would die for them. The last thing you want is to lose your temper at them. At 4:50 p.m., in the kitchen, it is the

first thing you do. My God, what comes over you?

Later, you cry.

Each day is a struggle. ... It is because we are bound. It is because God has limited us - horribly limited us. He has made it so that we cannot do what we want. He has sabotaged our vessels so that we cannot be the people we want to be. How we try. It is noble to try. We all try, and should. We pick up our burdens and try to budge them. Sometimes, we succeed. A miracle happens, and we are good people. Whenever this happens, we praise our Father. We ought to, because a dozen failures are coming down the pike.

I do not write from a place of depression or paranoia, but from reality and truth. I know so much about the love and sovereignty of God. He sustains the lilies of the field, and yet cares for me exceedingly more. What happens next? I promptly forget it. I forget about His care. Every day - at least sometime during the day – I doubt Him. Every day, I fail. Then comes an entire day when I lay utter confidence at His feet. His love remains constant throughout - but still.

Oh, that we could relax and even glory in our bonds, knowing that these limitations are of divine origin, and that they must precede liberation. We cannot know the sweet, coming release, apart from our writhing within these confines.

There is meaning in sweet writhing. May we both strain and relax in our splendid disability.

Long before the soldiers arrested Him at Gethsemane, our Christ knew bonds. Philippians 2:5-11 describes this:

For let this disposition be in you, which is in Christ Jesus also, Who, being inherently in the form of God, deems it not pillaging to be equal with God, nevertheless empties Himself, taking the form of a slave, coming to be in the likeness of humanity, and, being found in fashion as a human, He humbles Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Therefore, also, God highly exalts Him, and graces Him with the name that is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should be bowing, celestial and terrestrial and subterranean, and every tongue should be acclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God, the Father.

Jesus bound Himself to become human - to become limited in the worst ways possible. The Son of God would know hunger, depression, fatigue. He would want to move at the speed of light, as He used to, but now it would take him an hour to walk from Nazareth to Cana. And He would have to stop to rest. And drink. And cry. And pray.

And because of this, God highly exalts Him. Because of the limiting, God unbinds Him in ways unimaginable. He is affixed to the cross, WHERE-FORE God highly exalts Him. His limiting is a precursor to the salvation of all.

Oh, that we could relax and even glory in our bonds, knowing that these limitations are of divine origin, and that they must precede liberation. We cannot know the sweet, coming release, apart from our writhing within these confines.

Paul's Chains Further the Gospel

And now, lo! I, bound in spirit, am going to Jerusalem, not being aware what I will meet with in it, more than that the holy spirit, city ▶ by city, certifies to me, saying that bonds and afflictions are remaining for me. But of nothing have I a word, nor yet am I making my soul precious to myself, till I should be perfecting my career and the dispensation which I got from the Lord Jesus, to certify the evangel of the grace of God (Acts 20:22-24).

How can "bonds," "affliction" and "perfection" appear in the same sentence?

God's ways are higher than ours. Here is a scene of perfection from the life of Paul:

The warden casts Paul and Silas into the interior jail, and secures their feet in the stocks. Now at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and sang hymns to God. Now the prisoners listened to them. Now suddenly a great quake occurred, so that the foundations of the prison are shaken. Now instantly all the doors were opened, and the bonds of all were slacked (Acts 16:24-26).

An hour later, the jailor and his family heard the gospel of grace, and were saved. There is something about two jailed people singing hymns with their feet in stocks that impresses people.

Paul later wrote from Rome (Philippians 1:12-14),

Now I am intending you to know, brethren, that my affairs have rather come to be for the progress of the evangel, so that my bonds in Christ become apparent in the whole pretorium and to all the rest, and the majority of the brethren, having confidence in the Lord as to my bonds, are more exceedingly daring to speak the word of God fearlessly.

Weakness with grace is a mighty power. Jesus Christ amazed Pontius Pilate by calmly speaking to him. Then, from the cross, He forgave His murderers.

I complain when the convenience store runs out of my brand of chocolate bar. Sometimes I think it would be easier to walk nobly in the face of some great trial. It's the commonness of life that debilitates me, but then I realize: *I am in the trial of my life*. A slave of Christ, I walk unnoticed and poor through an indifferent world. My back is against the wall of the Philippi jail, and I cannot move.

What a great time to sing.

Humanity in the Arms of a Loving Savior and Important Related Matters

by — James T. Burson

The chapters of this book are connected in this singular manner: always, there is the attempt to display the grandeur of God's purpose in creation. Never is it proposed that God had a good idea which went awry, and thereafter He supposedly has been picking up the pieces. Our confidence, as believers, may always be premised on an overriding assurance that God does not behave like a mortal, being hesitant, exasperated, indecisive or hoping for the best outcome. This volume expresses the author's confidence in a far greater outcome of the entire human epoch than that which is generally proposed to the world. The flow of human history will not end in a groan, but rather a crescendo of praise by all to a true God of love and mercy. God will not only win, but He will radiate His victory over absolutely all that He has made; no other truth can settle the heart like this.

#1025, 328 pp, PB, \$14.95 (+ \$3.99 S&H = \$18.94)

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YOU MAY AS WELL LAUGH; PAUL DID

I realize, then, that we are enduring the most evil eon ever, and that we're all a step away from death - but that's no reason not to have a laugh, is it? Of course not. It didn't stop Paul.

One of my favorite lines (I almost said, "one-liners") from Scripture is Paul's memorable remark as he testifies for his life before Festus, procurator of Judea, King Agrippa II, and the king's sister, Berenice of Cilicia.

Having just made an impassioned defense, Paul gestures toward the king and says,

King Agrippa, are you believing the prophets? I am aware that you are believing! (Act 26:27).

Agrippa said:

Briefly are you persuading me, to make me a Christian! (:28).

Then Paul said:

May I ever wish to God, that briefly as well as greatly, not only you, but also all who are hearing me today, become such a kind as I am also, outside of these bonds! (:29).

Picture Paul. The king has just suggested that he could almost become like the apostle, and Paul then says, "I wish everyone was in my situation." The he lifts his chained hands and says, "Well, except for these, of course!"

I say he brought down the house. The royalty dismissed themselves (probably to giggle), and returned to declare Paul innocent.

A spoonful of humor helps the eon go down.

WE ARE LOCATED FOR THIS

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians:

No one is to be swayed by these afflictions, for you yourselves are aware that we are located for this.

It would be easy for Paul's friends to wonder why a messenger of God would have to suffer so much. Paul sure was in a lot of wrong places at the wrong times. Wasn't he? Not at all. Paul was actually moved, by God, to where the trouble was: swamp, ship, downtown Jerusalem, Rome - you name it. He was located *for the purpose* of affliction.

If there were not some value to be had, and some good to be wrung from the affliction, God would never have done this. He was doing it for Paul, not to him. It's the same with us.

Like Paul, then, we have a golden opportunity to sing in the rain.

As long as affliction has to come – and it does – it helps to know that we do not ultimately bring it on ourselves. Whatever you are going through, God has located you for it. You're not lost, and you're not alone.

Clanging Gong News Volume 3, Issue 6



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We are so thankful for the ministry the Lord has blessed you with as it has blessed us more that you will ever know. Thank you for your diligence in the Word and proclaiming truth! – GA

Thanks for posting the latest Pennsylvania Quarterly Gathering *videos*. I love these teachings; it is, for the most part, the only fellowship (albeit electronic) that we have with others of like faith. - Canada

My relatives were ministers and missionaries of traditional fundamentalism. Now at age 76 I've learned more about "baptism" from chapter 10 in God's Holv *Nation* than in a lifetime with relatives. – *FL*

God is love and He is using us in mighty ways. Keep up the good fight. -PA

I read God Assembles His Book, and studied the Scriptures along with it. Another eye-opener! I appreciate everything I'm learning, more than I will ever be able to express. - CO

Your Male & Female Series in your *video* section, how more excellent teaching can there be. You did a marvelous job of making clear that which has been obscured by religion and the traditions of men for a couple of thousand years. This series is beyond belief wonderful. To quote Paul, it "super-exceeds"! You are a wonderful researcher and teacher. I love it. -GA

Thank you Martin Zender, Dan Sheridan, Clyde Pilkington! God bless you all. Here I am, living in The Netherlands. I wish I could visit you dear friends. My whole thinking about God has been changed 100%. God is awesome. I have been listening to your messages. It is better than winning the lottery. Thank you so much. - Netherlands

I just finished reading 34 Reasons Why "the Holy Spirit" is not a "Separate Person" from the Only True God, the Father. Excellent writing, explained

so very, very well. Thank you for having the writings available to us for downloading. - NM

I have listened to your videos on *Judas*. The truths you presented are real gems. I thank and glorify God for moving you to present these Judas studies, and moving me to listen to them.

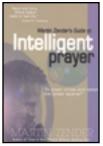
No one is more surprised than I that I am looking into universal salvation at this time. I have pushed against it, tried to get rid of it since the early sixties - 1963 or 64 - but! here I am again. I have been learning from your **Daily Email Goodies** and have included a bit on my Facebook page, under your name. - Email

I miss your tenderness caused by the evangel in you. Thank you for doing the only thing you can do. Thank you for being you. -NV

It seems I am addicted to the BSN! - TX

I finally got to listen to your talk entitled *Christ on* Display. That's the most powerful message I have heard all year. I wish that all who claim to believe in Christ would listen to that talk – deep truths. – MD

I am now reading *The Witness of the Stars* by E.W. Bullinger. It is so very wonderful how Father works! He created ALL, so why should not the stars reveal His plans as all creation does? An excellent book and so beautifully written. I do thank Father that He has revealed His truth to us and given the words to ones like E.W. Bullinger to write it down so we can read and understand it. Thank you for having this book available to the body and whoever may read it. -NM



Martin Zender's Guide to Intelligent Prayer:

Do Prayer Circles Work Better than Prayer Squares? by — Martin Zender (#6512) 80 pages, PB \$10.95 (\$14.94 with s&h)

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The Believer's Warfare

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

The believer is in the middle of an ancient spiritual warfare that is as old as mankind. The battle itself, although intense, is not complicated. It is not a process of spiritual hoop-jumping. Indeed it is simple. *The Believer's Warfare* surveys a few key passages of Scripture to reveal God's sure plan of victory in the life of His saints.

84 pp., PB. (#7000) \$9.⁹⁵ (+ \$3.⁹⁹ s&h = \$13.⁹⁴)

"I have really enjoyed *The Believer's Warfare*. For years I have struggled with my walk with Christ, bouncing 'in and out of fellowship'; using some human effort to try and control the flesh. It seems as though I still have a lot of legalistic and guilt-ridden programming in my brain." $-\mathbf{OH}$

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