

You're of no earthly value unless you're...

# Heavenly Minded

Vol 6 Iss 1



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Principle People of the Scripture – Part 1

## **Dear Friends,**

Thank you all so much for your support. We appreciate your kind words and prayers tremendously. We've included a Bible study guide in this issue the purpose of which is to generate discussion in a small group. If you find it helpful, we'll be glad to continue. Please let us know what you think.

Facing the new year, we're confident that the time is short until the end of the age. Whether it's two hours or two decades, may we stir each other to redeem the time we have.

If you're like us, you must deal with that stubborn old man daily and be reminded frequently of our true priorities. May the Lord surround you with loving people who will do just that when necessary. Let's keep our attention and affection on things above. God bless and keep you!

*In Christ's Love,*

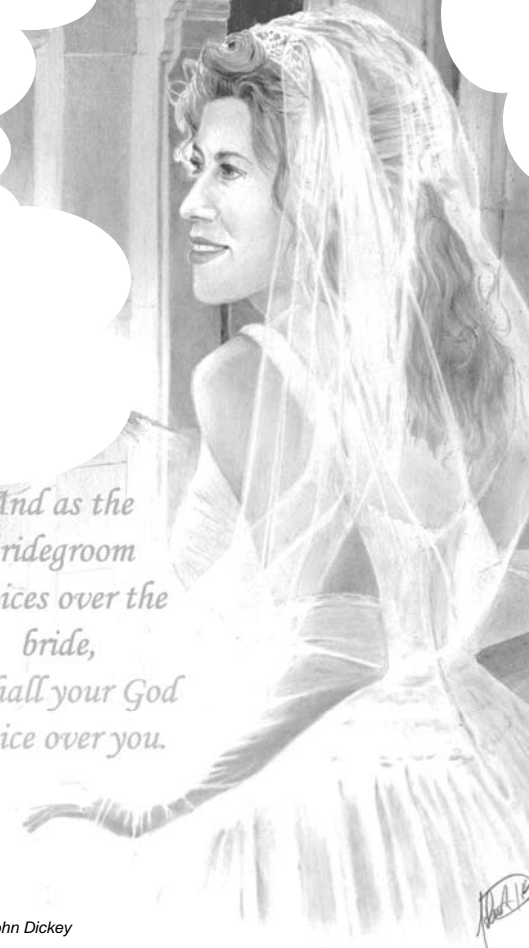
*John and Darlene*

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The goal of HM is to encourage our readers to "Set your affection on things above..." and thereby to be the greater and more effective witness to Christ. Articles may be shared freely and reproduced but only in their entirety. Comments and suggestions are always welcome. GBY!

*And as the  
bridegroom  
rejoices over the  
bride,  
so shall your God  
rejoice over you.*

Art. by John Dickey



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## *Eye on the Ball*

I felt cheated! The man I hired to simply move an electrical line overcharged me by some \$8,000. Like an emotional eruption, as I gazed at the invoice, I began imagining all sorts of mean and vengeful things I could do in response – not just for a moment but pretty much the whole day! And of course, I was miserable as a result. Perhaps that gives you an idea of the depth of my pitiful spirituality. But God, in His mercy, dealt with me.

Not many of us have the luxury of being able to chuck out the window eight grand and carelessly continue on, but that wasn't the point at all. Yes, I thought I was robbed, but that wasn't the point either. God knew I needed a reminder, for my wicked heart had strayed from a foundational need. I'll illustrate this need with a story you know well...

Abram was a little perturbed. After risking his life to rescue his nephew Lot, he returned to the Kings Valley where he tithed to the King of Salem and refused the reward of the king of Sodom. His refusal was commendable and yet there was a weight on his shoulder – a chip so to speak.

*After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward."*

*But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, ..." (Gen 15:1,2)*

Now, don't get me wrong – Abram wasn't ticked with God like I was with the electrician. However, the Lord was putting forth a magnificent point

and that was the lesson Abram as well as all believers need to know and be reminded of periodically.

Now, Abram received the vision but not the message, not yet. Do you see his misunderstanding? God said to him, "*I (am) ... your exceedingly great reward.*" Yet, Abram replied, "*Lord GOD, what will you give me...?*"

Abram missed it. Maybe it was because of the mental 'noise' of his disappointment or self pity. (I can sure relate to that, sad to say.) God didn't say, "I have a reward for you." Or, "I'll send you something special." God said, "*I (am) your exceedingly great reward.*" It wasn't something He had with which to enrich Abram – more sheep or goats, more gold or servants. It was God Himself.

Now, the Hebrew word translated "reward" is quite interesting. This passage is its first mention in scripture. It's basic meaning is "wages". It is derived from the word meaning "to hire". In essence, God said, "I (am) your exceedingly great wages."

Of course, your mind immediately reacts with the question, 'Wages? How could Abram work to earn anything from God? Doesn't this fly in the face of grace?' To answer this, let's listen to what Jesus said on the subject...

He had just fed these folks an all you can eat feast – bread and fish, but they wanted more. Consequently, Jesus said to them, "*Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.*"

*Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"*

*Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent." (John 6:27:29)*

Herein, Jesus made it clear that God's fundamental work is faith, specifically, saving faith. This type of earning is essentially different than physical work. It is, in a manner of speaking, an effortless earning, wages that aren't labored for literally but acquired by believing.

Back to our story – Abram had believed in God and obeyed Him by departing from Ur and then Haran. He had followed the Lord to the Promised Land. But this wasn't necessarily the kind of belief that resulted in righteousness. That's because it was really more an issue of obedience. (Like keeping the Law, if you would.) One leads to the other but not necessarily the other way around. Obedience, on its own, is known as religious observance. Faith, 'on its own', however, leads to righteousness. Of course, the scripture points out that it doesn't remain on its own but also leads to obedience out of a grateful heart. (see Jam 2:20)

So, at this point, God presented Abram with a crisis of faith. He had to believe God and not simply obey Him. He had to believe Him for something beyond his own ability – for something only God could do.

You see, simply believing that God exists does not give one salvation. James wrote, *You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!* (Jam 2:19) and the writer of Hebrews tells us, *But without faith it is impossible*

*to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.* (Heb 11:6)

So God said that He Himself was Abram's exceedingly great wages – wages earned by faith in God yet...

*...Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!"*

Abram didn't have this saving faith just yet. This kind of faith in the Old Testament is referred to as righteousness. In fact, Paul used this very passage in Romans 4 to illustrate that Abraham was saved by faith and that's the faith that was about to be born --

*And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."*

*And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.* (Gen 15:4-6)

Now, you may be thinking, 'How wonderful for God to bless Abram like this. To be his "exceedingly great reward" He must have meant that Abram would have a close intimate relationship with Him.' And indeed, He did. But, there was/is much, exceedingly much, more to this promise. For like all of us who believe, Abram was also a mortal man, prone to sin, and the wages of sin is death. For an intimate relationship with God to exist, sin must be dealt with; its wages must be paid.

So God also meant that He Himself was Abram's exceedingly great wages – wages earned by Abram's sin... In this, He was saying prophetically that He would pay the exceedingly great wages of sin by dying in Abram's place. Jesus Christ became our sin if you would on the cross – the Word says, *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.* (2 Cor 5:21) Now, I'm convinced that Abram didn't understand that at this point, but it is recorded for our profit who look to the blessed cross of Calvary for our salvation.

Jesus Christ is Abram's exceedingly great reward; ours too, who believe. As a matter of fact, God confirmed that this was the primary point of His promise through the covenant He made with Abram which immediately follows this passage (see Gen 15:9, 10). In it, Abram was told to bring a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon. When he brought all these to the Lord, he cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. This was known as 'cutting covenant' and the practice of making a covenant in such a grizzly manner was not uncommon in that day. However, the specifics of this particular set up all speak very prophetically of Jesus and His sacrifice on Golgatha. In the law which was to come, the heifer was the sacrificial animal of dedication; the goat was the animal upon which the people's sins were laid vicariously and sent out to be slaughtered outside the camp; the

ram was the sacrificial animal of substitution. The dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit and the nestling represents innocence and purity.

Three years speaks of the length of the Lord's earthly ministry which was terminated by His sacrifice on the cross. You see, there is no greater wage, no greater reward than Jesus Christ and yet along with Him, there's even more.

Paul wrote, *"He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"* (Rom 8:32)

Wow! Eternal life, heaven's bliss, endless love, pleasures forevermore, an enormous happy family, a sinless character, indescribable joy and peace ... on and on it goes ... all things, ALL things. We are mind-numbingly blessed.

**In heaven. It's in heaven. It's in heaven and it's forever.**

It's so easy to get wrapped up in the "affairs of this life". I'm not advocating a mindless ignorance of our daily challenges but rather the need for a frequent realignment of our priorities. We so easily get enticed by the rewards/wages available in this life don't we. But our true rewards are in heaven. By comparison, all that we could possess in the here and now is only a vapor, dust in the wind.

For this reason, our Savior said, *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal."* (Mat 6:19,20)

The Bible is full of promises, but perhaps the most wonderful of all is this: *"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him"* (1 Corinthians 2:9). There are many things we do not know about heaven but what we can be sure of is that it will fulfill our greatest longings, it will dazzle us with its beauty, it will obliterate our greatest problems with its power and splendor, it will be greater than anything we could imagine or dream, it will be a place where love and joy will reign unspoiled.

Joni Eareckson who became a quadriplegic as a result of a diving accident nearly 30 years ago has experienced more than her share of pain and heartache. She says that *"heaven has become my heart's home, the place where I will finally belong. The place where I will get a brand new body."* She continues, *"In the world's finale something so glorious is going to happen that it will atone for every single tear we've ever cried. God is going to give us the key that will make sense out of what now seems to be such senseless suffering. Heaven is going to be a place of no more disappointment, no more grief but joy. Heaven's joy."*

In Heaven there will be:

No more Death  
No more Graves  
No more Temptations  
No more Sickness  
No more Fear  
No more Night  
No more Depression  
No more Disappointments  
No more Pain  
No more Separations  
No more Divorce

No more Betrayal  
No more Aging  
No more Disease  
No more Bills to Pay  
No more Loneliness  
No more Hate  
No more Devil  
No more Bad Memories  
No more Not Having Enough.

In a manner of speaking, Heaven will be Eden restored. You could say we have been living east of Eden since Adam and Eve sinned, but the day will come when the original paradise God intended us to be a part of will be restored. The Bible gives this promise concerning the earth: *"The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God"* (Romans 8:19-21).

*Heaven will be right. It will be a place of righteousness, or rightness. All the wrongs of the world will be made right. It will be a place where everything evil is absent, and everything good is present; everything sad will be gone, and only joy will exist; everything disappointing will disappear, and everything exciting will appear; everything depressing will be gone, and everything hopeful will come; everything violent and hateful will be gone, and everything born of love will prevail; every unfaithfulness will be in the past, and steadfast loyalty will be present; everything detestable will be gone, and everything desirable will abide with*

*us; every sickness will be gone, and complete wholeness will take over our lives; every struggle, frustration and failure will be over, and only success will be possible.*

*Every wrong done to you in this world will be made right. Every injustice will meet with justice. Every sorrow will be reversed, and joy will wash over you like a waterfall.*

—R Buchanan

In addition, Heaven will be fantastically relational. As a matter of fact, you will be reunited again with those you may think you have lost who have known Christ and lived for him — if you belong to Christ. You see, as believers, our relationships are not lost; to the contrary, they will be regained and renewed. We will experience them at a level we have never known before. Deep, rewarding and fulfilling relationships are the essence of heaven. On earth, we let each other down and disappoint each other. Many times, without knowing it, we hurt each other and fail one another. But there, *"we will all be changed — in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed"* (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

In addition, our love for God and our relationship with him will be unspoiled. There will be nothing between us at all — no separation. Our sinful nature will be taken away, and we will no longer struggle with sin and temptation. Our relationship with God will be so intimate that the book of Revelation describes it as a bride coming to her husband — full of love and passion, with arms open wide.

Dear friends in Christ, home is on its way, but it is not here yet. Don't make the mistake of thinking it is. And when it gets here He will make "everything new." Jesus said, *"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done"* (Revelation 22:12). Every sacrifice you have made will be remembered. Every sorrow you have experienced will be dispelled with countless joys. Every rejection will be overcome by an explosion of love. Every work will be rewarded. Far from every mistake being brought out, every good thing you have done will be honored and recompensed.

*In C. S. Lewis' wonderful books The Chronicles of Narnia, the characters who have lived in Narnia have completed their time and work there. In a closing chapter entitled "Further Up and Further In," Aslan, the lion who represents Christ, has come for them in order to take them home. They are headed away from Narnia and are about to enter Aslan's land. But they are met with familiar scenes. One of the characters cries out: "I have come home at last! This is my real country! I belong here. This is the land I have been looking for all my life, though I never knew it till now. The reason why we loved the old Narnia is that it sometimes looked a little like this." -- Buchanan*

May your vision and desire for the King of heaven be renewed. Keep your eye on the ball! Our time here is short. Live for Jesus then *"Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven..."* (Mat 5:12)

## WHOLE

*"God is not really interested in our religious activities, our religious busyness, our religious fervor or emotionalism. He is interested in the kind of character we display. He wants us to be whole and holy. In our homes, in our businesses, in our schools, in our neighborhoods, He wants people to see His holy character shining through our lives, expressed through the qualities of love, joy, peace, forgiveness, patience, and understanding we show to the people around us. That is the character of a whole person."* — Ray Stedman

Now, wholeness is a focal point of one of my favorite books in the Bible, Leviticus. The theme of Leviticus is given in 20:26: *"You shall be holy to me; for I the LORD am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine."*

*Perhaps you were turned off right away by the word holy in this passage. I do not know what you think holy means. You probably read into it things from your past experience which make it unpalatable to you. Most of us associate it with some kind of grimness. We think of holy people as those who look as if they have been steeped in vinegar or soaked in embalming fluid. I used to think of the word that way, and holiness was not attractive to me at all. It repelled me. But I ran across a verse in Scripture which spoke of "the beauty of holiness" (1 Chronicles 16:29, 2 Chronicles 20:21, Psalms 29:2, 96:2). I asked myself, "What in the world is beautiful about holiness?" When I found out I agreed that*

*holiness is indeed a beautiful thing...*

*Others associate it with strangeness, apartness, as though holy people are weird, peculiar individuals who live out in the desert somewhere, remote from the rest of us. We think of them as "different."*

*But the Bible itself suggests none of these ideas concerning holiness. If you want to get at the meaning of this word you must go back to its original root. This word is derived from the same root from which a very attractive English word comes. This is the word wholeness. So that holiness means "wholeness," being complete. And if you read wholeness in place of holiness everywhere you find it in the Bible you will be much closer to what the writers of that book meant. We all know what wholeness is: It is to have together all the parts which were intended to be there, and to have them functioning as they were intended to function.*

*That is what God is talking about. He says to this people, "you shall be whole, because I am whole." God is complete; he is perfect. There is no blemish in God; he lives in harmony with himself. He is a beautiful person. He is absolutely what a person ought to be. He is filled with joy and love and peace. He lives in wholeness. And he looks at us in our brokenness and says to us, "You, too, shall be whole."*

*That word wholeness has power to awaken desire within us. We long to be whole people. Don't you? Don't you want to be what God made you to be, with all the ingredients of your personality able to be expressed in balance. That is*



to be a beautiful person, and that is what God is after. That is what the book of Leviticus is all about. In fact, the whole Bible is on that theme.

We are so aware of our own brokenness, of our lack of wholeness. We know how much we hurt ourselves and each other. We are aware of our inability to cope with life. We sometimes put up a big facade and try to bluff our way through as though we are able to handle anything. But inside, half the time, we are running scared. That is a mark of our lack of wholeness. We also know our diabolical power to irritate, to enrage, and to inflame others -- and ourselves...

Man has lost his way. He was made in the image and likeness of God. When man first came from the hand of God he was whole. Adam functioned as God intended man to function. He was functioning in the image and the likeness of God. But now we have lost that likeness. We still have the image, but the likeness is gone. God determines to heal man's brokenness and to make man whole again. And he knows how to do it -- he says so: "You shall be whole; for I am whole, and I have separated you from the peoples." It is a process of separation. The reason we are so broken is that we are involved in a broken race: Our attitudes are wrong. Our vision of life is twisted and distorted. We believe illusions, take them to be facts, and act upon them. We are following phantoms and fantasies and delusions.

So God must separate us. He has to break us loose from conformity to the thought patterns and the attitudes and reactions of those

around us. He has to deliver us from all that, straighten out our thinking, set our minds and hearts aright, and correct our tangled, fouled relationships. This is a process which takes infinite patience and love, because it is voluntary -- God never forces us into it. It can occur only to those who trust God enough to respond to his love."

In the book of Leviticus, we find a five fold system of religious sacrifices that illustrates God's path to wholeness.

...we see that the order of the offerings is significant... the first three, ...dealt with the basic needs of men and women for love (the burnt offering), joy (the grain offering), and peace (the peace offering). Love, joy, and peace are the basic needs of human life. Without them, we cannot function effectively as human beings. This is the same order that these fruits of the Spirit are listed in Galatians 5:22-23--love, joy, and peace.

Only after symbolically dealing with these basic human needs does God begin to talk about sin and trespass, the next two offerings. In the final two offerings, God deals with another basic requirement of humanity. We need not only the positive virtues of love, joy, and peace, but also to behave as responsible individuals. The sin and trespass offerings call us to act responsibly toward God and toward the people around us.

It is important to notice the order of the five sacrifices because the sacrifices tell us something important about the mind of God. Notice where He begins. While all

five of the sacrifices of Leviticus were fulfilled in the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, each sacrifice expresses a different aspect of His death, a different blessing that flows from His sacrifice. The first three blessings that come to us from the sacrifice of Jesus are love, joy, and peace. That is what the first three sacrifices speak of.

Then, in the final two sacrifices, the sin and trespass offerings, we see yet another blessing that flows to us from the cross of Christ: the forgiveness of sin. Now consider this: What is the first blessing we always think of when we reflect on the cross of Christ? Forgiveness! We always start our understanding of the cross with the issue of forgiveness--but that is not where God starts!

When we preach the Christian gospel, the first thing we usually say is, "You're a sinner! You need to be forgiven!" And sometimes we thunder away with hellfire and damnation at people in order to get them under conviction, to make them aware of the guilt that results from their sins. Its true, of course, that God wants to talk to human beings about sin. Men and women can never solve their problems until they solve the sin problem.

But we must remember that this is not where God starts. He begins by talking about love, joy, and peace. He provides these three blessings first. Then He says, "Now let's get at the heart of the problem that separates us." Isn't that marvelous?

### **The heart of the problem:**

...There was only one inflexible requirement [regarding the sin and trespass offerings]: that the sinner

admit his or her sin. The individual had to confess to the act of wrongdoing against God. It wasn't that God demanded repayment for the sin. Human beings cannot repay God for sinning against Him. But God required that people make restitution, if only to the extent of confessing that the act of wrongdoing was truly wrong.

Confession of sin was essential to obtaining forgiveness through the sacrificial offering of the animal.

The truth that is depicted here in these sacrifices is the same truth we read about in the New Testament letters of John: "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:8-9).

God insists that we admit and confess our sin--not because He wants to humiliate us but because confession is necessary in order for us to receive the forgiveness which He has already provided. It isn't that God forgives us at the moment we confess. He has already forgiven us. But we can't accept that forgiveness until we see and understand the truth about what we have done. That is why it is necessary for us to admit our wrongs before we can experience His cleansing forgiveness.

This is a fundamental principle for curing broken relationships within human society. We must come to a place where we face and admit our sins. We must admit our sin specifically, clearly, and unequivocally. It does no good to simply say, "If I have offended you,

please forgive me." That word "if" cancels out everything else you say. It is a denial of your own recognition of sin. When someone says, "If I have done something wrong," he is really saying, "You may see what I did as wrong, but I don't, and I won't admit it. If you think I did something wrong, then I'm sorry you feel that way, but I don't agree." That is not an admission of guilt, and it does not result in healing, forgiveness, or a reconciled relationships.

There are times in human relationships when we must do things that are right but painful, such as confront people who are living in a sinful lifestyle. At such times, we can be sorry that we have to hurt someone by speaking the truth to them in love--yet we are not sinning by doing so, we are doing what is right. A doctor may say, "I'm sorry" when doing something that causes a patient to feel pain--but the doctor is not doing something wrong. Sometimes a doctor must cause a little pain in order to bring about healing. So we need to understand that not every incident of causing pain or hurt to someone else is necessarily a sin.

But when we do sin against other people, God wants us to admit it to ourselves and confess it to God and to the person we have sinned against. God wants us to come to a place where we say, "Yes, I was wrong. I sinned, and I have no excuses to offer. Please forgive me."

Only at this point can a relationship be restored. In most broken relationships, it is necessary for both parties to seek forgiveness. Each person must begin with himself or

herself. As Jesus said, "First take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye" (Matthew 7:5).

Jesus talked about this very principle when He said, "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift" (Matthew 5:23-24). God is more pleased with our integrity and our healed relationships than He is with our religious offerings.

God provided the trespass offering and fulfilled it in Jesus Christ, so that we might heal the broken relationships of the past and live our lives with a clear conscience. If you want to have a vital relationship with God, you may need to heal the broken relationships of the past--relationships with friends, neighbors, and family members. You may need to make restitution and confess your sins and errors. But once you do, those relationships will be healed before God, and you will experience emotional and spiritual freedom for the rest of your life.

*(Many thanks to our brother in heaven, Ray Stedman, for this article which is comprised of a series of excerpts from his study in Leviticus and to Lambert Dolphin for presenting it on his website.)*

## *But One Thing*

*Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Phil 3:12-14)*

We'd so much like to think that the 'older' we get in the Lord, the saintlier we get. Whole denominations are built on this notion. Of course, there is some validity to this, but there is also a tension, if you would, with it as well. For, the more 'mature' we become in Christ, the more 'taintier' we realize we are in comparison to our dear Savior.

Now, some would characterize Paul as an ever gung-ho, you-can't-hold-me-back kind of guy. Maybe so, but what he is asserting in this passage has much less to do with spiritual accomplishment and much more to do with facing the balance of your life when you know that 'much water has passed under your bridge' so to speak. It is an attitude necessary for finishing well.

Perhaps, you've accomplished much; perhaps, you've suffered much; perhaps, you've failed greatly and repeatedly. Perhaps, there's reason to be proud or thankful, or perhaps, there are woeful regrets. Paul had them all; perhaps you do as well. Towards the end of his life he could justly boast of his sufferings for Christ as in 2 Cor 11 and yet he

came to esteem himself as the 'chief' of sinners (see 1 Tim 1:15).

Focusing on the past, we swing from castigation to congratulation back and forth. Both are balls and chains to the Spirit-filled believer. And of course, Satan knows this so he endeavors to fix our attention there.

But, how will you finish? With a sigh or a shout? With a limp or a leap? Paul said, "I press on" which is a symbolic use of words. You see, the Greek word he used here is most generally translated as 'persecute'. What he was alluding to was that the same fervor he had in persecuting or chasing down the believers before his conversion characterized his chasing down of Christ afterwards.

Paul also said, "I lay hold" which means "to take possession of". Possession of what? The promises of God in Christ. Paul was as fed up as you and I are with the failures of the flesh, but there is one way to deal with them, one thing to do. "...forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead". The Greek is more emphatic -- "truly forgetting". And, "reaching forward to those things which are ahead"--picture a racer stretching forward to break the tape. It's been a long race and yet the end is near so the racer stretches forward knowing the final effort is worth it.

For Paul, this wasn't a spiritual 'mid-life crisis' but a resolute determination to consider the past as 'hidden' in Christ and to face each step in the road ahead with faith and a grand anticipation.

“Together a father and son hiked through the mountains of Washington, Oregon and California. For many days they were alone on the trail, often camping above the 10,000-foot level. They faced every sort of discouragement—lack of food and water, danger from wild animals, danger from robbers they might meet, days of rain and mud, incredible physical exhaustion, the very real possibility of physical injury, not to speak of loneliness, blisters, mosquitoes, and the extremes of heat and cold. Before leaving on the trip, the father discovered that over 90% of those who set out to hike more than 500 miles never make it. Fifty percent never get started and 40% quit after they start. Only 10% ever finish a long-distance hike. After studying the 10% who succeed, he came to certain conclusions. Some of it involved strenuous training and meticulous logistical preparation. But there was something else involved. He discovered that those who succeeded versus those who failed understood that the biggest block was mental. They knew that their real enemy lay within, not without. Those who succeeded made two important decisions: First, they decided they would finish the trip no matter what happened, and second, they expected bad things to happen and decided they would not be surprised or dismayed. So when the rains turned the trail into a quagmire, they didn't quit because they weren't surprised. When black clouds of mosquitoes descended like some Old Testament plague, they didn't quit because they weren't surprised. When they faced days of loneliness and nights of hunger, they didn't quit

because they knew it would be like this. In essence, the successful backpackers adopted a certain mindset. They knew that the key was simply putting one foot in front of the other. You take a step and hit the mud. You take another step and see a bear. You take another step and your legs begin to cramp. You take another step and the crazy people come out of the woods. Doesn't matter. You aren't surprised because you knew the crazy people would show up sooner or later. So you just keep putting one foot in front of the other and eventually your journey is finished.” – Ray Pritchard

*Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus,...* (Heb 12:1)

It is so worth it to finish well! Like Paul, let's do this 'one thing'. Forget the past, Faith the future. Follow Jesus! All the promises of God are Yes! and Amen! in Him.

*Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind;...*

*For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.* (Phil 3:15,20,21)

## Principle Men of the Scripture – Part 1 - Adam

### Reference: Genesis 1:26 – 3:24

Consider Adam. He is the only man along with Jesus Christ who, initially, knew what it was like to live without sin. When God observed His creation and saw that it was “very good”, that included Adam. He had no flaw.

### Read Genesis 2:7

Here is the detail behind Genesis 1:26, 27. Man (Adam) was created first, as a lifeless vessel, a corpse of clay. Then the breath or wind (ruach in the Hebrew) of life was introduced. This combination created a living soul. Like God, Adam was a triune being – body, spirit and soul. Since the soul is the result of spirit indwelling the lifeless flesh, you can imagine it positioned between the influence of the two.

1. How does that effect the soul?

### Read v2:8

God created Eden and then placed Adam in it.

1. What did Adam do to make Eden?
2. ...or to find Eden?
3. ... or to merit Eden?
4. Does that apply to us today in any way?

### Read v2:9

God created Eden after creating Adam – making it pleasant to his sight and filled with good food.

1. What does this imply about it? Was Adam made for Eden or vice versa?

In the center was the choice – life or death.

1. Why not place it outside the garden or off to the side?

### Read v2:15-17

Adam was given a purpose – to cultivate and tend the garden.

1. What are some reasons God may have had in doing this?

### Read v2:18-20

The I AM is speaking here. Eve is the only creation made after the first seven days. From this point, she typifies the church as Adam typifies Christ. Note she is to be “a helper comparable” to Adam. See

1 Jhn 3:2 with Rev19:10 and 22:9

1. Why isn't it good for Adam to be alone?
2. Why was it important for her to be 'comparable'?
3. What does this tell us about God's heart toward man?

God brought the animals to Adam to see what he would call them.

1. Why do you think He was interested in the names?
2. Do you think Adam was learning anything? What?

### Read v2:21-23

Eve was not formed from the dust as the beasts were. She was formed directly from Adam.

1. What does this say as to our own spiritual constitution? See Rom 8:9-11.

Adam was put into a deep sleep which typifies Christ's death and a rib was taken from his side to form Eve.

1. What was 'taken' from Christ's side? See Jhn 19:34 and 1Jhn 5:7,8.
2. How does that relate to the church? See Eph 5:32

Eve was brought to Adam.

1. Did Eve have to search for Adam? Consider Jn 15:16. Man is “ish” and woman is “ish – AH” in the Hebrew. A good name, huh?

### Read v2:24

1. How does this speak of Christ?

### Read v2:25

1. Why were they not ashamed to be naked?

**Read v3:1-6**

Here is the most disastrous dialog in all of man's history. Eve was deceived, Adam was not. See 1 Tim 2:14. Yet sinless Adam chose to disobey God's command. You might say that the first Adam chose to die with his bride while the Last Adam, Jesus chose to die for His bride.

1. Why does scripture hold Adam accountable rather than Eve? See Rom 5:14 and 1 Cor 15:22.
2. God's command was simple. Does the serpent's complicating of the issue have relevance to the gospel of Christ today? See 2 Cor 11:3

**Read v3:7,8**

Sin changed their perception of everything.

1. What was the first reaction?
2. Was the sewing of fig leaves an effective disguise? An adequate covering?

They tried to hide from God.

1. Why?
2. Does sin still prompt us to do the same thing?

**Read v3:9**

Certainly, God knows exactly where Adam is.

1. Why the question?

**Read v3:10**

1. Why was Adam afraid?
2. Are we prone to the same thing?
3. How do we behave?

**Read v3:11-13**

It's pass the buck time. Neither Adam nor Eve hold themselves accountable.

1. Why does God ask what they've done? Doesn't He know?
2. Is there any confession of sin and repentance?

3. Is confessing just the facts sufficient in dealing with sin?

**Read v3:14, 15**

Here is God's curse and judgment upon Satan.

1. Why no questioning as there was with Adam and Eve?
2. Who fulfills this judgment? How?

**Read v3:16-19**

Bearing in mind that you 'reap what you sow' (Gal 6:7,8) and that God says "in sorrow of grief" Adam will eat – i.e. live.

1. What does this imply about what God's heart is toward His children?

God cursed the ground 'for man's sake'.

1. Was this a punishment?

**Read v3:20, 21**

Adam changed his wife's name from 'Ish-ah' to 'chav-vah'; from "woman" to "living" or "life".

1. Will the Last Adam do something similar? See Rev 3:12.
2. Some say that this statement is the birth of faith. What to you think?
3. What had to happen in order for the fig leaves to get tossed? How about an application to us today?

**Read v3:22-24**

God sent them out of the garden and barred their re-entry.

1. Why?
2. Bearing in mind that Eden is the place of God's presence and fellowship as well as the location of the Tree of Life, is the way still guarded by a flaming sword?
3. Can we enter? If so, how?



*In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye...*

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