



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Issue 18

Back to Basics:

Defining the Church

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

Part I

I Timothy 3:15-16

There is much confusion and controversy surrounding the subject of the church. Some teach or believe that the church is a building, a meeting, a system of beliefs, an organization, or a denominational system.¹ What does the Bible teach about the church?

The purpose of this study is to identify and understand the church of God's present program. Specifically, we want to focus upon the church in its local setting.

"But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Timothy 3:15).

"The church of the living God IS the pillar and ground of the truth! That makes it pretty important. If we can define church, we will have identified 'the pillar and ground of the truth.' Few endeavors are as important and rewarding as this.

"But, defining words is a crucial factor that many people never consider. Some purposely ignore it. Because of this, millions of people have missed the true meaning of the church. And, because they have missed this meaning, they now find themselves unwittingly in support of an institution the early believers despised.

WORD MEANINGS

"Learning the origins and correct meanings of words provides answers for many things. A word study will sometimes force us to change our use of a word after discovering that we've been using it wrongly. Finding past errors, however, is nothing to be ashamed of - unless we refuse to correct those errors. This quest, of course, never ends. There is more to learn than one lifetime allows. But, we can, and should, develop adequate vocabularies ... How we use words has a great effect on us.

"Words are tools. However, for two people to share these tools, both people must have a common understanding of word meanings. Communication between intelligent beings requires a standard meaning for words. Otherwise, my words will mean something different to others than they do to me. So, the pursuit of correct word usage is a noble endeavor."²

2. Taken from *What is the Ecclesia*, Ben Williams (edited and abridged).

1. Even in "grace circles" we often unwittingly confuse the issue by making a distinction between the kingdom and the church. But we might ask the questions "Which kingdom?" and "Which church?" The fact is that we, as members of the church, which is His body, are a part of a kingdom (Colossians 1:13; 4:11). And it is also true that those who looked for the kingdom of heaven were a part of a church (Galatians 1:13; c.f. I Timothy 3:5). The problem is that the terms kingdom and church are very general. We must qualify these terms by distinguishing a specific kingdom and church.

(continued on page 147)

Dear precious fellow-members of His Body:

In this current issue of the BSN, and in some of the ones that will follow, we will be addressing, among other things, the doctrine and practice of the church. As many of you many know, our views concerning the local church and its body life expression have changed over the last few years. I have resigned as pastor, we have abandoned our Sunday meetings altogether and we have brought the church back home (*i.e.*, we conduct home gatherings, or to say it in a more modern way we “home church”).

Our current understanding and practices are an alternative to the traditional way of doing things. These changes are based on our current understanding of the Scripture.

While we realize that our conclusions are subject to mistakes, we, nonetheless have been compelled to follow our convictions. For this reason we have taken the long road of a continuing transition. It is our purpose in some of the articles in the next few issues to explain doctrinally why we have pursued our present course and in so doing, we will have supplied you with further information so that you can make your own personal decision in these matters.

We are sure that some of our readers will be simply over-joyed by these issues. Others of you may become angry, confused, worried and/or offended. Some of you may even spend some restless nights, just as we did when we considered the seriousness of these issues. But ultimately you must decide for yourself. Whatever you decide, let us make it clear to you “up front” that we love and value you in Christ.

We simply want to let each of you to know that we have a vision of Body Life that is much more than casual and superficial. We want more than what the world’s religious system has offered. We desire to recover not just the Pauline doctrine, but the Pauline pattern of the local church as well. Will you join with us in this pursuit?

Your eternal brother,



Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

P.S. – *We continue to receive many gracious inquiries concerning my father. I am glad to report to you that he has improved far beyond our greatest expectations, or that of the medical profession. He and my mother have returned to their own home. We would like to say a special “thank you” for the many telephone calls, letters and cards that we have received. We look forward to seeing some of you at the conferences this summer.*

Bible Student's Notebook

This biweekly publication (24 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 (1 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 (1 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; 1 Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any “Movement,” “Organization,” “Mission,” or separate body of believers, but is sent forth to and for all “saints.”

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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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I. THE DEFINITION

One of the problems concerning this subject of the church arises from the fact that all too often, too much is made of the term church itself.

This is a result of centuries of traditional religious definition. So, let us take the time to define the word church before proceeding any further.

A. The English Word *Church*

1. The Influence of Religion on the Word Church

We can see the religious influence upon language in our word church. Most definitions of the word church, as found in an English dictionary, carry the current traditional usage that the word is limited to.

2. The King James Bible and the English Language

We must understand that the English language during the production of the Authorized Bible (1604-1611) was still in development and there were not as yet any official standards of spelling, grammar, and definition.³

3. "In 1604, Robert Cawdrey, a schoolmaster, prepared the first English dictionary. It was called *A Table Alphabetical*. It defined about 3,000 hard English words that had been taken from various other languages ... In 1721, Nathan Bailey published a dictionary containing about 60,000 words. This was the first English dictionary that tried to include all English words instead of hard words only. "In the early 1700's, Jonathan Swift, Alexander Pope, Joseph Addison, Samuel Johnson and other literary men of England wanted to prepare a dictionary that would set the standard for good usage in English... Samuel Johnson undertook the task of preparing an English dictionary... He finally published his great dictionary in 1755. Along with Walker's *Pronouncing Dictionary* (published in 1791), it served as the standard for information about words in English until the middle of the 1800's. "In 1806, Noah Webster published a small school dictionary in the United States. Webster wanted to set up an American standard of good usage to compare with the British standard set by Johnson and Walker. He had received encouragement from Benjamin Franklin, James Madison, and other American leaders. In 1828, he published a large dictionary containing 70,000 entries ..." *The Word Book*, Clarence Barnhart (Vol. 4, p. 160, 1960 Edition.)

The King James Bible actually played a major role in the stabilizing and standardizing the English language.

3. The Etymology of Our English Word Church

"Our English word church means pertaining to the lord. It refers to something that pertains to, or belongs to, a lord."²

4. The Best English Dictionary

Partly because of these factors, the BEST dictionary (English or otherwise) for defining the words used in the Scriptures is the Bible itself.⁴

There are three basic ways to allow the Bible to define its own words:

- a. Observe a word in its context.
- b. Compare other verses which use the word.

Examine the synonyms for the word. (The various words used to translate the same Greek or Hebrew word).⁵

B. The Greek Word *Ekklesia*

1. The Greek word translated church(es)" (and assembly) is EKKLESIA (or ECCLESIA). It is a compound word meaning: EK - out of, and KLESIA - to call. Thus meaning to call out of.
2. Ekklesia was a very BASIC term used for assembly. When it was first applied to believers, the word was already common and understandable in a non-religious, non-ecclesiastical, even non-biblical way.

C. The Hebrew Word *Qahal*

4. After all it is the only true authority! All other books (dictionaries included) are written by men. They are the research, ideas, opinions, and sometimes guesses of the authors. They therefore have no intrinsic authority. The Bible is the only book that God wrote!
5. The use of a tool such as *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* will allow us to accomplish this task.

Neither the English word church nor the Greek word *ekklesia* appear in the Hebrew portion of the Bible (generally referred to as the Old Testament.) This does not mean however that we cannot study the subject there. Quite the contrary, the Old Testament has much to say on the subject. How then do we locate the word (or words) to study? It is simple, we accept the authority of the Holy Spirit's translation of a Hebrew verse into a Greek verse.

1. The Holy Spirit quotes Psalm 22:22 in Hebrews 2:12. He translates the Old Testament word congregation (the Hebrew word *qahal*) into the New Testament as church (the Greek word *ekklesia*).
2. Therefore, the word church can be studied in the Old Testament. And we are not limited to the word congregation. Because Strong (H6951) shows that the Hebrew word *qahal* is also translated as assembly, company, and multitude.
3. Strong defines the word *qahal* as assembly.

II. THE DISTINCTION:

We must go to the Bible not only to DEFINE the word church but also to STUDY the DOCTRINE of it. We do not CREATE Bible doctrine, we DISCOVER it. To study a subject properly we must consider it in light of "right division" (II Timothy 2:15).

There are three basic divisions that we can use to arrange the various assemblies of the Bible.

A. A Secular Assembly

The word *ekklesia* is used to describe a basic secular assembly of any kind.

1. It is used in Acts 19 (vs. 32,41) of a mob.
2. It "was used among the Greeks of a body of citizens gathered to discuss the affairs of State, Acts 19:39." – Vine

The use of the word *ekklesia* in this sense certainly does not constitute the "biblical" meaning of "the church." This understanding is conveyed to us not only by the context in which these words appear, *but*, also by the faithfulness of our King James translators. We must remember that the KJV *never* uses our English word church to refer to a gathering of the heathen, but only in reference to saints.

B. A BIBLE Assembly

Throughout the Bible God has established different churches. These groups of saints belonged to Him; He ordained their assemblage. Thus, being called out, each of them are rightly identified as the church of God.

For the purpose of this section of the study we shall group these Bible churches into two basic categories.

1. Jewish Churches

These are the assemblies of God in reference to His divine purpose and program for the nation of Israel in its related earthly kingdom.

- a. The church of Israel at Sinai (Acts 7:38).
- b. The church of Christ's earthly ministry (Matthew 16:18; 18:17; Acts 2:47; Hebrews 10:25; James 5:14; Philip. 3:6).

2. Jew/Gentile Churches

These are the assemblies of God in reference to His divine purpose and heavenly program for the dispensation of grace.

Forms of This Church:

a. Universal

This is the church consisting of ALL the saved of this dispensation.

- (1) This is the church, the Body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22- 23).

(2) Entrance into this church is by baptism (SPIRIT, not water - I Corinthians 12:13). This is the baptism of Romans chapter 6.

(3) Faith in Christ's finished and complete cross work is the way in which we receive this baptism; which puts us "in Christ" (II Corinthians 5:17).

b. Geographical

The local church is the geographical manifestation of the Body of Christ; the church in a locality. It is the church, the body of Christ in its geographical form.

The word church can describe the various ways in which the body of Christ has geographical relationship. Each manifestation is not the body of Christ within itself, but rather it is the local expression of that body. It is merely a portion of the "one body" (Ephesians 4:4).

In reference to the local assembly of saints, the word *ekklesia* when translated church has a meaning to it of more than a meeting (the religious definition). It has a specific reference to those who make up the local assembly of saints. The meetings simply provide an ATMOSPHERE in which the spiritual union of believers is made practical. However, the meetings DO NOT define the boundaries of the local church. Notice in Acts 14:27 that the church (the "called out ones"), was the church, even when they were not meeting.

Therefore you do not go to church, rather, the church gathers. This is very important to understand; the saints are the church even when they are not together (c.f. I Corinthians 14:23).

Various Geographical Break-Downs:

(1) Regional

The churches of a province – Examples: churches of Asia (I Corinthians 16:19); churches of Galatia (I Corinthians 16:1; Galatians 1:2); churches of Macedonia (II Corinthians 8:1).

(2) Municipal

The churches of a city – Example: church at Antioch (Acts 13:1); church at Cenchrea (Romans 16:10; church at Corinth (I Corinthians 1:2; II Corinthians 1:1); church of the Thessalonians (I & II Thessalonians 1:1).

(3) Intrinsic⁶

The church in a house – this is where the church, the Body of Christ, has one of its greatest and most basic opportunities to exercise body life and its family function.⁷ Examples: Romans 16:5; I Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:16; Philemon 2.

Since it is impossible for the whole body to function together in one place, the local church (the called out ones of a particular locality) provides each believer with the practical relationship in which he can function and grow as a member of the body of Christ. The local church allows the believer to enjoy the support of fellow members of his spiritual family. All of the members of the body are necessary for proper operation, supplying fellow members the essentials needed (Ephesians 4:15-16; Colossians 2:19).

No one need join the local church

6. Intrinsic means: "Intimate; Closely familiar."

7. We shall study the issues of "body life" and "family function" in future lessons.

to become a member, for all believers are already "members one of another" (Romans 12:5).⁸
There are two types of members in every community of believers:

(a) Functional members

Believers living out their true and intimate scriptural relationship of unity.

(b) Dysfunctional members

Believers who have divided themselves, or have allowed themselves (wittingly or unwittingly) to be divided from living out their true and intimate scriptural relationship of unity.⁹

8. The "joining" of some man-made organization called church is foreign to the Scriptures. Such membership is sectarian and suggests that being "members one of another" is not sufficient for the believer. We will take a closer look at these issues in future lessons.

9. "Perhaps the big difference in what we're saying has to do with where the boundary markers are being placed as we define the church. What is in-bounds? What is out-of-bounds?...

"What we are arriving at here is truly a paradigmatic change in the way we perceive the church. We are accustomed to defining the church within a certain circle. We work at clarifying who is in, who is out; ... what we believe, what we do not believe; which activities belong, which do not; and what behavior is appropriate and what is not. So the line between insiders and outsiders is clearly drawn.

"...This kind of thinking is "bound-set thinking." That is, there is a boundary that sets the standard. One either qualifies or is rejected; it's pass or fail. What I'm advocating... is that we move from bound-set thinking... to 'centered-set thinking' in our understanding of the church.

"In a centered set, what counts is how each member is moving in relation to the center. The focus is upon the center, and each individual is in dynamic relationship to it. Belonging, in this case, is not a matter of performing according to an agreed-upon profile, it is a matter of living and acting out of commitment to a common center. The focus is on the center and on pointing people to that center. Process is more important than definitions ...

"It is not that bound sets are always bad and centered sets are always good. Boundaries do exist. Salvation is a bound set. One is either in Christ, or not in Christ ...

"What we are talking about can be visualized by the following diagram."

C. Non-Bible Churches

1. Buildings

Buildings are NOT churches in the Bible sense of the word. (Example: Aquila and Priscilla had a church in their house. How could you get a physical structure in your house? I Corinthians 16:19)

2. Denominational or Doctrinal Systems; and Religious Institutions or Organizations

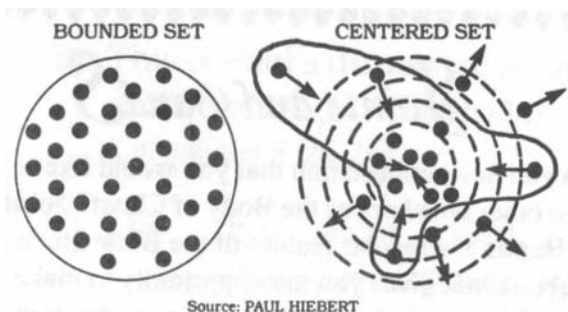
We have no right to pawn off our human systems and organizations as the church.

3. Meeting

Meetings are not the church, saints are! As we mentioned earlier, Acts 14:27 teaches us that the church, was the church, even when they were not meeting.

III. THE DEMONSTRATION (OF ITS GREAT VALUE)

Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, focused his ministry, from beginning unto the end, upon



Source: PAUL HIEBERT

"If we use this model, our understanding of what is the center must be very clear. The church is not the center. The center is the Head of the body. All members of the body are to function in relation to the center: Christ. If there is confusion on this point and we think of the church as being the center, we will find ourselves merely creating another bound-set." Church Without Walls, Jim Petersen (p. 173-175).

The Believer's Past, Present and Future

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

In Titus 2:11-13 we find three major doctrinal themes of Paul's apostleship

I. Past: Justification (Grace Appearing)

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11).

A. The Reign of Grace:

The Grace Appearing is Dispensational!

1. Grace Revealed – Grace "appeared" (i.e., was announced, revealed, manifest).

This "grace appearing" was made to Paul (I Timothy 1:11-16; c.f. Acts 26:16), thus his terms:

- a) My Grace (Philippians 1:7) and,
- b) My Gospel (Romans 16:25, 26).

2. Grace Reigning – Romans 5:21

- a) This is Paul's revelation of the mystery (Romans 16:25).
- b) This is Paul's dispensation of the grace of God (Ephesians 3:3; Colossians 1:25,26).

For the most part, the knowledge of this appearing has been lost! (Titus 3:4; II Timothy 1:10, 11, 15; 4:8).

B. The Reaction of Grace:

The Grace Appearing is Salvational! (Romans 5:20)

Grace BRINGS salvation.

Salvation is NOT brought by:

1. a good life (Romans 3:10),
2. good works (Titus 3:5),
3. giving, etc. (we simply do NOT have what it takes!).

This salvation was accomplished by the DBR (Death, Burial and Resurrection) of Jesus Christ – I Corinthians 15:3, 4; Romans 5:9; 4:25.

Paul speaks here (Titus 2:14) of Substitution ("for us") and Redemption ("redeem us").

C. The Reach of Grace:

The Grace Appearing is Universal!

Christ's provision WAS prophetically for Israel – Isaiah 53:8; Matthew 1:21; 15:24; 26:28 (note the word "many" in the last reference; then c.f. I Timothy 2:6). Christ's provision is now manifest to all men without distinction or exception (Romans 3:22; I Timothy 2:4-6).

II. Present: Sanctification (Christ Appearing in the Body)

“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world”
(Titus 2:12).

A. The Teacher

1. The NEW Classroom of Grace (Grace School)!

Grace is the divinely appointed teacher for this dispensation!

2. The OLD Classroom of Law (Law School, c.f. Galatians 3:24).

This school is now closed (Galatians 3:19; Colossians 2:14; Ephesians 2:15; II Corinthians 3:6-14)!

3. The Two schools contrasted:

(a) The Law School taught and motivated by FEAR (Exodus 20:20).

(b) The Grace School teaches and motivates by love (II Corinthians 5:14), not by fear (I Timothy 1:5).

(1) Grace and its love motivation are defined in Christ (II Corinthians 8:8-9).

(2) Grace and its love motivation are manifest in the life of Paul (II Corinthians 5:16; 12:15).

(3) Grace and its love motivation is the bond of perfectness (Colossians 3:14).

(4) Grace and its love motivation is effective (c.f. Jacob's love motivation – Genesis 29:20).

B. The Students

“Teaching US” – Grace living is only taught to the believer! There are no lost men enrolled in its school. The fact is that the believer is the ONLY true recipient of “grace living” teaching.

C. The Curriculum

This instruction is concerning our Identity (DBR):

1. Denial

“Teaching us that, denying”

Deny means “to disavow,” or “to renounce.” We are dead to sin in Christ (Galatians 2:20; Romans 6:2, 14).

This is the first part of the Identification truth: Our old man is dead in Christ!

We are to come to agreement with God on this matter. We are to reckon it and deny its works (Romans 6:11).

On the other hand some are “denying the power thereof” (i.e., the power of righteousness – the new man). Every believer will either deny identity with the old man or the new, thus divorcing himself from one or the other (c.f. Romans 7:17).

2. Sobriety

“We should live soberly”

Soberly means “with a sound mind” (c.f. I Timothy 3:2; 11; Titus 1:8; 2:2,

4, 6). It is translated as “right mind” in Mark 5:15 (Luke 8:35).

Sobriety is thinking with the divine viewpoint (c.f. Romans 12:1-3)!

This is the second part of the Identification truth: Our new man is Alive in Christ (“alive unto God” Romans 6:11)!

Even though we are “dead” unto sin, we “live” unto God (Galatians 2:20); i.e., Christ’s life is our life and can now be made manifest in our mortal bodies (II Corinthians 4: 10, 11).

III. Future: Glorification (Glory Appearing)

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

A. The Nature of the Blessed Hope

1. Our hope is Real

Hope in the context of Bible doctrine is the “confident expectation.”

2. Our hope is Good

(I Thessalonians 2:16; Our hope is real and it’s good, and it’s Real Good!)

3. Our hope is Divine

(I Timothy 1:1)

4. Our hope is Heavenly

Ephesians 1:3 – DBR + Seated in the Heavenlies! Ephesians 2:5, 6; Colossians 1:5.

5. Our hope is Eternal

i.e., it is vested in Eternal life – Titus 1:2; 3:7.

6. Our hope is Righteous

Galatians 5:5; we will be righteous: Spirit, Soul & Body! Hallelujah!

7. Our hope is Glorious

Romans 5:2 – c.f. Romans 3:23; I Corinthians 2:7; 15:40-43; II Corinthians 4:17; Colossians 1:27; 3:4; I Thessalonians 2:12; II Timothy 2:10.

8. Our hope is Comforting

I Thessalonians 4:18 – Ours is not a frightening hope!

Our hope is a real, good, heavenly, eternal, righteous, glorifying and comforting hope firmly settled in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ!

One day our hope will be made sight: The manifestation of the Sons of God (Romans 8:19)!

B. The Timing of the Blessed Hope

Our blessed hope is at the “glorious appearing.”

1. Prior to the coming of God’s Wrath (I Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9).

2. At the Resurrection (Our hope, like Israel’s, is connected with Resurrection! I Corinthians 15:17-19). ■

Letters to the Editor



"We have had a Bible study in our home for over twenty years and have no desire to change. It is my feeling that the Berean movement will not make much headway until they put into practice the order of the local church found in Paul's teachings. Bereans have the teaching but the church order is missing from most."

"Years ago I attended _____ Bible Camp. I met ministers with young churches. They felt they had to rent a building to have church. I felt free from this bondage..." WA

It was welcome news to hear that you are still going to put out the BSN. It is always a blessing to read and share it with others. The modest price to cover its cost is well worth it." IL

"Knowing that the KJV onslaught is heretical, I can not send money to a divisive cause... While profiting from reading your publication often, you should scratch my name off your mailing list, as I will not contribute to destroying our God given unity deliberately. This movement is a sinful shame dividing us. What is keeping you from turning from that?" FL

"I hope your new venture of GEM is used of our Lord to further His work and the Gospel of His Grace in spite of your views and convictions regarding the KJV. I do not hold those same views however and think it best to have our name deleted from your mailing list. It is a good thing our fellowship is based on Christ and not on man-made theories that exalt translators above the Sovereignty of God in preserving His Word. I can honestly wish you well in promoting dispensational literature, but cannot before God do the same regarding the KJV. I guess this is one of the real tests of grace and the leading of the Holy Spirit in each of our lives." NY

"We have never met personally. However, I have long appreciated your printed ministry and lesson notes. There are precious few believers today who are standing firm especially in defense of the Gospel of the Grace of God." CA

"Praise God... It's great hearing from you again. You were sorely missed. I am glad to hear about your father's recovery. Please know that you and yours are in our prayers." NY

Hugs

It's wondrous what a hug can do

A hug can cheer you when you're blue

A hug can say "I love you so"

Or "Gee, I hate to see you go"

A hug is "Welcome back again"

And "Great to see you, Where've
you been?"

A hug can smooth a small child's pain

And bring a rainbow after rain.

The hug: There's just no doubt about it

We scarcely could survive without it.

A hug delights and warms and charms --

It must be why God gave us arms.

Hugs are great for fathers and mothers,

Sweet for sisters, swell for brothers

And chances are your favorite aunts

Love them more than potted plants.

Kittens crave them, puppies love them,

Heads of state are not above them.

A hug can break the language barrier

And make your travels so much merrier.

No need to fret about your store of them

The more you give the more there's of 'em,

So stretch those arms without delay

And give someone a hug today!

Dean Walley

“Quotable”

Every now and then you read across something that “hangs with you.” You think back over it on occasion. You like to read it to someone from time to time. Such is the case with the following.

Do understand, we do not mean to endorse the authors nor their other writings, but we have found these particular items to be, “*Quotable*.”

TIME AND THE BELIEVER’S GROWTH

“It seems that most believers have difficulty in realizing and facing up to the inexorable fact that God does not hurry in His development of our Christian life. He is working from and for eternity! So many feel they are not making progress unless they are swiftly and constantly forging ahead. Now it is true that the new convert often begins and continues

for some time at a fast rate. But this will not continue if there is to be healthy growth and ultimate maturity. God Himself will modify the pace. This is important to see, since in most instances when seeming declension begins to set in, it is not, as so many think, a matter of backsliding.”

– Miles Stanford (*Green Letters*)

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– NC*

*“Your **Daily Email Goodies** are making me aware of authors whose names I don’t even know.” – GA*

*“The **Daily Email Goodies** continue to bless my heart! ... They provide plenty of food for thought.” – IL*

*“I am glad to be getting the **Daily Email Goodies** – keep ‘em coming.” – IN*

*“I really appreciate the **Goodies!**” – VA*

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Marriage

by - Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOME

Part I

Text: Genesis 1:27-28; 2:18-25

Marriage was the first institution founded by God, the Creator. Therefore marriage is the foundational institution of life. It stands as the building block of the home, society and the local church.

I. Marriage is the Creation of God!

Think of it, marriage was not some idea of man. Marriages are God's idea! The establishment of marriage was a part of His creative work in Genesis. God loves mankind and wants the best for them. He wants man to enjoy His creation.

Marriage is central to God's good plan for man. How wonderful God was to us in giving us such a marvelous thing as the marriage.

II. Marriage is Enjoyed Most When God's Plan is Followed!

We live in a consumer age and the best way to use our possessions is to consult the "owner's manual." This allows us to make "full" and "correct" use of them. Often problems arise if the manual is not utilized.

Now, our lives and marriage are far more valuable

than all of our material possessions combined, and the Bible is of far greater worth than any man-made manual. This is because it is our own divine "owner's manual."

True and lasting joy is only possessed when we carefully follow God's plan for life. This is especially true of marriage. Because it is God's design, He alone can tell us what it is and how it is to work. When we do not follow God's plan it brings heartache and sorrow. God's great gift then become a tragedy.

When it comes to marriage or any other part of life, we do not need the wisdom of this world, with all its modern, psychological "advances." What we need is simply God's Word. As we follow His "formula" we can enjoy the blessedness of the home as He intended it to be.

We must come to this conclusion: We will follow the Lord's written Word for our marriage. We will submit to His Lordship and not expose ourselves to the counsel of the world. Marriage is His creation and we will allow Him to be its *only* authority!

(This is part of a continuing series on the subject of the home.)

Your Part

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