



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume 43
Issue 1057

Sin As Much As You Want

Part 1

by — Steve Martin

[Click here to listen
to this article](#)

Key Points:

Grace is not a backup plan, it is *the* plan!.....8877
Your failures are God's responsibility.....8877

[Grace is the foundation of our relationship with God.....8879](#)

Romans 5:20 declares a shocking truth: “Where sin increases, grace *superexceeds*” Let that sink in. The worse the sin, the more grace abounds. You can sin as much as you want, and grace will still cover it. You cannot out-sin grace.



were written into the story by the same God who delights in you.

If that makes you uncomfortable, consider this: if God is sovereign, He's sovereign over everything – including your sin. Your failures are not surprises to Him. They're not curveballs disrupting His plan. They're *part of the plan*.

Here's the kicker: there would be no grace without sin. Christianity often glosses over this reality, avoiding Romans 5:20 like it's a pothole in their perfect theology. They argue this message gives people a “license to sin.” But think about it: have you ever needed a license to sin? No one does. We all sin constantly, whether or not we believe in hell.¹

The truth is, humanity was designed to fail. We were subjected to vanity, and sin is woven into the fabric of our lives. But Christianity keeps rolling out its “How to Stop Sinning” programs, as if grace is a backup plan for those who didn't follow the steps. This misses the point entirely.

Grace isn't a plan B. It's *THE* plan.

GOD WROTE THE SCRIPT

Here's something even more foundational: God wrote your life before you were born. Every moment, every success, and yes, every failure was scripted by Him. That means your sins, as much as they grieve you,

1. [Editor:] A place that really doesn't exist and is used by religion to put fear into people.

In fact, your failures are His failures in the sense that He caused them and placed them in the story for His purposes. Why? To keep you humble, to remind you of your need for Him, and to demonstrate His incredible grace. When we fail, it's an opportunity for His love to shine even brighter.

The beauty of this truth is that it removes the crushing burden of guilt and shame. You're not a broken cog in the machine. You're a beloved child, living out the life that God carefully crafted for you. And because He's the Author, you can rest in the assurance that nothing – not even your worst mistakes – can derail His plan.

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Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

ISSN: 1936-9360

Volume 43, No. 1057 – February 10, 2025

Scripture education in a weekly format!

This free electronic publication is dedicated to:

- the absolute sovereignty and deity of God (Romans 11:36);
- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation that God will save all through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3-4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the universality of death and resurrection (I Corinthians 15:21);
- the unique gospel of Paul – which he calls "my gospel" (Romans 2:16; 16:25; II Timothy 2:8; I Corinthians 15:1-4; Acts 13-28; Acts 20:24);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret in ages past" (Romans 16:25);
- the epistles of the present Secret Administration being Ephesians & Colossians (Ephesians 3:2, 9; Colossians 1:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the One Body (Ephesians 4:16);
- the Secret Administration, being the operational revelation for today (Ephesians 3:9);
- the unprophesied, Celestial hope and calling of the One Body (Colossians 3:4);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Ephesians 3:1-3);
- 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);
 - union in His death, burial and resurrection and ascended seated position among the celestials (Ephesians 2:6);
 - adult sonship position (Ephesians 1:5).

This publication is the product of humble efforts of saints intended to stimulate the earnest study of Scripture. We do not claim infallibility for the contents of this publication; thus they are not meant to imply finality on any subject discussed, or that further research would not add further light from the Word of God. God's storehouse of truth is inexhaustible, so draw on its wealth by prayerful study. 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."

We are always open for discussion, but never for disputation. – André Sneidar

Bible Student's Notebook™

PO Box 265, Windber, PA 15963

Office: (800) 784-6010 – Local: (814) 701-0063

bsn@studyshelf.com

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr. – Editor-in-Chief

André Sneidar – Executive Editor

Associate Editors: J. Blake Botner, Chris Carnahan, James Fine, Joe Marcello, Steve Martin, De Trefethen, Mark Vogt, Dean Wilkinson

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THE FOUNDATION OF TOTAL FREEDOM

If we are ever going to truly live in freedom, we must grasp this basic truth: *grace has no limits*. The depth of this truth changes everything. Until we understand that grace is bigger than sin – *any* sin – we will always live with guilt and fear in the back of our minds.

Think about it: if there's a limit to grace, we're never really free. We're always walking on eggshells, afraid of crossing some invisible line where God's patience runs out. But that's not the God of the Bible. Grace is limitless because God's love is limitless. Once you realize that, you're free: Free from guilt. Free from shame. Free from the exhausting need to perform, to measure up, to earn His favor.

When this truth settles into your heart, you can live without fear – without wondering if you've done enough, been good enough, or prayed hard enough to keep God on your side.

TRANSFORMATION THROUGH LOVE, NOT FEAR

Once you stop living in fear of hell, you can begin to live in the love of God. It's amazing how love changes you. When you experience God's grace and love, you suddenly find that you *don't want* to rob banks, cheat on your spouse, or lie to your neighbor. The transformation comes not because you're scared of hellfire, but because you're overwhelmed by love.

And the journey doesn't end there. Even our sins – the moments we miss the mark – bring Him glory. They humble us and remind us of our need for Him. Sin doesn't destroy your relationship with God; it only changes what *you* think He thinks about you. But here's

the good news: His thoughts about you never change. He's already completely delighted in you because He made you.

THE PROBLEM WITH RELIGION

Religion loves to keep us trapped in the cycle of sin and guilt. It says, "Focus harder, try harder, and you'll stop sinning." But the more you focus on sin, the bigger it looms in your mind. Even Paul, the apostle, admitted that he struggled with sin: "*For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out*" (Romans 7:18). Sound familiar? We've all been there, promising to do better, only to fail five minutes later.

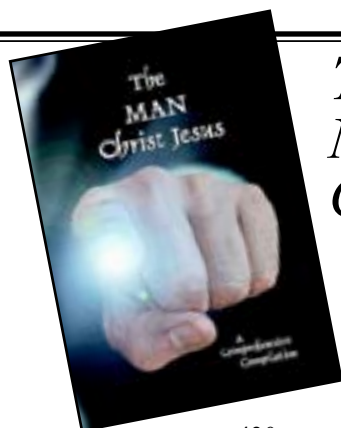
What's the answer? It's not prayer marathons, fasting, accountability partners, or white-knuckled self-discipline. The answer is grace. Struggling against sin is the essence of religion, and religion never works.

DYING TO SIN, LIVING IN GRACE

Grace doesn't magically erase your flesh or its struggles. It frees you from the constant war with it. Deliverance from sin doesn't come from winning battles; it comes from dying to the fight altogether. Grace changes the way you see sin. You realize that it no longer has power over you, not because you've conquered it, but because Christ has.

This is where true freedom begins. When you stop focusing on your failures and start focusing on His grace, you discover something incredible: you're free. Free to live. Free to love. Free to trust that God's got this – even your sin.

Grasping this basic truth is essential if ([see SIN, last page](#))



430 pages

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"Compilations."

The Man Christ Jesus: His Birth, Life, Nature, Faith, Suffering and Glory (A Comprehensive Compilation)

This book contains 24 authors and 74 works spanning 130 years. Authors include: Arthur P. Adams (1845-1925), William W. Bentley, Jr., William Tucker Broad (1860-1923), Leon A. Bynoe (1895-1983), E.W. Bullinger (1837-1913), E.H. Clayton (1887-1972), John H. Essex (1907-1991), William B. Hallman (1903-1985), Joseph Edwin Hartill (1909-1981), A.E. Knoch (1874-1965), Adlai Loudy (1893-1984), William Mealand (1873-1957), Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., Frank Neil Pohorlak (1907-1988), André Sneider, E. Al Stahl (1926-2011) and Charles H. Welch (1880-1967).

My Story

"We also believe, and therefore speak." Testimonies of Believers #14

From Doubt to Faith:

How Studying God's Sovereignty Transformed James Fine's Life

(as interviewed by Steve Martin)

Steve: Let's dive into your background, James. Could you tell us about your religious upbringing and journey?

James: Sure. Growing up, my parents didn't attend church, but my mom was really into Baptist radio preachers. So, we kids were exposed to a lot of radio sermons.

Whenever Billy Graham was on TV, we were made to watch him. I always felt I believed in God and Jesus; I can't remember a time that I didn't. When I was 11, my mom took us to a local Baptist church where I was introduced to the concept of hellfire, brimstone, altar calls, and the idea of needing to be "saved." It was all about avoiding hell.

At 13, I went forward during an "altar call" – not so much because of a deep conviction, but more out of fear. I needed that "fire insurance" to avoid going to hell. I got baptized, but soon after, my mom stopped going to church, and so did we. Throughout my teens, I still considered myself a believer, though I didn't read the Bible much. I'd still listen to radio preachers and held on to my belief in God.

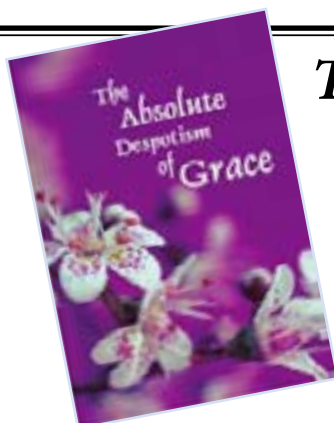
Steve: That sounds like a lot of people's experience. How did things change for you later on?

James: Well, when I went to college, I took a class on world religions. The professor, who was probably an atheist, emphasized that Christianity had borrowed heavily from other religions. He made it seem like Christianity was just another myth among many. This really shook my faith. I became what I'd call a "deist." I believed that some higher power created the universe, but that this being walked away, leaving us to our own devices. This mindset resonated with me, especially after seeing movies like "Star Wars," where the concept of "the Force" felt closer to what I believed.

I held onto that view for a long time – until I was 47, actually.

Steve: So, what happened at 47 to change your outlook?

James: It was a pivotal moment. A friend who was a Seventh-day Adventist gave me a book about the sovereignty of God. He said, "You're the way you are because God made you that way." This idea



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146 pages

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wasn't part of typical Adventist beliefs, but the book opened my eyes to the concept of God's sovereignty. It also discussed universal salvation, the idea that everyone would eventually be saved. Light bulbs went off in my head. I started studying like crazy, devouring anything I could get my hands on. That's when I discovered Clyde Pilkington and the *Bible Student's Notebook*. I immediately felt that this was the truth I had been searching for, and my faith was reignited.

Steve: It sounds like a significant shift. How did your family respond to this new understanding?

James: Not well, unfortunately. I was so enthusiastic that I told my 90-year-old mother and my 70-year-old brother that they weren't "*in the body of Christ*" because they believed in things like the Trinity and eternal torment. At the time, I was following a teacher who claimed that incorrect beliefs excluded someone from being part of "*the body of Christ*." It was a problem because, in my ignorance, I was telling them that, yes, they would ultimately be saved, but they weren't "saved" right now.

Naturally, my brother thought I had lost my mind, and my mother was hurt. So, I stopped discussing my beliefs with them. Both have since passed away. Looking back, I realize that I was wrong to judge their faith based on those criteria. I've since come to understand that we're all on different paths, and being in the "*One Body*" isn't as narrowly defined as I once thought.

Steve: It sounds like you've had a lot of growth since then. What recent studies have you found most

illuminating?

James: One of the most eye-opening revelations was understanding that we are not the problem in God's plan, but part of the solution. Christianity often paints us as hopeless sinners, but discovering that we are the "*complement of Christ*" completely changed my perspective.

It's uplifting to know that we have a role in God's grand design.

Another critical understanding came from diving into Paul's writings. Recognizing the differences between Paul's early epistles and his later ones, like Ephesians and Colossians, is crucial. They present the perfection of God's plan after the Jews rejected the Kingdom in Acts 28:28. This is when the "new ballgame" starts for believers, focusing on our celestial destiny.

For me, the realization that God is sovereign and that we were predestined brought incredible peace.

Steve: You mentioned running a Facebook group. How has that experience been?

James: It's been quite a journey! I started the group, called "Ignorant Brethren of Universal Salvation," when I retired at 62. I couldn't relate to other universal salvation groups because many of them still held onto traditional Christian beliefs like the Trinity and free will. I wanted a space where people could explore universal salvation through the lens of God's total sovereignty.

(see [TRANSFORMED](#), page 8883)



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under "Other Authors."

No Equals!

Reasons Why Our Heavenly Father Has NO Equals or Co-Equals, & Why "the Holy Spirit" Is Not a "Person" Separate from the Only True God, the Father

56 pages

by — Christian Educational Services

Two powerful titles in one book, both exposing the critical error of the traditional orthodox position of the Trinity. This very simple and clear presentation is a must-read.



Reader's Question Box #80

Why Is There a Need for Forgiveness?

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

[Click here to listen to this article](#)



Q: In the book *The Purposes of God* by A.P. Adams, he wrote, “God is responsible for all things as they exist.” He also writes that “God is the cause of all things,” which I believe.

The above said, my question is, why does man need to be forgiven if God is responsible and the cause of all things? Why did Paul say to forgive one another even as Christ has forgiven us, if God is responsible and the cause of ALL things? It seems to me that God is responsible and the cause of all things, sin being one of those things.

I’m just having a hard time reconciling God’s responsibility for ALL things and the cause of ALL things, yet man is 100% guilty and needed to be forgiven.
– G.B.

A: I am especially thankful for your insight on the theme of “forgiveness.”

A.P. Adams was indeed correct, that “God is responsible for all things as they exist.” I am also thankful that you have laid hold of this *grand* truth of God’s sovereignty.

So, to answer your enlightened question, *NO*, man does NOT need to be forgiven, since clearly God is responsible and the cause of all things! I learned to lay aside religion’s “forgiveness” soon after I began to leave religion itself.

Actually, Paul did NOT, in fact, teach forgiveness at all. The appearance of “forgive,” “forgiving,” and “forgiveness” in his epistles are simply the mistranslations of man.

The Greek word ἄφεσις (*aphesis*¹), often translated

“forgiveness”, is more properly “freedom from.” It is a compound word: “FROM-LETTING” (CKC).

*In Whom we have deliverance through His blood, the **freedom from** sins, according to the riches of His grace (Ephesians 1:7, BSV).*

In the primitive view of God in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament until Paul reveals the fullness of the grand truth of “justification,” “forgiveness” was a merciful ruse, awaiting the advanced revelation of Paul. Instead of “forgiveness,” Paul taught that sin is “justified,” and thus, we are “justified” from “sin.”

All “sin” will be “justified” by God Himself, in His absolute sovereignty, when He reveals in detail His wisdom of placing sin in His story of creation.

It is God alone Who is responsible for *all*. One day, in the resurrection, God will “justify” just how all “sin” was actually perfect and necessary, so that in the *absolute* sense we will see how there never was any “sin” or “evil,” since what God has written for all of our lives was perfect – perfect imperfection – and that all “sin” and “evil,” were but a divine illusion to bring about a contrast, so that our Father could be truly known in the fullness of His absolute wisdom and love.

Ultimate freedom from sin is *far more* than the traditional “forgiveness” or “pardon.” These are rooted in *guilt*. The followers of religion seek to obtain forgiveness through some means – concerted effort, confessions, prayers, penance, resolutions, etc. What Paul taught went well beyond “forgiveness.” The revelation given to him involved “justification” which, instead of being rooted in guilt, is rooted in righteousness.

Here are a few resources that should prove helpful in your studies along these lines (on the next page).

BSN

1. G859 (SEC).



Videos:

“Paul DID NOT Teach the Forgiveness of Sins”

(a short excerpt from my 2013 video)

<https://youtu.be/BUBSfyHNxoI>

Link to the original, full-length video “Are You Forgiveness or Justified?”:

<https://youtu.be/nugau884htc?si=IJQWFPMCOcEt7OH2>

<https://youtu.be/BChJixRfHE>

“The Justification of Sin” (The follow-up video):

<https://youtu.be/BChJixRfHE>

Book:

“Ultimate Liberation: Beyond Forgiveness (The Justification from and of Sin)”

<https://www.pilkingtontonandsons.com/clp.htm#2510>

BSN Articles:

“The Primitive Image of God in the Hebrew Scriptures,”

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

(*Bible Student's Notebook* 1041)

<https://www.biblestudentsnotebook.com/bsn1041.pdf>

(audio of this article:

<https://studyshef.com/BSNArticleAudios/1041-Clyde-Primitive.mp3>)

“God Is Both ‘Responsible’ and ‘Accountable,’” Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

(*Bible Student's Notebook* 927)

<https://www.biblestudentsnotebook.com/bsn927.pdf>

TOPICS:

Major: Forgiveness; Freedom; Justification; Responsibility

Minor: Religion; Sin; Sovereignty; Translation

TRANSFORMED ([continued from page 8881](#))

We now have about 1,300 members, and managing the group can be challenging. We get people who come in with their own agendas or those who try to turn the group into a platform for pushing their particular doctrines. But there are also those who join just to learn, and they are why I keep the group going. I get messages from people saying they're learning so much, and it's rewarding to see their growth.

Steve: It's great that you're creating a space for that kind of exploration.

I hear you're also involved in editing the *Bible Student's Notebook* (BSN). How did that come about?

James: Yes, though I'd call myself more of a “glorified proofreader.” Clyde is kind to involve me in the process. I mostly proofread the articles for typos and inconsistencies. Occasionally, I'll write letters to Clyde, and sometimes he'll take those and turn them into articles, which is always flattering. Clyde is very thorough; he won't publish anything until he's fully convinced of its accuracy. That integrity is one of the reasons I respect him so much.

Steve: What are your thoughts on Clyde's approach to teaching and doctrine?

James: Clyde is meticulous and careful in his teachings. He questions ideas, but he doesn't attack individuals. He's changed his mind on topics over the



180 pages

See [order form](#) under “Other Authors.”

Was Jesus Christ Alive Before His Life on Earth Began? A Critical Look at the Supposed Preexistence of Christ

by — Aaron Welch

Paul was exact in his statement that “there is one God, the Father ... and one Lord, Jesus Christ” (I Corinthians 8:6, *Concordant*). The only absolute God is the Father, and He has no equals. The Lord Jesus Christ is a part of His creation; the Spirit is an expression meaning God's spirit.

This exceptional work embraces the truth of “the man Christ Jesus” (I Timothy 2:5), exposing the traditional orthodox position known as the “pre-existence of Christ,” a creed vitally connected with Christendom's teaching of the Trinity. The “pre-existence of Christ” does great dishonor to both the Father and His Son, diminishing the true glory that belong uniquely to each.



years and is open about that. He's like the journalists of old who would verify every fact before putting out a story. That's why I trust what he publishes. It's also why I've bought all the bound copies of the BSN – they're an invaluable resource.

Steve: It's so important to have a trustworthy guide in these matters. It seems like your journey has taken some unexpected turns.

James: It sure has. I used to think that everyone in the universal salvation crowd believed the same things. But after starting my Facebook group, I realized that people have widely differing beliefs. It was humbling. The more I studied, the more I saw the diversity even among teachers.

Some insist on narrow doctrines, while others, like Clyde, are more focused on the broader principles of God's sovereignty and grace.

Steve: You've shared a lot of valuable insights. It's been great talking with you, James. Let's stay in touch!

James: Absolutely! I really enjoyed our conversation. Looking forward to chatting again. Take care!

TOPICS:

Major: Fine, James; Grace; Growth; My Story; Realization; Salvation of All; Sovereignty

Minor: Christianity; Perspective; Tradition

SIN (*continued from page 8879*)

you're ever going to live in total freedom. Grace is not a theological concept or a pretty word. It's the foundation of our relationship with God. Until we believe in the unlimited, all-encompassing grace of God, we'll always be stuck – striving, failing and wondering if we're enough.

But you are enough, because He is enough. Grace is bigger than sin, and it's time we stop pretending otherwise. We don't live in fear; we live in freedom – and freedom, my friends, is the beginning of real transformation.

(Continued next issue.)

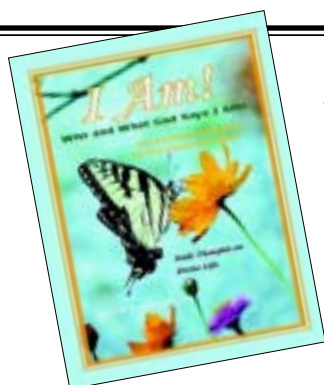
TOPICS:

Major: Freedom; Grace; Love

Minor: Sins

**I DEFY THE POPE
AND ALL HIS LAWS;
AND, IF GOD SPARES
ME, I WILL ONE DAY
MAKE THE BOY THAT
DRIVES THE PLOW IN
ENGLAND TO KNOW MORE
OF THE SCRIPTURES THAN
THE POPE DOES!**

WILLIAM TYNDALE (c. 1494–1536)



107 pages

I Am! Who and What God Says I Am!

The Divine Reckoning of the Renewed Mind; Daily Thoughts on Divine Life

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

People are always talking about their attempts to discover their true selves – of trying to “find themselves.” The believer in the Lord Jesus Christ needs to find out who they *really* are. This doesn't need to be such a difficult search. All that is really needed is a careful look at the Scriptures, and a simple faith in the words of who and what God says we are. God knows who we are; all we need to do is to *believe Him*. This book catalogs the Divine Record of who and what God says that you are. It is a short encyclopedia of faith – the truth about you. It is the truth about you, simply because it is *God* Who has said it. God has spoken these truths concerning you – the *real* you. Believe His record! Refuse to be the shell of a person, pushed into a mold of Adamic conformity. Be the real you that God has uniquely designed you to be. Refuse to be bullied out of your divinely designed identity that our Father has given you.

See [order form](#) under “Clyde Pilkington.”