

January 17, 2021

Viewpoint from the **Valley Grove Church Of Christ**

“Finally, Brethren . . .”

By Don Wright

Often times when Paul would conclude a series of points in an epistle, he would end the closing section with the words, “Finally, brethren...” That would follow with a final point that he wanted to convey to the brethren to whom he wrote. Let us look at a few places where he did this.

“Finally, brethren....be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace...” (2 Cor. 13:11).

This was certainly an appropriate way of wrapping up this epistle to the saints at Corinth. It has to do with their relationship with each other. To be perfect does not mean to be sinless, rather it points to being complete. Vine says it denotes the idea of making progress. To be perfect is to be heading in the right direction, becoming more mature in Christ and His Word. To be a complete Christian one must have a proper relationship with brethren. We should live in agreement with one another. If we have sinned against a brother in Christ, let us go to him and get it right (Matt. 5:23-24). If a brother has sinned against us, let us go to him and talk about it (Matt. 18:15). Being able to handle sin in this way is a sign of maturity or perfection in Christ. This is what Paul exhorted the saints at Corinth to do.

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might” (Eph. 6:10).

This should be our battle cry every day we go out into the world. The devil is always waiting for us. He is always in attack mode. We must be strong every day if we are to be victorious in this spiritual war in which we are engaged. Being strong means allowing our Lord’s strength to become our own. Paul said we should be strong “in the power of his might.” We must, as Paul goes on to say, put on the whole armor of God, shield ourselves with truth, righteousness, peace, and faith, and arm ourselves with thoughts of heaven and with the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God. This is what it takes to be strong. It does not happen by accident. We are strong only when we purposely do those things that strengthen us as Christians.

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“Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord...” (Phil. 3:1).

We have so much to be thankful for as Christians that rejoicing should not be that difficult. The problem is, we too easily take our minds off of what is truly important and get bogged down with the affairs of this world. When we think about what Christ has done for us, we should rejoice. When we think about what we have in Christ we should rejoice (Eph. 1:3; Rom. 8:1; 2 Tim. 2:10; Rev. 14:13; 1 Pet. 1:3-9). When we think about the special privileges we have in Christ (prayer, fellowship, the Lord’s supper, proper worship, etc.), we should rejoice. With these things in view, it should be clear that if a Christian is not rejoicing in the Lord, it is because he has taken his eye off the goal.

“Finally, brethren... think on these things” (Phil. 4:8).

If there is any doubt about the importance of the things we think about, this verse removes it. We can either fill our minds with worldly things that are unhealthy for our souls, or we can fill our minds with things that are pleasing to God. Which will it be? The devil wants to win the battle for our minds. He knows that if he can fill our minds with sinful things, he can win our souls. On the other hand, if we think about things that are true, honest, and just, we can defeat that old red dragon. We need to fill our minds with the Word of God (Ps. 119:11; Col. 3:16).

“Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you” (2 Thess. 3:1).

Is there anything more powerful in our possession than prayer? Through prayer, we have direct access to God and His power (Heb. 4:16). In times of weakness, we should pray to our Father for help (Matt. 26:41). In times of prosperity, we should pray, giving thanks to God for the blessings He has given us (1 Thess. 5:18). We should thank God every day for the sending of His Son, and the sacrifice they both were so willing to make (John 3:16; 2 Cor. 8:9).

Finally, brethren, let’s take the exhortations set forth by Paul in these passages and apply them to our lives. We will be better Christians if we do.

“Life affords no greater responsibility, no greater privilege, than the raising of the next generation!”

“If you want to know why you were placed on this planet, you must begin with God!”

“Guilt is concerned with the past. Worry is concerned about the future. Contentment enjoys the present!”

You Have Dwelt Long Enough

By Randy Cavender

In the opening of Moses' speech to the people in the book of Deuteronomy, he reviewed their history from the time they had been at Sinai until Israel had come to the Jordan River to cross over to the land of promise. Moses opens by reminding the people, "The Lord our God spoke to us in Horeb, saying: 'You have dwelt long enough at this mountain'" (Deut. 1:6). At times I believe we express this same sentiment when we say, "Haven't you had enough!" I believe what God said to the people of Israel, He is saying to them:

Without Christ. The spiritual condition of those without Christ is described vividly in the New Testament! For instance, those without Christ are aliens and strangers (Eph. 2:12), having no hope (2:12), and far off (Eph. 2:1). What a miserable condition in which to be! Yet, as a sinner, this is exactly the spiritual condition you are in! "Have you dwelt long enough" in this lost condition? Haven't you had enough of the passing pleasures of sin? If so, then be obedient to God and be "no longer strangers and foreigners" (Eph. 2:19) and be "made alive with Christ" (Col. 2:13).

Indifferent. As Jeremiah walked through his beloved city of Jerusalem and beheld its destruction, he lamented, "Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?" (Lam. 1:12) There are some who profess to be Christians who are really indifferent toward their responsibilities! If this attitude of passivity is yours, please notice what God's attitudes is toward you: "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth" (Rev. 3:16). "Have you not dwelt long enough" with this attitude? If so, then repent and pledge total allegiance to Christ (Matt. 12:30).

In Doubt. As Peter was walking on the water toward Jesus, he began to sink. When he finally reached his Lord, Jesus rebuked him saying, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" (Matt. 14:31) Doubt creates in us unbelief. The Hebrew writer warned: "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God" (Heb. 3:12). "Have you not dwelt long enough" in doubting God?

Brethren, the bottom line is summed up in that the "wages of sin is death." "Have you not dwelt long enough" in sin? If so, let each of us make the necessary changes in order to please God!

Visitors — We pray that you benefit spiritually from our worship together and hope to see you again.

Things To Remember When In Worship

By Jim Sasser

Remember the purpose of worship is not to entertain or amuse one another, but it is to pay homage, love and honor to God.

Remember the people in worship; they are not perfect, neither are you. Those with imperfections are worshipping Him who is perfect. He who realizes his own imperfections most is better qualified to worship Him than he who imagines himself 'perfect'.

Come to the worship period thinking how great God is and how insignificant you are.

Give due attention to the thoughts contained in the spiritual songs as well as in the harmony and melody of the singing of them.

Remember that a sermon depends as much on the hearing of it as the presenting of it.

Keep in mind that a critical, intolerant attitude is foreign to the spirit of Him whom you purpose to praise and to them that are gathered with you. You should be seeking to encourage those who are worshipping with you.

January Birthdays:

The 22nd Jennifer Collins;
The 23rd Paula Brown; The 25th
Jacqueline Pryor; The 25th David
Justice; The 27th Johnny Little;
The 29th James Brown;

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Sunday

Bible Study . . . 9:30 A.M.
Worship 10:30 A.M.
Worship 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday

Bible Study . . . 7:00 P.M.

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