

## KEEP THY HEART WITH “ALL” DILIGENCE

By: Bill Richardson      Edited by: Bill Kelly

“All The World’s A Stage.” Those are the words of a Poet. They may just be the title of his poem...I just don’t remember. I do remember that the poet used an expression to say, “That all the world’s a stage”, and I remember it ended with a word, “sans”, which I think is Latin and mean “absence” or “without”, which are synonymous. I do remember that I had to memorize the poem and recite it. No big deal, so I did. Today I can’t recite the poem. I do remember that I read or I heard it said that if you memorize something you are apt to sometime in the future forget it. But I was taught that if you learn something you would never forget it. I dare not debate either philosophy. I do however embrace the principle of each caveat. Each caveat is mind things.

I used those few words above in order to get my mind working. I’m sure that I received good admonishment when I was instructed as a youngster when it was said to me, “Use your mind son.” But at my age today I really do know the value and blessing of that training which began back in the early 1920’s. I need to improve yet, in my physical and spiritual facilities, and in any other, if I have any.

Yes there is the need to exercise the mind, but properly. Exercise causes growth. Mind exercise produces knowledge. I’m willing to say, “You know where I’m going with this? Yes you do! We need always to go to God’s Word. There is where the knowledge is that we need to know and put into our mind. Now, let’s exercise our mind.

*“Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:2-8).*

Praise the Lord that “*knowledge*” is in the list in 2 Peter 1:5. Read it! It will do you good! Maybe a better way to say it is, read it again because I am sure you have read it many the times. It’s a beautiful passage and is applicable to any or all--extensive studies of all principles named in the words and teachings of Jesus.

Did you note the subject title of our study? I have already prepared my heart to receive much reward in study and writing of that short three-letter word “A-L-L”. I started to say, “All I know is that my study and writing about this subject will be a great reward.” I said it that way to illustrate how we sometimes use the word all in our speaking, least wise I do. Today’s strange expression is, “You know.” Count the use!

If I use the expression, "All I know is", it is not a list of what I know. Thus it is not all I know. I do know that life is great and that God is good; that I owe Him my all; that I fall short of giving Him my all; that I must grow and increase in the virtues of 2 Peter 1:5; that I need His help which He is willing to give, but it's up to me; that I need my fellow saints' love and help; that I need God's and your forgiveness, and I beg for that forgiveness; and that my life will be more joyful by your choice to study with me on this subject. God bless us all! In Jesus name, Amen!

*"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandment, for this is the whole, (the all) of man" Ecclesiastes 12:13).* Can't you just imagine and/or envision the beauty that God sees in us when we live by that principle, that commandment. Can you/we hear it in your mind's ear when that great scripture is proclaimed as we are assembled in worship, and we are admonished by that scripture vocally? My heart would say then as it does now; 'O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder, consider all the love thou hast for me. The scripture would explode in my/your mind and reverberates and echoes from heaven above...THAT'S IT...THAT'S RIGHT...AMEN! That should get us started.

But there are more scriptures, which have great expressions, important thoughts, and great principles which will bless our mind if we will go over them and let them have their way, their place in our thinking and our "doings", our walk with the Lord.

I went to my Funk & Wagnall Dictionary and studied the definitions of the word "all". It turned into an interesting and challenging experience. I tell you the truth; I had never done that on this particular word before. It truly was interesting to me. I did this after I had found multi-scores of scripture that used "all" in them and have significant meaning to us. Well, it helped me and certainly makes or adds to the learning process of this study.

This method of study is exciting and challenging to me. I needed it. As stated above I was able to see and know that we sometimes use the word "all" in a way that it does not encompass the delineated meaning. That could be dangerous and could even get us into trouble. Is that all you have to say? No! I want myself to realize that when scripture uses all, it means the entire substance or extent.

Can all mean the greatest possible? There are questions and statements in the Bible using all which will reach out and grab one's thinking. I can see that it could only help and do good if we would list some of the ways that we use the word "all" and other words which we use along with it. Let me illustrate, just to get started, and I am hopeful you can add some of yours:

- 1). Above all. 2). After all. 3). All the better. 4). All in all. 5). All for one
- 6). For all of us. 7). All around. 8). All of it. 9). All or nothing at all.
- 10). All American. I just thought it would be interesting and even fun...You All!

Now let's look at more scriptures. There is a wonderful profound double question in Malachi 2:10 which ask *"Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us?"* (See Isaiah 43:1; 63:16). Is not the answer yes? Yes it's true! Wouldn't it be great if all

mankind would confess that truth that fact, and say with a resounding echo, yes, and mean it? Paul proclaimed, "...but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and through whom we live" (1 Corinthians 8:6).

We as Christians know that there is only one God. It is through Christ we know Him as the Father. We as Christians know that God is the source of all things. We were created to love and serve God. Acts 17:28 expresses our relationship to God by these inspired words: "...for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring' " (See also Colossians 1:17).

Now is a good time for us to read John 1:1-5. "*In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, all things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. And the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.*"

Spend time with Jesus in prayer as He prays to His Father and in John 17:1-12. You will be in prayer with the Lord. How great! It was rewarding to my heart, and I'm sure it will be with you also. In the beginning of His prayer He lifted His eyes to Heaven and said, "*Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You...*" Can we pray to the Father in the name of Jesus Christ that He (God) would glorify us, His children, that we may glorify Him our Father?

What is our relationship with God, and what is our reward if we live life and walk in harmony, that is, doing His will? Wouldn't that be glorifying God and God glorifying us? It's recorded in Ezekiel 20:40 that all shall serve Him. God requires our offerings, the first-fruits of our sacrifice. Know and realize that "*no man can serve two masters*", (Matt. 6:24). We are servants. In Luke 16:13 it is said that no servant can serve two masters. "*Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth*" (Joshua 22:14).

Joshua continued his admonishment by saying, "*...choose you this day whom you will serve, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord*" (Joshua 24:15). There are consequences if you don't. When we serve the Lord we are obeying the Lord by doing or keeping His commandments. All of them! If you love Me you will keep My commandments. Christ said it! Failure to do or keep His commandments amounts to negligence. Negligent; is not doing what needs to be done; what is commanded; it is not thinking and acting according to God's will. Do you know that is unrighteousness?

1 Corinthians 6:9 asked, "*Do you know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?*" I ask you, "Do you know that forgetfulness is unrighteousness?" Hebrews 6:10 tells us that, "*God is not unrighteous to forget...*" Isn't that a great characteristic of the God of the universe? We know God is love, and that He cannot sin. The scripture, by saying that God is not unrighteous to forget implies that if we forget we are unrighteous. That is teaching, in one way, what righteousness is not. Technique of teaching is what it is. Its all-right, it is all true!

Christ the source of all things in us. "*...let no one boast. For all things are yours: whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things*

Stay with me, please. I want to get back to Titus 3:1-2) up above and make these comments: Obedient Christians are to be good citizens; we must obey rulers unless they tell us to disobey God; and we are to help with good work (in the community and our neighbors). We are to be courteous and considerate at all times and under all circumstances. Never ever speak evil of anyone, live in peace being gentle and humble to all. That is the formula for Christian responsibility.

“O my—please read Romans 13:1-7. Ponder it. It will do you good. It did me. I am glad...because I needed it. I love God’s word! While I was there in Romans 13, I read and thought over vv. 8-14 also. While you are there reading the suggested scriptures please read also vv. 8-14. It begins by saying, “Owe *no one anything except...*” and ends with v.14 by saying, “...*put on the Lord Jesus Christ...*” Let us put Him on (Love Him) with ALL our heart, mind, soul, and strength. Let us be Christ like!

In 1 Corinthians 13 the Apostle Paul is telling of the strength and endurance (the staying power) of love. In v.7 he tells that love: “...bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things” Question? When we hear, believe, hope, and endure all things, “What are we doing?” The emphases here is not totally on “all”, but on how we all must grow as Christians--how we should walk with the Lord.

What we see, hear, think, say, and do, and all of them done properly (IAW) God’s Will, “Is that not our duty and conduct?” That is the way of life, which is pleasing to God. It is the life that we must live! And ‘O yes, I am praying that the list, which we will study together in this lesson, will be motivating to you and me causing us to grow as children of God.

I can’t think of better expressions than what is said in 2 Peter 1:2-11 which emphasize, “*giving all diligence*” to growing as Christians. Here now are some of the explanatory words of the notes from my (NKJV, Thomas Nelson Study Bible, page 1885.)

Peter’s plea begins in v. 2. His prayer request, by inspiration, was in an effort of heart and purpose to motivate us to make our Calling and Election sure. Peter asked, “*May grace and peace be multiplied to you in knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.*” It is true that we grow as Christians an ever-depending knowledge of God and His Son Jesus.

That knowledge involves a continuing relationship with Jesus as Lord. We are blessed to be able to gain and grow in knowledge. He continues in v. 3, “...*as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue.*” God gives us power to live holy lives, but we must accept and make use of this power. Let us pray the prayer for complete sanctification as set forth in 1 Thess. 5:23-24, “*Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.*” God’s power is ours through our personal knowledge of Him. God’s power was revealed in the earthly life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

Verse 4 makes known to us that God’s promises are great and precious. They are great blessings to us because in their fulfillment we may become partakers of the divine nature and be delivered from sin and eternal death. We must desire and be good, and

pure, and loving, and just in the same way that God is. If we are those, we can escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. The good, and pure, loving, and just, must be the Christian's way of life, and thus there is no room for worldly corruption through lust.

*"Now let us lay hold (hold fast) the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to 'stir up' (grow) love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching."*

Dear one...we need each other. We must diligently encourage one another to show love through good works. That's the way we grow—all of us. We help each other to be faithful to Christ by regularly assembling together and by exhorting one another. We, (Christians) have great privileges (blessings) in Christ. We have a greater responsibility because we know the truth and blessings that are in Christ. We must be faithful in teaching and passing the truth to others and passing it around to each other. If we don't, *"Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."* But don't do it out of fear, do it out of love!

Let's continue in 2 Peter 1:5 ff, and study on growth by looking to the advice of our responsibilities as outlined therein. In v.5 the scripture says, *"But also for this very reason..."* The reason: Because God promised us His divine power, and that power is a reality through Christ, and Christ's divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him...and for this reason, we must with diligence grow as Christians by cultivating the characteristics as listed in vv. 5-7.

The list is: 1. Faith, (see Heb. 11:1); 2. Virtue (Courage, purity, Christlikeness); 3. Knowledge, (discernment of truth from false teaching, right from wrong); 4 Self-control, is living a life that pleases God when tempted and difficulties come; 5. Perseverance, (Continuing, enduring, sustain, persist); 6. Godliness is, (attributes and actions which are well-pleasing to God. 7. Brotherly kindness, is showing through practical concern to your fellow Christian; 8. Love, (see 1 Corinthians 13).

The short word-thoughts of the above characteristics are not all that can be said to describe or identify them. It is needful in the growing process of any and all Christ like virtues be studied for comprehension and made a part of our life to produce fruit of holiness (v.8). For a great study of growth please ponder the fruit of the spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. Verse 23 ends by saying, *"Against such there is no law."* But it must be said that the fruit of the Spirit is ours for the harvesting, and if we don't we will be a law violator. We must not be a violator!

The scriptures and commentary that have been set forth in this study have been of great benefit to me. These wonderful scriptures and principles, which we studied, have been motivating to my conscience. It is my prayer that you who read and study, that you will accept all truth herein and that it will be a conscience server to you also.

The well-trained conscience is equal to the knowledge, abiding faith, and love that we expose or submit our mind to. With confidence I say that you are studying this lesson with faith and love, and that it will be of great benefit to you.

With confidence I also say, that you desire to be blessed to gain more knowledge. True abiding biblical knowledge is associated with responsibilities. It creates a desire to seek, search diligently, accept when found, to associate with, and be an active part in your responsibilities. That is the formula for abiding faithfully in the Lord's Church.

The church that I am speaking of cost the blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is His Body, His Kingdom, which is His Church. Please be an obedient dedicated part of the church of the Bible. Christ's church. The church we read about in the Bible. You cannot pass through Heaven's gate if you are not in His Body, (His Church), and it is the church that we read about in the New Testament. That is the truth. That is what the Bible teaches.

I invite you to view my Website, [www.geocities.com/dubbyt](http://www.geocities.com/dubbyt), please note other consecrated writings. There is a writing posted that I am sure you will want to view and copy. The writing title is, "The Church of The Bible, Christ's Church." It has a two-page enclosure, which has the title, "What Must I do to be saved." Please study both "biblical-truth" writings with an honest and receptive heart for truth and obedience. You will be blessed!

Note this data about my Website, [www.geocities.com/dubbyt](http://www.geocities.com/dubbyt), has a link to: [www.hartsellechurch.org](http://www.hartsellechurch.org), which is the Hartselle Church of Christ, Hartselle, AL, a link to, [www.austinvillecoc.org](http://www.austinvillecoc.org) which is the Website of Austinville Church of Christ, Decatur, AL, and a link to [www.northcobbchurch.org](http://www.northcobbchurch.org), which is the Church of Christ at North Cobb, Kennesaw, GA. Please visit each Websites; you will be blessed. Please advertise these Websites and help get the word out to as many as possible.

God bless you for studying with me on this great subject. God loves you! And I do too! Your servant in the Lord ~

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PS: One enclosure set forth on page seven. See how it can be a part of, "KEEPING THY HEART WITH ALL DILIGENCE". Please give me some feed back if you wish.

## KEEPING THE CHURCH PURE

Jesus wants the Church to be “a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:27). Jesus wants the Church to be PURE! How can YOU and I do to help keep the Church pure?

1. *Practice Pure Religion.* ONLY pure and undefiled religion is pleasing (James 1:27). Pure religion must focus on the following:

- a. Pure object of Worship—God.
- b. Pure sacrifice for sin—Jesus.
- c. Pure form of request—Prayer.
- d. Pure spiritual of abode—Church.
- e. Pure eternal home—Heaven.

2. *Portray Pure Lives.* Christians must be pure in heart (Matthew 5:8), speech (Philippians 1:27), conduct (Matthew 5:16) and deed (2 Corinthians 7:1). Christian purity is illustrated by the following:

- a. Pure Virgin (2 Corinthians 11:2).
- b. Pure Gold (1 Peter 1:6ff.).
- c. Pure branch (John 15:2).

3. *Preach Pure Doctrine.* The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). It alone will convict and change the hearts of men! May we strive to fulfill the Great Commission in our lifetime and perpetuate the purity of Christ’s Church. May we proclaim the message of Jesus...

- a. Boldly and without fear (Philippians 1:14).
- b. With love as our motivation (Ephesians 4:15).
- c. With souls as our focus (1 Timothy 4:16).

Conclusion: We must strive to practice religion that is both pure and undefiled, lest we succumb to the Devil’s most dangerous weapon, self-deception. AMEN!

Mark N. Posey

A prayer to God: Please dear Lord, help us to be strong in our religion, to be pure in all the ways that we have studied in this lesson; and help us to be strong as we war against the Devil and his angels. In Jesus name AMEN!