

## LIVING THE PURE LIVE BY THE PURE WORDS OF GOD

By: Bill Richardson

Edited by: Bill Kelly

Pure and Purity is required of the Christian's life, and let me add by saying, (all the days of one's life here on earth). It is a life which shall be purified when it is returned to God in Heaven when you hear, "*Well done.*"

Psalms 12: 6 tells us, "*The words of the LORD are pure...*" and Psalms 18:26 says, "*With the pure thou will show thyself pure...*" It is paraphrased this way, "Purity in ones life manifest itself by what one does and how they conduct themselves doing it."

There are great lessons and benefit for us in these words: It is written, "*Man shall not live by bread alone, But by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*" (Matthew 4:4).

One cannot, one must not, one shall not, live the Christian life, the acceptable life, by bread alone. Pure bread, pure Christian life must, (shall) be lived by the Pure Word, that is, "God's Word." God's providence gives and empowers life, and His providence preserves life, and life everlasting.

I want to make a side note here: Have we lost or forgotten the importance or strength of the word *shall*? Shall is used to express *determination, compulsion, obligation, or necessity*. In law, and God's pure word is law, and the Christian's life which is compulsory to the law of God, the question must be ask, "Are we determined and motivated to accept our obligation and application of Purity in our life?"

It is an obligation, and we must realize that! It became an obligation, a contract, when we confessed Christ and are baptized for remission (forgiveness) of our sins. The contract, in the Christian's life will continue, shall or must continue, until physical death. While we live here on earth, the contract must be performed in accordance with *all* terms and conditions, *and that is God's Will*. The contract does have terms and conditions applicable to the living Christian, and that is, "Live the Christian life by the Pure Word of God."

The word, the Pure Word of God, admonishes us so richly, helping us, motivating us, developing us with desire, to live the pure life. Note the following scriptures and let your heart be motivated by the blessings they offer.

Psalms 119:1, "*Blessed, (happy) are they whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the LORD.*" Our walk according to the law is; when we walk with the lord in the light of His word...Look in your songbook, read the words, they are said better than I can say them. The song is titled, "Trust and Obey".

Proverbs 20:11 says, "*Even a child is known by his deeds, whether what he does is pure and right.*" Here, let's give thought to the scripture, which tells us "We are known by our fruits." Note that fruits are plural, as are deeds, and it would be plural if it were *our acts* being judged.

Remember, "We are known by our fruit" and we must not be guilty in causing a brother to stumble. To safeguard against that, what must we do? As a matter of fact, not do! Here it is. All things are pure according to the word. Thus all things we do must be pure, (right by the word). We must walk in the Spirit; be producers of fruit (singular) of the Spirit. "*If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit*" (Galatians 5:22, 25). Do and you will be blessed! Guaranteed! It is the truth!

Here are the words of counsel in 2 Timothy 2:22, *“Flee youthful lust; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with them who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”*

*“Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as a brother, older women as mother, younger women as sisters, with all purity”* (1 Timothy 5:1, 2).

That scripture was an exhortation to young Timothy by the apostle Paul. However, it has application to us, and I'm sure you know that. A great lesson for our appreciation is when it says to do this in purity. We today are commanded to exhort one-other, thus exhorting has to be for the right purpose, at the right time and in the right way.

The apostle Paul said in 2 Timothy 1:3 that he thanked God, whom he served with a *pure conscience*. It's required of God. And it must be that way to be pleasing to God.

Much can be said about our conscience. Using the term, pure conscience, puts strong emphases on it. Don't you think? I think of it this way. The conscience judges the character of one's action, approving or censoring according to what it considers an absolute standard of good and evil. The final court of appeals for one's action is not however one's conscience but the Word, The Pure Word of God.

There is a verse in Titus the first Chapter which we should give thought as we consider our subject on *“Pure/Purity as it applies to the Christian's Life.”* Titus 1:15 reads, *“To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.”* Isn't that tragic?

It has been noted, and I am reminded each time I study it comes to me that the mind is the center of our whole body, our being. What we think, say and do is the result and working of our mind. Our mind controls our actions yes our mind controls us! Thus we have a great obligation to our mind. We must, with our mind, properly nurture, that is, (feed, and exercise) it.

The first computer class which I attended was a study of the basic of how computers work. The instructor invited our attention to what the computer-world had chosen as a teaching saying, and it was, *“Garbage In, Garbage Out.”* You think about it...the same is true of our mind, and it is one of the good lessons of the cited scripture above. Let's look at it.

I say it again, *“What one thinks so is he”* (Proverbs 23:7) Think how that impacts one's life. What one thinks he becomes! I think—so I am. You have heard all those expressions, haven't you? To study this principle is a needed study so let's think on it.

*“To the pure...”* Look at the words of Jesus in Matthew 15:11 as He says, *“Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.”*

If what comes out of our mouth (what one says) is not that what a man is thinking? And if it is defiling, (garbage), not pure, it's impure. Refresh your memory and look up the definition of defile and impure. What comes out of one's mouth is that which has passed through the mind, period! What was done to it, (as it was processed in the mind), is representative of and or determines what one was thinking? The mind and its processing can be right, wrong, pure, or impure. Let's look at definitions.

Right: factually correct; morally good; justified, or acceptable.

Pure: innocent or morally good; complete; nothing but; not mixed or adulterated with any other substance; free of impurities.

Wrong: not correct or true; mistake or in error; unjust; dishonest or immoral

Impure: morally wrong; contaminated; adulterated (see under definition of wrong)

The real test of purity is the heart (mind). (The biblical heart is the mind.) People whose mind and conscience is defiled (impure) can neither think clearly about spiritual things not distinguish between good and evil. If ones thinking or conscience are wrong (absent of purity), ones actions are seldom if ever right. How can they? But if persons having the mind of Christ and hearts filled with love, "holy living" will follow (cf. Philippians 2:5).

Inner cleansing is available through the blood of Christ. In Hebrews 10:22 we are admonished to draw near to our High Priest over the house of God with a true heart with full assurance. Our approach must be with a heart that is sincere and with a faith that trusts Christ's provision to cleanse an inward sinful tendency and us from outward sinful actions. From Christ, we draw strength to live the Christian life. The pure life!

A "Christian Life" is made manifest by what we think, what we do, what we say, how we say it, and all these acts must be done by dedicated love to God, who first loved us, and done also to our fellow man.

The scripture which teach us that the words of the Lord are pure was cited above in (Psalms 12:6). The law of the Lord is bound together in words and they are written words, which were provided by inspiration and preserved, in what is known to us as the Holy Word of God, the Bible. Praise the Lord for that! HALLELUJAHS PRAISE JEHOVAH! And AMEN!

To continue the thought let's look at what the Bible teaches us in 1 Corinthians 2:9-13. It says:

*"...The things which God has prepared for those who love Him, God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, and the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but by the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. (Paul here is speaking of the Devine Revelation, which he and other divinely inspired men receive). These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches."*

The Holy Spirit revealed spiritual truths and gave the appropriate words to express that truth. That truth, the Pure Words of God was, is, and always will be that which, through obedience, sustain the Christian's pathway into heaven's eternal joy. God bless us all with that joy! And in Jesus name, AMEN!

I am adding the below writings for the continued thoughts concerning life...Living and with God's mercy and forgiveness a life as pure as we can. They direct thoughts to give pause of the lessons they teach. Please read and accept their intent toward love of life and living. Give thanks and appreciation to the author/writer, Bill Irby, and whom I love and appreciate!

## THE SWEETNESS OF LIFE

By: Bill Irby – Minister, West Hobbs Church of Christ, Athens, Alabama

A fine young woman of this congregation, Meggie Peek by name, spent a little time in the hospital due to an argument between her car and a telephone pole. All of us are thankful to the Lord that neither Meggie nor her passenger was seriously hurt, which is more than can be said of her car.

A congregation is like a big family, so we are interested in things like what happened to members of our family and relieved when matters resolve positively. But things like what happened to Meggie do make us think. One such thing is that life is precious and sweet, particularly the lives of the people we love and care about. The older I am the more impressed I become with the importance of living each of my moments thinking about love for God and for my family and friends.

Now, I do not intend to go all *sappy* on you. And I really don't think love, at least the kind I have in mind, is always a *sappy* thing. Loving God means doing His will (John 14:15). Loving each other means wanting the best for them without regard for the cost to us. Loving family and friends makes life sweet.

But it is obvious that lots of folks just don't see it this way. The influence of the old Devil is strong (1 Peter 5:8). Because of the influence of evil in this world there is barriers to people enjoying the sweetness of life thank that God, through His love, would have us enjoy. Knowledge of truth will break down these barriers.

One barrier to enjoying life's sweetness is *selfishness*. Selfishness is a potent manifestation of worldliness (Romans 12:3). The way to destroy this barrier is to "be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2). When people need to have their own way it is frequently because they think more of themselves than they should. Sweetness of life comes out of love and interest in others, not in one's self. Conceit robs life of any opportunity for real happiness.

Another barrier to enjoying the sweetness of life is *superficiality*. I am thinking of a life that is more about style than substance. A life that is concerned with others thinking that I am "really something" is a surface sort of existence. There is nothing wrong with wanting, for instance, to dress and look nice. Indeed doing so is a good thing. But when *looking* good becomes more important than *being* good, trouble is afoot. We should remember that shallow streams dry up soonest.

This last barrier is perhaps somewhat controversial. This barrier to enjoying the sweetness of life is *sensuality*. Our world (remembers 1 John 2:15-17) deluges us with the idea that to really enjoy life one must flood the senses with every kind of experience possible with no regard to the morality of the activity involved. Thus our young folks are encouraged to be sexually active as soon as possible, to drink any sort of booze as much as possible and to do whatever they want to do as long as it is perceived to be "fun." It is a trick of the Devil that many people, and too many young ones, think that to enjoy life means to experience it sensually without restraints. There is no bigger lie. Now, God made us able to enjoy a world He created to be enjoyable. But there are laws, there are moral restraints and He has placed these on us for our own good (Galatians 5:19-21 and Hebrews 13:4, for example). Rampant sensuality destroys life's sweetness. So, things happen to us and our friends that make us think about important things. It is good that we do this kind of thinking, for an un-contemplated life is empty. God made life sweet. Thank about that!

*Bill Irby*

# WHO CARES?

By: Bill Irby – Minister West Hobbs Street Church of Christ, Athens Alabama

“Who cares?” is a little expression that we sometimes use sarcastically when we really mean, “I don’t care.” But other times when we are down and being pushed lower we ask, “Who cares” for real. Most of us are blessed with family and friends who care about us but there are times of despair when we look beyond even this sweet comfort.

You know the kind of thing I am talking about. Good people have troubles and even get terribly ill and die while bad people go along like they haven’t the first hint of a problem (just remember Romans 12:17-21). Things do not always seem fair. Some kids get grandparents, while others don’t. A man does good work and just gets by and another man makes it big manipulating the material world.

Peter spoke to this situation in this passage: *“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time: casting all your cares upon Him; for He careth for you”* (1 Peter 5:6-7). There are times in life when the pressure of normal existence makes us question the meaning of life. Yes, we have folks who care about us, but most of them have their own problems. Life is problematic. Everybody suffers in his or her own way. That’s the way it is and we learn to handle it. But sometimes it causes us to wonder if life makes any sense after all.

We need to remember that Peter told us in this context that the Devil was after us. We are to resist that old rascal “steadfast in the faith” knowing that he is after everybody else, too. When we doubt and wonder we are doing exactly what Satan wants us to do. The Devil wants us to feel sorry for ourselves. He wants us to dwell on what we perceive to be the unfairness of human existence. He wants us to be jealous of our friends and neighbors. He wants us to question the principles revealed in the Book. He wants us to feel like the Christians life is just not worth it. He wants us to feel that our suffering is unique. Satan wants us to become so discouraged that we turn from God to him.

So the apostle added this: *“But the God of all grace, who hath called us into his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you”* (1 Peter 5:10). Peter tells the truth. Everybody suffers. Trouble comes to every life. You are not the Lone Ranger. You remember that Elijah thought he was by himself in the world; God reminded him of seven thousand who had not bowed the knee unto Baal (1 King 19:18). God does not promise an easy road through this life. He does promise help in dealing with life (Philippians 4:4-6). And He promises Heaven as our home the end (2 Timothy 4:6-8). Yes, we suffer a little down here, but we are still on the way up there.

In the meantime, what do we have? We have someone who cares. He had Peter say that we must cast our care on Him, for *he careth for you*. This is an amazing thought, isn’t it?

The God who spoke the world into existence and holds it up by the word of His power...cares about you. The God who looked at our stubborn sinfulness and sent His Son to die for us...cares for you. The God who established the spiritual kingdom, the church, so that He could bless us with fellowship with Him...cares for you. The God who saves the lost...cares for you. The God who will one day speak all that is right out of existence...cares for you. The God who made Heaven cares for you.

When things go wrong, remember that God cares. When things go well, remember that it is because He cares. Yes, always be thankful that He cares.

*Bill Irby*

## POPULARITY AND PERSPECTIVE

By: Bill Irby – Minister, West Hobbs Street Church of Christ, Athens, AL

Not a few people have been bemused at the public reaction to the trial of Mr. Jackson of pop music fame. I am amazed that people get so caught up in these things, though I know that it is because a popular (in some circles) celebrity was involved. There is, however, an underlying problem with spiritual implications.

Here is the problem expressed as a question: *What is important?* If we allow the popular culture to define what is or is not important we will be led down various garden paths continually. It is, for another instance, popular to criticize Christianity while criticism of Islam is “off-limits.” The popular media fails to mention that it is illegal for Christians (of any kind) to do mission work in many Islamic countries. That is correct: Many countries with Islamic governments do not allow for religious freedom. Yet this is not part of the emphasis in the popular press.

The point here is rather plain. Just because something is popular does not make it right. The passage that comes to mind is Matthew 7:13-14: “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat: Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” Jesus said that basing one’s life on what is popular will not work. Just because millions are focused on Mr. Jackson’s problems does not mean that his life is more important than those of one’s next door neighbor. Just because millions believe in the religion of Islam does not make it correct, nor does it place that religion above examination.

An important dimension of the problem is this: We must allow the popular media to determine what is important in our minds. Specifically, we must not allow the popular culture to tell us what to think about religion. On the one hand, the truth is that Mr. Jackson’s is gnat, h historically. On the other hand, prohibition of religious freedom in a large part of the world is more significant than the supposed mistreatment of a copy of the Koran.

Human beings need to use their intelligence to filter out all the trash that comes down the pike purporting to be truth. This we can do if we allow our minds to be trained by the principles revealed in the Bible. It is always better to be correctly informed than to be popular.

*Bill Irby*

I say to you as I close out this writing that I have been blessed and my prayer is that you too have been blessed, and that you have gain knowledge, (true abiding biblical knowledge). Knowledge gained which is associated with responsibilities, will creates a desire to seek, to search diligently, to accept when found, to associate with, and be active in continued study and growing in the knowledge and truth of "God's Word." I pray that you will abide faithfully in the Lord's Church until death. And if you have not obeyed the true and pure gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ please, please consider doing so. Heaven awaits those who love the Lord and abides in living and doing His will. God bless you...I love you! Your servant.....

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