

We Are God's Workmanship

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

*"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works,
which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."*

~ Ephesians 2:10

Sometimes the Christian life is filled with frustration, discouragement, and guilt. These are all rooted in self-reliance. They are a failure of faith to lay hold on the reality of God's workmanship in our lives.

*"Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,
according to the power that **worketh in us**" (Ephesians 3:20).*

*"For it is God which **worketh in you** both to will and to do of His good pleasure"
(Philippians 2:13).*

*"From Whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every
joint supplieth, according to the **effectual working in the measure of every part**,
maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Ephesians 4:16).*

William R. Newell well articulated the basis of these distresses:

"To 'hope to be better' is to fail to see yourself in Christ only.

"To be disappointed with yourself, is to have believed in yourself.

"To be discouraged is unbelief – as to God's purpose and plan of blessing for you.

"To be proud, is to be blind! For we have no standing before God, in ourselves."¹

As believers, we are to walk by faith in what God has said to us.

"For we walk by faith, not by sight" (II Corinthians 5:7).

The fact is simple – we are not self-made, "*we are His workmanship*" (Ephesians 2:10). The great God of the universe is steadily working in our lives. We are His handiwork. He began the work, and faith is confident He will finish it.

1. William R. Newell, *Romans, Verse by Verse*.

*“Being confident of this very thing, that **He which hath begun a good work** in you **will perform it** until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).*

It is His faithfulness that carries out this work to its completion.

*“**Faithful** is He that calleth you, Who also **will do it**” (I Thessalonians 5:24).*

Things are not as they appear. This divine work in our lives will culminate in “*every man*” having the praise of God.

*“Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come ... and then shall **every man have praise of God**” (I Corinthians 4:5).*

If it is true that He has made us, and not we ourselves; if it is true that He began the work and will complete it; then why do we fret so? Why are we anxious and troubled? Why are we full of care, frustration, and discouragement? After all, is He not God? Is He not in charge?

*“**Be careful for nothing**; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7).*

Spiritual growth does not occur at the rate, or in the methods that are traditionally accepted. Instead God works steadily and effectually for His Own purpose. He is in no rush by human schedule. He works to bring us to a place of spiritual quietness, which along with assurance, is an effect of righteousness.

*“And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and **the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever**” (Isaiah 32:17).*

His divine work may not be done in accordance with our time tables, or by our predetermined methods or standards, but nonetheless He is the Creator and we are His creatures. He is the Potter and we are the clay. He molds and fashions us according to His own will and design.

*“But now, O LORD, Thou art our Father; we are the clay, and **Thou our Potter; and we all are the work of Thy hand**” (Isaiah 64:8).*

*“Arise, and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will cause thee to hear My words. Then I went down to the potter’s house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. **Behold, as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are ye in mine hand,** O house of Israel” (Jeremiah 18:2-6).*

Even Paul the Apostle echoes these thoughts:

“Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?” (Romans 9:21).

The Master Potter is faithfully, and steadily at work. And He works *all things* after His own will.

*“In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to **the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will**”* (Ephesians 1:11).

His hand in our lives leaves *no* place untouched. Even that which seemingly is working against us, is used by our Father to fulfill His goal in our lives.

*“And we know that **all things work together** for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose”* (Romans 8:28).

This truth can be seen in the life of our Apostle. Paul wrote to the Philippians from prison. Many circumstances had the appearance of working negatively in his life. Yet, he wrote with such confidence that the opposite was true:

*“But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have **fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel**”* (Philippians 1:12).

Another powerful example is demonstrated in the life of Joseph. The same was true with him. His brothers had sold him into slavery. This had been, upon the surface, a very sad and unfortunate turn of events. But Joseph saw a divine purpose:

*“But as for you, **ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good**”* (Genesis 50:20).

At times He leads us through *“the valley of the shadow of death,”* but as long as He is with us – even the darkest, lowest valley is HIGH GROUND!

*“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for **Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me**”* (Psalm 23:4).

We can trust God, He has a definite goal in sight! Our Father is taking each of us on a journey that has as it’s final goal conformity unto Christ.

*“For whom He did foreknow, He also **did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son**, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren”* (Romans 8:29).

To be conformed to the image of His Son is our predestination. To take us on this journey will mean many years of wilderness and valleys. His current goal is to bring us to a place where we find our completeness, satisfaction, contentment, glory, thanksgiving, and rejoicing in Him,

and not in our circumstances. This is what a walk of faith is all about: not saying, “Look, Look ...” while pointing to the circumstances all around us, but saying, “Look, Look ...” while pointing to our Lord and His cross. For Christ and His cross-work are the very object of the Father’s eye.

On this journey, each of us are at different places. Being at different places does not necessarily mean one is ahead or behind another spiritually. It just means the Lord needed to take each of us in such different (and yet at the same time so similar) paths due to the uniqueness of our personalities, upbringing and influences, as well as His unique purpose in our lives – all as it pleases Him.

*“But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, **as it hath pleased Him**”* (I Corinthians 12:18).

In our diversities, He works *all in all!*

*“And there are **diversities** of operations, but it is the same God which **worketh all in all**”* (I Corinthians 12:6).

Miles Stanford aptly wrote about this process:

“So many of us, after having entered into some of the deeper realities of our Lord, seek to immediately pull or push others into this wonderful advancement; and then we wonder why they are so slow to learn and seemingly apathetic in their understanding and concern. We so easily forget the many years it took, and by what wandering wilderness ways our Lord had to traverse with us in order to bring us over Jordan and into Canaan.”²

God is active in our lives, and in the lives of our brethren. We need not live lives filled with care, frustration, discouragement, and guilt. We can by faith lay hold of the reality of God’s own personal **workmanship** in our lives.

We are to rest in His great workmanship in our lives. Paul reminds us of what our walk with the Lord is all about:

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him” (Colossians 2:6).

We are to continue walking in divine life the same way we received it! How did we receive it?

*“For **by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves:** it is the gift of God: **Not of works**, lest any man should boast. **For we are His workmanship**, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them”* (Ephesians 2:8-10).

2. Miles Stanford, *The Principles of Spiritual Growth*.

*“But to him that **worketh not, but believeth** on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Romans 4:5).*

We began divine life by grace through faith, without works. Paul says this is the way we continue to walk in it. *“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.”*

The Galatian believers had fallen into the trap of believing they were their own workmanship – that their spiritual life was of their own making – that they were somehow in control of divine life.

*“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? **Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?**” (Galatians 3:1-3).*

Again, Paul brings us to this basic principle of divine life. *“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.”*

We rest, look, and wait upon our Father. Our *only* expectation is from Him, and we will not be disappointed!

*“My soul, wait thou only upon God; for **my expectation is from Him**” (Psalm 62:5).*

*“But they that **wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength**; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Isaiah 40:31).*

*“For the earnest **expectation of the creature waiteth** for the manifestation of the sons of God” (Romans 8:19).*

*“**Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ**” (Philippians 1:6).*

Have complete confidence in God, our Father. He will do it!

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