

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

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FORTH

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Living Stream Ministry
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To hold forth Christ is to live out Christ, to express Christ, and to work out our salvation. To work out our salvation is to obey the Triune God who is operating within us both the willing and the working for His good pleasure. Here we have five important, interrelated matters: working out our salvation, obeying God, living Christ, expressing Christ, and holding forth Christ. Christians commonly speak of obeying God. The other four expressions—living Christ, expressing Christ, holding forth Christ, and working out our salvation—are unusual and even extraordinary. It would be helpful if we would make such expressions part of our conversation in fellowship. As we speak to one another, we need to encourage one another to live out Christ and express Christ. We need to remind one another to hold forth Christ and to work out our salvation. Using these expressions will help us in ministering Christ to others, especially to young ones who have just received the Lord. We should not merely talk about the gospel and salvation in a common, ordinary way. We need to use

expressions based on Paul's word to the Philippians to stir in others the desire to experience the Lord in their spirit. It is very important that we bring these extraordinary spiritual expressions into our daily conversation, prayer, fellowship, and testimonies in the church meetings. This will serve to enrich our utterance.

DOING ALL THINGS WITHOUT MURMURINGS AND REASONINGS

In [Philippians 2:14](#) Paul issues a warning: "Do all things without murmurings and reasonings." Both murmurings and reasonings frustrate us from carrying out our salvation to the fullest extent, from experiencing Christ to the uttermost.

The context indicates that if we murmur or reason, we do not obey. Obedience to God slays all murmurings and reasonings. In order to work out our salvation, we must obey the very God who operates in us. He Himself is our salvation, and our obedience to Him is the working out of our salvation. The sisters need to realize that when they murmur, they disobey the God who works within them. Likewise, the brothers need to see that whenever they reason, they are rebellious against the One who operates in them.

Only by obedience can murmurings and reasonings be put to death.

BECOMING BLAMELESS AND GUILELESS

In [Philippians 2:15](#) Paul continues, “That you may become blameless and guileless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.” The Greek word rendered “that” means “in order that.” We should do all things without murmurings and reasonings in order that we may become blameless and guileless, children of God without blemish. The Greek word translated guileless also means simple, artless, innocent; hence, harmless ([Matt. 10:16](#)). It comes from a root which means unmixed. The word blameless describes our outward behavior, and the word guileless, our inward character. To be artless means not to play politics. No one who is political can rightly be called guileless. If we are artless, we are also guileless and harmless.

If we do all things without murmurings and reasonings, we shall become blameless and harmless. What a great thing it is not to have murmurings and reasonings! However, I have

never met a sister who did not murmur or a brother who did not reason. The problem of murmurings and reasonings comes out in particular in married life. For example, a wife may murmur if her husband does not show appreciation of the love and care she has for him. Some brothers have learned that one way to eliminate a wife's murmuring is to use two simple expressions: "I'm sorry" and "thank you." Using these simple expressions can make your married life much happier. If a brother never tells his wife that he is sorry or if he never says thank you, there is apt to be murmuring. If we are successful in eliminating murmurings and reasonings, we shall be blameless and guileless.

CHILDREN OF GOD WITHOUT BLEMISH IN THE MIDST OF A CROOKED AND PERVERTED GENERATION

In [Philippians 2:15](#) Paul also says that the believers are children of God. This implies regeneration, the new birth. To be a child of God means that we have been born of God, that God has been conceived within us. When we were born of God in our spirit, we were mingled with Him. Conception always precedes birth.

When we became children of God, God was conceived in our very being. This involves even more than mingling. However, we do not have words adequate to express the deep relationship between us and God that has been produced by God's being conceived within us. He has been conceived within us, and we have been born of Him to become His children.

Now that we have been born of God, we need to eat Him and drink Him. To be sure, whatever we eat and digest is assimilated by us and mingled with us. The Lord Jesus said that He is the bread which came down from heaven and also that the ones who eat Him will live because of Him ([John 6:50, 57](#)). The Lord clearly likened Himself to food for us to eat, digest, and assimilate. At the time of our conversion, God was conceived within us, and we were born of Him. At that time, we and God, humanity and divinity, were joined in a marvelous way. After our spiritual birth, we need to feed on God day by day. The Triune God is our food and drink. We can truly say that the food we eat and the water we drink are not merely united to us, but also mingled with us. We simply cannot deny the fact that the food and drink we take in and digest are mingled with us and eventually saturate us

metabolically. In the same principle, when we take in the Triune God as our food and drink, He is mingled with us, and we are mingled with Him. However, we must be clear that this mingling of God and man does not produce a mixture, or a confusion, of divinity and humanity. On the one hand, there is a genuine mingling; on the other hand, there is no mixture or confusion.

According to Paul's word in [Philippians 2:15](#), we are to be children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation. The generation in which we live is crooked, warped, and twisted. We, however, as children of God, must be different. Because we are God's children, we should be both blameless and guileless, without blemish.

We can be children of God only by having the life of God. How marvelous it is to have God's life! All those who are truly the children of God need to realize that they have the divine life within them.

The divine life within us wants to grow. Recently I noticed how much a palm tree planted in my backyard has been growing, thriving, and spreading. It is almost unbelievable how much this tree has grown. What a testimony to the

strength of the inner life of the palm tree and to the riches of this life! When I looked at that palm tree recently, I had the sense that the divine life within me is far more energetic than the life of that palm tree. Praise the Lord that we have God's very life!

Along with the divine life, we also have the divine nature ([2 Pet. 1:4](#)). Although we cannot fully define the divine nature, we know that as God's children we partake of it and have it within us.

Every living thing acts according to its own nature. Everything it does comes out of its nature. For example, a peach tree produces peaches because it is in keeping with the nature of a peach tree to do so. As children of God all genuine Christians have the divine nature. This nature should govern and direct us. Everything in the Christian life is according to the nature of God. How wonderful that we have God's life with His nature!

SHINING AS LIGHTS IN THE WORLD

As lights, or luminaries, the believers shine among those in this crooked and perverted generation. Actually, we have no light in ourselves; we are luminaries reflecting the light of the sun,

Christ. Christ is the unique sun, and the church is the moon reflecting Him. Praise the Lord that we have a source of light to reflect!

HOLDING FORTH THE WORD OF LIFE

In [Philippians 2:16](#) Paul speaks of “holding forth the word of life.” The Greek word for “holding forth” also means applying, presenting, offering. As God’s children, we need to present the word of life to others. The word of life is very different from doctrine in dead letters. The word of life is the living breathing of God ([2 Tim. 3:16](#)), the Spirit who gives life ([John 6:63](#)). According to [Philippians 2](#) we have the Lord Jesus as our pattern ([vv. 6-11](#)), we have God operating in us ([v. 13](#)), we are God’s children possessing God’s life and the divine nature ([v. 15](#)), we are luminaries qualified to reflect the divine light of Christ ([v. 15](#)), and we have the word of life to hold forth, to present to others ([v. 16](#)). What a divine and rich provision! By such we are well able to carry out God’s salvation to the full extent.

FOR THE APOSTLE’S BOASTING IN THE DAY OF CHRIST

If we hold forth Christ as the word of life, the apostle will be able to boast in the day of Christ

that he has not run in vain nor labored in vain. This is to make his joy full. The day of Christ is the day of the Lord's second coming, also called "the day of the Lord" (1 Thes. 5:2; 2 Thes. 2:2; 1 Cor. 1:8; 2 Cor. 1:14) and "that day" (2 Tim. 1:18; 4:8). In that day all believers will appear before the judgment seat of Christ to receive the reward each deserves (2 Cor. 5:10; Matt. 25:19-30).

Just as the Philippians could boast in Paul in Christ, so Paul wanted to be able to boast, rejoice, and glory in them in the day of Christ. He hoped to be able to boast that, as far as they were concerned, he had not run in vain nor labored in vain. However, at the time Paul wrote this Epistle, he was concerned that his running and labor might be in vain. Whether or not his labor was actually in vain would be determined by the deeds of the believers in Philippi. Suppose the believers there did all things without murmurings or reasonings and thus became blameless and guileless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a warped and twisted generation. Suppose, moreover, that the saints in Philippi were shining forth as luminaries in the world and presented the word of life to those around them. If such were their situation, Paul

would be able to rejoice and even boast at the time of the Lord's coming back.

In [Philippians 2:1-16](#) we see that the way to make the apostle happy is to have a life of seeking Christ, living Christ, expressing Christ, and carrying out God's salvation to its fullest. Because the apostle represents God, God will also be happy to see such a life. Then at the day of Christ, the day of the Lord's coming, the apostle will be able to boast and rejoice.

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