

Fit for the Master's Use

by Phil Beach Jr.

To be 'fit for the Master's use' means to be used by God for His own agenda and heavenly purpose, rather than using God for our own agenda.

Scripture: Joshua 24:15, Luke 11:36, Romans 6:4, Ephesians 4:11, Colossians 1:28, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 2 Timothy 2:19, Hebrews 4:12, 1 John 1:7

Topics: "Sanctification", "Selfless Love"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. preaches on the importance of being vessels of honor, sanctified and fit for the Master's use by purging ourselves from selfish ambitions and pride, allowing God to intervene through the Word of the cross. He emphasizes the need to depart from all lawlessness and be sanctified through and through by God, preserving our entire being blameless for the coming of Jesus Christ. Beach challenges believers to examine their hearts deeply, seeking to be truly devoted to selfless love like Timothy, rather than using God and others for personal gain.

Transcript

"The foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, The Lord knows them that are His, and let every one that names the name of the Lord depart from all lawlessness....if any man purge himself from these things (everything that brings dishonor to the Lord), he shall be a vessel of honor, sanctified (set apart for God's purpose alone) and fit for the Master's use..." 2Tim. 2:19a-21. "And may the God of peace Himself sanctify you through and through (separate you from profane things; make you pure and entirely devoted to God): and may your entire spirit, soul and body be preserved sound and complete and found blameless (without justifiable charge) at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" 1Thess. 5:23.

We are all prone to mistakenly think that we are asking God to use us for His purposes but are in fact using God for our own purposes! Ego, selfish ambition, and pride are so deeply ingrained in the heart of man that it is humanly impossible to escape their influence, apart from God's intervention, which is the Word of the cross effectually working in us, day by day. Part of the human, sinful condition is to view life, view friends, and view all things in light of how they can help us accomplish our own aspirations--we tend to use these things if we think they can help us get what we want.

Apart from the deep working of the cross in our lives, we will always approach life with this view and mind set. Friends become objects that we use to get something for ourselves; marriages become a means to gratify our own needs; jobs become a means to secure more money and a stepping stone to get bigger

and better things. When we use the Lord to advance our own interests and causes, we are no longer fit for His use. Paul said that all men seek their own interests and not those of Jesus Christ, and concluded that among the many professing believers he knew, only one, namely Timothy, was different.

Imagine that! Only one man was considered by Paul to be properly motivated and was commended by him as a true spiritual son! I do not think Paul was misguided by this statement. By the grace of God, Timothy had allowed the Lord to free him from the trap of using God and others as means to his own selfish ends. Beloved, we should allow the Lord to search our hearts very deeply over this matter of being fit for the Master's use. If Paul made such a statement suggesting that only one in his circle of friends was truly devoted to selfless love, then could it be that we know nothing of such love and devotion?

I wonder if we are troubled by Paul's statement and are prepared to earnestly seek the Lord to let Him show us our lack in this area. If Paul were with us today, walking among our homes and joining in our fellowship with other believers, do you think he would include you with Timothy, as one who possessed a heart of devotion and love like he had? Or do you think you would be in the group of those who are seeking their own interests and not those of Jesus Christ? Perhaps as we look at the process God uses to make us fit for His use and able to care for His interests, we can better answer this question.

Remember, Paul's passion was to be offered as a drink offering before His Lord and in doing so, be offered in sacrifice for the saints, so that in all things, they would become a corporate body where the full love and life of Jesus was properly functioning. Paul did not consider personal, self-centered ambitions as acceptable in those who wanted to follow the Lamb. Let's look at God's call to walk in His newness of life and discover how this newness of life is to touch every area of our lives; spirit, soul and body.

We will look at God's method of working to prepare us to become fit for His use, to bring glory to His name and to show forth good works that are being wrought by His Spirit working in us. This is certainly not a complete study of this subject, but is only intended to lay a foundation for the Lord to build upon. Called To Live in Newness of Life How wonderful it is when God opens our hearts to see His call to live in the newness of His life. We are invited to both walk and serve in newness of life. (Rom. 6: 4, Rom. 7:6) This is in contrast to walking in the old way of living, under the power of the flesh and the devil.

When we are empowered to live in the newness of Christ's life, we are able to keep His commandments, to bring glory to His name and overcome the dominion of sin. This includes being freed from selfish living and ambitions. What a marvelous gift God has given to us by imparting His new life! God's full intention is to make us a people in whom the light of His Son is fully manifest in our daily living. Jesus teaches us that if the whole body (our entire being) is full of light, having no part darkness, then our life will be like a bright shining candle that cannot be hidden (Lk.11:36.)

This captures God's desire in saving us. Paul, in his letter to the church at Ephesus shows us God's intention as well. He tells us that God gave us pastors, teachers, evangelists, prophets and apostles so that we all may grow up into the full expression of the moral likeness of the Son of God. Surely, this will result in our being able to walk in the newness of His life! In another place Paul said that all the power of grace that was working in him to labor for Christ was governed by one purpose.

This purpose was that he may present each person to Christ, fully mature and filled with the perfect love of God (Col 1:28, 29.) Jesus tells us that if we are following Him we will not be walking in darkness. John also said the same thing. He tells us that if we are walking in the light, as He is in the light, then we will confess our sins and be washed from all lawlessness. As we are taught by our Lord to walk in the newness of His

life we will then serve both God and others in newness of spirit.

In order for us to be able to walk this way, we must be subject to the Word of God and allow it to search into the depths of our being. God tells us this is exactly what God's Word, together with His Spirit does. The book of Hebrews tells us that God's Word is living and full of power. It is sharper than any two-edged sword and is able to penetrate into the very core of our being. God's purpose in searching us like this is to go into the deepest parts of our being, exposing and revealing all things in His light.

This provides us with the divine opportunity to see, as God sees, what is inside of us so that we can forsake all darkness and walk in His light and life alone. Let's look at exactly what God searches as His Word is applied into our lives by His Spirit and discover what He is looking to do in us. "...Having No Part Darkness..." It is God's will to set us apart so that all that we are is serving His purpose. According to Paul, we are to know, by God's power an ever increasing separation in our spirit, soul and body from all darkness so that we may live only by the newness of His life.

What a glorious calling this is. God is faithful and He who has called us into His marvelous light is also able to perform His promise and help us to walk in that light, in every area of our life. What a testimony this can be for the glory of God if men can see the light and beauty of Jesus Christ shining through our lives, in all our actions and words. Now, it is our purpose to understand, to the best of our ability as God shines light into our hearts, the full extent of this setting apart work that God wants to do in us.

We are wonderfully created by God! Our entire life, as human beings, is fashioned by God's very hand. Each part of our being, both the material as well as the immaterial is to serve God's wonderful purpose. As the Word of God says, Jesus Christ created all things for His glory to serve His purpose. This includes what we are as human beings! How nice to know that God is truly for our humanity! He did not save us to deliver us from being human nor to change our personalities. God's purpose in saving us is to keep us human and by His Son's life, to deliver us from the dominion of all indwelling sin.

This sin can affect our spirit, our soul and our body. Only as we are taught by God to abide in the Sinless One, our Lord Jesus Christ and to yield to His Spirit can we be free from the habitual practice of sinful actions and thoughts. We do not have any idea how deeply sin has affected our being. This is why we must seek to walk in His light. His light alone, shining brightly into the depths of our being is able to disentangle us from the indwelling sin. It is very dangerous when we stop walking in the light of the Lamb.

When this happens to us, our ability to see clearly is removed. Then, we begin to believe a lie about ourselves and others. These lies blind our hearts from seeing the truth and eventually lead us away from the Lord, making us slaves to selfish and life controlling sins. Now, let's look at each aspect of our being and discover God's purpose in creating us the way we are. We must learn to live under the control of the Holy Spirit in each area of our being. This is one of the most important lessons the Lord is trying to teach us.

We must remember that our entire being has been affected by the fall, and God must help us to stay free from the seducing powers of sin which can affect any part of our being and lead us astray. The Human Spirit When God created us He made us to possess a human spirit. God's Word teaches us that God is the father of our human spirit. As our father, He longs to love us and for us to love Him. It is generally believed that the Word of God teaches that the human spirit is the place where the Holy Spirit comes to live after the new birth.

Although created with certain abilities which are intended to serve God's purpose, it is important to note that our human spirit have been affected by the fall. For this reason we must be constantly washed in God's Word and cleansed by the blood of Jesus so that we can walk in the newness of His life. One of the abilities that our human spirit has is the power to worship. Of course, God longs for us to worship Him alone. He calls us to worship Him. God is a spirit and seeks that men may worship Him in spirit and in truth.

God never wants us to worship anything other than Him. However, because of indwelling sin, we are prone to worship something other than him. Paul tells us that we are to turn from all that is morally dirty and unclean so that we may worship and love God with all our hearts. We have the promise that God will accept us as sons and daughters if we turn from other gods and worship Him alone. For this reason Paul tells us to cleanse ourselves from everything that soils and contaminates our body and our spirit so that we may bring our consecration to completeness in reverential fear of God.

We must ask God to deliver us from worshipping others gods! Another aspect of our human spirit is the conscience. This part of our being properly functions when we are under the control of the Lord and allow His Word to dwell deeply in our hearts. Our conscience is designed to help us to know when what we are doing is right in the Lord's eyes and when it is not. Conscience is a beautiful gift from God and we should treat our it with great care, washing it daily in God's Word to ensure that it works properly.

One danger that God's Word warns us of is the possibility of our conscience becoming seared. This happens when we ignore it and do not respond to its reproof and correction. When this happens, our conscience becomes numb and no longer tells us when we are not pleasing the Lord. God's Word also tells us that we can have a dead conscience. This happens when we are devoted to works that spring out of a misguided desire to serve God by earning His favor. Our conscience must be freed from such slavery.

Another part of our human spirit is the perception or intuition. This is the vision that lives deep in our spirits. What a gift this is when this part of our being is under the control of the Lord and His Word. Then, we can see the Lord, see His beauty and loveliness, as well as see, at least in part, the plans He may have for us. It is in this manner that we may ask the Lord to perform His plans and by faith, believe Him to do the impossible. However, it is to be noted, that because of indwelling sin, we can be deceived into seeing wrong things too.

Some may see themselves as great people, wanting to become honored and esteemed in this world. This may be pride and ego if that is all we can see! May God set our entire spirit apart for Him so that we can be fit for His use. Let's now look at another aspect of our created being.

The Human Soul Another aspect of our being is the soul. God's purpose of our soul is the seat of our personality. Our soul is who we are, the unique person that God loves and created for His pleasure and our joy. The soul, like the human spirit, has different aspects. One of those aspects is the will. This is the part of our being where we decide. God has given us the marvelous gift of being able to exercise our will to choose what is right or what is wrong. Joshua said to the people of his day, "Make a choice this day who you will serve".

What a gift this is! God wants us to choose His way, choose life, and choose to follow Him, all the days of our lives. We can choose to obey the Holy Spirit or choose to ignore Him as well. God longs to see us so filled with love for Him so that we freely choose to lay our down and follow His way of sacrificial love and service. Again, because of indwelling sin, we are prone to be self-willed and tend to choose what is best

for our own desires and plans. God must deliver us from this if we are to be fit for His use.

Another aspect of our soul is the mind. This is the place where we think our thoughts and where our intellectual powers are seated. God's Word tells us that we are to be renewed in the spirit of our mind so that we may know what His will is. In another place God says that we are not to be ignorant, but instead, able to discern what His good and pleasing will is. This happens when our minds are filled with God's Word and together, with God's Spirit, we are enabled to walk in the newness of life in our mind.

God tell us to think on what is pure, true, honest, worthy of praise and that is pure and worthy of reverence. If we do not allow God's Word and Spirit to wash and renew our minds, they will fall under the control of indwelling sin and Satan. This is why Paul tells us that we must cast down every imagination and thought that is contrary to God's Word, bringing all of our thoughts into obedience. Lastly, our soul is made up of our emotions. This includes our affections and feelings.

God made us with feelings and they are part of being human. Our feelings can be a great blessing. Our emotions can be stirred in many ways. If we see beautiful sunset, we can experience beautiful emotions that cause our hearts to well up into praise for our Creator. We must guard against emotions if they are flooding our minds and feelings with ideas that are not true or that are sinful. Because of indwelling sin, we can have emotions that are not healthy or openly sinful. God tells us that our souls must be saved from the indwelling tendency to be self-centered.

We are actually called by Jesus to deny our selfish soul desires and sinful emotions so that we can embrace His life and purity. God wants to express His beauty and love through our souls so that all may see His grace in our lives. May the Lord help us to submit to His dealings in our soul so that we may become a fit for His use, to express his beauty in and through all that we may do! The Human Body God said that when he formed our body, he made it from the dust of the earth.

What a creation our body is! There are many places in God's Word that tell us it is God's will that we offer our body to Him for His purpose. The body is made up of five senses as well inbred desires. All the physical senses; taste, smell, sight, touch and hearing are given to us so that we can live and properly function in this physical world and enjoy the God given and created beauties of life. Francis Havergal penned a beautiful song expressing the Lord's desire for each of our senses to be dedicated to the Lord.

Additionally, the desires of the body are created by God for our pleasure and sustenance. Hunger and thirst are gifts from God that tell us our body needs both liquid and food to live. Sexual desire is created by God for procreative purposes and within the marriage vow is to be enjoyed by husband and wife. However, we must be on guard against the indwelling sin and its possible effect it has on our bodies. For this reason, Paul tells us that he disciplined his body and did not allow its desires to control him.

He was very careful to make sure that his bodily desires were kept in obedience to the Word of God. When referring to his actions regarding the discipline of his body, Paul used very strong language. The Greek reveals that Paul said that he buffed his body, handled it very roughly by beating it black and blue. This is figurative language for the purpose of emphasis implying that he subdued his bodily desires and made them his servant so they would not become his master. If we do not do this, we can fall easily to abuse and excess.

We must pray for the Holy Spirit to give us self-control so that our bodies do not lead us to fall prey to excess in the lawful pleasures our body provide us. Overeating is a dangerous sin in our day of

abundance. Rest is important but we can become lazy, if we are not careful. Recreation is healthy for our body, but if not careful we can become obsessed with sports and exercise and be led astray. Sex can become an obsession and misused, just like food. Because it is rampant in our day today, we must guard our bodies against sexual sin.

For this reason, I believe Paul condoned seasons of abstinence from both sex and food, among married couples as a means to control these desires from being abused. God wants us to offer our bodies to Him so that they serve His purpose, together with our soul and spirit. In Conclusion Because God's love is so rich and full towards us, He created us with an amazing harmony of spirit, soul and body. It is His highest intention to capture our hearts with a vision of and passion for His Son so that we may be changed into His moral likeness.

Because of the indwelling presence of sin we are prone to use God for our own agenda instead of being used by God for His own agenda and heavenly purpose. Paul found very few workers in the Lord's vineyard that were fit to be used by the Master. Because of this, we all should be very prayerful and ask the Lord to show us the areas in our lives where we are yet walking in darkness with selfish motivation. God in His mercy and grace provides all of His children with the opportunity to cooperate with Him so that we may become freed from the power of this indwelling sin.

This process must reach into the very center of our being and touch every area of our lives--spirit, soul and body. Only as we are walking in His light day by day and possessing a tender and obedient heart by submitting to all His purging and pruning can we be prepared to be used by Him. In this way, Christ our life will truly become our life, in thought, word, deed and action and thereby God will receive glory from our lives. May the Lord help us to submit to all of our Father's dealings so that we may become fit and prepared, by His hands, for His use, to bring glory to His name.

God is not expecting us to become perfect, without fault or sin. This will not happen until the second coming of our Lord. Now, the Lord seeks a people who will allow His Holy Spirit and His Word to control their lives; spirit, soul and body. God in His own timing will determine when we are fit for His use and then, we can know the joy of working, together with His Son and others of like precious faith, in seeing His work accomplished in and through our yielded lives. Amen!

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