



# Bible Student's Notebook™

*The Herald of His Grace*

*Weekly*

Presenting *every man* perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume XXI  
Issue 525

## “Fairness”

### Is It Scriptural or Spiritual?

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

There are words and concepts that we perceive as so spiritual or scriptural that – because of the influence of our modern culture – we are sure that the pages of Scripture are filled with them. Such a word and concept is “fairness.”



Our current democratic culture places a great emphasis on the concept of “fairness.” Such an emphasis circularly stems from and then reinforces self-centeredness as well as a false view of elusive “equality.”

If a situation is *fair*, everyone is treated *equally*. — *MacMillan Dictionary*

This modern concept of fair/fairness is defined as:

The quality of treating people *equally*. — *Cambridge Dictionary*

#### “FAIRNESS” IN SCRIPTURE

Consider the scriptural concept of “fairness.” With the constant emphasis placed on equality in our society, one would certainly expect to see “fairness” raised as an attribute of love (I Corinthians 13), or even as an attribute of the Spirit (Galatians 5). However, surprisingly they are not found in either passage.

In fact, not only is the modern concept of “fairness” foreign to the Scriptures, the word is not used anywhere in Scripture as a translation of Hebrew or Greek words.

<u>Version</u>	<u>Times “Fairness” is Used</u>
King James	0
Concordant Literal	0
Dabhar	0
Darby	0
Emphatic Diaglott	0
Moffatt	0
Rotherham	0
Weymouth	0
Young	0

Although the word “*fair*” is commonly used as a translation in English versions, it does not carry the meaning of “equality,” but rather carries the meaning of “beautiful” such as in “fair woman,” “fair weather,” “fair words,” “fair speech,” “fair colors,” and “fair jewels,” etc.

Our closest English words, used in translation, which may be deemed to come close to a **godly** version of “fairness” are: righteousness, justice, and equity (as contrasted with the modern concept of “equality”).

God deplores injustice. An example of such injustice can be seen in God’s condemnation of “*divers*” or “*deceitful*” “*weights*” (i.e., different standards of measurements – such as various standards for an inch or

(see **FAIR**, page 4603)

“Fairness” - Is It Scriptural or Spiritual? .....4601  
Our Mailbox.....4607



## Bible Student's Notebook™ Weekly

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

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This free weekly electronic publication is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation that God will save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret in ages past" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Romans 11:13);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
  - total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);
  - union in His death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6);
  - adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

We do not claim infallibility for the contents of this publication. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

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### ABBREVIATION KEY

<i>Scripture Version</i>	Concordance (Knoch)
(Unless otherwise noted all Scripture quotations are taken from the <i>Bible Student's Version</i> ).	CL: A Critical Lexicon and Concordance (Bullinger)
CV: Concordant Literal Version	CWS: Complete Word Study Dictionary (Zodhiates)
DAR: Darby Translation	FoS: Figures of Speech (Bullinger)
DT: Dabhar Translation	SEC: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance
FF: Ferrar Fenton Bible	TGL: Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon
KJV: King James Version	UR: Unsearchable Riches
RE: Rotterdam's Emphasized Bible	VED: Vine's Expository Dictionary
WT: Weymouth Translation	YAC: Young's Analytical Concordance
YLT: Young's Literal Translation	
<i>Reference Sources</i>	<i>Reference Notations</i>
AA: Analytical Analysis (Welch)	cf. – compare
BDB: Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon	e.g. – for example
CB: Companion Bible Notes & Appendixes (Bullinger)	et al. – and others
CC: Concordant Commentary (Knoch)	etc. – et cetera (and so on)
CKC: Concordant Keyword	ff. – and the following
	i.e., – that is

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*FAIR (continued from front page)*

foot, or that of a gallon or pound; cf. Proverbs 16:11; 20:10, 23; Micah 6:11; Leviticus 19:36; Deuteronomy 25:13). However, righteousness and justice are a far cry from the modern concept of “fairness” and “equality.”

Now, emphasizing these scriptural contrasts is not politically correct. In fact, if we were to judge God on modern day “fairness” standards He would fail miserably on all counts, and would be deemed as the *ultimate* example of “unfairness.”

Listen to Paul's powerful statement in Romans 9:18-21

*Therefore God has mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardens. Will you say then to Me, “Why does He yet find fault? For who has resisted His will?” No but, O man, who are you to question God? Shall a thing formed say to him who formed it, “Why have you made me this way?” Doesn't the potter have power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?*

### THE PARABLE OF THE HOUSEHOLDER

We will now reflect on a few notable examples taken from the pages of Scripture itself, demonstrating that righteousness and justice are not the same as “fairness” or “equality” so championed in modern society.

Consider our Lord's parable of *The Householder* in Matthew 20, which by today's “fairness” standards would be a grand abuse of equality labor models (“equal pay for equal work”). In this striking parable the householder, at the end of the day, paid those who worked for him accordingly:

- Those who labored for 12 hours were paid 1 penny<sup>1</sup>
- Those who labored for 9 hours were paid 1 penny
- Those who labored for 6 hours were paid 1 penny
- Those who labored for 3 hours were paid 1 penny
- Those who labored for 1 hour were paid 1 penny

It is very interesting to note that those with an “evil eye” (:15) “murmured” against (:11) the householder for his inequality (:12). However, he is specifically called a “goodman” (:11), because he was in fact “good” (:15; i.e., “generous”<sup>2</sup>), and did what was “right” (:7; i.e., “just” and “equitable”<sup>3</sup>), and *not* “wrong” (:13).

To the Western mindset this was blatantly, perhaps even criminally, “unfair.” Yet our Lord said that it was the very nature and foundation of what the “Kingdom of Heaven” (i.e., Heaven's righteous-rule on the earth) is likened unto.

### THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

In yet another Kingdom parable, the prodigal son, after he had squandered his inheritance, returned to his father's warm embrace. He was received home with a grand celebration.

*The father said to his servants, “Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fattened calf, and kill it; and let us eat and celebrate: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.” And they began to celebrate (Luke 15:22-24).*

This celebration was met with anger and jealousy by the prodigal's older brother.

*Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.*

*And he said unto him, “Your brother is come home; and your father hath killed the fatten calf, because he has received him safe and sound.” And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and pleaded with him.*

*And he answering said to his father, “Lo, these many years do I serve you, neither transgressed I at any time your commandment: and yet you never gave me so much as a little goat, so I could celebrate with my friends: but as soon as this son ►*

1. Greek, *denarion* = a day's wage at that time (E.W. Bullinger, *The Companion Bible*).

2. E.W. Bullinger, *The Companion Bible*.

3. G1342, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*.

of yours arrives, who has devoured your assets with prostitutes, you kill the fattened calf for him!"

And his father said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours, but it was right that we should celebrate and rejoice: for this brother of yours was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found" (Luke 15:25-32).

Although the older brother champions the modern rally-cry, "That's not fair!" yet the father without hesitation declared that the celebration was nonetheless *righteous*<sup>4</sup> (:32). The Greek word translated "right" is δεῖ (dei), meaning "right and proper," "necessity brought on by circumstances," i.e., "equity" (Thayer).

### THE "FAIRNESS" OF GOD

We can see from Scripture that "fairness" is not a righteous model. Not even God deals with us all "fairly" (i.e., "equally.") We are all different – and different by His purposeful design. He has made each of us uniquely distinct and is bringing each of us through diverse experiences, with vastly individual deficiencies and difficulties, so as to perfect us toward His grand end.

Once we ever gain a glimpse of the divine viewpoint, we can genuinely thank God that He *doesn't* deal with us equally, as it would be detrimental to the *unique* masterpiece He is making of us, all according to His wise plan.

Who makes you to **differ** from another? (I Corinthians 4:7).

4. "Right" (Darby, Green, Lamsa, BBE, Voice); "must" (Concordant); "proper" (Diaglott); "necessary" (Mitchell, Analytical, Exegeses).

Who has made man's mouth? Or, who makes the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the Lord? (Exodus 4:11).

### THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF LOVE

One does not need a standard or law of "fairness" or "equality" to do what is "right," "just" or "equitable." In fact, such a standard of "equality" would often be unrighteous.

Love, however, is always righteous. It always does the right thing. Although the definition of divine love never includes "fairness" or "equality," it always includes righteousness and equity (I Corinthians 13).

### THE ROOT OF "FAIRNESS"

At the heart of "fairness" is self-centeredness – self-interest – self-absorption; in a word: *selfishness*. It is a *desire* to have what others have; and left unchecked, it becomes a *demand* to have what others have. Though it permeates our society, by contrast we are reminded of the words of our Lord as recorded in Acts 20:35,

*It is more blessed to give than to receive.*

To which Paul admonishes us to appropriate the mind of Christ:

*In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others* (Philippians 2:3-4, KJV).

*Don't push your way to the front ... Put yourself*



56 pp., PB

## Spirit Manifestations and the Gift of Tongues

by — Sir Robert Anderson (1841-1918)

In a day of extravagant claims of the miraculous workings of the Spirit every believer must be prepared to evaluate these claims and determine reasonable expectations regarding the work of the Spirit in his or her own life. The author, a noted apologist, considers history and searches the Scriptures to determine what is of God and what is of the great deceiver.

See order form.

aside ... Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage (Philippians 2:3-4, Message).

## THE BYPRODUCTS OF "FAIRNESS"

"Fairness" generates unscriptural and non-spiritual *comparisons* which in turn produce either (1) pride and/or (2) loathsome self-abasement. Listen to Paul's warning against comparisons.

*For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise (II Corinthians 10:12).*

## "FAIRNESS" AND PARENTING

There are fewer places where fairness issues show more potential for training than in the home – especially in parenting. "Is being fair really that important?" Elizabeth Passarella<sup>5</sup> asks this question in the context of parenting. She answers by saying,

Stop worrying about each kid getting the same size cookie or an identical number of gifts, because the short answer to the question above is "NO."

"Fairness" and "equality" can be quite damaging. She says that a sound parental response to the issue of "fairness" can actually help build character in children.

5. The following indented paragraphs are adapted from *Is Being Fair Really that Important?* (Real Simple, December 2015, pages, 148-149; citing throughout: Betsy Brown Braun, author of *You're Not the Boss of Me*, and Gail Heyman, professor at the University of California, San Diego) (adapted & edited).

By passing over grand teaching opportunities, listen to how easy it is for parents to *reinforce* unjust principles of "fairness."

"OK, OK, you can each have a pink marker."

Or, taking a broccoli floret off one plate and showing it into your own mouth:

"There, you have the same."

Through these actions, parents teach their children that *equality* – whether that's a number of toys or minutes on the iPad – *is always right*. That is the root of the problem. We train our children to expect that. When a child screams "That's not fair!" she really means, I want whatever he has. I'm not happy with what just happened. The result is that parents go overboard to even things out because it's hard (and annoying) to see a child unhappy.

Stressing what is "just" rather than what is equal is the contrasting key.

When we say "just" we mean that we're considering all sides of the issue, all variables and people. It is really about giving your child what is *needed* at the time. It might be extremely practical (one kid needs new shoes *because* his feet have grown a half size since September) or emotional (a kid has rough day, so Mom takes him out to dinner for some one-on-one time). When the other sibling inevitably balks – I want to go to Chick-fil-A with Mom – too many parents' first instinct is to say, "All right, I'll take you tomorrow night." Don't do that. It ►

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undermines the consideration. It lets him know that he'll get the same thing, and that's not life.

Instead, the goal should be to teach a child that what doesn't seem "fair" (in his eyes) is still "right" and "just" – because attention (and, OK, sometimes waffle fries) are solving a *necessary*<sup>6</sup> problem or healing a hurt. We want our kids to get along with people, and to do that you have to appreciate someone's perspective, to develop a sense of *empathy*.<sup>7</sup>

A suggested response is offered:

"I think you're saying that you don't like it. You're unhappy."

For the little things, follow that up with,

6. "But it was *necessary* to celebrate and to be glad, because this your brother was dead and came back to life, and had been lost and was found" (Luke 15:32; *Analytical-Literal Translation*).
7. "The ability to understand and share the feelings of another" (Oxford).



***Pagan Christianity: Exploring the Roots of Our Church Practices***

by — Frank Viola & George Barna  
293 pp, PB  
(See order form.)

Have you ever wondered why Christians do what they do for "church" every Sunday morning? Have you ever asked yourself any of the following questions: Why do folks "dress up" for "church"? Why does the "pastor" preach a sermon every Sunday? Why are there pulpits and pews? Why "church" buildings, steeples, choirs and seminaries? Where did all of these things come from?

This book proposes that what Christians do in "churches" has no root in the Scriptures! It rather has its origin in pagan culture. As shocking as that sounds, the authors prove their points by documenting every claim they make.

Fully footnoted, *Pagan Christianity* documents the story of modern church practices. If you are content with status quo "churchianity," then you will not want to read this book. It is reserved for those who are ready to embark on an eye-opening venture that challenges every aspect of their church experience.

[www.StudyShelf.com/ChurchHis.htm](http://www.StudyShelf.com/ChurchHis.htm)

"Yep, I'm not always going to scoop ice cream the exact same way every time."

Or, when it comes to stuff:

"You'd like a new pair of shoes – I get it. And when your feet grow, you'll get them."

Don't over-explain. When you bend over backwards with answers, you run the risk of a child thinking,

"I'm getting the attention I want."

But don't brush it off, either. If one kid gets something more, even if there's a great reason, but you don't talk about it, this creates hidden resentment. Sometimes your kids will be spot on – a situation is truly unjust. Maybe a child comes home and says,

"The teacher punished the whole class for something that one kid did. That's not fair."

That's the opportunity for a good discussion, acknowledging that "doing the right thing" can be tricky. Maybe they wouldn't have handled it that way; but they can try to see the teacher's perspective.

The good news in all this is that you're building resilience<sup>8</sup> in your children. In addition to developing empathy, children are learning to tolerate disappointment. There are going to be all kinds of things that happen in life that don't seem "fair." But we rob them of the opportunity to learn resilience when we make everything "equal." When your child gets a raw deal, sympathize and move on. Be genuine,

"Yeah, that's lousy. I understand why you're upset about this."

Then share your own disappointments – the promotion that you didn't get, the friend who let you down. We need to model how to respond to those concepts that we want them to learn. ■

8. "The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties" (Oxford).



Keep it flowing! – **WI**

I thank God upon remembrance of you Clyde. Keep doing the good work, your labor is not in vain. – **CA**

I've been reading a lot lately of numerous authors and I have you to thank for it. I hope you know that your work is not in vain. I must say, wow, the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God, so true! A small seed of faith is beginning to grow in me; a faith in God that previously I could hardly imagine – a faith I have never experienced before. I am now finally beginning to believe that all things serve His purpose. – **IN**

Don't be discouraged. Keep pressing forward. – **CA**

Thank you for sending me your study materials. My eyes have been opened to some important truths. ... I like the way you encourage even us who are weak in faith at times. I noticed others really go out of their way to fight against those who differ in thinking. ... You are a kind man who shows the love of God.

Thank you for showing that love in the midst of all the turmoil going on with teachings. – **OH**

You and your family are in my love and prayers. You've helped me out so much over the last year with your teachings, that I won't desert you. – **NH**

I am always encouraged by your words. Thank you for helping me to see that God is always faithful even when it doesn't "feel" like it. – **NC**

Thanks for truth and faithfulness. – **TX**

For those of us who truly believe in the sovereignty of God, we find the concept of free will to be truly revolting, and a slap in the face of our Creator. – **Canada**

Thank God for you and your continuous searching God's Word. – **MN**

The story behind why the Pilkingtons have a man and scythe on their crest is pretty ironic. The master was disguised as a pauper who performed the monotonous job of mowing the meadows to deceive the enemy into thinking he was of no importance, and on certain crests it says "*The master mows the meadows.*" I enjoy mowing the meadows with you. – **Aaron Locker** ■



185 pp., PB

See order form.

## ***Wife Loving: The Husband's Paramount Privilege***

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

This book is about Christ-mentored husbandry; a look at husbands' important and honored role of loving their wives. So lofty and divine is its pursuit, Paul presents none other than Christ Himself as the mentor: "*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church.*"

"What wonderful thoughts. They are so true and practical. I love it!" – **The Netherlands**

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"Powerful, powerful stuff! As a woman I am honored by it. I am deeply grateful for your boldness to honor women and to portray the marriage relationship as simply yet profoundly as God intended." – **CA**

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