

Standing, Walking and Running with Paul

By Cornelius R. Stam

This is a duplication of the Bible Study Booklet written by Cornelius R. Stam titled: “Standing, Walking and Running with Paul”. The duplication was done with permission from Berean Bible Society N112 W17761 Mequon Road, Germantown, WI 53022.

In a way the Christian life is a *stand*; in another way it is a *walk*; in still another way it is a *race*.

Many who have taken a stand for Christ have not yet learned to *walk* “as becometh saints.” They are saved and even experience, in some measure, the joy and assurance of salvation, but their practices cause others to stumble and hinder their own effectiveness as witnesses for the Lord who died to save them.

Others in turn have learned to walk as Christians, living consistent, godly lives, but they have never put enough into it so that it might be said of them that they are *running*. They have never come to look upon the Christian life as a *race*.

By God’s grace we want to *stand*, *walk*, *yea run* for Him.

No one in Scripture has more to say about all this than the apostle Paul, the God-given example¹ for believers today.

STANDING

Thank God that He can cause the fallen sons of Adam to stand!

In I Cor. 15:1 the Apostle Paul writes of “*the gospel...wherein ye stand*,” and in Rom. 5:2 of “*this grace wherein we stand*,” while in Gal. 5:1 he bids us: “*Stand fast...in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free....*”

The apostle deals with the believer’s stand under three general headings as follows:

STAND FAST IN THE LORD

Phil. 4:1, “*Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so STAND FAST IN THE LORD, my dearly beloved.*”

There was a time when the writer thought that this blessed verse was merely an exhortation to stand fast *by His help*, but we have come to see much more in it now.

¹ The Lord Jesus Christ did not, as the Modernists teach, come into this world to be our Example. He came to be our *Savior*. It is Paul who, both in his salvation and his Christian life and testimony, is given to us in a particular sense as a pattern or example. (Read carefully, I Tim. 1:15, 16; Eph. 3:8, 9; Phil. 3:12-17; II Thes. 3:7-9; I Cor. 4:16, 11:1; I Thes. 1:6). This is not, of course, to deny that our Lord, *in certain matters*, was an example to others nor that we are exhorted to be examples to our brethren.

Standing, Walking and Running with Paul

By Cornelius R. Stam

God has given us a position *in Christ*. The apostle tells us in Eph. 1:6 that we have been “ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED” while in Col. 2:9, 10 he says, “FOR IN HIM DWELLETH ALL THE FULLNESS OF THE GODHEAD BODILY, AND YE ARE COMPLETE IN HIM...”

If God, then, sees us in Christ, *let us take our stand there*.

Would men require of us works for salvation or have us append to our salvation works once required? Would they tell us what more we must do to belong to *the Church* or to be *complete* as Christians? Let us tell them that we have been accepted in the Beloved and that God sees us complete *in Him*. Let us “*stand fast in the Lord*.”

Would the world allure us or Satan tempt us to doubt our salvation by pointing to our failures? Let us remember that God, in His own sovereign grace, hath made us accepted in Christ and let us “STAND FAST IN THE LORD.”

STAND FAST IN THE FAITH

In I Cor. 16:13 our apostle goes a step farther:

“*Watch ye, STAND FAST IN THE FAITH, quit you like men, be strong.*”

This follows naturally.

It is blessed to know that God accepts us in the Beloved and to take our stand in Christ, but it is more blessed to know *why*,—to be “*established in THE FAITH*,” to have “*the full assurance of understanding*.”

By “*the faith*,” of course, is meant *the doctrine* and it must be borne in mind that when Paul speaks of “*the faith*” he refers, not to the message of John the Baptist or of Christ on earth or even of Peter at Pentecost, but to “*the faith which should afterwards be revealed*,”—that glorious message which is the capstone of divine revelation, the “ONE FAITH” of Eph. 4:5, which he calls elsewhere “*My gospels*” and “*the form of sound words which thou has heard of me*.” (Rom. 16:25, II Tim. 1:13).

It is this message of grace and glory which our adversary so bitterly hates and so violently opposes.

STAND FAST IN THE FIGHT

Little wonder that the apostle says in Phil. 1:27:

“*Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye STAND FAST IN ONE SPIRIT, WITH ONE MIND STRIVING TOGETHER FOR THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL.*”

Standing, Walking and Running with Paul

By Cornelius R. Stam

Depend upon it—where there is faith there is a fight. Satan will see to that.

So many of God's dear people fail to realize this. They gladly accept His love and grace, but draw back when called upon to stand in battle for Him. They do not seem to realize that God has *committed to us* His precious deposit—the most glorious message ever proclaimed on earth—and that we are responsible to guard and defend it.

They do not feel keenly enough their responsibility to keep God's message of grace pure and unsullied. While Satan continues to use even Church leaders to adulterate and neutralize that powerful message they allow the process to go on without a protest. They say "Let us not have trouble. Anything to keep peace."—as though our adversary would ever let us proclaim God's truth in peace! In common parlance, "*They do not have what it takes.*"

Timothy, though such an earnest man of God, had some of this timidity about him and Paul seems concerned about it as he writes exhorting him:

"BE NOT THOU THEREFORE ASHAMED of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but BE THOU PARTAKER OF THE AFFLICTIONS OF THE GOSPEL according to the power of God." (II Tim. 1:8).

"FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF [THE] FAITH." (I Tim. 6:12).

"ENDURE HARDNESS AS A GOOD SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST." (II Tim. 2:3).

Surely in these crucial times we need particular grace lest we withdraw from the fight or—God forbid!—fail to see why there should be any fight at all.

It is remarkable that "*we have this treasure in earthen vessels,*" but God has done this "*that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us,*" and weak as we are in ourselves, He will enable us to "keep" that sacred deposit "by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us." (II Cor. 4:7, II Tim. 1:14).

By God's grace, then, let us stand fast *in the Lord—in the faith—in the fight.*

WALKING

But the Christian life is more than a stand—it is a *walk*. The epistles of Paul have much to say about the believer's walk, or manner of life.

We can often tell by a man's walk whose son he is, and we should walk so that men about us will know that we are the children of God. One thing is certain—our stand for the truth will mean little if our conduct does not harmonize with our testimony.

Standing, Walking and Running with Paul

By Cornelius R. Stam

WALKING DIFFERENTLY

In Eph. 2:1, 2 the apostle reminds us that we were once “*dead in TRESPASSES AND SINS; WHEREIN IN TIME PAST YE WALKED...*” But in Rom. 6:4 he says that we have been raised to “*WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE.*”

There should be a radical change in our conduct after we are saved. If there is not there must of necessity be some doubt as to any resurrection to “newness of life.”

It is true that we are not saved *by* good works, but it is equally true that we have been “*created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them,*” as the apostle tells us in Eph. 2:10. Or, as his letter to the Galatians has it, “*IF WE LIVE IN THE SPIRIT, LET US ALSO WALK IN THE SPIRIT.*” (Gal. 5:25). This, of course, will include walking “by faith,” “in love,” “honestly”—“not after the flesh.”

WALKING WORTHILY

“*WALK WORTHY OF THE LORD!*”

What an injunction!

How can we, poor creatures of dust, ever walk worthy of *Him*? Yet that is the standard. (Col. 1:10). We have been accepted *in Him*, given a position *in Him*, blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies *in Him*. Surely it should be our constant prayer and aim to walk worthy of Him. Moreover, if we fail in this we not only dishonor Him, but bring into contempt our own high position in Christ.

“*I therefore the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye WALK WORTHY OF THE VOCATION WHEREWITH YE ARE CALLED.*” (Eph. 4:1).

WALKING CIRCUMSPECTLY

It is not only for the Lord’s sake and for the sake of our high and holy calling that we should attend to our walk, but for the sake of the lost about us. In Col. 4:5 and Eph. 5:15-17 Paul says:

“*WALK IN WISDOM TOWARD THEM THAT ARE WITHOUT, REDEEMING THE TIME.*”

“*SEE THEN THAT YE WALK CIRCUMSPECTLY, NOT AS FOOLS, BUT AS WISE, REDEEMING THE TIME, BECAUSE THE DAYS ARE EVIL.*”

“*WHEREFORE BE YE NOT UNWISE, BUT UNDERSTANDING WHAT THE WILL OF THE LORD IS.*”

Standing, Walking and Running with Paul

By Cornelius R. Stam

Note that in these passages the emphasis is not so much on walking *virtuously* as on walking *wisely*. The days are evil and no one knows when God will close the day of grace and pour out His wrath upon a Christ-rejecting world. “See then,” says the apostle, “that ye walk *circumspectly*”—the word means *accurately* or *pointedly*—twice is translated “diligently.” It means to be definitely aiming at something. And he goes on, “NOT AS FOOLS, BUT AS WISE, REDEEMING [BUYING UP] THE TIME BECAUSE THE DAYS ARE EVIL.”

When he speaks of “understanding what the will of the Lord is,” we dare say he does not refer to God’s will concerning certain particulars in our lives as we are so prone to imagine, but to His own eternal purpose—His will. Paul says that God has “made known unto us the mystery of *His will*” (Eph. 1:9), that we might be “filled with the knowledge of *His will*” (Col. 1:9) and so “stand perfect and complete in all the *will of God*.” (Col. 4:12).

We are living in the tense moments between man’s declaration of war on God and God’s counter-declaration. In His matchless love and mercy God has held off the day of vengeance and has left us here as ambassadors, offering reconciliation by grace to His enemies everywhere. But He gives us no hint as to how long this period of grace will continue. We should be keenly aware of this and should walk “circumspectly,” accurately, pointedly—taking careful aim—not as fools, but as wise, understanding the will of the Lord, buying up every opportunity because the days are evil and the time probably short.

RUNNING

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, AND LET US RUN WITH PATIENCE THE RACE THAT IS SET BEFORE US.” (Heb. 12:1).

Running, of course, takes more energy than walking—especially running a *race*.

THE RACE

Oh, may we not be satisfied just to *stand* for God, or even to *walk* as His children. May we look upon the Christian life as a *race*. May it be our daily desire and determination to cover much ground, to *accomplish* as much as possible in the little time we have! May we put *everything* into it!

Apart from the Lord Jesus, who was more than man, we surely have no better example here than the Apostle Paul.

Speaking of “attaining” to the resurrection life of Christ—knowing the power of His resurrection—the apostle says:

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; BUT THIS ONE THING I DO, FORGETTING THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE BEHIND AND REACHING FORTH UNTO THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE BEFORE,

Standing, Walking and Running with Paul

By Cornelius R. Stam

“I PRESS TOWARD THE MARK [STRAIN TOWARD THE GOAL] FOR THE PRIZE OF THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS.” (Phil. 3:13, 14).

THE GOAL

This advice is important. When a contestant in a race is foolish enough to look back or even to allow his mind to be diverted to those behind or about him his speed is sure to be reduced.

The *goal!* He must have the goal—the goal alone—in mind as he runs!

So it is with the believer. If he looks back at his failures he will become discouraged. If he looks back at his “successes” he will become puffed up. Both are bad. He must be single minded. He must do “THIS ONE THING”—“FORGETTING THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE BEHIND, AND REACHING FORTH UNTO THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE BEFORE” he must “STRAIN TOWARD THE GOAL!”

Though the race be long, he must run with patience, all the while “*Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.*” (Heb. 12:2).

THE PRIZE

Surely it is not amiss to bring the matter of the prize in here.

In straining for the goal, of course, we strain for the prize. Phil. 3:14 reads, “*I strain TOWARD THE GOAL, FOR THE PRIZE of the high calling [or upward calling] of God in Christ Jesus.*”

We do not believe that this “upward calling” refers to the rapture but to his being called into the heavenlies with its spiritual blessings. Otherwise he would be racing *toward* it but not *for* it. In other words, the experimental appropriation of his blessings in Christ—that is the prize he is determined to win. He is speaking of *experiencing the resurrection life of Christ*—of laying hold on that for which Christ laid hold on him. (Ver. 12). This is what he seeks to “*attain unto*” or *arrive at*. (Verses 10, 11).

In this we should follow him, for in verse 17 he says, “BRETHREN BE FOLLOWERS TOGETHER OF ME.”

Experiencing the resurrection life of Christ and our position with Him in the heavenlies—*there is a prize worth running for!*

Have we entered the race? Then let us put everything we have unto it. Let us be single-minded, forgetting things behind or about us, putting every other consideration aside to *win the race*.

Let us live disciplined lives. Let us “*lay aside every weight,*”—everything that might retard our progress. The apostle writes to the Christians at Corinth, the scene of the great Corinthian games:

Standing, Walking and Running with Paul

By Cornelius R. Stam

“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but ONE receiveth the prize? SO RUN, that ye may obtain.

“And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown [a fading wreath], but we an incorruptible [an unfading one].” (I Cor. 9:24, 25).

It is a blessed fact that in the Christian race more than one may receive the prize, but the apostle’s point is, “*So run*” as if only one were to receive the prize—“*that ye may obtain.*”

It is touching to read in II Tim. 4:7, 8, Paul’s last allusion to the race course:

“I have fought a good fight, I HAVE FINISHED MY COURSE, I have kept the faith:

“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.”

As long as we are in the flesh we shall always have to say, as even Paul did: “I have not yet attained; I am not yet perfect,” but the return of our blessed Lord draws nearer and if we run with patience the race that is set before us we shall not only reach the goal, but will receive *a crown of righteousness*, His rich reward to all those who have showed, by the very fact that they entered the race, that they love His appearing.