

THE FULL BLESSING OF CHRIST'S GOSPEL

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Then, a full gospel is a gospel of transformed living (Rom. 12:1, 2). The mind is changed. In fact, God gives you a new mind—that means thoughts are changed; motives are changed. Notice that this transformation makes both the offering of our lives and the unfolding of our service to Christ "acceptable." Twice the same word is used. Again just as prominence is given to the fruit of the Spirit so a place is also given to the gifts of the Spirit in the full gospel. The Christian guide should lead the way through God's garden at graces to oft remind of the fragrance which comes from love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, temperance, faith and the rest. Moreover the gifts of the Spirit are not to be set aside. The full gospel will make a place for them in the body of Christ (the Church) and will honor the Spirit who endows them among believers.

Now, the full blessing of the gospel of Christ has its volitional qualities. Paul was fully persuaded that he was coming to Rome by the will of God (Rom. 15:32). The full gospel is a missionary gospel. Paul declared his aim "To preach the gospel where the name of Christ was previously unknown, and to avoid as far as possible building on another man's foundation so that they shall see, to whom no tidings of him came, and they who have not heard shall understand" (Rom. 15: 21 Phillips Translation).

The full gospel is never self-centered. It is a world gospel—a gospel which sings "To the regions beyond, I must go, I must go." This is the kind of gospel that begets disciples, that makes clear the call into God's vineyard, that helps to recruit workmen for the ranks. This full gospel witnesses a constant stream of new life surging up and into the channels of testimony, preparation and integration into the labor of the Lord. This full gospel is literally bursting with purpose. The same purpose which moved Christ to Calvary moves us to preach Christ to all men everywhere.

Finally, there is feeling, emotion if you please, in the full gospel. Paul describes it as the "full blessing" of the gospel. There is nothing dull about living for God. Coming together with other saints is described in the Scriptures as a "love feast." What meaning such a feast is to have! The catching away of the Bride of Christ at His coming is described as the "Rapture." What a word of delight! There is some suffering here allotted. The Bible prepares us for it. But the same Bible also declares that this suffering is not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed.

Christian heart, you are going somewhere, and you are on the journey today. Every hour that you live you ought to have the sense of spiritual journeying, the noises of motion, the clicking of the rails, the wind whistling past your open car window, the roar of the propeller, the swish of the jet engine. Every journey to the house of God ought to include a fresh look at the road map and just a little clearer understanding of the routing. You ought to be able to look out of your upper window and watch the landscape or the clouds go by. Christian, I say, you are going some place; you are set upon a full mission.

Check your life by this full blessing. Check your church by the full gospel. Has the tide gone out so that you are only busy burying the dead fish, bruising your feet, and picking up the empty shells? Is your moon in the last quarter—just a bare outline of what it once was? Paul declared, I shall bring with me the full blessing of Christ's gospel. It takes a full heart both to preach and to live this full gospel.

Steps to the Altar (No. 4)

WHEN SHOULD YOU DATE?

By Rev. G. E. Failing

There is the age factor. How old should you be when you begin to date? I am unwilling to state any definite date. The age will vary with the person. It must not be assumed, for example, that every boy or girl of eighteen is equally prepared for dating. The maturation factor enters in here. The real question is, "How capable is the young person in a social situation?" And the answer to this depends on normalcy of social attitudes, a certain psychological "weaning" from absolute dependence upon his parents, and the degree of self-control cultivated. The young person must have some self-confidence and must be conscious of a constant self-alertness when with another.

Some youngsters of thirteen are almost pushed into dating by the incessant teasing of others. They are made to feel quite backward unless they have their boy friends or girl friends. This is quite unfortunate. Dating should not start too soon. It should be remembered that dating is not conditioned so much upon the height or weight of the individual as upon his mental and emotional stature.

On the other hand, don't begin dating too late. It is all right to escort a young lady to a social function, even though one has no more than a passing interest in the lady. Don't wait till you think you "love" somebody to ask for a date. For dating is not primarily a "love" experience, but getting acquainted and enjoying company. If one does not date in the formative years, one is apt to be awkward and brusque in later social exchanges.

There is the hour factor. Day dating is very wholesome—and a lot of fun. Frequently, there is more activity involved, and that is good. For young people beginning to date the day factor is a safety factor. It is doubtful if evening dating should ever extend very late into the evening. Remember, we are speaking of dating as a getting-acquainted affair, and apart from any long-term perspective.

Then, there is the frequency factor. How often should you date? Perhaps, to begin with, once a month is not too far-fetched a suggestion. I am not so naive as to suggest that you date by the calendar. But it seems that in its earliest beginnings, there should be only intermittent, not steady, dating. Then perhaps frequency may step up to once-a-week. If it becomes more frequent than that, I should wonder if it has not developed beyond the stage of dating.

Anyway, dating ought not to crowd out other normal activities and interests. The experience must not be permitted to project itself out of all proportion to the normal factors of education, home responsibilities, etc. Moreover, dating is from the beginning a much more emotional experience with some than others. Perhaps, the emotional person will need to exercise more restraint in the number of dates permitted than will the more casual person.

COMFORT OR SERVICE

The trouble with nine-tenths of us church members is that we have joined the cult of comfort and we will let the world go to perdition before we will inconvenience ourselves for the Gospel's sake.

We are deluded victims of religious sentimentality. Too many of us are talking about full-time service who need to settle it first that God shall have our whole-hearted service.

—Paul S. Rees

The King's Highway