

The Power of the Word, Study 9

The Divine Purpose of the Word, Part 6

After listing in II Timothy 3:16, 4 powerful effects the Word of God can have in our lives, Paul gives two concluding purposes in II Timothy 3:17. Begin your study with prayer. Ask God for the illumination of His Spirit.

The previous 4 divine purposes in vs. 16 are all focused on these 2 targeted outcomes in vs. 17. Write out the 2 divine purposes from vs. 17:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

In this study, we'll look just at the first one. Some translations of the first part of the verse say, "that the man of God may be complete." Other translations change the word "complete" to "perfect," or "capable," or "adequate," or "qualified." The Greek word used here can also mean "fitted" or "ready" or "fresh." Like bread right out of the oven, we're to be "fresh" and "ready." Nothing stale or half-baked or partially prepared with a few ingredients missing! Knowing the Word of God and saturating ourselves in it, makes us ready, capable, and qualified to serve God.

There are several other verses in the New Testament that also talk about God's goal of making us complete or perfect. Three other Greek words are used to express this idea. Four of the five verses we will look at in this study use the same root word Jesus cried out from the cross when He said "It is finished!" This word can be translated "completed," "finished," "perfected," or "mature."

Colossians 1:27-29

What are the riches of the glory of the mystery that God desired to make known to us? (vs. 27)

What's was Paul's goal in preaching and teaching about Christ? (vs. 28)

Depending on your translation, the word "perfect" is generally translated "complete" or "mature." Strong's concordance adds this fuller meaning: "full grown, completion by fulfilling the necessary process or reaching the end of something; coming to full strength, full capacity, or full effectiveness."

Notice Paul's intensity of purpose in vs. 29. How would you describe it? _____

Ephesians 4:11-16

What did God give in vs. 11 (see also verse 7)?

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What are the 2 purposes for these gifts from God? (vs. 12)

for _____
for _____

What is the end goal? (vs. 13) Three things God want us all to come to:

to _____
to _____
to _____

And the end of vs. 13 tells us what a “perfect man” looks like:

The word in vs. 13 for “perfect” is the same word used in Colossians 1:28: mature, full grown, coming to full effectiveness or strength or capacity. God wants us to reach our full potential in Christ!

What will that protect us from? (vs. 14) _____

God wants us to mature and to grow up! In how many areas of life does He want us to grow? (vs. 15) in _____

Everything about our lives needs to come under the lordship of Christ. Everything about us is spiritual. There’s to be no secular/sacred division in our lives. This is a good definition or illustration of the word *integrity*. When a person has integrity, everything in his or her life lines up with truth. Everything about us is *integrated*.

According to vs. 16, what causes growth in the Body of Christ? _____

That verse brings us back full circle to where vs. 11 began: it’s the exercise of our gifts, used to serve the Body of Christ, that enables growth. My husband used to say that the “joints” mentioned in verse 16 are the relationships we nurture in the Body of Christ. Joints are not an entity in and of themselves, but they are where two bones come together. A two-word phrase used in both verses 15 and 16 tells us what the “joint lubricant” is that enables us to edify one another: Everything we say and do must be done **in** _____.

Colossians 3:14

What is the bond of perfection? _____

The word “perfection” in this verse is also the same word used in Colossians 1 and Ephesians 4. Love is the finishing touch, the completion of maturity, and the reaching of our full potential.

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One summer I studied Ephesians with my daughters as part of the “Bible Bee” program they were in. I remember very distinctly coming to the realization through that study that the highest pinnacle, the summit, of the vast mountain of God’s love is GRACE. As Paul describes and defines the magnitude of God’s love for us, the word *grace* keeps coming up, sprinkled all throughout the book of Ephesians. And since God is in the business of conforming us to His image, He is intent on fashioning our lives according to the mold of grace.

In Peter’s final letter, he concludes with an admonition that sums up this same idea.

II Peter 3:17-18.

He first gives a warning in vs. 17. Write out the warning:

Then he ends with an exhortation or command.

Write out the command given in verse 18:

We are made complete as we grow in grace—which only comes through increasing relational knowledge of Jesus Christ as the Lord of our lives and the Savior of our souls.

As I studied God’s grace in Ephesians, I came to another profound, and perhaps obvious, realization: Grace is only needed and exercised in the face of offense, for that is the very definition of grace. Grace means to give to someone what they don’t deserve. It is **unmerited favor**. Grace repays evil with good, giving forgiveness when sinned against instead of cutting off the relationship, treating someone who has hurt you with kindness instead of vengeance. Grace refuses to hold a grudge, refuses to harbor bitterness, and chooses instead to seek reconciliation and to respond with sweetness. Oh, how foreign this is to our natural tendencies! But it is oh, so natural to God. That is why it is **supernatural** for us. Only He can work that in our souls.

Perhaps this is why God allowed sin to enter the perfect world He created. It was the only way we could truly come to know the complete nature of God and even begin to comprehend this highest and best quality of His character. Ephesians 2:7 makes an astounding statement. What will God be unveiling to us “in the ages to come”? _____

For all eternity, we will continually be discovering more treasures, more wonders of the grace of God.

Our own perfection and completeness and maturity come from learning to love the same way God loves, and His love is spelled G-R-A-C-E. Nowhere is this needed more than in the Body of Christ! And where do we learn this kind of love? In His Word.

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James 1:2-4

What does James tell us to do in vs. 2?

This is extremely counterintuitive unless you understand the higher purpose for all of our trials. According to vs. 3, what do trials do to our faith? They _____ our faith.

What is that intended to produce in us? _____

Twice in vs. 4 this same word as in the previous verses we've looked at for "finished," "completed," "made mature" is used. What is the exhortation in vs. 4?

"Let _____."

The word "patience" is the word for "endurance." Later in the book, James exhorts us to "submit to God" (James 4:7). Peter also says to "humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time." Patient endurance requires humble submission to God, trusting His goodness and wisdom in what God has allowed to come into our lives. There's something about being willing to patiently endure our trials that works transformation within us. For what does James 1:4 say is the final outcome?

"that you may be _____ and _____"

The first of those two words is the one we've been looking at. God is in the business of finishing or completing His work in us.

What is Jesus called in Hebrews 12:2?

"The _____ and _____ of our faith"

The word in the second blank is the same word we've been studying in the previous verses: Completer, Perfecter, Finisher.

What is the promise given to us in Philippians 1:6?

"He who has begun a good work in us _____."

Again, it's the same root word: complete, finish, accomplish, perfect, bring to full maturity.

But James 1:4 adds another word. Write the two words again that James says patient endurance accomplishes in our lives:

"that you may be _____ and _____"

The second word means "complete in every part," "perfectly sound," "entire." Do you see the fullness, the comprehensiveness of what God wants to do in our lives—and has committed Himself to do in us?! James completes the verse by saying "lacking in nothing." It could also be translated "failing in nothing" or "having nothing absent." In other words, there will be no inadequacy in us, nothing missing, no failure. He is doing a complete work.

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One final verse that uses a different Greek word from the ones above:

Colossians 2:9-10

What does vs. 9 say dwells in Christ? _____

What does vs. 10 say about us? _____

The Greek word for “complete” in vs. 10 means “to make full, well-supplied, to cram up to the full level, to furnish, satisfy, finish, verify.” It carries the same idea as Jesus’ words in Luke 6:38: “good measure, pressed down, and running over.” Colossians is speaking of our status in Christ—what we have been given in Him. II Timothy is talking about our preparation for service. Both are complete, perfect, and full! God’s supply through Christ and His Word are more than enough for us, now and eternally, positionally and practically. Like a rushing river, His supply is constantly flowing into our lives, giving us all we need for life and godliness (see II Peter 1:2-4).

As you conclude this study, worship God for the fullness of His work in you. And then use the verses from this lesson to shape a prayer for yourself, for your family, and for those in your church fellowship.