

## Held in the Grip of God

***“Let not your manner of life be as a lover of silver, being satisfied with the things that are. For He has said, I will never let go of you, nor leave you behind”*** (Hebrews 13:5).

Loving things as a way of life is quite a different thing from being a collector of special items, as, for example antiques or art works or coins. Nor is it wrong to enjoy certain material things, such as fine china or fine automobiles. Of course that is true, only if those things are not all-consuming. The expression—φιλαργυρος (*philarguros*) applies to those who make the amassing of a fortune a way of life. Again, it is one thing to find oneself in a strong financial position as a result of one’s normal profession or work; it is quite another to make the goal of wealth one’s dominant life pursuit. Instead, we are urged to let our situation be sufficient to us. The translation—“Be content with such things as ye have” is not adequate here. The Greek word, αρκουμενοι (*arkoumenoi*), has to do with sufficiency. It is not so much a matter of being content, as an emotional expression, but rather accepting something as sufficient.

Furthermore, the word παρουσιν (*parousin*) is much broader than the things one has. It really means “the things that are.” What Paul is saying here is that the believer should let the circumstances of one’s life be acceptable and sufficient for one’s own satisfaction. It is, of course, understood that Paul is not referring to those things that are changeable. He is not suggesting indolence in which one sits back and lets life go on apace. He is rather referring to those circumstances that are one’s lot in life.

Obviously there is nothing wrong with industry or ambition so long as it is within the framework of one’s normal potential, and is not all-consuming. We reach a certain level that is in keeping with our abilities and opportunities, but to go beyond that level may require certain sacrifices of principle or application that would be damaging to ourselves or others or to Christ. This is the level at which we may get into compromise and obsession. If the Lord is in one’s advancement in position or circumstances, it will have a certain flow in it that is in harmony with Christ and our responsibilities to Him and to others. The author went through some 10 years of formal university education, but never with the sense of being out of step with what the Lord had in mind. If the Lord wants you to arrive at a certain level, He will make the way clear and possible.

If further advancement in one’s circumstances or position is not feasible without the unsound applications of effort, or is simply not possible at all, that is the point at which one is urged to let the lot in life which the Lord has given be sufficient for one’s satisfaction. In Psalm 55:22 one is urged to “*Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He will sustain thee.*” Actually the Hebrew word *yahab* is commonly translated “burden,” which means “lot” or “that which has been given.” If your circumstances are troubling to you, just put it in the Lord’s hands and express your willingness to let Him work it out in any way that He wishes. This is possible actually because of the following promises.

**I will never let go of you.** The Greek word, often translated by “leave” is ανιemi (*aniemi*), which means, basically, to “unloose” or “unfasten.” God promises never to “let go of us.” There is an apt analogy in the difference

between the cat and the monkey. The cat carries her young by holding them in her mouth by the nape of the neck. The monkey carries her young by having them cling to her. As the monkey goes swinging through the trees, the poor babies must hold on by themselves, or simply loose out—one less mouth to feed. According to this text, God holds on to us rather than we to Him. There are many texts that indicate this, as for example Jude 24—*“Unto Him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.”* It is very hard for Christians to grasp the full impact of this, but if they did, it would reduce the anxiety level considerably. According to Paul, our unsound deeds in the flesh may bring us trouble and consequences, but they do not cause God to let go of us, since we are His own children by right of birth.

**Nor leave you behind . . .** The Greek word here is interesting. It is actually made up of three words—λειπω (*leipo*), “to leave”; κατα (*kata*), “utterly”; and εν (*en*), “in.” What the word really implies is that He will not leave us behind, in any way, to fend for ourselves. Or, in other words, He will not abandon us in our need.

If the brain can be instantly sensitive to trillions of nerve cells, Christ can be instantly sensitive to all of the elements of His universe, and especially to His own people. More likely would the brain abandon its neurons than God would abandon His creation, especially His own people. Nor is God less able to be in instant touch with His creation than the brain to be in instant touch with its trillions of nerve cells.

Moreover, if God is able to pinpoint us, who are but particles in the vastness of the universe, and bring us into focus, and give us the sense of His person and presence, He is certainly able to hold us steadfastly to Himself throughout the reaches of eternity. His promise to His disciples, as He was preparing to return to His glory was, *“I will not leave you comfortless [orphans]: I will come to you”* (John 14:18). With such assurances can we not trust Him with our lives? *“Be careful [anxious] for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes [surpasses] all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 4:6,7).

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