

I remember when I was in seminary hearing the President saying, One of the worst things that can happen to a minister is for him to have a wife who keeps saying, "Poor Henry, he's not understood; these people don't understand, they don't appreciate him." And she keeps talking that way, instead of encouraging him to improve and to devote himself to the service of others instead of worrying too much about whether the people appreciate him or not. We all have a long ways to go to be truly God's jewels. Even Paul -- it is amazing when you think of it, that a man like Paul who was as perfect an example as you could possibly think of, in Phil. 3:10 he tells of his longing: "That I may know Him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his suffering, being made conformable unto His death."

You say, Oh, my if there's anybody who ever really knew these things that anybody of whom this was ever true in his life, it is the Apostle Paul. But in the next verse he says, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Even Paul himself felt that he must say to himself, 'Awake thou that sleepest and rise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light.' "If by any means I might attain . . . not as though I had already attained said Paul, either were already perfect but I follow after that I may apprehend that for which I also am apprehended in Christ Jesus. Brethren I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth to those things which are ahead, I press toward the prize mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ."

So if we truly are understanding the will of the Lord and not unwise, we will be pressing forward to the goal that God has set before us, and pressing forward to have the Holy Spirit develop the fruits of the Spirit in our lives, and develop such that the time may come when God can truly call us his jewels, not ~~just~~ merely potentially as to what he is going to develop us to be, but as that into which He has developed us. And we have a part in that. We are to work for and strive for these goals. We are to seek to be developed into the image of Christ.

It is very important that we learn to be His jewels, that we learn to be long suffering, that we learn to be rejoicing in everything He sends into our lives. Now things will go wrong in the lives of every one of us. We will have troubles, discouragements, disappointments from time to time. When we do, when something goes wrong we should immediately stop and think, did this go wrong because I committed a sin? If it did confess your sin and look to God to forgive you. But that's not the explanation for all ~~our~~ of our troubles by any means. Of course every problem in the world goes back to sin eventually because (?) But a particular thing may come into your life because of some particular sin and God may send it in order to call your attention to that sin. That is important, but that is not true by any means of all the difficulties and troubles we face.

Now something may go wrong in our lives because of a mistake, we've made a mistake, we've simply done a thing the wrong way. We have not followed through the proper processes or something. Well God wants things to work that way so that we will learn from our mistakes and will learn how to improve. So when something goes wrong we should question, Is this due to sin on my part? Is it due to