

Stand on Your Own Feet 2 of 2

#0581

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—March 22, 1969

Now last evening [Stand On Your Own Feet, part 1 of 2], we were studying from the text, “Stand upon thy feet.” Do you remember where that was? Ezekiel 2:1, that’s right. God wants every man to stand on his own two feet and every woman too. The question is how to do that? What’s involved in that?

We studied last night that one of the great reasons that this is a problem and yet a privilege is that we’re all made different. That’s what’s involved in standing each one on his own two feet. That means arriving at your conclusions, coming to the point of a conscientious conviction on a matter of personal duty, and then living by that. You remember we found that if we accept this principle fully, we shall never get into the problem of trying to be like somebody else. That’s just time wasted. It’s worse than wasted. It is frustrated. It makes you very unhappy because you can never succeed in that goal.

The only one that Jesus has asked us to be like is Himself. And the reason we can be like Jesus, and yet each one be individuals is that He is infinite. And so, there are an infinite number of patterns.

I remember several years ago at Wildwood, I was walking with a friend, we came up near the spring. And it was in the wintertime. And we looked over near the spring, and I noticed a beautiful-ruby-red sparkling object. And I called the attention of my friend to it. We both stood there looking at it. But I moved just a little bit, and it became a beautiful emerald green. What was it? Well, some rays of light were being reflected, being broken up into the colors, and the particular color I got as I looked at that light being broken up by this particle of water, in one position, I saw it red, but in another, I saw the green. It was the same place, but as I looked at it from a different angle, I got different colors.

And this illustrates to my mind how you can look at Jesus, and I can look at Jesus, and each see some new beauty, some different expression of His infinite character. And obviously, He causes me to see in Him that which He wishes me to become in Him. And He causes *you* to see in Him that which He wishes *you* to become in Him. Isn’t this wonderful, friends? And just as the different colors of the rainbow blend together in that beautiful harmony of color, so all Christians are to blend together, each one his own self, his own simple self—reflecting some beauty of the character of Christ, yet all blending together in unity and harmony. I think that’s wonderful, friends!

You know, as we go through this universe on our trips, we’re going to meet these people on other worlds, and we’ll be charmed with them as we meet them. Each one different, I mean each individual different; no two alike, yet all of them blending in harmony. Well, it’s going to be wonderful to explore it all.

My point is, let's not waste a minute trying to be like somebody else, what do you say? And the other that goes with that is not to try to make other people like us. For surely, if I'm not to be like other people, I shouldn't expect other people to be like me, should I? No. You can see if I know that I'm not to be like any else; if I could succeed in making anyone else like me, that would be defeating the whole purpose. Wouldn't it? Well, we can't do either one—we can't succeed in being like others, we can't succeed in making others like us. But we can get very frustrated trying it in either direction.

Now we mentioned last night the experience of David when he went to fight the giant. What did Saul think to favor him with? His armor. Did David start out with that armor? Yes. Did go ahead with it? What happened? He came back, turned in the weapons—turned them back to the king. What did he say? "I can't go with these, for I haven't proved them. They're not my weapons. They don't belong to me. You can take them, Saul. But there is something I can use that I know how to use." What was it? A sling with a rock in it.

Did it work? Sure it did. And God can take you, my brother. Bring to God your gift, my brother. He'll not need to use another. You will do.

I'm so glad for that, aren't you? Now this evening, I promised to give you some further information on why this is as it is. Why every individual is distinct, different as definitely as though there were a special creation of each one. Recently, there came to my attention an interesting book on embryology. That's the science that treats on the development of life from conception to birth. And you know there is a chapter in the Bible on embryology. As before I refer to this, some of these modern discoveries, I think we'll turn to Psalms 139, and we'll have that before us, as we read something of what science has discovered. Inspiration gave us some facts on this 3,000 years ago, some of which science has only discovered in the last few decades. Psalms 139, the 14th verse:

"I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made"
Psalms 139:14.

Now, what David is saying here is not merely that we are fearfully and wonderfully put together, but he is discussing the wonderful way in which we are made, which we're being made, from the moment of conception to birth and then on during the growing period:

"I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made
marvelous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right
well. My substance was not hid from Thee, when I was
made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts
of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being
unperfect; and in Thy book all my members were written,
which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there
was none of them" Psalms 139:14–16.

Now science can trace your life and mine back to the moment of conception, but David, by inspiration, traces it back long before that. He says, "In thy book, all my members were written when as yet there was none of them." Before a man builds a building, there's a blueprint. Before a woman makes a dress, there's a pattern. Before you and I were made, dear friends, on the drawing boards of Heaven, everything was there. In God's book, all our members were written when as yet there was none of them. And each one is different as we shall see.

Now, there's another thing that's very interesting. If you notice the margin on the 16th verse, I am going to read it:

"Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect;
and in Thy book all my members were written, what days
they should be fashioned, when as yet there was none of
them" Psalms 139:16.

It's a very interesting thing how many of the ancients had the idea that a child, during the growing period before birth, was simply a tiny little thing and then got bigger and bigger and bigger. Well, it's true that there's growth in size. But the point is, as the science of embryology has revealed, there is a time for the appearance of each organ and part of the body. There is a day when the arms begin as buds. There is a day when the hands appear. There is a day when the fingers come out as little stubs. There is a day when those fingers are developed fully. There is a day when the ears appear. There is a day when the heart begins to beat. And this is a definite day.

And an embryologist who is trained in these things can look at a photograph of a developing child and tell you exactly how many days that child is by the development of these different parts and organs. Now, this is amazing when we consider all this was unknown in the time of David. Yet by inspiration, he is writing it down here,

"In thy book all my members were written, what days they
should be fashioned, when as yet there were none of them"
Psalms 139:16.

And now let's go back of this, for there is still something more wonderful. You see friends, this single cell with which life begins, the union of the mother cell and the father cell, contains countless numbers of genes, or factors, affecting all manner of things. I will read a little about it here:

"These include the features of the human species, the color
of eyes, hair and skin, the configuration of face and body,
the tendency to be tall or short, fat or lean, ruggedly healthy
or prone to some diseases, and undoubtedly also the
tendency to contain certain qualities of temperament and
intelligence."

And now comes the part I want you to listen to especially:

“With so many genes joined, when the parent cells unite, there is obviously vast possibility for new variety of the existing family patterns. Each new baby is a unique individual, never entirely like either parent or any other ancestor.”

Let me read that last sentence again. Now, this is just a scientific statement, but you can see how it bears on what we studied last night and what we’re studying again tonight: “Each new baby is a unique individual” What does unique mean? Well, that nobody... nothing else like it. “Each new baby is a unique individual. Never entirely like either parent or any other ancestor.” I think that’s wonderful! Now, you’ve heard the expression regarding somebody who was supposed to be outstanding for some reason, “They broke the mold when they made him.” You’ve heard that, haven’t you. Well, that’s true about everybody. That’s true about you. They broke the mold when you were made.

God has never made even two snow crystals alike. He’s never made two flowers alike. And most of all, in the beings formed in His image, He has gone to infinite pains to make every individual, not a duplicate but unique. This is why my dear friends, it is your privilege and your duty to stand on your own two feet, be your own simple self, and not be a shadow of anybody else or an imitation of anybody else. Nothing of the kind. God wants you to be the man you were born to be, the woman you were born to be.

Now unfortunately, as I pointed out last night, sometimes there sometimes difficulties in the growing up process as children learn or try to learn, to be themselves. As we noted last night, the little baby has everything done for it. The adult is supposed to do most things for himself. And in between are the years of infancy, childhood and adolescence. And during these years, we gradually become more and more (if we are following the divine plan of life) the individual that God intended us to be.

The pattern of life unfolds just as a flower comes from bud to bloom and on to fruit. And as each life is unique, so the way of looking at things, the way of thinking, the way of reasoning, is individual. There are some concepts that we share together, and God has given us in His great law immortal principles that are supposed to guide all lives. These are like guidelines to keep us from going over the precipice to eternal ruin on either side. But within those guidelines, narrow as the way is, there is ample room for the expression of individuality.

It is very unfortunate when because of repression on one hand or permissiveness on the other, children arrive at the years when they ought to be able to make wise decisions, and they go at it in a selfish, unwise way; sometimes manifesting rebellion toward those to whom they should look with respect and whose counsel they should desire. But however, this maturity is arrived at, whether it be through the process God has intended, or whether it be through strife and war and trial and error, sooner or later, each individual, if he has an average mind, arrives at the place where he must make his own decisions.

Let’s read a text in Romans 14 that sums this up for us. Romans 14 the 12th verse:

“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God” Romans 14:12.

Each one is accountable to whom? To God. Now because this is so, Paul gives us some very practical instruction here in the 14th chapter of Romans. We’ll start reading with the first verse. Now, I want you to notice this and let me say before we read, Paul was dealing with some problems arising from the fact that the Jewish converts to Christianity, many continued to observe certain of the Jewish days, such as the Passover and the other annual feasts. Whereas the Gentile converts, coming in without any knowledge of these, did not feel obligated and were not obligated to accept them and follow them.

But since there were many Jews in the Christian church and many Gentiles, there could come problems, and problems did arise because the Jews many of them thought the Gentiles ought to keep the Passover too. And on the other hand, the Gentiles, Paul taught them they didn’t need to do this. That Christ had come, the Lamb had been sacrificed, and it wasn’t necessary to keep the Passover.

But when Passover day came—and it was a national day as well as a religious day. It was the day commemorating the escape from Egyptian slavery, something like our fourth of July, you know, National Independence Day. And the Jews trained in this through long generations. It was the most natural thing for them to sacrifice their lamb and eat that, clear the leavened bread out of their house, and bring in the bitter herbs and eat those with the Passover meal. Jews still do it, the Orthodox Jews.

But the Gentiles paid no attention to it. All right, now how were they to get along together in the Christian church? Paul is saying the 14th of Romans what we were saying last night, each one must stand on his own two feet.

We’re going to read something very much like that in just a few verses down:

“Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs” Romans 14:1–2.

Now Paul is not discussing the question of healthful diet here at all. He’s discussing these ceremonial distinctions that I have been speaking of. He didn’t mean we were free to eat lizards and rattlesnakes and ants and so on.

You know there are people who eat all the things I’ve mentioned, don’t you? Yes, I have seen them. I don’t mean the people eating them. I have seen these things in cans in special food stores. If any of you are interested, I might direct you where you can get some canned rattlesnake meat or some canned ants dipped in chocolate, lizard meat and other delicacies of that kind.

Paul is not saying that it’s okay to eat all that. He’s saying that some people, when Passover time comes, feel free to eat leavened bread, and others say, “No, we are going to eat our bitter herbs and clear the leavened out of our house.”

“One believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs” Romans 14:2

Now the lesson:

“Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him” Romans 14:3.

In other words, don't try to be like somebody else. Don't try to make other people like you.

“Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike” Romans 14: 4–5.

He's is not discussing the seventh-day Sabbath at all. Some people *think* that is what this is talking about. Has no connection with that whatsoever. He is talking about the Passover and these other annual days.

The setting here, speaking of the bitter herbs and eating, shows that. The seventh-day Sabbath never had a different diet from other days, did it? No, nothing to do with that. The day Paul is speaking of here has to do with eating certain things and not eating certain other things. That exactly fits the Passover.

“One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike...” Romans 14:5.

Now, will you read with me the rest of the verse all together:

“...Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind” Romans 14:5.

In other words, stand on your own two feet. If you're going to keep the Passover, if you feel that what you should do, go ahead and do it. But don't try to make other people do it. And if you are not going to keep the Passover, if you're going to just eat anything that's good on that day, eat leavened bread and eat like you do other days, all right. But don't worry about the man who is making this a special day. Let him make it that way.

This applies to thousands of things in the Christian life, and especially in regard to our personal duty. May I say friends, never try to decide what other people ought to do about matters of personal duty. That's what Paul is telling us here.

Let me read you a comment on this from *Desire of Ages*, page 550:

“In matters of conscience the soul must be left untrammelled. No one is to control another’s mind, to judge for another, or to prescribe his duty. God gives to every soul freedom to think and to follow his own convictions. Every one of us shall give an account of himself to God. No one has a right to merge his individuality in that of another. In all matters where principle is involved, let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind”
The Desire of Ages, page 550.

You know friends, in the home this is so important. The closest union in this world is the union of husband and wife, and God intends that husband and wife shall be one. That’s what the Bible says. But again and again, we are told that this does not mean that either one should merge his individuality with that of the other.

I remember reading in the *Testimonies* where the Lord’s messenger wrote a testimony, a personal testimony to a husband. He and his wife apparently differed on a number of things. And because he was the “head of the house,” (quotes) he felt he ought to get his wife to agree with him and do what he said on these matters.

The Lord’s messenger said this,

“Instead of respecting the feelings of your wife and kindly avoiding, as a gentleman would, those subjects upon which you know you differ, you have been forward to dwell upon objectionable points, and have manifested a persistency in expressing your views regardless of any around you.”
Adventist Home, page 119.

You know there are people who hold worship or offer prayer can bring in the thing they want to drive down somebody else’s throat. It has happened, sure. How much we need the grace of God. But I think many times people do this because they feel they ought to. They know what is right, and they’re so anxious for the other person to do it. And there are times, my friends, when we need to work with all the earnestness possible, but we need to be sure that the point we are in so deep earnest about is worth it.

In the book *Medical Ministry*, Sister White tells about some interesting experiences she had on the butter question. Now you young folks won’t be able to appreciate so much what I am about to tell you because today, nearly everybody knows butter is high in cholesterol, and cholesterol is one of the big factors in what? Heart attacks. But you know when I was a young man, people didn’t seem to know about that at all. And if you didn’t eat butter, you were... well, a lot of people thought you were a fanatic. That’s right, thought you were a fanatic.

Well, Sister White didn’t eat butter herself. You can read that in *Medical Ministry* and *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 3*, and other places. I am not discussing the butter question. I am using this for an illustration.

But she said—this is the point I want you to get—she said that some of her conscientious brethren ate butter and had butter on their tables and that she had no

burden to force them to do otherwise. She said that these matters must never be allowed to cause strife among brethren. She went ahead and when it was her house and her table, there wasn't any butter on the table [See Counsels on Diet and Foods, page 351, 352]. But if she was at somebody else's table and they had butter on the table, she didn't bawl them out. She didn't even labor with them privately after dinner. She just didn't eat it herself. It is a wonderful thing, friend, to be able to stand on our own two feet and let other people do the same, what do you say?

Now, this is what Paul is trying to tell us in this 14th chapter of Romans, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." But you know how some people react to this? If they're at a place where people eat butter, they'll eat the butter. But if they're where people don't eat butter, or where they think somebody is watching them that might think they shouldn't eat butter, then they don't want to eat it. And so, they're in a bit of a stew, do you understand.

[An audience member says] Like Peter was

Like Peter was, that's right, brother, just exactly. You remember Paul tells us about it in the book of Galatians. Peter was down in the city of Antioch, and the Lord had revealed of Peter several years before that the Gentiles were just as important and valuable to God as the Jews. You remember? He gave him the vision of the sheet and all that. And so in harmony with that, when Peter went down to Antioch and Paul and the others were eating with the Gentiles, they were all eating together Peter did.

But by and by people, some people came from Jerusalem—from headquarters. They came from James, Paul says in Galatians. James, you know, was the leader, and Peter knew that those men were watching him to see what he would do, and he didn't dare eat with the Gentiles. The Bible tells all about how it happened. A good man like Peter, he'd been converted and had the Holy Ghost, but his humanity showed through at that point. He wasn't able and willing to stand on his own two feet. He was influenced by what those men who had come from James would say and what James might say when he got back to Jerusalem.

But you read what Paul told him in the second chapter of Galatians. He really talked strongly to him, and it wasn't that he was trying to make Peter like Paul. He was just trying to help Peter to live up to his own convictions. And thank God, Peter accepted it too.

You know, friends, standing on our own two feet doesn't mean we shouldn't listen to counsel. It doesn't mean we don't need counsel. But it means that the decisions we make should be our own based upon the wisdom of the counsel and the other agencies that God uses to bring us to clear convictions.

All right now, back to the 14th of Romans, we're going now down to the 22nd verse. Read the whole chapter. It's wonderful on these points:

"Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God..."
Romans 14:22.

This is another way of saying again, “Stand on your own two feet.” Know what you believe and live by it.

“Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth” Romans 14:22.

Oh, my dear friends, if we understand this, we will never boast that we have a conscience that lets us do anything. The servant of the Lord speaks about people who have an India-rubber conscience. Do you know what India rubber is good for? It’s good to stretch—rubber it’s good to stretch. And there are times we need things that stretch, but conscience shouldn’t be made of rubber. It shouldn’t be something that stretches to fit any situation.

When in Rome, do as the Romans do. That principle is not in the Bible—when in Rome do as the Romans do. That came out of the Catholic apostasy, if you want to know its history. No.

“Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth” Romans 14:22.

In other words, friends, the happy man is the man who never does what his own conscience condemns. And may I point out, that should be an enlightened conscience. It isn’t a matter of what I think is right or wrong. It’s a matter of what I believe *God* thinks is right and wrong. That’s the important thing. And day by day, our conscience should get more sharp, more keen, more alert, more discerning because we are studying the Bible and the Testimonies more and more.

Dear ones, in all the affairs of life, in all the decisions of life, let us remember that each one of us is an individual, make God happy and make our own hearts happy, by standing on our own two feet. What do you say? Not trying to be like others. Not trying to make others like us.

And in all this, remember, like the individual colors of the rainbow, we’re to blend with our brethren in achieving that unity for which Jesus prayed.

Heavenly Father, be thee with all our hearts tonight, without us thinking of others, to write up a special plan for each of us in thy great book. We thank thee that we’ve been made unique, no duplicates. Give us the joy of making Thee happy by carrying out the plan of life Thou hast arranged, instead of dashing off to do something we’ve dreamed of, dreamed up or trying to imitate somebody else. Make us all happy in making thee happy by being the men and women you made us to be in Jesus’ sake, amen.

God bless you all.

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