

Wigetisms...

If you know me, you know that I like words. I like ones that you can find in the dictionary, and I like to make up some of my own when there just doesn't seem to be one that adequately expresses the point I'm trying to make. I'd like to share some of those words that I've made up over the years while preaching and teaching the Bible. I've also included some of the definitions that I've come up with for biblical themes along with a few of the expressions that I've used over the years to explain certain theological concepts as I see them. These are all original with me. If you've read or heard similar thoughts, either I heard it somewhere too and simply forgot hearing it, someone heard me say it and started using it (which is not very likely), or we are reading the same Bible under the influence of the same Spirit and came up with the same way to say it.

Words that I made up

I think that just about everyone who regularly speaks publicly makes up words to express where regular words just don't seem to suffice. I, for one, like creating my own terms – if indeed I feel that they more adequately communicate some life-giving truth. Sometimes people don't know what to make of it, and figure I just misspoke. For instance, I once said in a message that “Jesus wants to make us weller.” A woman who was visiting that Sunday approached me after the service to inform me that “weller” wasn't a word in the English language. I responded with, “Well-er, I appreciate you bringing that to my attention!” Anyway, here are a few of my made-up wigetisms.

P.S. Again addressing those who know me – my mind went kinda blank (I know “kinda” isn't a real word, though not a true “wigetism,” since I didn't make it up). I could only think of a few. If you remember any others from enduring years of listening to me, please contact me to remind me of them. I'll add them to the list.

Chrisitanly...

Rather than learn how to do a bunch of Christian things, we should learn how to do all things **Chrisitanly**. I've always loved this word and the statement that goes with it. Many people think Christianity is simply doing “Christian things” (reading the Bible, praying, going to church, tithing, witnessing). Don't get me wrong. Those are all good things to do. But what I believe Jesus wants us to do is do everything *Christianly*. We should do our jobs *Christianly*, our families *Christianly*, our relationships *Christianly*, our school work *Christianly*... Anyone can do Christian things – even non-christians. But only real Christians can do all of life *Christianly*.

Christian ACTitudes

Attitudes + Actions = ACTitudes. An ACTitude is an attitude that leads to an action. Get it? ACTitude! As Christians, we're commanded to practice both attitudes and actions; and it's my experience that right *attitudes* tend to lead to better *actions*. It's unwise to separate attitude from action. Cultivate a Christlike *attitude* and godly *actions* will almost certainly follow. By the way, maybe the Latins knew this, for the term in Spanish for attitude is “actitud.” Actually, that's where I got the idea.

Getting “Integrated”

I made use of the sort of familiar term, *integrated* to describe our goal to be like Jesus. I know it's kind of a strange word to use for a spiritual value, but follow me here. According to Webster, “*integrated*” means to be “*coordinated or blended into a functioning or unified whole.*” Does that sound like something you'd like to see in your own life? In the bigger picture, that's what it means to be saved. I'm talking about our “parts” (that is, our spirit, soul and body) working *together* instead of *against* each other. I wrote a paper on this called, “How To Get Integrated.” It's taken from Romans 6, 7 and 8.

Living Inside-Out

This is another way to express Jesus *in* us living his life *through* us. You get it right? Living for Jesus is from the *inside* where he lives, and gets expressed on the *outside* where we live. It reminds me of a story of a little girl who asked her mom, “Doesn’t God live inside us?” Yes, *dear*. “Isn’t God bigger than us?” *Right again, sweetheart*. “Then wouldn’t He show through?”

The Divine Dilemma (God’s Ethical Problem)

Though it’s not exactly theologically accurate to imply that God has (or ever has had) a “problem,” I want to challenge you to think in terms of a “Divine Dilemma” that He had in relation to forgiving the guilty without compromising His justice. The Bible is clear that God is a “just” God (Psalm 89:14; Revelation 5:16; 2 Timothy 4:8; Daniel 9:14). And since He’s perfect in character, His nature requires consistency within Himself. He never wavers between right and wrong. A.W. Tozer wrote, “*All of God does all that God does*.” In other words, His attributes are never at war within Him. He will never contradict any of His perfections. He’s never at odds with Himself.

Here’s where the “problem” arises. Being as committed to His justice as He is to His mercy, in order to forgive and justify the guilty He must *do justice to His justice*. That’s the ethical impasse. How can He do both (justice and mercy) at the same time? He must find a way to justify us and Himself concurrently. It’s a “Dilemma”!

The solution?

God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished – he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. Romans 3:25-26

Definitions of biblical concepts

Justification – *God’s righteous way of righteousing the unrighteous with his righteousness.*

I realize that “*righteousing*” isn’t a real word, and would fall under the category of a Wigetism by itself. But please get over that, and think through this definition. This term, “justification,” is one of the Bible’s most important.

God’s *righteous* way of righteousing the unrighteous with his righteousness. God always does things right because he is righteous. That is, he is right, and is the standard of all that is right. So, when he’s saving us, he does it right and righteously. It’s the right way to be right with the right God. His righteousness is that righteousness which His righteousness requires Him to require. (Oh man, we are deep in the Land of Wiget now!)

God’s righteous way of *righteousing the unrighteous* with his righteousness. This “righteousing the unrighteous,” is usually expressed in other terms – like, imputing righteousness to... Essentially, it means that God counts us, treats us, looks at us as “righteous.”

God’s righteous way of righteousing the unrighteous *with his righteousness*. In other words, the righteousness that His righteousness requires Him to require is the same righteousness that he gives

us. *“He made Christ to be sin for us that we might be the righteousness of God in him.”* (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Sanctification – *the progressive utilization of the divine nature imparted at new birth.*

There are many aspects of sanctification. This one aspect, the gradual becoming more like Jesus in our daily lives aspect is what this definition applies to. I’m fond of this way to define it because it emphasizes that we will become more like Jesus as we gradually take more and more advantage of the impartation of his life in our spirits. This leads to my definition of the Christian life...

The Christian Life – *is the life He (Jesus) lived then (when he was here) lived now by him in you.*

I might have adapted this from another author at some point. But since I can’t remember who, I’ll claim it as original unless proven guilty of stealing it. Nevertheless I really like this definition of what living for Jesus is about. It’s him *in us* generating the power to change. See the phrase below, “Inside-Out Living.” It carries the same meaning. It’s what Paul said in Philippians, *“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you both the desire and the power to do his will.”* He put it (the power) on the INSIDE of us, and we get it OUTSIDE in the way we live our lives.

The Gift of Faith – *the sudden surge of supernatural certainty for a certain situation.*

This is one of my favorites, simply because it’s fun to say. But beyond that, I like it because it distinguishes this special “*gift*” of faith (1 Corinthians 12) from other facets of faith. There’s *saving faith*, *daily faith*, and this *gift of faith*. It is different, in that it doesn’t necessarily last forever, it’s a “sudden surge” of faith. And it’s for a certain situation, not necessarily for every situation.

Grace – *is not permission to be mediocre, but the power to be great.*

OK, so there are tons of definitions of Grace. I’ve always found the old standby one, “*God’s undeserved favor*,” very lacking. It’s true as far as it goes. But that’s like saying I went to Hawaii yesterday when all you did was swim 100 yards in that direction. I like (my friends know this is true) acrostics and acronyms. These are lists, the first letters of which, are either the same or spell other things out. I really don’t know the difference between acrostic and acronym. I read the dictionary definitions, and didn’t understand the dictionary. Maybe that’s why I make up words and my own definitions for things, because I don’t understand Webster.

Anyway, I’ve heard (so these are not original with me) three definitions of grace using the letters of the word. The first is: **God Reaching Out And Calling Everyone**. Then there’s: **God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense**. I like this one, but I like the next one even better: **God’s Righteousness And Corresponding Enablement**. I’m especially fond of the word, “enablement” in this definition (whether it’s an acrostic or acronym). This is what is often missing in our understanding of grace, that it’s not merely a *posture* that God takes toward us (although it does include that). It is a power, an enablement from God to be different.

So back to my statement: **“Grace is not the permission to be mediocre, but the power to be great!”** It seems to me that the other more limited way of viewing grace (as “favor”), focuses on the forgiveness part of the good news and gives the impression of a permission to be a mediocre person. It almost encourages a sort of: C-minus Christianity. But if you’ll follow the term grace throughout the New Testament you’ll find that it is both a power to free us from sin’s penalty AND sin’s power. It forgives and empowers. It cleanses and enables.

Sin, Satan, and the System

You've undoubtedly heard of what it is that opposes us as Christians – the unholy trinity of the world, the flesh and the devil . That's right, our enemy is a trinity. Not THE Trinity, but A trinity. I've always thought that the words, "world" and "flesh" were sort of vague. Plus, I like it when we can make a list where all of the words start with the same letter (is that an acrostic or an acronym?). So I came up with: Sin, Satan, and the System.

Sin, of course, is our inclination toward self. We're self-centered, self-consumed, and selfish. That's really the big kahuna in this trinity.

The System is the way we humans think and act without Christ at our center. It's everything that refuses to bow to Jesus. John can help us understand this better:

Do not love the world (the system) or anything in the world (the system). If anyone loves the world (the system), the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world (the system)—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world (the system). The world (the system) and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever. 1 John 2:15-17

Satan is the one who appeals to the **sin within us** through the medium of the **system around us**. He uses the system as his lure, at which our sinfulness is all too willing to bite. Satan is a great salesman. He gets us to buy something bad for us at a price we can't afford!

Accountability is people helping other people to be better people.

I don't know if that requires much explanation. But suffice it to say, this is very much a biblical value. We need each other to help each other be like Jesus. One of my favorite verses in the Bible on this topic is where Jonathan *"helped David find strength in God."* He didn't *become* David's strength. He didn't *give* him strength. He led his friend to the source of strength, he helped him find it in God! Lord, give us friends who will do just that for us and help us be friends who will do that for others!

Intimacy is real people being real with other real people. Someone else defined "intimacy" as, "Into me you see." Get it? If not, say, "Into me you see," out loud. One of the bad raps that Christians get (and rightly so) is that we're not very real. We're disingenuous. We live on the surface and don't want people getting a look at anything deeper than the façade. But it seems that God does want us to go deeper with one another and he presents it as actually a healthy thing. It looks like it's part of what we were made to do – be intimate with others, real with them; open. I think this must have been in John's mind (the Apostle of love, the one who laid his head on Jesus' chest in the upper room) when he wrote, *"If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus purifies us from all sin."*

The glory of God. As I recall, the following definition is a compellation of my studies of the concept of God's "glory" throughout Scripture. Speaking of this study, I heartily recommend that you do a study on the word, "glory" in the Bible. It's one of those words that I think we use without having much of a clue about its meaning.

If you find the following definition, or a very similar phrasing somewhere, I stand corrected and convicted as a definition-thief. But I do think this is original with me.

God's glory is *the essence of God's nature, the weight of His importance, the radiance of His splendor, the atmosphere of His presence - the expression of all that He is.*

Fellowship is living together in the enjoyment of God.

(Again, I don't believe that I stole this from someone else, but apologize if I did. Either way, I think it's a great definition of fellowship, don't you?)

Faith - Like most biblical concepts, "faith" is many sided. You can't say about faith, "It is this one thing." I've heard many worthy definitions of its many facets. For instance, I'm particularly fond of this one: "*Faith is the spontaneous reaction to the faithfulness of God.*" I don't remember where I heard it, but I like it because it points out that faith is rooted in God and his character. It's not something that I have to create or conjure. God is faithful, that makes it easier for me to have faith in him. He is trustworthy (worthy of my trust), therefore I can trust him.

There's also this definition of faith that I heard from Roy Hicks Jr., who was both a great man of faith and a great preacher, "*Faith is the aggressive cooperation with the promises of God.*" This definition expresses more the aspect of faith that goes out and gets something from God. It's not simply a passive trust. It can, at times, be a very active and assertive thing.

But, in addition to these, and many others, I like this one that I sort of adapted from an illustration from Spurgeon: "*Faith is the aqueduct through which we tap the reservoir of His grace.*" Spurgeon painted a picture of how God creates an enormous reservoir of salvation, healing, and wholeness for us. He gives it all to us freely. But the way that we access it is through an aqueduct called, *faith*. His provision is there, and you are here. How will you get the provision to you so that you can benefit from it? You have to dig a ditch, a canal, an aqueduct between you and the reservoir. That's faith. The thing that we do (with God's help) that connects us with all of his blessings. It's *the aqueduct through which we tap the reservoir of His grace!*

Other ways to say things that you probably already believe

Here we have expressions that I feel God gave me over the years to express biblical realities in a *wigetistic* way. None of these truths are new to the seasoned follower of Jesus. But maybe they'll help you know a little better about what you know.

Our greatest pleasure is the pleasure of pleasing God.

God was pleased to create us in such a way as to receive our greatest pleasure in pleasing him.

The glory of God and good of people...

This is what I try (and fail miserably at) to live by. This is merely another way to say what Jesus told us was the bottom-line of life: Love God and love people. That's it. How could it simpler, yet more difficult to do? We're to live for *the glory of God* (see my definition of glory above) and for *the good of people*. God help us!

God-Centered and People-Oriented

This is very much akin to the "glory of God and good of people." I think the Lord gave this one to me as a sort of motto for one of our churches. It's more of a statement of a corporate priority. I like it because it puts first-things-first, and second-things-second, with everything else following. Notice that it's "*GOD-Centered and PEOPLE-Oriented.*" You don't want those switched – God-oriented and people-centered. A lot of churches are like that. They are simply oriented around God but centered on people. In other words, the needs and desires of people trump the requirements of God. But God must be at our center. And then, though we shouldn't put people at the center, we must be people-oriented. That is, we can't forget that the church is people, not programs, not precepts, not budgets, bureaucracies, or buildings. While we must be centered on God, we must also be oriented to people.

A.B.C.

Admit, Believe, and Commit.

To me, these words summarize in the best possible way how we access the grace of God for salvation. I absolutely wore our churches out with this almost every Sunday. I not only wanted pre-christians to know what to do to become Christians. I also wanted our Christians to know how to share with pre-christians about how to become Christians!

So here's how it goes. We have **Admit** that we're messed up without God. We need him, and in order to get him, we have to admit that we need him and are lost without him. We also have to **Believe** in him - believe that he is, that he came, that he died and rose, and that he truly wants to make us his sons and daughters. Lastly, we have to **Commit** everything we are and everything we have to him. The Bible term for this is repent, which means to turn around, turn from our sin, and turn to him for salvation. And it's as simple as **A.B.C.**

At his Beck and Call

This is my second A.B.C. acrostic. Once you become a Christian by Admitting, Believing, and Committing, you'll want to live constantly **At his Beck and Call**. The word, "beck" is kind of interesting. It means to motion for someone to do something (usually to come to the one "becking" - probably more accurately "beckoning") be it ever so subtle a motion. It could be a slight hand movement or an eyebrow lifted. It's usually done by someone in a place of authority or responsibility over the one being "becked" (beckoned). I like this because it describes the kind of relationship I want to have with Jesus, whereby he may subtly motion for me to come or to go. And, ideally, I do it! I want to constantly be **At his Beck and Call**. You too?

Good spiritual leaders lead by leading.

What I mean by this primarily is that the spiritual leader must first be *led* (by the Holy Spirit) in order to *lead* others. The leader isn't making up the goal, the path, the way as he goes. He's listening to the subtle leading (the "beckoning" see above) of the Lord, and then trying to lead people in light of the leading he's getting from the Lord. He/she leads by leading. Lead me, Lord about how to lead your people.

Christianity is not a guilt-ridden religion, but the only way to get rid of your guilt.

I think, to the pre-christian, one of the most common misconceptions of Christianity is that it is a religion that piles on guilt in order to control people. It can seem like a religion of rules and regulations designed to weigh people down – *a guilt-ridden religion*. But in reality, the opposite is the truth. Coming into vital relationship with Jesus, who died with our guilt on his shoulders, is the only way to *rid yourself of your guilt*. Guilt isn't *given* in Christianity, it's *acknowledged and relieved*. We who know Jesus are not *guilt-ridden*, instead we are *rid of our guilt*. Thank you, Jesus!

Thus concludes (for now) our wigetisms.