

DAY BY DAY

Bible Texts and Topics, With Comments,
For Personal Study and Use at Family Worship.

8: CHRISTIAN LIFE

1. LOVING ONE ANOTHER

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” John 13:35.

“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.” I John 3:14.

“The more closely we resemble our Savior in character, the greater will be our love toward those for whom He died. Christians who manifest a spirit of unselfish love for one another are bearing a testimony for Christ which unbelievers can neither gainsay nor resist. It is impossible to estimate the power of such an example. Nothing will so successfully defeat the devices of Satan and his emissaries; nothing will so build up the Redeemer's kingdom, as will the love of Christ manifested by the members of the church.... The heart in which love rules, will not be filled with passion or revenge, by injuries which pride and self-love would deem unbearable. Love is unsuspecting, ever placing the most favorable construction upon the motives and acts of others. Love will never needlessly expose the faults of others. It does not listen eagerly to unfavorable reports, but rather seeks to bring to mind some good qualities of the one defamed.

“Love “rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth.” He whose heart is imbued with love is filled with sorrow at the errors and weaknesses of other but when truth triumphs, when the cloud that darkened the fair fame of another is removed, or when sins are confessed and wrongs corrected, he rejoices.” Testimonies, Vol. 5, pages 167-169.

“Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.” Luke 10:27. Just before He left His disciples to return to heaven, Christ declared, “A new commandment I give unto you, That you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.” Here we see the standard lifted higher and still higher. “By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one to another.” John 13:34, 35. The disciples could not then comprehend Christ's words, but after His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, they understood His love as never before. They had seen it expressed in His suffering in the garden, in the judgment hall, and in His death on the cross of Calvary.” Testimonies, Vol. 8, pages 164, 165.

Do you love people? If you do, Then people will in turn love you;
But if your heart you do not share, With others, then you should beware,
Lest others pass you grimly by, And your poor heart will wither, die.

It seems a pity just to live, Partake of life, but nothing give;
That's why the Dead Sea's dead, it seems, For it gives forth no living streams.
Its ooze and slime no joy imparts, 'Tis thus with dead and selfish hearts.

O living Fountain, pure and clean, Fill Thou my life with hope serene,
Full from my heart let blessings flow Out to the world of sin and woe;
My soul a living channel clear, Imparting richness, love, and cheer. B. M. Grandy

2. KEEPING GOD'S COMMANDMENTS

“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.” John 14:21.

“There are conditions to the fulfillment of God's promises, and prayer can never take the place of duty. “If you love Me,” Christ says, “keep My commandments.” . . .

“Those who bring their petitions to God, claiming His promise, while they do not comply with the conditions, insult Jehovah. They bring the name of Christ as their authority for the fulfillment of the promise, but they do not those things that would show faith in Christ and love for Him.

“Many are forfeiting the condition of acceptance with the Father. We need to examine closely the deed of trust wherewith we approach God. If we are disobedient, we bring to the Lord a note to be cashed when we have not fulfilled the conditions that would make it payable to us. We present to God His promises, and ask Him to fulfill them, when by so doing He would dishonor His own name.

“The promise is, “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you.” John 15:7. And John declares: “Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that says, I know Him, and keeps not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But who so keeps His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.” I John 2:3-5.” Christ's Object Lessons, pages 143, 144.

“Are we on the side of those who refuse to be loyal to God? They have no interest in knowing God. They reject the divine Son of God, the personification of all human goodness. They place themselves with those who, although no fault could be preferred against Christ, chose instead a thief and a murderer. This testifies to the moral taste of the world. Shall we be on the side of the world, or on the side of Christ, who declared, “I have kept My Father's commandments”? ...

“Those who receive Christ by faith as their personal Savior cannot be in harmony with the world. There are two distinct classes: One is loyal to God, keeping His commandments, while the other talks and acts like the world, casting away the word of God, which is truth, and accepting the words of the apostate, who rejected Jesus.” Testimonies to Ministers, pages 138, 139.

A farmer whose barns were full of corn, was accustomed to pray that the wants of the needy might be supplied; but when any one in needy circumstances asked for a little of his corn, he said he had none to spare. One day, after hearing his father pray for the poor and needy, his little son said to him, “Father, I wish I had your corn.” “Why, my son, what would you do with it?” asked the father. The child replied, “I would answer your prayers.”

3. THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.” Galatians 5:22-24.

“Those who become new creatures in Christ Jesus will bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” Galatians 5:22, 23. They will no longer fashion themselves according to the former lusts, but by the faith of the Son of God they will follow in His steps, reflect His character, and purify themselves even as He is pure. The things they once hated, they now love; and the things they once loved, they hate. The proud and self-assertive become meek and lowly in heart. The vain and supercilious become serious and unobtrusive. The drunken become sober, and the profligate pure. The vain customs and fashions of the world are laid aside. Christians will seek not the “outward adorning,” but “the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.” I Peter 3:3, 4.

There is no evidence of genuine repentance, unless it works reformation. If he restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, confess his sins, and love God and his fellow men, the sinner may be sure that he has passed from death unto life.

“When, as erring, sinful beings, we come to Christ and become partakers of His pardoning grace, love springs up in the heart. Every burden is light; for the yoke that Christ imposes is easy. Duty becomes a delight, and sacrifice a pleasure. The path that before seemed shrouded in darkness, becomes bright with beams from the Sun of Righteousness.

“The loveliness of the character of Christ will be seen in His followers. It was His delight to do the will of God. Love to God, zeal for his glory, was the controlling power in our Savior's life. Love beautified and ennobled all His actions. Love is of God. The unconsecrated heart cannot originate or produce it. It is found only in the heart where Jesus reigns. “We love, because He first loved us.” I John 4:19, R.V. In the heart renewed by divine grace, love is the principle of action. It modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, subdues enmity, and ennobles the affections. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the life, and sheds a refining influence on all around....

“Obedience is not a mere outward compliance, but the service of love. The law of God is an expression of His very nature; it is an embodiment of the great principle of love, and hence is the foundation of His government in heaven and earth. If our hearts are renewed in the likeness of God, if the divine love is implanted in the soul, will not the law of God be carried out in the life? When the principle of love is implanted in the heart, when man is renewed after the image of Him that created him, the new-covenant promise is fulfilled, “I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.” Hebrews 10:10. And if the law is written in the heart, will it not shape the life?” Steps to Christ, pages 62-66.

4. THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS IN BAPTISM

“Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?” Matthew 3:13, 14.

“When Jesus came to be baptized, John recognized before in Him a purity of character that he had never perceived in any man. The very atmosphere of His presence was holy and awe-inspiring. Among the multitudes that had gathered about him at the Jordan, John had heard dark tales of crime, and had met souls bowed down with the burden of myriad sins; but never had he come in contact with a human being from whom there breathed an influence so divine. All this was in harmony with what had been revealed to John regarding the Messiah. Yet he shrank from granting the request of Jesus. How could he, a sinner, baptize the Sinless One? And why should He who needed no repentance submit to a rite that was a confession of guilt to be washed away?

“As Jesus asked for baptism, John drew back, exclaiming, “I have need to be baptized of Thee, and came Thou to me?” With firm yet gentle authority, Jesus answered, “Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness.” And John, yielding, led the Savior down into the Jordan, and buried Him beneath the water. “And straightway coming up out of the water,” Jesus “saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him.”

“Jesus did not receive baptism as a confession of guilt on His own account. He identified Himself with sinners, taking the steps that we are to take, and doing the work that we must do. His life of suffering and patient endurance after His baptism was also an example to us.” The Desire of Ages, pages 110, 111.

“Christ was wholly righteous; yet He, the Savior of the world, gave man an example by Himself taking the steps which He requires the sinner to take to become a child of God, and heir of Heaven.

"If Christ, the spotless and pure Redeemer of man, condescended to take the steps necessary for the sinner to take in conversion, why should any, with the light of truth shining upon their pathway, hesitate to submit their hearts to God, and in humility confess that they are sinners, and show their faith in the atonement of Christ by words and actions, identifying themselves with those who profess to be His followers? There will ever be some who do not live out their profession, whose daily lives show them to be anything but Christians. But should this be a sufficient reason for any to refuse to put on Christ by baptism into the faith of His death and resurrection?" Testimonies, Vol. 4, pages 40, 41.

5. THE VALUE OF BAPTISM

The Commission: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Matthew 28:19.

Likened to Death and Resurrection: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Romans 6:3-6.

Expression of Faith: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Mark 16:16. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2:38.

"The commission which Christ gave to the disciples, just prior to His ascension to heaven, was, "Go you therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And, LO, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word." The commission reaches those who shall believe on His word through His disciples. And all who are called of God to stand as ambassadors for Him, should take the lessons upon practical godliness given them by Christ in His word, and teach them to the people." Testimonies, Vol. 4, page 401.

"Both of these important events, the crucifixion and the resurrection, have their memorials. By partaking of the Lord's supper, the broken bread and the fruit of the vine, we show forth the Lord's death until He comes. The scenes of His sufferings and death are thus brought fresh to our minds. The resurrection of Christ is commemorated by our being buried with Him by baptism, and raised out of the watery grave, in the likeness of His resurrection, to live in newness of life." Early Writings, page 217.

"I will seek redemption through Christ, for in no one else is there salvation. To be redeemed through Him is to become like unto Him; to be pure in mind, and to do good; to be free from sin, and to live for God alone." Frederica Rowan.

"Our Master walked each path of life, The stormy and the fair;
And so, wherever our path may, be, We'll always find Him there." William E. Myers.

6. HOW TO GROW IN GRACE

a. Live a Life of Prayer: "A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always." Acts 10:2.

b. Study the Bible Daily: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so." Acts 17:11.

c. Yield to the Holy Spirit: "When He had said this, He breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." John 20:22. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Ephesians 4:30.

d. Work for Your Fellow Men: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." James 1:27.

e. Keep Your Eyes on Jesus: "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews 12:2.

f. Obey the Voice of Conscience: "Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." I Samuel 15:22.

g. Associate with Christians: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Hebrews 10:25.

"Many have an idea that they must do some part of the work alone. They have trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sin, but now they seek by their own efforts to live aright. But every such effort must fail. Jesus says, "Without Me you can do nothing." Our growth in grace, our joy, our usefulness,-all depend upon our union with Christ. It is by communion with Him, daily, hourly, by abiding in Him,-that we are to grow in grace. He is not only the author but the finisher of our faith. It is Christ first and last and always. He is to be with us, not only at the beginning and the end of our course, but at every step of the way. David says, "I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." Psalm 16:8.

"Do you ask, "How am I to abide in Christ?" In the same way as you received Him at first. "As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk you in Him The just shall live by faith." Colossians 2:6; Hebrews 10:38. You gave yourself to God, to be His wholly, to serve and obey Him, and you took Christ as your Savior. You could not yourself atone for your sins or change your heart; but having given yourself to God, you believed that He for Christ's sake did all this for you. By faith you became Christ's, and by faith you are to grow up in Him - by giving and taking. You are to give all, your heart, your will, your service, give yourself to Him to obey all His requirements. And you must take all, Christ, the fullness of all blessing, to abide in your heart, to be your strength, your righteousness, your everlasting helper, to give you power to obey." Steps to Christ, pages 73, 74.

7. PUT OFF SIN, PUT ON RIGHTEOUSNESS

"But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." Colossians 3:8-17.

"The fact that we are under so great obligation to Christ, places us under the most sacred obligation to those whom He died to redeem. We are to manifest toward them the same sympathy, the same tender compassion and unselfish love, which Christ has manifested toward us. Selfish ambition, desire for supremacy, will die when Christ takes possession of the affections." Testimonies, Vol. 5, page 170.

"The vows which we take upon ourselves in baptism embrace much. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we are buried in the likeness of Christ's death, and raised in the likeness of His resurrection, and we are to live a new life. Our life is to be bound up with the life of Christ. Henceforth the believer is to bear in mind that he is dedicated to God, to Christ, and to the Holy Spirit. He is to make all worldly considerations secondary to this new relation. Publicly he has declared that he will no longer live in pride and self-indulgence. He is no longer to live a careless, indifferent life. He has made a covenant with God. He has died to the world. He is to live to the Lord, to use for Him all his entrusted capabilities, never losing the realization that he bears God's signature, that he is a subject of Christ's kingdom, a partaker of the divine nature. He is to surrender to God all that he is and all that he has, employing all his gifts to His name's glory." Testimonies, Vol. 6, pages 98, 99.

"Keep your heart free from hate, your mind from worry. Live simply; expect little; give much; sing often; pray always. Fill your life with love. Scatter sunshine. Forget self. Think of others. Do as you would be done by. These are the tried links in contentment's golden chain." Malcolm James McLeod.

How To Live

Whatever you think, never think what you feel
You would blush, in the presence of God, to reveal;
Whatever you speak, in a whisper or clear,
Say nothing you would not like Jesus to hear.

Whatever you read though the page may allure,
Read nothing of which you are perfectly sure
Consternation at once would be seen in your look
If God should say solemnly, "Show me that book."

Whatever you write, though in haste or in heed,
Write nothing you would not like Jesus to read;
Whatever you sing, in the midst of your glees
Sing nothing His listening ear would displease.

Whenever you go, never go where you fear
Lest the great God should ask you, "How camest thou here?"
Turn away from each pleasure you'd shrink from pursuing
If God should look down and say, "What are you doing?"

Whatever you wear, can you be very sure
That the feelings it quickens are blameless and pure?
Would your face be unblushing and conscience be clear
Should your wardrobe be opened and Jesus appear?

When you think, when you speak, when you read, when you write,
When you sing, when you walk, when you seek for delight,
To be kept from all wrong when at home or abroad,
Live always as under the eyes of the Lord.