

DAY BY DAY

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

2.11: LESSONS

1. THE GOLDEN RULE

“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.” Matthew 7:12.

“In your association with others, put yourself in their place. Enter into their feelings, their difficulties, their disappointments, their joys, and their sorrows. Identify yourself with them, and then do to them as, were you to exchange places with them, you would wish them to deal with you. This is the true rule of honesty. It is another expression of the law, “Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself.” And it is the substance of the teaching of the prophets. It is a principle of heaven, and will be developed in all who are fitted for its holy companionship.

“The golden rule is the principle of true courtesy, and its truest illustration is seen in the life and character of Jesus. Oh, what rays of softness and beauty shone forth in the daily life of our Savior! What sweetness flowed from His very presence! The same spirit will be revealed in His children. Those with whom Christ dwells will be surrounded with a divine atmosphere. Their white robes of purity will be fragrant with perfume from the garden of the Lord. Their faces will reflect light from His, brightening the path for stumbling and weary feet.

“No man who has the true ideal of what constitutes a perfect character will fail to manifest the sympathy and tenderness of Christ. The influence of grace is to soften the heart, to refine and purify the feelings, giving a heaven-born delicacy and sense of propriety.” Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, 192, 193.

“Whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you even so to them.” Blessed results would appear as the fruit of such a course. “With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again.” Here are strong motives which should constrain us to love one another with a pure heart, fervently. Christ is our example. He went about doing good. He lived to bless others. Love beautified and ennobled all His actions.

“We are not commanded to do to ourselves what we wish others to do, unto us; we are to do unto others what we wish them to do to us under all circumstances. The measure we mete is always measured to us again. Pure love is simple in its operations, and is distinct from any other principle of action. The love of influence, and the desire for the esteem of others may produce a well-ordered life, and frequently a blameless conversation. Self-respect may lead us to avoid the appearance of evil. A selfish heart may perform generous actions, acknowledge the present truth, and express humility and affection in an outward manner, yet the motives may be deceptive and impure. The actions that flow from such a heart may be destitute of the savor of life and the fruits of true holiness, being destitute of the principles of pure love. Love should be cherished and cultivated, for its influence is divine.” Testimonies 2, 136.

2. THE SHEPHERD PSALM

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures: He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul: He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me. Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me. Thou prepares a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anoints my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Psalms 23.

"While we review, not the dark chapters in our experience, but the manifestations of God's great mercy and unfailing love, we shall praise far more than complain. We shall talk of the loving faithfulness of God, as the true, tender, compassionate shepherd of His flock, which He has declared that none shall pluck out of His hand. The language of the heart will not be selfish murmuring and repining. Praise, like clear flowing streams, will come from God's truly believing ones, "Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Testimonies 6, 367.

"There is a touching incident related of a Highland chief, of the noble house of McGregor, who fell wounded by two balls at the battle of Prestonpans. Seeing their chief fall, the clan wavered, and gave the enemy an advantage. The old chieftain, beholding the effect of his disaster, raised himself upon his elbow, while the blood gushed in streams from his wounds, and cried aloud, "I am not dead, my children; I am looking at you to see you do your duty." These words revived the sinking courage of his brave Highlanders. There was a charm in the fact that they still fought under the eye of their chief. It roused them to put forth their mightiest energies, and they did all that human strength could do to turn and stem the dreadful tide of battle." Charles H. Spurgeon.

When after toil, at close of day,
With weary steps we wend our way
Back to our home, or where we stay,
And darkness round us creep,
With muscles sore, with steps so slow,
And nerves unstrung, we still may know
God cares for us, for even so,
"He gives His beloved sleep."

When weak and worn with toil and stress,
Like weary pilgrim seeking rest,
Lean hard upon the Savior's breast;
He gives peaceful sleep. In joy or grief, in sneer or fame,
When rich or poor, when whole or lame,
In life or death, He is the same-
"He gives His beloved sleep."

And when at last our course is run;
When, near the setting of the sun,
Our end has come, our work is done,
We need not fear nor weep,
For Christ our Lord this way hath trod;
And though we're laid beneath the sod,
We'll rest in Him, He is our God
Who gives His beloved sleep." N. P. Nealsen.

3. THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:13-20.

“The Savior looked upon the company before Him, and then to the rising sun, and said to His disciples, “You are the light of the world.” As the sun goes forth on its errand of love, dispelling the shades of night, and awakening the world to life, so the followers of Christ are to go forth on their mission, diffusing the light of heaven upon those who are in the darkness of error and sin.

“In the brilliant light of the morning, the towns and villages upon the surrounding hills stood forth clearly, making an attractive feature of the scene. Pointing to them, Jesus said, “A city set on a hill cannot be hid.” And He added, “Neither do men light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the stand, and it shines unto all that are in the house.” (R.V.) Most of those who listened to the words of Jesus were peasants and fishermen, whose lowly dwellings contained but one room, in which the single lamp, on its stand, shone to all in the house. Even so, said Jesus, “Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, 63, 64.

A beautiful, statue once stood in the marketplace of an Italian city. It was the statue of a Greek slave girl. It represented the slave as tidy and well dressed. A ragged, uncombed little street child, passing the statue in her play, stopped and gazed at it in admiration. She was captivated by it. She gazed long and lovingly. Moved by a sudden impulse, she went home and washed her face and combed her hair. Another day she stopped again before the statue and admired it, and she got a new idea. Next day her tattered clothes were washed and mended. Each time she looked at the statue she found something in its beauties until she was a transformed child. Thus it is that by beholding Christ we become changed into His image.

4. WHOLEHEARTED SERVICE

“Thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah, and wrought that which was good and right and truth before the Lord his God. And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered.” 2 Chronicles 31:20, 21.

“He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” Luke 16:10-13.

"It is not the length of time we labor, but our willingness and fidelity in the work, that makes it acceptable to God. In all our service a full surrender of self is demanded. The smallest duty done in sincerity and self-forgetfulness, is more pleasing to God than the greatest work when marred with self-seeking. He looks to see how much of the spirit of Christ we cherish, and how much of the likeness of Christ our work reveals. He regards more the love and faithfulness with which we work than the amount we do.

"Only when selfishness is dead, when strife for supremacy is banished, when gratitude fills the heart, and love makes fragrant the life, it is only then that Christ is abiding in the soul, and we are recognized as laborers together with God." Christ's Object Lessons, 402.

"Nothing with which we have to do is really small. Every action is of some account, either on the side of right or on the side of wrong. It is only by exercising principle in the small transactions of ordinary life that we are tested and our characters formed. In the varied circumstances of life we are tested and proved, and thereby we acquire a power to stand the greater and more important tests that we are called to endure, and are qualified to fill still more important positions. The mind must be trained through daily tests to habits of fidelity, to a sense of the claims of right and duty above inclination and pleasure.

"Minds thus trained do not waver between right and wrong, as the reed trembles in the wind; but as soon as matters come before them, they discern at once that principle is involved, and they instinctively choose the right without long debating the matter. They are loyal because they have trained themselves to habits of faithfulness and truth. By being faithful in that which is least, they acquire strength, and it becomes easy for them to be faithful in greater matters." Testimonies 3, 22.

"Michelangelo was one day explaining to a visitor at his studio what he had been doing to a statue since a previous visit. 'I have retouched this part, polished that, softened this feature, brought out that muscle, given some expression to the lips, and more energy to that limb.' 'But these are trifles,' remarked the visitor. 'It may be so,' said the sculptor; 'but recollect that, trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle.'"

5. JUDGE NOT

"Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. Matthew 7:1-5.

"Why does thou judge thy brother? Or why does thou set at naught thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." Romans 14:10-13.

"Who makes thee to differ from another? And what has thou that thou did not receive? One is your Master; . . . and all you are brethren." "Why does thou judge thy brother? Or why does thou set at naught thy brother?" "Let us not therefore judge one another; . . . but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."

"It is always humiliating to have one's errors pointed out. None should make the experience more bitter by needless censure. No one was ever reclaimed by reproach, but many have thus been repelled, and have been led to steel their hearts against conviction. A tender spirit, a gentle, winning deportment, may save the erring, and hide a multitude of sins.

"The apostle Paul found it necessary to reprove wrong, but how carefully he sought to show that he was a friend to the erring! How anxiously he explained to them the reason of his action. He made them understand that it cost him pain to give them pain. He showed his confidence and sympathy toward the ones who were struggling to overcome....

"When one at fault becomes conscious of his error, be careful not to destroy his self-respect. Do not discourage him by indifference or distrust. Do not say, "Before giving him my confidence, I will wait to see whether he will hold out." Often this very distrust causes the tempted one to stumble.

"We should strive to understand the weakness of others. We know little of the heart trials of those who have been bound in chains of darkness, and who lack resolution and moral power. Most pitiable is the condition of him who is suffering under remorse; he is as one stunned, staggering, sinking into the dust. He can see nothing clearly. The mind is beclouded, he knows not what steps to take. Many a poor soul is misunderstood, unappreciated, full of distress and agony, a lost, straying sheep. He cannot find God, yet he has an intense longing for pardon and peace.

"Oh, let no word be spoken to cause deeper pain! To the soul weary of a life of sin, but knowing not where to find relief, present the compassionate Savior. Take him by the hand, lift him up, speak to him words of courage and hope. Help him to grasp the hand of the Savior." Ministry of Healing, 166 168.

6. THE SABBATH

"For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." Colossians 1:16, 17.

"He said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." Mark 2:27, 28.

As Christ was Creator of all things, so He was Creator of the Sabbath.

"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath," Jesus said. The institutions that God has established are for the benefit of mankind. "All things are for your sakes Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

"The law of Ten Commandments, of which the Sabbath forms a part, God gave to His people as a blessing. "The Lord commanded us," said Moses, "to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive." And through the psalmist the message was given to Israel, "Serve the Lord with gladness; come before His presence with singing. Know you that the Lord He is God; it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise." And of all who "keep the Sabbath from polluting it," the Lord declares, "Even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer."

"Wherefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." These words are full of instruction and comfort. Because the Sabbath was made for man, it is the Lord's day. It belongs to Christ. For "all things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." Since He made all things, He

made the Sabbath. By Him it was set apart as a memorial of the work of creation. It points to Him as both the Creator and the Sanctifier. It declares that He who created all things in heaven and in earth, and by whom all things hold together, is the head of the church, and that by His power we are reconciled to God. For, speaking of Israel, He said, "I gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them," make them holy. Then the Sabbath is a sign of Christ's power to make us holy. And it is given to all whom Christ makes holy. As a sign of His sanctifying power, the Sabbath is given to all who through Christ become a part of the Israel of God." *The Desire of Ages*, 288.

"Christianity is not simply historical and traditional, but present and permanent, with its roots in the infinite past, and its branches in the infinite future, the eternal spring and growth of divine love. Not the dying echo of words uttered centuries ago, but God's good tidings spoken afresh in every soul." John Whittier.

7. PERSECUTION BECAUSE OF COMMANDMENT KEEPING

"The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. Revelation 12:17.

"The remnant church will be brought into great trial and distress. Those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, will feel the ire of the dragon and his hosts. Satan numbers the world as his subjects; he has gained control of the apostate churches; but here is a little company that are resisting his supremacy. If he could blot them from the earth, his triumph would be complete." *Testimonies* 9, 231.

Denounced as Enemies of the State: "Those who honor the Bible Sabbath will be denounced as enemies of law and order, as breaking down the moral restraints of society, causing anarchy and corruption, and calling down the judgments of God upon the earth. Their conscientious scruples will be pronounced obstinacy, stubbornness, and contempt of authority. They will be accused of disaffection toward the government. Ministers who deny the obligation of the divine law will present from the pulpit the duty of yielding obedience to the civil authorities as ordained of God. In legislative halls and courts of justice, commandment keepers will be misrepresented and condemned. A false coloring will be given to their words; the worst construction will be put upon their motives." *The Great Controversy*, page 592.

Appointed Unto Death: "As the Sabbath has become the special point of controversy throughout Christendom, and religious and secular authorities have combined to enforce the observance of the Sunday, the persistent refusal of a small minority to yield to the popular demand, will make them objects of universal execration. It will be urged that the few who stand in opposition to an institution of the church and a law of the state, ought not to be tolerated; that it is better for them to suffer than for whole nations to be thrown into confusion and lawlessness. The same argument eighteen hundred years ago was brought against Christ by the "rulers of the people."

"It is expedient for us," said the wily Caiaphas, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." John 11:50. This argument will appear conclusive; and a decree will finally be issued against those who hallow the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, denouncing them as deserving of the severest punishment, and giving the people liberty, after a certain time, to put them to death. Romanism in the Old World, and apostate Protestantism in the New, will pursue a similar course toward those who honor all the divine precepts. The people of God will then be plunged into those scenes of affliction and distress described by the prophet as the time of Jacob's trouble.... Jeremiah 30:5-7." *The Great Controversy*, 615, 616.