

DAY BY DAY

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

3.3: DAILY LIVING

1. THE HUSBAND AND THE WIFE

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

“So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

“This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.”
Ephesians 5:25-33.

“Like every other one of God's good gifts entrusted to the keeping of humanity, marriage has been perverted by sin; but it is the purpose of the gospel to restore its purity and beauty. In both the Old and the New Testament the marriage relation is employed to represent the tender and sacred union that exists between Christ and His people, the redeemed ones whom He has purchased at the cost of Calvary. “Fear not,” He says; “thy Maker is your husband; the Lord of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.” “Turn, O backsliding children, says the Lord; for I am married unto you.” In the “Song of Songs” we hear the bride's voice saying, “My Beloved is mine, and I am His.” And He who is to her “the chief among ten thousand,” speaks to His chosen one, “Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee. “

“In later times, Paul the apostle, writing to the Ephesian Christians, declares that the Lord has constituted the husband the head of the wife, to be her protector, the house-band, binding the members of the family together, even as Christ is the head of the church, and the Savior of the mystical body.

“The grace of Christ, and this alone, can make this institution what God designed it should be, an agent for the blessing and uplifting of humanity. And thus the families of earth, in their unity and peace and love, may represent the family of heaven.

“Now, as in Christ's day, the condition of society presents a sad comment upon Heaven's ideal of this sacred relation. Yet even for those who have found bitterness and disappointment where they had hoped for companionship and joy, the gospel of Christ offers a solace. The patience and gentleness which His Spirit can impart, will sweeten the bitter lot. The heart in which Christ dwells, will be so filled, so satisfied, with His love that it will not be consumed with longing to attract sympathy and attention to itself. And through the surrender of the soul to God, His wisdom can accomplish what human wisdom fails to do. Through the revelation of His grace, hearts that were once indifferent or estranged may be united in bonds that are firmer and more enduring than those of earth, the golden bonds of the love that will bear the test of trial.” Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, 100, 101.

2. LIKE UNTO LITTLE CHILDREN

“At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.” Matthew 18:1-6.

“Many would make any and every sacrifice but the very one they should make, which is to yield themselves, to submit their wills to the will of God. Said Christ to His disciples, “Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Here is a lesson in humility. We must all become humble as little children in order to inherit the kingdom.

“Our heavenly Father sees the hearts of men, and He knows their characters better than they themselves know them. He sees that some have susceptibilities and powers, which, directed in the right channel, might be used to His glory, to aid in the advancement of His work. He puts these persons on trial, and in His wise providence brings them into different positions and under a variety of circumstances, testing them that they may reveal what is in their hearts, and the weak points in their characters which have been concealed from their own knowledge. He gives them opportunities to correct these weaknesses, to polish off the rough corners of their natures, and to fit themselves for His service, that when He calls them to action they will be ready, and that angels of heaven may unite their labor with human effort in the work that must be done upon the earth.

“To men whom God designs shall fill responsible positions, He in mercy reveals their hidden defects, that they may look within and examine critically the complicated emotions and exercises of their own hearts, and detect that which is wrong; thus they may modify their dispositions and refine their manners. The Lord in His providence brings men where He can test their moral powers and reveal their motives of action, that they may improve what is right in themselves and put away that which is wrong. God would have His servants become acquainted with the moral machinery of their own hearts. In order to bring this about, He often permits the fire of affliction to assail them, that they may become purified.” Testimonies 4, 84, 85.

3. THINGS WHICH GOD HATES

“These six things doeth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto Him. A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.” Proverbs 6:16-19.

“We may flatter ourselves that we are free from many things of which others are guilty; but if we have some strong points of character, and but one weak point, there is yet a communion between sin and the soul. The heart is divided in its service, and says, “Some of Self, and some of Thee.” The child of God must search out the sin which he has petted and indulged himself in, and permit God to cut it out of his heart. He must overcome that one sin; for it is not a trifling matter in the sight of God.

“One says, “I am not the least jealous, but then I do get provoked and say mean things, although I am always sorry after giving way to temper.” Another says, “I have this fault or that, but then I just despise such and such meanness as is manifested by a certain person of my acquaintance.” The Lord has not given us a list of graded sins, so that we may reckon some as of little consequence, and say that they will do but little harm, while others are of greater magnitude and will do much harm.

"A chain is no stronger than is its weakest link. We might pronounce such a chain good on the whole, but if one link is weak, the chain cannot be depended on. The work of overcoming is to be the study of every soul who enters the kingdom of God. That impatient word quivering on your lips must be left unspoken. That thought that your character is not rightly estimated must be put from you; for it weakens your influence, and works out the sure result, making you of light estimation in the minds of others. You should overcome the idea that you are a martyr, and lay claim to the promise of Christ, who says, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Review and Herald, Aug. 1, 1893.

Pomposity, or self-importance, may be illustrated by the story of Washington, who one day came across a small band of soldiers working very hard at raising some military roads, under the command of a pompous little officer who was issuing his orders in a very peremptory style indeed. Washington, seeing the arduous task of the men, dismounted from his horse, lent a helping hand, and perspired freely, till the weight at which they were working was raised. Then turning to the officer, he inquired why he, too, had not helped, and received the indignant reply, "Don't you know I'm the corporal?"

"Ah, well," said Washington, "next time your men are raising so heavy a weight, send for your Commander-in-Chief," and he rode off leaving the corporal dumfounded. The vanity which parades its own virtues may be shown to be nothing more than a veneer of self-respect over sordid meanness. James Terry White.

4. THE LADDER CONNECTING HEAVEN AND EARTH

"And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.." Genesis 28:12-17.

"In this vision the plan of redemption was presented to Jacob, not fully, but in such parts as were essential to him at that time. The mystic ladder revealed to him in his dream was the same to which Christ referred in His conversation with Nathanael. Said He, "You shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." John 1:51.

"Up to the time of man's rebellion against the government of God, there had been free communion between God and man. But the Sin of Adam and Eve separated earth from heaven, so that man could not have communion with his Maker. Yet the world was not left in solitary hopelessness. The ladder represents Jesus, the appointed medium of communication. Had He not with His own merits bridged the gulf that sin had made, the ministering angels could have held no communion with fallen man. Christ connects man in his weakness and helplessness with the source of infinite power.

"All this was revealed to Jacob in his dream. Although his mind at once grasped a part of the revelation, its great and mysterious truths were the study of his lifetime, and unfolded to his understanding more and more." Patriarchs and Prophets, 184.

I do not know just why my path Should lead o'er mountains high,
Nor why dark, gloomy clouds should hide The sunshine of my sky.
I only know, however hard And steep the way may be,

There's One who shares the flinty road
And mountain steeps with me.
I only know, however dark
And gloomy is the place,
No clouds are dense enough to hide
The sunlight of His face.
And when some day I shall look back
Along the paths I've trod,
I shall perceive that every one
Was ordered by my God.
I shall perceive that in His plans,
Embracing time and space,
Nothing was useless or unwise,
Or lost or out of place.
And thus in facing every trial,
In meeting every test,
I rest assured that God is love,
That all His ways are best. Edward J. Urquhart.

5. PREPARATION OF HEART FOR SERVICE

"In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar. And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and your iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me." Isaiah 6:1-8.

"This is the experience needed by those who labor in all our institutions. There is danger that they will fail of maintaining a vital connection with God, of being sanctified through the truth. It is thus that they lose a sense of the power of the truth, lose the ability to discriminate between the sacred and the common.

"My brethren in responsible positions, may the Lord not only anoint your eyes that they may see, but pour into your hearts the holy oil that from the two olive branches flows through the golden pipes into the golden bowl which feeds the lamps of the sanctuary. May He "give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling. . . . and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us who believe." Ephesians 1:17-19. Testimonies 7, 154.

"When the Lord's voice calls, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" the divine Spirit puts it into hearts to respond, "Here am I; send me." Isaiah 6:8. But bear in mind that the live coal from the altar must first touch your lips. Then the words you speak will be wise and holy words. Then you will have wisdom to know what to say and what to leave unsaid. You will not try to reveal your smartness as theologians. You will be careful not to arouse a combative spirit or excite prejudice by introducing controversial points of doctrine. You will find enough to talk about that will not excite opposition, but that will open the heart to desire a deeper knowledge of God's word." The Colporteur Evangelist, 19, 20.

6. GOD'S MERCY WAITS

"He spake also this parable: A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumberest thou the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down." Luke 13:6-9.

“Then after that.” In these words there is a lesson for all who are connected with the work of God. A period of probation was granted to the tree that bore no fruit. And in like manner God bears long with His people. But of those who have had great advantages, and who are standing in positions of high and sacred trust, and yet bear no fruit, He says, “Cut it down; why cumberest thou the ground?”

Let those connected with the Lord's special instruments remember that He will call for fruit from His vineyard. Proportionate to the blessing bestowed will be the returns required. .

The world is watching, ready to criticize with keenness and severity your words, your deportment, and your business transactions. Every one who acts a part in connection with the work of God is watched, and is weighed by the scales of human discernment. Impressions, favorable or unfavorable to Bible religion, are constantly made on the minds of all with whom you have to do. The world watches to see what fruit is borne by professed Christians. It has a right to look for self denial and self-sacrifice from those who claim to believe advanced truth.” - Testimonies, Volume VII, pages 200, 201.

One class were registered as cumberers of the ground. As the piercing eyes of the judge rested upon these, their sins of neglect were distinctly revealed. With pale, quivering lips they acknowledged that they had been traitors to their holy trust. They had had warnings and privileges, but they had not heeded nor improved them. They could now see that they had presumed too much upon the mercy of God. True, they had not such confessions to make as had the vile and basely corrupt; but, like the fig tree, they were cursed because they bore no fruit, because they had not put to use the talents entrusted to them.

This class had made self supreme, laboring only for selfish interests. They were not rich toward God, not having responded to His claims upon them. Although professing to be servants of Christ, they brought no souls to Him. Had the cause of God been dependent on their efforts, it would have languished; for they not only withheld the means lent them of God ' but they withheld themselves. But these could now see and feel that in occupying an irresponsible position in reference to the work and cause of God, they had placed themselves on the left hand. They had had opportunity, but would not do the work that they could and should have done.” - Ibid., Volume IV, page 385, 386.

7. GOD WILL NOT FORGET

“Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.” Isaiah 49:15.

“When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.” Psalm 27:10.

“The Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works.” Amos 8:7.

“Will the Lord forget His people in this trying hour? Did He forget faithful Noah when judgments were visited upon the antediluvian world? Did He forget Lot when the fire came down from heaven to consume the cities of the plain? Did He forget Joseph surrounded by idolaters in Egypt? Did He forget Elijah when the oath of Jezebel threatened him with the fate of the prophets of Baal? Did He forget Jeremiah in the dark and dismal pit of his prison house? Did He forget the three worthies in the fiery furnace? or Daniel in the den of lions?

“Zion said, Jehovah hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands.” Isaiah 49:14-16. The Lord of hosts has said, “He that touches you, touches the apple of His eye.” Zechariah 2:8.

“Though enemies may thrust them into prison, yet dungeon walls cannot cut off the communication between their souls and Christ. One who sees their every weakness, who is acquainted with every trial, is above all earthly powers; and angels will come to them in lonely cells, bringing light and peace from heaven. The prison will be as a palace; for the rich in faith dwell there, and the gloomy walls will be lighted up with heavenly light, as when Paul and Silas prayed and sung praises at midnight in the Philippian dungeon.” The Great Controversy, 626, 627.

“Life is disciplinary. While in the world, the Christian will meet with adverse influences. There will be provocations to test the temper; and it is by meeting these in a right spirit that the Christian graces are developed. If injuries and insults are meekly borne, if insulting words are responded to by gentle answers, and oppressive acts by kindness, this is evidence that the Spirit of Christ dwells in the heart, that sap from the Living Vine is flowing into the branches. We are in the school of Christ in this life, where we are to learn to be meek and lowly of heart. And in the day of final accounts we shall see that all the obstacles we meet, all the hardships and annoyances that we are called to bear, are practical lessons in the application of principles of Christian life. If well endured, they develop the Christ life in the character, and distinguish the Christian from the worldling.” Testimonies 5, 344.

SKILLED LABOR

I watched them tearing a building down,
A gang of men in a busy town.
With a heave Ho and a lusty yell,
They swung a beam and a side-wall fell.

I asked the builder, “Are these men skilled
And the men you'd hire if you were to build?”
He gave a laugh and said “No indeed,
Unskilled labor is all I need.

They can easily wreck in a day or 2,
What builders have taken a year to do.”
And I thought to myself as I went on my way,
Which of these roles have I opted to play?

Am I a builder who builds with care,
Measuring life by rule and square?
Patiently doing the best I can,
Ordering things to a well-made plan?
Or am I a workman that walks the town
Content with the “labor” of tearing things down???