

## **DAY BY DAY**

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

### **3.09: USING OUR MEANS**

#### **1. THE GOODNESS OF THE LORD**

“Hear, O LORD, [when] I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me. [When thou saidst], Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek. Hide not thy face [far] from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation. When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up. Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies. Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty. [I had fainted], unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.”  
Psalm 27:7-14.

“Our God has heaven and earth at His command, and He knows just what we need. We can see only a little way before us; “but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.” Above the distractions of the earth He sits enthroned; all things are open to His divine survey; and from His great and calm eternity He orders that which His providence sees best.

“Not even a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father's notice. Satan's hatred against God leads him to delight in destroying even the dumb creatures. It is only through God's protecting care that the birds are preserved to gladden us with their songs of joy. But He does not forget even the sparrows. ‘Tear you not therefore, you are of more value than many sparrows.’ Testimonies 8, 272, 273.

“God spared not His own Son, but delivered Him to death for our offenses, and raised Him again for our justification. Through Christ we may present our petitions at the throne of grace. Through Him, unworthy as we are, we may obtain all spiritual blessings. Do we come to Him that we may have life?

“How shall we know for ourselves God's goodness and His love? The psalmist tells us, not, hear and know, read and know, or believe and know; but, “Taste and see that the Lord is good.” Instead of relying upon the word of another, taste for yourself.

“Experience is knowledge derived from experiment. Experimental religion is what is needed now. “Taste and see that the Lord is good.” Some, yes, a large number have a theoretical knowledge of religious truth, but have never felt the renewing power of divine grace upon their own hearts. . .

“There must be a revival of the strait testimony. The path to heaven is no smoother now than in the days of our Savior. All our sins must be put away. Every darling indulgence that hinders our religious life must be cut off. The right eye or the right hand must be sacrificed, if it cause us to offend. Are we willing to renounce our own wisdom, and to receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child? Are we willing to part with self-righteousness? Are we willing to give up our chosen worldly associates? Are we willing to sacrifice the approbation of men? The prize of eternal life is of infinite value. Will we put forth efforts and make sacrifices proportionate to the worth of the object to be attained?” Testimonies 5, 221, 222.

## **2. LOVE OF MONEY**

“But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.” I Timothy 6:6-12.

“The Bible condemns no man for being rich, if he has acquired his riches honestly. Not money, but the love of money, is the root of all evil. It is God who gives men power to get wealth; and in the hands of him who acts as God's steward, using his means unselfishly, wealth is a blessing, both to its possessor and to the world. But many, absorbed in their interest in worldly treasures, become insensible to the claims of God and the needs of their fellow men. They regard their wealth as a means of glorifying themselves. They add house to house, and land to land; they fill their homes with luxuries, while all about them are human beings in misery and crime, in disease and death. Those who thus give their lives to self-serving are developing in themselves, not the attributes of God, but the attributes of the wicked one. These men are in need of the gospel. They need to have their eyes turned from the vanity of material things to behold the preciousness of the enduring riches. They need to learn the joy of giving, the blessedness of being coworkers with God.” Ministry of Healing, 212, 213.

“In this generation, the desire for gain is the absorbing passion. Wealth is often obtained by fraud. There are multitudes struggling with poverty, compelled to labor hard for small wages, unable to secure even the barest necessities of life. Toil and deprivation, with no hope of better things, make their burden heavy. Careworn and oppressed, they know not where to turn for relief. And all this that the rich may support their extravagance or indulge their desire to hoard! Love of money and love of display have made this world as a den of thieves and robbers.” Prophets and Kings, 650, 651.

Many professed Christians today have an idea that they must by some act on their own part earn the eternal reward. It is by this deception that Satan leads many into doubt and discouragement. Eternal life is not earned; it is the gift of God through Jesus Christ. By nothing that we can do will we merit the favor of God. We can only reach out by faith and take from Him the blessings that He stands ready to bestow. To Jesus Christ belongs all credit for the blessings we enjoy in this world and for the fullness of blessings we shall enjoy in the world to come.

## **3. RENDERING TO GOD HIS OWN**

“All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord.” Leviticus 27:30.

“This matter of giving is not left to impulse. God has given us definite instruction in regard to it. He has specified tithes and offerings as the measure of our obligation. And He desires us to give regularly and systematically. Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, “Concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do you. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.” Let each regularly examine his income, which is all a blessing from God, and set apart the tithe as a separate fund, to be sacredly the Lord's. This fund should not in any case be devoted to any other use; it is to be devoted solely to support the ministry of the gospel. After the tithe is set apart, let gifts and offerings be apportioned, “as God hath prospered you.” Review and Herald, May 9, 1893.

"A very plain, definite message has been given to me for our people. I am bidden to tell them that they are making a mistake in applying the tithe to various objects, which, though good in themselves, are not the object to which the Lord has said that the tithe should be applied. Those who make this use of the tithe are departing from the Lord's arrangement. God will judge for these things.

"One reasons that the tithe may be applied to school purposes. Still others reason that canvassers and colporteurs should be supported from the tithe. But a great mistake is made when the tithe is drawn from the object for which it is to be used—the support of the ministers. There should be today in the field one hundred well-qualified laborers where now there is but one." *Gospel Workers*, 226.

"Read carefully the third chapter of Malachi, and see what God says about the tithe. If our churches will take their stand upon the Lord's word, and be faithful in paying their tithe into His treasury, more laborers will be encouraged to take up ministerial work. More men would give themselves to the ministry were they not told of the depleted treasury. There should be an abundant supply in the Lord's treasury, and there would be if selfish hearts and hands had riot withheld the tithes or made use of them to support other lines of work.

"God's reserved resources are to be used in no such haphazard way. The tithe is the Lord's, and those who meddle with it will be punished with the loss of their heavenly treasure, unless they repent. Let the work no longer be hedged up because the tithe has been diverted into various channels other than the one to which the Lord has said it should go. Provision is to be made for these other lines of work. They are to be sustained, but not from the tithe. God has not changed; the tithe is still to be used for the support of the ministry. The opening of new fields requires more ministerial efficiency than we now have, and there must be means in the treasury." *Gospel Workers*, 227, 228.

#### **4. ROBBING GOD IN TITHES AND OFFERINGS**

"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings." Malachi 3:8.

"The offerings made to God by His professed people would be much larger if it were not for the selfish love of ease, the manufactured wants, the lack of economy, the love of luxuries, the gratification of appetite, the desire for self-pleasing. But the life and character of Christ and the lessons He has given to His followers present no encouragement to selfishness. How much of self-indulgence did Christ have in His life? He for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich. And He said, "Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." Self-indulgence, self-pleasing, pride, and extravagance must be renounced. You cannot be Christians and gratify these propensities. We cannot love God supremely and our neighbors as ourselves, and devote to our own use the means entrusted to us to honor and glorify God. We need to make a practical application of the lessons of our Savior's life and teachings.

"In view of all the gifts of God to us, the question is asked, "Will a man rob God?" As though such a sin were not possible. But the Lord declares, "You have robbed Me." God reads the covetous thought in every heart that purposes to withhold from Him. Those who are selfishly neglectful in paying their tithes and bringing their gifts and offerings to the treasury, He sees. The Lord Jehovah understands it all. As a book of remembrance is written before Him of them that fear the Lord, and that think upon His name, so there is a record kept of all who are appropriating to themselves the gifts which God entrusted to them to use for the salvation of souls." *Review and Herald*, May 16, 1893.

"There is another matter too often neglected by those who seek the Lord in prayer. Have you been honest with God? As the giver of every blessing, God claims a certain portion of all we possess. This is His provision to sustain the preaching of the gospel. And by making this return to God, we are to show

our appreciation of His gifts. But if we withhold from Him that which is His own, how can we claim His blessing? If we are unfaithful stewards of earthly things, how can we expect Him to entrust us with the things of heaven? It may be that here is the secret of unanswered prayer.

“But the Lord in His great mercy is ready to forgive, and He says, “Bring you all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith. . . . if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.” . . .

“So it is with every other one of God's requirements. All His gifts are promised on condition of obedience. God has a heaven full of blessings for those who will cooperate with Him. All who obey Him may with confidence claim the fulfillment of His promises.” Christ's Object Lessons, 144, 145.

## **5. THE PROMISE FOR OBEDIENCE**

“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.” Malachi 3:10, 11.

“Divine wisdom has appointed, in the plan of salvation, the law of action and reaction, making the work of beneficence, in all its branches, twice blessed. He that gives to the needy blesses others, and is blessed himself in a still greater degree. God could have reached His object in saving sinners without the aid of man; but He knew that man could not be happy without acting a part in the great work in which he would be cultivating self-denial and benevolence.

“That man might not lose the blessed results of benevolence, our Redeemer formed the plan of enlisting him as His co-worker. By a chain of circumstances which would call forth his charities, He bestows upon man the best means of cultivating benevolence, and keeps him habitually giving to help the poor and to advance His cause. He sends His poor as the representatives of Himself. By their necessities, a ruined world are drawing forth from us talents of means and of influence, to present to them the truth, of which they are in perishing need. And as we heed these calls by labor and by acts of benevolence, we are assimilated to the image of Him who for our sakes became poor. In bestowing, we bless others, and thus accumulate true riches.” Testimonies 3, 382, 383.

“Whenever God's people, in any period of the world, have cheerfully and willingly carried out His plan in systematic benevolence and in gifts and offerings, they have realized the standing promise that prosperity should attend all their labors just in proportion as they obeyed His requirements. When they acknowledged the claims of God, and complied with His requirements, honoring Him with their substance, their barns were filled with plenty. But when they robbed God in tithes and in offerings, they were made to realize that they were not only robbing Him, but themselves; for He limited His blessings to them just in proportion as they limited their offerings to Him.” Testimonies 3, 395.

Honesty in Business: The story is told of a young merchant who, beginning business some years ago, overheard one day a clerk misrepresenting the quality of some merchandise. He was instantly reprimanded and the article was unsold. The clerk resigned his position at once, and told his employer that the man who did business that way could not last long. But the merchant did last, and when he died he was the possessor of the largest wealth ever gathered in a single lifetime up until that time. Noah Hunt Schenck.

## **6. VOWING AND PAYING**

“Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few. For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words. When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?” Ecclesiastes 5:2-6.

“When a pledge is made to the cause, it is a vow made to God, and should be sacredly kept. In the sight of God it is no better than sacrilege to appropriate to our own use that which has been once pledged to advance His sacred work.

“When a verbal or written pledge has been made in the presence of our brethren, to give a certain amount, they are the visible witnesses of a contract made between ourselves and God. The pledge is not made to man, but to God, and is as a written note given to a neighbor. No legal bond is more binding upon the Christian for the payment of money, than a pledge made to God.

“Persons who thus pledge to their fellow men, do not generally think of asking to be released from their pledges. A vow made to God, the giver of all favors, is of still greater importance; then why should we seek to be released from our vows to God? Will man consider his promise less binding because made to God? Because his vow will not be put to trial in courts of justice, is it less valid? Will a man who professes to be saved by the blood of the infinite sacrifice of Jesus Christ, “rob God”? Are not his vows and his actions weighed in the balances of justice in the heavenly courts?” Testimonies 4, 470.

“The contributions required of the Hebrews for religious and charitable purposes amounted to fully one fourth of their income. So heavy a tax upon the resources of the people might be expected to reduce them to poverty; but, on the contrary, the faithful observance of these regulations was one of the conditions of their prosperity. On condition of their obedience, God made them this promise: “I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field.... And all nations shall call you blessed; for you shall be a delight some land, says the Lord of hosts.” Patriarchs and Prophets, 527.

“This is the gospel of labor, ring it, you bells of the land!

The Lord of Love came down from above, to live with the men who work.

This is the rose that He planted, here in the thorn cursed soil:

Heaven is blest with perfect rest, but the blessing of Earth is toil.” Henry Vandyke.

## **7. THE MOTIVE IN GIVING**

“Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that

they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him." Matthew 6:1-8.

"By their good works, Christ's followers are to bring glory, not to themselves, but to Him through whose grace and power they have wrought. It is through the Holy Spirit that every good work is accomplished, and the Spirit is given to glorify, not the receiver, but the Giver. When the light of Christ is shining in the soul, the lips will be filled with praise and thanksgiving to God. Your prayers, your performance of duty, your benevolence, your self-denial, will not be the theme of your thought or conversation. Jesus will be magnified, self will be hidden, and Christ will appear as all in all.

"We are to give in sincerity, not to make a show of our good deeds, but from pity and love to the suffering ones. Sincerity of purpose, real kindness of heart, is the motive that Heaven values. The soul that is sincere in its love, wholehearted in its devotion, God regards as more precious than the golden wedge of Ophir.

"His, not mine, are the gifts, and only so far can I make them Mine as in giving I add my heart to whatever is given.

"We are not to think of reward, but of service; yet kindness shown in this spirit will not fail of its recompense. "Thy Father, which sees in secret, Himself shall reward thee openly." While it is true that God Himself is the great reward, that embraces every other, the soul receives and enjoys Him only as it becomes assimilated to Him in character. Only like can appreciate like. It is as we give ourselves to God for the service of humanity that He gives Himself to us." Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, 121, 122.