

Luke Devotionals & Sermon Illustrations

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Luke 1

Luke 1:31-41 The Spirit Of Christmas

February 1, 2012 — by David C. McCasland

The acts of generosity and good will that flourish in December often fade quickly, causing many to say, “I wish we could keep the Christmas spirit all year long.” Why does it seem that kindness and compassion are chained to the calendar? Is there an ever-flowing fountain of compassion deeper than warm holiday feelings that pass with the season?

In the first two chapters of Luke, it is striking that the Holy Spirit is mentioned seven times. His work is cited in the lives of the unborn John the Baptist (1:15), Mary (1:35), Elizabeth (1:41), Zacharias (1:67), and Simeon (2:25-27). Here, in what we often call “the Christmas story,” there is no mention of people having something just come to mind or of feeling strangely moved. Instead, the Holy Spirit is identified as the One who guided Simeon, filled Zacharias and Elizabeth, and created the baby in Mary’s womb.

Do we, like them, recognize the Spirit’s voice in the midst of all others? Are we alert to His promptings and eager to obey? Will we allow His warmth and love to fill our hearts and flow through our hands?

Today, the presence and power of Christ remain with us through the Holy Spirit, who is the true, eternal Spirit of Christmas—all year long.

Let the fullness of Thy Spirit

Fall upon us here this hour.

How we need a new anointing

Of the Holy Ghost and power. —Jarvis

Jesus went away so the Spirit could come to stay.

Luke 1:45. Blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the lord.

Yes, it is the performance that is so often lacking, because the faith is not forthcoming on our part. We admire the green pastures of God's word, but fail to lie down and rest our souls upon them. We are caught in the Slough of Despond, and never see the steps of promise, all ready there to guide us out. We are shut up in Doubting Castle, and the key of God's promise lies rusty and unused. We lose heart, and faint, and give up the fight, when one taste of the rich cordial of God's promises would give us fresh life and vigor. How much simpler our lives would be, how powerful and free from care and worry, if we only believed that in Christ there is all we need to satisfy every longing of our heart, to make us thoroughly happy and useful and holy. F. S. WEBSTER.

Luke 1:53

Poor Rich People - Martin Luther once observed, "Riches are the least worthy gifts which God can give a man. What are they to God's Word, to bodily gifts: such as beauty and health; or to the gifts of the mind, such as understanding, skill, and wisdom? Or what are they compared to spiritual treasures? Yet men toil for wealth day and night, and take no rest. Therefore God commonly gives riches to foolish people, to whom He gives nothing else!"

The children of a certain family, during a period of prosperity, were constantly left in the nursery in the care of servants. At length a depression came, the servants had to be discharged, and the parents once again cared for their little ones. One evening when the father returned home after a day filled with business worries, his little girl climbed up on his lap and, twining her soft, childish arms around his neck, said, "Papa, don't get rich again. You didn't come into the nursery when you were rich; but now we can be around you and get on your knee and kiss you. Please, please, don't get rich again, Papa!" The father suddenly realized how empty his life had been when he was busy making money but neglecting his family. He saw how he had actually been squandering his God-given time which should have been devoted to higher goals, and abiding values.

Some years ago in Bogota, Colombia, a tame pigeon swallowed a diamond and several emeralds worth \$40,000 and flew away. The news item stated that the children of a millionaire had been playing with the stones when the bird snatched them. What a parable on wealth that is amassed at the expense of spiritual, moral, and personal values. Such riches soon "take wings and fly away." Jesus says that few rich men reach the kingdom. Completely occupied with the affairs of this world, neglecting the things of the soul, they are "sent empty away" when their time to leave this earth arrives. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Carve your name high above shifting sands,
On rocks that defy decay;
All that you'll hold in your poor, dead hand
Is that which you've given away! —Anon.

The real measure of our wealth is how much we would be worth if we lost our money!

Don't Pray for a Life of Convenience - Thanking God for the good things He has given us comes pretty easy. But thanking Him for an enduring "inconvenience" can be difficult.

Moira MacLachlan (a pen name) experienced a shattering, life-altering event when she was raped and became pregnant. Because of her decision to raise the child, there would be a daily reminder of this violent disruption of life.

Moira cautiously likens her situation to Mary's unexpected pregnancy. She writes, "This world considers any disruption of its thoroughly detailed preparation for a life of convenience a rational excuse for unbridled anguish and rebellion. To [the world], the thankful prayer I raise to God for the radical explosion that took place in my life is akin to insanity. The disruptions in the plans of Mary and me served to bring us both to the same conclusion: Sometimes God's purpose in shattering the peace in our lives is to remind us that He has a purpose for everything." Moira thanks God for her beautiful child, and concludes, "Don't pray for a life of convenience, you might get it—and wouldn't that be too bad?" ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Luke 1 - I recently came across a 90's version of **"The Night Before Christmas."** Let me read just part of it to you:

Twas the night before Christmas and Santa's a wreck...

How to live in a world that's politically correct?

His workers no longer want to be called "Elves."

"Vertically Challenged" they were calling themselves.

Four reindeer had vanished, without much propriety,

Released to the wilds by the humane society.

The runners had been removed from his sleigh;

the ruts were termed dangerous by the E.P.A.

And to show you the strangeness of life's ebbs and flows,

Rudolf was suing over the misuse of his nose

And had gone on Geraldo, in front of the nation,

Demanding millions in over-due compensation. ([Brian Bill](#))

Luke 2

Luke 2:1-7 Because Of Love

December 9, 2012 — by Anne Cetas

I received some nice Christmas gifts last year—ski pants, a bracelet, and a Kindle reader. But what I enjoyed the most were the gifts of time with people: playing with nine grandnephews and grandnieces from out of state; having a niece and her husband and their 18-month-old daughter attend our church's Christmas Eve service with us; visiting with a retired co-worker and his wife who are suffering with some health issues; celebrating the season with long-time friends; reading the Christmas story with loved ones. These were all special gifts because of the love we share.

God the Father, because of love, sent a gift to this world 2,000 years ago. Jesus was wrapped in swaddling cloths and laid in a manger (Luke 2:7). The shepherds knew He was an amazing gift because an angel announced His birth to them in the middle of the night while they were in their fields (vv.8-14). They rushed to see Him and then couldn't help but share the news of this Gift with others (vv.16-17). Yet many later rejected Him, and He was crucified for our sins and buried. But He rose from the tomb and now offers salvation to all who receive Him.

Thank You, God, for the Gift You gave—because of love.

Because of love God sent His Son

From heaven's throne to earth

To rescue us from sin and death—

A Gift of priceless worth! —Sper

God's gift to the world is the life-giving Savior.

Luke 2 -Whoever Takes the Son -(An exceptional illustration!)

Many years ago, there was a very wealthy man who shared a passion for art collecting with his son. They had priceless works by Picasso and Van Gogh adorning the walls of their family estate. As winter approached, war engulfed the nation, and the young man left to serve his country. After only a few short weeks, his father received a telegram. His son had died. Distraught and lonely, the

old man faced the upcoming Christmas holidays with anguish and sadness. The joy of the season had vanished with the death of his son. On Christmas morning, a knock on the door awakened the depressed old man. As he walked to the door, the masterpieces of art on the walls only reminded him that his son was not coming home. As he opened the door he was greeted by a soldier with a large package in his hands who said, "I was a friend of your son. I was was the one he was rescuing when he died. May I come in for a few moments? I have something to show you."

The soldier mentioned that he was an artist and then gave the old man the package. The paper gave way to reveal a portrait of the man's son. Though the world would never consider it the work of a genius, the painting featured the young man's face in striking detail. Overcome with emotion, the man hung the portrait over the fireplace, pushing aside millions of dollars worth of art. His task completed, the old man sat in his chair and spent Christmas gazing at the gift he had been given. The painting of his son soon became his most prized possession, far eclipsing any interest in the pieces of art for which museums around the world clamored. The following spring, the old man died. The art world waited with anticipation for the upcoming auction. According to the will of the old man, all the art works would be auctioned on Christmas Day, the day he had received the greatest gift. The day soon arrived and art collectors from around the world gathered to bid on some of the world's most spectacular paintings. Dreams would be fulfilled that day. The auction began with a painting that was not on anyone's museum list. It was the painting of the man's son. The auctioneer asked for an opening bid, but the room was silent. "Who will open the bidding with \$100?" No one spoke. Finally someone said, "Who cares about that painting. It's just a picture of his son. Let's move on to the good stuff."

The auctioneer responded, "No, we have to sell this one first. Now, who will take the son?" Finally, a neighbor of the old man offered \$10 dollars. "That's all I have. I knew the boy, so I'd like to have it." The auctioneer said, "Going once, going twice...gone." The gavel fell. Cheers filled the room and someone exclaimed, "Now we can bid on the real treasures!" The auctioneer looked at the room filled with people and announced that the auction was over. Everyone was stunned. Someone spoke up and said, "What do you mean, it's over? We didn't come here for a painting of someone's son. There are millions of dollars worth of art here! What's going on?" The auctioneer replied,

"It's very simple. According to the will of the father, whoever takes the son...gets it all."

Puts things in perspective, doesn't it? The message is the same this Christmas. **Because of the Father's love...whoever takes the Son gets it all.** ([Brian Bill](#))

Luke 2:1-7 Don't Pray for a Life of Convenience

Thanking God for the good things He has given us comes pretty easy. But thanking Him for an enduring "inconvenience" can be difficult.

Moira MacLachlan (a pen name) experienced a shattering, life-altering event when she was raped and became pregnant. Because of her decision to raise the child, there would be a daily reminder of this violent disruption of life.

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Our Daily Bread, December 20, 1996

Luke 2:8-12 Joy

December 16, 2012 — by Julie Ackerman Link

After Adam and Eve disobeyed God, joy was lost. God expelled them from their garden home to prevent something worse from happening. If they had eaten from the tree of life after eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, they would have lived forever in their misery.

Life outside the garden was not easy. Adam and Eve had to work hard for their food. The reality of death was everywhere, and animals preyed on one another. Even worse, the couple's firstborn son murdered his younger brother. What could be worse? Sin had pierced their lives, and the couple could not stop joy from draining out.

But God had a plan to restore joy. Joy was lost in the Garden when death came, but joy returned through birth—the birth of God's

own Son. “I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people” (Luke 2:10). Jesus grew up to heal the sick, give sight to the blind, and raise the dead. But this was just a taste of things to come. God entered our world, experienced our sorrow, and conquered death, giving us hope that He will keep His promise to end pain, and eliminate sorrow and death (John 11:25-26; 1 Cor. 15:3-4; Rev. 21:4). No wonder Christmas is the season of joy!

Have you felt the joy of the shepherds,

Who were first to behold the sight

Of that holy Child of Mary,

On that wonderful Christmas night? —Brill

The joy of Christmas is Jesus.

Luke 2:8-19 Take Time To Ponder

August 4, 2013 — by Dennis Fisher

Parents love to remember the developmental milestones of their children. They will record in a baby book when their little ones first roll over, then crawl, and take their first steps. Often they will take photographs and save baby clothing to bring back the memories of those precious experiences.

According to Luke 2:19, Mary, the mother of Jesus, kept a baby book of sorts—in her heart. She treasured the promises that had been given about her Son and “pondered them.” The Greek word for “ponder” means “placing together for comparison.” Mary had heard of great things concerning her Son from angels and shepherds (1:32; 2:17-18). As His life unfolded, she would compare those promises with how her Son acted to fulfill them.

Our faith will be strengthened and we will be encouraged when we meditate on what the Scriptures say about God and compare it with the way He works in our own lives (John 14:21). He is a God who answers prayer (1 John 5:14-15), comforts us in our suffering (2 Cor. 1:3-4), and provides for our needs (Phil. 4:19).

When we take time to ponder, we will see the faithfulness of our great God.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,

Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide,

Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow—

Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside! —Chisholm

God gives by promise that we may take by faith.

Luke 2:8-20 Now Is The Time

December 25, 2011 — by Jennifer Benson Schuldt

During our church’s Christmas celebration, I watched the choir members assemble in front of the congregation while the music director rifled through papers on a slim black stand. The instruments began, and the singers launched into a well-known song that started with these words: “Come, now is the time to worship.”

Although I expected to hear a time-honored Christmas carol, I smiled at the appropriate choice of music. Earlier that week I had been reading Luke’s account of Jesus’ birth, and I noticed that the first Christmas lacked our modern-day parties, gifts, and feasting—but it did include worship.

After the angel announced Jesus’ birth to some wide-eyed shepherds, a chorus of angels began “praising God and saying: ‘Glory to God in the highest!’” (Luke 2:13-14). The shepherds responded by running to Bethlehem where they found the newborn King lying in a barnyard bassinet. They returned to their fields “glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen” (v.20). Coming face to face with the Son inspired the shepherds to worship the Father.

Today, consider your response to Jesus’ arrival on earth. Is there room for worship in your heart on this day that celebrates His birth?

Grant us, Father, hearts of worship

At this time of Jesus' birth;

We would see anew His glory

Shine throughout this sin-cursed earth. —D. De Haan

Heaven's choir came down to sing when heaven's King came down to save.

Luke 2:13-20 Moment Of Grace

December 24, 2012 — by David C. McCasland

Every year, I enjoy listening to the BBC's worldwide live radio broadcast of the Christmas Eve service from King's College Chapel in Cambridge, England. This Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols combines Scripture readings, prayers, and choral music in a moving service of worship. One year, I was struck by the announcer's description of the congregation leaving the magnificent chapel, saying they were "stepping out of this moment of grace and back into the real world."

Wasn't it that way on the first Christmas? The shepherds heard an angel announce the birth of the Savior, Christ the Lord (Luke 2:11), followed by a "multitude of the heavenly host praising God" (vv.13-14). After they found Mary, Joseph, and the Baby in Bethlehem, the shepherds couldn't help telling others about this Child (v.17). "The shepherds went back to work, glorifying and praising God for everything that they had heard and seen, which had happened just as they had been told" (v.20 Phillips).

They had been changed by their "moment of grace." As they stepped back into their real world, they carried the good news about Jesus in their hearts and voices.

May we too take God's grace into the real world this Christmas and every day of the new year.

May the grace that we encounter

At this time of Christmas cheer

Not be true just in this season

But remain throughout the year. —Sper

Take the joy of Christmas with you every day.

Luke 2:16-18 - What a sad commentary on what the birth of our Lord has come to mean is this all-too-true parody of the wonderful words of Luke's Christmas narrative. "And there were in the same country children keeping watch over their stockings by the fireplace. And, Lo! Santa Claus came upon them; and they were sore afraid. And Santa said unto them: "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which be to all people who can afford them. For unto you will be given great feasts of turkey, dressing and cake; and many presents; and this shall be a sign unto you, ye shall find the presents, wrapped in bright paper, lying beneath a tree adorned with tinsel, colored balls and lights. And suddenly, there will be with you a multitude of relatives and friends, praising you and saying, 'Thank you so much, it was just what I wanted.' And it shall come to pass as the friends and relatives have gone away into their own homes, the parents shall say to one another, 'Darn it! What a mess to clean up! I'm tired, let's go to bed and pick it up tomorrow. Thank goodness, Christmas only comes once a year!' And they go with haste to their cold bed and find their desired rest."

Luke 2:20

In a delightful sermon titled, "When the Angels Were Gone," G. L. Chappell emphasizes that when the angels announced the good news to the shepherds the men took action. They went to Bethlehem to see the Christ-child for themselves.

Chappell then sets up a hypothetical situation in which the shepherds respond quite differently They simply sit around discussing the brightness of the angelic appearance and the wonder of the message.

Some 40 years later, one of the shepherds tells his small grandson about that eventful night. The youngster asks,

"But Granddaddy, was what the angels said really true?"

The shepherd continues telling him what he has heard about Jesus, even the reports of His resurrection. But when the lad keeps

asking, all the elderly shepherd can do is shake his head and say,

"I don't really know. I never went to see."

Many people are like that shepherd. They have heard about Jesus but they have never come to Him. —H. V Lugt [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**WHEN YOU LOOK TO THE LIGHT
YOU RECEIVE ETERNAL LIFE**

Luke 2:22-38 Waiting . . .

November 9, 2011 — by Julie Ackerman Link

Autumn is hunting season here in Michigan. For a few weeks every year, licensed hunters are allowed to go out into the woods and hunt for various species of wildlife. Some hunters build elaborate tree stands high above the ground where they sit quietly for hours waiting for a deer to wander within rifle range.

When I think of hunters who are so patient when it comes to waiting for deer, I think of how impatient we can be when we have to wait for God. We often equate "wait" with "waste." If we're waiting for something (or someone), we think we are doing nothing, which, in an accomplishment-crazed culture, seems like a waste of time.

But waiting serves many purposes. In particular, it proves our faith. Those whose faith is weak are often the first to give up waiting, while those with the strongest faith are willing to wait indefinitely.

When we read the Christmas story in Luke 2, we learn of two people who proved their faith by their willingness to wait. Simeon and Anna waited long, but their time wasn't wasted; it put them in a place where they could witness the coming of Messiah (vv.22-38).

Not receiving an immediate answer to prayer is no reason to give up faith.

Not ours to know the reason why

Unanswered is our prayer,

But ours to wait for God's own time

To lift the cross we bear. —Anon.

Waiting for God is never a waste of time.

Luke 2:25-35

THE LONGING - Look at the people around you: the shoppers walking the malls hunting for last-minute Christmas gifts, the enthusiastic fans at football and basketball games, fellow employees in the workplace. Do you think they've found happiness?

As people rush through life -- hurrying from paycheck to payment and from job to home and then doing it all over again -- many of them feel empty inside. They long for something to make their existence more meaningful and fulfilling.

Unlike Simeon, whom we read about in Luke, chapter 2, many people don't know what will bring happiness. The Holy Spirit had told Simeon that he would not die until he had seen the promised Messiah. When that extraordinary day came and Simeon came to the temple to meet Jesus, peace and contentment were guaranteed.

All around us are people who could have that same peace and contentment if they could just meet Jesus. As we see the crowds each day, we should be reminded to pray that the Holy Spirit will touch their hearts and make them want to see Jesus. They may be rushing around, but in their hearts they have a void waiting to be filled by the Messiah, the Lord Jesus. -J D Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Now none but Christ can satisfy,
None other name for me;
There's love and life and lasting joy,
Lord Jesus, found in Thee. - McGranahan

There is a longing in every heart that only Jesus can satisfy.

Luke 2:40-50

SIR Isaac Newton, a seventeenth-century scientist, is renowned for having discovered the law of gravity. What some people don't know is that he was a dedicated Christian. In fact, while at the height of his career in physics and mathematics, he decided to turn his attention toward studying God's Word. When a colleague tried to lure him back to the field of science, Newton replied, "I do not want to be trifling away my time, when I should be about the King's business." Although he retained his interest in science, he made theological pursuits his top priority.

Newton's response challenges every Christian. How dedicated are we to doing the King's business?

No matter what we do for a living, we must be dedicated to serving God in and through our daily occupation.

The compelling motive of the Lord Jesus, even as a boy, was to do God's will—to be about His Father's business.

Imagine if that were true of every believer. Even if our employment or profession is considered secular, we can make the King's business our chief commitment. —P R V ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Luke 2:41-52 Great Mathematician

Karl Friedrich Gauss, considered one of the greatest mathematicians of all time, first showed his precocious ability at age nine when he was admitted to an arithmetic class. The teacher gave what appeared to be a complicated problem, which in reality could be solved by the use of a simple formula. Although he had never been taught the formula, young Gauss handed in his slate within seconds. For an hour he sat idly by while his classmates labored. When all of the slates were in, Gauss's was the only one with the right answer. The stunned teacher was so impressed that he bought Gauss the best available math textbook and did what he could to advance the boy's progress.

Today in the Word, MBI, 12-28-91

Luke 2:41-52 Becoming

May 14, 2013 — by Julie Ackerman Link

I grew up in a small town. No famous people. No busy streets. Not much to do. Yet I've always been thankful for my quiet, uncomplicated upbringing.

One evening when my husband and I were attending a business dinner, a new acquaintance asked me where I was from. When I told her, she said, "Aren't you embarrassed to admit it?"

Unsure whether or not she was joking, I simply said, "No."

Although my town was sometimes belittled for its lack of sophistication, it was not lacking in things that matter. My family was part of a church community in which parents brought up children "in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).

Jesus also grew up in a small town: Nazareth. A man named Nathanael asked, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46). Jesus proved that the answer is yes. Even though He grew up in an insignificant place, He was the most significant person in all of history.

Experience taught me and Scripture confirms that what matters is not where you grow up but how you grow up. Sometimes we feel insignificant compared to sophisticated people from prominent places. But we are significant to God, and He can make us strong in spirit and filled with His wisdom.

O teach me what it cost You, Lord,
To make a sinner whole;
And help me understand anew
The value of one soul! —Anon.

What we become is more important than where we're from.

Luke 3:3, 7-8

And [John] went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. . . . Then he said to the multitudes . . . "Bear fruits worthy of repentance" (Luke 3:3, 7-8).

Repentance - Thomas Russell Ybarra defined a Christian as a person who does "repentance on a Sunday for what he did on Saturday and is going to do on Monday."

True biblical repentance is never that short lived; it is a complete about-face. John challenged the Jews to prepare themselves for the coming Messiah by turning from their sins to holiness. This meant changing their minds and actions.

The sorry truth is that repentance has very little to do with crying our eyes out. Repentant people may be tearful, but tearful people are not always repentant. Repentance means turning around. It is a compass test; does a person know how to go south after he or she has been going north?

God is sometimes described as repenting of His plans, such as with Nineveh (Jonah 3:10), but this may be humanity's limited attempt to explain the actions of an all-knowing God. What is significant, even if from a human standpoint, is that God in His repentance makes a complete U-turn, and this is a perfect model for us to follow.

Never-on-Sunday sinning is not what the Changemaker had in mind. Change of heart means a change of life every day.

Luke 3:1-16

Bad roads were getting worse in a Detroit suburb. Commuters and homeowners let their local government officials know they wanted action, not more talk about who was responsible—the city or the borough—for the repairs. They wanted the road fixed and the pot-holes filled. They didn't want to risk losing a tailpipe or a tire every time they ventured onto Lakeshore Drive. Though one of the most scenic drives in the city, it had become what one Detroiter called a "kidney-crunching, teeth-chattering, tire-popping experience that even bus drivers dreaded."

Luke 3 tells of another kind of rough road—"the way of the Lord"—that needed repair, not talk. In John the Baptist's day this "road" was in bad shape, for the moral and spiritual condition of the nation of Israel had deteriorated. John made it clear that if the people were going to be ready for the Messiah they had to "prepare the way" by getting rid of the road hazards of selfishness, greed, and violence. He also made it plain that they had to do more than just talk about changing their ways. He challenged His hearers to prove their faith by turning from their sins in genuine repentance.

Although John's message was directed to Israel, every Christian can profit from it. Unconfessed sins are the potholes of the Christian journey. To repair the road, we need only repent. —M. R. De Haan II ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Repentance not only regrets sin, but also renounces it.

Luke 4

Luke 4:1-13

Before I was old enough to get a driver's license, I had a haunting fear of getting behind the wheel of a car. When I thought about driving with an open stretch of road before me, I was afraid I'd be overwhelmed by an obsession to go as fast as the car would go. I couldn't imagine having the self-control to drive no faster than road conditions and the speed limit would allow. When I turned sixteen, though, I learned that I could control the accelerator instead of being controlled by it. Just because I was able to press the pedal to the floor didn't mean I had to do so.

Many times I've heard people try to justify sin by claiming that a sudden, unusual, and irresistible temptation had confronted them. And sometimes we reason that a certain questionable action might actually be all right because the opportunity came along at just the right time and provided just what we thought we needed.

One of the lessons we learn from the temptation of Jesus is that God will always provide a way of escape from temptation or He will give us the strength to resist it. He expects us to be discerning and to be conscious of the meaning of temptation. Beyond that, He wants us to know that we can rely on His Spirit and His Word, the way Jesus did, and to resist temptation rather than be ruined by it. —M. R. De Haan II ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Every temptation is an opportunity to get nearer to God

Luke 4:1-13 Fix Your Eyes

July 25, 2010 — by Julie Ackerman Link

Over and over again, my driver's education instructor said these two words: "Drive ahead." This was his way of telling me to focus on the horizon, not just on my immediate surroundings. Drivers who continually look to the right or to the left may well go into the ditch.

Satan is good at causing "roadside distractions" that tempt us to look at him rather than at Jesus. If he can get our attention, he may be able to get us off track and delay our spiritual progress. He even tried this with Jesus Himself!

After Jesus was baptized, Satan tried to deter Him by suggesting "better" ways to accomplish His work. Satan told Jesus that He could prove He was the Son of God by throwing Himself from the temple (Luke 4:9-11). But Jesus knew that proving He was God's Son would come by submitting Himself to the cross, not by flinging Himself from a high building. He responded, "You shall not tempt the Lord your God" (v.12). Jesus had His eyes on our redemption, and He knew He couldn't accomplish it by taking a detour around the cross.

The way to stay out of spiritual ditches is to fix our eyes on Jesus (Heb. 12:2) and refuse to even glance at Satan's distractions.

The only way to overcome
Temptations that we face,
Is to be focused on the Lord,
Who strengthens by His grace. —Sper

Satan ought not be in our line of vision, but behind us. —Leonard Sweet

Luke 4:1-13 Out Of Context

March 27, 2013 — by Julie Ackerman Link

When a friend started making random despairing statements, people were concerned for him and started giving advice and offering encouragement. As it turned out, he was simply having fun by quoting song lyrics out of context to start a conversation. Friends who tried to help wasted their time by offering help he didn't need and advice he didn't want. The consequences of my friend's misleading statements were not serious, but they could have been. In taking time to respond to his false need, someone could have neglected someone else's truly serious need.

Some people who take words out of context just want to gain attention or win an argument. But others are more sinister. They twist truth to gain power over others. They endanger not only lives but also souls.

When people use words to manipulate others to behave in certain ways—or worse, when they quote the Bible out of context to convince others to do wrong—there's only one defense: We need to know what God truly says in His Word. Jesus was able to resist temptation with the truth (Luke 4). We have the same resource. God has given us His Word and Spirit to guide us and keep us from being deceived or misled.

Your words of pure, eternal truth

Shall yet unshaken stay,

When all that man has thought or planned

Like chaff shall pass away. —Anon.

If we hold on to God's truth, we won't be trapped by Satan's lies.

Luke 4:4 Dissident Soviet Jew

Anatoli Shcharansky, a dissident Soviet Jew, kissed his wife goodbye as she left Russia for freedom in Israel. His parting words to her were, "I'll see you soon in Jerusalem." But Anatoli was detained and finally imprisoned. Their reunion in Jerusalem would not only be postponed, it might never occur. During long years in Russian prisons and work camps Anatoli was stripped of his personal belongings. His only possession was a miniature copy of the Psalms. Once during his imprisonment, his refusal to release the book to the authorities cost him 130 days in solitary confinement.

Finally, twelve years after parting with his wife, he was offered freedom. In February 1986, as the world watched, Shcharansky was allowed to walk away from Russian guards toward those who would take him to Jerusalem. But in the final moments of captivity, the guards tried again to confiscate the Psalms book. Anatoli threw himself face down in the snow and refused to walk on to freedom without it. Those words had kept him alive during imprisonment. He would not go on to freedom without them.

From Discipleship Journal, Issue #43 (1988), p. 24

Luke 4:22 A Local Boy

The return of the local-boy-made-good is not always the triumph that legend has it. Around the turn of the century there was a young man named James Lewis Kraft who was a clerk in Ferguson's general store at Fort Erie, Ontario, across the Niagara River from Buffalo. Kraft had been born on a farm near there. He was obviously a good clerk, appreciated by his employer, because he was making \$150 a month—a good salary in those days.

A neighboring storekeeper, a man named Land, remembered him very well. Years later, when Kraft revisited the Land store on a trip home, the elderly proprietor identified him with every sign of pleasure. A good deal of water had gone over the falls during that interval. James Kraft had founded the Kraft Cheese Company in Chicago. The company's products had reached practically every grocery store in the U.S.A. and adjacent Canada as well. Millions of dollars in advertising had etched the Kraft name into public consciousness, and J.L. Kraft had every expectation that neither the name nor the products had bypassed the admiring attention of his old friend.

But Land merely said, "Why, hello, Lew. Haven't seen you for years. You still clerkin' up at Ferguson's?"

It couldn't, as the saying goes, have happened to a nicer guy. For J.L. Kraft was a humble man, even though he built a multi-million-dollar business.

Bits & Pieces, July 21, 1994, pp. 19-21

Luke 4:14-30 Rejection Can Be Irreparable

As far as we know, Christ never returned to Nazareth. Rejection can be irreparable, final. God never sends anyone to hell. It is a chosen state. Having pursued it through life, God finally lets us have it our way.

Bruce Larson, Luke, p. 92-3

Luke 5

Luke 5:12-16

In a letter to friends, hymn writer Wendell P. Loveless told about a visitor to the United States who wanted to make a telephone call. He entered a phone booth, but found it to be different from those in his own country. It was beginning to get dark, so he had difficulty finding the number in the directory. He noticed a light on the ceiling, but he didn't know how to turn it on. As he tried again to find the number in the fading twilight, a passerby noted his plight and said, "If you want to turn the light on, you have to shut the door." To the visitor's amazement and satisfaction, when he closed the door, the booth was filled with light. He soon located the number and completed the call.

When we draw aside in a quiet place to pray, we must block out our busy world and open our hearts to the Father. He then will illuminate our darkened world of disappointments and trials. We will enter into communion with God, sense His presence, and be assured of His provision for us. Our Lord often went to be alone with the heavenly Father. Sometimes it was after a busy day of preaching and healing, as in Luke 5. At other times, it was before making a major decision (Luke 6:12).

We too can have the confidence that "if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us" (1John 5:14). But we must remember that to "turn on the light," we must first "shut the door" by getting alone with God. —R. W. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

One of the great secrets of prayer is prayer in secret

Luke 5:17-26

WHENEVER I read the story of the paralyzed man who was healed by Jesus, I think about his friends. They cared enough about him to take him to Jesus.

Kelly, a college student, shattered her arm in the first varsity volleyball game of the season. This meant she couldn't work at her part-time job. Then her car stopped running. To top it all off, the young man she had been dating stopped calling. Kelly felt so low that she began spending hours alone in her room crying.

Laura, a Christian friend on the volleyball team, became concerned about Kelly and decided to help her. So she called some friends and they planned a party. They collected some money, and a couple of fellows got her car running again. They found a temporary job she could do using just one hand. And they got her tickets to see her basketball hero, Isiah Thomas, when the Detroit Pistons came to town. Before long, Kelly was herself again. Then, when she asked why they did all this for her, Laura was able to tell her about the love of Jesus.

Having a friend in need is an opportunity to show the love of Christ in deeds and then in words. We never know what mighty things God can do with a small act of kindness. —D C Egnor

Luke 5:17-32

Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him (Proverbs 26:12).

In 1984, the House of Representatives disciplined two United States congressmen for immoral behavior. The first, a conservative known for his stand against abortion-on-demand and pornography, tearfully confessed his wrongdoing and voted with his colleagues for his own censure. Many newspeople, however, continued to criticize him. They focused on his prior hypocrisy, refusing to commend him for repenting and turning from his immorality. The second politician, a liberal who openly favored abortion and pornography, defiantly maintained he had done nothing wrong and admitted he was a homosexual. Many newspeople who condemned the first man were far less critical of the second. Apparently they were more comfortable with an open, calloused attitude toward immorality than an open and genuine sorrow for sin.

This incident points out our greatest sin—the refusal to acknowledge our transgressions. The Lord Jesus reached down to the most despised people of His day—publicans and harlots—and forgave them when they repented. But He condemned self-righteous people and resisted all who didn't face up to their sin. Refusing to acknowledge sin is a sure ticket to hell!

Insisting we don't need His forgiveness is life's greatest sin. God can forgive us no matter what we do, but we must repent and turn to Jesus. —H. V. Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Forgiveness flourishes in the soil of confession

Luke 5:27-35 Jesus' Team

March 8, 2013 — by David C. Egnor

In 2002 the Oakland Athletics built a winning baseball team in an unorthodox way. They had lost three top players after 2001, and the team didn't have money to sign any stars. So Oakland's general manager, Billy Beane, used some often-neglected statistics to assemble a group of lesser-known players either "past their prime" or seen by other teams as not skilled enough. That ragtag team ran off a 20-game winning streak on the way to winning their division and 103 games.

This reminds me a little of the way Jesus put together His "team" of disciples. He included rough Galilean fishermen, a zealot, and even a despised tax collector named Levi (Matthew). This reminds me that "God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty" (1 Cor. 1:27). God used those dedicated men (minus Judas) to ignite a movement that affected the world so dramatically it has never been the same.

There's a lesson here for us. Sometimes we seek out the familiar, the influential, and the rich. And we tend to ignore people with less status or those with physical limitations.

Jesus put some of society's less desirable people on His team—treating everyone the same. With the Spirit's power and guidance, we too can honor all people equally.

In Jesus Christ we all are equal,

For God's Spirit makes us one;

As we give each other honor,

We give glory to His Son. —Fitzhugh

There are no unimportant people in the body of Christ.

Luke 6

Luke 6:6-11

THE religious leaders in Jesus' day were supposed to go to synagogue to hear the Word of God, to worship, and to serve. Instead they went to find out something about Jesus to criticize. Their primary purpose was to discredit Christ.

People in churches today aren't much different. Too many Christians go to church to find fault, to gossip, and to criticize. In his book *Angry People*, Warren Wiersbe wrote: "Joseph Parker, the great British preacher . . . was preaching at the City Temple in London. After the service one of the listeners came up to him and said,

'Dr. Parker, you made a grammatical error in your sermon.'

He then proceeded to point out the error to the pastor. Joseph Parker looked at the man and said,

"And what else did you get out of the message?"

What a fitting rebuke!"

No one in the church is perfect—not the pastor, the organist, the song leader, or the ushers. We all make mistakes. A faultfinding spirit can produce only discouragement and strife. And people who always look for mistakes miss out on the instruction, correction, and blessings the Lord has for them. We all need to ask ourselves this question: Why do I go to church? —D C Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Luke 6:27-36 Cornered

June 26, 2012 — by Jennifer Benson Schuldt

One Sunday morning, D. L. Moody entered a house in Chicago to escort some children to Sunday school. During his visit, three men backed him into a corner and threatened him. "Look here," Moody said. "Give a fellow a chance to say his prayers, won't you?" The men actually allowed him to call out to God, and Moody prayed for them so earnestly that they left the room.

Had I been in Moody's situation, I might have called for help or looked for the back door. I'm not sure I would have acted on Jesus' command to His followers: "Pray for those who mistreat you" (Luke 6:28 NIV).

Praying for the people who treat us with contempt is one way to "do good to those who hate [us]" (v.27). Jesus explained that Christians get no credit for swapping acts of kindness with other "nice" people. He said, "Even sinners do the same" (v.33). However, blessing our persecutors (Rom. 12:14) sets us apart from them and aligns us with the Most High, because God is kind even to wicked people (Luke 6:35).

Today, if you feel "cornered" by someone, seek safety if the situation calls for it, and follow Jesus' teaching: Pray for that person (Luke 23:34). Prayer is your best defense.

We want to know Your heart, Lord, and have Your

wisdom to know how to handle opposition.

Give us patience to show kindness.

Guide us, we pray.

Returning good for good is human; returning good for evil is divine.

Luke 6:27 Flowers D.O.A.

Flowers are a thing of beauty and an expression of sentiment which may mean, "I love you," "Get well," or "My condolences." In keeping with the cynical spirit of our age, a new venture called Flowers of Extinction will deliver buds and petals guaranteed to be

dead upon arrival. The offensive gift is designed as a way to get even with former bosses, jilting lovers, or whomever you would like to insult with revenge. It may sound like a clever retort, but it won't meet with Christ's approval. "Do good to them which hate you," Jesus said (Luke 6:27). Has someone wronged you? Do you feel bitter about the injustice of a friend? I have a suggestion. Instead of scheming for a way to return evil for evil, love your enemies and former friends. Why not send them flowers? Instead of Flowers of Extinction, make your peace offering a Bouquet of Distinction.

Source unknown

Luke 6:27-36 The Life We'd Like To See

July 13, 2013 — by David C. McCasland

The annual Texas Book Festival in Austin draws thousands of people who enjoy browsing for books, attending discussions led by acclaimed authors, and gleaning advice from professional writers. At one such festival, an author of young adult fiction told aspiring writers, "Write the book that you want to find on the shelf." That's a powerful recommendation for writing and for living. What if we decided to live the way we want everyone else to live?

In Luke 6:27-36, Jesus urged His followers to pursue a lifestyle that demonstrates God's mercy to all: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you" (vv.27-28). He also said that generosity and a lack of retaliation should characterize our reaction to unreasonable treatment (vv.29-30). Jesus concluded, "Just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise" (v.31).

Impossible? Yes, if we rely on our own strength and resolve. The strength comes from the Spirit. And the resolve comes from remembering how God has treated us: "He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful" (vv.35-36). That's a life we all long to see.

All the way my Savior leads me—

What have I to ask beside?

Can I doubt His tender mercy,

Who through life has been my Guide? —Crosby

Christianity is not just Christ in you, but Christ living His life through you.

Luke 6:30 Sacrificial Giving

Christians should give sacrificially to help people in need. That's what Henry Richards did when he brought the gospel to the people of Banza Mateke. Each day he would translate and explain 10 verses from the book of Luke. When he came to the 6th chapter, he hesitated because most of his followers were very poor, and might misunderstand the 30th verse. He said that Jesus' words illustrate a principle and had to be interpreted in the light of other Scriptures. But they took them literally and quickly asked for almost everything Richards owned. Without hesitation he gave them what they requested. Soon, his most cherished possessions were in their hands. After talking among themselves, the people concluded that Mr. Richards was truly a man of God, for they had never seen anyone so self-sacrificing. One by one they came and returned what he had given them. Because of his willingness to give up everything, the missionary's work bore much fruit.

Now, Scripture never condones selfishness and indolence, but encourages hard work and personal responsibility (2 Th. 3:10). For this reason we must be discerning when people ask for help, lest shysters become prosperous and saints become paupers. Yet our Lord's teaching is clear: when anyone has a genuine need, we who are His followers must be generous and never allow greed or a love for things to keep us from giving assistance. Source unknown

Luke 6:30-36

IT started as small talk at an estate sale. When Patsy Wassenaar asked Russell about his family, tears filled his eyes. "Both my parents died, and I'm alone," he replied. Touched, Patsy knew in her heart that God wanted her to show mercy to this man. So she and her husband invited Russell to stay with them. That was thirteen years ago. He's lived with the Wassenaars ever since.

Russell had slipped through the cracks of society. He had lived with his parents until they died, avoiding people and accumulating old discarded items he hoped to repair and sell. His house was stuffed with things nobody wanted. And Russell figured he fit right in—nobody seemed to want him either.

But now he has a "family," a comfortable place to live, and work to do each day. He still goes to estate sales, but he's no longer ignored and alone.

Becoming involved in someone's life may require sacrifice, but each of us needs to be willing to do good to those who need it the most. When one of God's unwanted people crosses our path, God is giving us an opportunity to practice godliness by showing His mercy and love.--D Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Luke 6:27-36 Doing Good

August 1, 2011 — by Marvin Williams

Someone once said, "The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway." I like that; it's a great reminder. In the book of Acts, Luke summarized Jesus' earthly ministry by saying that He "went about doing good" (10:38).

What does the Bible mean when it tells us to "do good"? Jesus did good by teaching, healing, feeding, and comforting people. Using Jesus as the perfect example, His followers are called to meet the needs of others, including those who hate them: "Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you" (Matt. 5:44; see also Luke 6:27-35). They are to serve their enemies without expecting anything in return.

Moreover, as opportunity arises, His followers are to do good especially to fellow believers (Gal. 6:10). They are not to let persecution, selfishness, and busyness cause them to forget to do good and to share what they have with others (Heb. 13:16).

To be like our Savior and His early followers, we should ask ourselves each day: "What good thing can I do today in Jesus' name?" When we do good, we will be offering a sacrifice that pleases God (Heb. 13:16) and that draws people to Him (Matt. 5:16).

From the example of Jesus,

Who went about doing good,

We are to honor our Savior

By helping wherever He would. —Hess

Imitate Jesus—go about doing good.

Luke 6:36-42 College Students

Many years ago two young men were working their way through Stanford University. At one point their money was almost gone, so they decided to engage the great pianist Paderewski for a concert and use the profits for board and tuition. Paderewski's manager asked for a guarantee of \$2000. The students worked hard to promote the concert, but they came up \$400 short. After the performance, they went to the musician, gave him all the money they had raised, and promised to pay the \$400 as soon as they could. It appeared that their college days were over. "No, boys, that won't do," said the pianist. "Take out of this \$1600 all your expenses, and keep for each of you 10 percent of the balance for your work. Let me have the rest."

Years passed. Paderewski became premier of Poland following World War I. Thousands of his countrymen were starving. Only one man could help - the head of the U.S. Food and Relief Bureau. Paderewski's appeal to him brought thousands of tons of food. Later he met the American statesman to thank him. "That's all right," replied Herbert Hoover. "Besides, you don't remember, but you helped me once when I was a student in college."

Source unknown

Luke 6:36-42 Good Action Brings Good Fortune

Baron De Rothschild once posed before an artist as a beggar. While the artist, Ary Scheffer, was painting him, the financier sat before him in rags and tatters holding a tin cup. A friend of the artist entered, and the baron was so well disguised that he was not recognized. Thinking he was really a beggar, the visitor dropped a coin into the cup.

Ten years later the man who gave the coin to Rothschild received a letter containing a bank order for 10,000 francs and the following message: "You one day gave a coin to Baron de Rothschild in the studio of Ary Scheffer. He has invested it and today sends you the capital which you entrusted to him, together with the compounded interest. A good action always brings good fortune. Signed, Baron de Rothschild."

Luke 6:37

HOW CAN I FORGIVE? - A seminary student earned his way through school driving a bus on Chicago's south side. One day a gang of young thugs boarded the bus and refused to pay the fare. The young man spotted a policeman, stopped the bus, and reported them. The officer made them pay, but then left. After the bus rounded a corner, the thugs beat the driver severely.

The gang members were rounded up, brought to trial, and found guilty. As soon as their sentences were announced, however, the student asked the judge if he could serve their jail terms for them. The judge and gang members were astounded. "It's because I forgive you," he explained. The request was denied, but in the months that followed, the student visited the young men in jail and led several of them to faith in Jesus Christ.

When Joseph's brother stood before him in Egypt asking for food, Joseph faced a great test. Years before, these men had planned to kill him, but they changed their minds and sold him into slavery. Now Joseph was in a position of power and could take revenge, but because he trusted God's sovereignty he offered them forgiveness.

Have you been wronged? Just as you trusted Christ to forgive you, ask Him for grace to forgive others. - H W Robinson ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord help me be kind and forgiving --
So oft Your forgiveness I've known
For sins I have daily committed;
Lord, grant me a love like Your own. --Anon.

Forgiveness is Christianity in action

See Related Topics:

FORGIVENESS AND UNFORGIVENESS

- List of links related to forgiveness/unforgiveness
 - Multiple illustrations and quotes related to forgiveness/unforgiveness
 - Exposition of "Forgiveness" in Ephesians 4:32
 - Exposition of "Forgiveness" in Colossians 3:13
 - Exposition of "Forgiveness" in Matthew 6:12 and Matthew 6:14-15
-

Luke 6:37-42

The seventeenth-century French churchman Fenelon said, "It is often our own imperfection which makes us reprove the imperfection of others; a sharp-sighted self-love of our own which cannot pardon the self-love of others."

Sometimes our own faults and imperfections make us see faults in others that don't even exist. A woman complained that her neighbor's windows were always dirty. One day, after complaining about them to a friend, the visitor encouraged her to wash her own windows. She followed the advice. The next time her friend visited, she exclaimed, "I can't believe it. As soon as I washed my windows, my neighbor must have cleaned hers too. Look at them shine."

Criticism also blinds us to the good that others accomplish. A man who built a large drinking fountain in a public square drew derogatory comments from an art critic about its design. Though somewhat hurt, the builder asked, "Is anyone drinking from it?" The builder was happy to learn that the fountain, even though the critic didn't like its design, was doing its job—and doing it well.

Instead of calling attention to others' imperfections, we should

examine ourselves. What we don't like in someone else might be the same thing that's wrong with us. And instead of judging others, we should look for the good in them and love them in spite of their faults. —R W De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When criticizing, don't forget: God is listening.

Luke 6:41

John was driving home late one night when he picked up a hitchhiker. As they rode along, he began to be suspicious of his passenger. John checked to see if his wallet was safe in the pocket of his coat that was on the seat between them, but it wasn't there! So he slammed on the brakes, ordered the hitchhiker out, and said,

"Hand over the wallet immediately!"

The frightened hitchhiker handed over a billfold, and John drove off. When he arrived home, he started to tell his wife about the experience, but she interrupted him, saying,

"Before I forget, John, do you know that you left your wallet at home this morning?"

Let's be careful not to form our opinions about others until we have all the facts. Instead, we should first take an honest look at ourselves. Many unkind words have been spoken and many relationships have been hurt because someone was too quick to judge another person. How important it is not to jump to conclusions! —H. G. Bosch ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

PEOPLE WHO JUMP TO CONCLUSIONS OFTEN LAND ON A LIE.

Luke 6:45 Empty Me

July 16, 2011 — by Cindy Hess Kasper

"What a rotten design," I grumbled, as I emptied our paper shredder. I was following good advice about shredding personal documents, but I could not empty the container without spilling strips of confetti all over the carpet! One day as I was gathering trash, I debated whether I'd even bother since it was only half-full. But when I slipped a small plastic bag over the top and flipped it upside down, I was pleased to see that not a bit of paper had fallen on the floor.

The error had been mine. I had been waiting until the container was filled to the brim before emptying it!

When we allow sin to fill up our hearts, it too will overflow into our life. Luke 6:45 says that "an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil." It is "out of the abundance of the heart" that we speak.

What if we were to empty our hearts of the rubbish of sin before it started spilling into our interactions with others? To dispose of our bitterness, stubborn pride, seething anger? (Eph. 4:26-32). First John 1:9 reminds us that "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

A paper shredder is designed to be a rubbish receptacle. You and I are not!

Search me, O God, and know my heart today;

Try me, O Savior, know my thoughts I pray.

See if there be some wicked way in me;

Cleanse me from every sin, and set me free. —Orr

Own up to your sin—you can't hide it from God anyway!

Luke 6:46-49 Earthquake-Proof Hotel

The great architect Frank Lloyd Wright was given the challenge of building the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo, one of the most earthquake-prone cities in the world. Wright's investigation showed that a solid foundation could be "floated" on a sixty-foot layer of soft mud underlying the hotel, which would provide a shock-absorbing but solid support for the immense building. Shortly after the hotel was completed it withstood the worst earthquake in fifty-two years, while lesser buildings fell in ruins around it.

Today in the Word, March, 1989, p. 6

Luke 6:46-49 The Company President

Imagine, if you will, that you work for a company whose president found it necessary to travel out of the country and spend an extended period of time abroad. So he says to you and the other trusted employees, "Look, I'm going to leave. And while I'm gone, I want you to pay close attention to the business. You manage things while I'm away. I will write you regularly. When I do, I will instruct

you in what you should do from now until I return from this trip.”

Everyone agrees. He leaves and stays gone for a couple of years. During that time he writes often, communicating his desires and concerns. Finally he returns. He walks up to the front door of the company and immediately discovers everything is in a mess— weeds flourishing in the flower beds, windows broken across the front of the building, the gal at the front desk dozing, loud music roaring from several offices, two or three people engaged in horseplay in the back room. Instead of making a profit, the business has suffered a great loss. Without hesitation he calls everyone together and with a frown asks, “What happened? Didn’t you get my letters?”

You say, “Oh, yeah, sure. We got all your letters. We’ve even bound them in a book. And some of us have memorized them. In fact, we have ‘letter study’ every Sunday. You know, those were really great letters.” I think the president would then ask, “But what did you do about my instructions?” And, no doubt the employees would respond, “Do? Well, nothing. But we read every one! “

Charles Swindoll, *Living Above the Level of Mediocrity*, p. 242

Luke 6:46-49 Artist Andrew Wyeth

Nat Wyeth, engineer and inventor, on his brother, artist Andrew Wyeth: Andy did a picture of Lafayette’s quarters near Chadds Ford, Pa., with a sycamore tree behind the building. When I first saw the painting, he wasn’t finished with it. He showed me a lot of drawings of the trunk and the sycamore’s gnarled roots, and I said, “Where’s all that in the picture?” “It’s not in the picture, Nat,” he said. “For me to get what I want in the part of the tree that’s showing, I’ve got to know thoroughly how it is anchored in back of the house.” I find that remarkable. He could draw the tree above the house with such authenticity because he knew exactly how the thing was in the ground. - Kenneth A. Brown, *Inventors at Work*

Ye Call Me Master

Ye call Me Master and obey me not,
Ye call Me Light and see me not,

Ye call Me way and follow me not
Ye call Me Life and desire me not,

Ye call Me wise and acknowledge me not,
Ye call Me fair and love me not,

Ye call Me rich and ask me not,
Ye call Me eternal and seek me not,

Ye call Me gracious and trust me not,
Ye call Me noble and serve me not,

Ye call Me mighty and honor me not,
Ye call Me just and fear me not,

If I condemn you, blame me not.

Resource, July/August, 1990

Luke 6:46-49 Repeating a Name

We might miss the strength of these statements (Matt 7:21-23 and here) unless we realize that repeating a person’s name is a Hebrew expression of intimacy. When God speaks to Abraham at Mount Moriah, as he is about to plunge the knife into the breast of Isaac, He says, “Abraham, Abraham.” Or when God encourages Jacob in his old age to take the trip to Egypt, He says, “Jacob, Jacob” (Genesis 22:11, 46:2). Compare the call of Moses from the burning bush: “Moses, Moses,” or the call of Samuel in the night, “Samuel, Samuel” (Exodus 3:4; 1 Sam 3:10). Or consider David’s cry of agony, “Absalom, Absalom,” and Jesus’ cry of desolation on the cross, “My God, my God.” (2 Samuel 18:33; Matt 27:46). When Jesus confronted Martha, when He warned Peter, and when He wept over Jerusalem—in each case we find the word repeated for intimacy’s sake (Luke 10:41; 22:31; Matt 23:37).

Some pretend to have a deep relationship with Christ, but this claim is not borne out in their lives. There are many who say, “Lord, Lord,” while in fact they live in contempt for Christ’s commandments. “If you love me, you will obey what I command,” said Jesus (John 14:15).

Luke 7

Luke 7:1ff The Governor's Mother

Dorothy Lawsom McCall, mother of Oregon's late governor Tom McCall, was an energetic matriarch, not content to live vicariously through her son's achievements. She published two books after she was 80, announced for governor herself at 85 and had a lifelong love affair with the telephone that involved just about everybody in public power.

Naturally no one got more of her attention than her celebrated son. Despairing of his privacy, Tom McCall at last got an unlisted number and "forgot" to give it to her. He reckoned not, however, that he was dealing with his mother.

Word came one time while he was having his usual noon swim at the YMCA: The White House is calling. Awed and dripping, McCall picked up the phone. "Tom," a soft, south-Texas voice said, "this is Lyndon. I've just been talking to your mother." Source unknown

Luke 7:1ff Homework Assignment

Amy Carter brought home one Friday night a homework assignment while her father was still President. Stumped by a question on the Industrial Revolution, Amy sought help from her mother. Rosalynn was also fogged by the question and, in turn, asked an aide to seek clarification from the Labor Department. A "rush" was placed on the request since the assignment was due Monday.

Thinking the question was a serious request from the Prez himself, a Labor Department official immediately cranked up the government computer and kept a full team of technicians and programmers working overtime all weekend at a reported cost of several hundred thousand dollars. The massive computer printout was finally delivered by truck to the White House on Sunday afternoon and Amy showed up in class with the official answer the following day. But her history teacher was not impressed. When Amy's paper was returned, it was marked with a big red "C." Source unknown

Luke 7:11-18

At times, the world seems to be an uncaring, unsympathetic place. People are often cruel and indifferent, not giving a second thought to the plight of their suffering neighbors. Wrapped up in their own interests, they don't seem to notice the anguish and despair that is at their doorstep.

This could not be said of the Lord Jesus. Time after time He met the needs of suffering people. Luke 7 tells about Christ's compassion when He saw the widow stricken with grief over the death of her son. Jesus had compassion on her and healed the boy. Earlier, when He saw a man with leprosy—who was despised, ostracized, and no doubt terribly disfigured—He made him well (Luke 5:12-15). Still today, Jesus looks upon human need with compassion.

A little girl whose mother had been taken to the hospital was spending the night alone with her father for the first time. Soon after her father turned out the lights, the girl asked quietly, "Daddy, are you there?" "Yes," he assured her. A moment later she asked, "Daddy, are you looking at me?" When he said yes, she fell asleep.

Likewise, every child of God can depend on the Savior's look of love. No matter how painful the problem or how deep the sorrow, we know He has His eyes fixed on us. And knowing that our Savior's compassionate gaze always watches over us should make us loving, caring people. Although the world may turn its eyes from suffering, the Christian, following the example of our Savior, should be alert to sorrow and quick to respond. —D. C. Egnor ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

God loves every one of us as if there were but one of us to love.

Luke 7:11-23 Restoring Order

November 24, 2010 — by Julie Ackerman Link

As I looked at family members gathered around the Thanksgiving table, I smiled at the range of talents represented. At one end were doctors; at the other end were musicians. Thanks to doctors, human bodies operate more efficiently. Thanks to musicians, beautiful sounds uplift our spirits and soothe troubled minds.

Although their abilities are very different, doctors and musicians rely on the same thing: an orderly universe. Without order, there would be no predictability; without predictability, there would be no music or medicine.

Within our orderly world, disease is a sign that something is “out of order.” Healing is a sign that God will some day restore all things to their original condition (Acts 3:21). When John the Baptist wanted to know whether Jesus was the “Coming One,” Jesus said, “Go and tell John . . . the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them” (Luke 7:20-22). Healing was evidence that Jesus was Israel’s Messiah (Mal. 4:2).

I am thankful for music that soothes my troubled mind and soul, and for medicine that heals my body, because they remind me of the ultimate healing and restoration that Christ is accomplishing.

What are the prospects for this earth?

What hope is there for man?

A world restored through Jesus Christ

In whom we see God’s plan. —D. De Haan

Jesus specializes in restoration.

Luke 7:18-28 It’s Okay To Ask

July 10, 2012 — by Randy Kilgore

It’s perfectly natural for fear and doubt to creep into our minds at times. “What if heaven isn’t real after all?” “Is Jesus the only way to God?” “Will it matter in the end how I lived my life?” Questions like these should not be given quick or trite responses.

John the Baptist, whom Jesus called the greatest of the prophets (Luke 7:28), had questions shortly before his execution (v.19). He wanted to know for sure that Jesus was the Messiah and that his own ministry had therefore been valid.

Jesus’ response is a comforting model for us to use. Instead of discounting the doubt or criticizing John, Jesus pointed to the miracles He was doing. As eyewitnesses, John’s disciples could return with vivid assurances for their mentor. But He did more—He used words and phrases (v.22) drawn from Isaiah’s prophecies of the coming Messiah (Isa. 35:4-6; 61:1), which were certain to be familiar to John.

Then, turning to the crowd, Jesus praised John (Luke 7:24-28), removing any doubt that He was offended by John’s need for reassurance after all he had seen (Matt. 3:13-17).

Questioning and doubting, both understandable human responses, are opportunities to remind, reassure, and comfort those who are shaken by uncertainty.

When my poor soul in doubt is cast

And darkness hides the Savior’s face,

His love and truth still hold me fast

For He will keep me by His grace. —D. De Haan

Reassurance comes as we doubt our doubts and believe our beliefs.

Luke 7:22-25 The Storms of Life

No Christian is immune from the storms of life. When we come by faith to Christ and experience the transforming power of His grace, we are not automatically guaranteed that we will be free from difficulty and trial. Yet we are assured of God’s abiding presence and mighty power to calm our fears and hold us secure in time of trouble.

A seagoing captain commanded a passenger ship that was sailing from Liverpool, England, to New York. His family was on board with him. One night when everyone was asleep, a squall unexpectedly swept over the waters and tossed the ship violently, awakening the passengers. They were all terribly afraid because of the storm. The captain’s little 8-year-old girl was also awakened. “What’s the matter?” cried the frightened child. Her mother told her that a sudden storm had struck the ship. “Is Father on deck?” she asked. “Yes, Father’s on deck,” came the encouraging answer. Hearing this, the little girl snuggled back into her bed and in a few

moments was sound asleep. The winds still blew and the waves still rolled, but her fears were calmed because her father was at the helm. Source unknown

Luke 7:36-50

MAN returned to his wife whom he had left years before for a life of sin. He came to Christ in a rescue mission while living as a derelict on skid row. Now when he talks about God's mercy, he is overwhelmed with emotion.

People may say, "That man's wife could never love the Lord as much as he does, because she was forgiven far less than he." But they are wrong. Because she views herself as hopelessly lost apart from Christ, she can love as much as he.

Our Lord's statement to Simon that the sinful woman loved much because she had been forgiven much is often misunderstood. Jesus wasn't saying that some people need less forgiveness and are therefore not able to love as much as others. Rather, He was saying that the more we realize the depth of our sinfulness and the extent of God's forgiveness, the greater will be our love. Simon had shown no evidence of love for Christ. His self-righteousness was just as evil as that woman's immorality, and if he would turn to Jesus, his love for Him could be just as great.

Even those who were converted as children and never sank deep into sin can appreciate the Lord's mercy. When we ponder our own unworthiness and reflect on God's forgiveness, our love for Christ will grow.—H V Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Luke 7:36-49 Beautiful Scars

April 18, 2012 — by David H. Roper

A number of years ago I was hiking along the Salmon River and came across a grove of pine trees that had been partially stripped of their bark. I knew from a friend who is a forester that the Native Americans who hunted this area long ago had peeled the outer bark and harvested the underlying layer for chewing gum. Some of the scars were disfiguring, but others, filled with crystallized sap and burnished by wind and weather, had been transformed into patterns of rare beauty.

So it is with our transgressions. We may be scarred by the sins of the past. But those sins, repented of and brought to Jesus for His forgiveness, can leave behind marks of beauty.

Some people, having tasted the bitterness of sin, now loathe it. They hate evil and love righteousness. Theirs is the beauty of holiness.

Others, knowing how far they fall short (Rom. 3:23), have tender hearts toward others. They rise up with understanding, compassion, and kindness when others fail. Theirs is the beauty of humility.

Finally, when acts of sin are freely and thoroughly forgiven it leads to intimacy with the One who has shown mercy. Such sinners love much for much has been forgiven (Luke 7:47). Theirs is the beauty of love.

Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me—

All His wonderful passion and purity!

O Thou Spirit divine, all my nature refine,

Till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me. —Orsborn

A forgiven heart is the fountain of beauty.

Luke 7:34-48 Fishing Where They Ain't

August 8, 2011 — by David H. Roper

I have a good friend I fish with now and then. He's a very thoughtful man. After climbing into his waders and boots and gathering up his gear, he sits on the tailgate of his truck and scans the river for 15 minutes or more, looking for rising fish. "No use fishing where they ain't," he says. This makes me think of another question: "Do I fish for souls where they ain't?"

It was said of Jesus that He was "a friend of tax collectors and sinners" (Luke 7:34). As Christians, we are to be unlike the world in our behavior, but squarely in it as He was. So we have to ask ourselves: Do I, like Jesus, have friends who are sinners? If I have only Christian friends, I may be fishing for souls "where they ain't."

Being with nonbelievers is the first step in “fishing.” Then comes love—a heart-kindness that sees beneath the surface of their off-hand remarks and listens for the deeper cry of the soul. It asks, “Can you tell me more about that?” and follows up with compassion. “There is much preaching in this friendliness,” pastor George Herbert (1593–1633) said.

Such love is not a natural instinct. It comes solely from God. And so we pray: “Lord, when I am with nonbelievers today, may I become aware of the cheerless voice, the weary countenance, or the downcast eyes that I, in my natural self-preoccupation, could easily overlook. May I have a love that springs from and is rooted in Your love. May I listen to others, show Your compassion, and speak Your truth today.”

When amazed by His love for me,

To love Him back became my prayer.

I sought an answer sincerely—

It was: Love the neighbor who’s there. —Verway

We are to be channels of God’s truth— not reservoirs.

Luke 7:30 God sends none away empty but those who are full of themselves.

Luke 7:37 - Broken -- I was “rough housing” in the living room with my brother when I knocked over one of my mother’s ornamental coal-oil lamps off of the mantle. I tried to catch it, but couldn’t, and it shattered into a zillion pieces.

I cleaned up the mess, but knew I could never replace the broken lamp. I can still see the look of disappointment in my mother’s eyes when she discovered my mischief.

A broken lamp is useless, but some things need to be broken before they are useful.

A farmer doesn’t plant his crop in cement, rather, he chooses good soil, breaks it up, and then sows the seed. Unbroken soil does not produce abundant crops, but cultivated soil incubates life. A butterfly could never flutter in the spring air without breaking its cocoon, neither could an eaglet emerge without breaking its shell.

Jesus could not feed the five thousand, until he broke the bread (Mark 8:1–8). The sinful woman could not pour the costly perfume over Jesus until she broke the alabaster box (Luke 7:37). God could not reconcile Himself to sinful man until he broke down the wall that separated us and Him (Ephesians 2:14). We can never know salvation without Jesus’ broken body (1 Corinthians 11:24).

We are not useful until we are broken. David wrote: “The sacrifice you want is a broken spirit. A broken and repentant heart, O God, you will not despise” (Psalm 51:17 NLT).

Luke 9

Luke 9:10 Loaves and Fishes

“What parable do you like best?” the Sunday School teacher asked her class. “The one,” replied the pupil, “about the multitude that loafs and fishes.” Source unknown

Luke 9:18-26

BRAHMS, the famous German composer, had a weight problem, so his doctor put him on a diet. One day the doctor saw Brahms in a restaurant with all the wrong kinds of food spread out before him. “So this is what you think of my advice,” he said to his patient. “Oh,” Brahms responded, “I’ve decided that it isn’t worth starving myself to death just to live a few more years.”

We may smile at Brahms’s reply, but some of us are as foolish in the spiritual realm. Jesus said that we all need to die to our selfish desires in order to live. “Whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it,” He said (Luke 9:24). But some Christians would rather “live” in the now. Christians who insist on catering to their own selfish desires and ambitions lose out on the satisfaction of doing the will of God, which is life at its best.

On the other hand, believers in Christ who deny themselves and follow Him do lose their lives in the sense that they live for Him

rather than for themselves. But in so doing they actually save their lives. They find real purpose and joy. And one day they will be amply rewarded.—R W De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Luke 9:18-27 Risky Business

August 24, 2012 — by David C. McCasland

As the worldwide financial crisis deepened in 2010, executives of a global banking firm were investigated for deceiving their customers about the risk involved in certain investments they were selling. While promising a high rate of return, the banking firm knew that the investments were destined to fail, leaving those who purchased them with nothing.

Deception is nothing new. Jesus described Satan as one who “does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him . . . for he is a liar and the father of it” (John 8:44). The enemy of our souls tells us, “Live only for the present,” when he knows it will result in our eternal loss.

Jesus, on the other hand, did not offer His disciples a life of prosperity and ease but called them to self-sacrifice and identification with Him. After telling them that He would be killed and raised from the dead, Jesus said, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it” (Luke 9:23-24).

There are two voices telling us where to invest our lives. It’s risky business to follow the wrong one.

When you hear the Shepherd’s voice

As He calls you, “Come to Me,”

In your life make Him your choice

And His faithful follower be. —Hess

If we hold on to God’s truth, we won’t be trapped by Satan’s lies.

Luke 9:18-27 Miserable Success

June 28, 2013 — by David C. McCasland

“In whatever a man does without God, he must fail miserably—or succeed more miserably,” wrote George MacDonald (1824–1905), a Scottish novelist, poet, and Christian minister. This intriguing statement is often cited by modern speakers and writers and appears in MacDonald’s book *Unspoken Sermons*.

MacDonald was dealing with the difficult subject of a Christian’s self-denial and how we are to apply this teaching of Jesus: “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it” (Luke 9:23-24).

Rather than merely trying to suppress our natural desires, MacDonald said that true self-denial means “we must see things as [Christ] saw them, regard them as He regarded them; we must take the will of God as the very life of our being We are no more to think, ‘What should I like to do?’ but ‘What would the Living One have me do?’”

Getting only what we want is succeeding miserably. True success is found in “losing” our lives for Jesus’ sake and finding them again full and free in His will.

More like the Master I would live and grow,

More of His love to others I would show;

More self-denial, like His in Galilee,

More like the Master I long to ever be. —Gabriel

The spirit of humility and self-denial precedes a deeper and closer walk with God.

Luke 9:18-20 - Clarity in Communication - If Jesus came to certain theological schools today and asked the professors, “And you, who do you think I am?” what do you think they might reply? Some might answer, “You are the eschatological manifestation of the

kerygma in which we recognize the ultimate significance of our interpersonal relations.” And Jesus would probably say, “What?!”

Luke 9:23 - For Cure of Cirrhosis of the Giver

The disease cirrhosis of the giver was discovered in A.D. 34 by the husband-wife team of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1–11). It is an acute condition that renders the patient’s hands immobile when he is called on to move them in the direction of his wallet or her purse, and from thence to the offering plate. This strange malady is clinically unobservable in such surroundings as the golf club, supermarket, clothing store, or restaurant. Some try to use a fake remedy, pointing out to the patients that income tax deductions can be claimed for giving. The best therapy, and that which leads to a sure and lasting cure, is to get the individual’s heart right with God. This affliction is actually a symptom of a more basic need of the soul.

Prescribed Medication: Frequent doses of Romans 12:1 and Luke 9:23, accompanied by a dash of 2 Corinthians 9:7. This dosage will become quite pleasant if swallowed with a heaping tablespoon of Philippians 4:19!

Luke 9:46

Hudson Taylor - The accuracy of Jesus’ statement about Mary of Bethany is proven every time we talk about her act of devotion. What she did is still “spoken of, for a memorial of her.” Her outpouring of love for Jesus, which was demonstrated when she anointed Him with oil, has been remembered down through the centuries to this very day.

In Yorkshire, England, during the early 1800s, two sons were born to a family named Taylor. The older one set out to make a name for himself by entering Parliament and gaining public prestige. But the younger son chose to give his life to Christ. He later recalled, “Well do I remember, as in unreserved consecration I put myself, my life, my friends, my all, upon the altar. I felt I was in the presence of God, entering into covenant with the Almighty.” With that commitment, Hudson Taylor turned his face toward China and obscurity. As a result, he is known and honored on every continent as a faithful missionary and the founder of the China Inland Mission (now known as Overseas Missionary Fellowship). For the other son, however, there is no lasting monument. He became known simply as “the brother of Hudson Taylor.” - PRV ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Luke 9:47-48 - Achieving Kingdom Greatness

A child is helpless and unable to reward the one who renders a favor or service. Thus to serve a little child who cannot enhance a person’s stature or opportunity for recognition is to serve with no expectation of reward (see Luke 9:47–48). The apostles thought of ruling masses of people; Jesus spoke of serving one little child. In effect Jesus said that if you forget self-glory to serve in His name one whom the world regards with little importance, you will achieve kingdom greatness.

Luke 9:50; 11:23 No Neutrality

In 9:50 those not against the disciples and their work will not lightly speak evil of Christ. It isn’t ours to forbid any work done, however imperfectly, in Christ’s name. In 11:23 neutrality now becomes an impossibility.

Life and Times of Jesus, Book 4, p. 118

Luke 9:57-62 Renounce

1. Renounce possession of things as primary (vv.57,58).
2. Renounce procrastination by putting Christ first (vv.59,60).

Jesus gives us the test of genuine discipleship in Luke 9:57-62. If we are to follow Him fully, we must:

3. Renounce all other priorities (v.61).
4. Renounce all thought of not persevering (v.62).

If we do this, Jesus promises that whosoever will lose his life for His sake shall find it. - H.G.B.

The Other Jesus, L.J. Ogilvie, Word, 1986, pp. 70ff

Luke 9:57-62 A Call To Commitment

April 27, 2012 — by David C. McCasland

Many health and fitness centers expect a flood of people to join every January who will come only a few times. They don't mind if people pay the fee and never return. But fitness trainer Jesse Jones takes the opposite approach. If you sign up and don't show up, he will terminate your membership. Jones says, "Save your money. Come see me in a few months when you're serious. My passion is not for another three-month payment . . . we're making people accountable to reach their goals."

In Luke 9:57-62, we encounter three people who told Jesus they wanted to follow Him, and all received what seem to be harsh replies from the Lord: "The Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head" (v.58). "Let the dead bury their own dead" (v.60). "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (v.62). For each person, Jesus stated the sacrifice and commitment required to become His disciple.

A man I admire as a dedicated and sensitive follower of Christ says that Christians need to be "ready for radical commitment and change." The Lord calls us not only to leave the status quo, but also to take that calling seriously by following Him.

Lord, I want to be sold out for You. I want to
love You with my whole heart, soul, mind, and
strength. Give me the power to be who You want me
to be, and to walk in Your ways.

Following Jesus demands our all.

Luke 9:57-62

When Deborah, Israel's fourth judge, sang her song in celebration of Israel's victory over the Canaanites (Judges 5:2-31), she mentioned the people of the tribe of Reuben. They had "great resolves of heart," she said; but, she noted with dismay, they were content to sit "among the sheepfolds." They had not turned their plans into action.

The tribe of Reuben was like the boy who sat at his mother's desk, carefully drawing a picture. Soon he laid down his pen and proudly showed his mother his sketch of the family dog. She commented on the fine likeness, then noticed that something was missing. "Where is Rover's tail?" she asked. "It's still in the bottle," the boy explained.

Many important things in the Christian life are left undone because we don't put our plans into action. We decide to devote more time to the reading and studying of the Word of God, then get sidetracked by other activities. We resolve to be more faithful in praying for others. And for a while we do just that. Then, gradually, other things take priority.

No matter how noble our plans, no matter how good our intentions, they can't glorify God if they are "still in the bottle." —P. R. Van Gorder. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**We may be on the right track,
but we won't get anywhere if we just sit there.**

Luke 9:62 In the Bottle - In a small art studio I observed the works of an artist who portrays western scenes and people. An unfinished sketch on his easel reminded me of the story of a boy who sat at his mother's desk, drawing a picture. Using a fountain pen and a bottle black ink, he exhibited considerable talent in sketching a picture of a dog. But he stopped drawing before giving the dog a tail. When his mother noticed the picture, she asked, "Where is the tail?"

Looking up, he explained, "It's still in the bottle."

A Paraphrase of Luke 9:62 If you look back only to the road over which you have just come, your car will become a pile of junk metal.

Luke 10

Luke 10 The Good Samaritan

I overheard a story that has had a powerful effect on my understanding of just how hardened Christian people can become in order

to protect themselves from seeing the engulfing hurt and need.

One semester, a seminary professor set up his preaching class in an unusual way. He scheduled his students to preach on the Parable of the Good Samaritan and on the day of class, he choreographed his experiment so that each student would go, one at a time, from one classroom to another where he or she would preach a sermon. The professor gave some students ten minutes to go from one room to the other; to others he allowed less time, forcing them to rush in order to meet the schedule. Each student, one at a time, had to walk down a certain corridor and pass by a bum, who was deliberately planted there, obviously in need of some sort of aid.

The results were surprising, and offered a powerful lesson to them. The percentage of those good men and women who stopped to help was extremely low, especially for those who were under the pressure of a shorter time period. The tighter the schedule, the fewer were those who stopped to help the indigent man. When the professor revealed his experiment, you can imagine the impact on that class of future spiritual leaders. Rushing to preach a sermon on the Good Samaritan they had walked past the beggar at the heart of the parable.

We must have eyes to see as well as hand to help, or we may never help at all. I think this well-known poem expresses it powerfully:

I was hungry and you formed a humanities club
to discuss my hunger.
Thank you.

I was imprisoned and you crept off quietly
to your chapel to pray for my release.
Nice.

I was naked and in your mind you debated the
morality of my appearance.
What good did that do'

I was sick and you knelt and thanked God for
your health.
But I needed you.

I was homeless and you preached to me of the
shelter of the love of God.
I wish you'd taken me home.

I was lonely and you left me alone to pray for me.
Why didn't you stay?

You seem so holy, so close to God; But I'm still
very hungry, lonely, cold, and still in pain.
Does it matter'

Anonymous

Luke 10 - The dialogue in Luke 10 reminds me of a true story I heard theologian Carl F. H. Henry tell as he spoke to a group of radio broadcasters. The late Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr decided to write out his theological position, stating exactly where he stood philosophically—his credo. Being the profound thinker he was (and a bit verbose), it took him many sheets of paper to express himself. Upon completion of his masterwork, he realized it was in need of being read and evaluated by a mind much more practical than his own. He bundled up the material and sent it to a minister whom he knew had a practical mind and a pastoral “heart.” With great pains the clergyman sweated through this ream of paper, trying desperately to grasp the meaning. When he finally finished, he worked up the nerve to write a brief yet absolutely candid note in reply. It read:

My dear Dr. Niebuhr:

I understand every word you have written, but I do not understand one sentence. —Charles R. Swindoll, *Compassion*

Luke 10:25-37 - A greek class was given an assignment to study the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25–37. These young theologs were to do an in-depth analysis of the biblical text, observing and commenting on all the major terms and syntactical factors worth mentioning. Each student was to write his own translation after having done the work on his commentary.

As is true in most language classes, a couple or three of the students cared more about the practical implications of the assignment than its intellectual stimulation. The morning the work was to be turned in, these three teamed up and carried out a plan to prove their point. One volunteered to play the part of an alleged victim. They tore his shirt and trousers, rubbed mud, catsup, and other realistic-looking ingredients across his "wounds," marked up his eyes and face so he hardly resembled himself, then placed him along the path that led from the dormitory to the Greek classroom. While the other two hid and watched, he groaned and writhed, simulating great pain.

Not one student stopped. They walked around him, stepped over him, and said different things to him. But nobody stooped over to help. What do you want to bet their academic work was flawless ... and insightful ... and handed in on time?

This incident always reminds me of a scripture that penetrates the surface of our intellectual concerns. "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?" (1 John 3:16-17, NIV). —Charles R. Swindoll, Compassion

Luke 10:20

At one time Frederick the Great held a banquet at which Voltaire, the French philosopher and skeptic, was present. When dinner was served, the noted unbeliever began to ridicule the Christians who were there. Finally he said,

"Why, I would sell my seat in heaven for a Prussian dollar!"

There was a pause. Then one of the guests quietly rose from his chair and said,

"Sir, you are in Prussia, where we have a law which requires that one who wishes to sell anything must first prove ownership. Are you prepared to establish the fact that you have a seat in heaven?"

Surprised and embarrassed, Voltaire, the normally quick-witted scoffer, had nothing more to say for the rest of the evening.

How different with those of us who have been joined to Christ through faith! We are sure of a place in heaven. —H. G. Bosch [Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

WHEN WE RECEIVE CHRIST, WE BECOME STOCKHOLDERS IN HEAVEN.

Luke 10:25-37

WHILE D. L. Moody was attending a convention in Indianapolis on mass evangelism, he asked his song leader, Ira Sankey, to meet him at six o'clock one evening at a certain street corner.

When Sankey arrived, Mr. Moody asked him to stand on a box and sing. Once a crowd had gathered, Moody spoke briefly and then invited the people to follow him to the nearby convention hall. Soon the auditorium was filled with spiritually hungry people, and the great evangelist preached the Gospel to them. Then the convention delegates began to arrive. Moody stopped preaching and said,

"Now we must close, as the brethren of the convention wish to come and discuss the topic, 'How to reach the masses.'"

Moody's action that day illustrated the difference between talking about doing something and going out and doing it.

One of the lessons of the parable of the Good Samaritan is that the person who puts belief into practice is the one who pleases God.

We can get sidetracked so easily in committee meetings and brainstorming sessions, important as they are, while people are dying by the wayside. But there comes a time when talking about how to witness effectively or how best to help others must stop. At some point, we have to go out and do it! —D C Egener ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Luke 10:25-37 Loving God

Swami Shivananda, a famous swami in India used to tell his disciples: "Kill the mind and then, and then only, can you meditate." The Christian position is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind"—the intellectual nature; "with all thy heart"—the emotional nature; "with all thy soul"—the willing nature; and "with all thy strength"—the physical nature. The total person is to love him—mind, emotion, will, strength. But the "strength" might mean the strength of all three. Some love him with the strength of the mind and the weakness of the emotion—the intellectualist in religion; some love him with the strength of emotion and the weakness of the mind—the sentimentalist in religion; some love him with the strength of the will and the weakness of emotion—the man of iron who is not

approachable. But loving God with the strength of the mind, the strength of the emotion, the strength of the will—that makes the truly Christian and the truly balanced and the truly strong character. *Ordering Your Private World*, G. McDonald, p. 103

Luke 10:25-37

SOME seminary students were asked to preach a sermon on the parable of the Good Samaritan, and Phyllis Le Peau tells an interesting story about what happened on the day they were scheduled to preach:

When the hour arrived for their sermon, each one was deliberately delayed en route to class. As the students raced across campus, they encountered a person who pretended to be in need. Ironically, not one of the students stopped to help. (Kindness: Reaching Out to Others)

Le Peau commented, "After all, they had an important sermon to preach."

Christians preach the most powerful sermons when they live what they say they believe—when they demonstrate God's kindness to others, not just talk about it.

Every time we meet someone in need, we choose whether to behave like the religious Pharisees or the Good Samaritan. We can either take the time to get involved or be like the religious leaders who passed by and offered no help.—D C Egnor ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Luke 10:25-37 Neighborly Kindness

November 2, 2010 — by Marvin Williams

One of the major obstacles to showing compassion is making prejudgments about who we think is worthy of our compassion. Jesus told a parable to answer the question: "Who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29). Or, who qualifies as worthy of our neighborly acts?

Jesus told of a man who traveled on the notoriously dangerous road from Jerusalem to Jericho. As he traveled, he fell among thieves and was robbed, beaten, and left for dead. Religious Jews (a priest and a Levite) passed him, but they walked by on the other side, probably for fear of being religiously defiled. But a Samaritan came along and had unconditional compassion on the wounded stranger.

Jesus' audience would have gasped at this because Jews despised Samaritans. The Samaritan could have limited or qualified his compassion because the man was a Jew. But he did not limit his neighborly kindness to those he thought were worthy. Instead, he saw a human being in need and resolved to help him.

Are you limiting your kindness to the ones you deem worthy? As followers of Jesus, let us find ways to show neighborly kindness to all people, especially to those we have judged as unworthy.

How many lives shall I touch today?

How many neighbors will pass my way?

I can bless so many and help so much,

If I meet each one with a Christlike touch. —Jones

Our love for Christ is only as real as our love for our neighbor.

Luke 10:27 - The relationship between the greatest commandment, to love the Lord, and the second commandment, to love your neighbor as yourself, is similar to the relationship between the cue ball and eight ball in a game of billiards. The cue ball represents our relationship to God and the eight ball represents our relationship to men. If we are off center when we shoot the cue ball, we can forget about having the eight ball sink in the corner pocket. This is why to love God is the first and greatest commandment.

Luke 10:25-37

The Good Samaritan in Jesus' parable set a worthy example. He stopped to help a Jewish man, even though he knew that Jews despised Samaritans and that most of his fellow Samaritans hated Jews. He acted sacrificially—his deed cost him time and money. And he took a risk by stopping on that Jericho road—he too could have been attacked by a band of robbers.

A friend recently came upon a dangerous situation along the free-way. He saw a truck swerve to miss a reckless driver and then

crash into a guardrail. As he approached the scene, he noticed gas leaking from the truck's fuel tank. Fearing an explosion, he screeched to a stop, jumped out of his vehicle, and pulled the dazed driver out of his cab. He was a modern-day Good Samaritan. He too took a risk to help a "neighbor."

If we take seriously Jesus' teaching in Luke 10:25-37, we will sacrifice our time and money to help all kinds of people. We may not have the opportunity to do something dramatic, as my friend did, but we can offer kindness to a discouraged divorcee, a person dying with AIDS, or a misunderstood teenager. Showing mercy to others is a way to express our gratitude to God for His salvation. When we reach out to others, we show our desire to obey Jesus' command to love God above all and our neighbors as ourselves. Getting involved, even when it means taking a risk, is a good risk. —H V Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

How much we are willing to sacrifice is the measure of our love.

Luke 10:29-37 Neighborly Love

January 22, 2010 — by Joe Stowell

It would have been simpler just to buy a new hair dryer. But determined to save a buck, I decided to fix it myself. In order to loosen the screw that was buried deep in the handle, I took out the ultimate handyman's helper—my pocket knife. As I put pressure on the knife to turn the screw, the blade folded back—on my finger.

I learned a lesson that day: I love myself. And I am urgent about meeting my needs. There was no thought of, "Well, I don't really have time to stop the bleeding now. I'll get to it later." Also, there was a tenderness about how the need was met. I instructed my first-aid team (my wife and kids) to wash my finger gently and then to put the bandage on in a way that would avoid having the hairs on my finger pulled up when it was removed. My thoughts, words, and actions were driven by my love for myself.

To love "your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27) requires the same urgent kind of love. It's a love that notices the need of another person and won't rest until it's been met. It's a gentle, tender love that thinks and acts carefully. It's the sacrificial and compassionate love that a nameless Samaritan had for a fallen traveler. It's the kind of love God wants to share with your neighbors through you.

Lord, help me see the heartfelt needs

Of those within my care,

And grant that through my words and deeds

Your love with them I'll share. —D. De Haan

You cannot touch your neighbor's heart with anything less than your own.

Luke 10:30–36 Who Is My Neighbor? In the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30–36) Jesus did not define the word neighbor. He described a neighbor. He was dealing with actions, not academics.

Luke 10:30-37 Stop To Help

June 11, 2010 — by Marvin Williams

Dr. Scott Kurtzman, chief of surgery at Waterbury Hospital in Connecticut, was on his way to deliver a lecture when he witnessed a horrible crash involving 20 vehicles. The doctor shifted into trauma mode, worked his way through the mess of metal, and called out, "Who needs help?" After 90 minutes of assisting, and the victims were taken to area hospitals, Dr. Kurtzman commented, "A person with my skills simply can't drive by someone who is injured. I refuse to live my life that way."

Jesus told a parable about a man who stopped to help another (Luke 10:30-37). A Jewish man had been ambushed, stripped, robbed, and left for dead. A Jewish priest and a temple assistant passed by, saw the man, and crossed over to the other side. Then a despised Samaritan came by, saw the man, and was filled with compassion. His compassion was translated into action: He soothed and bandaged the man's wounds, took him to an inn, cared for him while he could, paid for all his medical expenses, and then promised the innkeeper he would return to pay any additional expenses.

There are people around us who are suffering. Moved with compassion for their pain, let's be those who stop to help.

Reach out in Jesus' name

With hands of love and care

To those who are in need

And caught in life's despair. —Sper

Compassion is always active.

Luke 10:30-37 The Accident

Fred and Marlene Nichols stopped at a service station near Mobile, Alabama to ask directions. Suddenly, a truck without brakes flew across the highway and crashed into their car. Mrs. Nichols was severely injured. Needing to go with his wife to the hospital, but unsure what to do about their car and belongings, Mr. Nichols heard a stranger's reassuring words and felt a comforting hand on his shoulder. The man told Mr. Nichols to go ahead, he would stay with the couple's car. Looking at the man, Mr. Nichols instantly recognized him. "You're Bobby Knight." "I am," the man replied, "but we won't talk about that now." Fresh from guiding his Indiana University basketball team to the 1987 collegiate championship in New Orleans, and en route to Atlanta to receive a coach-of-the-year award, Knight laid aside his honored position and became a servant to a couple in need. Today in the Word, April 16, 1992

Luke 10:37 - Three Philosophies for Relating to Others

The parable of the Good Samaritan gives three philosophies of life. The robber's philosophy was "What you have is mine, and I will take it." The priest and Levite had the philosophy that "What is mine is mine, and I will keep it." The Samaritan's philosophy was "What is mine is yours, and I will share it." Jesus endorsed the Samaritan's philosophy and said, "Go, and do thou likewise" (Luke 10:37).

Luke 10:30 Which Was a Neighbor'

A certain woman driving alone from Washington to Richmond, ran over a spike which punctured her tire and left her stranded. In distress, she raised the hood of her car and tied a scarf to the door handle; then she locked the doors and sat in the car praying for the Lord to send help.

By chance there came a limousine with a bumper sticker that read, "Smile, God Loves You." When the occupants saw the stranded woman, they passed by in the far lane without even smiling.

Also, there came a sports car with a CB radio and a bumper sticker saying, "Honk If You Love Jesus." The driver passed by in the far lane without even honking or using his CB to tell the highway patrol about the woman's dilemma.

A certain workman, when he saw the raised hood and scarf, come to the spot where the woman was, with compassion. He stopped his old pickup, which had no bumper stickers, crossed the four-lane highway and offered to change the tire.

The woman tried to pay the workman, but he refused the money saying, "If my wife were stranded on the highway, I'd want some good Samaritan to stop and help her out." And again he crossed the four-lane highway, got into his bumper-stickerless truck, smiled and honked at her, and went on his way to work. Which now of these three was a neighbor unto her that had a flat'

Eastside Christian, Clarksville, Ind.

Luke 10:30 The Law - Lawyer: I'd keep the Law if I could, but I can't because it's unclear.

Neighbor: I see a need, recognize it, am able to meet it, and respond to it.

Source unknown

Luke 10:30 The Beggar

On 9-8-82 I saw a man, Jimmy Packer, outside a Safeway store, asking for \$1 for wine. Usually I'd brush by or give him a quarter to rid myself of the nuisance, but I told him, "I need to run an errand. If you're still here in 5 minutes and want to dry out, I'll take you to a 24-hour house where they can help you. He was. I did. John Underhill, Spokane, WA

Luke 10:30 Mother of the Salvation Army - Catherine Booth was the "mother" of the Salvation Army. "Wherever Catherine Booth went," said Campbell Morgan, "humanity went to hear her. Princes and princesses merged with paupers and prostitutes."

One night, Morgan shared in a meeting with Mrs. Booth; and a great crowd of “publicans and sinners” was there. Her message brought many to Christ.

After the meeting, Morgan and Mrs. Booth went to be entertained at a fine home; and the lady of the manor said, “My dear Mrs. Booth, that meeting was dreadful”

“What do you mean, dearie?” asked Mrs. Booth.

“Oh, when you were speaking, I was looking at those people opposite to me. Their faces were so terrible, many of them. I don’t think I shall sleep tonight!”

“Why, dearie, don’t you know them?” Mrs. Booth asked; and the hostess replied, “Certainly not!”

“Well, that is interesting,” Mrs. Booth said. “I did not bring them with me from London; they are your neighbors!”

Source unknown

Luke 10:36-37

Mercy - As Wordsworth put it, "The best portion of a good man's life is his little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love."

To a wily, Jewish lawyer Jesus unfolded a three-act play about a good man. In a surprise ending, the story revealed an unexpected white knight—not a priest or Levite but a hated Samaritan. Knowing that Jesus had trapped him, the legal expert admitted that the expected villain had become a hero because he showed mercy, not because he followed the letter of the law.

The priest and the Levite who passed by the injured man were not really the muscle men of God's Word; they were spiritual weaklings. They had somehow missed all the Old Testament verses about God's great mercy; they had skipped Micah's claim that good people love mercy (6:8).

Like the two religious men of Jesus' parable, we sometimes forget that pure religion is looking after those who can never repay us, such as orphans and widows (James 1:27). Our obtuseness comes from not appreciating the great mercy God showed in loving us.

Paul argued that those who understand God's mercy overcome the evil of this world with good (Romans 12:1-21). Our nameless acts of compassion do not go unremembered by Him.

Luke 10:25-37

The Good Samaritan in Jesus' parable set a worthy example. He stopped to help a Jewish man, even though he knew that Jews despised Samaritans and that most of his fellow Samaritans hated Jews. He acted sacrificially—his deed cost him time and money. And he took a risk by stopping on that Jericho road—he too could have been attacked by a band of robbers.

A friend recently came upon a dangerous situation along the free-way. He saw a truck swerve to miss a reckless driver and then crash into a guardrail. As he approached the scene, he noticed gas leaking from the truck's fuel tank. Fearing an explosion, he screeched to a stop, jumped out of his vehicle, and pulled the dazed driver out of his cab. He was a modern-day Good Samaritan. He too took a risk to help a "neighbor."

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How much we are willing to sacrifice is the measure of our love.

Luke 10:38-42 Too Busy To Know God?

October 13, 2011 — by Randy Kilgore

One day when I was waiting to board a plane, a stranger who had overheard me mention that I was a chaplain began to describe to me his life before he met Christ. He said it was marked by “sin and self-absorption. Then I met Jesus.”

I listened with interest to a list of changes he had made to his life and good deeds he had done. But because everything he told me was about his busyness for God and not his fellowship with God, I wasn't surprised when he added, "Frankly, chaplain, I thought I'd feel better about myself by now."

I think the New Testament character Martha would have understood that stranger's observation. Having invited Jesus to be a guest at her home, she set about doing what she thought were the important things. But this meant she couldn't focus on Jesus. Because Mary wasn't helping, Martha felt justified asking Jesus to chide her. It's a mistake many of us make: We're so busy doing good that we don't spend time getting to know God better.

My advice to my new airplane friend came from the core of Jesus' words to Martha in Luke 10:41-42. I said to him: "Slow down and invest yourself in knowing God; let His Word reveal Himself to you." If we're too busy to spend time with God, we're simply too busy.

Savior, let me walk beside Thee,

Let me feel my hand in Thine;

Let me know the joy of walking

In Thy strength and not in mine. —Sidebotham

Our heavenly Father longs to spend time with His children.

Luke 10:38-42

The Good Part - Martha was gently rebuked by Jesus, not because she worked hard to prepare His dinner but because she neglected a more important concern. She had been so busy making a perfect meal that she failed to nourish her soul with the spiritual food Mary was receiving through fellowship with Him. The fact that Martha was anxious about her work indicates that her priorities had gotten out of line. Mary, however, had "chosen that good part," which would not be taken away from her (v. 42).

An unknown author has captured the lesson of Luke 10 in these poetic words:

Martha in the kitchen, serving with her hands,

Occupied for Jesus with her pots and pans.

Loving Him, yet fevered, burdened to the brim,

Careful, troubled Martha, occupied for Him.

Mary on the footstool, eyes upon her Lord,

Occupied with Jesus, drinking in His word.

This one thing was needful, all else strangely dim;

Loving, resting Mary, occupied with Him.

So may we, like Mary, choose the better part:

Resting in His presence, hands and feet and heart;

Drinking in His wisdom, strengthened by His grace;

Waiting for the summons, eyes upon His face.

When it comes, we're ready, spirit, will, and nerve;

Mary's heart to worship, Martha's hand to serve;

This the rightful order, as our lamps we trim:

Occupied WITH Jesus, then occupied FOR Him!"

Luke 11:1

SAYING PRAYERS - For two and one-half years I served as student-pastor in a little church on the outskirts of a small town. None of the businessmen of the village attended, for most of them were members of another very large denomination which claimed the majority of the people in that community. They were friendly to me, however, and gave our church a sizable discount each time we made a purchase. Usually the businessman would say, "I want to give this item to you at my cost; I only ask that you say a prayer for me." I believe they said this sincerely because they truly thought it would help if I would do this for them. I told them frankly that I didn't "say prayers" in the routine, perfunctory way they sup-posed, but that I would remember them when we brought our petitions before the Lord.

No, prayer is not just repeating some memorized phrases de-signed to produce magical results. Prayer is talking to God! If I am really to communicate with Him who is perfect in holiness, I must search my soul, examine my motives, and confess my sins. In fact, God often permits afflictions and crushing disappointments to enter the lives of His children in order that they might be driven to real intercession! By nature we are spiritually lazy; consequently, a life of ease and prosperity has a tendency to draw us away from God so that we begin "saying prayers" rather than really praying.

"Saying prayers" will accomplish very little; but heartfelt petitions will keep you close to the Lord, make your life glow with spiritual splendor, and draw your mind away from all that is wicked and carnal. In fact, you cannot be an effective Christian without real prayer, for God has chosen to do His work in this way. Let us ask the Lord every day to keep us from "saying prayers." With the disciples of old, we must approach Him re-questing, "Lord, teach us to pray!" It will probably cost us some-thing, but it will be worth it! ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

O Thou by whom we come to God,
The Life, the Truth, the Way,
The path of prayer Thyself host trod;
Lord, teach us how to pray! —J. Montgomery

Praying is to the soul what breathing is to the body!

Luke 11:1-10 Where Do I Start?

November 10, 2010 — by Anne Cetas

Several years ago, I was driving down the freeway when my car died. I pulled over to the side of the road, got out of the car, and opened the hood. As I looked at the engine I thought, A lot of good this does me. I know nothing about cars. I don't even know where to start!

That's how we might sometimes feel about prayer: Where do I start? That's what the disciples wanted to know when they asked Jesus, "Teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). The best place to look for instruction is in the example and teaching of Jesus. Two questions you may have are:

Where should we pray? Jesus prayed in the temple, in the wilderness (Luke 4), in quiet places (Matt. 14:22-23), in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22), and on the cross (Luke 23:34,46). He prayed alone and with others. Look at His life, follow His example, and pray wherever you are.

What should we pray? In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus taught us to ask that God's name be honored and that His will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Ask Him for your daily provisions, for forgiveness of sin, and for deliverance from temptation and evil (Luke 11:2-4).

So if you're looking for a good place to start, follow the example of the Lord's Prayer.

The Lord has shown us we can pray

Wherever we may be;

And when we say, "Your will be done,"

His work on earth we'll see. —Sper

If Jesus needed to pray, how can we do less?

Luke 11:1

UNDERSTANDING PRAYER - What a privilege it would be to talk privately with the president of the United States! Yet believers can choose at any time to enjoy an infinitely greater privilege -- fellowship with the King of kings.

Prayer is not simply a matter of rushing into God's presence with our requests. Supplication is a valid element of prayer, to be sure, but fellowship and communion are far more important elements. Prayer includes adoration, praise, thanksgiving, and intercession for others, as well as asking for the supply of our own needs and legitimate desires. Prayer is not only talking to God; it is also listening to Him as He reminds us from His Word what He wants us to do.

In Alexander Solzhenitsyn's 'A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich,' Ivan endures all the horrors of a Soviet prison camp. One day he is praying with his eyes closed when a fellow prisoner notices him and says with ridicule, "Prayers won't help you get out of here any faster." Opening his eyes, Ivan answers, "I do not pray to get out of prison but to do the will of God."

Prayer is not manipulating God to get what we want but discovering what He wants us to do, and then asking the Holy Spirit to enable us to do His will. - V C Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Praise His blessed name forever!
There is naught that can compare
To the glories of a contact
With the Mighty God through prayer. -Anon.

**Prayer is not a way to get what we want
but the way to become what God wants.**

Luke 11:1-13

"When you pray, say: 'Our Father'" (Luke 11:2).

Dr. Robert A. Cook, president of The King's College, told an audience at Moody Bible Institute that he had talked with Vice President George Bush the previous day. Two hours after that, he spoke briefly with President Ronald Reagan. Then, smiling broadly, Cook told us, "But that's nothing. Today I talked with God."

Prayer takes on new power and fervency when we become conscious of God's greatness and glory. When saints of past ages caught a glimpse of the Almighty, they were awestruck. Job, who had complained bitterly about his misfortune and had made some self-righteous statements, finally met the Lord and cried out, "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5-6). Isaiah saw a vision of God and exclaimed, "Woe is me, for I am undone!" (Isa. 6:5). Ezekiel observed the glory of the Lord and declared, "So when I saw it, I fell on my face" (Ezek. 1:28). The apostle John, after seeing a vision of the glorified Son of God, said, "I fell at His feet as dead" (Rev. 1:17).

To all of these men, the vision of God's greatness and glory brought an overwhelming sense of their weakness and depravity. Yet God invites us to talk to Him, and He wants us to address Him as "Our Father." —H V Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Our highest privilege is to talk to God.

Luke 11:2

The Privilege of Prayer - A comment by Robert A. Cook, president of The King's College in New York, renewed my appreciation for the privilege of prayer. Speaking at the Moody Bible Institute, Cook said that the day before, he had been at a gathering in Washington and had talked with Vice President George Bush. Two hours later he spoke briefly with President Ronald Reagan. Then smiling broadly, Cook told us, "But that's nothing! Today I talked with God!"

Luke 11:2-4 - Lord's Prayer

I cannot say "our" if I live only for myself.

I cannot say "Father" if I do not endeavor each day to act like his child.

I cannot say "who art in heaven" if I am laying up no treasure there.

I cannot say "hallowed be thy name" if I am not striving for holiness.

I cannot say “thy Kingdom come” if I am not doing all in my power to hasten that wonderful event.

I cannot say “thy will be done” if I am disobedient to his Word.

I cannot say “on earth as it is in heaven” if I’ll not serve him here and now.

I cannot say “give us this day our daily bread” if I am dishonest or am seeking things by subterfuge.

I cannot say “forgive us our debts” if I harbor a grudge against anyone.

I cannot say “lead us not into temptation” if I deliberately place myself in its path.

I cannot say “deliver us from evil” if I do not put on the whole armor of God.

I cannot say “thine is the kingdom” if I do not give the King the loyalty due him from a faithful subject.

I cannot attribute to him “the power” if I fear what men may do.

I cannot ascribe to him “the glory” if I’m seeking honor only for myself, and I cannot say “forever” if the horizon of my life is bounded completely by time.

Author Unknown

Luke 11:3

Long Stretches Tire Us - These two Scripture verses prompted someone to write, “One secret of a happy Christian life is living by the day. It’s the long stretches that tire us. But really, there are no long stretches. Life does not come to us all at once. Tomorrow is not ours; but when it does come, God will supply both daily bread and daily strength.”

As Pastor Philip Doddridge was walking along the street one day, he was feeling depressed and desolate, for something had happened to burden his heart. Passing a small cottage, he heard through the open door the voice of a child reading the words found in Deuteronomy 33:25, “.as your days, so shall your strength be.” The Holy Spirit used that truth to bolster his sinking morale. He was encouraged not to look too far ahead, but just to go on living for the Lord from moment to moment in the consciousness that God would care for him.

Apparently D.L. Moody also learned that secret, for he said, “A man can no more take in a supply of grace for the future than he can eat enough today to last him for the next 6 months, nor can he inhale sufficient air into his lungs with one breath to sustain life for a week to come. We are permitted to draw upon God’s store of grace from day to day as we need it!”

God never gives His strength in advance, so let’s stop crossing bridges before we come to them. The Heavenly Father will graciously supply our every need - one day at a time! **Don’t try to bear tomorrow’s burdens with today’s grace.**

Luke 11:23 No Neutrality

In [Luke] 9:50 those not against the disciples and their work will not lightly speak evil of Christ. It isn’t ours to forbid any work done, however imperfectly, in Christ’s name. In 11:23 neutrality now becomes an impossibility. -- Life and Times of Jesus, Book 4, p. 118

Luke 11:43 (Luke 14:8-11) - A rich man once invited many honored guests for a feast. His own chair, richly decorated, was placed at one end of the long table. While he was away, each guest seated himself according to his own esteem of his position in sight of the master. When time came and all were seated, the master moved his chair to the other end of the table!

Luke 12

Luke 12:13-34

A Terrible Deathbed - I once read of a man who bought a luxurious house and filled it with expensive and spectacular furnishings. After taking a friend on a tour through its many spacious rooms, the owner of the mansion asked proudly, “Well, what do you think of it?” He expected to hear lavish praise, so he was stunned when his guest responded, “It is gorgeous; but to be perfectly frank, things like this make a deathbed terrible.”

Luke 12:13-34

All Mine - George W. Truett, a well-known pastor, was invited to dinner in the home of a very wealthy man in Texas. After the meal, the host led him to a place where they could get a good view of the surrounding area.

Pointing to the oil wells punctuating the landscape, he boasted, “Twenty-five years ago I had nothing. Now, as far as you can see, it’s

all mine.” Looking in the opposite direction at his sprawling fields of grain, he said, “That’s all mine.” Turning east toward huge herds of cattle, he bragged, “They’re all mine.” Then pointing to the west and a beautiful forest, he exclaimed, “That too is all mine.”

He paused, expecting Dr. Truett to compliment him on his great success. Truett, however, placing one hand on the man’s shoulder and pointing heavenward with the other, simply said, “How much do you have in that direction?” The man hung his head and confessed, “I never thought of that.” ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Luke 12:13-34 How Much Land Does a Man Need'

Leo Tolstoy once wrote a story about a successful peasant farmer who was not satisfied with his lot. He wanted more of everything. One day he received a novel offer. For 1000 rubles, he could buy all the land he could walk around in a day. The only catch in the deal was that he had to be back at his starting point by sundown. Early the next morning he started out walking at a fast pace. By midday he was very tired, but he kept going, covering more and more ground. Well into the afternoon he realized that his greed had taken him far from the starting point. He quickened his pace and as the sun began to sink low in the sky, he began to run, knowing that if he did not make it back by sundown the opportunity to become an even bigger landholder would be lost. As the sun began to sink below the horizon he came within sight of the finish line. Gasping for breath, his heart pounding, he called upon every bit of strength left in his body and staggered across the line just before the sun disappeared. He immediately collapsed, blood streaming from his mouth. In a few minutes he was dead. Afterwards, his servants dug a grave. It was not much over six feet long and three feet wide. The title of Tolstoy’s story was: How Much Land Does a Man Need? - Bits and Pieces, November, 1991

Luke 12:13-34 Money Is the Goal

College students know what they want. Money. According to a survey conducted by the American Council on Education in 1987, 75 percent of the 200,000 incoming freshmen who were polled felt that being well-off financially is either an “essential” or a “very important” goal. And 71 percent said the key reason they were going to college was so they could get high-paying jobs when they graduate. There’s something else: The percentage of freshmen who thought it was vital to develop a meaningful philosophy of life was at an all-time low—only 39 percent. - C. Swindoll, Living Above the Level of Mediocrity, p. 152

Luke 12:13-21 More, More, More

July 22, 2013 — by Dennis Fisher

Some people love to shop. They have a perpetual desire to buy, buy, buy. The craze to find the latest deal is worldwide. There are huge shopping malls in China, Saudi Arabia, Canada, the Philippines, the United States, and around the world. A rise in store purchases and online buying show that buying is a global phenomenon.

Shopping can be fun. Certainly, there is nothing wrong with trying to find a real deal and to enjoy the things God has given to us. But when we become preoccupied with obtaining material goods, we lose focus.

Jesus challenged His listeners with these words: “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses” (Luke 12:15). He went on to tell a parable about a man “who lays up treasure for himself,” but is not concerned about his relationship with God (v.21).

How can we learn to be content with what we have and not be consumed with amassing more? Here are some ways: View material goods as given by God to be used wisely (Matt. 25:14-30). Work hard to earn and save money (Prov. 6:6-11). Give to the Lord’s work and those in need (2 Cor. 9:7; Prov. 19:17). And always remember to be thankful and to enjoy what God gives (1 Tim. 6:17).

Lord, our hearts often run after “stuff.”

Teach us not to be obsessed with collecting

more and more material goods. May we instead

learn what it means to be “rich” toward You.

To be rich in God is far better than to be rich in goods.

Luke 12:15

Philip Parham tells the story of a rich industrialist who was disturbed to find a fisherman sitting lazily beside his boat.

"Why aren't you out there fishing?" he asked.

"Because I've caught enough fish for today," said the fisherman.

"Why don't you catch more fish than you need?" the rich man asked.

"What would I do with them?"

"You could earn more money," came the impatient reply, "and buy a better boat so you could go deeper and catch more fish. You could purchase nylon nets, catch even more fish, and make more money. Soon you'd have a fleet of boats and be rich like me."

The fisherman asked, "Then what would I do?"

"You could sit down and enjoy life," said the industrialist.

"What do you think I'm doing now?" the fisherman replied as he looked placidly out to sea. ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Luke 12:16-21 You Fool!

March 16, 2012 — by C. P. Hia

It seems to me rather contradictory that Jesus, who was so gentle at times (Matt. 19:13-15), would call some people fools. Yet, as recorded in the Gospels a number of times, our Lord used this derogatory term to describe those He spoke about—especially the Pharisees (see Matt. 23:17-19; Luke 11:39-40).

Jesus also used the word fool in a parable after warning a man about coveting (Luke 12:13-21). What made him foolish is not the fact that he built bigger barns to store his abundant harvest (vv.16-18). It would have been more foolish of him to leave it out in the fields where inclement weather would spoil it. Nor was he foolish because of his thought that this unexpected windfall was enough to last him a long time (v.19). After all, we are urged to follow the example of the ant in "storing up" the harvest (Prov. 6:6-8).

What made the man foolish? He left God out of the picture. He was called a fool because he failed to realize that his life was in God's hands. While he was planning carefully for his comfortable life on earth, he failed to plan for eternity and store up treasures in heaven (Matt. 6:20).

Does your plan for the future have God in it? You won't want to be called foolish by Him in the end.

Oh, why not turn while yet you may;

Too late, it soon will be—

A glorious life you may possess

Throughout eternity. —Anon.

He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose. —Jim Elliot

Luke 12:16-21 - A young man was prompted by his father's example of giving at church—an area in which he had been negligent—to do the same. So the next Sunday he gave a dollar. He told me about it Sunday night and commented, "And would you believe I found a dollar in the parking lot! Next Sunday I plan to give twenty!"

In Jesus' parable of the rich fool that Jesus told, recorded in Luke 12:16–21, the man had amassed so much material wealth that he needed to tear down his existing barns and build bigger ones. Then he told himself, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry."

In the Cotton Patch Gospel, by Clarence Jordan, the rich man decides to, "Recline, dine, wine, and shine, fool!"

Borneaux, a French painter, musing about this parable, was so moved over it, he took out a canvas, a pallet, paint and brush, and began to paint the scene. He painted a man sitting behind a desk, rather portly in size, several bags of money on the front of his desk. Behind him was a shelf, on which was a small bag, as if for a very special purpose. Outside the window of that man's home was a bumper crop blowing in the afternoon breeze and a warm sunshine beating down on it.

Then Borneaux painted the opposite side of the canvas. Same man, same desk, same bags of money, same little treasured bag behind him on the shelf, same crops, same window, but now everything was covered with dust. The death angel had his hand on the man's shoulder. And the angel's lips were pursed, as if to say, "Fool ... fool."

Did you hear about the drunk who was down on all fours late one night under a streetlight? He was groping around on the ground, feeling the cement, peering intently at the little cracks. A friend drove up and asked, "Sam, what are you doing there?" Sam answered, "I lost my wallet." So the friend got out of his car, walked over, got down on his hands and knees with him, and they both started looking. Neither of them could find it. Finally the friend said to his drunk buddy: "Are you sure you lost the wallet here?"

"Of course not! I dropped it a half a block over there."

"Then why are we looking here?"

"Because there's no streetlight over there."

—Billy Graham, *How to Be Born Again*

Luke 12:19 The Key

An English clergyman was called to the death-bed of a wealthy parishioner. Kneeling beside the dying man the pastor asked him to take his hand as he prayed for his upholding in that solemn hour, but he declined to give it. After the end had come, and they turned down the coverlet, the rigid hands were found holding the safe key in their death grip. Heart and hand, to the last, clinging to his possessions, but he could not take them with him. - *Moody's Anecdotes*, pp. 12-13

Luke 12:22 Birds, Lilies, And Me

August 24, 2011 — by David C. Egener

In the episodes of an old television show, the veteran police lieutenant always said this to the young officers on their way out to the street for their day's assignments: "Be careful out there!" It was both good advice and a word of compassion because he knew what could happen to them in the line of duty.

Jesus gave His followers a similar warning, but in even stronger terms. Luke 11 ends ominously with these words: "The scribes and the Pharisees began to assail Him vehemently, and to cross-examine Him about many things" (v.53). In the continuation of this account, Luke says that Jesus compassionately instructed His disciples to "beware" (12:1) but not to worry or be afraid (vv.4-7,22).

Jesus was promising to guard, protect, and care for them as they went out into the world. He assured them that because He cared for simple things like birds and lilies, they could be certain that He would take care of His "little flock" of believers (vv.24-32).

We cannot know the future. But we can know this: No matter what comes, we are under the loving, caring, watchful eye of our great Shepherd, who also happens to be the Son of God!

I walked life's path with worry,

Disturbed and quite unblest,

Until I trusted Jesus;

Now faith has given rest. —Bosch

If Jesus is concerned about flowers and birds, He certainly cares about you and me.

Luke 12:21 Misers

John G. Wendel and his sisters were some of the most miserly people of all time. Although they had received a huge inheritance from their parents, they spent very little of it and did all they could to keep their wealth for themselves.

John was able to influence five of his six sisters never to marry, and they lived in the same house in New York City for 50 years. When the last sister died in 1931, her estate was valued at more than \$100 million. Her only dress was one that she had made herself, and she had worn it for 25 years.

The Wendels had such a compulsion to hold on to their possessions that they lived like paupers. Even worse, they were like the kind of person Jesus referred to "who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:21).

Daily Walk, June 2, 1993

Luke 12:22-4 Bedtime Bread

God promises that He will provide the basics of life—food and clothing. Once we have accepted this, we have laid the foundation for genuine contentment. In his book “God’s Psychiatry,” Charles L. Allen tells this story: “As World War II was drawing to a close, the Allied armies gathered up many hungry orphans. They were placed in camps where they were well-fed. Despite excellent care, they slept poorly. They seemed nervous and afraid. Finally, a psychologist came up with the solution. Each child was given a piece of bread to hold after he was put to bed. This particular piece of bread was just to be held—not eaten. The piece of bread produced wonderful results. The children went to bed knowing instinctively they would have food to eat the next day. That guarantee gave the children a restful and contented sleep.” Source unknown

Luke 12:29

WATCH THE "OIL"! - The editor of the Arkansas Baptist, Erwin L. McDonald, went to school during the twenties when most people did not drive an automobile. He lived eight miles from the high school, and did not even own a bicycle. However, one of his former school teachers had a Model-T Ford and a daughter who also wanted an education. The father told the young man he could have his transportation free if he would consent to drive the car. The young man carefully deliberated for half a second and said he would do it.

It turned out to be a very good arrangement for Erwin Mc-Donald. He not only obtained his education, but ended up marrying an older sister of the girl he drove to school. In addition to this he received some excellent advice from his future father-in-law. The day he turned over the key to the lad he said, "Erwin, watch the oil. It won't run without gas, but you can be driving down the road thinking all is well, and you can be burning out the motor for lack of lubrication."

Mr. McDonald later saw this as a parable on life. As a car will not run without gasoline, so we cannot function without food, clothing, rest, and some of the material things in life. However, it is possible to eke out an existence without giving thought to spiritual realities. It is a tragedy that a person can go day after day with his heart set on the things of earth, not realizing that his life is being destroyed because he is running without "spiritual oil." All the comforts and conveniences this earth can afford will never satisfy the deepest needs of the soul.

Christian, you may have a lovely home, a new automobile, and a color TV, but — are you watching the "oil"? Be wise, put the things of God first! ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

O for a life by God controlled,
A heart to do His will;
With Him put first, no lack we'll know,
Our needs His love will fill! —GW

Christians are either Bibles or libels

Luke 12:22-31 Money Worries

March 24, 2011 — by Philip Yancey

Of His words recorded in the Bible, Jesus has more to say on money than any other topic. Luke 12 offers a good summary of His attitude. He does not condemn possessions, but He warns against putting faith in money to secure the future. Money fails to solve life's biggest problems.

Although Jesus speaks to many aspects about money, He seems to concentrate on the question: What is money doing to you? Money can dominate a person's life, diverting attention away from God. Jesus challenges us to break free of money's power—even if it means giving it all away.

Jesus urges His listeners to seek treasure in the kingdom of God, for such treasure can benefit them in this life and the next one too. “Do not worry,” He says (v.22), for God is the one who provides for our needs. And then to emphasize His point, He brings up King Solomon, the richest man in the Old Testament. Jesus said that a common wildflower is clothed more gloriously by God than a royal king. So do not have an anxious mind (vv.27-29), “but seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you” (v.31).

Better to trust in the God who lavishes care on the whole earth than to spend our lives worrying about money and possessions.

For Further Study

Learn more about this subject by reading

[Jesus' Parables About Money](#)

The real measure of our wealth is what will be ours in eternity.

Luke 12:35-40 Prepared For The Real Thing

May 20, 2012 — by Joe Stowell

Through the years, quite a few people have predicted the return of Jesus at a specific time. Just last year an American radio preacher stirred up the interest of the mainstream media with his prediction that Jesus would return on May 21, 2011.

Anyone who knows Scripture well knew that this advance warning wasn't accurate, because Jesus Himself said His return would be "at an hour you do not expect" (Luke 12:40). But I do have to admit that this prediction captured my attention. Often I get so caught up in the busyness of life that I live as though Jesus' return is some distant reality. I forget that Jesus could come back at any time. The prediction, wrong as it was, reminded me about the importance of being prepared for my Savior's return, and it renewed my excitement that it could be any day—even today.

Sometimes when we think of being ready for Jesus' return, we think about what we shouldn't be doing. But being prepared is really about purifying ourselves and becoming more and more like Him so we are pleasing to Him when He comes back for us (1 John 3:2-3). Jesus taught that being ready for His return requires living according to our Master's will now (Luke 12:47). Will we be prepared when it's time for the real thing?

Keep me praying, keep me trusting

Every step along life's way!

Keep me waiting, keep me watching,

For He may return today! —Thiesen

Look for Christ's return and you'll live for Christ's glory.

Luke 14

Luke 14:7-14 Guest List

January 25, 2013 — by Dennis Fisher

Qumran was a first-century Jewish community that had isolated itself from outside influences to prepare for the arrival of the Messiah. They took great care in devotional life, ceremonial washings, and strict adherence to rules of conduct. Surviving documents show that they would not allow the lame, the blind, or the crippled into their communities. This was based on their conviction that anyone with a physical "blemish" was ceremonially unclean. During their table fellowship, disabled people were never on their guest lists.

Ironically, at that same time the Messiah of Israel was at work in the cities and villages of Judea and Galilee. Jesus proclaimed His Father's kingdom, brought teaching and comfort, and worked mighty miracles. Strikingly, He proclaimed: "When you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed" (Luke 14:13-14).

The contrast between Jesus' words and the guest list of the Qumran "spiritual elite" is instructive to us. Often we like to fellowship with people who look, think, and act like us. But our Lord exhorts us to be like Him and open our doors to everyone.

The gospel must be shared with all,

Not just with those like you and me;

For God embraces everyone

Who turns to Him to set them free. —Sper

The inclusive gospel cannot be shared by an exclusive people. —George Sweeting

Luke 14:11

They Took God's Glory - What did King Nebuchadnezzar of ancient Babylon and Nikolai Ceausescu of present-day Romania have in common? Both were ruthless dictators who fell after boldly exalting themselves.

Nebuchadnezzar brazenly declared that he had built the great city of Babylon by his own power and for the honor of his majesty (Dan. 4:30). God humbled him by driving him into the wilderness with a mental illness.

Ceausescu, after years of cruelly persecuting Christians and killing all potential threats to his power, instructed the National Opera to produce a song in his honor that included these words: "Ceausescu is good, righteous, and holy." He wanted this song to be sung on his 72nd birthday on January 26, 1990, but on December 25, 1989, he and his wife were executed. Although his overthrow was part of the anticommunist revolution that swept through eastern Europe, many Christians see his sudden downfall as an act of God. One Romanian, Peter Dugulescu, said that it was "because he took for himself the glory of God." ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Luke 14:15-24

"Many churches today remind me of a laboring crew trying to gather a harvest while they sit in the tool shed. They go to the tool shed every Sunday and they study bigger and better methods of agriculture, sharpen their hoes, grease their tractors, and then get up and go home. Then they come back that night, study bigger and better methods of agriculture, sharpen their hoes, grease their tractors, and get up and go home. They do this week in and week out, year in and year out, and nobody ever goes out into the fields to gather in the harvest" (Paul W. Powell, *The Complete Disciple*).

The final command of Christ to His disciples was to tell everyone about His saving power. Just before He ascended to heaven, He said to His followers, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). Today, that great commission is still the responsibility of believers. But many church members, even though they have much Bible knowledge and have been Christians for years, never enter the harvest field.

I must confess my own guilt in this regard. I promote missions. I support missionary endeavors regularly. Some of my best friends are missionaries. But I haven't been out in the realm of the lost as I should be. It's time for all of us to confess our shortcomings and to get into the fields. —D C Egnor ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**There is only one thing we can't do for missions—
get rid of our responsibility.**

Luke 14:25-33

THE name Mickey Thompson used to be one of the most recognized in auto racing. His team built the fastest cars on the track. But not one of those cars ever brought Thompson a checkered flag. Although his cars took the lead in the first twenty-nine races they entered, they never won a race. Why? Because they did not finish.

Thompson could make the fastest cars, but he couldn't build them to last. They all broke down during the race. Engines blew. Gearboxes broke. Carburetors failed. His cars were good starters and fast runners, but they were not good finishers.

As we run the race of the Christian life, we need to end well. The apostle Paul is an example of a good finisher. He received Christ on the Damascus road. He attended "seminary" in the Arabian desert (Galatians 1:17-18). He served Christ in spite of hardship and persecution. He opened Europe to the Gospel. And at the close of his life, he could say with confidence, "I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7).

What about us? What stalls our spiritual engines? What causes us to break down? When we find ourselves out of the running, we need to diagnose the problem, make the necessary repairs, and get back into the race. God needs people He can count on to cross the finish line.—D C Egnor ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Luke 14:25-35 Baby's Blessing

It occurred in Northern Virginia, probably on his last visit there. A young mother brought her baby to him to be blessed. He took the infant in his arms and looked at it and then at her and slowly said, "Teach him he must deny himself." Robert E. Lee, Douglas Southall Freeman, in Lee, quoted in Charles Swindoll, *Living Above the Level of Mediocrity*, p.54

Luke 15

Luke 15:1-10 Lost And Found

June 30, 2011 — by Julie Ackerman Link

Until the day I was found, I didn't know I was lost. I was going about business as usual, moving from task to task, distraction to distraction. But then I received an e-mail with the heading: "I think you're my cousin." As I read my cousin's message, I learned that she and another cousin had been searching for my branch of the family for nearly 10 years. The other cousin promised her father, shortly before he died, that she would find his family.

I hadn't done anything to get lost, and I didn't have to do anything to be found except acknowledge that I was the person they had been looking for. Learning that they had spent so much time and energy searching for our family made me feel special.

This led me to think about the "lost and found" parables of Luke 15—the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. Whenever we wander away from God, whether intentionally like the prodigal son or unintentionally like the sheep, God looks for us. Even though we may not "feel" lost, if we have no relationship with God, we are. To be found, we need to realize that God is looking for us (Luke 19:10) and admit that we are separated from Him. By giving up our waywardness, we can be reunited with Him and restored to His family.

The Lord has come to seek and save

A world that is lost in sin;

And everyone who comes to Him

Will be restored and changed within. —Sper

To be found, you must admit you are lost.

Luke 15 No One Is Hopeless

When I first began to work for God in Chicago a Boston businessman was converted there and stayed three months, and when leaving he said to me that there was a man living on such a street in whom he was very much interested, and whose boy was in the high school, and he had said that he had two brothers and a little sister who didn't go anywhere to Sabbath School, because their parents would not let them. This gentleman said, "I wish you would go round and see them."

I went, and I found that the parents lived in a drinking saloon, and that the father kept the bar. I stepped up to him and told him what I wanted, and he said he would rather have his sons become drunkards and his daughter a harlot than have them go to our schools. It looked pretty dark, and he was very bitter to me, but I went a second time, thinking that I might catch him in a better humor. He ordered me out again. I went a third time and found him in better humor. He said, "You are talking too much about the Bible. I will tell you what I will do; if you teach them something reasonable, like 'Paine's Age of Reason,' they may go."

Then I talked further to him, and finally he said, "If you will read Paine's book, I will read the New Testament."

Well, to get hold of him I promised and he got the best of the bargain. We exchanged books, and that gave me a chance to call again and talk with that family.

One day he said, "Young man, you have talked so much about church, now you can have a church down here."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, I will invite some friends, and you can come down here and preach to them; not that I believe a word you say, but I do it to see if it will do us chaps any good."

"Very well," I said, "now let us have it distinctly understood that we are to have a certain definite time."

He told me to come at 11 o'clock, saying, "I want you to understand that you are not to do all the preaching."

"How's that?"

"I shall want to talk some, and also my friends."

I said, "Supposing we have it understood that you are to have 45 minutes and I fifteen; is that fair?"

He thought that was fair. He was to have the first 45 and I the last 15 minutes.

I went down, and the saloonkeeper wasn't there. I thought perhaps he had backed out, but I found the reason was that he had found that his saloon was not large enough to hold all his friends, and he had gone to a neighbor's, whither I went and found two rooms filled. There were atheists, infidels, and scoffers there. I had taken a little boy with me, thinking he might aid me. The moment I got in they plied me with all sorts of questions, but I said I hadn't come to hold any discussion; that they had been discussing for years and had reached no conclusion. They took up the 45 minutes of time talking and the result was there were no two who could agree.

Then came my turn. I said, "We always open our meetings with prayer; let us pray," I prayed, and thought perhaps someone else would pray before I got through. After I finished the little boy prayed. I wish you could have heard him. He prayed to God to have mercy upon those men who were talking so against His beloved Son. His voice sounded more like an angel's than a human voice. After we got up, I was going to speak, but there was not a dry eye in the assembly. One after another went out, and the old man I had been after for months—and sometimes it looked pretty dark—came and, putting his hands on my shoulder with tears streaming down his face, said, "Mr. Moody, you can have my children go to your Sunday School."

The next Sunday they came, and after a few months the oldest boy, a promising young man then in the high school, came upon the platform, and with his chin quivering and the tears in his eyes, said, "I wish to ask these people to pray for me; I want to become a Christian."

God heard and answered our prayers for him. In all my acquaintances I don't know of a man whom it seemed more hopeless to reach. I believe if we lay ourselves out for the work there is not a man but can be reached and saved. I don't care who he is, if we go in the name of our Master, and persevere until we succeed, it will not be long before Christ will bless us, no matter how hard their heart is. "We shall reap if we faint not." -- Moody's Anecdotes, pp. 84ff

Luke 15 - A prodigal son named Robert left home for Paris. Robert awoke one morning to the bitter realization that his money was gone. All his creditors were hounding him. Hurriedly he left Paris for a small town in Normandy. But his past caught up with him. Everything was repossessed. There was nothing to do but to seek work with one of the local farmers. In that environment something—the wooing of God's spirit in his heart—brought him back to himself.

He thought of "Twin Oaks" and the gracious, orderly life he had left behind. Wistfully he compared his days with those of the workers on his father's plantation. Nostalgically he remembered Christmas back home. The roast turkey with chestnut stuffing, the platters of fried chicken, the beaten biscuits, watermelon-rind preserves, pecan pies, spoon bread, and cold floating island.

He remembered the look in his father's eyes as he had stood at the head of the table carving the turkey, the look of tender pride as he had surveyed his family.

Once again he could feel his father's strong arms around him ... a big hand laid tenderly on a little boy's head that day his puppy had been killed.

Dimly he recalled certain moments of growing up when he had thought his father stuffy, old-fashioned. Now everything in him cried out for some of that old-fashioned love.

That night he crept away from the farm, and on foot made his way to Cherbourg, where he worked his way back across the Atlantic on a freighter.

He was going home.

What drew the boy back? The love of a father. The love of a home. Never once did the prodigal son in Luke 15 say, "I will arise and go back to my house." There is little in a house to draw someone back to it. It's love that draws us home. —Peter Marshall, John Doe, Disciple

Luke 15 Find Someone Who Has Fallen

I remember the first good Samaritan I ever saw. I had been in this world only three or four years when my father died a bankrupt, and the creditors came and swept away about everything we had. My widow mother had a cow and a few things, and it was a hard struggle to keep the wolf from the door. My brother went to Greenfield, and secured work in a store for his board, and went to school. It was so lonely there that he wanted me to get a place so as to be with him, but I didn't want to leave home. One cold day in November my brother came home and said he had a place for me. I said that I wouldn't go, but after it was talked over they decided I should go. I didn't want my brothers to know that I hadn't the courage to go, but that night was a long one.

The next morning we started. We went up on the hill, and had a last sight of the old house. We sat down there and cried. I thought that would be the last time I should ever see that old home. I cried all the way down to Greenfield. There my brother introduced me

to an old man who was so old he couldn't milk his cows and do the chores, so I was to do his errands, milk his cows and go to school. I looked at the old man and saw he was cross. I took a good look at the wife and thought she was crosser than the old man. I stayed there an hour and it seemed like a week.

I went around then to my brother and said: "I am going home."

"What are you going home for?"

"I am homesick," I said.

"Oh well, you will get over it in a few days."

"I never will," I said. "I don't want to."

He said, "You will get lost if you start for home now; it is getting dark."

I was frightened then, as I was only about ten years old, and I said, "I will go at daybreak tomorrow morning."

He took me to a shop window, where they had some jackknives and other things, and tried to divert my mind. What did I care for those old jackknives? I wanted to get back home to my mother and brothers; it seemed as if my heart was breaking.

All at once my brother said, "Dwight, there comes a man that will give you a cent."

"How do you know he will?" I asked.

"Oh! he gives every new boy that comes to town a cent."

I brushed away the tears, for I wouldn't have him see me crying, and I got right in the middle of the sidewalk, where he couldn't help but see me, and kept my eyes right upon him. I remember how that old man looked as he came tottering down the sidewalk. Oh, such a bright, cheerful, sunny face he had! When he came opposite to where I was he stopped, took my hat off, put his hand on my head, and said to my brother: "This is a new boy in town, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir, he is; just came today."

I watched to see if he would put his hand into his pocket. I was thinking of that cent. He began to talk to me so kindly that I forgot all about it. He told me that God had an only Son, and He sent Him down here, and wicked men killed Him, and he said He died for me. He only talked five minutes, but he took me captive. After he had given me this little talk, he put his hand in his pocket and took out a brand new cent, a copper that looked just like gold. He gave me that; I thought it was gold, and didn't I hold it tight! I never felt so rich before or since.

I don't know what became of that cent; I have always regretted that I didn't keep it; but I can feel the pressure of the old man's hand on my head today. Fifty years have rolled away, and I can hear those kind words ringing yet. I never shall forget that act. He put the money at usury; that cent has cost me a great many dollars. I have never walked up the streets of this country or the old country but down into my pocket goes my hand, and I take out some money and give it to every forlorn, miserable child I see. I think how the old man lifted a load from me, and I want to lift a load from some one else.

Do you want to be like Christ? Go and find some one who has fallen, and get your arm under him, and lift him up toward heaven. The Lord will bless you in the very act. May God help us to go and do like the good Samaritan!

Moody's Anecdotes, pp. 10-12

Luke 15:1-7 T-Ball Faith

January 2, 2013 — by Randy Kilgore

Whoever dreamed up T-ball is a genius: Every kid on the field gets a taste of the fun and joy of the game before they taste the disappointment of striking out.

In T-ball, a baseball is placed on a rubber tee about waist-high to the 5- and 6-year-old batters. Players swing until they hit the ball and then run. On my first night as a coach, the very first batter hit the ball far into the outfield. Suddenly every player from every position ran to get the ball instead of staying where they were supposed to. When one of them reached it, there was nobody left in the infield for him to throw it to! All the players were standing together—cheering with unrestrained exuberance!

Those who have recently come to know Jesus as Savior have an unrestrained joy that is a delight to be around as well. We rejoice with them, and so do the angels in heaven! (Luke 15:7). New Christians are in love with God and excited about knowing Him and

learning from His Word.

Those who've been Christians for a long time may get discouraged with the struggles of the Christian life and forget the joy of new-found faith. So take the opportunity to rejoice with those who've come to faith. God can use them to inspire you to renew your own commitment to Jesus.

Rejoice, O soul, your debt is paid,

For all your sins on Christ were laid;

We've been redeemed, we're justified—

And all because the Savior died. —D. DeHaan

Restore to me the joy of Your salvation. —Psalm 51:12

Luke 15:2 Edith

One day a little girl returned home from church and was asked by her mother what the preacher had said. She replied, "He talked about Edith," her little sister. "What do you mean?" asked the mother. "He said, 'He receiveth sinners, and Edith with them too.'" There's truth there. "He receiveth sinners, and (my name) with them too! -- Source unknown

Luke 15:10

History was unfolding before our eyes. There on our TV screens were pictures of East Germans dancing on top of the Berlin Wall. We didn't know these people personally. We were separated by miles, culture, and language. Yet we rejoiced with them as they felt the invigorating breeze of freedom blow across their land.

A people had been given a new measure of liberty, and we shared their thrilling moment. The wall was coming down, an era of tyranny was ending, and free people everywhere celebrated with those jubilant East Germans.

This reminded me of another vicarious celebration—the joy that the angels in heaven experience when a sinner breathes his first breath of freedom from the tyranny of sin. Because the insurmountable wall that separates man from God has been torn down by Christ on the cross, we can now be free from the oppressive weight of sin's guilt. This burden, which makes it impossible to enjoy life, is lifted when a person receives Christ as his or her Savior. And how the angels rejoice! J. D. Branon ([Our Daily Bread](#), [Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

ANGELS REJOICE WHEN SINNERS REPENT

Luke 15:11-24 Avoid The Husks

December 16, 2011 — by Dave Branon

Ah, the life of a pig! Each new day brings nothing but slopping through the mud and snorting happily at mealtime. And what meals they have! Crunchy corn husks—or whatever leftovers get tossed into the pen.

Sound good? No? It probably didn't sound good to the prodigal son either.

Before he started eating with pigs, he had a warm bed, a rich inheritance, a loving father, a secure future—and probably good food. But it wasn't enough. He wanted "fun." He wanted to run his own life and do whatever he desired. It resulted in a pig's dinner.

Whenever a young person ignores the guidance of godly parents and the instruction of God's Word, similar results occur. It always shocks me when someone who professes to know Jesus chooses a life that rejects God's clear teaching. Whether the choices include sexual sin, addictive substances, a lack of ambition, or something else, any action that leaves God out risks ending badly.

If we ignore clear biblical morals and neglect our relationship with God, we can expect trouble. Luke tells us that the young man turned things around after he came to his senses (Luke 15:17). Keep your senses about you. Live for God by the guidance of His Word—unless you have a hankering for the husks.

When we are lured to turn away

To follow sinful lust,

Lord, help us to resist the pull

And in You put our trust. —Sper

If sin were not deceitful, it wouldn't seem delightful.

Luke 15:11-24 Open Arms

January 21, 2013 — by David C. McCasland

At the funeral of former US First Lady Betty Ford, her son Steven said, "She was the one with the love and the comfort, and she was the first one there to put her arms around you. Nineteen years ago when I went through my alcoholism, my mother . . . gave me one of the greatest gifts, and that was how to surrender to God, and to accept the grace of God in my life. And truly in her arms I felt like the prodigal son coming home, and I felt God's love through her. And that was a good gift."

Jesus' parable about a young man who asked for and squandered his inheritance and then in humiliation returned home leaves us amazed at his father's response: "When he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him" (Luke 15:20). Instead of a lecture or punishment, the father expressed love and forgiveness by giving him a party. Why? Because "this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found" (v.24).

Steven Ford concluded his tribute with the words, "Thank you, Mom, for loving us, loving your husband, loving us kids, loving the nation, with the heart of God."

May God enable us to open our arms to others, just as His are open wide to all who turn to Him.

Lord, help me be kind and forgiving—

Your loving forgiveness You've shown

To me for the sins I've committed;

Lord, grant me a love like Your own. —Anon.

Forgiven sinners know love and show love.

Luke 15:11-24 Deal, Or No Deal

July 14, 2010 — by Joe Stowell

If you're like me, you love a good deal. Not just bargain shopping, but when you manage to cut a great deal for yourself without giving anything up in return. So if you can identify with these kinds of deals, you'll understand the prodigal son's scheme when he decided to return home.

There were three kinds of servants in those days: day workers who were paid on a day-to-day basis; hired servants who worked long hours on the estate but lived in town with their independence intact; or bond servants who lived on the estate and gave all of themselves to serving the family.

When the prodigal son hit rock bottom, it's interesting that his planned apology involved asking if he could be like a hired servant. Why not a grateful bond servant? Some commentators suggest that perhaps he was trying to negotiate a deal—a way to get a paycheck and keep his independence as well.

Often we approach God like, "I'll serve You but You can't take away my freedom." It may seem like a good deal at the time, but God's deal is so much better. Just like the boy's father, His arms are ready and willing to receive repentant sinners as part of His family. There could be no better deal and no better way to serve Him!

Lord, take my life and make it wholly Thine;

Fill my poor heart with Thy great love divine.

Take all my will, my passion, self, and pride;

I now surrender, Lord—in me abide. —Orr

True freedom is found in surrender to Christ.

Luke 15:11

The Tramp - Evangelist J. Wilbur Chapman recounted a testimony given by a man in one of his meetings. The man said,

“I got off at the train depot one day as a tramp. For a year I had begged on the streets. Badly in need of food, I touched a man on the shoulder and said, ‘Mister, please give me a dime.’

As soon as I saw his face, I recognized my aging father.

“Don’t you know me?’ I asked.

Throwing his arms around me, he cried,

‘Oh, my son, I have found you at last! All I have is yours!’

Think of it—I was a tramp who begged for 10 cents from a man I didn’t know was my father, when for 18 years he had been looking for me to give me all he possessed!”

Luke 15:11ff Seven R’s

1. A request “Give me” (v.12)
2. A rebellion “Took his journey” (v.13)
3. A retribution “And he began to be in want” (v.14)
4. A reflection “He came to himself” (v.17)
5. A resolution “I will arise and go to my father” (v.18)
6. A repentance “I have sinned against heaven” (v.21)
7. A restoration “Bring forth the best robe and put it on him” (v.22)

Living Dangerously, S. Briscoe, Zondervan, 1968, pp. 59ff

Luke 15:11ff The Tramp

Evangelist J. Wilbur Chapman recounted a testimony given by a man in one of his meetings. The man said, “I got off at the train depot one day as a tramp. For a year I had begged on the streets. Badly in need of food, I touched a man on the shoulder and said, ‘Mister, please give me a dime.’ As soon as I saw his face, I recognized my aging father.

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Think of it—I was a tramp who begged for 10 cents from a man I didn’t know was my father, when for 18 years he had been looking for me to give me all he possessed!” Our Daily Bread, November 12, 1992

Luke 15:11-32 - Prodigal Son

One of the most beautiful stories of the Scriptures is that of the prodigal son, the youth who left home, got into deep difficulty, wasted his life in riotous living, and ended up in the pigpen.

Dr. J. Vernon McGee once asked, “Do you know the difference between the son in that pigpen and the pig? The difference is that no pig has ever said to himself, “I will arise and go to my father.”

He is right; only sons say that. That is why there will be no condemnation, no rejection by God of his children. All believers, even prodigal sons, are his children, not his enemies. - J Vernon McGee

Luke 15:11ff The Photo

Longing to leave her poor Brazilian neighborhood, Christina wanted to see the world. Discontent with a home having only a pallet on the floor, a washbasin, and a wood-burning stove, she dreamed of a better life in the city. One morning she slipped away, breaking her mother’s heart. Knowing what life on the streets would be like for her young, attractive daughter, Maria hurriedly packed to go

find her. On her way to the bus stop she entered a drugstore to get one last thing. Pictures. She sat in the photograph booth, closed the curtain, and spent all she could on pictures of herself. With her purse full of small black-and-white photos, she boarded the next bus to Rio de Janeiro.

Maria knew Christina had no way of earning money. She also knew that her daughter was too stubborn to give up. When pride meets hunger, a human will do things that were before unthinkable. Knowing this, Maria began her search. Bars, hotels, nightclubs, any place with the reputation for street walkers or prostitutes. She went to them all. And at each place she left her picture—taped on a bathroom mirror, tacked to a hotel bulletin board, fastened to a corner phone booth. And on the back of each photo she wrote a note. It wasn't too long before both the money and the pictures ran out, and Maria had to go home. The weary mother wept as the bus began its long journey back to her small village.

It was a few weeks later that young Christina descended the hotel stairs. Her young face was tired. Her brown eyes no longer danced with youth but spoke of pain and fear. Her laughter was broken. Her dream had become a nightmare. A thousand times over she had longed to trade these countless beds for her secure pallet. Yet the little village was, in too many ways, too far away. As she reached the bottom of the stairs, her eyes noticed a familiar face. She looked again, and there on the lobby mirror was a small picture of her mother. Christina's eyes burned and her throat tightened as she walked across the room and removed the small photo. Written on the back was this compelling invitation. "Whatever you have done, whatever you have become, it doesn't matter. Please come home." She did.

Max Lucado, *No Wonder They Call Him the Savior*, Multnomah Press, 1986, pp. 158-9

Luke 15:11ff Parable in the Key of F

Francis the Foolish felt a filial fondness for his flawless, fastidious father, Ferdinand the Fourth. Over one February fortnight, Francis, feeling footloose and frisky, forced his fond father to fork over five hundred forty-five farthings, then fled his father's fertile fief. Fleeing to foreign fields, Francis finally frittered away his fortune on females, feasting, firkins of foaming ale, and fickle, freeloading friends. Fleeced by those fiendish fellows of the fleshpots, and facing failure and famine, Francis finally found himself flinging feed to fowl in a filthy farmyard as a farmhand. Footsore and famished, he fain would have filled his famished frame with filched food but found it fit only for a footman.

"Fie!" flared Francis. "My father's flunkies fare far finer!" Fortunately, the frazzled and forlorn fugitive finally faced facts. Frustrated by failure and filled with foreboding, he fled forthwith to his faraway family. Falling fatigued at his father's feet, Francis feebly phrased his feelings. "Father," he fumbled, "I've flunked—and fruitlessly forfeited family favor. Forgive me!"

The far-sighted father, forestalling future family fissures, flagged his flunkies, "Fetch a fatling from the flock and fix a feast for Francis! Fall to! Faster!" Frederick the fetulant, Francis' fiesty, fault-finding brother, frowned upon his father's forgiveness of Francis' former philandering. "Flog the foolish flounder!" he fumed. But the faithful father felt that Francis' former foibles should be freely forgiven.

"Filial fidelity is what fathers are for, Frederick," said Ferdinand, his feelings freely flowing. "Forsooth! The fugitive is found, so what forbids festivity? Fly the flags freely, amid fifes, fiddles, and fanfare. Fling a feast!" Francis, face flushed, foreswore frippery forevermore by forcing his frame into a friar's frock. Fini -- Source unknown

Luke 15:11-24

A twelve-year-old boy killed one of the family geese by throwing a stone and hitting it squarely on the head. Figuring his parents wouldn't notice that one of the twenty-four birds was missing, he buried it. But that evening his sister called him aside and said, "I saw what you did. If you don't offer to do the dishes tonight, I'll tell Mother." The next morning she gave him the same warning. All that day and the next the frightened boy felt bound to do the dishes. The following morning, however, he surprised his sister by telling her it was her turn. When she reminded him of what she would do, he replied, "I've already told Mother, and she has forgiven me. Now you do the dishes. I'm free again."

Luke tells us that the prodigal son, concerned about his meeting with his father, decided to begin the conversation by confessing his sin. Then he planned to offer himself as a slave. But he never had to make that proposal. He had hardly begun his confession when his father forgave him and restored him to his status as a son. For that young man, as for the little boy, confession opened the door to freedom.

David discovered the same liberation after his sin. In Psalm 32 he declared that when he kept silent, mental depression and bodily distress kept him bound. But as soon as he confessed what he had done, he was forgiven. His spiritual joy and physical vitality returned. Repentance brings release from bondage. —H V Lugt ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Luke 15:11-24

An artist searching for a man to model as the prodigal son saw a beggar in the street and asked him to come to his studio and pose for him, promising to pay him. At the appointed time the man appeared, neatly shaven and all dressed up. "Who are you?" asked the artist. "I am the beggar," answered the man. "I thought I'd get cleaned up before I got painted." "I can't use you as you are now," said the artist, and dismissed him.

All who come to Jesus for salvation must come just as they are. Simple trust in Christ—with no claim of their own merits—that's what God is looking for. This attitude is also a key to growth in grace and a life of useful service. After we are saved, we may begin to think that we must clean ourselves up in order to prove ourselves worthy. Although we must "work out" our own salvation, pride and conceit blind us to the truth that it is God who works in us "both to will and to do for His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12-13).

Paul put it like this: "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD" (1 Cor. 1:31). Our part is to yield to His working in us.

Continued spiritual progress requires that we honestly recognize our continual spiritual poverty. Although we are saved once and for all, we must maintain that basic sense of need that prompted our initial response to Jesus in order for God's Spirit to remain in control. God can use only those who rely on Him and maintain a prodigal posture throughout all of life. —D J De Haan ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved) **To be rich in God is better than to be rich in goods.**

Luke 15:28 Two Kinds of Sin

"The elder brother is the dark contrast which heightens the glowing picture of the repentant prodigal. When we look at sin, not in its theological aspects but in its everyday clothes, we find that it divides itself into two kinds. We find there are sins of the body and sins of the disposition; or, more narrowly, sins of the passions, including all forms of lust and selfishness, and sins of the temper. The prodigal is the instance in the New Testament of sins of passion; the elder brother of sins of temper. One scholar did a careful analysis of the ingredients that went into that one spiteful speech. They were jealousy, anger, pride, uncharitableness, cruelty, self-righteousness, sulkiness, touchiness, and doggedness. Let us carefully read our hearts, lest there be any trace of this spirit in us when others are pressing into the kingdom with joy." Source unknown

Luke 16

Luke 16:1-12

Polite Salesman - Faithfulness in duties we think are of minimal importance proves our readiness for larger tasks. Charles M. Schwab told of a prosperous man who started out in his youth as a poorly paid helper in a department store.

One rainy day when business was slow, the employees gathered in a corner to discuss the current baseball situation. When a woman came in, wet and bedraggled from the weather, they all continued talking except this young fellow. Quickly he walked over to the customer and asked courteously, "What can I show you, madam?" He promptly got the merchandise she requested and explained its features in a pleasant manner.

A short time later, the firm received a letter from this lady ordering complete furnishings for a large estate overseas. "I want to be assisted by the polite clerk who waited on me a few weeks ago," she wrote. The head of the company responded by saying that the one she asked for was young and inexperienced, so the manager would be sent instead.

But when her reply came, it stated that she wanted the person she had designated and no other. So the courteous employee was sent to advise in furnishing a famous Scottish palace, for the customer had been none other than Mrs. Andrew Carnegie!

Luke 16:9 - An Eternal Investment

When a wealthy man died someone asked, "How much did he leave?" Another replied, "Every last cent of it." "You can't take it with you" is a common expression. But you can send it on ahead! That's true whether we are talking about money, talents, opportunity, or time. The way to send it on ahead is to use it properly here on earth. Jesus taught this truth in the parable of the unjust (or shrewd) steward (Luke 16:9). He also taught us to lay up treasures in heaven (Matt. 6:20). We may lay up treasures in heaven by investing

our resources in those going to heaven: not in things but in persons.

Luke 16:27,28, Mark 16:15, Acts 16:9 - Cry From Above and Beneath and Without

Some years ago, a very good friend of mine, Dr. E. Myers Harrison, gave a missionary message that I cannot forget. It was to a small group of people, but I will never forget the sermon. Dr. Harrison is now at home with the Lord, but he was a great servant of God and a great missionary statesman. He said that each of us as Christians must hear what God has to say. There is the command from above: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature?" (Mark 16:15). Have you heard that? I've heard people say, "But God wants our church to be different. We're not supposed to have a missionary program." I don't believe that. I believe the command from above is given to every Christian and to every assembly that God has raised up.

Then there is the cry from beneath. Remember the rich man who died and woke up in hell and begged for someone to go and tell his brothers? (see Luke 16). "I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house (for I have five brethren), that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment?" (Lk 16:27,28). There is the cry from beneath. If you and I could hear the cries of people in a lost eternity right now, we'd realize how important it is to get the Gospel out. There's the command from **above**. Have you heard it? There's the cry from **beneath**. Have you heard it?

Then, according to Dr. Harrison, there is the call from **without**. Acts 16:9 says, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." People around us are saying, "Please come to help us!" So much money, time and energy is being spent on routine church matters in America when there is a whole world to reach for Christ! We face so many open doors!

[Something Happens When Churches Pray](#), Warren Wiersbe, pp. 102-3 (1984)

Luke 16:13

Duke of Willington - Godfrey Davis, who wrote a biography about the Duke of Willington, said,

"I found an old account ledger that showed how the Duke spent his money. It was a far better clue to what he thought was really important than the reading of his letters or speeches."

How we handle money reveals much about the depth of our commitment to Christ. That's why Jesus often talked about money. One-sixth of the gospels, including one out of every three parables, touches on stewardship. Jesus wasn't a fundraiser. He dealt with money matters because money matters. For some of us, though, it matters too much.

Luke 16:19-31 Donald Trump

Early in 1989, when Trump's bank account was still bulging, a writer asked Trump the inevitable question about what horizons were left to conquer.

"Right now, I'm genuinely enjoying myself," Trump replied. "I work and I don't worry." "What about death?" the writer asked. "Don't you worry about dying?" Trump dealt his stock answer, one that appears in a lot of his interviews. "No," he said. "I'm fatalistic and I protect myself as well as anybody can. I prepare for things." This time, however, as Trump started walking up the stairs to have dinner with his family, he hesitated for a moment. "No," he said finally, "I don't believe in reincarnation, heaven or hell—but we go someplace." Again a pause. "Do you know," he added, "I cannot, for the life of me, figure out where." - Donald Trump, investor and businessman.

Quoted in Pursuit magazine in an adaptation from the book What Jesus Would Say, by Lee Strobel, 1994, Zondervan

Luke 16:19-31

A CHURCH that needed a pastor invited several candidates to come and preach. One minister spoke on Psalm 9:17, "The wicked shall be turned into hell." The chairman of the board was not in favor of him. A few weeks later, another preacher came and used the same verse for his sermon. This time the man said, "He's good! Let's call him."

The other board members were surprised. "Why did you like him?" one of them asked. "He used the same text as the other minister."

"True," replied the chairman, "but when the first preacher said that the lost would be turned into hell, he seemed to gloat over it. When the second said it, he had tears in his eyes and concern in his voice."

When Jesus warned of the terrible reality of hell, His words must have sounded frightening. But they were motivated by love for the

lost. The Bible says that God takes "no pleasure in the death of the wicked" (Ezekiel 33:11) and "desires all men to be saved" (1 Timothy 2:4). Every time Jesus spoke of hell, therefore, He did so out of loving concern.

A terrible fate awaits those who reject God's gracious salvation. If we love them as Christ does, we will show it by lovingly yet urgently speaking to them of their need to receive Christ.—H G Bosch ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Luke 16:25–26 Suffering of Hell Charles Howard was one of the most ardent evangelists I ever knew. One time I heard him preach on hell. He said that one of the greatest sufferings of hell will be remembrance of lost opportunities to believe in Christ as Savior (see Luke 16:25–26).

Luke 17

Luke 17:4 How Many Times'

The Pharisees said the law required that you forgive another person three times. Therefore Peter wanted to know if he should go beyond even that and forgive up to a "perfect" seven times.

Today in the Word

Luke 17:32 Remember Lot's Wife

This is obviously one of the shortest verses in the Bible, and in it Jesus is commanding us to remember someone whose name we never knew! Neither her name, nor anything she ever said or did is recorded in Scripture, and yet the Lord wants us to remember her. There is one exception to the above statement, of course, and this is the key. When God tried to save Lot and his family from the fiery destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, "his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt" (Genesis 19:26).

This strange miracle—whether it was an instantaneous chemical transmutation, or a sudden burial by erupting bodies of salt, or a gradual petrification process as her body was buried and later transformed in a fall of volcanic ash—really happened, for the Lord Jesus thus confirmed it, as He did the destruction of Sodom, itself (Luke 17:28,29)! The reason why He commands us to remember it and profit by its lesson is given in the next verse: "Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it" (Luke 17:33).

This same paradoxical formula is given by Christ in very similar terminology no less than five other times in the four gospels (Matthew 10:39; 16:25; Mark 8:35; Luke 9:24; John 12:25), a fact which surely indicates its preeminent importance.

Therefore, one should remember Lot's wife, whenever he or she is tempted to hang on to a comfortable life style in a wicked world. Lot, himself, was a rather worldly minded believer, but when he consented to flee the doomed city, his wife lagged "behind him," and kept "looking back," grieving over the imminent loss of her material comforts and high social position among her ungodly neighbors. Finally, the Lord's longsuffering patience was ended, and her carnal desire to save her old life caused her to lose her whole life. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul (same Greek word as 'life')?" (Matthew 16:26).

The instruction for us is clear and pointed. "They which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Corinthians 5:15). HMM.

Luke 18

Luke 18:1-8 Unanswered

June 10, 2012 — by Anne Cetas

One of my biggest struggles is unanswered prayer. Maybe you can relate. You ask God to rescue a friend from addiction, to grant salvation to a loved one, to heal a sick child, to mend a relationship. All these things you think must be God's will. For years you pray. But you hear nothing back from Him and you see no results.

You remind the Lord that He's powerful. That your request is a good thing. You plead. You wait. You doubt—maybe He doesn't hear

you, or maybe He isn't so powerful after all. You quit asking—for days or months. You feel guilty about doubting. You remember that God wants you to take your needs to Him, and you tell Him your requests again.

We may sometimes feel we're like the persistent widow in Jesus' parable recorded in Luke 18. She keeps coming to the judge, badgering him and trying to wear him down so he'll give in. But we know that God is kinder and more powerful than the judge in the parable. We trust Him, for He is good and wise and sovereign. We remember that Jesus said we "always ought to pray and not lose heart" (v.1).

So we ask Him, "Summon Your power, O God; show us Your strength, O God, as You have done before" (Ps. 68:28 NIV). And then we trust Him . . . and wait.

Pray on, then, child of God, pray on;

This is your duty and your task.

To God the answering belongs;

Yours is the simpler part—to ask. —Chisholm

Delay is not denial so keep praying.

Luke 18:9-14

WHEN a member of a church board fell into sin, the pastor called together the other board members. With love and compassion he told them the sad story. Then he asked this question: "If you had been tempted as our brother was, what would you have done?" The first man, confident of his ability to with-stand temptation, said, "I would never have given in to that sin." Several others made the same statement.

Finally, the minister addressed the question to the last member of the board, a man the others respected for his spiritual maturity. "Pastor," he answered, "I feel in my heart that if I had been tempted and tested as he was, I would probably have fallen even lower." There was silence. Then the pastor said, "You are the only one who can go with me to talk with our erring brother and try to restore him to fellowship."

We must never take a superior attitude toward believers who fall. Instead, we are to lift them up from a position of humility that comes from knowing ourselves. Only those who realize their own vulnerability and tendency to sin have the humility necessary to help restore a wayward believer.—H G Bosch ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Luke 18:9-14 Looking Down

August 13, 2013 — by Anne Cetas

After I had minor eye surgery, the nurse told me, "Don't look down for the next 2 weeks. No cooking or cleaning." The last part of those instructions was a little easier to take than the first part! The incisions needed to heal, and she didn't want me to put any unnecessary pressure on them by looking down.

C. S. Lewis wrote about another kind of looking down that we may have a problem with: "In God you come up against something which is in every respect immeasurably superior to yourself. . . . As long as you are proud you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people: and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you" (Mere Christianity).

Jesus told a parable about a Pharisee who felt superior to others. In a prideful prayer, he thanked God that he was not like other men (Luke 18:11). He looked down on extortioners, the unjust, adulterers, and the tax collector who was also praying in the temple. By contrast, the tax collector knew he was a sinner before God and asked for His mercy (v.13).

Pride can be an issue for all of us. May we not look down on others but instead see the God who is far above us all.

When I survey the wondrous cross

On which the Prince of Glory died,

My richest gain I count but loss,

And pour contempt on all my pride. —Watts

Spiritual pride is the most arrogant of all kinds of pride.

Luke 18:10–14 That's Not Prayer

The Pharisee prayed “thus with himself,” as though he talked to his own image in a mirror. His prayer was totally self-centered, a time to congratulate himself for his virtues. Such a prayer, if we can call it that, was not heard by God.

Luke 18:13

I'm Guilty - The story is told that one day Frederick the Great, King of Prussia, visited a prison and talked with each of the inmates. There were endless tales of innocence, of misunderstood motives, and of exploitation. Finally the king stopped at the cell of a convict who remained silent. “Well,” remarked Frederick, “I suppose you are an innocent victim too?” “No, sir, I'm not,” replied the man. “I'm guilty and deserve my punishment.” Turning to the warden, the king said, “Here, release this rascal before he corrupts all these fine innocent people in here!”

Luke 18:13 Proud of Our Humility

Paul W. Powell once observed, “Pride is so subtle that if we aren't careful we'll be proud of our humility. When this happens our goodness becomes badness. Our virtues become vices. We can easily become like the Sunday School teacher who, having told the story of the Pharisee and the publican, said, ‘Children, let's bow our heads and thank God we are not like the Pharisee!’” Today in the Word

Luke 18:13

Charles Haddon Spurgeon used to tell the story of a duke who boarded a galley ship and went below to talk with the criminals manning the oars. He asked several of them what their offenses were. Almost every man claimed he was innocent, blaming someone else or accusing the judge of taking a bribe.

One young fellow, however, replied, “Sir, I deserve to be here. I stole some money. No one is at fault but me. I'm guilty” Upon hearing this, the duke shouted, “You scoundrel, you! What are you doing here with all these honest men? Get out of their company at once!” The duke ordered that this prisoner be released. He was set free, while the rest were left to tug at the oars. The key to this prisoner's freedom was his admission of guilt.

That's also true in salvation. Until a person is willing to admit, “I am a sinner in need of salvation,” he cannot experience freedom from guilt and condemnation. —R W De Haan ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Luke 18:9-14

The Tombs - In his book Great Themes of the Bible, Louis Albert Banks told of the time D.L. Moody visited a prison called “The Tombs” to preach to the inmates. After he had finished speaking, Moody talked with a number of men in their cells. He asked each prisoner this question, “What brought you here?” Again and again he received replies like this: “I don't deserve to be here.” “I was framed.” “I was falsely accused.” “I was given an unfair trial.” Not one inmate would admit he was guilty. Finally, Moody found a man with his face buried in his hands, weeping. “And what's wrong, my friend?” he inquired. The prisoner responded, “My sins are more than I can bear.” Relieved to find at least one man who would recognize his guilt and his need of forgiveness, the evangelist exclaimed, “Thank God for that!” Moody then had the joy of pointing him to a saving knowledge of Christ—a knowledge that released him from his shackles of sin.

What an accurate picture of the two contrasting attitudes spoken of in Jesus' parable of the Pharisee and the publican! As long as the sinner claims innocence and refuses to acknowledge his transgressions before the Lord, he does not receive the blessings of redemption. But when he pleads guilty and cries out, “Lord, be merciful to me a sinner,” he is forgiven. God's pardon is available to everyone, but it is experienced only by those who admit guilt and trust Christ. To be “found,” a person must first recognize that he is “lost.”

Luke 18:14

Faith's Checkbook by C H Spurgeon

True Humility Rewarded

“He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”—Luke 18:14

It ought not to be difficult for us to humble ourselves, for what have we to be proud of? We ought to take the lowest place without being told to do so. If we are sensible and honest we shall be little in our own eyes. Especially before the Lord in prayer, we shall shrink to nothing. There we cannot speak of merit, for we have none. Our one and only appeal must be to mercy: “God be merciful to me a sinner.”

Here is a cheering word from the throne. We shall be exalted by the Lord if we humble ourselves. For us the way upward is downhill. When we are stripped of self, we are clothed with humility, and this is the best of wear. The Lord will exalt us in peace and happiness of mind; He will exalt us into knowledge of His Word and fellowship with Himself; He will exalt us in the enjoyment of sure pardon and justification. The Lord puts His honors upon those who can wear them to the honor of the Giver. He gives usefulness, acceptance, and influence to those who will not be puffed up by them, but will be abased by a sense of greater responsibility. Neither God nor man will care to lift up a man who lifts up himself; but both God and good men unite to honor modest worth.

O Lord, sink me in self that I may rise in thee.

Luke 19

Luke 19:1-10 Who Do We See?

March 30, 2012 — by David C. McCasland

For many years, Allen Funt’s Candid Camera television program delighted viewers by using a hidden camera to catch the often hilarious reactions of ordinary people to unexpected situations. Their approach, according to his son Peter was: “We believe people are wonderful, and we’re out to confirm it.” Peter feels the perspective of some other similar shows is that “people are stupid, and we’re going to find ways to underscore that.”

His comments point out that our view of people determines how we treat them.

The citizens of Jericho were offended when Jesus went to the home of Zacchaeus the tax collector. “When they saw it, they all complained, saying, ‘He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner’” (Luke 19:7). Yet, when Zacchaeus had a deep change of heart (v.8), Jesus told him, “Today salvation has come to this house . . . for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (vv.9-10).

My friend Bob Horner says, “When we see people as losers, we treat them with contempt. When we see them as lost, we treat them with compassion.”

Jesus doesn’t see losers, only lost people He loves. When we look at others, who do we see?

Oh, give me, Lord, Your love for souls,

For lost and wandering sheep,

That I may see the multitudes

And weep as You did weep. —Harrison

Those who have been found should seek the lost.

Luke 19:11-23 - Dark Days - John Kennedy used this story in so many of his speeches. It concerned Colonel Davenport, the speaker of the Connecticut House of Representatives in another century.

In the days before Connecticut became a state, an incident occurred there that has become known as “the dark day.” Suddenly thick darkness —probably the result of an abnormal atmospheric condition—blotted out the sunlight. The colonial legislature was in session at the time, and some of its members concluded that the day of judgment had come. The cry went forth, “It is the day of judgment! Let us go home and get ready!” However, an old church deacon who was in the legislature stood up and said, “Brethren, it may be the day of judgment—I do not know. the Lord may come. But when he does, I want Him to find me at my post, doing my duty up to the very last moment. Mr. Speaker, I move that candles be brought in and that we get on with the business of the colony.”

The Master gave us simple instructions to occupy till He comes. I, too, prefer to be found doing my duty and not to default every time some howler of calamity sound the siren. Jesus would not ask me to “occupy” were it His knowledge that I must be smothered by the unleashing of a nuclear inferno. Dark days do not always mean judgment. Source unknown ([Bible.org](#))

Luke 19:10 Hide and Seek

Rabbi Baruck’s grandson Jechiel was playing hide-and-peek with another child. Jechiel hid and waited for his friend to search for him. He waited a long time, and finally left his hiding place. His playmate was nowhere to be found. Now Jechiel realized that his friend had not even bothered to look for him. With tears in his eyes he came running to his grandfather. Then Rabbi Baruck also began to weep and said, “That is the way God acts: I hide, but nobody wants to look for me.” - Gebhard Maria Behler, “What is God’s Game?” in A Treasury of Catholic Digest ([Bible.org](#))

Luke 19:11-23 - Little Things How necessary it is to remind ourselves that success in life often depends upon little things. This is especially true in a day when so many people are afflicted with what we might call “the greatness syndrome.”

The saintly Horatius Bonar, reflecting on this subject, realized that the little things can either make or break the Christian. He wrote, “A holy life is made up of a multitude of small things. It is the little things of the hour and not the great things of the age that fill up a life like that of the apostles Paul or John, or David Brainard, or Henry Martyn. Little words, not eloquent speeches or sermons; little deeds, not miracles or battles, or one great heroic effort or martyrdom, make up the true Christian life. It’s the little constant sunbeam, not the lightning, the waters of Siloam that go softly in their meek mission of refreshment, not ‘the waters of the rivers great and many’ rushing down in torrent, noise, and force, that are the true symbols of a holy life.”

Bonar then warned against the “little evils, little sins, little inconsistencies, little weaknesses, little foibles, little indulgences of self and of the flesh, little acts of indolence or indecision, or slovenliness or cowardice, little equivocations or aberrations from high integrity, little bits of covetousness, little indifferences to the feelings or wishes of others, little outbreaks of temper, or crossness, or selfishness or vanity.”

Our Daily Bread

Luke 19:11-23 - A Talent

- A talent is a trust, not mine but God’s
- A talent is a test, future responsibility is tied to present faithfulness. Use it, or lose it!

Source unknown

Luke 19:1-10 Making It Right

January 9, 2013 — by Jennifer Benson Schuld

It was a perfect day for our garage sale—bright and warm. People rummaged through clothing, paperbacks, and mismatched dishes. I noticed a young woman looking at a string of white beads. A few minutes later, the necklace vanished along with its admirer. I spotted her in the street, jogged the length of my driveway, and discovered the missing jewelry nestled in her palm. As we faced each other with the knowledge of what had happened, she volunteered to pay for the stolen item.

Zacchaeus, the tree-climbing tax collector, met Jesus and was changed. He vowed to repay four times the amount of money he had dishonestly taken from others (Luke 19:8). In those days, tax collectors frequently overcharged citizens and then pocketed the extra funds. Zacchaeus’ eagerness to pay back the money and to donate half of what he owned to the poor showed a significant change of heart. He had once been a taker, but after meeting Jesus he was determined to make restoration and be a giver.

Zacchaeus’ example can inspire us to make the same kind of change. When God reminds us about items we have taken, taxes left unpaid, or ways we have wronged others, we can honor Him by making it right.

Help me, dear Lord, to be honest and true

In all that I say and all that I do;

Give me the courage to do what is right

To bring to the world a glimpse of Your light. —Fasick

A debt is never too old for an honest person to pay.

Luke 19:1-10 Seek And Save

August 10, 2012 — by Marvin Williams

Lachlan Macquarie, governor of New South Wales from 1810–1821, had a way of making everyone feel included in the new colony. When the “exclusives” (free settlers, civil servants, and military officers) shunned the society of the “emancipists” (transported convicts given conditional or absolute pardon), Governor Macquarie insisted that they be treated as social equals.

Jesus showed interest in Zacchaeus, a shunned tax collector in Jericho, and included him in the recipients of His salvation plan (Luke 19:1-10). A marginalized and hated man because of his profession, Zacchaeus was desperate to see Jesus and climbed a tree to get a glimpse of Him. When Jesus passed by, He saw Zacchaeus’ desire and told him to come down because he had a divine appointment at his house. Some complained that Jesus was spending time with a sinner. His loving attention changed Zacchaeus’ life. He repented and offered restitution for those he had defrauded. Salvation had come to his house.

Jesus’ mission was simple: Diligently search for lost people, whatever their social standing, and offer them God’s salvation plan. As followers of Christ, we too have that as our mission.

Lord, help us show compassion

To a world that’s lost in sin,

So when we share the gospel,

Hungry souls for Christ we’ll win. —Sper

Christ’s mission is our mission.

Luke 19:11-23 Little Things

How necessary it is to remind ourselves that success in life often depends upon little things. This is especially true in a day when so many people are afflicted with what we might call “the greatness syndrome.”

The saintly Horatius Bonar, reflecting on this subject, realized that the little things can either make or break the Christian. He wrote, “A holy life is made up of a multitude of small things. It is the little things of the hour and not the great things of the age that fill up a life like that of the apostles Paul or John, or David Brainard, or Henry Martyn. Little words, not eloquent speeches or sermons; little deeds, not miracles or battles, or one great heroic effort or martyrdom, make up the true Christian life. It’s the little constant sunbeam, not the lightning, the waters of Siloam that go softly in their meek mission of refreshment, not ‘the waters of the rivers great and many’ rushing down in torrent, noise, and force, that are the true symbols of a holy life.”

Bonar then warned against the “little evils, little sins, little inconsistencies, little weaknesses, little foibles, little indulgences of self and of the flesh, little acts of indolence or indecision, or slovenliness or cowardice, little equivocations or aberrations from high integrity, little bits of covetousness, little indifferences to the feelings or wishes of others, little outbreaks of temper, or crossness, or selfishness or vanity.”

Luke 19:11-27

One stormy night an elderly couple entered the lobby of a small hotel and asked for a room. The hotel was filled, but the clerk said,

"I can't send a nice couple like you out in the rain at one o'clock in the morning. Would you be willing to sleep in my room?"

The couple hesitated, but the clerk insisted. The next morning when the man paid his bill, he said,

"You're the kind of manager who should be the boss of the best hotel in the United States. Maybe someday I'll build one for you."

The clerk smiled, amused by the older man's joke. A few years passed and the clerk received a letter from the elderly man. He recalled that stormy night and asked the clerk to come to New York for a visit. A round-trip ticket was enclosed. When the clerk arrived, his host took him to the corner of 5th Avenue and 34th Street, where a magnificent new building stood.

"That," explained the man, "is the hotel I have just built for you to manage."

"You must be joking," said the clerk.

"I most assuredly am not," he replied.

"Who—who are you?" stammered the other.

"My name is William Waldorf Astor."

That hotel was the original Waldorf-Astoria, and the young clerk who became its first manager was George C. Boldt.

In heaven there will be "many mansions" to manage. So we should never underestimate the importance of what we are doing now for Jesus' sake, for He sees it all. Faithful service here on earth prepares us for great things in Glory. —D J De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**God's requirement is faithfulness;
our reward is fruitfulness**

Luke 19:13

In the days before Connecticut became a state, the colonial legislature was in session when a thick darkness blotted out the sunlight. The cry was heard,

"It is the day of judgment! Let us go home and get ready!"

But one member of the legislature, an old church deacon, stood up and said,

"Brethren, it may be the day of judgment—I do not know. The Lord may come. But when He does, I want Him to find me at my post, doing my duty. Mr. Speaker, I move that candles be brought in and we get on with the business of the colony"

In Luke 19:11-27, Jesus told a parable of a nobleman who went into a far country. Before leaving, the man called 10 of his servants together, gave them each a coin worth about 3 months' salary, and said, "Do business till I come." Later he returned, and the servants had to give an account of what they had done with the money.

At His ascension, Jesus also "went into a far country" (Luke 19:12), and He could return at any moment. But until He does, our duty as His servants is to serve Him. —R. W. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)).

**A WATCHING CHRISTIAN
WILL BE A WORKING CHRISTIAN**

Luke 19:37-44 The Need For Tears

September 3, 2011 — by Bill Crowder

Following the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, we were all overwhelmed by the images of devastation and hardship endured by the people of that tiny nation. Of the many heartbreaking pictures, one captured my attention. It showed a woman staring at the massive destruction—and weeping. Her mind could not process the suffering of her people, and as her heart was crushed, tears poured from her eyes. Her reaction was understandable. Sometimes crying is the only appropriate response to the suffering we encounter.

As I examined that picture, I thought of the compassion of our Lord. Jesus understood the need for tears, and He too wept. But He wept over a different kind of devastation—the destruction brought on by sin. As He approached Jerusalem, marked by corruption and injustice and the pain they create, His response was tears. "Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it" (Luke 19:41). Jesus wept out of compassion and grief.

As we encounter the inhumanity, suffering, and sin that wreak havoc in our world, how do we respond? If the heart of Christ breaks over the broken condition of our world, shouldn't ours? And shouldn't we then do everything we can to make a difference for those in need, both spiritually and physically?

Lord, when I learn that someone is hurting,

Help me know what to do and to say;

Speak to my heart and give me compassion,

Let Your great love flow through me today. —K. De Haan

Compassion offers whatever is necessary to heal the hurts of others.

Luke 19:17 The Peanut - George Washington Carver once asked God to tell him about the universe. According to Carver, the Lord replied, "George, the universe is just too big for you to understand. Suppose you let Me take care of that." Humbled, he replied, "Lord, how about a peanut?" The Lord said, "Now, George, that's something your own size. Go to work on it and I'll help you." When Carver was done studying the peanut, he had discovered over 300 products that could be made with that little bit of God's universe. Source unknown

Luke 19:17 Kind Hotel Clerk - One stormy night many years ago an elderly couple entered the lobby of a small hotel and asked for a room. The clerk explained that because there were three conventions in town, the hotel was filled. "But I can't send a nice couple like you out in the rain at 1 o'clock in the morning," he said. "Would you be willing to sleep in my room?" The couple hesitated, but the clerk insisted.

The next morning when the man paid his bill, he said, "You're the kind of manager who should be the boss of the best hotel in the United States. Maybe someday I'll build one for you." The clerk smiled, amused by the older man's "little joke."

A few years passed. Then one day the clerk received a letter from the elderly man, recalling that stormy night, and asking him to come to New York for a visit. A round-trip ticket was enclosed. When the clerk arrived, his host took him to the corner of 5th Avenue and 34th Street, where stood a magnificent new building.

"That," explained the man, "is the hotel I have just built for you to manage."

"You must be joking," said the clerk. "I most assuredly am not," came the reply.

"Who—who are you?" stammered the other.

"My name is William Waldorf Astor." That hotel was the original Waldorf-Astoria, and the young clerk who became its first manager was George C. Boldt. Our Daily Bread (Bible.org)

Luke 20

Luke 20:45-21:4

The world's standard for measuring people differs radically from God's. The news and entertainment media, for example, pay homage to the rich and famous, showing little regard for their moral or spiritual qualities. The Almighty, on the other hand, delights in virtues like humility, meekness, sincerity, reverence, and unselfishness.

Sometimes, because we cannot see people's hearts and motives, we misjudge them, both positively and negatively. The Jewish people, because they could see only the actions of the scribes, held them in high regard. These well-educated religious leaders copied the Scriptures without charge while depending on their profession for their livelihood and on freewill gifts. This gave them every appearance of great piety. The Lord Jesus, however, saw the scribes as men who took advantage of their position to fleece the gullible and obtain red-carpet treatment everywhere. Moreover, He observed the humble sincerity of the widow who, out of love for God, deposited in the temple treasury two small copper coins, a gift that represented great sacrifice. Yet she received no recognition from the people.

As we set our own personal goals and make judgments about people around us, we must remember that God looks at our hearts. If we remain open to the ministry of the Holy Spirit and rely on Him, He will produce in us a lifestyle that will meet with Divine approval. —H V Lugt (Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries. Grand Rapids. MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

**If we have a distorted picture of the Christian he,
we've allowed the world to develop the film.**

Luke 21

Luke 21:8

Be Not Deceived - A good friend of mine was "taken in" recently. A man, driving a new, luxurious car, stopped at his place of business with a trunk full of jewelry. He claimed that he had purchased this merchandise at a tremendous discount, and was passing on the savings to those who might be interested in making a few extra dollars. Taking out a box, he displayed some very impressive and expensive-looking watches. Across the face of the dials was written what appeared to be one of the best-known and most trusted names in the watch field. My friend was much impressed, especially so when this "gentleman" (?) informed him that he could buy them for only \$10.00 each. What a bargain, he thought; and so he purchased 13 of them. The jewelry salesman having gone, my friend began to examine the merchandise more carefully. What a shock he received! Looking very closely he discovered that the name on the face of the watch was not that of a famous make after all. Two letters had been changed in the word, but the printing was so small that he hadn't noticed it before. The watch strap itself bore the information that it was "Genuine Lizard," and on the back of the watch case were imprinted these words: "Swiss base metal." The imprint on the face of the dial also seemed to convey the idea that it was an electric timepiece. Without careful examination one would be led to believe it was a famous make, had a genuine leather band, and an electric movement.

As I heard about this, I was reminded of the words of the Savior in Luke 21: "Take heed that ye be not deceived." Even as in the watch business, so there are those in religious circles who would lead us astray. Using theological terminology, they seek to beguile us into accepting their pernicious doctrines as the truth. Today with so many strange voices abroad in the land, what a need there is for us to be grounded firmly in the Word, lest we be deceived.

"Last days" shall bring many deceivers,
Who'll seek to ensnare foolish men,
But with your eyes focused on Jesus,
Check up with your Bible again! —Bosch

The principal method for defeating error and heresy is the establishing of truth! —J. Newton

Luke 21:25-36

On Palm Sunday, 1981, millions of Americans shared a great sense of anticipation as they awaited the liftoff of the manned space shuttle Columbia. The media billed the event as "the dawn of a new age." More than 80,000 people crowded into Florida's Kennedy Space Center to witness the launching of the nation's first space plane. Hundreds of thousands drove to nearby roads for the best view they could get. And countless others watched the event on television. As the countdown reached the last ten seconds, the nation counted down in unison. Then at 7 A.M. Eastern time it happened. The great flying machine rose straight up. Orange flames and vapor engulfed the launch site as sound and shock waves thundered through the air and ground. The hopes of all future manned spaceflight seemed to focus on the success of that long-awaited mission.

As promising as that event was, it's nothing compared with another event—the return of the Lord Jesus to earth. He will usher in the dawn of a new age like we have never seen. When He comes in the clouds with power and glory, all other hopes will look empty and foolish.

The glory of what we put up into space is nothing compared with the glory that Christ will bring down when He returns. —M. R. De Haan II ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**The return of Jesus is sure,
for what the Bible predicts and Christ promises,
God will perform.**

Luke 21:1-2 The Treasury - In Shekalim 6:5 it is said that "there were thirteen horn-shaped chests in the Temple," i.e. receptacles for contributions. Each was labeled for specific contributions and evidently set up on the Court of the Women, where all contributors were in public view. It is at these trumpet-shaped chests, which Mark and Luke call "the treasury," that the widow of Mark 12:41-42 and Luke 21:1-2 contributed her "mites." Exegesis and Exposition, Vol. 3, # 1 (Fall, 1988), p. 47 ([Bible.org](#))

Luke 22

Luke 22:19-20

Remembrance - uncovers a forgotten ember, still smoldering down there, still hot, still glowing, still red as red."

Remembering Israel's experience in Egypt, the disciples and Jesus celebrated the Passover, one of God's many memory devices. The Passover lamb reminded Jews of the animal blood spilled to protect their lives in Egypt. Because Jesus was the true Passover Lamb, He chose new symbols, bread and wine, for His broken body and shed blood.

God knows we have short memory spans; that's why He creates unforgettable memory aids. Yet sometimes we become indifferent to them or deliberately ignore them, allowing spiritual senility to set in.

Those concerned about forgetfulness fight it with attentive minds that meditate on who God is and what He has done. For ponderers and reflectors, the past is the road to a future of fresh experiences with God.

Most of all, graduates of God's memory school think about Jesus. He is always in their mind's eye. They see red as red.

Luke 22:24-30

A young woman who lives with her parents on a small government allowance complains of continual depression and weariness. Yet when I suggested that she seek employment or engage in volunteer work, she resisted. She thinks that accepting a lowly task would be demeaning. But if she would swallow her pride and get busy, no matter how menial the task, she would not only feel better about herself but she would also bring honor to the Lord.

J. Gresham Machen, world-renowned theologian, accepted lowly work while serving as a YMCA volunteer during World War I. He was assigned the task of making hot chocolate at a canteen. Since it had to be ready at 7 A.M., Machen would get up before 5. He'd take bars of chocolate and shave them into slivers. Then he'd melt them, gradually adding condensed milk and water as the mixture heated. From 7 until 9 he kept busy serving the hot chocolate and often didn't get his own breakfast until the middle of the morning. Although Machen would have been an excellent counselor to the servicemen, he honored God by accepting a mundane task without complaining.

In Old Testament times, it was an honor for the Levites to do the manual labor associated with the tabernacle and temple. Likewise, the apostle Paul wasn't ashamed to make tents. The Lord Himself washed His disciples' feet. Any lowly task, done as unto the Lord, affords a unique opportunity to exalt Him and to demonstrate the reality of our faith. Christians can find joy no matter where they serve. —H V Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Luke 22:25 Benefactors Jesus alluded to the Seleucidae and the Ptolemies when He said that the kings of the Gentiles call themselves "benefactors," for the Greek word euergetes (benefactor) was one of their titles. The masses over which they ruled paid taxes to them and prostrated themselves before them, but they would have done the same for any other master. (Also made claims to be deity). New Testament Survey, Merrill Tenney, p. 19

Luke 22:32

With cranberries, it's the bounce that counts. According to Science Digest, processing cranberries involves pouring freshly picked berries down a series of step-like boards. At each level, only those berries that bounce over an eight- to ten-inch barrier pass the test. Each berry gets eleven chances. Those that fail are discarded. Some fruits are judged by firmness and color, but the cranberry is distinguished by its ability to "bounce like a golf ball."

The strength of our faith can also be judged by our ability to bounce back after defeat. Although setbacks hurt, they allow us to show our underlying confidence in Christ. A spiritual reversal should not cause us to give up. It's the "bounce" of our faith and His forgiveness that are important. —M. R. De Haan II ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

DEFEAT ISN'T BITTER UNLESS WE SWALLOW IT.

Luke 22:31-34

"I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail" (Luke 22:32).

With cranberries, it's the bounce that counts. According to Science Digest, processing cranberries involves pouring freshly picked berries down a series of step like boards. At each level, only those berries that bounce over an eight- to ten-inch barrier pass the test. Each berry gets eleven chances. Those that fail are discarded. Some fruits are judged by firmness and color, but the cranberry is distinguished by its ability to "bounce like a golf ball."

The strength of our faith can also be judged by our ability to bounce back after defeat. Although setbacks hurt, they allow us to show our underlying confidence in Christ. Our Lord's words to Simon Peter suggest this. Jesus knew Peter was about to trip over his own self-confidence and zeal. He knew that Peter, who said he was willing to die for his Lord, would soon deny Him. The beauty of Christ's response to Peter's denial was that He saw beyond it to the disciple's repentance. He assured Peter that He had prayed that his faith would not fail. In essence, He was saying, "You will bounce back after your fall."

This experience in Peter's life can encourage us. We have the advantage of Christ's work and prayers on our behalf, and this gives us the confidence that He Himself sustains us. We too can be useful again to Him, even after a hard fall. A spiritual reversal should not cause us to give up. It's the "bounce" of our faith and His forgiveness that are all-important. —M. R. De Haan II ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Defeat isn't bitter unless we swallow it.

Luke 22:41-44

Gethsemane - "He watch'd and wept; he pray'd and felt for all," wrote Oliver Goldsmith about one of his characters in *The Deserted Village*. In great distress, Jesus went to an olive orchard to talk to the only One who really feels for all—the heavenly Father. Jesus wanted to forgo the humiliation of a criminal cross.

No Jew ever spoke to God as Jesus did in the garden; He called Him Abba, which is almost the same as Daddy or Papa in modern English. After His intimate conversation with His Father, He seemed ready to face His betrayer and judges, ready to begin His death march.

The disciples, particularly Peter, James, and John, could have comforted and supported Jesus, but they did not hear the death knell. While Jesus struggled with His coming agony, they slept.

God does not take naps. Always alert to our suffering, He comforts us in our troubles so that we can console others (2Corinthians 1:3, 4). In reaching out to others, we walk arm-in-arm with them—crying, praying, hoping—feeling all it means to be human.

Luke 23

Luke 23:33

A Divided World - Is there life on other planets? What about flying saucers? Do they come from outer space? I don't know the answer you give to these questions, but of this I am certain: should there be life "out there," and should some space "creature" visit this earth, he would not stay very long. Just a five-minute newscast would tell him that we are living in a world divided into two distinct camps whose ideologies are in such sharp contrast that both sides are "armed to the teeth." Each possesses the potential of destroying life itself upon this earth. This would be enough to make any "visitor" want to hop right back in his spaceship and be gone to wherever he came from. However, today I'm thinking of an even greater division than this: one that has eternal implications. After all, the present differences between nations will not always exist, for when Jesus comes, "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." There is a division in the world today, however, that will last for all eternity; it is that which exists between those who are saved and those who are lost. Everyone belongs to one of these two classes. You are either on the devil's side or God's side. You are either traveling the broad way that leads to destruction, or you are on the narrow way that leads to life everlasting. You either believe in Christ or you reject Him. But, I can hear someone say, "You're wrong. I'm neutral." Oh no you aren't! Jesus said: "He that is not with me is against me" (Matt. 12:30).

When Jesus hung on the cross, two men were crucified with Him, "one on the right hand, and the other on the left." One rejected Him, and the other received Him by faith. One is in the place of the condemned. The other is in the presence of the Lord. Everyone in the entire world of mankind is represented by one or the other of these men. On which side are you?

What will you do with Jesus?
Neutral you cannot be;
Someday your heart will be asking,
"What will He do with me?" —Simpson

To talk of being neutral in regard to Christ is like a falling man with a parachute saying he can be neutral about pulling the ripcord!-- H G Bosch ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Luke 23:33-34

Crucifixion - "Red never saw the bullet coming. Death was so quick that he probably never felt it. As the bullet penetrated the back of his head, Red's blood flowed out and began to blend with Wayne's. For a second the two men stood locked in an embrace of blood and death.

"Red stayed [alive] . . . just long enough to save a man's life and communicate the deepest and purest kind of love one man can have for another." Thus wrote R. C. Sproul of the March 16, 1945, rescue of point man Wayne Alderson by Red Preston during the invasion of Germany by the American Third Division.

In His death Jesus expressed a love deeper and purer than Red's. People have died for friends, relatives, and helpless strangers but rarely for enemies and evildoers. In dying for the latter, Jesus did the unexpected.

Spikes and rough-hewn T-beams hardly seemed the instruments of peace, but somehow the executioner's song became the victor's cry. As a carpenter, Jesus built with nails and wood; as a Savior, He framed a new world with the same.

One criminal understood this; the other could not comprehend how Jesus could save him by dying. God rescued Israel with His power, but crosses stood for shame and weakness. In this seeming weakness, God showed His strength—His true power to save.

On death hill outside Jerusalem, the blood of the three flowed together on the ground—if not literally, certainly symbolically. Although some reject Him, as one of the criminals did, Jesus offers to cross-link His life with ours, and that is the real point of salvation.

Luke 23:34-41

IN his book "Becoming a Whole Person in a Broken World, Ron Lee Davis tells about a girl who was admitted to a hospital in Europe. At age twelve, she saw her cursing, abusive, alcoholic parents wrestle for a gun which went off and killed her father. As a result of that trauma, her mind snapped. But the fantasy life to which she retreated was no more peaceful. She became violently insane, scratching and screaming at anyone who came near her.

The attending physician recommended a then-common therapy called catharsis—the venting of her rage on another person. A nurse named Hulda volunteered. Every day for two weeks she went into the girl's cell for an hour. The girl kicked, clawed, and pounded Hulda until the girl was exhausted. Then she would crouch in a corner like a frightened animal. After each assault, Hulda, bloody and bruised, would bend down and say over and over, "Darling, I love you." Little by little the girl responded with tears and affection. She was becoming a whole person.

To begin our journey to wholeness, we must see ourselves in the heartless participants at Calvary—those who cried out "Crucify Him!" and who hammered nails through Jesus' flesh. We must then hear Him saying to us, "I love you." When we admit our sinfulness, we are ready to accept God's forgiveness.—D J De Haan ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries. Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Luke 23:34; 46 - Death, Last Words

In Shakespeare's Richard II, the dying Duke of Lancaster tells the Duke of York: "O, but they say the tongues of dying men enforce attention like deep harmony: Where words are scarce they are seldom spent in vain, for they breathe their words in pain."

Luke 23:39-43 Behind The Parted Curtain

January 30, 2010 — by Marvin Williams

Pastor and author Erwin Lutzer wrote: "One minute after you slip behind the parted curtain, you will either be enjoying a personal welcome from Christ or catching your first glimpse of gloom as you have never known it. Either way, your future will be irrevocably fixed and eternally unchangeable."

Luke recorded a short yet powerful narrative that pictures two men about to go behind that curtain of death. When Jesus was being crucified, two thieves hung alongside Him. According to Mark, both men hurled insults at Jesus (15:32).

One of the thieves, however, had a change of heart as he realized Jesus' innocence, his own sin, and his destiny. He rebuked the other thief and asked Jesus to remember him when He came into His kingdom. These words were a sign of repentance and simple faith. Jesus responded, "I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). Salvation for the man was immediate. He knew that day where he would spend eternity.

Realizing that we are sinners and placing our trust in Jesus' death and resurrection assures us that we can immediately know where we will spend our eternal tomorrows when we slip behind the parted curtain.

Oh, why not turn while yet you may;

Too late, it soon will be—

A glorious life you may possess

Throughout eternity. —Anon.

To prepare for tomorrow, trust Jesus today.

Luke 23:44-24:3 The Good Story

June 14, 2010 — by Anne Cetas

People tend to remember negative images more than they do positive ones, according to an experiment conducted at the University of Chicago. While people claim that they want to turn away from the barrage of bad news in the media—reports on tragedies, diseases, economic downturns—this study suggests that their minds are drawn to the stories.

Catherine Hankey (1834-1911) was more interested in the “good news.” She had a great desire to see young women come to know Christ. In 1866, she became very ill. As she lay in bed, she thought about all those with whom she had shared the story of Jesus' redemption, and she wished that someone would visit and comfort her with “the old, old story.” That's when she wrote the poem that later became a hymn, “Tell Me the Old, Old Story”:

Tell me the story slowly, that I may take it in—

That wonderful redemption, God's remedy for sin.

Tell me the story often, for I forget so soon;

The early dew of morning has passed away at noon.

We never tire of hearing the story that because of His great love God sent His one and only Son to this earth (John 3:16). He lived a perfect life, took our sin upon Himself when He was crucified, and 3 days later rose again (Luke 23:44-24:3). When we receive Him as our Savior, we are given eternal life and become His children (John 1:12).

Tell someone the old, old story of Jesus and His love. They need some good news.

The good news of Christ is the best news in the world.

Luke 23:45 The Veil

In Shekalim 8:5 the dimensions of the curtain of the Temple are given. This is interesting in light of the gospel account of the rending of the veil upon Christ's death (Matt. 27:51, Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45). There is some question as to which veil the gospels are referring to, the outer veil separating the sanctuary from the forecourt or the inner veil separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. The same question could be asked regarding the curtain of Shekalim 8:5, but according to Blackman it is the inner curtain of Exodus 26:31 (n. 1). According to Mishnah 5 the thickness of the curtain was “one handbreadth,” which Blackman calculates as 3.65 inches. The tearing of a curtain that thick is a divine sign, one designed to show that God was finished with temple worship; Christ and His church are the new temple. Only in Christ do people meet God. And the rending of the veil was a portent of the temple's impending destruction.

D.A. Carson, Matthew, pp. 580-81; Lane, Mark, p. 574) from Exegesis and Exposition, Vol. 3, No 1 (Fall, 1988) p. 47.

Luke 24

Luke 24:13-27

AN explorer discovered an ancient sundial. Recognizing its value, he restored it to its original condition and put it in a museum where it would be shielded from the elements—including the sun! Although he valued it, he never used it.

Many Christians do the same with the Bible but for different reasons. They consider the Bible valuable, but the time and effort required to understand and apply its truths keep them from getting serious about studying it. Besides, it was written long ago about people long dead and places far away. For interest and relevance, the Bible can't compete with Time or Newsweek.

There are indeed obstacles to Bible study. Even though we have splendid commentaries, encyclopedias, and other helpful tools, to gain understanding of Scripture is a demanding task. And all the various translations and interpretations make the task seem even more formidable.

All of these obstacles, however, won't stop us if we remember that the Bible is a living book about a living Person who can change us if we let Him. Sundials work only when exposed to the sun. So it is with the Bible. We must read it under the clear light of God's illuminating glory if we are to understand it well enough to obey it.—H W Robinson ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Luke 24:13-35 Two Friends

It happened, on a solemn eventide,
Soon after he that was our surety died,
Two bosom friends, each pensively inclined,
The scene of all those sorrows left behind,

Sought their own village, busied, as they went,
In musings worthy of the great event:
They spake of him they loved, of him whose life,
Though blameless, had incurred perpetual strife,

Whose deeds had left, in spite of hostile arts,
A deep memorial graven on their hearts.
The recollection, like a vein of ore,
The farther traced, enriched them still the more;

They thought him and they justly thought him, one
Sent to do more than He appeared t'have done;
To exalt a people, and to place them high
Above all else, and wondered he should die.

Ere yet they brought their journey to an end,
A Stranger joined them, courteous as a friend,
And asked them, with a kind engaging air,
What their affliction was, and begged a share.

Informed, he gathered up the broken thread,
And, truth and wisdom gracing all he said,
Explained, illustrated, and searched so well
The tender theme, on which they chose to dwell,

That reaching home, "The night," they said, "is near,
We must not now be parted, sojourn here."
The new acquaintance soon became a guest,
And welcome at their simple feast,

He blessed the bread, but vanished at the word,
And left them both exclaiming, "Twas the Lord!
Did not our hearts feel all he deigned to say,
Did they not burn within us by the way?"

William Cowper, The Walk to Emmaus

Luke 24:13-35 The Great Physician and Counselor - Read the story of the walk to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35) and see Jesus the great physician and counselor at work. Here were two people in a very distressed state, unable to think straight.

First of all Jesus asked questions: he got them to talk, established a relationship, and so made them receptive to what he had to say. His opening gambit drew from Cleopas only rudeness (people who are hurt often react in this way), but he persisted and they shared their trouble. In this way healing was able to begin.

Second, he explained the Scripture, showing them that what had been puzzling them—the death of the one whom they thought would redeem them by ending the Roman occupation—had actually be prophesied centuries before as God's way of redeeming, in the sense of ending the burden and bondage of sin.

Finally, he revealed his presence. "Stay with us" they had said to him on reaching Emmaus. In the deepest sense he did, even after they ceased to see him. What a blessing for them that they were given to hospitality! What they would have missed had they not been!

Jesus is still the great physician and counselor today. We shall receive his healing as we tell him our trouble, let him minister to us from Scripture, and ask him to assure us that as we go through what may feel like fire and flood, he goes with us and will stay with us till the road ends.

Your Father Loves You by James Packer, Harold Shaw Publishers, 1986, page for May 12

Luke 24:13-34 Knee-Deep In Daffodils

March 31, 2013 — by Jennifer Benson Schuldt

When the first flowers of spring bloomed in our yard, my 5-year-old son waded into a patch of daffodils. He noticed some debris from plants that had expired months before and remarked, "Mom, when I see something dead, it reminds me of Easter because Jesus died on the cross." I replied, "When I see something alive—like the daffodils—it reminds me that Jesus came back to life!"

One reason we know Jesus rose from the grave is that, according to the gospel of Luke, He approached two travelers headed to Emmaus 3 days after His crucifixion. Jesus walked with them; He ate dinner with them; He even gave them a lesson in Old Testament prophecy (24:15-27). This encounter showed the travelers that Jesus conquered the grave—He had risen from the dead. As a result, the pair returned to Jerusalem and told the disciples, "The Lord is risen indeed!" (v.34).

If Jesus had not come back to life, our faith as Christians would be pointless, and we would still be under the penalty of our sin (1 Cor. 15:17). However, the Bible tells us that Jesus "was raised to life for our justification" (Rom. 4:25 niv). Today, we can be right with God because Jesus is alive!

I serve a risen Savior, He's in the world today;

I know that He is living, whatever men may say.

I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer,

And just the time I need Him He's always near.

—Alfred Ackley © Renewal 1961. The Rodeheaver Company

The empty cross and the empty tomb provide a full salvation.

Luke 24:18 Christ's Appearances

It is interesting that Christ's first two appearances after His resurrection, were to women. The fourth and most extended appearance was His visit with Cleopas and another unnamed disciple (Luke 24:13-35). None of these people were His apostles, but all were among His most devoted followers. This intimate conversation described becomes even more touching when we suddenly realize that the disciple with Cleopas was his wife! We gather this from the following list. "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene" (John 19:25). The one who walked home with Cleopas that day, and who shared their dinner with the Lord, could have been none other than his wife. Cleopas took the lead in the conversation, but both obviously were devoted disciples, through concerned and confused over the death of their Master.

Strangely, however, "their eyes were holden that they should not know Him," even though they could say later: "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?" (Luke 24:16,32). Recognition finally came when, "as He sat at meat with them, He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them: (Luke 24:30). Probably, as He offered them the bread they saw the scars in His hands, and knew in their hearts that none but Jesus bore such scars!

And so with us. When we suddenly realize the Lord Jesus died for us, and rose again, our lives also are forever changed, like those of Cleopas and his beloved wife. Source unknown

Luke 24:44-49

One night the meeting place of a small and inactive group of Christians caught on fire. The blaze lit up the sky and attracted a crowd of people from far and near. A member of the church saw the town skeptic standing among the spectators and said, "I never saw you come near this church before." "No," replied the man, "but then I never saw this church on fire before either."

The church faces a challenge today, but the power to meet it is not found in fine buildings, modern equipment, large sums of money, or efficient programs. Only the Holy Spirit can enable believers to implement the Savior's command, but they must yield to His control. Otherwise the church will be powerless and will make little impact on the world.

The coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost marked the formation of the church. With its inception, the risen Christ also provided the power needed to propagate the gospel. Believers who formed the early church were to be witnesses of Christ in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the end of the earth. The indwelling Spirit became the dynamic force to carry out the task of going into all the world.

Pentecost doesn't need to be repeated, because the indwelling Holy Spirit has never left. He is the Spirit of power, and He works through Christians who are yielded to Him. Luke records that the apostles witnessed "with great power" (Acts 4:33). This power is still present and available today. — P R Van Gorder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The power that compels comes from the Spirit that indwells.

Luke 24:44-53

LUIGI TARISIO loved violins passionately, and he spent his limited income buying the finest instruments he could find. At one time he owned 246 exquisite violins, and he had them crammed into every corner of his otherwise barren little house. But Luigi never played them, and his obsession with them pre-vented the instruments from fulfilling their purpose: to make beautiful music.

Some Christians treat the message of Christ the way Luigi treated his violins: they keep it to themselves. Instead of following his example, we should heed the warning in Proverbs and not withhold good things, in this case the best thing of all, from others.

When we keep to ourselves something that would enrich the lives of other people, we not only fail to increase their happiness, we also rob ourselves of the joy that generosity brings.

Christians have a musical score that brings to earth the melodies of heaven, and it is our job to distribute it.—V C Grounds [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Luke 24:46-48 - Great Commission

When Jesus ascended to heaven after his mission on earth, the angels asked him: "Did you accomplish your task?"

"Yes, all is finished," the Lord replied.

"We have a second question," said the angels. "Has the whole world heard of you?"

"No," said Jesus.

The angels next asked, "Then what is your plan?"

Jesus said, "I have left twelve men and some other followers to carry the message to the whole world."

The angels looked at him and asked: "What is your Plan B?"

Friends, there is no Plan B. Jesus desires to reach the world through men and women like you and me.

Luke 24:44-53

Christians are a "heavenly" people. That's what Paul meant when he told the Ephesians that God has "raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6). We live on earth, but "our citizenship is in heaven" (Phil. 3:20). We should therefore "seek those things which are above," and store up treasures in heaven.

We see a graphic difference between an earthly minded person and a heavenly minded person when we look at two Middle Eastern tombs. The first is the burial place of King Tut in Egypt. Inside, precious metal and blue porcelain cover the walls. The mummy of the king is en-closed in a beautifully inscribed, gold-covered sarcophagus. Although King Tut apparently believed in an afterlife, he

thought of it in terms of this world's possessions, which he wanted to take with him.

The other tomb, in Palestine, is a simple rock-hewn cave believed by many to be Jesus' burial site. Inside, there is no gold, no earthly treasure, and no body. Jesus had no reason to store up this world's treasures. His goal was to fulfill all righteousness by doing His Father's will. His was a spiritual kingdom of truth and love.

The treasures we store up on earth will all stay behind when this life ends. But the treasures we store up in heaven we'll have for eternity. When we seek to be Christlike in thought, word, and deed, we will live like "heavenly" people. —P R Van Gorder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Wise are those who gear their goals to heavenly gains.

OUR DAILY HOMILY

F B MEYER

Lk1

Luke 1:38 Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it unto me according to thy word.

The angel's message meant, for this young, purehearted girl, a great deal of misunderstanding and reproach. It was inevitable that clouds would gather around her character, which would sorely perplex the good man to whom she was betrothed. But as soon as she realized that this lot was ordained for her by God she humbly acquiesced, with these model words of patient faith. Let us often say them:—

First: To his commands. — God's voice often speaks within our hearts, and no word of his is devoid of power. We must test what seems to be his voice by these three corroborations:— First, his Word; second, by the trend of outward circumstances; third, by the advice of Christian people not immediately interested. When these concur, we may take it that God has spoken to us, and whatever the burden of his words we must respond — Be it unto me according to thy word.

Secondly: To the responsibilities thrust on us. — It may be a trusteeship for some dying friend; a charge of orphan children; a babe cast on our parentage; an invalid; a difficult and trying piece of Christian enterprise. But whenever it comes on us, imposed by the evident appointment of our Father, notwithstanding the shrinking of our flesh and the fearfulness of our soul, we must say: Be it unto me according to thy word.

Thirdly: To any burden of pain and suffering. — Are you one whom God has set apart to manifest the power of his grace in suffering and pain? Are you sleepless by night, and helpless by day? Are you likely to spend years in one position, as paralysed or rheumatic? Well, still dare to look up and say: Be it unto me according to thy word.

Lk2

Luke 2:14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace.

These twain are joined together, and none can sunder them. Do you want peace? your highest aim must be the glory of God. Do you seek God's glory as your highest aim? then, the inevitable result will be the peace that passeth understanding.

Glory to God in the highest. — It was said of the soldiers of the first Napoleon that they were content to die in the ditch if only he rode over them to victory. With their last breath they cried, "Long live the Emperor!" It seemed as though they had lost all thought and care of their own interests, so long as glory accrued to his name. So should it be of us. Higher than our own comfort, or success, or popularity, should be the one thought of the glory of our God. Let Christ be honored, loved, exalted, at whatever cost to us.

On earth, peace. — It will come, because when the heart has only one aim to follow, it is delivered from dividing and distracting cares. It will come; because the glory of God is so lofty an aim that it lifts the soul into the atmosphere of the heavenly and eternal world, where peace reigns unbroken. It will come, because we are not greatly troubled by the reverses and alternations of fortune that are incident to all work in this world, since the main object is always secure and beyond fear of failure. What though there be the ebb and flow of the wave, yet the tide is certainly coming up the shore, and will presently stand at high-water mark.

This peace is said in the r.v. to come only to men in whom God is well pleased. Live to please God, and He will breathe on thee his peace. Seek his glory, and He will make thy heart his home. Do his will, and thereby good shall come to thee.

Lk3

Luke 3:16 - He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.

They had received the negative, water; they were to receive the positive, fire. Water is not sufficient for natures such as ours. The Baptist pointed to a greater Baptist than himself. Jesus plunges the soul into a baptism of fire.

Fire cleanses. — Ore may be mingled with earthly ingredients from which it is imperative to free it. A chisel or pickaxe could not extricate it. But when it is plunged into the furnace, the metal runs out in a molten stream. So our characters are full of impurities and earthly ingredients; but as they are brought into contact with the power of the Holy Spirit, these are eliminated and drop away, and we attain degrees of purity and love which otherwise had made us unserviceable to our dear Lord. Do not seek to rid yourself of these things as a condition of his gracious cleansing, but seek the baptism of the Spirit, and He will free thee; for He is like a consuming fire.

Fire illuminates. — As the express-train hurries the traveller by night through a district where the smelting furnaces are in full blast, his eyes are arrested by their glow, and the very heavens are lurid with the light, reflected for miles. So when the Spirit comes in power to the soul, He teaches us to know God, and truth, and things hidden from the wise and prudent. The fires that sanctify, illuminate us.

Fire enkindles. — It is contagious. It will spread over an immense area, where inflammable material attracts it. A match may light up a bonfire that will burn for hours. So when the Spirit of God touches a soul, like an unlit candle, it begins to glow; and from it the blessed spark may pass from heart to heart, and church to church, till an entire continent may blaze with heavenly fire.

Lk4

Luke 4:18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me.

As the Lord emerged from the waters of baptism, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit in a bodily shape descended upon Him and abode. Then his mouth was opened, and his public ministry commenced. Now He stepped forth into the world, saying:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor: He hath sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovering of sight to the blind, To set at liberty them that are bruised, To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”

The Spirit was given Him without measure, as the power in which He was to cast out devils, preach the Gospel, and glorify his Father by his human life and ministry.

What that scene was in the life of the Lord, Pentecost was for the Church. Then she was anointed for her Divine mission among men; the unction of the Holy One rested upon her, to be continued and renewed as the centuries slowly passed. What happened for the Church should take place in the history of each member of it. This anointing is for all, is to be received by faith, and is specially intended to equip us for work. Hast thou had thy share? If not, art thou not making a mistake in attempting God's work without it? If Jesus did not put his hand to this work till He was conscious of his anointing, though He was one with the Holy Spirit in an especial sense, how much less should we! Hast thou known it? Seek it on the threshold of each new enterprise. Be satisfied with nothing less than to be anointed with fresh oil.

Lk5

Luke 5:13 He stretched forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean.

This leper, as the physician-evangelist remarks, was full of leprosy. It was a very aggravated case. He lay in the dust before Jesus. What a contrast! Loathsomeness and Divine beauty; disease and health; humanity at its worst and best; sinner and Savior; one of Satan's most miserable victims, and the Almighty Deliverer. So, my reader, if thou art conscious of a heart and life which are full of sin, I would have thee meet thy Savior now. There is no if about his power — even the leper recognized that. The only doubt was about the Savior's will: there is, however, no doubt on this score now, since He has healed myriads, and promises healing to all who come. Throw thyself, then, at his feet, and ask for cleansing.

“He stretched forth his hand, and touched him.” No one else would have dared to do as much. To touch that flesh, according to the Levitical code, would induce uncleanness. But Jesus shrank not. On the one hand, He knew that the ceremonial restrictions were abolished in Himself: on the other, He desired to teach that sin cannot defile the Divine holiness of the Savior. Whatever be the stories of sin that are breathed into his ear; whatever the open bruises and putrefying sores which are opened to his touch; whatever the sights and scenes with which He has to cope — none of these can leave a taint of evil in his sinless heart. It would be as impossible for sin to soil Christ as for a plague to contaminate flame. And He will heal thee. Dare to claim it.

“Break up the heavens, O Lord, and far Through all yon starlight keen Draw me, thy bride — a glittering star In raiment white and clean.”

Lk6

Luke 6:40 Every one when he is perfected shall be as his Master. (r.v.)

We are not perfected yet. — There is a great chasm between our highest and our Master's lowest; between where we stop and He begins: between our light, which is twilight at best, and His meridian glory. When we compare ourselves with ourselves, or with our neighbors, our standard is altogether too low; we should compare ourselves with Him, the beloved Master. Job, who was reputed perfect, abhorred himself, and repented in dust and ashes when he had seen God, of whom he had formerly only heard.

But we shall be perfected one day. — That when has a hopeful ring. But to what period does the Master point? Not till sorrow, sanctified by God's grace, has done its work; not till the snow and frost, the light shower and the bitter wind, the earth and sun, have contributed their shares to the desired quota. Not till the perfect image of Jesus has emerged from the sculptured stone; not till the molten metal reflects each lineament of the glorified Lord.

When we are perfected we shall be as our Master. — “We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” It seems altogether too much to expect! To think that we shall be changed into his image; that we shall bear his impress; that we shall be as like Him as Gideon's brethren to Gideon, of whom the princes of Midian testified that they were like the children of a king. Yet it shall be so. The Lord Jesus became like unto us in our low estate, that we should become like Him in his glory. There must ever be the limitation of the creature as compared with Him by whom all things were made. But in our measure there shall be the same perfect beauty — his beauty upon us — for a mountain lake may as perfectly reflect the wide blue heaven as an ocean.

Lk7

Luke 7:13 When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

No widow stands by the bier of her only son, no mother by the empty cot of her babe, no lover beside the fading beauty of his beloved — but the Son of Man, unseen but glorious, is at hand, seeing, understanding, touched with compassion, and saying, in his tenderest tones, Weep not!

Weep not: Love is eternal. — Hast thou forgotten that there are three things which abide for evermore, the greatest of which is love? Is it likely that those blessed ties which have woven us to others can be snapped by death, which can only touch the body, but is not able to reach the soul? Is not love of God — and can God's love change, and pass away? No; though severed from your sight, the dear ones that are gone are thine today, and have not forgotten, but love thee still. Without us they cannot be made perfect.

Weep not: recognition of the beloved dead is certain. — Did not Mary and the women, Peter and five hundred more, recognize Jesus after his resurrection? Is He not the same Man? Are we not to be like Him? Recognition went so far, in his case, that the Magdalene recognized the very tones of his voice, when He said Mary, and she answered Rabboni. Yes, though refined and purified, the face thou hast loved shall smile, and the tones that have made thy heart-music shall speak again. Weep not!

Weep not: they shall rise again, nevermore to be separated. — The Lord raised this youth to life; but there had to be another parting, when his mother or he died. But when thy dear ones are re-united to thee, there will be no more partings. There shall be no more sea. Thy heart shall find its mate. Thou and he shall go no-more out.

Lk8

Luke 8:46 But Jesus said, Some one did touch Me. (r.v.)

Amid the pressure of the crowd that crushed on Him from all sides, Jesus detected the light touch of one thin hand, which drew from Him healing virtue. We may be very near Christ, and throng Him, without touching; but no one can touch Him, however lightly, without deriving the very grace needed.

We think of Jesus today amid the thronging crowds of angels and spirits of the just made perfect. Amid their voices will ours be heard? Amid the pressure of their attendance on his sacred person will He stay to recognize our poor trembling touch? Amid the vast interests that depend on Him, the government of the universe, the holding together and consistence of all things, is there any likelihood of our need asserting itself successfully? See, He is hastening on to raise the dead; there is the daughter of many a Jairus waiting for his summons, in the cemeteries and sleeping places of the dead. Will He stay for me? Yes, always.

There is the touch of prayer and faith. Thou canst never exercise it, however simply, without eliciting an immediate response. The conductor can detect the tiny note of a piccolo in an orchestra; and Christ is moved by a whisper, a sigh, a tear, a touch. There may

be a good deal of mistake and superstition, as there was in this woman, who seemed to have thought that virtue clung to his robes; but He will distinguish the soul of holy trust amid many false ingredients. There is also the touch of affection. He knew when the woman crept to kiss his feet. He did not instantly speak of it, but said afterwards, "From the time I came in she hath not ceased to kiss my feet." Not one loving expression from thy heart to his is lost on Him!

Lk9

Luke 9:31 Behold, there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elijah.

What a spectacle was this, on the slopes of Lebanon, with light transcending that of the moon light shining in the upper heights! And what converse! Possibly that transfiguration was an example of the way in which Adam and all his race might have passed into heaven, had not death come on us all through sin; and therefore it was the greater proof of the love of our dear Lord, when He deliberately turned from all the radiant light and took the way of the cross. His death is here called an exodus: such is the Greek word rendered decease. How much these two great souls, Moses and Elijah, had to say about it: the one representing the law; the other the prophets.

Moses would remind Him of the lamb that would be slain before the children of Israel could escape from Egypt; of the rock that must be smitten, before the water could flow forth for the thirsty crowds; of the serpent that must be fixed on the pole, before the dying Israelites could look and live.

Elijah would remind the Lord of Psalm 22, beginning with a wail and ending with praise; of Isaiah 53, finishing with a burst of triumph; and many another sacred and familiar passage.

And after all it was only an exodus, the going forth of his spirit from the Time-sphere to the Eternal; from contact with a very weary world to victory and joy-mending. Lighted by the Shechinah glory; following through the Red Sea of Blood; hastening to the morning, with its vision of enemies strewn dead on the sea-shore. The memory of this talk so far robbed death of its terror, in the heart of one of the disciples at least, that afterwards he described his own death as an exodus (2Pe 1:15).

Lk10

Luke 10:18 I beheld Satan as fallen as lightning from heaven.

This was Christ's vision of the effect of his work in man's nature, and on man's behalf. For ages Satan had vaunted his power over man; but now and henceforward the demon-nature was to be vanquished by the name and nature of Jesus Christ. "The demons are subject to us in thy name." Whenever you are tempted by the demon of alcohol, of passion, of jealousy, or any other, claim instantly the protection of the Name which is above every name: make the Name and Nature of Jesus your strong tower into which you shall run and be safe: realize all that He stands for: and you will find that the demons will be subject to you. In your life also, Satan will fall from heaven, and be trodden under your feet.

And what is true in your own life is true also of your influence over others. If you dare to live in the risen Christ, you share his empire and all the fruits of his victory over Satan. He gives you authority over serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy. The Christ nature within you becomes the dominant, triumphant power to which all power must ultimately yield. Dare to use it. In conflict with the demon spirits that haunt so many lives; in antagonising the giant forces that are so strongly entrenched in our natural life, the ravages of vice — be sure to rely, not on numbers or organization, but on the name of Jesus, used not as a charm, but as representing his living and ascended might.

And let it be carefully noted that as the success of these disciples over a few demons in the villages and towns of Israel reacted on the balance of power in the heavenlies, so there is no victory won anywhere by any lonely disciple, or handful of disciples, that does not react on the entire battle-field.

Lk11

Luke 11:1 Lord, teach us to pray.

It was a wise and good request, prompted by the Savior's own practice. He did not, in the first instance, command his disciples to pray; but He gave himself to the blessed practice of prayer, and this made them eager to learn and practise the holy art. This is the best way of inculcating new and holy habits on those who surround us. Do not begin by exhorting them; but by living before them a life so holy, so unselfish, so consecrated and devout, that they shall spontaneously approach you, saying, "Give us your secret; tell us how we may do and become as you." It is a holy life which constitutes our best pulpit.

We should daily ask the Master to teach us to pray. Each time we kneel in prayer we may well preface our petitions with the sentence: "We know not what we should pray for as we ought; but by thy Holy Spirit, Lord, teach us to pray." And probably the Lord's answer will fall into suggestions, borrowed from the form and model of prayer which He gave his disciples. It has been called the

Lord's Prayer; it should be called the Disciples'.

Address prayer to the Father, through the Son. Do not be selfish in prayer; but look out on the needs of others, incorporating them in every petition — us, we, our. Remember, you are speaking to your Father, and that his honor and glory should have a paramount and foremost place. If you desire first the hallowing of his name, and the coming of his kingdom, all your personal needs and desires will fall easily and naturally into their place, which will be a comparatively subordinate one. You will need forgiveness as often and as regularly as your daily bread. Be, also, direct and definite in prayer.

Lk12

Luke 12:11 Be not anxious. (r.v.)

So often through this discourse the Lord refers to anxiety. "Be not anxious how or what ye shall answer" (Luke 12:11). "Which of you by being anxious can add?" (Luke 12:25). "Why are ye anxious?" (Luke 12:26). There must have been a great strain on the crowds who listened to Him; and there was every likelihood of the strain becoming even greater for his disciples as the years passed on. So, also, the characteristic of our age is anxious strain.

But the heart of Jesus was always at peace. His life was calm amid the storms of life; as the coral island, with its fringed palms and lagoons of still water, is peaceful amid the storm-tossed ocean, because of the protection of its reef. The surf breaks there, but does not intrude further. The secrets of Jesus were the perpetual presence of God in his soul, and his never-faltering faith in the loving, careful providence of God in all the experiences of his chequered life.

Can we not have this? We may if we are willing to pay the price. If we will resign or surrender our will utterly to Him; if we will tear down every veil that might hide his face, and throw open our whole being to his indwelling and use; if we will cease scheming, planning, devising, and fall back on the absolute care and arrangements of God; if we will learn to reckon on God as absolutely as on any resourceful human friend; if we will dare to believe that God holds Himself responsible for the sustenance and equipment for duty of all who absolutely seek his glory — then:

"Our lives shall be full of sunshine, And the cares that infest the day Shall fold up their tents like the Arabs, And as silently steal away."

Lk13

Luke 13:24 Enter in by the narrow door.

The question which the disciples asked was for their gratification and curiosity. Men have always been curious to know what will be the numerical result of the Redeemer's work. But to such questions the Lord had no reply. He was only eager that none of those whom He loved should miss the full measure of blessedness that was within his reach; therefore He bade each be sure of entering the narrow door, so narrow that there is no room to carry through it the love of self, the greed of gain, the thirst for the applause and rewards of the world.

We may be saved from the penalty of sin by one single glance at the Savior, who lived, and died, and lives for evermore; but we cannot be saved in the deepest meaning of the word, in the sense of being delivered from the love and power of sin, unless we are willing to enter through a door, so constructed and strait, that it seems impossible to effect an entrance. Art thou willing for this, willing to leave behind thy amassed and hardly-gained treasures, thy luggage and impedimenta, thy jewels and gewgaws, thy certificate of merit and credentials, thy notions of self-importance, the weights which thou hast carried so long, the pillows with which thou art always sparing thyself from the stern realities and efforts of a noble life? If thou art willing for this, and prepared to strive, even to the rending of thyself asunder, then thou shalt be saved from the love and tyranny of that wild, dark power, which, hitherto, has always dragged thee downwards.

It is not enough to eat and drink of the blessed memorial supper, nor to listen to the voice of Jesus teaching in his Church. Many may do all this, and yet never be included in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Lk14

Luke 14:26, 27, 33 He cannot be my disciple.

Three times Christ repeats these solemn words; and it may be that earnest men have done injury to his cause, which they desired to serve, by omitting these stringent conditions in their Gospel invitations. It is quite true that whosoever will may come and take; that whosoever believeth in Him shall never perish; that the door of mercy stands open wide. But it is equally true that the faith that saves must pass such tests as these; and if it does not, it is not of the quality which can bear the soul through the swelling billows of the river of death. These three tests may be classified thus: —

Separation. — It sometimes happens in the disciple's life that Christ's work lies in one direction, whilst the blessed ties of home lie in another. Tender voices call; loving hands reach out to hold him. Here the plough is waiting in its furrow; there the hearth with its tender memory and association. At such times, for the true man, there can be but one choice.

Crucifixion. — Every one has his own cross — some one thing in which the will of God crosses his will. Jesus made that cross, and bids us take it up and bear it after Himself. Yet how many evade it, flee from it, postpone it. They think they can follow Him apart from it; but it is impossible. We can only follow the Crucified when we bear each his own cross. And to shrink from it shows that we are not disciples.

Renunciation. — All we have must be gladly yielded when Christ asks for it. If the accumulation of a life be on one scale and Christ in the other, we must choose Christ, come what may to the rest, or we must abandon our title to discipleship.

Lk15

Luke 15:28 He would not go in.

The elder brother is the dark contrast which heightens the glowing picture of the repentant prodigal; as the gargoyle does the beauty of the angel faces on the cathedral font.

When we look at sin, not in its theological aspects, but in its everyday clothes, we find that it divides itself into two kinds. We find that there are sins of the body and sins of the disposition; or, more narrowly, sins of the passions, including all forms of lust and selfishness, and sins of the temper. The prodigal is the instance in the New Testament of sins of passion — the elder brother of sins of temper. Now we might be disposed to think that the prodigal is the worse sinner of these two; but it is at least worthy of remark that as the story ends, we see him found, forgiven, restored; whilst the elder brother is still outside the house, and an absentee from the feast. Does Christ mean that the ill-tempered murmuring of the Pharisee is more hopeless than the passion of the publican and sinner? We must not press the thought too far; but we may at least ask whether we are harbouring, beneath a very respectable, moral exterior, the spirit of the elder brother, who plods daily to work, and is accounted a paragon of filial dutifulness, but is left without the door.

One has made a careful analysis of the ingredients that went to make up that one spiteful speech; they come out thus: jealousy, anger, pride, uncharity, cruelty, self-righteousness, sulkiness, touchiness, doggedness. "His speech, like the bubble escaping to the surface of the pool, betrays the rottenness beneath." Let us carefully read our hearts, lest there be any trace of this spirit in ourselves, when others are pressing into the kingdom with joy.

Lk16

Luke 16:12 That which is another's.

Our Lord is speaking of money and its use.

He describes money. — It is so associated with unrighteousness that He speaks of it as the unrighteous mammon. It was as though the inveterate moneymaker, who will get money at all costs, was an idolater, prostrating himself daily in the temple of the heathen deity who bore that name. In his judgment, also, it is a very little thing (Luke 16:10). We only know how little when we compare it with the immortal qualities of a lowly character. At least, it is not the true riches (Luke 16:11). Moreover, it is not our own — it is clearly another's — God's (Luke 16:12). We have nothing that we have not received.

He indicates the main use of money. — It is God's; but He puts it into our hands to watch the use we will make of it, before He entrusts to us the true riches of eternity — just as you will test a child with a toy watch before you dare place in his hands a real one. If he is destructive of the one, you hesitate to hand him the other; whilst if he is careful, you feel able to consign to his care some family heirloom. So God is testing men by giving them money, that He may know how far to trust them in the mart of the New Jerusalem.

He arouses us to fidelity — care for God's interests as much as the wasteful and unfaithful steward cared for his own. He used his master's money to secure a welcome to the debtor's houses when he lost his situation. But God has so arranged it, that if you use his money aright, you shall not only win his approbation, but his interests will be so coincident with yours, that when the world fades from view, those whom you have helped for God's sake shall welcome you to heaven.

Lk17

Luke 17:20 The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.

The Kingdom is "in mystery" just now. It is hidden from mortal eye, because the King Himself is withdrawn from the visible sphere. The creation groans and travails for its manifestation. He must be manifested before we can be manifested with Him in glory. In the

meanwhile, it is not without, but within; not compelling human attention, but pervading human hearts. Let us remember this when we are lamenting the slow progress of Christianity in the world. It appears to recede almost as quickly as it advances; what it gains in one place it loses in another. If heathen lands are receiving Christ, are not the populations of Christian lands departing from Him? Stay; you cannot tell! It is useless to argue! There may be much more good working than you know. For every bold confessor there are probably seven thousand who have not bowed to Baal.

When we are tempted to estimate our success by numerical results. — When our church is crowded; our roll of communicants constantly augmented; and the money revenue large — we are disposed to think that the cause of Christ is really advancing in our midst. It may be so. But sometimes, where numbers are scant and difficulties many, a yet deeper and more lasting result is being achieved.

When we are lamenting the apparent slowness of our growth in grace. — You do not feel as you would; nay, to judge by your emotional life you fear lest you are positively receding in the divine life; you think that the quality and quantity of your fruit unto God is decreasing. Stay; the deepest work is not always the most obvious. Before the mole appears above the wave, years of work have been expended where no eye can see; but every stone tells in the result.

Lk18

Luke 18:6 Hear what the unjust judge saith.

The force of this parable lies in its succession of vivid contrasts, which rise to an irresistible climax.

The judge is unjust. — He neither fears God nor regards man. His one idea is to extort as much money as he can from the prisoners who desire to get out of gaol, and from those that want to keep them in, or put others to share their fate. But God is our Father, unimpeachable in his integrity, and only eager to promote our welfare.

The judge had no personal interest in the claimant. — She had no personal attraction for him. Had she been possessed of property, he might have cared more. But now he looked on her as a pest that plagued and worried him. But we are God's elect, over whom his tender heart yearns. Did He not choose us before all the worlds unto his glory?

The judge answered the widow's cry just to save himself trouble. — Whenever he went to his seat, there she was. Though he had refused to hear her a score of times, there was her voice again, as clear and penetrating as ever. She had been forcibly hurried from his presence by his officials, and she had been borne screaming and remonstrating into the rear; but she never knew herself defeated. At last he could bear it no longer, and gave orders that her patrimony should be restored.

And will not God do as much, as, generation after generation, He sees his Church, like a widowed soul, oppressed by the great enemy and avenger? As He hears the cries of martyrs and saints; the perpetual prayer, Come, Lord Jesus; the insolent boast of the foe — will He not arise and avenge? Yes, verily, speedily! But it may seem long to us, because one thousand years with Him are as one day.

Lk19

Luke 19:34 They said, The Lord hath need of him.

Oh, could I hear Thee say as much of me, my blessed Lord! Here, where two ways meet, I have been standing long, waiting for a purpose worthy to fill my soul, and task the powers that are, as yet, only in the first burst of young life.

Thou needest much and many in thy great redemptive work. The boat to cross the lake; the line to catch the fish; the bread and fish to feed the crowds; the baskets to gather up the fragments; the chalice to hold the wine; the dish to hold the sop; the little child to be the text for thy sermon; the clay for the blind man's eyes; the tender women to minister of their substance; the apostles to preach thy Gospel. Canst Thou not find a niche for me also?

Thou requirest undivided loyalty. — Born of the Virgin's womb, laid in death where man's dust had never come, Thou must have a colt on which none had ever sat. I cannot give Thee a heart which has never known another; but I profess to Thee that there is no rival now. Thou mayest have all. Thine is the Kingdom.

Thou requirest patience and humility. — But these, also, Thou hast taught. I have waited patiently till this glad hour, and am quieted and humbled like a weaned child. No longer do I seek great things for myself. It is enough for me to be and do anything, if only Thou shalt be glorified.

Thou requirest, perhaps, but one brief service. — To serve Thee always with increasing fervour would be my choice; but if Thou needest only one brief, glad hour of ministry, like that the good Ananias did to thy Church when he ministered to Saul, then be it so. To prepare for it, and revert to it, would be my satisfaction in having lived.

Lk20

Luke 20:24 Whose image and superscription hath it?

Our Lord more than once compared men to coins. He spoke of the woman who lost one piece of silver, and searched till she had found it. The analogy might be carried out in many particulars; for as the ore passes through the crucible, and many another process, before it is stamped with the image of the sovereign, so do souls experience many fiery trials ere they can receive and keep the impression of heaven's mint, which is the face of Jesus.

Whose image dost thou bear? — Is there a clear-cut outline of the features of Christ, so manifest that those who touch and handle you are irresistibly reminded of Him; or have the features of your King, which were once clear-cut, become effaced?

Whose is thy superscription? Is A. D. there? — the year in which you were born into the kingdom of God, the year of our Lord, the year of your eternal life? Is "Dei gratis" there? (By the grace of God). So that all the while those who know you magnify the exceeding riches of his love as manifested in you. Is "Christus Rex" there? (Christ the King). Are you absolutely Christ's — to serve and to obey? Is "Fid. Def." there? (Defender of the Faith). Do you keep the deposit of Christ's holy Gospel, as you look to Him to keep the deposit which you have committed to Him? Is the lion on the quarterings? — speaking of the strength of the Lion of Judah imparted to your soul. Is the harp amongst them indicating the subjection of every string of your life to his finger. Is the crown there? — indicating how absolutely you have placed the empire of your nature upon the brow of your Lord. Then weave together the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley as the symbol of his reign.

Lk21

Luke 21:36 Watch ye at every season, making supplication. (r.v.)

Let us never release the girdle from around our loins, nor throw ourselves listlessly upon the bank to drink, whilst the enemy may be stealing up against the wind. It is the art of our great enemy to fill the air with the heavy breath of the poppy; that, like the lotus-eaters of the old legend, we may be indisposed for the perils and toils of our onward journey.

Watch ye in the season of festivity. — When merry voices fill the chamber with mirth, and jokes pass; old stories are retold; quaint anecdotes circulated remember to look frequently up into the Master's face, to discover if aught has covered it with shame, or filled it with regret. Let not your heart be overcharged with surfeiting drunkenness.

Watch ye in hours of stress and anxiety. — These will come between the soul and Christ, oppressing us with anxious care, leading us to think too much of the things which are seen and transient, and filling our hearts with dismay, as though the future would find us orphans and homeless, because the storm had swept away some few gatherings of the earth's perishable stores. When stocks are falling, business declining, competition increasing — Watch! Make supplication! Stand before the Son of Man as those whom He cannot forget or forsake.

Watch ye in seasons of tender love. — We wear armor abroad, but when we come within the closed door of the home, and our hearts expand beneath the genial warmth of kindred natures, how apt we are to cry, Now, surely, we may unbend, ungird, and let nature have free course. But the Master says, Watch ye at every season; and He reminds us that we never cease to stand before the Son of Man.

Lk22

Luke 22:31 Simon, Simon, behold Satan asked to have you that he might sift you as wheat.

The Master apparently did not pray that temptation should be withheld. The quick eye of his affection had discerned the tempter's approach. His quick ear had detected Satan's request of the Father; as though he said, "Let me have the chance for one brief hour, and I will show that these men, so far from being gold, silver, and precious stones, are only wood, hay, and stubble." But though He knew all this, the Master did not request that the winnowing wind should be withheld. Why? Because temptation is part of the present order of the world. Why it is so we cannot tell; that it is so we know assuredly. Why the Almighty permitted the evil one to intrude into paradise, and to assail every single soul of woman born, that has passed to years of consciousness, we shall probably never understand until mystery drops from our eyes in the meridian light of heaven. We only are sure that the permission of temptation is not inconsistent with His almightiness or beneficence.

Because temptation tests character and reveals us to ourselves and to one another. — Was it not well that Peter should know how weak he was; that he might become truly penitent and converted? Was it not befitting that Judas should be exposed before the Day of Pentecost? Was it not best that the foundation stones of the Church should be well tested? It is better to learn our weakness now and here than at the Judgment-seat.

But if Satan tempts, our Advocate pleads. He anticipates the advent of temptation by storing up his prayers. He warns the soul when the hawk begins to hover. If He may not arrest temptation, He will at least ask that our faith may not fail; and will seek us out as He did Peter.

Lk23

Luke 23:43 Verily, I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.

Today! — Dost thou ask Me to remember thee at some distant moment, when the kingdom of which I am now laying the foundations shall have become the all-conquering kingdom of the world? Thou needest not wait so long. I say unto thee that this very day, when yonder sun now scorching above our heads is sinking in the west, and the shadows lie long from our crosses, and the people have gone to their homes, thou shalt be with Me, where the sun shall no more be thy light by day, nor the moon by night, but the Lord shall be thy everlasting light.

Thou shall be with Me. — Dost thou ask only to be remembered; that I should give thee the glance of a thought; that I shall recall thy voice and face for a brief moment? Thou shalt be with Me, for I will await thee on the confines of my home. The throngs which escort Me shall behold thee by my side, and when I sit upon my sapphire throne I will give thee to sit beside Me, the one who, in my mortal anguish, trod the vale of the shadow, and who, with Me, shall tread the paths of light and glory.

In Paradise. — I am here regaining Paradise. All that was lost is being recovered. Within a few hours it will be mine to give; within a few hours its key will be in my hand; within a few hours thou shalt walk with Me there in the cool of the day, and the angel that drove out Adam shall keep watch lest the Serpent enter to molest.

Verily, I say unto thee. — All this is fixed and certain. I say “verily” to thee because the Father hath said “verily” to Me. Oh, trembling soul, who hast fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before thee, thou mayest have strong encouragement from my Word and death.

Lk24

Luke 24:7 Crucified, and the third day rise again.

These are the two poles of Christian life — Death and Resurrection. That which was true in the history of our Lord must have its counterpart in our own experiences. That Jesus died and rose again is not only the dual basis of justification, but it is the dual basis of sanctification. Did He die? Then we must arm ourselves with the same mind. The crucifixion was not finished on Calvary; it has continued through all ages, and will continue unto the end; not in its mediatorial and atoning aspect, but with the view of each man denying himself and taking up his cross to follow daily. So also we are perpetually leaving the things of time and sense where Christ left his grave-clothes, and are pressing up and on in the wake of his resurrection and ascension.

It is a solemn question, how far we are participating in this daily dying and daily rising. “Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed. Mortify your members which are upon the earth; seek those things which are above. If one died for all, then all died; that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again.”

It is not that the old nature dies, but that we die to it. As a matter of experience and walk, the results will be very similar from either of these ways of stating the fact. But it is true to Scripture and experience also to speak of reckoning ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin — that is, the root-principle which so often fruits in sins. Reckon that the grave of Christ lies between thee and the solicitations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Deem thyself dead to thyself. All this, however, is only possible through the Holy Spirit.