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52 Life Changing Devotional Thoughts: Spiritual Food for the Journey

By Trevor O'Reggio

Introduction

Over the last twenty years that I have worked as a professor of Church History at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, I have given a short devotion to my students at the beginning of each class period to inspire and encourage them in their faith journey and to affirm them in their call to ministry. I have gathered up these precious devotional thoughts and put them in this small book, so there will be a permanent record of these spiritual reflections. Enclosed you will find short scriptural reflections, homilies, inspirational poems, bible readings and common-sense instructions. I hope it will provide a source of encouragement to you in your own faith journey. When you are finished with this little booklet, pass it on to someone else to encourage them in their journey. Share the love.

Trevor O'Reggio

Day 1 A new Beginning

This Year. . .

This year, think first of someone else.

Take pleasure in the beauty and wonder of the earth

Write a love letter. Share some treasure.

Gladden the heart of a child. Welcome a stranger.

Thank God for what you are and what you have

Whether it be great or small.

Mend a quarrel. Give a soft answer.

Seek out a forgotten friend.

Dismiss suspicion, and replace it with trust.

Keep a promise. Find the time.

Forego a grudge, forgive an enemy.

Apologize if you were wrong.

Listen. Try to understand.

Examine your demands on others.

Appreciate. Be kind; a little more.

Deserve confidence.

Express your gratitude to others.

Pray for peace. Go to church.

Love completely. Speak your love.

Speak it again. Speak it still once again.

These are but inklings of a vast category,

a mere scratching of the surface.

They are simple things; you have heard them all before,
but their influence has never been measured. This year; they can change your life.

--anonymous

Day 2 Retrospection, Introspection, Propection

1. A LOOK AT THE PAST (Reflection)

There are two ways to look at the past and both of them have great value.

- a. Count your blessings
 - Health
 - Safety
 - Friends
 - Family
 - Material needs
 - Answered prayer
 - Spiritual progress

Since inventory involves counting, this is very appropriate. The value of counting these blessings are obvious, or are they?

- Makes us appreciate how well we are
- Makes us more generous
- Helps us to sympathize with those in need
- We can use these memories when times become difficult
- Turns our thoughts toward God

- b. Examine the Negative Aspects
 - Trials—teaches us patience and compassion
 - Failures-teaches uses the value of confession

The benefit of looking at our negative past is so that we will not make the same mistakes again. As the saying goes, "Those who ignore the past are doomed to repeat its mistakes again and again." However, don't look too

long. If you do, you may fall prey to a gloomy disposition which Satan may use to defeat you.

Jesus said that a certain man planted a fig tree. He dug about it, fertilized it and cared for it. He expected fruit from the tree, but year after year it was barren. Finally, he said to the keeper, "Cut this tree down; it cumberes the ground." The keeper interceded, saying, "Give the tree another chance, please. Give it just one more year and then if it doesn't bear fruit we will cut it down." The man agreed to spare the tree for another (Luke 13).

Maybe you are like that tree. Once you had a great experience with God. You promised to be faithful and fruitful. God has watched over you, cared for you, and blessed you down through the years. But you have disappointed Him. You haven't been faithful. You haven't born any fruit. Who knows but that you may be cut down before another year is over. But thank God, He is giving you another year. He is eternally the God of the second chance. So, if your past haunts you, resolve by God's help not to repeat its mistakes.

2. A LOOK AT THE PRESENT (Introspection)

A true spiritual inventory not only includes a look backward, but also involves a careful examination of our present lives. In order to do this, two things must be scrutinized: (1) our attitudes and (2) our actions. Is our belief up-to-date? If it is then we will pass the test.

Inner attitudes always determine outward performance. The Lord works from the inside out. So, if we're not "working out our salvation," then it's likely that we have no salvation.

In Matthew 12:30, Jesus said, "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters." To be with someone in this sense means to share the same values, interests and concerns. For believers it means that Jesus' way of life becomes ours. That's the biblical definition of belief!

One can be for something and yet not with it. For example, you can be for marriage and yet be single. You can cheer for your favorite team and yet not be a part of them. Judas Iscariot was for Jesus, but it's clear that he was not with Him!

If one of the definitions of a Christian is to share in the concerns of Jesus, we ought to know what they are. Jesus said, "I have come to seek and save the lost." Evangelism was a main concern of our Lord. He said to His followers, "Learn of me." Therefore, discipleship was also a primary issue. In John 17, Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them; keep them from evil." Holiness was something that He was deeply concerned about as well. And these are but three. A careful examination of the gospels will reveal others.

One day I looked at myself—at the self that Christ can see;
I saw the person I am today and the one I ought to be.
I saw how little I really pray and how little I really do;
I saw the influence of my life—how little of it was true!

I saw the bundle of faults and fears I ought to lay on the self;
I had given a little bit to God, but I hadn't given myself!

I came from seeing myself, with my mind made up to be—
The sort of person that Christ can use, with a heart He may always see.

Examine yourself! What is the condition of your heart?

3. A LOOK TO THE FUTURE (Prospection)

The month of January on the calendar was named for the Roman god, Janus. He was known as the "gate god." And an image of him was placed at the entrance gate of each city in the Roman Empire. The reason Janus received such honor was because he had two faces. This meant that he could see in two directions at the same time.

Each new year we need to take at least a two-way look so that we can have a proper appreciation of the past and a bright outlook for the future. I have added a third because I believe that our present determines our future to some extent. Change-improvement-progress. That's the whole purpose of self-evaluation. It's a good thing to say, "I resolve in my heart." It's better to make resolutions and keep them for a while than never to have made them at all! Let's look at some Bible characters and the resolutions they made.

Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself. He would not eat pork or drink wine because they were forbidden by the Lord. He defied the king's orders. But he didn't lose out. He earned the admiration and respect of his captors because he didn't compromise his convictions.

Jacob resolved to bring his tithe to the Lord. At Bethel he had a dream-angels going up and down a ladder. When he awoke, he looked up to God and said, "If

you go with me, I will live for You and surely give you one tenth of all I shall earn."

He had nothing to call his own when he made that vow and he didn't keep it faithfully. But when he did, God heaped rich blessings upon him.

David made two resolutions: (1) to read the Scriptures and adopt them as the standard of his life; (2) to be a man of prayer: "Because he has inclined his ear to me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live."

Paul made a resolution to be a soul-winner. What a marvelous thing it would be if every one of us would resolve to win one person to the Lord in the new year!

I believe we should look to the future with optimism and excitement. Why?

Because it is an unspoiled page in my book of time. It is my opportunity to practice what I've learned the past 12 months and to renew my allegiance to Christ who said, "Behold, I make all things new." The new year also affords me an opportunity to grow in my faith and be more consistent in living it out.

One day a college girl was tacking her calendar for the new year on her dorm room wall. She said to her roommate, "It's going to be a beautiful year!" "How do you know that?" asked her roommate. "Well," she replied, "a day isn't a long time and I know it's going to be beautiful because I'm going to take a day at a time and make it so. I will see that every one of those 365 days gets at least one beautiful thing into it through my efforts."

Wow! Now that's the way to live. This kind of attitude is also expressed in a poem by Avis Christiansen, called, "Another Year."

Another year is dawning-a path unknown, untried. 'Twould fill me with foreboding, had I no hand to guide; But He who walked beside me, all through the yesteryear, whatever may betide me, has promised to be near.

Another year with Jesus! Ah, then, no dread I know; His love is ever precious, how're the winds may blow. Even when the storm is fiercest, in Him my soul may rest, and find sweet peace and comfort upon His lovely breast.

Another year to trust Him-yes, I can trust Him still, who has never yet failed me-as I have sought His will.

His rod and staff He giveth, to be my strength and stay, And tenderly He leadeth along the homeward way.

As you inventory your life, what plans do you have for the new year? What changes? What goals? What resolutions are you going to make with God's help? May God grant us to so live that the world of which we are a part will know that Christianity is the most powerful and life-changing force in the universe

Day 3 We are Living Trees

The Chinese proverb says, the best time to plant a tree was 20 year ago and the second-best time is now. I have taken that counsel to heart and over the last 10 years I have planted over 400 trees and I am still planting trees, they are good for the environment. Go plant a tree and make the environment better.

Trees have played an important role in salvation history. It was from a tree that our first parents ate the fruit of knowledge of good and evil sin and plunged the world into sin. But it was from another tree, the tree of Calvary that salvation came unto all humanity. We will eat from the Tree of Life in the new world that will bring healing to the nations. Trees are vital to the existence of human life.

Here are a few reasons, trees provide us with oxygen while getting rid of our carbon dioxide., they give us food, shelter, medicine, clothing, furniture and shade.

Psalm 1

¹ Blessed is the one

who does not walk in step with the wicked

or stand in the way that sinners take

or sit in the company of mockers,

² but whose delight is in the law of the Lord,
and who meditates on his law day and night.

³ That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither— whatever they do prosper.⁴ Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away.⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.⁶ For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.

The psalmist compares the believer to a tree planted by the rivers of water that is ever flourishing and bearing fruits. The tree grows in four ways, upwards, downwards, inward and outwards. In the downward way, the root system—must go deep to get nutrients and water from the soil. This unseen part of the tree is perhaps the most important part. In like manner, it is the unseen and unknown part of our lives that gives us power. It is what we are when no one is looking that gives power to our lives and builds character. It's when we are in our secret closet with God that we get the strength that we need. The strength of the root system will determine how well the tree will withstand the stresses of life the stronger the root system, the stronger the tree. Our spiritual root system must plunge deep into the Word of God and draw its sustenance from this source of power.

We must have that deep connection with God that will sustain us during the turbulent times.

The tree also grows upwards, always reaching up to the light. Without light there is no life. Photosynthesis—light is critical for the life of the tree, without light it dies. Light is necessary for the production of food. Without reaching up for the light, the tree cannot produce food for us. We must reach up to God. Reach up to the Son of Righteousness, for he is the light of life. We must reach up the light of the World, for without his light we are in total darkness and without his life, we are defenseless, joyless, and fruitless. We need God's light for our spiritual life and his light to bless others.

Day 4 Reaching Out

The tree also grows by reaching out. The branches, leaves and fruits reach out and provides shelter and food. Reaching out in service to others is critical for our spiritual survival. It is in the service to others that we find meaning, joy, and satisfaction of life. We are blessed to bless others, we are to be conduits of God's grace to the world. Trees take in carbon dioxide, but return oxygen to the atmosphere. Trees are vital in the web of life. They take a toxic substance and turn out a life-giving substance. In the same way we have to absorb life's toxicity, its pain, disappointments, sorrow, challenges, crisis, tragedies, hardships and

transform them into instruments of grace and blessings to others. We take in the carbon dioxide of life and return the oxygen of life to those around us. The power of God's grace is that he takes your weakness, vulnerability, pain, sorrows, disappointment, trouble and trials, problems, challenges and crisis and transforms them into most profound forms of ministry. It's Christ wounds that heal us and in like manner He calls us to be the wound healers like Himself. Thru our wounds we heal others.

Day 5 Cast all your Cares on Him

1 Peter 5:7 *"Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you".*

Our lives are bombarded by anxieties, and fears on every side. Even in our most happy and pleasurable moments, we are never far from these anxieties. It is easy for us to become overwhelmed by them and this can cause us to lose our balance and our equilibrium. For many people these anxieties can trigger serious illness and diseases, because living in a state of perpetual anxiety can compromise our immune system, making us more vulnerable to the myriad of harmful microbes that constantly invade our bodies.

Peter, here calls to let go of our fears, release our anxieties. Cast them on Christ because he cares for us. The word of God gives us the promise that our Savior cares for us and will carry those burdens for us. We do not have to go

through life burdened under a weight of anxiety. There is hope, there is a place where we can find refuge. When we obey this command, we will experience rich blessings. Our journey in life will be less stressful. We will experience a greater sense of peace and serenity. We will live happier and more satisfying lives. We will have a positive effect our environment, especially the people that we interact with.

Day 6 The Spirit of Love, Power and a Sound Mind

2 Timothy 1:17⁷ For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and of sound mind.

Many of us are crippled by fear, all kinds of fears that make our lives miserable, unfulfilled and stagnant. Fear paralyzes us and kills our dreams. Fear immobilizes us and pushes us to give up. Fear prevents us from achieving our goals, because some of us are too fearful to risk. Fear locks us up, imprisons our emotions, because we are afraid to love, to give, to forgive, to look past hurts or offenses. Fear traps us in the past of unspeakable hurt for which we seem incapable to be free of. Fear boxes us and gives us no exit. Fear causes us to relive our pain again and again.

Our fears are many: fear of failure, fear of the future, fear of heights, fear of the dark, fear of strangers, fear of love, fear of the night, fear of strange

sounds, fear of places, fear of getting old, fear of dying, fear of dying alone, fear of loneliness, fear of living alone, fear of being left alone, fear of rejection, fear of being unloved, fear of gaining weight, fear of losing youthfulness, fear of losing our beauty, fear of losing our life partner, fear of death, fear of the grave, fear of the devil, fear of God, fear of judgment, fear of losing our lives, fear of losing our job, fear of losing our home, fear of our children not doing well. I could go on and on. Our fears are many and they intrude our lives from every angle causing our blood pressure to rise, our health to deteriorate and our relationships to suffer.

The word of God emphatically declares that God has not given us a spirit of fear but of Love, Power, and Sound Mind. Here is God's antidote to all your fears. Love, power (God's power) and sound mind.

Day 7 Courage

2 Tim 1:7 For God has not given you a spirit of fear, but of power and love and of a sound mind

This is a true story of something that happened just a few years ago at USC. There was a professor of philosophy there who was a deeply committed atheist. His primary goal for one required class was to spend the entire semester to prove that God couldn't exist. His students were always afraid to argue with him because of his impeccable logic. Sure, some had argued in class at times but no

one had every really gone against him because of his reputation. At the end of every semester on the last day, he would say to his class of 300 students, "If there is anyone here who still believes in Jesus, stand up!" in twenty years no one had ever stood up.

They knew what he was going to do next, he would say, "because anyone who believes in God is a fool. If God existed, he could stop this piece of chalk from hitting the ground and breaking. Such a simple task to prove that He is god, and yet He can't do it."

And every year, he would drop the chalk onto the tile floor of the classroom and it would shatter into a hundred pieces. All of the students would do nothing but stop and stare. Most of the students thought that God couldn't ext.

Certainly, a number of Christians had slipped through, but for 20 years, they had been too afraid to stand up. Well, a few years ago there was a freshman who happened to enroll. He was a Christian, and had heard the stories about his professor. He was required to take the class for his major, and he was afraid. But for three months that semester, he prayed every morning that he would have the courage to stand up no matter what the professor said, or what the class thought. Nothing they said could ever shatter his faith. . .he hoped.

Finally, the day came! The professor said, “If there is anyone here who still believes in God, stand up!” the professor and the class of 300 people look at him, shocked, as he stood up at the back of the classroom. The professor shouted, “You FOOL!!! If God existed, he would keep this piece of chalk from breaking when it hit the ground!” He proceeded to drop the chalk, but as he did, it slipped out of his fingers, off his shirt cuff, onto the pleat of his pants, down his leg, and off his shoe. As it hit the ground, it simply rolled away unbroken. The professor’s jaw dropped as he stared at the chalk. He looked up at the young man, and then ran out of the lecture hall. The young man who had stood, proceeded to walk to the front of the room and shared his faith in Jesus for the next half hour. 300 students stayed and listened as he told of God’s love for them and of His power through Jesus.

Day 8 With God all things are Possible

No matter how negative your circumstance maybe God has a . . . God Has a Positive Answer

You say: It’s impossible. God say’s: all things are possible (Luke 18:27)

You say: I’m too tired. God say’s: I will give you rest (Matt. 11:28-30)

You say: Nobody really loves me. God say’s: I love you (John 3:16 & John 3:34)

You say: I can’t go on. God say’s: My grace is sufficient (II Corinthians 12:9 & Psalm 91:15)

You say: I can't figure things. God say's: I will direct your steps (Proverbs 3:5-6)

You say: I can't do it. God says: You can do all things (Philippians 4:13)

You say: I am not able. God say's: I am able (II Corinthians 9:8)

You say: It's not worth it. God say's: it will be worth it (Romans 8:28)

You say: I can't forgive myself. God say's: I forgive you (I John 1:9 & Romans 8:1)

You say: I can't manage. God say's: I will supply all your needs (Philippians 4:19)

You say: I'm afraid. God say's: I have not given you a spirit of fear (II Timothy 1:7)

You say: I'm always worried and frustrated. God say's: Cast all your cares on ME (I Peter 5:7)

You say: I'm not smart enough. God say's: I give you wisdom (I Corinthians 1:30)

You say: I feel all alone. God say's: I will never leave you or forsake you (Hebrews 13:5)

Believe God is there just for you . . .

Submitted by Curmilus Dancy II

Day 9 I am Soldier in his Army

I belong to the army of God

A Real Solder's Creed

I am a soldier in the army of my God.

The Lord Jesus Christ is my commanding officer.

The Holy Bible is my code of conduct.

Faith, Prayer and the Word are my weapons of Warfare.

I have been taught by the Holy Spirit, trained by experience, tried by adversity and tested by fire.

I am a volunteer in this army, and I am enlisted for eternity.

I will either retire in this army at the advent or die in this army;

But I will not get out, sell out, be talked out, or pushed out. –I AM A SOLDIER

I am faithful—reliable—capable—and dependable.

If My God needs me in Sabbath School—to teach the children—work with the youth—help adults or just sit and learn.

He can use me because I am there! — I AM A SOLDIER

I AM A SOLDIER! —I am not a baby.

I do not need to be pampered—petted—primed up—pumped up—picked up or pepped up. I AM A SOLDIER!

No one has to call me—remind me—write me—visit me—entice me—or lure me.

I AM A SOLDIER. I am not a wimp.

I am in place—saluting my King—obeying His orders—praising His name—and building His kingdom! I AM A SOLDIER!

I AM A SOLDIER. No one has to send me flowers, gifts, food, cards, candy or give me handouts.

I do not need to be cuddled—cradled—cared for—or catered to. I am committed I AM A SOLDIER!

I cannot have my feelings hurt bad enough to turn me around. I AM A SOLDIER!

I cannot be discouraged enough to turn me aside.

I cannot lose enough to cause me to quit.

When Jesus called me in this army—I had nothing.

If I end up with nothing—I will still come out even! I AM A SOLDIER!

I AM A SOLDIER. I will win. My god will supply all my needs I am more than a conqueror.

I will always triumph—I can do all things through Christ.

Devils cannot defeat me—People cannot disillusion me.

Weather cannot weary me

Sickness cannot beat me

Battles cannot beat me

Money cannot buy me

Governments cannot silence me—and hell cannot handle me! I AM A SOLDIER!

I AM A SOLDIER. Even death cannot destroy me.
For when my commander calls me from this battlefield, --He will promote me to a captain and then bring me back to rule this world with Him.
I am a soldier, in the army of God—and I am marching—claiming victory.
I will not give up—I will not turn around-- I AM A SOLDIER—marching heaven bound
HERE I STAND! I AM A SOLDIER!

Day 10 Do It Anyway

Bishop Muzore tells of a critical period in his life when he had been asked by his people to lead the African national Council. He knew that all previous leaders in Rhodesia who criticized government policies that were unjust to Black Rhodesians had been either deported from the country, put in a restricted camp, or killed. He struggled with his decision and prayed as he had never prayed before. He did not want to be killed or deported or placed in a restricted camp, yet his people were calling him to lead them. As he struggled with his decision, a friend handed him this poem:

People are unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered
--love them anyway!

If you do good people will accuse you of selfish ulterior motives
--do good anyway!

If you are successful, you will win false friends and true enemies
--succeed anyway!

The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow
--do good anyway!

Honesty and frankness makes you vulnerable
--be honest and frank anyway!

The biggest people with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the smallest
people with the smallest minds
--think big anyway!

People favor underdogs, but follow only top dogs
--fight for some underdog anyway!

What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight
--build anyway!

People really need help but may attack you if you help them
--help people anyway!

Give the world the best you've got and you'll get kicked in the teeth
--give the world the best you've got anyway!

Day 11 The Incomparable Christ

This is a boyhood poem of mine that has inspired me over the years. I hope it will inspire you also.

He came from the bosom of the Father to the bosom of a women,
He took on humanity that we might put on divinity
He became the son of man that we might become the sons and daughters of God
He came from heaven where waters never freeze flowers never fade and winds
never chill the air
There are not undertakers there and no grave yards, for no ever dies and no one
is ever buried

This incomparable Christ was born contrary to the laws of nature
He lived in poverty and was reared in obscurity
He did not travel extensively, only once did he cross the boundary of native land
and that was in childhood
He had no scholastic training or formal education
His relatives were inconspicuous and influential
But in infancy he startled a king, in childhood he marveled doctors, in manhood
he ruled the course of nature and walked upon the billows as if pavement

This incomparable Christ never wrote a song yet he has furnished the theme of
more songs than all songwriters combined
He never went to college yet all the schools put together cannot boast of having
as many students as he had
He never marshaled an army, never fired gun, nor drafted a soldier yet no general
has ever had as many soldiers under his command and made them surrender
without a single shot being fired
He healed multitudes without medicine yet made no charge for his service

He is the star of astronomy, the rock of geology and the lamb of zoology
He is the harmonizer of all discords, the healer of all diseases
The names of proud past statesmen, scientists, theologians and philosophers
have come and gone but the name of this incomparable Christ lives on
He is the God of theology, the master of philosophy and the doctor of biology
Herod could not kill him, Satan could not conquer him, death could not destroy
him, not even the very grave could not hold him

He became poor that we through his poverty might become rich,
He laid aside his majestic garment for a peasant's gown,
How poor? ask Mary, He slept in another's manger, He rode upon another man's
ass, He cruised the lake in another man's boat
All failed, but he never, and today he is still the chief among ten thousand, He is
the one altogether lovely, and he is seated upon the pinnacle of glory, proclaimed
by God, worshiped humanity, feared by devils and acknowledged by the entire

universe as the living incomparable Christ and He is my Lord and Savior.
Anonymous

Day 12 Slow Me Down Lord

Read this poem when you feel that life is moving too fast and you need to slow down.

“Slow me down, Lord! Ease the pounding of my heart by the quiet of my mind.

Steady my hurried pace with the vision of the eternal reach of time.

Give me, amidst the confusion of my day, the calmness of the everlasting hills.

Break the tension of my nerves and muscles with the soothing music of the singing streams that live in my memory.”

“Help me to know the magical, restoring power of sleep.

Teach me the art of taking Minute Vacations. . .of slowing down to look at a flower, to chat with a friend, to pat a dog, to read a few lines from a good book, to fish, to dream.

Remind me each day of the fable of the hare and the tortoise that I may know that the race is not always to the swift; that there is ore in life than increasing speed.”

“Let me look upward into the branches of the towering oak and know that it grew great and strong because it grew slowly and well. Slow me down, Lord, and inspire me to send my roots deep into the soil of life’s enduring values that I may grow upward toward the stars of my greater destiny.” Author Unknown

Day 13 Guard your Heart

Proverbs 4:23—“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it”. The wise man reveals here something that is of supreme importance (above all things). We must keep watch over our hearts, we must guard what goes in and comes out of our mind. We must constantly monitor our emotions. As human beings we tend to neglect or ignore what is happening in our own hearts and many times we are trying to monitor what is in the heart of another person. There are very few people who take seriously the words of Socrates the Philosopher who said “man know thyself.” There is an appalling ignorance of our own hearts because, so few of us take the time for serious self-examination, thoughtful self-introspection. We are not always aware of the emotion we are feeling at a given moment because we don’t know ourselves. When we are feeling destructive emotions, it’s important that we can correctly identify them and call them out so they do not remain hidden and produce greater destruction in us because of our ignorance of them. In other words when we are feeling angry, we

should know we are angry, when we are jealous, we should that too. When we are frustrated it is important to recognize that also. This is one way of guarding our hearts. But another important way is to be vigilant about what we take into our minds. We must be vigilant in what we see, read, listen to our heart, and tolerate. Toxic feelings and emotions must not be allowed to thrive and flourish in our souls. Expel envy, jealousy, pride, grudges, fear, revenge, from our heart. Cultivate love, joy, peace, longsuffering, patience, gentleness, forgiveness, courage, faith, hope, thankfulness, let these virtues fill your soul to the brim.

Still another way to guard your heart is the importance of not giving away your affections to another easily and too quickly. Many people fall in love too easily, especially with individuals that are virtual strangers. You should get to know the person before you start sharing with them your deepest affections and intimate secrets. The Bible says the enemy comes to steal, kill and destroy, but Jesus comes that we may have life and have it more abundantly. We sometimes allow people into our lives who cause us enormous damage because we did not take the time to know them well. I am not suggesting you shouldn't reach out and love as many people as you can. That we should do, sharing God's love everywhere. But we must be wise and discreet in the selection of those within our inner circle or those with whom we form romantic relations.

Why are we to guard our hearts? The wise man answers, because out of it are the issues of life. What are these issues of life? This is the source of life, the springs of life. Our heart is the source of all our actions, thoughts, and desires. If the heart is corrupt, the life will be corrupt, if the heart is pure, the life will be pure. In other words, our focus should be on what's going out in our hearts, because the condition and state of our heart determines everything else.

Day 14 Devotional and lifestyle of God's remnant people

1. Prayer and Effort:
Pray as though the efficiency and praise were all due to God and work as though the duty were all your own. No man is safe for a day or hour without prayer
2. Christ in the heart is our only defense
We must be vitally connected to God, only way to remove selfishness and evil habits from our hearts.
3. Grounded in God's word
Diligent study of the Word of God, necessary preparation for the end.
Only those whose mind have fortified with the word will stand
Build a wall of scriptures around you.
Commit scriptures to memory
4. Self-control of our thoughts and imagination
Preoccupy the mind with sacred and eternal things
Cultivate pure thoughts; Keep the Lord continually before you. E.g. Enoch
5. Review Gods' blessings in your life.
We have nothing to fear for the future except we forget the way the Lord has led us.

6. Occupy till I come.
Do not neglect life's duties and responsibilities
Live everyday as if it were your last
Daily consecrate yourself to God.
Keep studying, learning and building.
7. Sabbath Keeping; carry out acts of mercy
Faithfulness in tithes and offerings
Prayer and fasting, morning and evening worship.
8. Country living
Cultivate a garden
God's judgment will rain down on the cities
We must work for the cities

Day 15 We must do God's work in Gods way.

If we intend to do God's work, we must do it God's way. So many accept God's call to work in His vineyard but they have no desire to follow God's methods. Because they have wrong motivations for working and they sometimes see his work as a way of elevating themselves and gaining favor and authority from others, they employ selfish methods that ruin the work of God, rather than advance His kingdom of grace. God's servant has given us for us have 4 simple steps that specify Christ's method.

"Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for

them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. The he bade them,
'Follow Me.'" MH 143.

Be a friend to others with no ulterior motive. Be compassionate. Care for them in
their necessities. Never betray their confidence. Model for them God's love

Day 16 Prayer of a Wounded Soldier

This wounded soldier left this beautiful prayer for all of us.

Prayer Answered

I asked for strength that I might achieve;

He made me weak that I might obey.

I asked for health that I might do greater things;

I was given grace that I might do better things.

I asked for riches that I might be happy;

I was given poverty that I might be wise.

I asked for power that I might have the praise of men;

I was given weakness that I might feel the need of God.

I asked for all things that I might enjoy life;

I was given life that I might enjoy all things.

I received nothing that I asked for, all that I hoped for,

My prayer was answered.

(Faith, Prayer, and Tract League, Grand Rapids, MI)

Day 17 Waiting for the Lord

Isaiah 40:31- “But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint”.

Waiting in the sense of expecting—wait on Yahweh. Wait for his help, trust in him, put your hope or confidence in his—applicable is those who are in circumstances of danger or want, who look to him for merciful interpretation.

Those in captivity looking for deliverance. Especially applicable to those who are weak, feeble, guilty, or helpless? Does not imply inactivity, indolence or laziness.

I’m reminded of the story of the farmer who while walking one day, found an eagle egg. He took it to the hen house and placed it under a setting hen who had several eggs under her. In time, all the eggs hatched and out of the shell of that eagle came, to her way of thinking, the oddest-looking chicken she had ever seen with the oddest voice she had ever heard. When the other chicks chirped, this one would screech. When the mother hen clucked, all but this ugly one would come running. There simply seemed to be no understand between them. They spoke two different

languages. So, because he was odd, all the others picked and pecked at him. Of course, he was odd. He was an eagle who was trying to live the chicken life.

One day while he was in the barnyard, a huge shadow passed over him. It was Father eagle soaring high above. Father eagle looked down and say the little eaglet. Seeing it was one of his own kind, father eagle swooped down giving a loud screech. The young eaglet looked up. Father eagle said t the eaglet, "What are you doing down there? You're not a chicken, you're an eagle. Eagles aren't made for barnyard living. The heavens are your domain. Come up here."

Now the little fellow wondered what to do. Up to now the barnyard had been home t him, but he really hadn't been happy there. He just didn't seem to fi in the barnyard living. All of a sudden, the truth of who he was with him. He discovered his true identity. Father eagle had given it to him. He wasn't a chicken. He was an eagle. Down deep inside him he felt the urge to respond to father eagle, but when he tried, he couldn't seem to get off the ground.

Father eagle screeched again, "just make a jump and flap your wings. You can fly if you try." The little eaglet made a feeble jump, flapped his wings and landed on top of the barnyard fence post. Father eagle screeched again, "Child, jump higher, try again. Make the jump and I'll sweep under you and carry you on my wings." Little eaglet did what father eagle asked him to do, and father eagle did what he said he would do. A mighty jump of faith and little eaglet was riding on father eagles' wings on his first solo flight into the heavenly realm.

Saints of God, we are called to be God's eagles Christians, but may have been content to live the chicken life, confined to barnyard limitation in their spirit. A barnyard to the believer is any attitude, any mindset, and lifestyle that restricts us from being or accomplishing all that God has purposed for us to be or do in life.

Our barnyard is that comfort zone we like to live in because it makes no demands of us that will challenge us to change. Jehovah father eagle calls to us in our barnyard and challenges us to spread our wings of faith and come up higher. Some respond and get as high as the barnyard post and settle there feeling like they've really accomplished something. But they need to make another jump of faith and set their wings in the promises of God's Word and let the wind of the Holy Ghost life them up.

Sermoncentral.com

Day 18 Be an Eagle

The 7 Principles of An Eagle - Dr. Myles Monroe

PRINCIPLE 1

Eagles fly alone at high altitude and not with sparrows or other small birds. No other bird can get to the height of the eagle. Stay away from sparrows and ravens.

Eagles fly with Eagles

PRINCIPLE 2

Eagles have strong vision. They have the ability to focus on something up to five kilometers away. When an eagle sites his prey, he narrows his focus on it and set out to get it. No matter the obstacles, the eagle will not move his focus from the prey until he grabs it.

Have a vision and remain focused no matter what the obstacle and you will succeed.

PRINCIPLE 3

Eagles do not eat dead things. They feed only on fresh prey. Vultures eat dead animals, but eagles will not.

Be careful with what you feed your eyes and ears with, especially in movies and on TV. Steer clear of outdated and old information. Always do your research well.

PRINCIPLE 4

Eagles love the storm. When clouds gather, the eagles get excited. The eagle uses the storm's wind to lift it higher. Once it finds the wind of the storm, the eagles use the raging storm to lift him above the

clouds. This gives the eagle an opportunity to glide and rest its wings. In the meantime, all the other birds hide in the leaves and branches of the trees.

We can use the storms of life to rise to greater heights. Achievers relish challenges and use them profitably.

PRINCIPLE 5

The Eagle tests before it trusts. When a female eagle meets a male and they want to mate, she flies down to earth with the male pursuing her and she picks a twig. She flies back into the air with the male pursuing her.

Once she has reached a height high enough for her, she lets the twig fall to the ground and watches it as it falls. The male chases after the twig. The faster it falls, the faster he chases it. He has to catch it before it falls to the ground. He then brings it back to the female eagle.

The female eagle grabs the twig and flies to a higher altitude and then drops the twig for the male to chase. This goes on for hours, with the height increasing until the female eagle is assured that the male eagle has mastered the art of catching the twig which shows commitment. Then and only then, will she allow him to mate with her.

Whether in private life or in business, one should test commitment of people intended for partnership.

PRINCIPLE 6

When ready to lay eggs, the female and male eagle identify a place very high on a cliff where no predators can reach. The male flies to earth and picks thorns and lays them on the crevice of the cliff, then flies to earth again to collect twigs which he lays in the intended nest. He flies back to earth and picks thorns laying them on top of the twigs. He flies back to earth and picks soft grass to cover the thorns.

When this first layering is complete the male eagle runs back to earth and picks more thorns, lays them on the nest; runs back to get grass it on top of the thorns, then plucks his feathers to complete the nest. The thorns on the outside of the nest protect it from possible intruders. Both male and female eagles participate in raising the eagle family. She lays the eggs and protects them; he builds the nest and hunts. During the time of training the young ones to fly, the mother eagle throws the eaglets out of the nest. Because they are scared, they jump into the nest again.

Next, she throws them out and then takes off the soft layers of the nest, leaving the thorns bare. When the scared eaglets again jump into the nest, they are pricked by thorns. Shrieking and bleeding they jump out again this time wondering why the mother and father who love them so much are torturing them. Next, mother eagle pushes them off the cliff into the air. As they shriek in fear, father eagle flies out and catches them up on his back before they fall and brings them back to the cliff. This goes on for some time until they start flapping their wings. They get excited at this newfound knowledge that they can fly.

The preparation of the nest teaches us to prepare for changes; The preparation for the family teaches us that active participation of both partners leads to success; The being pricked by the thorns tells us that sometimes being too comfortable where we are may result into our not experiencing life, not progressing and not learning at all. The thorns of life come to teach us that we need to grow, get out of the nest and live on. We may not know it but the seemingly comfortable and safe haven may have thorns.

The people who love us do not let us languish in sloth but push us hard to grow and prosper. Even in their seemingly bad actions they have good intentions for us.

PRINCIPLE 7

When an Eagle grows old, his feathers become weak and cannot take him as fast as he should. When he feels weak and about to die, he retires to a place far away in the rocks.

While there, he plucks out every feather on his body until he is completely bare. He stays in this hiding place until he has grown new feathers, then he can come out.

We occasionally need to shed off old habits & items that burden us without adding to our lives.

Day 19 Rest in God's special day of rest

7 Dimensions of Sabbath Rest

1. Spiritual rest Hebrews 4:9 The Sabbath is a metaphor for our spiritual rest in Christ. Adam and Eve began their earthly history on Friday evening. Their first sunset was a Sabbath sunset, their first sunrise was a Sabbath sunrise. They rested before they worked. We must rest in the finished work of our Savior that he completed on the cross to experience the true rest of grace. His work is imputed to us, we simply accept it. Having accepted his work then, he motivates us to work for him. We cannot really work him until we have rested in him. In God's program rest precedes work. We rest in order to work, not the other way around.
2. Physical rest Genesis 2:2 SHABBAT
To pause or cease. We cease from our work, our labor. We rest from our secular work, from our jobs, from our efforts to earn a salary. We devote this holy time to God and to his work. If and when we do work on the Sabbath, this is a work of mercy and compassion towards those that are in need.
3. NUACH rest. Exodus 20:11. To be tranquil in a state of repose and peace. God sat back in tranquil repose and mentally rejoicing in the world. He invites us to join him.
4. NEPHESHI—emotional rest. Exodus 31:17. God was refreshed—verb that literally means He took on a new soul or life. The Sabbath should be a time of emotional rejuvenation. This can be done through meditation on God's

word, reflecting on Gods' awesome power in nature, connecting with family and loved ones, or just quiet meditative time

5. Observe/Celebrate. Exodus 31:16. The children of Israel shall observe the Sabbath throughout their generations—NIV. Celebrate instead of merely observing—God offers the Sabbath to us to exuberantly celebrate his goodness. Let every sabbath be a celebration of the matchless love and grace of our Savior, whose compassion fail not and whose mercies are everlasting.
6. God bless the Sabbath. Fill it with power. Empower it to fulfill the function for which it was created. Let the Sabbath be a day to empower others through your service to them. Teach, preach, practice and model God's love.
7. God sanctified the Sabbath. Made it Holy, his presence. The gift of the Sabbath rest is not just a gift of a day but a gift of a person—filling the day with his joyous person. When we spend time in his presence, the Sabbath becomes more real to us.

Day 20 God's Incredible Grace

Psalm 51:1-15 (From The Message)

Generous in love--God, give grace!

Huge in mercy-wipe out my bad record.

Scrub away my guilt,

soak out my sins in your laundry.

I know how I've been had;

my sins are staring me down.

you're the one I've violated, and you've seen
it all, seen the full extent of my evil.

You have all the facts before you;
whatever you decide is fair.

I've been out of step with you for a long time,
in the wrong since before I was home.

What you're after is truth from the inside out.
Enter me, then; conceive a new, true life.

Soak me in your laundry and I'll come out clean,
scrub me and I'll have a snow-white life.

Tune me in to the foot-tapping songs,
set these once-broken hones to dancing.

Don't look too close for blemishes,
give me a clean bill of health.

God, make a fresh start in me,
shape a Genesis week from the chaos of my life.

Don't throw me out with the trash,
or fail to breathe holiness in me. Bring me back from gray exile,
put a fresh wind in my sails!

Give me a job teaching rebels your ways
so the lost can find their way home.

Commute my death sentence, God, my salvation God,
and I'll sing anthems to your life-giving ways.
Unbutton my lips, dear God; I'll let loose with your praise.

Day 21 Satan's Meeting

Satan called a worldwide convention of demons. In his opening address he said, we can't keep Christians from going to church. We can't keep them from reading their Bibles and knowing the truth. We can't even keep them from forming an intimate relationship with their savior. Once they gain that connection with Jesus, our power over them is broken. So, let them go to their churches; let them have their covered dish dinners, BUT steal their time, so they don't have time to develop a relationship with Jesus Christ. . ."

"This is what I want you to do," said the devil. "Distract them from gaining hold of their Savior and maintaining that vital connection throughout their day." "how shall we do this?" his demons shouted. "keep them busy in the non-essentials of life and invent innumerable schemes to occupy their mind," he answered. "Tempt them to spend, spend, spend, and borrow, borrow, borrow. Persuade the wives to go to work for long hours and the husbands to work 6-7 days each week, 10-12 hours a day, so they can afford their empty lifestyles. Keep

them from spending time with their children. As their family's fragment, soon, their homes will offer no escape from the pressures of work! Over stimulate their minds so that they cannot hear that still, small voice. Entice them to play the radio or cassette player whenever they drive. To keep the TV VCR, CDs and their PCs going constantly in their home and see to it that every store and restaurant in the world plays non-biblical music constantly. This will jam their minds and break that union with Christ. Fill the coffee tables with magazines and newspapers. Pound their minds with the news 24 hours a day. Invade their driving moments with billboards. Flood their mailboxes with junk mail, mail order catalogs, sweepstakes, and every kind of newsletter and promotional offering free products, services and false hopes. Keep skinny, beautiful models on the magazines and TV so their husbands will believe that outward beauty is what's important, and they'll become dissatisfied with their wives. Keep the wives too tired to love their husbands at night. Give them headaches too! If they don't give their husbands the love they need, they will begin to look elsewhere. That will fragment their families quickly. Give them Santa Claus to distract them from teaching their children the real meaning of Christmas. Give them an Easter bunny so they won't talk about his resurrection and power over sin and death. Even in their recreation, let them be excessive.

Have them return from their recreation exhausted. Keep them too busy to go out in nature and reflect on God's creation. Send them to amusement parks, sporting events, plays, concerts, and movies instead. Keep them busy, busy, busy! and when they meet for spiritual fellowship, involve them in gossip and small talk so that they leave with troubled consciences. Crowd their lives with so many good causes they have no time to seek power from Jesus. Soon they will be working in their own strength, sacrificing their health and family for the good of the cause. It will work! It will work!

It was a quite a plan. The demons went early to their assignments causing Christians everywhere to get busier and more rushed, going here and there. Having little time for their God or their families. Having no time to tell others about the power of Jesus to change lives.

I guess the question is, has the devil been successful in his schemes?

Email sent by N. Mitchell

Day 22 The God who sees us.

Genesis 16:13—She gave this name to the Lord who spoke to her: “You are the God who sees me,” for she said, “I have now seen^[a] the One who sees me.”

Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her. You are the God who sees, for she said, have I also here seen him. Who sees me?

Hagar finds herself exiled in the desert sent there by the jealous Sarah because of Hagar’s pregnancy. Hagar had brought this punishment on herself by her proud arrogance before Sarah. Hagar is desperate, and she calls on the name of the Lord—YAHWEH. That mighty name on which we can call when there is not where else to turn. Man’s extremity now becomes God’s opportunity. In her desperate situation Hagar discovers something new about Yahweh. In other places and to other people He is EIYON,—the strongest mighty one; El Shaddai— The Almighty God; El OLAM--Everlasting God. YAHWEH Yireh, YAHWEH will provide; YAHWEH is my banner. YAHWEH Shalom- YAHWEH is peace. YAHWEH Sabbaoth. YAHWEH of hosts (armies). YAHWEH Rapha. YAHWEH who heals and YAHWEH ELOHIM;

YAHWEH the mighty one. Here Hagar gives God a new name—YAHWEH EL ROI.

The mighty one who sees . She recognizes that this God sees her situation, he understands her problem. He is mindful of her pain and her hurts. He knows how she feels.

Even though at times we believe no one understands or sees what we are going through, like Hagar we can call our God. YAHEH EL ROI—for this mighty one sees and understands our deepest pain, our most profound longings, our bitterest disappointments, our tragic losses, our secret sins, our unrevealed deficiencies. He sees and knows everything about us, yet he still loves us.

Day 23 Principles from the Lord's prayer.

THE LORD'S PRAYER MATTHEW 6:5-13

“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. 9 “This, then, is how you should pray:

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

11

Give us today our daily bread.

12

And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13

And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.'

OUTLINE.

I. Emphasis on God.

a. Praise 6:9

- We hallow his name by rehearsing who He is
- By relinquishing control of our lives.
- By recognizing his presence in our lives.

Seven benefits of praise:

- Enhances our appreciation and love for God,
- expands our vision,
- eclipses our fears,
- energizes our work,
- refreshes our spirit
- exhausts our enemies
- prepares us for heaven

b. Priorities 6: 10

II. Emphasis on us.

c. Provision 6:11

d. Personal relationship 6:12

e. Protection 6: 13b

III. Emphasis on God

a. Promise 6: 13

Relationships in the Lord's prayer:

- Our Father-Parent /child
- Hallowed be thy name-Deity/worshipper
- Thy kingdom-Sovereign/subject
- Thy will be done-Master/servant
- Give us this day our daily bread-Benefactor/beneficiary
- Forgive us our debts-Savior/sinner
- Lead us not into temptation-Guide/pilgrim
- Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory -Creator/creature

Day 24 Love One Another

John 13:34 “A new commandment I give unto you. That you love one another as I have loved you, that you also love one another”.

Jesus says, behold I give you a new commandment that you love one another. Is this commandment really new, no. it has always been God's command? But Jesus here renews it and reiterates it. Notice the command to love one another. Love is not a noun, it's a verb, it's not a feeling, or an impulse, but a command to act. It is a divine imperative for every believer, none is exempted. We are commanded to love. It's a divine mandate, a spiritual obligation. It doesn't say love, if things are going well, or love when you are feeling happy, or love because you are loved. No, we are called to love in spite of. How are we to love?

What is our model for love? Jesus says, "As he loved." Jesus is our model our example. How did he love? He gave himself for us. He offered himself as a sacrifice and showed his love. No sacrifice was too great, no burden too heavy, no commitment too deep . His love was total, full, no holding back, that's our challenge to love like that.

Day 25 Nothing can separate us from his love

Romans 8:38-39 *"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

This is one of the most awesome promises in the Bible. Nothing can separate us from his love. None of life's circumstances, no demons in hell, no angels in glory, no physical or spiritual boundaries, no emotional barriers, no lengths of time. This promise comes to strengthen our faith especially in those moments of doubts and fear, when our present circumstances and our enemies both internal and external seeks our destruction. We ought not to fear anything or anyone when we are connected to our loving Savior. We can be confident that his divine grip on us will hold us fast. It is not us that holds Him. It is He who holds us. Our assurance is not in our puny acts of righteousness, but the ground of our

acceptance rests in His perfect life and sacrificial death. His work for our salvation is perfect and complete. Nothing can be added to make it more complete. When we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord. He credits to us his perfect life to us and his sacrificial death atones for our sins. We are complete in Him; our assurance is in Him. Through Jesus Christ we are eternally connected to God. Nothing can ever separate us, sever us, from His love for us

Day 26 Trust Him in all things

Proverbs 3:5-6 *5 “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;⁶ in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight”*. The wiseman admonishes us to rely on God as the guide for our lives. Our heavenly Father who is omnipotent and omniscient, knows what is best for us. Our heavenly Father is more willing to give us divine wisdom and guidance than we are willing to ask. So why is it we are so often reluctant to ask him for guidance, for his Holy Spirit to give us wisdom to enable to make decisions in our lives? So often we run ahead of him, making impulsive decisions without conferring or consulting him. These decisions sometimes lead to disastrous consequences and often we are forced them to turn to him but this time it's more about repairing what has already very broken. How much anguish and

sorrow we could have saved ourselves if we always sought the Lord's wisdom. King David makes it a habit of his life to inquire of the Lord before he made any decision. Time and time again, the Bible said David inquired of the Lord before he went into battle before he made a journey, etc. on these occasions when he failed to inquire of the Lord he suffered the consequences. Trusting God, seeking his counsel, relying on his promises must be the hallmark of all true believers. We dare not journey on in life without the guiding will of our Heavenly Father.

Day 27 Ask God for wisdom

1 Kings 3:7-8 *7 "Now, Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. 8 Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. I am a little child, I do not know how to go in or come in".* King Solomon here expresses three important virtues of being a true spiritual leader.

1. He calls himself a little child. Childhood is the period of intense discovery. In describing himself as a little child, Solomon expresses his teachableness and a spirit of discovery. He offers himself to God as a learner, one who is malleable and pliable in the hand of God, receptive to God's counsels,

willing to listen to his commands, and eager to follow his will. This childlike spirit should characterize our posture before God and our fellow human beings.

2. There is also a humility expressed in Solomon's words for as a little child he recognizes his ignorance, limitations, and deficiencies, while at the same acknowledging the wisdom, might and power of God. In this attitude before God, there is no place for pride and self-aggrandizement. With a humble spirit before God, we bow our heads, beat our chest, fall on our faces and acknowledge our nothingness before him. Only his grace and mercy can spare us. All our works of righteousness are nothing before him. Humility marks our every step.
3. Solomon also expressed a spirit of dependence. The greatest temptation of the Christian is the sin of self-sufficiency. The idea that I need no one and I have all the resources necessary for my salvation. This is a lie that contradicts our every reality. A few minutes without oxygen and we die, days without water we die, months without food we die. Our entire physical existence is dependent on resources outside of ourselves. If we are left loveless without familial affections, or human interactions we die both emotionally and physically. This is no less true for our spiritual lives. We

cannot sustain ourselves by ourselves. God is our inexhaustible source of life and joyfully invites us to depend on him, rely on him, trust him, and connect to him. So as a little child is dependent on his parents for survival, in that same spirit of a child God calls us to depend on him.

Day 28 Be a loving neighbor to those who are in need.

Luke 10:25-37 25 *“On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” 26 “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?” 27 He answered, ““Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind”[a]; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” 28 “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.” 29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” 30 In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 34*

He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two denarii[c] and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' 36 "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" 37 The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

In this parable, Jesus reveals three essential philosophies of life. The first philosophy says—what's yours is mine. The second says—what's mine is mine. And the third says—what's mine is yours. The first philosophy is shown by the behavior of the thieves who attacked a defenseless man on the road to Jericho. They beat him mercilessly, stripped off all his cloths, stole all his belongings and left him naked and bleeding on the roadside. This philosophy is further shown by people who are bent on taking from you what is yours, your possessions, your time, your identity, your good name, your joy, and your peace. Driven by malice, envy, jealousy, they do anything to dispossess you of your possession. Some will use force, blackmail, extortion, to steal from you. Some borrow from you without an intention of repaying. What's yours is mine!

The second philosophy says, what's mine is mine. A short time later two religious men, a priest and a Levite, walked by the scene of the crime. However, they looked at the fallen victim and kept on going. They did nothing to help. In fact, they crossed the road to avoid getting any closer. Their philosophy—what's mine is mine—translated- mind your own business. Don't get involved! Do your own thing regardless of need. This philosophy is very prevalent in our society.

- A child get hit by car several people walked by without helping
- Women gets raped or murdered in a big city, several people hear and see the crime, yet closed their windows, don't want to get involved.

We live in an age of apathy—mind your own business. Do your thing. I mind my own business, no sense of belonging to a community, no one wants to endanger themselves to help others. No one wants to risk anything to help others. People believe what is theirs is theirs and is not to be shared with others—what's mine is mine.

Finally, someone else comes along a Samaritan, a despised foreigner, hated by the Jews, considered vile, worst than dogs. This stranger unlike the ones who preceded them responds in a very different manner. Although he is of a different race, different religion, different culture. He notices the injured man, takes the necessary steps, at great risk and danger to himself (thieves could still be in the

vicinity) lovingly he tends to the man's wounds. He pours oil and wine. He then loads the man on his own donkey for the difficult 10-mile journey into the city. Upon arriving there, he pays for the wounded man's lodging and care. Promising the hotel manager to pay more if necessary. The Samaritan's philosophy, what's mine is yours permeates his actions, his attitude. Our resources are not ours only to selfishly spend on ourselves or to be used to indulge in our desires. God has blessed us in order for us to bless others. We are to be rivers. not ponds or lakes, freely received, freely give. As he Samaritans actions saved a man's' life so we are to be God's instrument to be used of God in his miraculous work of redemption. As true believers we must tell God concerning our resources, what's mine is yours. This must be our philosophy for without this spirit of sacrifice we cannot and will not mature and succeed spiritually.

1. When your neighbor has a major problem, give sacrificially to solve it.

Become a Samaritan today and be open to what is going on in the lives around you. Be sensitive to what is happening with them and be responsive in the ways that you are able. It may demand the sacrifice of time more than money, of emotional assistance more than financial assistance but whatever it takes be an instrument of Christ's love. Prayer—makes me an instrument of thy peace

2. When your church has a major need give to meet that need. As a member of the body, your participation is crucial. Whatever the need, new building, pay off debt, or ministry expansion.
3. When your Christian brothers and sisters have a major crisis give sacrificially to confront it. Think for example about believers who are being persecuted for their faith, people living in communist countries being persecuted for knowing Jesus. Support a ministry-support a pastor in Vietnam, Laos, or Cambodia.

Day 29 Lord make me an instrument of good

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace;

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

and where there is sadness, joy.

Divine Master,

grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console;

to be understood, as to understand;
to be loved, as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Amen.

St. Francis of Assisi - 13th century

Day 30 Lord Search me.

Psalm 139:23-24 *23 Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. 24 See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.* Are we willing to allow God to search us? Are we willing to undergo the divine scrutiny? What if He reveals to us things we would rather not know about ourselves. This prayer request from the writer should be ours also. Open up your hearts to the holy x-ray of his Spirit. Allow him to show you your true self. Let him in all the dark and hidden corners of your life, places you would rather keep hidden because they maybe too painful to reveal. Let the light of his love shine in these areas that healing can take place. Maybe, it's a secret abuse, a

defiling habit, a crime, a false identity, a vile act, a fantasy, a lustful longing, no matter what it is, his light can bring healing.

Day 31- My heart's desire

Psalm 27:4 *One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.* Our desires are far from God. We desire, wealth, happiness, love, adventure, power, position, fame, popularity, the lists never end. The fulfilment of each desires fuels new desires. We become consume with our desires and spend most of our lives pursuing them. The psalmist says, one thing I desire and that is I may permanently reside in God's house and gaze upon his beauty. One desire consumed him, to be in God's presence. The writer realized one thing that most of us have forgotten. When we are in his presence all our needs are met, all our desires are fulfilled. In him we have everything. Outside of him we have nothing.

Day 32 Do good to all

Galatians 6:10 *“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers”*. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good to all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. The opportunity to do good is all around us. Charity begins at home. Let us begin doing good to our own family first. Our family is our first church. Many ministers make the mistake of neglecting their family while doing the work of the church. They are busy saving others while their family is being lost. Take the time to care for your family, do not neglect your children, play with them, pray for them, listen to them, do their homework with them. When my children were young, I made it my habit to put them to bed and give them a good night kiss. One night while putting my baby daughter to bed, she looked up in my face with her pretty brown eyes and said, “Daddy, when you die I will always remember your kisses”. I looked back at her and said, “Baby, that’s sweet, but I am not dying anytime soon.” The memory of that beautiful moment will always remain with me.

This is also a command to do good to fellow believers. Use every opportunity to do good towards the members of our faith. There are some many ways in which we can do this. Be a spiritual mentor to a child, visit the shut-ins, take someone to church on Sabbaths. Invite a visitor home for lunch after church. As a boy

growing up, I watch my mother invite people home for lunch every sabbath, even when the food was small, but we always had enough because of the blessings of God. She went out of her way to care for the less fortunate. Her boundless generosity and compassionate love still guide my life today.

It was Martin Luther King who said, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, what are you doing for others?... The time is always right to do what is right".

In another place he said this: "Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable. Every step towards the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering and struggle; the tireless concern of dedicated individuals. Without persistent effort, time itself becomes an ally of the insurgent and primitive forces of irrational emotionalism and social destruction. This is no time for apathy and complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action". Now is the moment to do good, spread joy and happiness wherever you are.

Day 33 Bringing the mind under the control of the Holy Spirit

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 *"The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 5 We*

demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ". Victory in the Christian life is not simply doing good or refraining from doing bad. It is a life brought under the sovereignty of the Christ of God. It is bringing every thought under the control of the Holy Spirit, where the mind is surrendered to God. The great battle of life is fought in the mind. Satan wants to control our mind because he knows that if wins this battle, the war is over. Every thought, impulse and desire must be surrendered to the Spirit of God. When God is enthroned in the mind, our actions will show.

Day 34 Emptied of self and full of Jesus

Philippians 2:7 *"But made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men."*

In verse 7 what did Jesus do? He emptied Himself, made Himself nothing. This is a graphic and emphatic action of Jesus. He did it to himself. He is both the subject and object of the action. He emptied Himself. Does this mean that his status of equality with God was temporarily suspended (kinetic theory of the incarnation)? It is obvious that Jesus cannot stop being God but he became

something what he was not, before while continuing to be God. He laid aside temporarily, the majestic form and glory of divinity. He divested himself of the prerogatives and privileges of divinity.

Jesus descended into a lower state than he was before.

1. From being infinite, he became finite.
2. From uncreated perfection he became subjected to human development.
3. From being almighty he became in need of prayer and help in his weakness.

Jesus shrouded, concealed, his divinity and relied totally on his Father's power. He temporarily renounced his status as God. He descended to serve.

Notice the contrast to this philosophy of Lucifer. He aspired to rule. He went to ascend to rule. Jesus descends to serve. Jesus lays down for his the model of true servant leadership

“The servant leader serves first and then leads after. This is very different from those leaders who aspire for leadership positions then choose to serve out of moral or obligatory reasons. Servant leaders are not seeking or aspiring after leadership positions, but simply want to serve, so that leadership flows from their desire to serve. Their goal or mission is not to lead but to serve. Leadership is

always secondary, so that if they are removed from leadership positions, they are not mad or angry because a leadership position was never their aim. On the contrary, their desire to serve remains unabated. In Mark 9:35, Jesus says, if any man wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant to all.” Church Politics by Walker and O’Reggio

He took upon himself the form of a servant slave. In other words, he descended to serve. Before I speak of Jesus 'dissension as a slave, I must speak of his descension as human. What an awesome mystery that the great God of the universe would condescend to the lowly estate of humanity. Imagine the uncreated one, the unimagined, that cannot be replicated by any material, transcending time and space, entering the narrow confines of time and space, reducing himself to a microscopic cell, entering into the womb of a young woman, subjecting himself to laws of human developing, drinking milk from the breast of a human mother, learning to say dad taking first steps, learning the Hebrew alphabet- what condescension! C.S. Lewis describes it as humans become worm to save the worms. The gap between us and worm is finite; we are both created. The gap between creation and creature is infinite.

Ellen G. White says, "In contemplating the incarnation of Christ in humanity, we stand baffled before an unfathomable mystery, that the human mind cannot comprehend." ST July 30, 1896.

"The incarnation of Christ has ever been, and will ever remain a mystery. That which is revealed is for us and for our children, but let every human being be warned from the ground of making Christ altogether human, such as one as ourselves, for it cannot be." 5BC 1129.

Day 35 Humility of our Savior

Imagine if you came from another planet and you had a chance to become a human being here on earth. What kind of human would you be? A king, a prince, a person of royal pedigree, the best of the best, a slave never?

1. Slaves had no rights as citizens
2. Slaves could not hold property
3. A slave was mere chattel that could be bought or sold
4. At death, a slave could be scourged, tortured, and subjected to the bitterest and vilest death

At the arrest and trial of Jesus he was treated as a slave, sold for thirty pieces of silver, beaten, tortured, scourged and deprived of any legal rights and finally crucified as a common criminal

He humbled himself by giving up his rights as God and descended to become a human, the lowest kind of human, a slave, a double descent into self-abnegation. This humility would cause him to descend further yet to death. Not just any kind of death but the lowest and the worst kind of death. So, Jesus as God, the highest being, descends into man lowest kind of man, slave, and descends further into death, the lowest kind of death. What a descent. We measure a fall not by the absolute level reached but by comparison with the altitude left. Never has one descended from such heights and fallen to such depths.

This humility of Christ is a rebuke to our pride and the only antidote for cure. The sin of pride inflicts all of us and is an insidious and pernicious evil that afflicts all humanity. Two of the most common forms of pride are race pride and gender pride. Some people have so much pride in their race that they think they are the smartest, prettiest, people and everyone else is less than them inferior to them.

He subjected himself to death even the death of the cross. Jesus willingly subjected himself to death. We die of necessity, He dies by choice. It was a voluntary act motivated by love. Being obedient to death may give the impression that death conquered Jesus.

Day 36 The Divine Descent

Jesus descends into death; It is a decent to self-sacrifice. Lucifer on the contrary wants to ascend above the heights of the clouds, He wants to ascend to self-preservation. Jesus became obedient to death even the death of the cross. On a cross, Yymbol of shame and a curse. Slaves were executed on crosses. See him there hanging on the tree, naked, no clothing. The artist puts clothing on him out of modesty, but he is naked, wounded in the head for the wicked thoughts we have thought, pierced in the hands for the evil things we have done, pierced in the side for all the sins we hold dear to our bosom, wounded in his feet for all the places we have gone, that we should not have gone. The demons of hell rejoiced around the cross and they sang, we got him, we got we got him. Like Paul Bremer when he caught Sadam Hussein. WE GOT HIM! That's what they thought.

But Jesus willingly subjected himself to death. We die of necessity, He died by choice. It was a voluntary act motivated by love. Being obedient to death may

give the impression that death conquered Jesus. Perish the thought! Use your sacred, fertile imagination with me and picture the scene.

Jesus Christ enters Hades, the dominion of Satan, he enters into the Hall of Horrors and there seated on an ivory throne is the devil himself surrounded by the many nefarious weapons he has use against us weak humans. On the wall around are fears of every kind, doubt, depression, despair, discouragement, disasters, diseases. But Jesus notices that the devil has in his hand a mighty sword. He calls it death, his mightiest weapon, the mother of all weapons, against the human race. There is a struggle between Jesus and the devil, because the devil does not want up give up this weapon without a fight. Jesus disarms the devil and with one mighty swing of that giant sword he decapitates the devil and then he takes the mighty sword and breaks over his knee and cries out. I am the resurrection and life. Though you were dead yet shall you live again. I am He that was dead but I am alive for evermore and have the keys of hell and the grave.

Praise God Almighty. Death shall no longer have dominion over you because He has broken the power of death. He has cast down principalities and power, triumphing over the powers of darkness and has crushed the enemy forever. This is why God has highly exalted him and given him a name that is above every name and before who every knee shall bow and confess that Jesus Chris is Lord. Col 2:15

Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them. True ministry is living the life of Jesus, it is a descent into service for our fellow men, a descent in self-abnegation, a denying of self and the desires of the flesh. It is a descent into self-sacrifice, it is the giving of one self completely to God. Take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to thee, Lord take my will it is thine own, it shall be no longer mine.

True ministry is living the life of Jesus, it is a descent into service for our fellow men, a descent in self-abnegation, a denying of self and the desires of the flesh. It is a descent into self-sacrifice, it is the giving of one self completely to God. Take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to thee, Lord take my will it is thine own, it shall be no longer mine. The following chart illustrates what true ministry is about.

What is True Ministry?
It is the Story of a Descent

Two Models of Ministry



Lucifer's Model
Isaiah 14:12-21



Descent to Self-Abnegation
Took form of a Slave



Descent to Self-Sacrifice
Obedient to Death on Cross

Eternal Exaltation

Ascent to Rule
I will ascend to heaven



Ascent to Self-Exaltation
I will be like the Most High



Ascent to Self-Preservation I will
ascend above the heights of
the clouds

Eternal Extinction

The *paradox* of true ministry is:

The way Up is Down

**Day 37- Loved and Loving Unconditionally (A Paraphrase of I Corinthians 13)
by Mable C. Dunbar**

1. Even though we are able to speak eloquently and influence a large audience to respond to the love of God, if we do not have His love in our hearts, we are only full of noise. And since people are drawn to us because of our charming and winsome personalities, they will soon turn their backs on God.
2. Even if we have the ability to predict things, and are very intuitive; we are able to understand those things that seem mysterious; we have several degrees and expertise in many areas; we believe that we could accomplish anything we put

our minds to like moving a mountain, without love, our accomplishments are worthless.

3. Even though we give all of our money, clothes, and food to the poor and needy, we sacrifice ourselves by working hard in the church, giving Bible Studies, and attending every service; and go through fire, floods, hurricanes, earth quakes, if we don't love, our motives are wrong, and we are nothing.
4. Our love for each other should not end because we put on weight, get sick, grow old, lose a job, disagree, or don't live up to each other's expectations. True love is kind. It does not prevent us from looking attractive for ourselves and each other. It is not jealous and possessive. It does not seek to have power and control over each other. Rather it should encourage us to love each other as Christ loves us, and give of ourselves to each other as He gives of Himself to us.
5. Love does not do those things that are improper, that makes us feel ashamed, guilty or uncomfortable. Love is not self-centered. It is not rude or disrespectful. It will encourage us to maintain our dignity and integrity. It will not dwell on our mistakes, and keep a journal of our failures. Love will not be accusing. It will motivate us to think the best of each other. It will act in ways that will allow us to use our potential for God's glory, while we allow others to do the same.
6. Love will not perpetuate evil. It will not cause us to look at evil, talk of evil, or practice evil. It will speak the truth. Love will not knowingly allow us to cause

each other or anyone else pain. For a disposition to cause pain comes from the devil. Love will not permit us to keep secrets that are detrimental to each other or to others. It will hold us accountable for our actions, while inviting us to find grace through Jesus Christ.

7. Love will forbear under all circumstances. It will always believe that we can change, people can change. It will hope for the best and it will stand the test of time. It will give us and others the opportunity to live in safe environments.
8. Love will not fail in times of poverty, or discouragement. Love will not allow us to disregard each other or talk badly of each other. One day our predictions will cease. One day our ability to speak in many languages will end. Many things that we are learning now will not be of any value, for they will pass away.
9. Even the vast knowledge that we have regarding technology and science will end. What we can predict only gives us a cloudy and limited vision of the future.
10. When time is ended, more of God's knowledge will be imparted to us. We will totally understand why we had to go through the experiences that caused us grief and pain. But whatever we did not fully understand before this will not matter, because He will take away our sorrow. He will wipe away our tears. Affliction will not rise up again.
11. When we were young, we spoke like children do. Our understanding was very childish.

As we grew up we realized that our childish thinking and actions were keeping us from becoming adults. Some of them we put away. Some we did not.

12. Today, some things are still not clear to us. We don't understand why we suffer so much. We don't understand why life is so hard. We don't understand why we carry so much anger, bitterness, resentment, guilt and shame. We don't understand why we are either the victim or perpetrator of abuse. But love will help us get help, so that we can truly support each other. We must do the best we can to foster a non-violent relationship and rest assured that when Jesus comes, He will answer all of our questions. Then we will truly understand. For now, He only reveals to us what He wants us to know. Until then, we need to be patient and trust Him to take care of us whether we are together or apart.

13. There are three very important gifts that God has given us: Faith in Him, hope for the future, and unconditional love. But the greatest gift of all is unconditional love not only for others, but also for ourselves.

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Day 38 Quality Gifts, We Give One Another Ronald Hawkins

Spend time together.

We give the gift of time. Have fun together.

We give the gift of laughter. Share feelings and thoughts.

We give the gift of sharing. Like being together.

We give the gift of appreciation. Discuss issues.

We give the gift of confidence. Survive crises together.

We give the gift of dependability. Discuss fear.

We give the gift of vulnerability. Cover our partner's weaknesses.

We give the gift of protection. Celebrate our individual values together.

We give the gift of respect.

Encourage a life separate from our life together.

We give the gift of separateness. Speak the truth together.

We give the gift of honesty. Handle conflict together.

We give the gift of surfaced anger. Practice forgiveness.

We give the gift of forgiveness. Practice unconditional acceptance.

We give the gift of love.

Day 39 THE TWENTY CANS OF SUCCESS.

Christian author Neil Anderson wrote a list he called The Twenty Cans of Success.

These are based on what the NT says is true of Christians. These are promises, claimed by believers through the centuries. Allow God to speak to you through these assurances.

1. Why should I say I can't when the Bible says I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength (Philippians 4: 13)?

2. Why should I lack when I know that God shall supply all my needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19)?
3. Why should I fear when the Bible says God has not given me a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7)?
4. Why should I lack faith to fulfill my calling knowing that God has allotted to me a measure of faith (Romans 12:3)?
5. Why should I be weak when the Bible says that the Lord is the strength of my life and that I will display strength and take action because I know
6. God (Psalm 27:1; Daniel 11:32)?
7. Why should I allow Satan supremacy over my life when He that is in me is greater than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4)?
8. Why should I accept defeat when the Bible says that God always leads me in triumph (2 Corinthians 2: 14)?
9. Why should I lack wisdom when Christ became wisdom to me from God and God gives wisdom to me generously when I ask Him for it (1 Corinthians 1:30; James 1:5)?
10. Why should I be depressed when I can recall to mind God's loving kindness, compassion, and faithfulness and have hope (Lamentations 3:21-23)?
11. Why should I worry and fret when I can cast all my anxiety on Christ who cares for me (1 Peter 5:7)?

12. Why should I ever be in bondage knowing that there is liberty where the Spirit of the Lord is (2 Corinthians 3: 17)?
13. Why should I feel condemned when the Bible says I am not condemned because I am in Christ (Romans 8: 1)?
14. Why should I feel alone when Jesus said He is with me always and He will never leave me nor forsake me (Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5)?
15. Why should I feel accursed or that I am the victim of bad luck when the Bible says that Christ redeemed me from the curse of the law that I might receive His Spirit (Galatians 3: 13-14)?
16. 1s. Why should I be discontented when I, like Paul, can learn to be content in all my circumstances (Philippians 4:1i)?
17. Why should I feel worthless when Christ became sin on my behalf that I might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21)?
18. Why should I have a persecution complex knowing that nobody can be against me when God is for me (Romans 8:31)?
19. Why should I be confused when God is the author of peace and He gives me knowledge through His indwelling Spirit (1 Corinthians 14:33; 2: 12)?
20. Why should I feel like a failure when I am a conqueror in all things through Christ (Romans 8:37)?

21. Why should I let the pressures of life bother me when I can take courage knowing that Jesus has overcome the world and its tribulations (John 16:33)?

Day 40 Prayer and Empowered Ministries

Inspired writings and experience make it clear that two principles must be applied for all our ministries to be most fully used and empowered by the Holy Spirit: 1) Much personal and united prayer; 2) Much lay member involvement.

1. "What the Lord did for His people in that time (early church), it is just as essential I, and more so, that He do for His people today. All that the apostles did, every church member today is to do.* And we are to work with as much more fervor, to be accompanied by the Holy Spirit .in as much greater measure, as the increase of wickedness demands a more decided call to repentance." 7T p. 33
2. **"A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work* . . .** Our heavenly Father is more willing to give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, than are earthly parents to give good gifts to their children. but it is our work,

"by confession, humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer, to fulfill the conditions upon which God "has promised to grant us His blessings. A revival need be expected only in answer to prayer.*" 1SMp.121 .

3. "At the sound of fervent prayer, Satan's whole host trembles." 1T p: 3 6
4. "It is part of God's plan to grant us in answer to t e prayer of faith, that which He would not bestow if we did not thus ask." GC p. 525 11
5. "It is the order of God that those who bear repressibilities should often meet together counsel with one another and pray earnestly for that wisdom which He alone can impart." Unitedly make known your troubles to God. Talk less: much precious time is lost in talk that brings no light. Let brethren unite in fasting and prayer* for the wisdom that God has promised to supply liberally." 1T p. 624
6. *"If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in Heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" Matthew 18:19, 20 "Ask of Me, and I will answer your requests."**

The promise is made on condition that the united prayers of the church are off red, and in answer to these prayers there may be expected a

power greater than that which comes in answer to private prayer.* The power given will be proportionate to the unity of the members and their love of God and for one another. -Letter 32, 1903, p. 5 {To Brother and Sister Farnsworth, January 28, 1903.) White Estate Washington D.C.

October 22,1979 (9MR 303.3) -MR No. 748 *The Power of United Prayer.*

7. "The greatest victories gained for the cause of God are not the result of labored argument, ample facilities, wide influence, or abundance of means;* they are gained in the audience chamber with God,* when with earnest, agonizing faith men lay hold upon the mighty arm of power."

GWp. 259

8. The word of the living God is not merely written, but spoken. The Bible is God's voice speaking to us, just as surely as though we could hear it with our ears. If we realized this, with what awe would we search its precepts!

The reading and contemplation of the Scriptures would be regarded as an audience with the Infinite One. 6T p. 393

9. "An intensity, such as never before was seen, is taking possession of the world. In amusement, in moneymaking, in the contest for power, in the very struggle for existence, there is a terrible force that engrosses body and mind and soul. In the midst of this maddening rush, God is speaking.

He bids us come apart and commune with Him. 'Be still, and know that I am God.'"* Psalm 46:10

"Many, even in their seasons of devotion, fail of receiving the blessing of real communion with God. They are in too great haste. With hurried steps they press through the circle of Christ's loving presence, pausing perhaps a moment within the sacred precincts, but not waiting for counsel. They have no time to remain with the divine Teacher. With their burdens they return to their work.*

"These workers can never attain the highest success until they learn the secret of strength. They must give themselves time to think, to pray, to wait upon God for a renewal of physical, mental, and spiritual power. They need the uplifting influence of His Spirit. Receiving this, they will be quickened by fresh life. The wearied frame and tired brain will be refreshed; the burdened heart will be lightened.

"Not a pause for a moment in His presence, but personal contact with Christ, to sit down in companionship with Him-this is our need."*

Education p. 260-261

10. *"Parents* have a great and responsible work to do, and they may well inquire: 'Who is sufficient for these things?' But God has promised to give

wisdom to those that ask in faith, and He will do just as He said He would. *He is pleased with the faith that takes Him at His Word.*"*

*"The mother of Augustine prayed for her son's conversion. She saw no evidence that the Spirit of God was impressing his heart, but she was not discouraged. She laid her finger upon the texts, presenting before God His own words, and pleaded as only a mother can. Her deep humiliation, her earnest importunities, her unwavering faith, prevailed and the Lord gave her the desires of her heart. Today He is just as ready to listen to the petitions of His people. His hand is not shortened that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy that it cannot hear; and if Christian parents seek Him earnestly, He will fill their mouths with arguments and for His name's sake will work mightily in their behalf in the conversion of their children."** ST p. 322-323

11. "When the mind dwells upon self, it is turned away from Christ, the source of strength and life. Hence, *it is Satan's constant effort to keep the attention diverted from the Savior and thus prevent the union and communion of the soul with Christ.*"*

The pleasures of the world; life's cares, perplexities, and sorrow; the faults of others; or your own faults and imperfections-to any or all of

these h will seek to divert the mind. Do not be misled by his devices.

Many who are really conscientious, and who desire to live for God, he too often leads to dwell upon their own faults and weaknesses and thus by separating them from Christ, he hopes to gain the victory. We should not make self the center and indulge anxiety and fear as to whether we shall be saved. All this turns the soul away from the source of our strength. Commit the keeping of your soul to God, and trust in Him. **Talk and think of Jesus. Let self be lost in Him!**"* SC p. 71-72

12. "The greatest help that can be given our people is to teach them to work for God, and to depend on Him, not on the ministers." 7T p. 19

13. "There is no influence in our land more powerful to poison the imagination, to destroy religious impressions, and to blunt the relish for the tranquil pleasures and sober realities of life, than theatrical amusements. The love of these scenes increases with every indulgence as the desire for intoxicating drink strengthens with its use. The only safe course is to shun the theater and every other questionable amusement." 4T p. 653

14. "The secret of success is the union of divine power with human effort. Those who achieve the greatest results are those who rely most implicitly

upon the almighty arm. The man who commanded, 'Sun, stand still upon Gibeon; and thou, moon, in the Valley of Ajalon, is the man who for hours lay prostrate upon the earth in prayer in the camp at Gilgal. The men of prayer are the men of power." pp p. 509

*Note: All **bolding**, *italicizing*, and underlining in this document are supplied by the compiler. Please visit our Website at: www.revivalandreformation.org for additional resources.

Day 41 Be a Giant Slayer

1 Samuel 17

He stood nine feet tall, ugliness and evil personified, uttering bellicose blasphemies that sent shock waves of fear throughout the camp of Israel. He was big, bad, brazen bodacious and bombastic. He exuded total self-confidence, he was the worst kind of bully armed to the teeth, everybody was afraid of him. His sword was larger and longer than anyone else. There would be no contest in a battle between weapons. Israel knew and Goliath knew it. Maybe Goliath did not have the whole amour of God but he certainly had the whole, amour of man. For forty terrifying days, he shouted forth profanities, curses, and threats against Israel and Israel's God. None dare

opposed him. The men of Israel scurried away like frightened rats hiding in caves. They were intimidated, terrified and were scared to death. Who is going to save the day? The only one who can is God. He is a present help in time of trouble. He is our rescuer. But sometimes God needs some material to work with. Who will stand in the gap? Who will step up? A great general; a warrior king? NO, NO it's a busy Shepard boy who brings his lunch for his brothers. God calls busy people Gideon, the disciples, Amos, Paul. David is only a kid, considered too young to fight, being the last of eight sons of his father.

Another scenario: You can tell by the sound of the doctor's voice that the diagnosis is cancer. Becky Pippert tells the story of a friend who confided in her that she was diagnosed with cancer. She called Becky and these are her words I know this may sound funny to you, but I don't know how to think. I have read books telling it's possible to heal myself of cancer through proper nutrition, a healthy life style and building up my immune system. I've read book that some consider the faith approach, that say pray and claim victor over cancer. But I think both approaches are afraid to admit the obvious, some things are beyond our control. I do pray and have always been committed a healthy lifestyle" but that doesn't insure that the cancer will go away. Becky, she said, "I am scared I don't want to die. Does my fear mean that I don't trust God as I thought I did?

How can I not be afraid of a deadly disease? How do I deal with my fears and trust God and find courage?

Perhaps you are facing a goliath today, a giant so large he has blocked the face of God. Maybe that giant is causing you to feel powerless and afraid. Perhaps it's a devastating illness to you or a loved one. Your giant today maybe stress on the job, your boss is mean, the job is tough, you are confronting a financial giant, you feel overwhelmed, the debts wants to crush you. Perhaps it's a dysfunctional relationship, your marriage, your problems seem too big to solve. Maybe you feel insecure about your job, your career, your future. Are you afraid of growing old? Dying alone? Afraid you will never get married or have children, or you a praying mother who have rebellious children that you are afraid maybe lost, whatever your situation is. There are times when you will face giants that will strike fear and terror. what then? There is no emotion more paralyzing than fear. One minute we are reasonably confident we are on top of things and the next moment we are blindsided. We go from feeling that life is fairly under control to feeling that even the ground we walk on is not secure as before. Fear taps into our deepest anxieties. As paralyzing as fear can be it teaches us that vital lessons that if we are honest, reminds us of our inadequacy. Life is too much for us, sooner or later we will face a situation that

leaves us sobered by our inadequacy and we become painfully aware that our gifts, knowledge, character, education, degrees, are not guaranteed of success, when the odds are truly against us and fear swallows us up. The silver lining in this dark cloud is that fear pushes us to change our view of reality. Does my deliverance depend on human prowess and the things I can see? Does the final outcome depend on a massive resource beyond my own-the power, there is a faithful, loving God? If God is real then God confidence is what I need more than self-confidence. Then if there is a God? the only correct way to receive reality is through Him. Evil may seem to be winning the day but appearance ultimately does not count because God's sovereignty is involved. He has the final word. How does faith in God sovereignty determine the way we handle fear? How can we trust the unseen reality of God when what we see, hear feel, terrifies us? There are too many seeing feeling and hearing Christians. We need more faith believing Christians.

Day 42 Protection in God's name

Proverbs 18:10 *"The name of the Lord is a strong and the righteous run into it and are safe".*

David and Goliath: As insignificant as David seem, the moment that he steps on the stage of we notice the vitality of his person, 1Sam: 23-26, 32-37 Notice David's' courage and Israel's' fears David's view of Goliath v.36 David sees the wider conflict, that was not just a conflict Israel vs. the Philistines. Saul had forgotten God and behaved as if he was irrelevant to the battle. If God is irrelevant then Israel is in trouble when God is out of the picture we are in trouble they needed a new view of reality. Whose definition of reality would prevail Goliath's; or David's? How we see reality matters a great deal. We need eyes of faith.

David is called before Saul who is desperate and could only see reality through human eyes. David is undeterred- his source of strength was. not in himself but in God as far as David was concerned life's difficulties always present us a choice. Do we trust in appearance or the unseen living God for David it was no contest because he was convinced that beyond appearances lay the deeper reality. Saul showed his misunderstanding of the battle by offering David his weapons to fight Goliath. In this warfare we need the weapons of God for this is ordinary, only God's weapon will do Eph:6:12 the only antidote for weapon that could penetrate Goliath 's armor. But it would require nerves of

steel on David's part but his bravery came from a deep trusting and proven faith in God.

Day 43- Above All Faith

Faith comes by living God's word as we learn to rely upon the truth in God's word it provides us a compass in a confusing, unstable and scary world. The word of God guides not only in right thinking (orthodoxy) but also in right actions (orthopraxis). Our obedience to God keep us steady in the worst of times, when we break his law we break ourselves. When we walk in obedience, confessing our sins regularly. Living as best as best we know how, we will encourage in difficult times. Our salvation may take time, but our courage comes from knowing the road map that we have submitted to is completely trustworthy.

Faith comes by believing God's word. You can count on God. God has promised to bring about an end of sin and evil and it matters not how veil seem to be winning now we already know the final outcome. Satan as lost the game he is a loser, we don't have to fear we can be calm and tranquil. In the midst of this world for we know the final outcome, God does not give a detail game plan, sometimes we are in the middle of a terrifying situation but assured friends the

game is over we know the final results we can be more than conquerors through them that love us.

Above all take the shield of faith. Faith is like a shield. This particular type of shield was special kind. It was rectangular in shape 4 feet by two and a half feet as large as door, covered the body. The psalmist says Thou Lord will bless the righteous with favor you compass him as shield. There were special shield of that time whose material was dipped in a special substance to quench the fiery darts of enemy.

Faith like a shield receives the blows of that are meant for the man himself, blows must be expected, the conflict is unavoidable, but the shield of faith bears the blows of the enemy . Faith is like a shield, but it must be strong, if you go to battle with a flimsy shield, the weapon of the enemy will pierce right through. You may run into battle thinking that you have a strong shield only to realize that your shield cannot protect you. You must have true faith when confronted by the fiery darts of the enemy, your shield will extinguish them. When confronted by the spears and swords of the enemy it will break them into pieces. A faith that will shatter the missiles of the enemy is a faith fixed on Jesus as Savior, Lord and conquering king.

Day 44 Using the weapon of Faith

The shield of faith is of no use unless it is well handled, like soldier who knows his weapon we must know how to handle the shield of faith. You handled it well when quote and rely on the promises of God. The devil says, one day you shall be poor and starve, NO FAITH says, I have been young and now I am old but I have never seen the righteous forsaken and his seed begging bread. The devil says, one day you will fall by the hand of the enemy, but faith responds I am persuaded that He which began a good work in me will perform until the day of Jesus Christ. The devil says, but the slander of the enemy will overtake you, NO says Faith, he makes the wrath of man to praise him. Again, Satan say,s you are weak, yes says faith but my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly will glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Again, Satan says but your sin is great, but faith says he is able to save to the uttermost them that cometh to God him. But the enemy is persistent drawing his sword he makes a tremendous thrust, God has cast you off, NO says faith, he does not cast off his people neither does he forsake his heritage. With one last attempt, the enemy says, But I will have you after all, NO says faith, he said I give unto my sheep eternal life and they shall never perish neither shall any one pluck them out of my hand, this what we call handling the shield.

Day 45 Contentment

Philippians 4:11 *I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. Not that I speak in respect of want; for I learn in whatever state I am therewith to be content.*

A spirit of contentment is gratitude for what we have and thanking God for his care for us in all circumstances, even the difficult ones. Paul was grateful no matter what his circumstances were-in adversity or prosperity,

But let us not confuse contentment with sloth, passivity or laziness.

Contentment is not taking it easy or not trying to improve your life and move ahead. A spirit of contentment prevents you from getting caught up in the rat race of life, trying to keep up with the Jones, this unending quest to acquire more and more. As soon as we acquire a house or a car, we want to buy a bigger and better one. The fulfillment of each need fuels new needs. It's a race to nowhere. Hell is never satisfied. Contentment is living out the spirit of thankfulness to God everyday of our lives for what he has given to us, without coveting and lusting after what others have.

Day 46- More Than Conquerors

Romans 8:37 *“No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us”*. Yet in all things, we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. As believers, our DNA is coded with the insignia of victory. Our conquering hero and Lord, Jesus Christ our Savior, has won the victory on our behalf and has credited that victory to us. Through him we are more than conquerors. This is not a victory or a war barely won, this was not a close encounter. His victory was total. It was a complete and transcendent victory over the enemy. It was a smashing victory. He was more than a conqueror. He was a conqueror plus, plus. We are also more than conquerors. We are conquerors, plus, plus. He has crushed the head of the serpent through his death. Our Savior took Satan’s mightiest weapon, death and defeated the enemy. Death no longer has power over the believer. No wonder he has proclaimed, *“O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory.*

Joshua 3:5 “Joshua told the people, “Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you.

Day 47- Trust in the Lord

Proverbs 3:5 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding". Total and complete trust in God is our surest guarantee for victory in life. As humans we are socialized to depend on ourselves. We trust ourselves, our parents raised us to be independent and our independence is seen as a sign of our maturity. This is the nature of our natural existence. We move from dependence to independence. However, in the Christian life, it is counter-intuitive. The sign of our spiritual maturity is a movement from independence to dependence. The more dependent we are the greater our spiritual maturity, because this movement from independence to dependence is contrary to our natural existence. No wonder we find it so difficult. In the spiritual realm we must act against our natural instinct and our upbringing. Trusting in the Lord with all of our heart and lean not on our own understanding is difficult for human beings. We sometimes take the middle path by trusting God with some things. Perhaps the big things in life. Like choosing a life mate, a profession or a major financial decision. But we're demurred when it comes to the small decisions. The wise man asks us to trust God with our whole being. Take God in every decision of your life. Include him in every area of your life, not just your spiritual life but your professional life, your love life, your family life, your emotional life, your financial affairs. Invite

him to every room in your home—the kitchen, bedroom, family room, basement and even the bathroom. Do not exclude him from any decision ,big or small. David made it a habit to inquire of the Lord. Whenever he did so, God always responded. To trust in, rely on, have confidence in our God who is omnipotent, omniscient, is a sure sign of our spiritual maturity.

Day 48 Abundant Life

John 10:10 *“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have more abundantly”*. Jesus, the life giver and the life sustainer offers us this simple invitation. “I am come that you may have life and have it more abundantly.” In the previous verse John describes what our adversary wants from us, “the thief comes but to steal, kill, and destroy.” The devil desires only one thing and that is our complete annihilation. If he promises fame, fortune, power, or riches beware of what he will ask in return—your soul. He promises us these things but they are illusions for there is a hook in every one of his promises. John tells us what the Devil wants from us. He wants to steal our joy, our happiness, our health, our eternal inheritance, our salvation. He wants to kill our hopes, dreams, our aspirations, our desires, our faith, our confidence and then finally he wants to destroy us. He wants to

obliterate our life, our memory, our legacy. He wants to annihilate us from the heart of our loving Father and makes it appear as if we never were. In contrast to this diabolical intent is the loving desire of our Savior and Lord. He wants to give us abundant life here on earth and rewards us with eternal life. This abundant life that Jesus offers is beautifully illustrated in the philosophy of the Andreasen Center for wellness on the campus of Andrews University.

After we have experienced this abundant life on earth Jesus invites us to spread eternity with him. This is a win-win proposition. What fool would turn this down and accept the Devil's lie, his proposition? Yet, so many accept the devils offer and end up in a lose-lose situation. They not in abundant life here on earth and the hope of eternal life in the hereafter. Dear friends, I urge you to accept the offer of Jesus, your loving Savior. Begin to live the abundant life right now, while living in the hope of the eternal life to come.

Day 49 Spiritual eyes and compassionate heart

Matthew 9:36 *"When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd"*. As Jesus looked on the multitude, he was not merely seeing them visually. The Greek word here for look is to perceive, to look within, to discern what was going

inside. Jesus saw their struggles, pain, dreams, hopes, fears, anxieties. He had a spiritual eye. But not only did he see their present reality, he saw their potential, their glorious future, their divine possibilities. He saw what they could become through the power of his spirit. As the popular song says, while others saw the worst in me, you saw the best in me. People may judge you based on your race, gender, clothing, appearance, country of origin, accent, immigration status, family connections, and political affiliation. They may write you off as a no body, incapable of achieving nothing. But when your heavenly Father looks at you, he sees value and worth in you. You are loved and cherished.

The text also says, he had compassion on them. The Greek verb here suggests that Jesus was torn up in his inner being. The verb is expressed in its most intensive form to convey the intensity of the emotion of Jesus for these hurting people. It was their condition that elicited this emotion from Jesus. They were scattered abroad. The Greek here suggest that the people were injured and laying prostrate on the ground. It reminds one of sheep who have been attacked by wolves and are laying down injured on the ground. It is a graphic illustration of the human condition caused by our enemy, who seeks to steal from us, kill and destroy us. It was the compassion of Jesus heart that led him to the cross

to pay the ultimate price for our redemption. He invites us to join him in this work of redemption of our fellow humans. Let us pray for spiritual eyes and compassionate hearts

Day 50 Bring light to the Coming Darkness

Isaiah 60: 1,2 Arise and shine your light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. For behold darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people; But the LORD will arise over you and his glory will be seen upon you.

The darkness of our age is deepening and the light of true believers is needed more than ever to give direction to those around us who are looking for guidance. Wherever you are in the world, let your light shine. Be the peace maker in the midst of strife, sow love where hatred abounds, be merciful in an unmerciful world, extend forgiveness to those who offend you, be compassionate to the cruel, let your kindness fall like dew drops upon your friends and enemies, go the extra mile for those who need your help, speak gently to all, clothe yourself with the garment of humility, open your heart to love and close your mind to malice and envy, plant a tree and watch it grow, visit the sick, take advantage of every opportunity to do good to someone, learn something new every day, never, never, never stop learning.

Ask God each day to fill your heart with the presence of his Holy Spirit. Step

into your destiny and be the leader God has called you to be.

Remember, the greatest want of the world is the want of leaders who are not susceptible to bribery and corruption, leaders who are transparent and authentic people of integrity, leaders who are not afraid to identify and name evil for what it is; leaders who will carry out their duty with conscientiousness and a solemn sense of responsibility; leaders who are governed by conviction and principle than by public opinion and political expediency. Leaders who will speak TRUTH in an age of lies, fake news and alternative facts.

Day 51 Change your World

. We may sometimes feel that our singular efforts to change the world around us makes no difference, but let me remind you of the words of America's most idealistic young president for your contemplation. "Some believe that there is nothing one man or one woman can do against the world's ills-- against misery, ignorance, injustice or violence. Yet many of the world's great movements of thought and action, have flowed from the work of a single man. A young monk started the Protestant reformation, a young general extended an empire from Macedonia to the borders of the earth, and a young woman reclaimed the territory of France. It was a young Italian explorer who discovered the New World, and 32 year old Thomas Jefferson who proclaimed that all men are

created equal. 'Give me a place to stand' said Archimedes, 'and I will move the world'. These men moved the world, so can we all." John. F Kennedy

So go out and change your world for the better. Share your love, give a smile, mentor someone, be a big brother or sister, contribute to a worthy cause, save the environment and your health by walking more, visit a sick, a shut in or a prisoner, share a meal with someone in need, extend a warm handshake and a loving embrace to those in need of your love, give away some of your clothing that you no longer need, sponsor a poor student for college, reach across your racial, ethnic, linguistic, socio-economic divide and make a new friend. Get out of your comfort zone, your safe space and be like the good Samaritan and ministered to the needs of suffering, hurting humanity all around you. Your life will be full and your joy will increase.

DAY 52 The Seven Secrets of a Happy Life

In parting, I share with you my seven secrets of a happy life.

Love Unconditionally: The call to unconditional love is not optional but a divine imperative, a holy obligation. Jesus said love one another as I have loved you.

Unconditional love is love that is willing to accept less than the which is perfect, even sometimes less than the best. Unconditional love doesn't control others by means of manipulating their natural tendency to experience shame when

they fail. Unconditional love doesn't give up and quit. It loves in spite of, regardless of, in the face of hatred, even when rejected. It is a love characterized by tenacity and perseverance.

Laugh often: "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine". Laughter is good for the body mind and soul. Laughing often is even better. Laughter decreases stress, relaxes the body, boost the immune system, triggers the release of endorphins, burns calories, protects the heart, improves longevity, improves mood, defuses conflicts and attracts others to us. Keep on laughing and often.

Never stop Learning: Children are by nature curious, always wanting to learn new things, have new experience, visit new places. Recapture the spirit of your childhood. The joy of life is not the destination, but the journey, the quest never ends. To be alive is to grow to change, we must never stop learning. Keep discovering, keep probing, never silence that inquisitive voice within. Never stop asking questions, never stop seeking, new answers. Be a life-long learner. Embark on the ship of learning and never get off. Let all of life's circumstances, tragedies, crises, joys, sorrows, successes, failures, defeats and victories be your curriculum from which you will learn. Be better, happier, kinder, gentler, more compassionate, more joyful, more sensitive, more understanding. Virtues

like these, you will never have enough of them. Learn less to be selfish, egotistic, narcissistic, covetous, greedy, revengeful, thoughtless. Vices like these you must constantly unlearn.

Live passionately: Live your life to its fullest potential. Don't let fear hold you back. Launch out from the safe shores of the familiar into the wide ocean of adventure and discovery. You will never grow if you allow passivity, fear and cowardice to cower you into life without passion or risk.

Live passionately is living holistically. It's a life where you don't put limits on yourself because of your race, gender, background, accent, education, religion or country of origin. You embrace passionately everything good about yourself. Revel in the uniqueness of who you are. As part of God's diverse universe, see yourself as part of the rich tapestry that constitutes God's creative genius. It is common practice that others will try to place limits on you because of who they think you are, or who they think you should be. When they observe your race, gender, or hear your accent, they will label you and want to pigeon hole you in their conception of what they think you should be or do. In their bias assessment of you, they desire to consign you to a role they think is befitting you. You must rise above the narrow conception and assessment of others. Never let others tell you who you are, or what you can do or cannot do. Shape

you own destiny, not by their assessment but by the high value God has placed on you. Secure your future with wise decisions. Plan for success by hard work. Living passionately is living godly, its living by the golden rule. Whatever good we desire for ourselves, desire it for others also.

Give generously: Give generously is to give all that you are able to give and doing so lovingly. It's giving with the right motives and with the most sincere desires. The generous giver gives because he realizes that all that he has, is not really his. He is a steward, managing on behalf of the great Creator and owner of all. The steward has no ownership rights so whatever he possesses, he holds loosely. If his brother or sister is in need, he gives without any external pressure

Serve Unselfishly: the joy of life is serving. We are given so we can give back. We are blessed so we can bless others. The ultimate aim of our education, training, knowledge seeking is not to serve ourselves but to serve others. We are not lakes or ponds, collecting but not giving. We are rivers, not holding containers, but running currents of water, spreading and dispensing life, energy, and vitality. God's universe operates on his principle of service rendered joyfully and lovingly to others.

Serving unselfishly is one of the most important secrets of life.

Practice moderation in all the good things of life: there are many good things in life but even the good things can become bad things when we indulge them and use them to excess. The moderate use of the good should be a guiding principle in our lives. The temptation is there that because a thing is good, more is better, but this is not so, because good things can become snare to us. No can deny the benefits of food, but if we overeat and over-indulge in this good thing, we can ruin our health and hasten our death.