



Foundation of Faith

Spiritual Unemployment

God's Faithful Stewards

Use What You Have!

Now Hiring!

A Faithful Servant

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Editorial

Dear Readers,

The apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 4:1-2, "Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful."

As a leading apostle endowed with God's authority, Paul could easily have assumed the role of a prince in the kingdom of God. However, he instead saw himself as a servant. Being a servant of Christ became his core identity, as Paul lived to glorify God, whose grace had saved him. His greatest desire was to serve Him faithfully until death; in his own words, "to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21).

As children of God, we are called to serve in the same way. It is easy to say, "I serve God," but what does that really mean? Does it not mean to put our whole life at the Lord's disposal? In some Bible translations, the word given here as "servant" is actually translated as "slave." A slave—even though Christ freed us? It seems contradictory, but it means that I commit myself freely, out of love, to serve God for life, whether I like every detail of this service or not.

To serve Jesus also means to be faithful. By serving Him faithfully—in His power, by His grace, and in small and large things—we can expect to be crowned with eternal life when our time here on Earth comes to an end. We can look forward to hearing God say, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord" (Matthew 25:21).

I hope that the following articles are an encouragement and a help in becoming such faithful servants ourselves.

R. Taron



The Testimony of the Blind Hindu

A young Hindu lived in Allahabad, a large city in northern India situated at the junction of the sacred rivers Ganges and Yamuna, which was visited every year by many pilgrims. This poor young man aroused pity simply by his appearance. His face was disfigured by pockmarks, and he was blind. The terrible disease had struck him in early childhood and robbed him of his sight. Many years had passed since then.

One day a missionary spoke to him on the street, saying, “Do you know who the Lord Jesus is?”

“I heard his name mentioned a long time ago,” replied the blind man. “Please tell me more about Him!”

The missionary gladly complied with this request. He began to tell the attentive young man the old, yet ever-new story of the Son of God who came into the world to save sinners. With special warmth he lingered over the account of the Good Shepherd, who seeks what is lost until He finds it.

As he spoke, the blind man’s face changed noticeably. A joyful smile beautified his disfigured features. As his ears heard these wonderful things, the knowledge of God’s love began to dawn in the heart darkened by superstition, just as the sun rises brightly in

the morning after a dark night. Astonishingly, in a short time, the poor blind man grasped what he had just heard.

“Oh!” he cried after the missionary had finished, “I must belong to Him! Yes, I belong to Him. I want to be baptized, and I no longer want to be called by my old name. I want to be called David. Just like David, I want to sing of His love and grace.”

In his story the missionary had also spoken of David, the poet-king of ancient times, who spoke and sang so many wonderful things about the coming King. Our young Indian friend wanted to be like him.

From that day on, the blind Hindu could often be seen with his teacher. In the eyes of people he was still the same poor, pitiable man as before. In truth, however, he had become someone else, a new person. Certainly, he remained blind as far as his physical sight was concerned, but his spiritual eyes had been opened wide. He had glimpsed the Sanctuary, and what he had seen there caused his heart to overflow with joy.

Every day he visited the missionary to receive his “daily bread.” It was not food for the body, but the Bread of Life: a passage from the Word of God that his

teacher read aloud to him, which he could meditate on all day long.

One morning, when he came to the missionary as usual, he looked very troubled. Since this was quite unusual for him, it immediately caught his friend's attention, and he asked what had happened.

"Ah, sir," said David, as he had been called from the day of his conversion onward according to his wish, "I wish I could read!"

"But David," replied the missionary in surprise, "you must not wish for something impossible. You are blind."

"Yes, that is true," David answered, "but I have heard that a script has been invented that blind people can read. And there is even supposed to be a Bible printed in this script. Can you not tell me something about it?"

The missionary certainly could; but he saw no way of obtaining such an expensive Bible for his poor pupil. He therefore thought it better to dissuade him from the idea than to give him hope of which fulfillment was very doubtful. But David would not be turned away. "Sir," he pleaded in a touching tone, "will you not pray with me that my heavenly Father may send me His book and teach me to read in it?"

The missionary could not refuse this request. So, they knelt down and prayed. But, as the missionary later admitted, he did so with little faith that the prayer would be answered.

Three months passed. As before, David came day after day to receive his "daily bread." But he never again mentioned his wish with a single word.

One morning the missionary was sitting on his veranda. Then hurried footsteps came up the stairs. There was loud knocking at the door, and a voice trembling with excitement called out, "Are you there, sir?"

"Yes, what is it?"

David entered. One could see that he was extremely excited. "Sir," he cried, "just now someone on the street put this package into my hand and said, 'Poor blind boy, I have long felt drawn to you. Here is something for you; I hope it will be a blessing to you.' What could it be, sir? Please open it quickly!"

The missionary cut the string. He expected to find a piece of clothing or something similar in the package. But how surprised he was when he saw the contents! Inside the wrapping lay a book with the title: *The Gospel According to John*, in Braille.

He scarcely dared to believe his eyes. But who can describe the delight of the poor blind man when he heard what he had received!

"I knew it!" he rejoiced. "I knew that my heavenly Father would grant my request if I only had patience! It is my Father's book, His own gift!" With that he pressed the Gospel to his chest and kissed it long and tenderly.

The first thing the two men did was to kneel down and thank the Lord for this new proof of His love. Then David immediately set about the task of learning to read. Because he had such eagerness and love for the matter, he made rapid progress. In a relatively short time, he overcame the great difficulties and was soon able, though slowly, to read in his precious book.

One day—he could now read fluently—he came again to his teacher and said, "I can read now. But I do not want to keep the wonderful things that come to me daily just for myself. There are hundreds among my people who long for this book just as I do."

And what do you think he did next? The following morning, he tied his book around his neck, went out into the street, and began to read aloud from it, letting his index finger glide over the lines. One of the first verses he read was: "I am the Good Shepherd; the Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep."

One can imagine what a sensation the man caused. To hear a blind man reading in the street—such a sight was not an everyday occurrence. And so, he found many listeners. Most of them listened merely out of curiosity. Many also laughed at him. But that did not trouble him. He was content to know that in this way some were able to hear the Word of God.

And this love for his Savior and his desire to witness for Him did not grow cold. After some time, David devoted himself entirely to the service of the Lord. He went from place to place and read God's Word everywhere. Later he became a reader in an institution for the blind. Many of his fellow sufferers came to faith in the Lord Jesus through him and became happy children of God.

This story has something to say to every one of us. To one it says: Jesus, the Good Shepherd, has also laid down His life for you. To another: If this poor blind Hindu found a way to serve his Lord, should there not also be a way for you to serve your Lord and Savior?

From: "Seeds to Sow" (Samenkörner)

God's Faithful Stewards

Being a faithful steward of God should be important to every child of God. An owner of earthly goods will greatly appreciate having a faithful steward whom he can rely on in all things. He will certainly reward him generously for his faithfulness in managing his possessions as if they were his own, and he will honor him in a special way. God also has this kind of relationship with those who love Him and strive to serve Him.

But how can we be God's stewards? If we look into the Word of God, we read in Luke 19:11–27 about the parable of the talents. Our Father in heaven has given every person, whether a child of God or not, certain abilities, provided they have not been destroyed by sin. This could be a beautiful voice or a special talent for music, a gift for public speaking, or something else. A person without a relationship with God can also use these gifts and has often risen to great prestige, wealth, power, and honor as a result.

However, God has not given us gifts so that we would use them only for temporary things or in the service of sin. Rather, a child of God will always ask, "How can I best use the abilities entrusted to me for the glory of my heavenly Father?"

Yet it is not only abilities that have been entrusted to us. Everything that God's goodness has granted us—whether money, possessions, or the like—is given to us only for a short time. And with all of it, even with the little that we may have, we are called to be faithful stewards of God.

Some have been equipped by the Lord with multiple gifts. He expects more from them than from someone to whom He has entrusted less. In Luke 12:48, we read: "For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more." But if a child of God uses the gifts given to him not for the Lord's glory but for his own, or if he does not use them at all, "burying" them, God will take away what he has and entrust them to another who will make better use of them.

The enemy of our souls is always at work, seeking to sow lukewarmness and laziness, especially when it comes to using the gifts the Lord has entrusted to us. He is constantly whispering to us: "You don't have time. Now this has to be done, then that. When are you supposed to have time for Jesus?" And many allow themselves to be deceived by this whispering of the enemy and perhaps say, "I simply can't—I have to take care of my mother!" Another might claim that, because of his family, he cannot help in the kingdom of God. A third excuses himself by saying that he still has much to learn, for one must always continue to grow in knowledge.

When it comes to these excuses, one could truly say, "Satan, you have done your job well!" Here he has made a faithful child of God lukewarm through his pursuit of honor and prestige. There he has even succeeded in turning a servant of God away from the most important goal—rescuing precious human souls from destruction—because of earthly concerns. Another, through the temptation of worldly wealth, has gone so far as to become like Demas, once again loving the world.

Despite their former love for His cause, the Lord will not one day be able to say to these souls: "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord" (Matthew 25:23). Yes, Satan can accomplish all of this. That is why we should beware of him.

Being a servant can sometimes be bitter. But as the master is, so shall His disciple be. Can we place ourselves above our Master? Certainly not. He was also a servant. And won't those who served Him faithfully here on earth be richly rewarded in eternity? Let us not grow weary and tired, and let us not lose sight of our goal, which is to obtain the treasure. Let us not look at the difficulties but go into battle courageously. We do not fight alone. The Lord goes before us in battle. May it be our desire and fervent prayer to prove ourselves faithful stewards of God in even the smallest things.

H. Schulz



Godly Counsel That Brings Blessing

The Bible tells us of people who gave wise guidance.

After the children of Israel left Egypt, Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, came and brought Moses' wife Zipporah and their two sons to him. Moses told him how wonderfully God had delivered them from slavery in Egypt with signs and wonders.

The next day, "Moses sat to judge the people" and proclaimed God's counsel to them. The people stood before him all day long, since they came before him one by one. Moses' father-in-law rebuked him and said, "The thing that you do *is* not good. Both you and these people who *are* with you will surely wear yourselves out. For this thing *is* too much for you; you are not able to perform it by yourself" (Exodus 18: 17–18).

And now follows some excellent advice that Jethro gave:

"You shall select from all the people able men . . . and place *such* over them *to be* rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And let them judge the people at all times. Then it will be *that* every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they themselves shall judge" (Exodus 18: 21–22).

Here we have a special example of how God used Moses' father-in-law to give counsel of lasting value—

advice that proves to be a blessing both in practical, everyday matters and in the spiritual realm.

Dear Reader, are you prepared to accept criticism when someone tells you, "What you are doing is not good"? Does it hurt your feelings? Or do you think about it and accept the criticism gratefully?

In Jesus' time, we read about two groups. One group gladly accepted His advice, while the other despised Him: "And when all the people heard *Him*, even the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him" (Luke 7: 29–30).

In Romans 10: 21, the Apostle Paul writes: "All day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and contrary people."

How many people have heard God's Word and listened to the Savior's gracious invitation—yet ignored it, rejected it, or even spoke against it. In their disobedience and unbelief, they have perished, eternally lost and separated from God.

Dear Reader, is it not both wise and essential to listen to God's Word and receive it in faith? I, too, can testify from my own life that the Lord truly "is wonderful in counsel and excellent in guidance."

H. D. Nimz

The Divine Call

So, when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” (Exodus 3: 4)

Moses was tending his father-in-law’s sheep near Mount Horeb. While he was going about his daily duties, something unusual happened. Moses observed the burning bush and noticed that it was not being consumed by the fire. We can easily imagine that this aroused his curiosity. He drew nearer to get a better look at what was actually happening. Then he heard the voice of God coming from the flame of fire: “Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground” (Exodus 3:5). Moses was now seized with holy awe and covered his face.

Then God told him that He had seen the misery of His people in Egypt and heard their cries, and had now come to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians. God wanted to send Moses to Pharaoh, and he was to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt.

It is not surprising that Moses exclaimed in amazement: “Who *am* I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” (Exodus 3:11). But God said: “I will certainly be with you.” (Exodus 3:12). Moses offered more excuses, but then he obeyed.

God’s call often comes to people as they go about their daily duties. When God wanted to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt, he called a shepherd who was working alone in the desert.

This was not the only time God called a shepherd. Once, when God wanted to warn the people of Judah to abandon their sinful ways, he called another shepherd away from his flock, namely Amos of Tekoa.

From a human perspective, we would think that God would call highly gifted speakers to such tasks. However, He knows best who is suitable and whom He can use, for He knows the hidden abilities that lie dormant in people.

When God’s call comes to a person, that place becomes holy ground for them. Any moment becomes sacred when God calls. One day, as Jesus was walking along the Sea of Galilee, He called a young fisherman, “Follow Me.” And he was willing and ready to respond, “Here I am.”

God also reveals His will to those He calls. There at the burning bush, Moses knew for certain that God was calling him. What mattered now was Moses’ willingness to respond to God’s call. Moses had seen more than just the burning bush; he had recognized that God was revealing His will to him. It was now up to him to obey.

God calls His servants in different ways. He called Isaiah in the temple. But one thing is certain: He calls only those who love Him and who have God’s cause and the salvation of others at heart.

God’s call is directed to everyone—men, women, and young alike. All those who have an open ear for this divine call and are willing to be guided by Him. God Himself strengthens those who respond to His call. And He not only calls, but also gives the strength and grace necessary to respond to this call. God’s call to a difficult task is always accompanied by the promise of His help and assistance.

The Apostle Paul testified that he could “do all things through Christ who strengthens” him. When one fully yields to God—when their own desires are

wholly aligned with His will—God can dwell with them and work through them, faithfully providing the grace and power needed for every task.

Moses put forward many excuses. He felt that he could not carry out such a great task. But God made all provisions. He promised to be with him. And what God wanted to impress deeply upon Moses' heart then, He also wants to impress upon ours today: the truth that when we move forward in trust and obedience to Him, God Himself takes responsibility and brings everything to victory.

God is still calling followers and workers for His work today. He calls people from among ordinary men and women. He makes His will known to them. He desires that each of His children, to the best of their ability, be a true light in this world darkened by sin.

Dear Reader, can you see how God desires to use you for His work and for the good and salvation of others? As you live in close fellowship with Him, He will make His will clear to you. And when you recognize His call, follow the example of Moses: respond obediently and do what God asks of you. ■

What Is in Your Hand?

"What is that in your hand, Moses?"

"Nothing but a staff, Lord—used to tend my flock."

"Take it and use it for Me."

Moses obeyed, and God worked through that simple staff in ways Egypt and its kings had never witnessed.

"What do you have in your hand, Mary?"

"Only a flask of anointing oil, Lord. I want to pour it out for Jesus."

She did so, and the fragrance filled the house—and her act of love continues to uplift the hearts of believers to this day.

"Poor widow, what do you have in your hand?"

"Just two small coins, Lord. It is very little, but I want to give it to You."

She gave them, and her sacrificial offering has inspired countless hearts to dedi-

cate what they have to the Lord.

"Tabitha, what do you have in your hand?"

"Only a needle."

"Use it in My service."

She did, and through her love the poor of Joppa were clothed. Her life still stands as an example today.

If grace and peace dwell within you, faithful heart, they are like a sweet fragrance sealed in a golden vessel. But the vessel must be opened if the fragrance is to fill the room. If you are wealthy, give generously. If you are poor, offer comfort. If you lack influence, love sincerely. If you are lonely, pray faithfully. Be someone who gives—or at least seeks to give. Even a simple kind word is a gift. A small act of courtesy is a gift. A smile of gratitude or encouragement is a gift. ■

Spiritual Unemployment

“[B]e steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord” (Psalm 90: 10).

Children of God, who through new birth have come to spiritual life, carry two lives within them: a natural life and a spiritual life. Both require care. Just as natural life withers without work, order, and provision, so it is with spiritual life as well. It, too, can fall into hardship, into crises, and even into seemingly hopeless situations.

Spiritual unemployment causes lasting harm to our souls. We know this in principle, and yet we witness this development with alarm in many congregations. What is the reason? Have we lost our healthy spiritual grounding?

Jesus himself says in Matthew 13:38: “The field is the world.” God has given His church a clear field of work: the souls of our fellow human beings.

The prophet Isaiah describes the Messiah in these words: “He shall see the labor of His soul, *and* be satisfied. . . . Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong” (Isaiah 53: 11–12).

We think of Jesus’ Great Commission: “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16: 15). Can we really speak of spiritual unemployment when God’s children take this commission seriously and follow it? Or has this work become too exhausting, too inconvenient, too “thorny” for us? All

too easily, substitutes are sought—in pure theory, in dry dogmatics, in busy organizational life, in the mere attendance of events, or in a worship service that has become routine.

Yet God’s people can grow and flourish only when they return to their true field of labor. There lies the work by which the soul is nourished and through which it becomes spiritually rich.

Dear child of God: if you have forgotten this work through other pursuits, then return to it today. God has entrusted you with your own corner of the world. He has placed you among people who are in need of salvation. Then you will no longer complain of spiritual emptiness or inner hunger—for work nourishes. And one can work for souls only with one’s own soul.

Lay aside the burdens of the world, and you will gain time for this fruitful task. In the field called “the world” there is still room—room for your labor for souls, your prayers, your striving, your dedication; room for your gifts and your strength.

Therefore, take up the plow and the harrow again. Dare once more to sow and to reap. For your spiritual life becomes truly precious only when it involves “abounding in the work of the Lord.”

W. Waurich



Now Hiring

Kingdom of God

In Service to the Creator of the Universe

Harvest workers urgently needed!

Are you a born-again child of God? Are you filled with the Holy Spirit and burning with love for God and for others? Then this job is for you!

The Kingdom of God urgently needs more workers. Many people still don't know what Jesus did for them; the good news of the Gospel must be spread among our colleagues, neighbors, and friends in all corners of the world.

Though they long for it, many souls have no peace. The devil holds people captive in sin with chains that only the grace of our great God can break.

To lead a holy life that pleases God, believers must learn to overcome all challenges through biblical principles and truth, which should be taught in Sunday school, youth groups, and church congregations.

Candidate Profile

- A new heart
- A life wholly dedicated to God
- Full of the Holy Spirit
- Love for God and for others
- A good reputation
- Willingness to assume responsibility
- Sacrifice
- Teamwork
- Strong Bible knowledge
- Humility

Job Description

- Flexible working hours
- Team-based collaboration
- Tasks tailored to your gifts
- Chances to grow by taking on greater responsibilities
- Opportunities for continued development
- Spirit-led work structure
- Tax-free downstream compensation in Heaven

Are you interested?

Contact your Creator and Savior for a personal conversation. Trust Him, and just ask if He has anything for you to do. If you meet the requirements, you can expect to be hired! ■



You Are My Witnesses

If we appreciate what the Lord Jesus has done for us, it is only natural that we should bear witness to it. The apostles said: “For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4: 20). Likewise, if we are thankful for the salvation we have received, we cannot help but speak about what we have experienced. Are people not inclined to speak and testify to what they have experienced? “For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks” (Luke 6: 45b).

We are all witnesses, either for the Lord Jesus or for the devil. Jesus said: “No one can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon” (Matthew 6: 24).

To be good witnesses, we need a clear understanding of what we are bearing witness to. We must also have sufficient evidence to make our testimony convincing. Our evidence must come from a reliable source in order to be of value and credibility. So if we want to be successful witnesses for Christ, we must have a clear understanding of the biblical plan of salvation, and very importantly, personally possess the salvation He has purchased for us. We must be completely sanctified and laid on the altar of God, willing and ready at all times to do His will. We must always be ready “to give a defense to everyone who asks [us] a reason for the hope that is in [us], with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3: 15).

Our lives should always be consistent with our profession of faith, so that the world can see that we truly possess what we speak about. A testimony gains credibility when it is confirmed by action and when it becomes evident that we ourselves have experienced the grace of God we proclaim. Where life and testimony are out of step, words lose their power. People sense very quickly when conduct and profession do not align.

The wise king, Solomon, mentioned false witnesses among the things that God hates. In Proverbs 19: 5, we read: “A false witness will not go unpunished, and *he who speaks lies will not escape.*” God wants to help us not to be false witnesses. What else is it but false testimony and a lie when a person takes on a form of godliness yet denies its power (2 Timothy 3: 5)?

“A true witness delivers souls” (Proverbs 14: 25). But who is a true and faithful witness in a spiritual sense? It is someone whose life and conduct corresponds to their testimony and who, even in the face of unbelief and adversaries, does not shy away from bearing witness to the whole counsel of God. In short, it is one who is ready to testify for our Lord and Savior under all circumstances and conditions.

Being witnesses for the Lord means more than just giving a testimony in church or writing one for a publication. To be true witnesses, the Word of God must always be our guide. There must be a clear difference between us and the world if our testimony is to be believed. Above all, our love for one another as God’s children should be a living testimony that we belong to the Lord. “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13: 35).

We must not forget that the influence each of us exerts is a lasting testimony—either for good or for evil. This influence often extends beyond our lifetime. Especially toward our family members and those who are in close contact with us, we exercise a continual influence. How important it is, therefore, that we be wholly devoted to the Lord.

Someone may say, “There is no point in witnessing for the Lord. People don’t accept it anyway.” Well, even if the majority doesn’t accept it, should that surprise us? Wasn’t it the same for the Lord Jesus himself? His testimony was the most clear and convincing ever given. But did everyone believe in Him? Even His many miraculous works did not convince them. Did Jesus stop witnessing because the vast majority of people did not accept His testimony? No, He continued to do what He was called to do, and encouraged His disciples to follow His example. We cannot expect to win souls for the Lord if we stop witnessing.

Paul admonishes Timothy: “do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord” (2 Timothy 1: 8). This admonition also applies to us. Why should we be ashamed to testify for Him who has done so much for us? Is a person ashamed to praise the skill of the doctor who has helped him? As children of God, should we be ashamed to praise the power and grace of God? It is our duty and our privilege to witness for the Lord. We can confidently leave the results in His hands. J. T.

A Royal Servant

How often, over the many years in which I have read the Word of God, the life of the prophet Jeremiah has deeply impressed me. Even in his youth, the Lord had wonderfully called him: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born, I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations” (Jeremiah 1:5). For many years, he faithfully admonished and warned the people of Israel, showing them their sin and disobedience. “Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but everyone followed the dictates of his evil heart . . .” (Jeremiah 11:8).

In fact, in the early years of his ministry, some men from Jeremiah’s hometown of Anathoth conspired to kill him. Yet the prophet

had to continue to bring the message to the people that God would use Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, to conquer and devastate Jerusalem, to kill many, and to take others into exile in Babylon as punishment for their godlessness.

However, this message angered the king’s princes, and in their malice, “they took Jeremiah and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the king’s son, which *was* in the court of the prison, and they let Jeremiah down with ropes. And in the dungeon *there was* no water, but mire. So Jeremiah sank in the mire” (Jeremiah 38:6).

Was the prophet now to perish and meet a miserable end? No—no indeed. God had already chosen a special servant long ago. We read: “Now Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs, who was in the king’s house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon. When the king was sitting at the Gate of Benjamin, Ebed-Melech went out of the king’s house

and spoke to the king, saying: ‘My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon, and he is likely to die from hunger in the place where he is. For *there is* no more bread in the city’” (Jeremiah 38:7–9).

Who was this Ebed-Melek? Some describe him as “an Ethiopian, a Cushite, a foreigner” who served as

a chamberlain at the royal court. So, who was this stranger? I had read about him for many years, but now, in recent days, I asked myself: What does his name mean in the original text? Ebed-Melek means “royal servant—a servant of the king.”

This man performed a royal service indeed. It

was he who went to the king and then selected 30 men to pull the prophet out of the pit with ropes and old rags so that he would not die.

Thousands of Israelites heard the prophet’s messages and did not believe! Here, however, was a stranger who listened to Jeremiah’s words and took them to heart, who believed and stood up for the truth and became a helper in times of greatest need. Yes, he was a royal servant who then also received a royal reward.

Even before Nebuchadnezzar conquered the city, Jeremiah was allowed to comfort Ebed-Melek and proclaim God’s message to him: “‘For I will surely deliver you, and you shall not fall by the sword; but your life shall be as a prize to you, because you have put your trust in Me,’ says the LORD” (Jeremiah 39:18).

Beloved reader, would you not also like to be a royal servant—a faithful servant of the most High . . . a servant of God?

H. D. Nimz

*Here, however, was a stranger
who listened to Jeremiah’s
words and took them to heart,
who believed and stood up for
the truth and became a helper
in times of greatest need.*



Be an Encourager!

Do you encourage others when:

- ... your neighbor loses their job?
- ... a friend has an accident?
- ... a relative falls sick?
- ... a young person suffers trauma?
- ... someone loses their faith in God?

Most people focus on the faults and mistakes made by others in life. They are always ready to complain and spread gossip. If someone makes a mistake, should we not pray for them and correct them where necessary with grace and in love? Is it not wise to be swift to hear and slow to speak (James 1:19)?

As Christians, having Christ as our Lord and Savior, we should be those who bless and

encourage others. Just as Barnabas, the son of encouragement, did: he owned a field and sold it in order to help those in need (Acts 4:37). He brought Saul to the others of the church when they were afraid of him (Acts 9:26–28).

What a blessing Saul, later known as the Apostle Paul, became to the entire church ministry. A brother of great faith, who, filled with the Holy Spirit, was able to bless and encourage many others in the church family (Acts 11:22–26). By Paul's witness and actions, the Lord added many new souls to the church.

Are we a blessing to those who are workers in our churches; those who freely give of their

time to bless the local church ministry? This not only includes the pastor and his family, but also Sunday School teachers, youth leaders, choir leaders, kitchen helpers, and so on.

Let us be like Philemon, who greatly encouraged Paul in his ministry. We read of Philemon that he had a great love for all the saints. The result was, "For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother" (Philemon 7). Can this be said of our service to our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ?

There was a time in our ministry where we became very discouraged. We were serving in our Mexico mission when we encountered a very difficult time. There seemed to be one problem after another that came our way from both issues in the mission school as well as in the church. At one point this all seemed too much for me, and I grew very weak emotionally and physically.

One morning I was lying on our sofa at home, unable to get up to do any of my church duties. I was exhausted and spiritually drained. I prayed, O Lord, how can I go on? Then there was a knock at our door, as a dear sister had come to say hello that day. My wife went to the door to greet her. They talked for awhile and then called me to join them. The sister said that she had prayed for us that morning and felt she needed to bring us a poem of encouragement. She then read us the following poem.

I Said A Prayer for You

*I said a prayer for you today
and know God must have heard;
I felt the answer in my heart
Although He spoke not a word.*

*I didn't ask for wealth or fame
I knew you wouldn't mind;
I asked for priceless treasures rare
Of a more lasting kind.*

*I prayed that He'd be near to you
At the start of each new day;
To grant you all of His blessings
And His light to show your way.*

*I asked for happiness for you
In all things great and small;
But that you'd know His loving care
I prayed for most of all.
(unknown)*

What a blessing these words were for us! Our hearts were lifted as she shared these wonderful words of encouragement. She had not only prayed for us but came to our door to share them with us. We fondly remember that day of grace and the love she showed us. I was able to continue my ministry with renewed joy and a refreshed heart.

What an encouragement the church in Thessalonica was to the gospel spreading throughout the regions of the early church. Paul writes with joy in 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3, "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father."

What can you and I do to bless others? Pray for those in need and when the Spirit impresses on you to do something for them, then follow through. This may be sharing a message of hope, a visit, a phone call, a gift, a smile, a listening ear, letting them know you are praying for them, a kind word and so much more.

Remember the Lord has promised to reward and bless us when we act in faith and give even a cup of cold water to someone in need (Matthew 10:42).

Let us actively encourage others in the love of Christ as we serve Him. The Lord can change any situation for the good and lift our spirits to carry on the good fight of faith.

May God richly bless you to be an encourager in the faith.

*Harry Klinger
Winnipeg, MB*

A Reunion With Jesus



The Werner family recently experienced something very sad: Very suddenly, Grandpa, Mrs. Werner's father, had died. He had been visiting just the day before. He had played happily with his grandchildren, Nicholas, Laura, and little Tobias. They had laughed together, built with building blocks, had a snowball fight outside, and enjoyed their time together.

But the next morning, the phone rang. Mrs. Werner answered the call—and fell silent. Tears ran down her face. She had just learned that her father's heart had suddenly stopped beating. The doctors could no longer help him.

The whole family was deeply shaken. The children could hardly comprehend what had happened.

"But Grandpa was still so happy!" said Nicholas in amazement.

And Laura asked quietly, "Is he not coming back at all?"

The parents sat down with the children. Everything grew quiet. Each one prayed silently in their heart to God. Then they began to explain: Death is a separation—and that hurts—but for people who believe in Jesus, it is like moving to the heavenly city. There will

be a reunion there.

When a person dies, their body becomes very tired, they stop breathing, they stop living. But their soul—the part that really makes them who they are—lives on. Grandpa was a child of God and believed in Jesus.

Jesus once said to His disciples:

"If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will also be" (John 12: 26).

And:

"In My Father's house are many mansions; . . . I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14: 2–3).

Today was the funeral. Grandpa's casket was placed in a grave and covered with dirt—a difficult moment for all who loved him.

But the thought that Grandpa was now with Jesus in the heavenly city brought comfort to the family.

In the evening, during family devotions, Grandma was also there. Together they prayed, thanking God for all the beautiful memories—and for the hope that one day they would see Grandpa again with Jesus.

Helene Rotfuss

What Happens After Death?

Jesus told the Pharisees a special story. They knew God's commandments well and strictly adhered to many rules. But they forgot that, above all else, God desires a heart that trusts Him and does His will. Many of them considered themselves better than other people and did not believe in Jesus, the Son of God, who had come to reconcile them with God and save them.

The story Jesus told them helps us understand what happens after death—and why it is so important to listen to God. You can find it in Luke 16: 19–31.

A rich man lived in a large house. He wore magnificent clothes and enjoyed delicious food every day. At his door lay a poor man named Lazarus. He was sick and hungry. But the rich man paid no attention to him and did not help him.

One day, both of them died: first Lazarus, then the rich man.

Lazarus was taken to a wonderful place, very close to Abraham. There he was comforted, safe, and free from all pain.

But the rich man came to a place of darkness and suffering. In his distress, he cried out, "Father Abraham, send Lazarus to me! I need help!"

But Abraham replied, "There is a deep chasm between us. No one can get from here to you—nor from there to us."

The rich man continued to plead, "Then at least send him to my family so that they may be warned!"

But Abraham replied, "They have God's Word. If they do

not listen to it, they will not change—even if someone rises from the dead."

This story teaches us that those who listen to God, believe in Jesus Christ, and follow Him will live forever after death—in a place full of joy, in the heavenly city.

However, those who reject Jesus will be separated from God forever. The Bible calls this place hell.

Jesus says: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14: 6).

Let us trust Jesus Christ with all our hearts and follow him faithfully, so that we may also be where He is in eternity.

Helene Rotfuss



A hand is shown placing a wooden block on a tall, slightly wobbly tower of Jenga blocks. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with trees and a bright sky. The title 'Christian SELF-ESTEEM' is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Christian

SELF-ESTEEM

One thing all people seem to have in common is that they have insecurities about themselves. It doesn't matter who you might ask, all people perceive things about themselves that they would like to change. The desire for improvement and growth can be a great thing, especially when it's brought on by healthy kinds of motivation. However, if we're not careful, we can allow ourselves to want to change who we are because of dangerous and impure motives.

For example, it is good to want to exercise more and eat better because we feel unhealthy and recognize the importance of taking care of our bodies. That's positive and healthy motivation to change our lives. Unfortunately, far too many people try to change who they are because they dislike or even hate certain things about themselves, and when that's our motivation, it usually doesn't matter how much we change, since we never reach the point of being content with who we are.

There are various reasons why we often feel self-conscious about ourselves. One reason would be our society and the media that portray unrealistic standards of what they say we should be like and look like. These are standards that are not only unnatural but are also deeply rooted in the lusts of the flesh and the pride of life.

But there are also other reasons why we tend to feel inadequate about certain parts of our lives; for example, when we lack self-esteem and self-worth. Starting with this article, and continuing in next

month's publication, we want to see what God's Word says about these topics and others related to our identity in Christ. It is my desire that this study would help us to see ourselves as God sees us.

Let's begin by defining self-esteem. An online health resource defines self-esteem as: "the manner in which we evaluate ourselves. It is our internal assessment of our qualities and attributes." The source continues by explaining that there are generally two extremes of unhealthy self-esteem. "Firstly, you can think too highly of yourself, which can lead you to fall into the trap of narcissism. When your self-esteem is too high, you exaggerate your positive traits or deceive yourself about your faults and weaknesses." "In contrast, when you have low self-esteem, you underestimate—or flat out ignore—your positive characteristics." I find that it's a low self-esteem that causes the greatest issues. We tend to undervalue ourselves and ignore our positive characteristics and gifts. How should we as Christians see ourselves? Or, what can help us to recognize our positive attributes?

One thing that can help is recognizing that we are the workmanship of our great Creator. David writes in Psalm 139: 13–14, "For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I *am* fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and *that* my soul knows very well." When we look in a mirror, do we recognize that we are fearfully and wonderfully made? Fearfully, meaning, to cause astonishment and awe within us? Do we realize that we are wonderfully made? Consider for a moment how incredibly complex the human body is, and how every part, from the smallest cell to the largest organ work in perfect unity and harmony to allow for our bodies to live.

How could we ever think that we are not wonderfully made? Often, it is the pressure of our society and

the circumstances of our lives that whittle away at our self-esteem. Sometimes our culture and up-bringing play a part in determining our level of self-esteem. For example, in the culture that I was raised in, children are rarely praised when they do things well. In some cases, they may never be told that they are loved or appreciated. This doesn't mean that they're not appreciated or loved; affection just isn't shown as much. If children grow up without ever hearing this kind of positive feedback or without receiving signs of affection, they tend to believe that they're not very appreciated and are not special in any way.

I remember reading an article that explained how self-esteem is not as closely related to a person's socio-economic background as people tend to think; it is more related to how children (six and under) are treated and perceived by their parents. Children with low self-esteem enter adulthood without really knowing what a healthy self-esteem looks like. This is hard, because when they are praised, they might feel very good about themselves (because they have never received praise before), but later, when they are criticized for something, they feel completely deflated. Due to their upbringing, they have a hard time believing and internalizing that they are fearfully and wonderfully made.

We must remember, it isn't anything that we do that determines our worth; our worth comes from God. We'll look at this thought in next month's publication.

The Psalmist reminds us that we are fearfully and wonderfully made by an incredible Creator. It is vital for us to have a healthy self-esteem because it has a life-long impact on so many areas of our life.

*David Knelsen
Hamilton, ON*

When the Nest Is Empty

Long gone are the years when the children were little. Back then, the house was filled with children's laughter, with sleepless nights when they were ill, with toys they preferred to bring into the living room or the kitchen—simply to be close to you. With bedtime stories and songs, with amazement at every developmental milestone, and little bouquets of flowers and stones that small hands placed into yours. Back then, you taught them to play together without fighting, answered their many questions, and entrusted them to the Good Shepherd.

The teenage years are history as well—the years when little children grew into young people with their own ideas and feelings, often pushing the limits: discussions, the stress of school, friendships, grand dreams, and first disappointments. A time when you had to learn to set boundaries while at the same time extending trust. A time full of contradictions—joy and worry, hope and anxiety. You gave them tasks and responsibilities to prepare them for life.

And the years of young adult children living at home are also behind you—conversations and decisions about studies, work, and relationships shaped everyday life. The house grew quieter, yet it was still full of life, shared meals, music, and laughter. During that time, you were aware that many things might change soon. And more than ever you prayed that God would provide, that He would bring the right people into the family—people you could then welcome into your heart as sons- and daughters-in-law.

You have also now experienced the first true “letting go”—when the first child became independent. Mind and heart had to adjust to this new situation. For even if your child did not move far away, the reality described in Genesis 2:24—that a person leaves father and mother—became reality. And then it progressed very quickly—one child after another left the family home, becoming independent. Your family grew, and now the house is often noisy and lively when everyone

comes to visit—only to become all the quieter once they have all left.

Have you experienced this, too—or has your house grown quiet for a different reason? Whatever your life situation may be, this newly created vacancy is a wonderful opportunity to allow it to be filled with God's love. It is a chance to deepen and renew your devotion to the Lord, as described in Romans 12:1–2: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

Dedication in the new season of life

Surely you have already dedicated your life to the Lord. And yet, new circumstances in life also bring new challenges. Often we find ourselves struggling, and God desires, through His grace, to lead us to the victory already won long ago at Golgotha.

It is God's compassion that allows us, right now, to intentionally place our lives into His hands. Even when children have left home, a season of life comes to a close, or familiar responsibilities end, we are not at the mercy of the passage of time, and our lives lose neither value nor meaning. We may come quietly before God and allow Him to fill every lack with His presence. This truth applies to every circumstance of life: the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, gives His sheep abundant life (John 10:10b).

Is it really the case that we have already fulfilled our purpose in life when we become empty nesters? No—for our earthly service to God does not end until He calls us home to heaven. As long as we walk this earth, we may again and again risk new steps of faith by serving, loving others, and living our short lives in view of eternity. Paul writes: “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God

prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2: 10).

You may seek God’s nearness through prayer, by reading His Word, and in quiet reflection on what He has done in your life and what He still intends to do. You may come to find rest at His heart and allow Him to fill every need. Be assured that He has responsibilities waiting for you. Commit your everyday life to Him: your time, thoughts, worries, plans—and also your vulnerability, which surfaced when the familiar pattern and daily rhythm of life changed.

In bringing all this to God, you allow Him to mold you and focus your perspective in this new phase of life. He uses your experience and your personality and equips you with the gifts of His Spirit for service in His kingdom. How wonderful to be a child of God—loved, guided, and needed. Ask Him: “Lord, what should I learn in this new phase? Whom can I encourage? What should I do?”

I recall a mountain hike during which God comforted and strengthened me in a special way. It was in Austria, shortly before our older children became independent. My heart was heavy because an unfamiliar season of life was beginning. But the Holy Spirit opened my eyes to the beauty around me, and I became aware of it again. As we continued walking, the landscape changed, and time and again a new, wonderful scene was revealed: first toward one mountain, then the next, and finally, a valley on the other side. Step by step, God gave me a new perspective: It will be different—but good. Still beautiful and fulfilling, because Jesus Christ stays with us.

From silence to renewed fruitfulness

Why is a renewed, deeper commitment

necessary in this season of life? Because every farewell—even a good and natural one—requires an adjustment. After years of giving, the heart needs a new focus so that no hidden vacuum develops, but rather, the Holy Spirit can fill it anew. Because your value and identity are not determined by outward circumstances, but by the One who created you, walks with you, and wants to use you for His glory—in every chapter of your life.

It is necessary, because God has not given you a task only for past years, but also wants to entrust you with responsibility now and in the future. He has not stopped guiding you simply because your children are independent. Perhaps, right now, a season of faith begins that is deeper, calmer, and at the same time more fruitful than anything you had before.

Jesus says, “Without Me you can do nothing” (John 15: 5). If you remain in the vine, the empty nest—which initially felt frightening—will become a place where God’s presence is tangible, His peace dwells, and new, blessed fruitfulness emerges.

*Helene Rotfuss
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The Calling

Jeremiah: called from birth

When God called Jeremiah, Israel was in spiritual decay. People had turned away from God, permitted idolatry and lost their hearts to the world. Few adhered to the true faith. It is precisely in such times that God seeks people who hear His voice, proclaim His truth, and urge others to repent and change their lives. Jeremiah's calling shows how God chooses a single man to proclaim His word in a fallen world with courage, fidelity, and divine authority (Jeremiah 1:4–5).

God said to Jeremiah, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations” (Jeremiah 1:5).

Jeremiah recognizes that he is chosen, not by chance, but through divine foresight. God's actions are based on His knowledge of the heart of man. Being from a priestly house of the tribe of Benjamin, Jeremiah grew up in an environment that had remained faithful to God. When God chose him, his parental home thus provided the spiritual foundation for his calling. This shows that God knows His tools, shapes them, and calls them at the right time (Psalm 139:13–16; Jeremiah 1:5).

Being chosen by God is not a privilege but a responsibility. From the moment of Jeremiah's birth, God appointed him to spread His word, not only to Judah but also to other nations. His task was to preach, rebuke, warn, and admonish. Knowing his people, Jeremiah knew he would meet with resistance, so he

answered the Lord, “Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I cannot speak, for I *am* a youth” (Jeremiah 1:6).

It was fear speaking, but it came from an honest place: that of a young man who knew his weakness. However, God seeks obedience and trust regardless of age, experience, or education, so He replied, “Do not say, ‘I *am* a youth,’ for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak” (Jeremiah 1:7).

To alleviate Jeremiah's fear, God gave him encouragement and a promise, saying, “Do not be afraid of their faces, for I *am* with you to deliver you” (Jeremiah 1:8). Then the Lord touched Jeremiah's mouth and said, “Behold, I have put My words in your mouth” (Jeremiah 1:9).

This action added authority to Jeremiah's calling. From that moment on, God's Word was the source of his mission, authority, and strength. Jeremiah was now more than the son of a priest; he was a prophet of the Most High. When God calls us, He always equips us accordingly. His Word itself is the sword and shield of His chosen (Luke 21:15).

Having called and equipped Jeremiah, God now gave him his task. He said, “See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant” (Jeremiah 1:10).

Jeremiah's mission included both judgment and grace. Jeremiah was to uncover sin, destroy false se-



When God Calls Us to Serve (Part 2)

curity, and expose idols while proclaiming hope for renewal through God. Working for God sometimes means tearing down the old so that the new can grow. In the midst of judgment, Jeremiah's task was to point the way to restoration, thereby uniting God's truth and strictness with His love and mercy (Hebrews 12:6–7).

To confirm his calling, God showed Jeremiah two visions. The first was an awakening branch—a picture of new life and God's vigilance over His Word—regarding which God stated, “I am ready to perform My word” (Jeremiah 1:12). The blooming branch symbolizes hope, renewal, and God's working, which brings forth new life in the midst of decay. The second vision was “a boiling pot, . . . facing away from the north” (Jeremiah 1:13). This represents the coming invasions by foreign nations being used by God as tools of His judgment. God thus showed His prophet both the hope and the seriousness of his mission (Jeremiah 1:11–14).

Jeremiah then received God's final promise, as God said, “Therefore prepare yourself and arise, and speak to them all that I command you. Do not be dismayed before their faces, lest I dismay you before them” (Jeremiah 1:17).

God promised to make Jeremiah into a strong city, an iron pillar, a bronze wall—He wanted Jeremiah to be able to face down kings, priests, and the people. These images show that Jeremiah's strength came not from himself but from God's steadfast presence. Those

who are called should look not to the call's result but to its origin (Jeremiah 1:17–19; 2 Corinthians 12:9).

Jeremiah's ministry was marked by suffering, persecution, and misunderstandings. He had to face a disobedient people and proclaim the truth, even if it was unpopular. Despite all this, he remained faithful. His heart was torn between pain and obedience, but his faith held fast. He did not preach what people wanted to hear, but what God commanded. His message was clear: “They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water” (Jeremiah 2:13). This is how Jeremiah fought against idolatry, hypocrisy, and superficiality so that the people might return to the living spring (Galatians 1:10).

Jeremiah's calling teaches us that God prepares His servants in the depths, gets to know them, and calls and equips them. He requires trust, not perfection. He gives courage where there is fear, and strength where there is weakness. Because God stood behind him, Jeremiah became an unshakable witness to the truth. We, too, can claim God's promise: “I *am* with you to deliver you” (Jeremiah 1:8). Those who accept this call can know that God carries, strengthens, and perfects them through His grace (Philippians 1:6). ■

This is the second of three articles addressing God's call; they are based on a series of five discourses given by Brother Gustav Sonnenberg.



The Secret of the Singing Heart

C. W. Naylor

A GREAT ADVENTURE

Life has wonderful possibilities for good or for evil. It may be a great adventure upon which we go, with ever-changing scenes, through which we may march with our heads up and a song of victory in our hearts. To many, life is this. On the other hand, life may mean a servitude in which the weary, discouraged, and almost hopeless prisoner of fate marches on toward an eternal dungeon. One may be a slave to worry, fear, foreboding. Life may be a series of defeats. But this is not the normal life. No one need live such a life.

Life was intended to be triumphant, joyous, and prosperous. It was meant to be filled with gladness, with light hearts and with singing. Facing life as we are capable of facing it, we can make it an ever-ascending pathway. Life may be a series of discoveries. Each day there is new territory to be explored, new experiences to be had.

It is so easy to say, "Oh, I do not amount to anything. I never can be anything. I never can do anything worthwhile," then to settle down in the prison house of this idea and attitude and never be free, not because we might not be free but because we do not choose to be free. So often people say, "My life is not worth living." Every life is worth living, but every life is *worth living right*. So many lives are like an airplane that is so heavily loaded it can never gain altitude.

Free from entanglements

There are some things of which we must rid ourselves in order to live a normal life. A bird entangled in the grass cannot fly. It must first be freed from its entanglement. In like manner we must be loosed from our entanglement to have freedom of life. Our entanglements are often of our own making. We build our own prisons; we shut ourselves up in our own cells. Circumstances can never long imprison us if our spirits are free. Has not someone written, "Stone walls do not

a prison make, nor iron bars a cage?" The free spirit cannot be imprisoned. Let us not be content with servitude. Let us cry out with Patrick Henry, "Give me liberty," and then strike with the sword of a determined will to cut out a way through whatever may imprison or hamper us. Do you say, "This is easier said than done"? True, but it can be done by everyone. It is well within the possibilities of each of us.

What are we getting out of life? In the first place, we can get out of it no more than we put into it. So if we are getting too little out of our lives, if they are unsatisfying, or impoverished, or hemmed in, it is because we are putting too little into them. Our lives are what we make them. It is not how *long* we live but how *intensively* we live, how full of worthwhile things we fill our lives that make them worthwhile and satisfying.

Life is what we are within

Life, in reality, is what we are within. Therefore, life is not made up of favorable or unfavorable circumstances, nor of possessions either many or few, nor of recognition or the lack of it, nor of honors given by others. It is what we are that gives quality to all these things when they come into life. We can take musical sounds and blend them to produce either harmony or discord. Things can be made either helpful or harmful.

If we put into our lives selfishness, disregard of others, unkindness, discourteousness, ill-temper, complaints, murmuring, distrust, doubts, fear, hate, malice, envy, covetousness and the like, we shall inevitably have bitterness, dissatisfaction, sorrow and similar things in our lives as the natural result. Let us not say that God makes our life as it is, or that it is our lot, or that people wrong us.

No, we are making the quality, if not the form and outline of our lives. Circumstances alone neither make us nor mar us. It is our reaction to circumstances that



produces results in us. What ruins one makes another. The things that are obstacles in life to some become stumbling stones, but to others stepping stones, according to the use made of them.

We are the architects of our own lives

So, after all, what we shall have in life is our own choice. We are the architects of our own lives. If we build with noble materials, carved with patient care, we shall have beauty and grace in our lives. If we put into them love, loyalty, gentleness, meekness, kindness, faith, forbearance, patience, and hope, we shall not fail to draw good dividends from all these things—dividends which shall rejoice our hearts, cause our eyes to sparkle and the song of gladness to well up.

The purpose of life is not merely to have a good time, to gratify the senses, to eat, drink and be merry. Its high and holy purpose is the building of character. Good character is the basis of real happiness. The poet has said,

*“Only the holy and innocent sing
Out of a bosom where pleasures abide.”*

The process of character building is not always easy, but it is always profitable. Each of us has capacity to develop a great character, a noble and beautiful life which cannot be unhappy. In such a soul there is a depth into which trouble never can reach. No matter how trials and troubles may press in upon the life, there is a calm and undisturbed peace at the very center of life. There is a joy that springs up on the dark-

est days. There is a light that shines in the deepest night. Life must have its discipline and its difficulties to make it of value, to give it character. Iron ore is of little value until it passes through the fire and is purified, tempered and shaped. The chisel must bite deeply into the marble again and again before the angel in it looks out. Paint of little value, when carefully spread upon the canvas by a great artist, becomes of rare beauty and worth. Likewise the little things, seemingly valueless in our lives, become richer than a king’s ransom when their possibilities are developed.

Causes of dissatisfaction

The Christian life of many people is unsatisfying. Instead of being joyous with the elements of heaven, it is burdensome. There are two causes for this. If, when we come to God, we still cling to the things of the past and try to graft Christianity upon our old lives, we shall not have the fruits of righteousness. There must be a break with the past. There must be a newness of life. We must be new creatures. Gone with the old life that is forsaken will be many of the causes of heartaches and sorrows and burdens of the past. However, if when we come to God we give up many things that have gone far to make up life for us in the past, and we do not replace these things with something just as good or better, we impoverish ourselves, and our lives become barren and unsatisfying.

We should fill our lives with the better things, the pleasant things of righteousness, truth, nobility, and service, that make life rich for ourselves and profitable to others. We need the freshness and beauty of true ►

spirituality. We need activities—interesting and profitable things.

A life of wonderful possibilities

God said to us, “Rejoice and be glad.” The Christian life is full of wonderful possibilities. I do not mean merely the formal and empty shell of Christian profession. I mean the inner divine life begotten by the Holy Spirit. A life spent in exploring the kingdom of God on earth is always an interesting, attractive, and happy life.

Let us make our lives a great adventure. It is our privilege now and then with heart and mind to make an excursion to heaven, there to sit and meditate beside the river of God. We can go back through history and become acquainted with the saints of old. We can have fellowship with their joys. We can drink of the “river of pleasure” and eat of the “honey out of the rock.” We can live love’s way—bask in the sunlight of heaven. We can “run and not be weary, and walk and never faint.” ■

A Life for God

The steamship’s siren sounded. Crowds pressed forward, waving from the pier.

“Goodbye—see you next year!”

“Come back safely!”

But for Mary Reed, there would be no return—and safely . . . ? She turned away and went quietly to her cabin.

Mary Reed had spent ten years teaching in her homeland of America before traveling to India to help for what she thought would be a short time. There she lived through the horrors of a devastating famine. Countless children wandered across parched fields, eating earth in an attempt to ease their hunger. Alongside others, Mary traveled throughout the district, nursing the sick, offering comfort, and helping distribute food and medicine. To her, this work felt only natural.

If only the fever she had contracted had not lingered so stubbornly. In time, she was sent back home.

Weeks passed before she gathered the courage to visit a specialist. What she had feared was confirmed beyond all doubt: it was leprosy—incurable. The diagnosis struck her like a blow. Was this what God meant by the words, “Teach me to do Your will, for You *are* my God”?

“Think it over carefully,” the doctor said calmly. By law, he was required to isolate her. She was given a

choice: to spend the rest of her life in a sanatorium—or to return to India and serve the sick for as long as she was able. Mary had believed she understood what devotion to God meant. Now she realized she was only beginning to learn the true depth of surrender.

Mary Reed settled at a remote outpost of a mission station in the Himalayas. She walked steep mountain paths to reach villages, never shrinking back from pain or suffering. She visited the sick and the healthy alike. Over the years, two communities for men and women afflicted with leprosy came into being.

Leprosy? Yes.

A ruined life? No.

The living Lord became her life. She gave freely what she herself received from God.

This was not a strained effort to do good works. Every sacrifice had become a joyful, continual sharing of what she received day by day from the merciful hands of her Lord. Around her, lives were transformed. For many, this did not mean physical healing, but it did mean liberation—from despair, hopelessness, and the crushing spirit of illness.

They called Mary Reed “Mother.” She had grown rich in trust.

“What God does is always best,” she wrote. “He cares for His righteous ones.” ■

ANNOUNCEMENTS

February 27 to March 1, 2026
Youth weekend in Kirchberg (Germany)

April 3 to 6, 2026
Easter Conference in Hamm (Germany)

May 23 to 25, 2026
Pentecost Conference in Herford (Germany)

And whatever you do, do it heartily,
as to the Lord and not to men,
knowing that from the Lord you will
receive the reward of the inheritance;
for you serve the Lord Christ.

Colossians 3:23–24

The Master is calling you

*The Master needs more faithful reapers
In His great harvest which is ripe.
Save the lost, wake up the sleeper,
Let us work while there is light.
Christ gave His life for our salvation;
Let's give Him ours in dedication.*

*The Master needs more faithful soldiers
To battle evil, sin, and wrong.
To carry weight upon their shoulders,
To bring Him glory all day long.
Be a brave soldier on holy ground
And you will gain a glorious crown.*

*The Master requires more witnesses
To bring souls to the church of God;
To save from sin and sicknesses
Those lost at home and those abroad.
Why don't you be a witness that's true
And let God rescue dear souls through you!*

*The Master is calling. Hear His voice.
No longer be idle, dear friend.
Though it is late, let this be your choice:
To serve Him now, true to the end.
Work in His vineyard diligently,
There's great reward in eternity.*

Gertrud Tarutis