

The Secrets Of Happy Living

“Young man,” he said, I can’t understand this. An hour ago I was about to remove this leg, but something has happened here. It is going to get well. What did you do to it, son?”

With tears of joy in his eyes, the lad looked at the doctor and tried to speak. “Captain,” he said falteringly, I prayed. But I know someone else was praying, too. I could just feel it. I could almost see my mother back home; and doctor, she was praying, too.”

And she was praying. “When I talked to this young man, now completely restored,” the chaplain reported, “he had received the comforting word from his mother. As they compared times, they discovered that at that same hour she had been praying for her son. She wrote that a strange feeling came over her, a conviction that her son was needing her just at that hour.”

Both mother and son saw not what others saw—the mangled leg, the doctor’s surgical instruments. They looked at those things that are not seen, and saw the Great Physician. Their faith triumphed because they looked steadily at Him who is invisible.

And so down through the corridors of time, from the days of righteous Abel, even to this very hour, mankind is looking, is seeing, and is entranced in vision by night and day.

Some see the things that can be seen, the temporal: others see the things which are not seen, the eternal. The former fail to grasp the riches in Christ, and struggle for the gold that perishes. The latter lay up treasures in heaven where rust and canker do not spoil.

As we ponder the experiences of our forebears, may we turn our faces heavenward and pray for a faith that will endure “as seeing Him who is invisible.”

In No Condition to Ask

DON’T LEAVE THE FRONT STEPS! Those words sounded in Fulton Ousler’s mind as clearly as if they were suspended on the fresh spring air of the morning when his mother spoke them. They brought flooding back to his mind the picture of himself on those steps, clad in the finery of his Sunday best, obediently standing. In fact, I get the decided impression that he would never have dreamed of moving, never, that is, had it not been for the sudden appearance of the son of the local baker. I can just picture this second lad with a tight top lip, a provocative look, and a jaunty lilt to his step, and as he passes the steps in question I can almost hear him hiss through his teeth one single word —“Sissy!” That was just too much for young Fulton, who sprang down and delivered the same baker’s son a good hard cuff on the ear. The battle was furious but short-lived.

The thought of his now ruined clothes was interrupted by the familiar tinkling of the ice-cream man’s bell. Without a moment’s thought of hesitation, Fulton dashed to his mother and begged the necessary money for the coveted ice-cream. Any parent who is reading this episode can picture the ensuing explosion, without my pausing to paint it, but may I just add this mother’s immortal words: “Look at yourself! You’re in no condition to ask for anything!” And as Mr. Ousler himself concluded in retrospect, how often we ask for something from God, when we are in no condition to ask for anything.

It is true that the Bible assures us that if we pray, God will answer our prayers, but it is equally true that such a promise is not made without conditions. If you want to get answers to your prayers, then maybe you have just one more minute to spare during which we would like to share with you four passages of Scripture wherein are revealed four preparatory steps, so that it should not be said of us, we are not in a condition to ask anything!

Firstly, Matthew 9:29. “Then touched He their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes were opened.” These two blind men had followed Jesus right down the street from the home of the resurrected daughter of the ruler, and into another home. They certainly were very anxious for Jesus to help them, but they had to demonstrate their faith and belief that Jesus could help them, before the miracle took place. Today, many people pray and then take the attitude: “Well, it won’t happen anyhow, but I might as well pray and take a chance.” There really isn’t any room for this kind of spiritual gambling if we are sincere and right with God.

Secondly, Mark 11:25: “And when you stand praying, forgive, if you have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.” It is common for people to block the prayer channel, the power channel between heaven and earth, by refusing to be right with their fellow men. They hold grudges tenaciously. Remember the Lord’s Prayer teaches us that God forgives us in direct

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proportion to how we forgive those who wrong us.

Thirdly, 1 John 5:14. "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us." God's ways are infinite, ours are finite. He who knows the future, will always do what is for our best good, if we pray, "according to His will."

Lastly, 1 John 3:22. "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." Anybody knowingly and willfully profaning God's name, or neglecting His Sabbath, or lying, or stealing, or coveting, cannot expect God to answer their prayers. But remember, if first we do our part-believe, forgive, pray according to His will, and keep His commandments-then God and heaven will come very close to answer when we kneel down to pray.

God's Truth and Man's Dilemma!

GOD'S TRUTH will goad us out of comfortable ruts and push us on to superhuman tasks-and may lead us to suffering and death. But it is the only answer to man's dilemma.

THERE WAS A TIME a few centuries ago when Western man lived his life within the acceptance of God's sovereignty and guiding power. He felt himself to be a child of God, and His kingdom was the object of his strivings. The world, the flesh, and the devil laid snares unceasingly for his unwary feet; but he walked the earth with his hand in God's, and the hope of eternal life gave his life dignity of purpose and the assurance of meaning.

Within the past century the thinking of Western man has changed. The discoveries of science have drawn his eyes from heaven to earth. Writing thirty years ago a distinguished American scholar and historian declared: "Edit and interpret the conclusions of modern science as tenderly as we like, it is still quite impossible for us to regard man as the child of God for whom the earth was created as a temporary habitation. . . . Un parented, unassisted, and undirected by omniscient or benevolent authority, he must fend for himself, and with the aid of his own limited intelligence find his way about in an indifferent universe."

The Apostle Peter told us long ago that men should add to their faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge. But he had no idea that by acquiring knowledge man would lose the cardinal virtue of faith. Knowledge should not drive out faith, yet Christ's sad query, "When the Son of man comes, shall He find faith on the earth?" gives indication that He foresaw that this, to a large degree, would be true. This, then, is the dilemma of modern man: with his loss of faith in God he has lost the sense of purpose from his life, and life no longer has a significant meaning for him.

Man's dilemma is pictured by America's poet-philosopher, Robert Frost. He compares man to a caged bear, and after describing a bear which is free to roam the hills and woods, he goes on to say: "Man acts more like the poor bear in a cage That all day fights a nervous inward rage, His mood rejecting all his mind suggests. He paces back and forth and never rests The toe-nail click and shuffle of his feet. The telescope at one end of his beat, And at the other end the microscope, Two instruments of nearly equal hope, And in conjunction giving quite a spread."

These two extremes of scientific research-the telescope, which has opened up to man's view vast ranges of unsuspected space: and the microscope, which has uncovered the tiniest components of matter-have puzzled many scientists who have not done their study within the framework of faith in God.

The problem of finding the meaning of life has occupied man's thoughts from the beginning of time. We find this in the ancient Biblical Book of Job, and in the modern drama which explores the same problem, presented by Archibald MacLeish, and appropriately called "J. B." In the Book of Job the question is raised as to why a good man who serves God should be visited with sorrow and loss and suffering. The answer is that suffering is not a punishment for evil done, but rather that it comes alike to all men as the result of the sin in the world, and that the righteous man will not swerve in his steadfast faith and love for God because of troubles which come upon him.

The modern version by MacLeish follows the story of job very closely, but poses the problem in a modern setting. J. B. loses his children tragically, his bank is destroyed and he is left poor, his health gives way under the strain, and his wife leaves him. In his troubles three comforters come to him also-a political philosopher, a psychologist, and a priest. The philosopher and the psychologist explain his troubles logically, and the priest endeavors to convince him of his guilt. But J. B. knows he is innocent, as did job