

## The Secrets Of Happy Living

the prophet of the Lord. Unable to defeat Israel, the Syrian monarch determined to capture the prophet, so by night surrounded the town of Dothan, wherein Elisha lived.

Arising from his sleep on that eventful morning, the servant of Elisha went outside to take a look around. The sight that he beheld was terrifying. The mountains about them were filled with horses and chariots. In a frightened state he ran to his master, and exclaimed, "Alas, my master, how shall we do?" But Elisha had seen things his servant had not seen, and he answered, "Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." Sending his servant back to take a second look, Elisha prayed, "Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes that he may see." As the servant peered into the hills with a new vision, he saw an entirely different picture. Now he saw not horses and chariots of flesh and iron, but the protecting hosts of heaven. His first look focused on material things; his second look enabled him to see the things he could not see.

I wonder if today we have the vision of Elisha? What do you see around you? Is it giants of despair? Demons of unbelief? Or could it be that we see the wonderful presence and providence of the Lord?

Some five centuries before the days of Elisha there was born into the family of one of the sons of Levi a goodly child. Born in obscurity, reared among royalty, spending years in exile, he was destined to become a giant of faith, a leader of vision, a man of God. His name was Moses.

Moses, a type of Christ (Deuteronomy 18:15), made tremendous decisions in the face of amazing offers and worldly opportunities. Why did he do this? What enabled him to choose so? "He endured, as seeing Him who is invisible." Hebrews 11:27. In other words, he looked at the things he could not see. His penetrating vision, equal to that of Elisha and Paul, enabled the Lord to use this man in a tremendous program, a program that ultimately placed Moses in the presence of God, and a witness at the transfiguration of Christ. (Jude 9; Matthew 17:3.)

Four centuries prior to the birth of Moses, we read of the experience of Abraham and Lot, uncle and nephew, respectively. They were nomads, wandering in a strange land, and yet a land which was destined to be the habitation of their children. These two men had been greatly blessed of the Lord, but because of differences they could not reconcile, they came to the parting of the ways. Their choices and their future experiences were based, not on the spin of the coin, not on the turn of the wheel, but on the things they saw. Lot, the nephew, saw the plains of Jordan that they "were well watered everywhere, even as the garden of the Lord." Genesis 13:10. He saw the cities of the plains, wealthy and attractive, inviting to profitable traffic in their crowded marts. Lot was dazzled with a vision of worldly gain, and was anxious to grasp its advantages. These were things both visible and tangible. He chose them.

In sharp contrast to Lot, we have the vision of Abraham. He saw, "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Hebrews 11:10. His sight penetrated to the unseen, and consequently lifted his desires, his ambitions, his aims above the mundane and perishable things, to eternal riches in Christ. He was a believer, and "it was counted unto him for righteousness." He was the father of the faithful.

Lot died in ignominy and shame without mention in Hebrews in the "Hall of faith." He saw the things that could he seen. Abraham died in faith "not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off." Both saw with their eyes, both possessed the same opportunities, but how divergent their ends. Abraham saw the things he could not see.

**During the Korean War** an army chaplain talked to a young man who had been badly wounded. At the receiving station where he had been taken for emergency treatment, the doctor told him that it would be necessary to amputate his left leg immediately, and ordered him to be prepared for surgery. On learning of the decision, the young man asked to see the doctor.

"Captain," he said, "may I ask a favor of you? They tell me you are going to take off my leg; but could you wait an hour before doing this?" "You see, sir," he continued, "I am my mother's only son. My father is dead. I know mother is praying for me, and will you give me one hour to join her in prayer?"

The doctor was deeply moved by this young man's simple request, and although not a religious man himself, he consented to wait. At the close of the hour the doctor sent the nurse and an attendant to bring the soldier into the surgery room where he was prepared to amputate his leg. However, the nurse returned without the boy.

"Captain, she said, "that boy insists he must see you, and I presume there is nothing to do but take off your gown and go in and see him." The captain went to the ward and looked at the boy's leg. He realized at once something had happened during that hour.

## 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