



Cultivating the Habit of Service

In studying Jesus’ life, we observe a man who so beautifully illustrates a life of loving service to his fellows. One might argue that this would be expected of a Creator Son. Yet, it seems that the consistency with which the Son of Man conducted his life may have taken more effort than it appeared. This workshop examines *The Urantia Book’s* statement on 171:7:10 (1875.5) that **1** “...it behooves the Master’s followers in all ages to learn to minister as ‘they pass by’—to do unselfish good as they go about their daily duties.”

I. Considerations

Sometimes our personal goals for how we behave and treat others outpace our ability to achieve them. This can lead to feelings of failure and insecurity. However, the positive example of Jesus’ life and teachings gives us reason to be optimistic that we can become better able “to do unselfish good to others.” In examining Jesus’ life, we need to consider the following.



Consideration 1: We can never become Jesus, but we can learn from Jesus’ example how “to do unselfish good to others” as we go about our daily lives.

2 Although the average mortal of Urantia cannot hope to attain the high perfection of character which Jesus of Nazareth acquired while sojourning in the flesh, it is altogether possible for every mortal believer to develop a strong and unified personality along the perfected lines of the Jesus personality. The unique feature of the Master’s personality was not so much its perfection as its symmetry, its exquisite and balanced unification. The most effective presentation of Jesus consists in following the example of the one who said, as he gestured toward the Master standing before his accusers, “Behold the man!” ^{100:7.1(1101.5)}



Consideration 2: We are constantly faced with choices. It is only by our decisions that we are able to act and “do unselfish good to others” as we go about our daily lives.

3 The keys of the kingdom of heaven are: sincerity, more sincerity, and more sincerity. All men have these keys. Men use them advance in spirit status — by decisions, by more decisions, and by more decisions. The highest moral choice is the choice of the highest possible value, and always — in any sphere, in all of them — this is to choose to do the will of God. ^{39:4.14 (435.7)}



Consideration 3: Habits of the mind help us to make decisions. Jesus’ habits to go off and meditate or to learn about his fellows helped him greatly as he “passed by.” We can shape our religious habits so that we can better “do unselfish good to others” as we go about our daily lives.

hab-it (noun)*The Free Dictionary*

1. A recurrent, often unconscious pattern of behavior that is acquired through frequent repetition
2. An established disposition of the mind or character
3. Customary manner or practice

4 Religious habits of thinking and acting are contributory to the economy of spiritual growth. One can develop religious predispositions toward favorable reaction to spiritual stimuli, a sort of conditioned spiritual reflex. ^{100:1.8(1095.3)}
When a moral being chooses to be unselfish when confronted by the urge to be selfish, that is primitive religious experience. No animal can make such a choice; such a decision is both human and religious. It embraces the fact of

God-consciousness and exhibits the impulse of social service, the basis of the brotherhood of man. When mind chooses a right moral judgment by an act of the free will, such a decision constitutes a religious experience.
103:2.8(1131.7)



Consideration 4: The context that we are in currently live is much different from that of Jesus' time. *The Urantia Book* suggests that we may not necessarily do exactly as Jesus did, but understanding his beliefs and ideals can help us to "do unselfish good to others" as we go about our daily lives.

5 To "follow Jesus" means to personally share his religious faith and to enter into the spirit of the Master's life of unselfish service for man. One of the most important things in human living is to find out what Jesus believed, to discover his ideals, and to strive for the achievement of his exalted life purpose. Of all human knowledge, that which is of greatest value is to know the religious life of Jesus and how he lived it. 196:1.3 (2090.4)

II. Shaping Our Habits



If developing new habits were so simple, we might already have fused and be moving onward in our universe careers. But it isn't. It is easier to formulate philosophy and dogmatize truth because of our mental laziness and fear in making changes in habits of thinking and ways of living 132:3.3(1459.3)

And that's why we need a plan. How do we develop those habits that will help us "do unselfish good to others" as we go about our daily duties?



6...Habits which favor religious growth embrace cultivated sensitivity to divine values, recognition of religious living in others, reflective meditation on cosmic meanings, worshipful problem solving, sharing one's spiritual life with one's fellows, avoidance of selfishness, refusal to presume on divine mercy, living as in the presence of God. The factors of religious growth may be intentional, but the growth itself is unvaryingly unconscious. 100:1.8(1095.3)



7...Whence then comes the energy to do these great things? Look to your Master. Even now he is out in the hills taking in power while we are here giving out energy. The secret of all this problem is wrapped up in spiritual communion, in worship. From the human standpoint it is a question of combined meditation and relaxation. Meditation makes the contact of mind with spirit; relaxation determines the capacity for spiritual receptivity. And this interchange of strength for weakness, courage for fear, the will of God for the mind of self, constitutes worship. At least, that is the way the philosopher views it. 160:3.1 (1777.2)



8 The effort toward maturity necessitates work, and work requires energy. Whence the power to accomplish all this?One thing I am sure of: Emotional excitement is not the ideal spiritual stimulus. Excitement does not augment energy; it rather exhausts the powers of both mind and body. Whence then comes the energy to do these great things? Look to your Master. Even now he is out in the hills taking in power while we are here giving out energy. The secret of all this problem is wrapped up in spiritual communion, in worship. From the human standpoint it is a question of combined **meditation and relaxation**. Meditation makes the contact of mind with spirit; relaxation determines the capacity for spiritual receptivity. And this interchange of strength for weakness, courage for fear, the will of God for the mind of self, constitutes worship. At least, that is the way the philosopher views it.

When these experiences are frequently repeated, they crystallize into habits, strength-giving and worshipful habits, and such habits eventually formulate themselves into a spiritual character, and such a character is finally recognized by one's fellows as a mature personality. These practices are difficult and time-consuming at first, but when they become habitual, they are at once restful and timesaving. The more complex society becomes, and the more the lures of civilization multiply, the more urgent will become the necessity for God-knowing individuals to form such protective habitual practices designed to conserve and augment their spiritual energies. ^{160:3.2(1777.3)}



9 The soil essential for religious growth presupposes a progressive life of self-realization, the co-ordination of natural propensities, the exercise of curiosity and the enjoyment of reasonable adventure, the experiencing of feelings of satisfaction, the functioning of the fear stimulus of attention and awareness, the wonder-lure, and a normal consciousness of smallness, humility. Growth is also predicated on the discovery of selfhood accompanied by self-criticism — conscience, for conscience is really the criticism of oneself by one's own value-habits, personal ideals. ^{100:1.5(1094.7)}



10 A philosophy of religion evolves out of a basic growth of ideas plus experimental living as both are modified by the tendency to imitate associates. The soundness of philosophic conclusions depends on keen, honest, and discriminating thinking in connection with sensitivity to meanings and accuracy of evaluation. Moral cowards never achieve high planes of philosophic thinking; it requires courage to invade new levels of experience and to attempt the exploration of unknown realms of intellectual living.

Presently new systems of values come into existence; new formulations of principles and standards are achieved; habits and ideals are reshaped; some idea of a personal God is attained, followed by enlarging concepts of relationship thereto. ^{101:7.3(1114.1)}

Please turn to the final page of this handout and respond to question 1.

III. “As Jesus Passed By” (Paper 171.7, p. 1874)



“As Jesus Passed By” is one of the most inspiring sections in *The Urantia Book*. It is as if the midwayers hold up a mirror, and by looking into it, we see Jesus as that perfect reflection of all those qualities we would hope to possess in our attempts to “do good to others” in our daily lives. As we read this section, think about some of the important points that are made about Jesus.

11 Jesus spread good cheer everywhere he went. He was full of grace and truth. His associates never ceased to wonder at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth. You can cultivate gracefulness, but graciousness is the aroma of friendliness which emanates from a love-saturated soul.

Goodness always compels respect, but when it is devoid of grace, it often repels affection. Goodness is universally attractive only when it is gracious. Goodness is effective only when it is attractive.

Jesus really understood men; therefore could he manifest genuine sympathy and show sincere compassion. But he seldom indulged in pity. While his compassion was boundless, his sympathy was practical, personal, and constructive. Never did his familiarity with suffering breed indifference, and he was able to minister to distressed souls without increasing their self-pity.

Jesus could help men so much because he loved them so sincerely. He truly loved each man, each woman, and each child. He could be such a true friend because of his remarkable insight — he knew so fully what was in the heart

and in the mind of man. He was an interested and keen observer. He was an expert in the comprehension of human need, clever in detecting human longings.

Jesus was never in a hurry. He had time to comfort his fellow men “as he passed by.” And he always made his friends feel at ease. He was a charming listener. He never engaged in the meddling probing of the souls of his associates. As he comforted hungry minds and ministered to thirsty souls, the recipients of his mercy did not so much feel that they were confessing to him as that they were conferring with him. They had unbounded confidence in him because they saw he had so much faith in them.

He never seemed to be curious about people, and he never manifested a desire to direct, manage, or follow them up. He inspired profound self-confidence and robust courage in all who enjoyed his association. When he smiled on a man, that mortal experienced increased capacity for solving his manifold problems.

Jesus loved men so much and so wisely that he never hesitated to be severe with them when the occasion demanded such discipline. He frequently set out to help a person by asking for help. In this way he elicited interest, appealed to the better things in human nature.

The Master could discern saving faith in the gross superstition of the woman who sought healing by touching the hem of his garment. He was always ready and willing to stop a sermon or detain a multitude while he ministered to the needs of a single person, even to a little child. Great things happened not only because people had faith in Jesus, but also because Jesus had so much faith in them.

Most of the really important things which Jesus said or did seemed to happen casually, “as he passed by.” There was so little of the professional, the well-planned, or the premeditated in the Master’s earthly ministry. He dispensed health and scattered happiness naturally and gracefully as he journeyed through life. It was literally true, “He went about doing good.”

And it behooves the Master’s followers in all ages to learn to minister as “they pass by” — to do unselfish good as they go about their daily duties.

Please turn to the final page of this handout and respond to question 2.

IV. Themes

Within the section “As Jesus Passed by,” there are a number of different themes, or important ideas, that are being presented to the reader. These themes are universal in that they apply regardless of age, gender, geography, time,

or culture. A theme might help us to better understand the human condition or provide insight into ourselves. Let's examine some themes in more depth as we plan to develop new habits to "do good to others" in our daily lives.



Act Friendly, Kindly, and Graciously to Others



Show Compassion, Sympathy, and Respect for Others



Exhibit Curiosity, Open-mindedness, and Interest Towards Others



Act Courageously and with Confidence in Yourself and in Others



Be a Sincere Problem Solver



Strive to Demonstrate a Well-Balanced Character

12 *"If you would share the Master's joy, you must share his love. And to share his love means that you have shared his service."* ^{180:1.5(1945.2)}

Act Friendly, Kindly, and Graciously to Others



13 *His life association with us exemplifies the ideal of human friendship; only a divine being could possibly be such a human friend. He is the most truly unselfish person we have ever known. He is the friend even of sinners; he dares to love his enemies. He is very loyal to us. While he does not hesitate to reprove us, it is plain to all that he truly loves us. The better you know him, the more you will love him. You will be charmed by his unswerving devotion... While he makes no use of flattery, he does treat us all with equal kindness; he is invariably tender and compassionate. He has shared his life and everything else with us. We are a happy community; we share all things in common. We do not believe that a mere human could live such a blameless life under such trying circumstances.* ^{161:2.3(1785)}



14 *The idea of duty signifies that you are servant-minded and hence are missing the mighty thrill of doing your service as a friend and for a friend. The impulse of friendship transcends all convictions of duty, and the service of a friend for a friend can never be called a sacrifice. The Master has taught the apostles that they are the sons of God. He has called them brethren, and now, before he leaves, he calls them his friends.* ^{180:1.6(1945.3)}



15 *The unfailing kindness of Jesus touched the hearts of men, but his stalwart strength of character amazed his followers. He was truly sincere; there was nothing of the hypocrite in him. He was free from affectation; he was always so refreshingly genuine. He never stooped to pretense, and he never resorted to shamming. He lived the truth, even as he taught it. He was the truth. He was constrained to proclaim saving truth to his generation, even though such sincerity sometimes caused pain. He was unquestioningly loyal to all truth.* ^{100:7.2(1101.6)}



16 *He was candid, but always kind. Said he, “If it were not so, I would have told you.” He was frank, but always friendly. He was outspoken in his love for the sinner and in his hatred for sin. But throughout all this amazing frankness he was unerringly fair.* ^{100:7.11(1102.8)}



17 *Jesus was consistently cheerful, notwithstanding he sometimes drank deeply of the cup of human sorrow. He fearlessly faced the realities of existence, yet was he filled with enthusiasm for the gospel of the kingdom. But he controlled his enthusiasm; it never controlled him. He was unreservedly dedicated to “the Father’s business.” This divine enthusiasm led his unspiritual brethren to think he was beside himself, but the onlooking universe appraised him as the model of sanity and the pattern of supreme mortal devotion to the high standards of spiritual living. And his controlled enthusiasm was contagious; his associates were constrained to share his divine optimism.* ^{100:7.12(1102.9)}



18 *Then said the Master to Nathaniel, “Nathaniel, do you serve me?” And the apostle answered, “Yes, Master, and with an undivided affection.” Then said Jesus: “If, therefore, you serve me with a whole heart, make sure that you are devoted to the welfare of my brethren on earth with tireless affection. Admix friendship with your counsel and add love to your philosophy. Serve your fellow men even as I have served you. Be faithful to men as I have watched over you. Be less critical; expect less of some men and thereby lessen the extent of your disappointment. And when the work down here is over, you shall serve with me on high.”* ^{192:2.10(2049.1)}



19 *Then said the Master to Nathaniel, “Nathaniel, do you serve me?” And the apostle answered, “Yes, Master, a “Happy are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” Mercy here denotes the height and depth and breadth of the truest friendship — loving-kindness. Mercy sometimes may be passive, but here it is active and dynamic — supreme fatherliness. A loving parent experiences little difficulty in forgiving his child, even many times. And in an unspoiled child the urge to relieve suffering is natural. Children are normally kind and sympathetic when old enough to appreciate actual conditions.* ^{140:5.17(1575.2)}



20 *Jesus spread good cheer everywhere he went. He was full of grace and truth. His associates never ceased to wonder at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth. You can cultivate gracefulness, but graciousness is the aroma of friendliness which emanates from a love-saturated soul.* ^{171:7.1(1874.4)}



21 *Even though you are effectively armed to meet the difficult situations of life, you can hardly expect success unless you are equipped with that wisdom of mind and charm of personality which enable you to win the hearty support and co-operation of your fellows. You cannot hope for a large measure of success in either secular or religious work unless you can learn how to persuade your fellows, to prevail with men. You simply must have tact and tolerance.* ^{160:1.9(1774.1)}

Show Compassion, Sympathy, and Respect for Others



22 *The uniqueness of his character and the perfection of his emotional control convince us that he is a combination of humanity and divinity. He unfailingly responds to the spectacle of human need; suffering never fails*

to appeal to him. His compassion is moved alike by physical suffering, mental anguish, or spiritual sorrow. He is quick to recognize and generous to acknowledge the presence of faith or any other grace in his fellow men. He is so just and fair and at the same time so merciful and considerate. He grieves over the spiritual obstinacy of the people and rejoices when they consent to see the light of truth.^{161:2.5(1785.5)}



23 He seems to know the thoughts of men's minds and to understand the longings of their hearts. And he is always sympathetic with our troubled spirits. He seems to possess all our human emotions, but they are magnificently glorified. He strongly loves goodness and equally hates sin. He possesses a superhuman consciousness of the presence of Deity. He prays like a man but performs like a God... While he is kind, he is also brave and courageous. He never falters^{138:8.9(1545.10)}



24 Always respect the personality of man. Never should a righteous cause be promoted by force; spiritual victories can be won only by spiritual power. This injunction against the employment of material influences refers to psychic force as well as to physical force. Overpowering arguments and mental superiority are not to be employed to coerce men and women into the kingdom. Man's mind is not to be crushed by the mere weight of logic or overawed by shrewd eloquence. While emotion as a factor in human decisions cannot be wholly eliminated, it should not be directly appealed to in the teachings of those who would advance the cause of the kingdom. Make your appeals directly to the divine spirit that dwells within the minds of men. Do not appeal to fear, pity, or mere sentiment. In appealing to men, be fair; exercise self-control and exhibit due restraint; show proper respect for the personalities of your pupils. Remember that I have said: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock, and if any man will open, I will come in."^{159:3.2(1765.4)}



25 In bringing men into the kingdom, do not lessen or destroy their self-respect. While overmuch self-respect may destroy proper humility and end in pride, conceit, and arrogance, the loss of self-respect often ends in paralysis of the will. It is the purpose of this gospel to restore self-respect to those who have lost it and to restrain it in those who have it. Make not the mistake of only condemning the wrongs in the lives of your pupils; remember also to accord generous recognition for the most praiseworthy things in their lives. Forget not that I will stop at nothing to restore self-respect to those who have lost it, and who really desire to regain it.^{159:3.3(1765.5)}



26 Take care that you do not wound the self-respect of timid and fearful souls. Do not indulge in sarcasm at the expense of my simple-minded brethren. Be not cynical with my fear-ridden children. Idleness is destructive of self-respect; therefore, admonish your brethren ever to keep busy at their chosen tasks, and put forth every effort to secure work for those who find themselves without employment.^{159:3.4(1765.6)}



27 The disciples early learned that the Master had a profound respect and sympathetic regard for every human being he met, and they were tremendously impressed by this uniform and unvarying consideration which he so consistently gave to all sorts of men, women, and children. He would pause in the midst of a profound discourse that he might go out in the road to speak good cheer to a passing woman laden with her burden of body and soul. He would interrupt a serious conference with his apostles to fraternize with an intruding child. Nothing ever seemed so important to Jesus as the individual human who chanced to be in his immediate presence. He was master and teacher, but he was more — he was also a friend and neighbor, an understanding comrade.^{138:8.9(1545.10)}



28 The Master was a pattern of reverence. The prayer of even his youth began, "Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be your name." He was even respectful of the faulty worship of his fellows. But this did not deter him from making attacks on religious traditions or assaulting errors of human belief.^{100:7.16(1103.4)}



29 But the Master was so reasonable, so approachable. He was so practical in all his ministry, while all his plans were characterized by such sanctified common sense. He was so free from all freakish, erratic, and eccentric tendencies. He was never capricious, whimsical, or hysterical. In all his teaching and in everything he did there was always an exquisite discrimination associated with an extraordinary sense of propriety.^{100:7.3(1101.7)}

Exhibit Curiosity, Open-mindedness, and Interest Towards Others



30 Jesus' originality was unstifled. He was not bound by tradition or handicapped by enslavement to narrow conventionality. He spoke with undoubted confidence and taught with absolute authority. But his superb originality did not cause him to overlook the gems of truth in the teachings of his predecessors and contemporaries. 100:7.5(1102.2)



31 Living much of the time in Sepphoris for six months afforded Jesus a new opportunity to become better acquainted with the gentile viewpoint of life. He worked with gentiles, lived with gentiles, and in every possible manner did he make a close and painstaking study of their habits of living and of the gentile mind. 128:2.5(1410.4)



32 ... Jesus' usual technique of social contact was to draw people out and into talking with him by asking them questions. The interview would usually begin by his asking them questions and end by their asking him questions. He was equally adept in teaching by either asking or answering questions. As a rule, to those he taught the most, he said the least. Those who derived most benefit from his personal ministry were overburdened, anxious, and dejected mortals who gained much relief because of the opportunity to unburden their souls to a sympathetic and understanding listener, and he was all that and more. And when these maladjusted human beings had told Jesus about their troubles, always was he able to offer practical and immediately helpful suggestions looking toward the correction of their real difficulties, albeit he did not neglect to speak words of present comfort and immediate consolation. And invariably would he tell these distressed mortals about the love of God and impart the information, by various and sundry methods, that they were the children of this loving Father in heaven. 132:4.2(1460.6)



33 ...If you love your fellow men, you must have discovered their values. Jesus loved men so much because he placed such a high value upon them. You can best discover values in your associates by discovering their motivation. If someone irritates you, causes feelings of resentment, you should sympathetically seek to discern his viewpoint, his reasons for such objectionable conduct. If once you understand your neighbor, you will become tolerant, and this tolerance will grow into friendship and ripen into love. 100:4.4(1098.1)



34 While it is true that many men and women must assiduously apply themselves to some definite pursuit as a livelihood vocation, it is nevertheless wholly desirable that human beings should cultivate a wide range of cultural familiarity with life as it is lived on earth. Truly educated persons are not satisfied with remaining in ignorance of the lives and doings of their fellows. 149:4.6(1674.2)



35 Jesus was very broad in his outlook. He exhorted his followers to preach the gospel to all peoples. He was free from all narrow-mindedness. His sympathetic heart embraced all mankind, even a universe. Always his invitation was, "Whosoever will, let him come." 100:7.6(1102.3)



36 He loved men as brothers, at the same time recognizing how they differed in innate endowments and acquired qualities. "He went about doing good." 100:7.8(1102.5)

Act Courageously and with Confidence in Yourself and in Others



37 His courage was equaled only by his patience. When pressed to act prematurely, he would only reply, "My hour has not yet come." He was never in a hurry; his composure was sublime. But he was often indignant at evil, intolerant of sin. He was often mightily moved to resist that which was inimical to the welfare of his children on earth. But his indignation against sin never led to anger at the sinner. 100:7.14(1103.2)



38 His courage was magnificent, but he was never foolhardy. His watchword was, "Fear not." His bravery was lofty and his courage often heroic. But his courage was linked with discretion and controlled by reason. It was

courage born of faith, not the recklessness of blind presumption. He was truly brave but never audacious.

100:7.15(1103.3)

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39 And then Jesus discoursed on the dangers of courage and faith, how they sometimes lead unthinking souls on to recklessness and presumption. He also showed how prudence and discretion, when carried too far, lead to cowardice and failure. He exhorted his hearers to strive for originality while they shunned all tendency toward eccentricity. He pleaded for sympathy without sentimentality, piety without sanctimoniousness. He taught reverence free from fear and superstition. 149:4.4(1673.4)

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40 It would help you much if you would learn that true wisdom embraces discretion as well as courage. You should learn sagacity to go along with your aggressiveness. There will come those supreme moments wherein my disciples will not hesitate to lay down their lives for this gospel, but in all ordinary circumstances it would be far better to placate the wrath of unbelievers that you might live and continue to preach the glad tidings. 181:2.15(1958.2)

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41 The six did not separate to go to their work until they had exchanged many words in discussion of Jesus' instruction that each of them should choose a new apostle. Andrew's counsel finally prevailed, and they went forth to their labors. In substance Andrew said: "The Master is right; we are too few to encompass this work. There is need for more teachers, and the Master has manifested great confidence in us inasmuch as he has intrusted us with the choosing of these six new apostles." This morning, as they separated to go to their work, there was a bit of concealed depression in each heart. They knew they were going to miss Jesus, and besides their fear and timidity, this was not the way they had pictured the kingdom of heaven being inaugurated. 138:1.3(1539.1)

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42 Jesus received the obedience of his followers without exacting it. Only three men who received his personal call refused to accept the invitation to discipleship. He exercised a peculiar drawing power over men, but he was not dictatorial. He commanded confidence, and no man ever resented his giving a command. He assumed absolute authority over his disciples, but no one ever objected. He permitted his followers to call him Master. 149:2.12(1672.1)

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43 The Master was admired by all who met him except by those who entertained deep-seated religious prejudices or those who thought they discerned political dangers in his teachings. Men were astonished at the originality and authoritativeness of his teaching. They marveled at his patience in dealing with backward and troublesome inquirers. He inspired hope and confidence in the hearts of all who came under his ministry. Only those who had not met him feared him, and he was hated only by those who regarded him as the champion of that truth which was destined to overthrow the evil and error which they had determined to hold in their hearts at all cost. 149:2.13(1672.2)

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44 Jesus was an unusually cheerful person, but he was not a blind and unreasoning optimist. His constant word of exhortation was, "Be of good cheer." He could maintain this confident attitude because of his unswerving trust in God and his unshakable confidence in man. He was always touchingly considerate of all men because he loved them and believed in them. Still he was always true to his convictions and magnificently firm in his devotion to the doing of his Father's will. 100:7.9(1102.6)

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45 The Son of Man was always a well-poised personality. Even his enemies maintained a wholesome respect for him; they even feared his presence. Jesus was unafraid. He was surcharged with divine enthusiasm, but he never became fanatical. He was emotionally active but never flighty. He was imaginative but always practical. He frankly faced the realities of life, but he was never dull or prosaic. He was courageous but never reckless; prudent but never cowardly. He was sympathetic but not sentimental; unique but not eccentric. He was pious but not sanctimonious. And he was so well-poised because he was so perfectly unified. 100:7.4(1102.1)

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46 A philosophy of religion evolves out of a basic growth of ideas plus experimental living as both are modified by the tendency to imitate associates. The soundness of philosophic conclusions depends on keen, honest, and discriminating thinking in connection with sensitivity to meanings and accuracy of evaluation. Moral cowards never achieve high planes of philosophic thinking; it requires courage to invade new levels of experience and to attempt the exploration of unknown realms of intellectual living. ^{101:7.2(1113.8)}

Be a Sincere Problem Solver



47 Successful living is nothing more or less than the art of the mastery of dependable techniques for solving common problems. The first step in the solution of any problem is to locate the difficulty, to isolate the problem, and frankly to recognize its nature and gravity. The great mistake is that, when life problems excite our profound fears, we refuse to recognize them. Likewise, when the acknowledgment of our difficulties entails the reduction of our long-cherished conceit, the admission of envy, or the abandonment of deep-seated prejudices, the average person prefers to cling to the old illusions of safety and to the long-cherished false feelings of security. Only a brave person is willing honestly to admit, and fearlessly to face, what a sincere and logical mind discovers. ^{160:1.7(1773.4)}



48 The wise and effective solution of any problem demands that the mind shall be free from bias, passion, and all other purely personal prejudices which might interfere with the disinterested survey of the actual factors that go to make up the problem presenting itself for solution. The solution of life problems requires courage and sincerity. Only honest and brave individuals are able to follow valiantly through the perplexing and confusing maze of living to where the logic of a fearless mind may lead. And this emancipation of the mind and soul can never be effected without the driving power of an intelligent enthusiasm which borders on religious zeal. It requires the lure of a great ideal to drive man on in the pursuit of a goal which is beset with difficult material problems and manifold intellectual hazards. ^{160:1.8(1773.5)}



49 But the greatest of all methods of problem solving I have learned from Jesus, your Master. I refer to that which he so consistently practices, and which he has so faithfully taught you, the isolation of worshipful meditation. In this habit of Jesus' going off so frequently by himself to commune with the Father in heaven is to be found the technique, not only of gathering strength and wisdom for the ordinary conflicts of living, but also of appropriating the energy for the solution of the higher problems of a moral and spiritual nature. But even correct methods of solving problems will not compensate for inherent defects of personality or atone for the absence of the hunger and thirst for true righteousness. ^{160:1.10(1774.2)}



50 About this time a state of great nervous and emotional tension developed among the apostles and their immediate disciple associates. They had hardly become accustomed to living and working together. They were experiencing increasing difficulties in maintaining harmonious relations with John's disciples. The contact with the gentiles and the Samaritans was a great trial to these Jews. And besides all this, the recent utterances of Jesus had augmented their disturbed state of mind. Andrew was almost beside himself; he did not know what next to do, and so he went to the Master with his problems and perplexities. When Jesus had listened to the apostolic chief relate his troubles, he said: "Andrew, you cannot talk men out of their perplexities when they reach such a stage of involvement, and when so many persons with strong feelings are concerned. I cannot do what you ask of me — I will not participate in these personal social difficulties — but I will join you in the enjoyment of a three-day period of rest and relaxation. Go to your brethren and announce that all of you are to go with me up on Mount Sartaba, where I desire to rest for a day or two. ^{143:3.1(1610.4)}



51 *This was a marvelous occasion in the experience of each of them; they never forgot the day going up the mountain. Throughout the entire trip hardly a word was said about their troubles. Upon reaching the top of the mountain, Jesus seated them about him while he said: "My brethren, you must all learn the value of rest and the efficacy of relaxation. You must realize that the best method of solving some entangled problems is to forsake them for a time. Then when you go back fresh from your rest or worship, you are able to attack your troubles with a clearer head and a steadier hand, not to mention a more resolute heart. Again, many times your problem is found to have shrunk in size and proportions while you have been resting your mind and body."* ^{143:3.3(1611.1)}



52 *When they went up the mountain, Andrew's head was full of problems. John was inordinately perplexed in his heart. James was grievously troubled in his soul. Matthew was hard pressed for funds inasmuch as they had been sojourning among the gentiles. Peter was overwrought and had recently been more temperamental than usual. Judas was suffering from a periodic attack of sensitiveness and selfishness. Simon was unusually upset in his efforts to reconcile his patriotism with the love of the brotherhood of man. Philip was more and more nonplused by the way things were going. Nathaniel had been less humorous since they had come in contact with the gentile populations, and Thomas was in the midst of a severe season of depression. Only the twins were normal and unperturbed. All of them were exceedingly perplexed about how to get along peaceably with John's disciples.* ^{143:3.5(1611.3)}

The third day when they started down the mountain and back to their camp, a great change had come over them. They had made the important discovery that many human perplexities are in reality nonexistent, that many pressing troubles are the creations of exaggerated fear and the offspring of augmented apprehension. They had learned that all such perplexities are best handled by being forsaken; by going off they had left such problems to solve themselves. ^{143:3.6(1611.4)}

Their return from this holiday marked the beginning of a period of greatly improved relations with the followers of John. Many of the twelve really gave way to mirth when they noted the changed state of everybody's mind and observed the freedom from nervous irritability which had come to them as a result of their three days' vacation from the routine duties of life. There is always danger that monotony of human contact will greatly multiply perplexities and magnify difficulties. ^{143:3.7(1611.5)}



Strive To Demonstrate a Well-Balanced Character

53 *On this same occasion the Master talked to the group about the desirability of possessing well-balanced characters. He recognized that it was necessary for most men to devote themselves to the mastery of some vocation, but he deplored all tendency toward overspecialization, toward becoming narrow-minded and circumscribed in life's activities. He called attention to the fact that any virtue, if carried to extremes, may become a vice. Jesus always preached temperance and taught consistency — proportionate adjustment of life problems. He pointed out that overmuch sympathy and pity may degenerate into serious emotional instability; that enthusiasm may drive on into fanaticism. He discussed one of their former associates whose imagination had led him off into visionary and impractical undertakings. At the same time he warned them against the dangers of the dullness of overconservative mediocrity.* ^{149:4.3(1673.3)}



54 *It was not so much what Jesus taught about the balanced character that impressed his associates as the fact that his own life was such an eloquent exemplification of his teaching. He lived in the midst of stress and storm, but he never wavered. His enemies continually laid snares for him, but they never entrapped him. The wise and learned endeavored to trip him, but he did not stumble. They sought to embroil him in debate, but his answers were always enlightening, dignified, and final. When he was interrupted in his discourses with multitudinous questions, his answers were always significant and conclusive. Never did he resort to ignoble tactics in meeting the continuous pressure of his enemies, who did not hesitate to employ every sort of false, unfair, and unrighteous mode of attack upon him.* ^{149:4.5(1674.1)}



55 Jesus was the perfectly unified human personality. And today, as in Galilee, he continues to unify mortal experience and to co-ordinate human endeavors. He unifies life, ennobles character, and simplifies experience. He enters the human mind to elevate, transform, and transfigure it. It is literally true: "If any man has Christ Jesus within him, he is a new creature; old things are passing away; behold, all things are becoming new."
100:7.18(1103.6)

IV. Planning for Service "As You Pass By"



Sometimes it seems unimaginable to think about the difficult situations that Jesus faced as he lived his life as a man. But we know that from his youth onward that he experienced life in such a way that his service to others was habitual. It wasn't so much of a matter of thinking, but a matter of doing, acting. Let's take from away from today a simple plan to develop a habit or two that will give us the energy to "do unselfish good to others" as we go about our daily lives.

Please turn to the final page of this handout and respond to question 3.

Reflections



1. As you think about how you can shape your habits to "do unselfish good for others" as you go about your daily life, what are some strategies that you might consider? (*Section 2. Shaping Our Habits*)



2. As you read the section “As Jesus Passed by” what are some of the things that Jesus did as he passed by that you think you do well? Think of a few examples. What are some things that you think are important and you might like to get better at? Think of some situations where you could practice. (Section 3. As Jesus Passed by)



3. Select a theme(s) from this presentation theme and choose a quality(s) for “doing good to others” that you could commit to developing into a consistent habit. Make a simple plan to do good to others. (Section IV. Themes)

Which quality(s) did you select?

What will you do?

When will you do it?

How will you do it?

How will you know when you are successful?

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