

Study Guide to the Christian Service

August 2015

1st Week.

Dates: August 2nd to 8th, 2015

Reading Assignment: Pages 92.2- 94.3

Forceful Illustrations

Divine love has been stirred to its unfathomable depths for the sake of men, and angels marvel to behold in the recipients of so great love a mere surface gratitude. Angels marvel at man's shallow appreciation of the love of God. Heaven stands indignant at the neglect shown to the souls of men. Would we know how Christ regards it? How would a father and mother feel, did they know that their child, lost in the cold and the snow, had been passed by, and left to perish, by those who might have saved it? Would they not be terribly grieved, wildly indignant? Would they not denounce those murderers with wrath hot as their tears, intense as their love? The sufferings of every man are the sufferings of God's child, and those who reach out no helping hand to their perishing fellow beings provoke His righteous anger.—The Desire of Ages, 825. {ChS 92.2}

I have read of a man who, journeying on a winter's day through the deep, drifted snow, became benumbed by the cold which was almost imperceptibly stealing away his vital powers. And as he was nearly chilled to death by the embrace of the frost king, and about to give up the struggle for life, he heard the moans of a brother traveler, who was perishing with cold as he was about to perish. His humility was aroused to rescue him. He chafed the ice-clad limbs of the unfortunate man, and, after considerable effort, raised him to his feet; and as he could not stand, he bore him in sympathizing arms through the very drifts he had thought he could never succeed in getting through alone. And when he had borne his fellow traveler to a place of safety, the truth flashed home to him that in saving his neighbor he had saved himself also. His earnest efforts to save another quickened the blood which was freezing in his own veins, and created a healthful warmth in the extremities of the body. These lessons must be forced upon young believers continually, not only by precept, but by example, that in their Christian experience they may realize similar results.—Testimonies for the Church 4:319, 320. {ChS 92.3}

You are not to shut yourselves up to yourselves, and be content because you have been blessed with a knowledge of the truth. Who brought the truth to you? Who showed the light of the Word of God to you? God has not given you His light to be placed under a bushel. I have read of an expedition that was sent out in search of Sir John Franklin. Brave men left their homes, and wandered about in the North Seas, suffering privation, hunger, cold, and distress. And what was it all for?—Merely for the honor of discovering the dead bodies of the explorers, or, if possible, to rescue some of the party from the terrible death that must surely come upon them, unless help should reach them in time. If they could but save one man from perishing, they would count their suffering well paid for. This was done at the sacrifice of all their comfort and happiness. {ChS 93.1}

Think of this, and then consider how little we are willing to sacrifice for the salvation of the precious souls around us. We are not compelled to go away from home, on a long and tedious journey, to save the life of a perishing mortal. At our very doors, all about us, on every side, there are souls to be saved, souls perishing,—men and women dying without hope, without God,—and yet we feel unconcerned, virtually saying by our actions, if not by our words, "Am I my brother's keeper?" These men who lost their lives in trying to save others are eulogized by the world as heroes and martyrs. How should we who have the prospect of eternal life before us feel, if we do not make the little sacrifices that God requires of us, for the salvation of the souls of men?—The Review and Herald, August 14, 1888. {ChS 93.2}

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In a town in New England a well was being dug. When the work was nearly finished, while one man was still at the bottom, the earth caved in and buried him. Instantly the alarm was sent out, and mechanics, farmers, merchants, lawyers, hurried breathlessly to the rescue. Ropes, ladders, spades, and shovels were brought by eager, willing hands. "Save him, O save him!" was the cry. {ChS 94.1} Men worked with desperate energy, till the sweat stood in beads upon their brows and their arms trembled with the exertion. At length a pipe was thrust down, through which they shouted to the man to answer if he were still alive. The response came, "Alive, but make haste. It is fearful in here." With a shout of joy they renewed their efforts, and at last he was reached and saved, and the cheer that went up seemed to pierce the very heavens. "He is saved!" echoed through every street in the town. {ChS 94.2}

Was this too great zeal and interest, too great enthusiasm, to save one man? It surely was not; but what is the loss of temporal life in comparison with the loss of a soul? If the threatened loss of a life will arouse in human hearts a feeling so intense, should not the loss of a soul arouse even deeper solicitude in men who claim to realize the danger of those apart from Christ? Shall not the servants of God show as great zeal in laboring for the salvation of souls as was shown for the life of that one man buried in a well?—Gospel Workers, 31, 32. {ChS 94.3}

Questions to Ponder- August 8, 2015

1. With which illustration were you most impressed? Why?

2nd Week.

Dates: August 9th to 15th, 2015

Reading Assignment: Pages 94.4- 98.2

Profession vs. Expression

Every important truth received into the heart must find expression in the life. It is in proportion to the reception of the love of Christ that men desire to proclaim its power to others; and the very act of proclaiming it, deepens and intensifies its value to their own souls. {ChS 94.4}

Our faith should be prolific of good works; for faith without works is dead. {ChS 95.1}

All who receive the gospel message into the heart will long to proclaim it. The heaven-born love of Christ must find expression.—Christ's Object Lessons, 125. {ChS 95.2}

We are to praise God by tangible service, by doing all in our power to advance the glory of His name.—Christ's Object Lessons, 300. {ChS 95.3}

Our faith at this time must not stop with an assent to, or belief in, the theory of the third angel's message. We must have the oil of the grace of Christ that will feed the lamp, and cause the light of life to shine forth, showing the way to those who are in darkness. {ChS 95.4}

Your spiritual strength and blessing will be proportionate to the labor of love and the good works which you perform.—Testimonies for the Church 3:526. {ChS 95.5}

Very much more might be done for Christ if all who have the light of truth would practice the truth.—Testimonies for the Church 9:40. {ChS 95.6}

I was shown that as a people we are deficient. Our works are not in accordance with our faith. Our faith testifies that we are living under the proclamation of the most solemn and important message that was ever given to mortals. Yet in full view of this fact, our efforts, our zeal, our spirit of self-sacrifice, do not compare with the character of the work. We should awake from the dead, and Christ will give us life.—Testimonies for the Church 2:114. {ChS 95.7}

Go forth in faith, and proclaim the truth as if you believed it. Let those for whom you labor see that to you it is indeed a living reality.—Testimonies for the Church 9:42. {ChS 95.8}

A Christlike life is the most powerful argument that can be advanced in favor of Christianity.—Testimonies for the Church 9:21. {ChS 95.9}

There are many who profess the name of Christ whose hearts are not engaged in His service. They have simply arrayed themselves in a profession of godliness, and by this very act they have made greater their condemnation, and have become more deceptive and more successful agents of Satan in the ruin of souls.—The Review and Herald, March 27, 1888. {ChS 95.10}

Those who are watching for the Lord, are purifying their souls by obedience to the truth. With vigilant watching they combine earnest working. Because they know that the Lord is at the door, their zeal is quickened to co-operate with the divine intelligences in working for the salvation of souls. These are the faithful and wise servants who give to the Lord's household "their portion of meat in due season." They are declaring the truth that is now specially applicable. As Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Moses each declared the truth for his time, so will Christ's servants now give the special warning for their generation.—The Desire of Ages, 634. {ChS 96.1}

Our standing before God depends, not upon the amount of light we have received, but upon the use we make of what we have. Thus even the heathen who choose the right as far as they can distinguish it, are in a more favorable condition than are those who have had great light, and profess to serve God, but who disregard the light, and by their daily life contradict their profession.—The Desire of Ages, 239. {ChS 96.2}

It is the privilege of every Christian, not only to look for, but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain.—Christ's Object Lessons, 69. {ChS 96.3}

Christians should arouse themselves, and take up their neglected duties; for the salvation of their own souls depends upon their individual efforts.—The Review and Herald, August 23, 1881. {ChS 96.4}

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True worship consists in working together with Christ. Prayers, exhortation, and talk are cheap fruits, which are frequently tied on; but fruits that are manifested in good works, in caring for the needy, the fatherless, and widows, are genuine fruits, and grow naturally upon a good tree.—The Review and Herald, August 16, 1881. {ChS 96.5}

Let the individual members of the church take up their appointed work of diffusing as well as receiving light. Not one is excusable in being an idler in the Lord's vineyard.—The Review and Herald, February 19, 1889. {ChS 96.6}

The *doing principle* is the fruit that Christ requires us to bear; doing deeds of benevolence, speaking kind words, and manifesting tender regard for the poor, the needy, the afflicted.—The Review and Herald, August 16, 1881. {ChS 97.1}

The Samaritan woman who talked with Jesus at Jacob's well had no sooner found the Saviour than she brought others to Him. She proved herself a more effective missionary than His own disciples. The disciples saw nothing in Samaria to indicate that it was an encouraging field. Their thoughts were fixed upon a great work to be done in the future. They did not see that right around them was a harvest to be gathered. But through the woman whom they despised a whole city full were brought to hear Jesus. She carried the light at once to her countrymen. This woman represents the working of a practical faith in Christ.—The Ministry of Healing, 102. {ChS 97.2}

Seventh-day Adventists are making progress, doubling their numbers, establishing missions, and unfurling the banner of truth in the dark places of the earth; and yet the work moves far more slowly than God would have it. [Why?] The members of the church are not individually aroused to put forth the earnest effort they are capable of making, and every branch of the work is crippled by the lack of fervent piety, and devoted, humble, God-fearing laborers. Where are the soldiers of the cross of Christ? Let the God-fearing, the honest, the single-hearted, who look steadfastly to the glory of God, prepare themselves for the battle against error. There are too many faint, cowardly hearts in this hour of spiritual conflict. O that out of weakness they may be made strong, and wax valiant in fight, and put to flight the armies of the aliens!—Historical Sketches, 290. {ChS 97.3}

It is a universal principle that whenever one refuses to use his God-given powers, these powers decay and perish. Truth that is not lived, that is not imparted, loses its life-giving power, its healing virtue.—The Acts of the Apostles, 206. {ChS 97.4}

Nothing will give bone and sinew to your piety like working to advance the cause you profess to love, instead of binding it.—Testimonies for the Church 4:236. {ChS 98.1}

Those who endeavor to maintain Christian life by passively accepting the blessings that come through the means of grace, and doing nothing for Christ, are simply trying to live by eating without working. And in the spiritual as in the natural world, this always results in degeneration and decay.—Steps to Christ, 80, 81. {ChS 98.2}

Questions to Ponder August 15th, 2015

1. Are our works in accordance with our faith?
2. What is the favorable condition that a Heathen has over a professed Christian?

3rd Week.

Dates: August 16th to 22nd, 2015

Reading Assignment: Pages 93.3, 101.1

Danger Accompanying Missionary Activity

Let us not forget that as activity increases, and we become successful in doing the work that must be accomplished, there is danger of our trusting in human plans and methods. There will be a tendency to pray less, and to have less faith. We shall be in danger of losing our sense of dependence upon God, who alone can make our work succeed; but although this is the tendency, let no one think that the human instrument is to do less. No, he is not to do less, but to do more by accepting the heavenly gift, the Holy Spirit.—The Review and Herald, July 4, 1893. {ChS 98.3}

There will come times when the church will be stirred by divine power, and earnest activity will be the result; for the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit will inspire its members to go forth and bring souls to Christ. But when this activity is manifested, the most earnest workers will be safe only as they depend upon God through constant, earnest prayer. They will need to make earnest supplication that through the grace of Christ they may be saved from taking pride in their work, or of making a savior of their activity. They must constantly look to Jesus, that they may realize that it is His power which does the work, and thus be able to ascribe all the glory to God. We shall be called upon to make most decided efforts to extend the work of God, and prayer to our heavenly Father will be most essential. It will be necessary to engage in prayer in the closet, in the family, and in the church.—The Review and Herald, July 4, 1893. {ChS 98.4}

In the estimation of the rabbis, it was the sum of religion to be always in a bustle of activity. They depended upon some outward performance to show their superior piety. Thus they separated their souls from God, and built themselves up in self-sufficiency. The same dangers still exist. As activity increases, and men become successful in doing any work for God, there is danger of trusting to human plans and methods. There is a tendency to pray less, and to have less faith. Like the disciples, we are in danger of losing sight of our dependence on God, and seeking to make a savior of our activity. We need to look constantly to Jesus, realizing that it is His power which does the work. While we are to labor earnestly for the salvation of the lost, we must also take time for meditation, for prayer, and for the study of the Word of God. Only the work accomplished with much prayer, and sanctified by the merit of Christ, will in the end prove to have been efficient for good. {ChS 98.5}

Encouragement to Beginners in Christian Service

The most successful toilers are those who cheerfully take up the work of serving God in little things. Every human being is to work with his life-thread, weaving it into the fabric to help complete the pattern.—Testimonies for the Church 6:115. {ChS 99.1}

We are to make our everyday duties acts of devotion, constantly increasing in usefulness, because we see our work in the light of eternity.—Testimonies for the Church 9:150. {ChS 99.2}

The Lord has a place for every one in His great plan. Talents that are not needed are not bestowed.—Testimonies for the Church 9:37. {ChS 99.3}

Each has his place in the eternal plan of heaven. Each is to work in co-operation with Christ for the salvation of souls. Not more surely is the place prepared for us in the heavenly mansions than is the special place designated on earth where we are to work for God. {ChS 99.4}

The Lord has His eye upon every one of His people; He has His plans concerning each.—Testimonies for the Church 6:12. {ChS 99.5}

All can do something in the work. None will be pronounced guiltless before God unless they have worked earnestly and unselfishly for the salvation of souls.—Testimonies for the Church 5:395. {ChS 100.1}

Your duty cannot be shifted upon another. No one but yourself can do your work. If you withhold your light, someone must be left in darkness through your neglect.—Testimonies for the Church 5:464. {ChS 100.2}

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The humble worker who obediently responds to the call of God may be sure of receiving divine assistance. To accept so great and holy a responsibility is itself elevating to the character. It calls into action the highest mental and spiritual powers, and strengthens and purifies the mind and heart. Through faith in the power of God, it is wonderful how strong a weak man may become, how decided his efforts, how prolific of great results. He who begins with a little knowledge, in a humble way, and tells what he knows, while seeking diligently for further knowledge, will find the whole heavenly treasure awaiting his demand. The more he seeks to impart light, the more light he will receive. The more one tries to explain the Word of God to others, with a love for souls, the plainer it becomes to himself. The more we use our knowledge and exercise our powers, the more knowledge and power we shall have.—Christ's Object Lessons, 354. {ChS 100.3}

Let every one labor for God and for souls; let each show wisdom, and never be found in idleness, waiting for some one to set him to work. The "some one" who could set you to work is overcrowded with responsibilities, and time is lost in waiting for his directions. God will give you wisdom in reforming at once; for the call is still made, "Son, go work today in My vineyard." "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." Hebrews 3:7, 8. The Lord prefaces the requirement with the endearing word "son." How tender, how compassionate, yet withal, how urgent! His invitation is also a command.—Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, 419. {ChS 100.4}

Strength to resist evil is best gained by aggressive service.—The Acts of the Apostles, 105. {ChS 100.5}

Every act, every deed of justice and mercy and benevolence, makes music in heaven. {ChS 100.6}

The spirit of Christ is a missionary spirit. The very first impulse of the renewed heart is to bring others also to the Saviour.—The Great Controversy, 70. {ChS 101.1}

The only way to grow in grace is to be interestedly doing the very work Christ has enjoined upon us to do.—The Review and Herald, June 7, 1887. {ChS 101.2}

You are not to wait for great occasions or to expect extraordinary abilities before you go to work for God.—Steps to Christ, 83. {ChS 101.3}

The man who blesses society, and makes a success of life, is the one who, whether educated or uneducated, uses all his powers in the service of God and his fellow men. {ChS 101.4}

Many whom God has qualified to do excellent work accomplish very little, because they attempt little.—Christ's Object Lessons, 331. {ChS 101.5}

If you fail ninety-nine times in a hundred, but succeed in saving the one soul from ruin, you have done a noble deed for the Master's cause.—Testimonies for the Church 4:132. {ChS 101.6}

The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son. {ChS 101.7}

The Lord sees and understands, and He will use you, despite your weakness, if you offer your talent as a consecrated gift to His service; for in active, disinterested service the weak become strong and enjoy His precious commendation. The joy of the Lord is an element of strength. If you are faithful, the peace that passeth all understanding will be your reward in this life, and in the future life you will enter into the joy of your Lord.—Testimonies for the Church 8:34. {ChS 101.8}

Questions to Ponder August 22, 2015

1. What is the greatest danger in success?
2. Can we shift our duty unto another person?

4th Week.

Dates: August 23rd to 29th, 2015

Reading Assignment: Pages 101.9- 105.3

Persons of little talent, if faithful in keeping their hearts in the love of God, may win many souls to Christ. Harlan Page was a poor mechanic of ordinary ability and limited education; but he made it his chief business to seek to advance the cause of God, and his efforts were crowned with marked success. He labored for the salvation of his fellow men in private conversation and in earnest prayer. He established prayer meetings, organized Sunday schools, and distributed tracts and other religious reading. And on his deathbed, with the shadow of eternity resting upon his countenance, he was able to say, "I know that it is all of God's grace, and not through any merit of anything that I have done; but I think I have evidence that more than one hundred souls have been converted to God through my personal instrumentality."—Testimonies for the Church 5:307, 308. {ChS 101.9}

This world is not the Christian's heaven, but merely the workshop of God, where we are to be fitted up to unite with sinless angels in a holy heaven.—Testimonies for the Church 2:187. {ChS 102.1}

The humblest and poorest of the disciples of Jesus can be a blessing to others. They may not realize that they are doing any special good, but by their unconscious influence they may start waves of blessing that will widen and deepen, and the blessed results they may never know until the day of final reward. They do not feel or know that they are doing anything great. They are not required to weary themselves with anxiety about success. They have only to go forward quietly, doing faithfully the work that God's providence assigns, and their life will not be in vain. Their own souls will be growing more and more into the likeness of Christ; they are workers together with God in this life, and are thus fitting for the higher work and the unshadowed joy of the life to come.—Steps to Christ, 83. {ChS 102.2}

There are many who have given themselves to Christ, yet who see no opportunity of doing a large work or making great sacrifices in His service. These may find comfort in the thought that it is not necessarily the martyr's self-surrender which is most acceptable to God; it may not be the missionary who has daily faced danger and death, that stands highest in heaven's records. The Christian who is such in his private life, in the daily surrender of self, in sincerity of purpose and purity of thought, in meekness under provocation, in faith and piety, in fidelity in that which is least, the one who in the home life represents the character of Christ,—such a one may in the sight of God be more precious than even the world-renowned missionary or martyr.—Christ's Object Lessons, 403. {ChS 102.3}

Not the amount of labor performed, or its visible results, but the spirit in which the work is done, makes it of value with God.—Christ's Object Lessons, 397. {ChS 103.1}

The approval of the Master is not given because of the greatness of the work performed, because many things have been gained, but because of the fidelity in even a few things. It is not the great results we attain, but the motives from which we act, that weigh with God. He prizes goodness and faithfulness more than the greatness of the work accomplished. {ChS 103.2}

Do not pass by the little things, and look for a large work. You might do successfully the small work, but fail utterly in attempting a large work, and fall into discouragement. Take hold wherever you see that there is work to be done. Whether you are rich or poor, great or humble, God calls you into active service for Him. It will be by doing with your might what your hands find to do that you will develop talent and aptitude for the work. And it is by neglecting your daily opportunities that you become fruitless and withered. This is why there are so many fruitless trees in the garden of the Lord.—Testimonies for the Church 9:129. {ChS 103.3}

The Lord desires us to use every gift we have; and if we do this, we shall have greater gifts to use. He does not supernaturally endow us with the qualifications we lack; but while we use that which we have, He will work with us to increase and strengthen every faculty. By every wholehearted, earnest sacrifice for the Master's service, our powers will increase. {ChS 103.4}

Christ's heart is cheered by the sight of those who are poor in every sense of the term; cheered by His view of the ill-used ones who are meek; cheered by the seemingly unsatisfied hungering after

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righteousness, by the inability of many to begin. He welcomes, as it were, the very condition of things that would discourage many ministers.—Gospel Workers, 37. {ChS 103.5}

We need not go to heathen lands, or even leave the narrow circle of the home, if it is there that our duty lies, in order to work for Christ. We can do this in the home circle, in the church, among those with whom we associate, and with whom we do business.—Steps to Christ, 81. {ChS 103.6}

If we are making the life and teachings of Christ our study, every passing event will furnish a text for an impressive discourse.—Testimonies for the Church 9:63. {ChS 104.1}

The life on earth is the beginning of the life in heaven; education on earth is an initiation into the principles of heaven; the life-work here is a training for the life-work there. What we now are, in character and holy service, is the sure foreshadowing of what we shall be.— {ChS 104.2}

Those who reject the privilege of fellowship with Christ in service, reject the only training that imparts a fitness for participation with Him in His glory. They reject the training that in this life gives strength and nobility of character.—Education, 264. {ChS 104.3}

Let none suppose that they can live a life of selfishness, and then, having served their own interests, enter into the joy of their Lord. In the joy of unselfish love they could not participate. They would not be fitted for the heavenly courts. They could not appreciate the pure atmosphere of love that pervades heaven. The voices of the angels and the music of their harps would not satisfy them. To their minds the science of heaven would be as an enigma.—Christ's Object Lessons, 364, 365. {ChS 104.4}

Christ calls upon us to labor patiently and perseveringly for the thousands perishing in their sins, scattered in all lands, like wrecks on a desert shore. Those who share in Christ's glory must share also in His ministry, helping the weak, the wretched, and the despondent. {ChS 104.5}

The common people are to take their place as workers. Sharing the sorrows of their fellow men as the Saviour shared the sorrows of humanity, they will by faith see Him working with them.—Testimonies for the Church 7:272. {ChS 104.6}

Christ is sitting for His portrait in every disciple. Every one God has predestinated to be "conformed to the image of His Son." In every one Christ's long-suffering love, His holiness, meekness, mercy, and truth, are to be manifested to the world.—The Desire of Ages, 827. {ChS 104.7}

The call to place all on the altar of service comes to each one. We are not all asked to serve as Elisha served, nor are we all bidden to sell everything we have; but God asks us to give His service the first place in our lives, to allow no day to pass without doing something to advance His work in the earth. He does not expect from all the same kind of service. One may be called to ministry in a foreign land; another may be asked to give of his means for the support of gospel work. God accepts the offering of each. It is the consecration of the life and all its interests, that is necessary. Those who make this consecration, will hear and obey the call of Heaven.—Prophets and Kings, 221. {ChS 105.1}

The worldly wise man, who meditates and plans, and whose business is ever in his mind, should seek to become wise in matters of eternal interest. If he would put forth as much energy to secure the heavenly treasure and the life which measures with the life of God as he does to secure worldly gain, what could he not accomplish?—Testimonies for the Church 6:297. {ChS 105.2}

God will move upon men in humble positions to declare the message of present truth. Many such will be seen hastening hither and thither, constrained by the Spirit of God to give the light to those in darkness. The truth is as a fire in their bones, filling them with a burning desire to enlighten those who sit in darkness. Many, even among the uneducated, will proclaim the word of the Lord. Children will be impelled by the Holy Spirit to go forth to declare the message of heaven. The Spirit will be poured out upon those who yield to His promptings. Casting off man's binding rules and cautious movements, they will join the army of the Lord.—Testimonies for the Church 7:26, 27. {ChS 105.3}

Questions to Ponder August 29, 2015

1. What can we learn from Harlan Page?
2. In light of eternity, how important is the faithful service for Jesus here on Earth?