

Study Guide to the Christian Service

September 2015

1st Week.

Dates: August 30 to September 5th, 2015

Reading Assignment: Pages 105.4- 108.3

The Christian Life in Landscape

The heart that receives the word of God is not as a pool that evaporates, not like a broken cistern that loses its treasure. It is like the mountain stream, fed by unfailing springs, whose cool, sparkling waters leap from rock to rock, refreshing the weary, the thirsty, the heavy-laden. It is like a river constantly flowing, and as it advances, becoming deeper and wider, until its life-giving waters are spread over all the earth. The stream that goes singing on its way, leaves behind its gift of verdure and fruitfulness. The grass on its banks is a fresher green, the trees have a richer verdure, the flowers are more abundant. When the earth lies bare and brown under the summer's scorching heat, a line of verdure marks the river's course. {ChS 105.4}

So it is with the true child of God. The religion of Christ reveals itself as a vitalizing, pervading principle, a living, working, spiritual energy. When the heart is opened to the heavenly influence of truth and love, these principles will flow forth again like streams in the desert, causing fruitfulness to appear where now are barrenness and dearth.—Prophets and Kings, 233, 234. {ChS 106.1}

The Christian's Watchwords

There are three watchwords in the Christian life, which must be heeded if we would not have Satan steal a march upon us; namely, Watch, Pray, Work.—Testimonies for the Church 2:283. {ChS 106.2}

Every soul that has made a profession of Christ has pledged himself to be all that it is possible for him to be as a spiritual worker, to be active, zealous, and efficient in his Master's service. Christ expects every man to do his duty; let this be the watchword throughout the ranks of His followers.—Testimonies for the Church 5:460. {ChS 106.3}

A Spiritual Paralytic

Strength comes by exercise. All who put to use the ability which God has given them, will have increased ability to devote to His service. Those who do nothing in the cause of God, will fail to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. A man who would lie down and refuse to exercise his limbs, would soon lose all power to use them. Thus the Christian who will not exercise his God-given powers, not only fails to grow up into Christ, but he loses the strength which he already had; he becomes a spiritual paralytic. It is those who, with love for God and their fellow men, are striving to help others, that become established, strengthened, settled, in the truth. The true Christian works for God, not from impulse, but from principle; not for a day or a month, but during the entire period of life.—Testimonies for the Church 5:393. {ChS 106.4}

The Sure Remedy

For the disheartened there is a sure remedy,—faith, prayer, work. Faith and activity will impart assurance and satisfaction that will increase day by day. Are you tempted to give way to feelings of anxious foreboding or utter despondency? In the darkest days, when appearances seem most forbidding, fear not. Have faith in God. He knows your need. He has all power. His infinite love and compassion never weary. Fear not that He will fail of fulfilling His promise. He is eternal truth. Never will He change the covenant He has made with those who love Him. And He will bestow upon His faithful servants the measure of efficiency that their need demands.—Prophets and Kings, 164, 165. {ChS 107.1}

There is but one genuine cure for spiritual laziness, and that is work,—working for souls who need your help.—Testimonies for the Church 4:236. {ChS 107.2}

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This is the recipe that Christ has prescribed for the fainthearted, doubting, trembling soul. Let the sorrowful ones, who walk mournfully before the Lord, arise and help some one who needs help.—Testimonies for the Church 6:266. {ChS 107.3}

Christians who are constantly growing in earnestness, in zeal, in fervor, in love,—such Christians never backslide.—The Review and Herald, June 7, 1887. {ChS 107.4}

It is those who are not engaged in this unselfish labor who have a sickly experience, and become worn out with struggling, doubting, murmuring, sinning, and repenting, until they lose all sense as to what constitutes genuine religion. They feel that they cannot go back to the world, and so they hang on the skirts of Zion, having petty jealousies, envyings, disappointments, and remorse. They are full of fault finding, and feed upon the mistakes and errors of their brethren. They have only a hopeless, faithless, sunless experience in their religious life.—The Review and Herald, September 2, 1890. {ChS 107.5}

Unwarranted Excuses

When Jesus went away, He left to every man his work, and “nothing to do” is an unwarrantable excuse. “Nothing to do” is the reason of trial among the brethren; for Satan will fill the minds of idlers with his own plans, and set them to work.... “Nothing to do” brings evil testimony against the brethren, and dissension into the church of Christ. Jesus says, “He that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad.”—The Review and Herald, March 13, 1888. {ChS 108.1}

Brethren and sisters, many of you excuse yourselves from labor, on the plea of inability to work for others. But did God make you so incapable? Was not this inability produced by your own inactivity, and perpetuated by your own deliberate choice? Did not God give you at least one talent to improve, not for your own convenience and gratification, but for Him? Have you realized your obligation, as His hired servant, to bring a revenue to Him by the wise and skillful use of this intrusted capital? Have you not neglected opportunities to improve your powers to this end? It is too true that few have felt any real sense of their responsibility to God.—Testimonies for the Church 5:457. {ChS 108.2}

Many have the idea that if their life is a working, business life, they can do nothing for the salvation of souls, nothing to advance the cause of their Redeemer. They say they cannot do things by the halves, and therefore turn from religious duties and religious exercises, and bury themselves up in the world. They make their business primary, and forget God, and He is displeased with them. If any are engaged in business where they cannot advance in the divine life and perfect holiness in the fear of God, they should change to a business in which they can have Jesus with them every hour.—Testimonies for the Church 2:233, 234. {ChS 108.3}

Questions to Ponder- September 5, 2015

1. What are the three watchwords in the Christian life?
2. Which is the genuine cure for spiritual laziness?

2nd Week.

Dates: September 6th to 12th, 2015

Reading Assignment: Pages 108.4- 111.2

Aim for a Heavy Crown

We must not become weary or faint-hearted. It would be a terrible loss to barter away enduring glory for ease, convenience, and enjoyment, or for carnal indulgences. A gift from the hand of God awaits the overcomer. Not one of us deserves it; it is gratuitous on His part. Wonderful and glorious will be this gift, but let us remember that "one star differeth from another star in glory." But as we are urged to strive for the mastery, let us aim, in the strength of Jesus, for the crown heavy with stars. "They that be wise shall shine as the firmament, and they that win many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."—The Review and Herald, October 25, 1881. {ChS 108.4}

Service Has Been Paid For

The Lord at His coming will scrutinize every talent; He will demand interest on the capital He has intrusted. By His own humiliation and agony, by His life of toil and His death of shame, Christ has paid for the service of all who have taken His name and profess to be His servants.—Testimonies for the Church 9:104. {ChS 109.1}

All are under deepest obligation to improve every capability for the work of winning souls to Him. "Ye are not your own," He says; "for ye are bought with a price;" therefore glorify God by a life of service that will win men and women from sin to righteousness. We are bought with the price of Christ's own life,—bought that we may return to God His own in faithful service.—Testimonies for the Church 9:104. {ChS 109.2}

God has given me a message for His people. They must awake, spread their tents, and enlarge their borders. My brethren and sisters, you have been bought with a price, and all that you have and are is to be used to the glory of God and for the good of your fellow men. Christ died on the cross to save the world from perishing in sin. He asks your co-operation in this work. You are to be His helping hand. With earnest, unwearying effort you are to seek to save the lost. Remember that it was your sins that made the cross necessary.—Testimonies for the Church 7:9. {ChS 109.3}

Christ's followers have been redeemed for service. Our Lord teaches that the true object of life is ministry. Christ Himself was a worker, and to all His followers He gives the law of service,—service to God and to their fellow men.... The law of service becomes the connecting link which binds us to God and to our fellow men.—Christ's Object Lessons, 326. {ChS 109.4}

Go Forward

Often the Christian life is beset with dangers, and duty seems hard to perform. The imagination pictures impending ruin before, and bondage and death behind. Yet the voice of God speaks clearly, Go forward. Let us obey the command, even though our sight cannot penetrate the darkness. The obstacles that hinder our progress will never disappear before a halting, doubting spirit. Those who defer obedience till every uncertainty disappears, and there remains no risk of failure or defeat, will never obey. Faith looks beyond the difficulties, and lays hold of the unseen, even Omnipotence, therefore it cannot be baffled. Faith is the clasping of the hand of Christ in every emergency.—Gospel Workers, 262. {ChS 110.1}

Our ideas are altogether too narrow. God calls for continual advancement in the work of diffusing light. We must study improved ways and means of reaching the people. We need to hear with ears of faith the mighty Captain of the Lord's host saying, "Go forward." We must act, and God will not fail us. He will do His part when we in faith do ours. Brethren and sisters who have been long in the truth, you have not done the work God calls upon you to do. Where is your love for souls?—Historical Sketches, 289, 290. {ChS 110.2}

It was the joy of Christ to save souls. Let this be your work and your joy. Perform all duties and make all sacrifices for Christ's sake, and He will be your constant helper. Go straight forward where the voice of duty calls; let no seeming difficulties hinder you. Take up your God-given responsibilities, and as you bear your sometimes heavy burdens, do not ask, "Why idle stands my brother, no yoke upon

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him laid?" Do the duty nearest you, and do it thoroughly and well, not coveting praise, but working for the Master because you belong to Him.—The Southern Watchman, April 2, 1903. {ChS 110.3}

The course of God's people should be upward and onward to victory. A greater than Joshua is leading on the armies of Israel. One is in our midst, even the Captain of our salvation, who has said for our encouragement, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." He will lead us on to certain victory. What God promises, He is able at any time to perform. And the work He gives His people to do, He is able to accomplish by them.—Testimonies for the Church 2:122. {ChS 110.4}

Why do we not become enthused with the Spirit of Christ? Why are we so little moved by the pitiful cries of a suffering world? Do we consider our exalted privilege of adding a star to Christ's crown—a soul cut loose from the chains with which Satan has bound him, a soul saved in the kingdom of God? The church must realize its obligation to carry the gospel of present truth to every creature. I entreat of you to read the third and fourth chapters of Zechariah. If these chapters are understood, if they are received, a work will be done for those who are hungering and thirsting for righteousness, a work that means to the church, "Go forward and upward."—Testimonies for the Church 6:296. {ChS 111.1}

The great majority of this earth's inhabitants have given their allegiance to the enemy. But we have not been deceived. Notwithstanding the apparent triumph of Satan, Christ is carrying forward His work in the heavenly sanctuary and on the earth. The Word of God portrays the wickedness and corruption that would exist in the last days. As we see the fulfillment of prophecy, our faith in the final triumph of Christ's kingdom should strengthen; and we should go forth with renewed courage to do our appointed work.—Gospel Workers, 26, 27. {ChS 111.2}

Questions to Ponder September 12th, 2015

1. What did Jesus teach as the true object of life?
2. What are the word of encouragement when duty seems hard to perform?

3rd Week.

Dates: September 13th to 19nd, 2015

Reading Assignment: Pages 93.3, 101.1

An Impressive Scene

In the visions of the night a very impressive scene passed before me. I saw an immense ball of fire fall among some beautiful mansions, causing their instant destruction. I heard some one say, "We knew that the judgments of God were coming upon the earth, but we did not know that they would come so soon." Others, with agonized voices, said, "You knew! Why then did you not tell us? We did not know!" On every side I heard similar words of reproach spoken. {ChS 111.3}

In great distress I awoke. I went to sleep again, and I seemed to be in a large gathering. One of authority was addressing the company, before whom was spread out a map of the world. He said that the map pictured God's vineyard, which must be cultivated. As light from heaven shone upon any one, that one was to reflect the light to others. Lights were to be kindled in many places, and from these lights still other lights were to be kindled. {ChS 111.4}

The words were repeated: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matthew 5:13-16. {ChS 112.1}

I saw jets of light shining from cities and villages, and from the high places and the low places of the earth. God's word was obeyed, and as a result there were memorials for Him in every city and village. His truth was proclaimed throughout the world.—Testimonies for the Church 9:28, 29. {ChS 112.2}

Chapter 10—Methods

House to House

Of equal importance with special public efforts is house-to-house work in the homes of the people. In large cities there are certain classes that cannot be reached by public meetings. These must be searched out as the shepherd searches for his lost sheep. Diligent, personal effort must be put forth in their behalf. When personal work is neglected, many precious opportunities are lost, which, were they improved, would advance the work decidedly.—Testimonies for the Church 9:111. {ChS 113.1}

Deeds as well as words of sympathy are needed. Christ prefaced the giving of His message by deeds of love and benevolence. Let these workers go from house to house, helping where help is needed, and, as opportunity offers, telling the story of the cross. Christ is to be their text. They need not dwell upon doctrinal subjects; let them speak of the work and sacrifice of Christ. Let them hold up His righteousness, in their lives revealing His purity.—Testimonies for the Church 7:228. {ChS 113.2}

God is no respecter of persons. He will use humble, devoted Christians, even if they have not received so thorough an education as some others. Let such ones engage in service for Him by doing house-to-house work. Sitting by the fireside, they can—if humble, discreet, and godly—do more to meet the real needs of families than could an ordained minister.—Testimonies for the Church 7:21. {ChS 113.3}

Among the members of our churches there should be more house-to-house labor, in giving Bible readings and distributing literature.—Testimonies for the Church 9:127. {ChS 113.4}

Those who engage in house-to-house labor will find opportunities for ministry in many lines. They should pray for the sick, and should do all in their power to relieve them from suffering. They should work among the lowly, the poor, and the oppressed. We should pray for and with the helpless ones who have not strength of will to control the appetites that passion has degraded. Earnest, persevering effort must be made for the salvation of those in whose hearts an interest is awakened. Many can be reached only through acts of disinterested kindness. Their physical wants must first be relieved. As they see evidence of our unselfish love, it will be easier for them to believe in the love of Christ.—Testimonies for the Church 6:83, 84. {ChS 113.5}

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Let the workers go from house to house, opening the Bible to the people, circulating the publications, telling others of the light that has blessed their own souls.—Testimonies for the Church 9:123. {ChS 114.1}

Our Saviour went from house to house, healing the sick, comforting the mourners, soothing the afflicted, speaking peace to the disconsolate. He took the little children in His arms and blessed them, and spoke words of hope and comfort to the weary mothers. With unfailing tenderness and gentleness, He met every form of human woe and affliction. Not for Himself, but for others did He labor. He was the servant of all. It was His meat and drink to bring hope and strength to all with whom He came in contact.—Gospel Workers, 188. {ChS 114.2}

The presentation of the truth, in love and simplicity, from house to house, is in harmony with the instruction that Christ gave His disciples when He sent them out on their first missionary tour. By songs of praise, by humble, heartfelt prayers, many will be reached. The divine Worker will be present to send conviction to hearts. “I am with you always,” is His promise. With the assurance of the abiding presence of such a helper, we may labor with faith and hope and courage.—Testimonies for the Church 9:34. {ChS 114.3}

House-to-house laborers are needed. The Lord calls for decided efforts to be put forth in places where the people know nothing of Bible truth. Singing and prayer and Bible readings are needed in the homes of the people. Now, just now, is the time to obey the commission, “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” Those who do this work must have a ready knowledge of the Scriptures. “It is written” is to be their weapon of defense.—Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, 540. {ChS 114.4}

My brethren and sisters, visit those who live near you, and by sympathy and kindness seek to reach their hearts. Be sure to work in a way that will remove prejudice instead of creating it. And remember that those who know the truth for this time, and yet confine their efforts to their own churches, refusing to work for their unconverted neighbors, will be called to account for unfulfilled duties.—Testimonies for the Church 9:34. {ChS 115.1}

Questions to Ponder September 19th, 2015

1. What was the “Impressive Scene” Sister E.G White dreamt about?
2. List some of the methods we can use in House-to-House work?

4th Week.

Dates: September 20rd to 26th, 2015

Reading Assignment: Pages 101.9- 105.3

On this first tour the disciples were to go only where Jesus had been before them, and had made friends. Their preparation for the journey was to be of the simplest kind. Nothing must be allowed to divert their minds from their great work, or in any way excite opposition and close the door for further labor. They were not to adopt the dress of the religious teachers, nor use any guise in apparel to distinguish them from the humble peasants. They were not to enter into the synagogues and call the people together for public service; their efforts were to be put forth in house-to-house labor. They were not to waste time in needless salutations, or in going from house to house for entertainment. But in every place they were to accept the hospitality of those who were worthy, those who would welcome them heartily as if entertaining Christ Himself. They were to enter the dwelling with the beautiful salutation, "Peace be to this house." That home would be blessed by their prayers, their songs of praise, and the opening of the Scriptures in the family circle.—The Desire of Ages, 351, 352. {ChS 115.2}

Visit your neighbors in a friendly way, and become acquainted with them.... Those who do not take up this work, those who act with the indifference that some have manifested, will soon lose their first love, and will begin to censure, criticize, and condemn their own brethren.—The Review and Herald, May 13, 1902. {ChS 115.3}

The apostle's efforts were not confined to public speaking; there were many who could not have been reached in that way. He spent much time in house-to-house labor, thus availing himself of the familiar intercourse of the home circle. He visited the sick and the sorrowing, comforted the afflicted, and lifted up the oppressed. And in all that he said and did, he magnified the name of Jesus. Thus he labored, "in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." He trembled lest his teaching should reveal the impress of the human rather than the divine.—The Acts of the Apostles, 250. {ChS 115.4}

Go to your neighbors one by one, and come close to them till their hearts are warmed by your unselfish interest and love. Sympathize with them, pray with them, watch for opportunities to do them good, and as you can, gather a few together and open the Word of God to their darkened minds. Keep watching, as he who must render an account for the souls of men, and make the most of the privileges that God gives you of laboring with Him in His moral vineyard. Do not neglect speaking to your neighbors, and doing them all the kindness in your power, that you "by all means may save some." We need to seek for the spirit that constrained the apostle Paul to go from house to house pleading with tears, and teaching "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."—The Review and Herald, March 13, 1888. {ChS 116.1}

The Lord has presented before me the work that is to be done in our cities. The believers in these cities are to work for God in the neighborhood of their homes. They are to labor quietly and in humility, carrying with them wherever they go the atmosphere of heaven.—Testimonies for the Church 9:128. {ChS 116.2}

The One-Soul Audience

The work of Christ was largely made up of personal interviews. He had a faithful regard for the one-soul audience. From that one soul the intelligence received was carried to thousands.—Testimonies for the Church 6:115. {ChS 116.3}

He was faint and weary; yet He did not neglect the opportunity of speaking to one woman, though she was a stranger, an alien from Israel, and living in open sin.—The Desire of Ages, 194. {ChS 116.4}

The Saviour did not wait for congregations to assemble. Often He began His lessons with only a few gathered about Him, but one by one the passers-by paused to listen, until a multitude heard with wonder and awe the words of God through the heaven-sent Teacher. The worker for Christ should not feel that he cannot speak with the same earnestness to a few hearers as to a large company. There may be only one to hear the message; but who can tell how far-reaching will be its influence? It seemed a small matter, even to His disciples, for the Saviour to spend His time upon a woman of

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Samaria. But He reasoned more earnestly and eloquently with her than with kings, councilors, or high priests. The lessons He gave to that woman have been repeated to the earth's remotest bounds.—
The Desire of Ages, 194. {ChS 116.5}

Questions to Ponder September 26th, 2015

1. What was Jesus' Instructions to the Disciple in ther work House to House? What can we learn out of it?
2. Did Jesus wait for congregations to assemble to start teaching? Why not?