



The Work and the Life - 10

(1) WHAT HEAVENLY PRINCIPLE DOES JESUS ASK US TO FOLLOW?

John 13:34

Related Texts: 1 John 4:7-12, 16, 21; 2:8-10; 3:14-18, 23; 2 John 1:5, 6; John 15:12, 13, 17; Leviticus 19:18, 34; Romans 12:10; Ephesians 5:2; James 2:8; 1 Peter 1:22

God is the one who gives life, light and joy to everything. He pours out blessings to all of His creatures like rays of light from the sun and streams of water bursting from a flowing spring. And whenever the love of God is in the heart, it will flow out to others in love and blessings.

Jesus' greatest joy is in lifting up and saving us from our sinful condition. Saving us was more important to Him than His own life, and He gave it for our sake. He suffered on the cross and took our shame. Angels are also always working for the happiness of others, for this is their joy. These sinless beings are always helping us, even though we are wretched and in every way lower in character and rank. The spirit of Christ's self-sacrificing love is the spirit that fills heaven with happiness. This is the spirit that Christ's followers will have.

When the love of Jesus is living in our heart, like a sweet smell it cannot be hidden. Its holy effect will be felt by those we are around. The spirit of Jesus in our heart is a spring in the desert which flows to refresh everyone, making those who are ready to die anxious to drink of the water of life.

(2) WHY DID JESUS COME TO EARTH?

Matthew 20:28

Related Texts: Luke 22:27; 5:31, 32; Isaiah 61:1-3; 53:4, 5; Philippians 2:4-8; Psalm 146:7-9; Ephesians 5:2; Hebrews 9:28; 1 John 2:2

Our love to Jesus will be shown in a desire to work as He worked which was blessing and helping others. Following His example helps us to show love, tenderness, and sympathy toward all the creatures of our heavenly Father's care.

Jesus' life on earth was not a life of ease and selfishness. He worked with unending, earnest, and untiring effort to save those lost in sin. From the manger to Calvary He was always unselfish and did not try to avoid hard work. The pain He went through as He traveled and the untiring care He gave was always for the good of others. He said He "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." This was the main reason for His life. Everything else came in second place. His purpose in life was to do the will of God and to finish His work. It was like food and water to Him. Selfishness had no part in the things He did.

(3) WHEN WE BECOME PARTAKERS OF THE GRACE OF CHRIST, LIKE JOHN, WHAT TESTIMONY WILL THE HOLY SPIRIT LEAD US TO PROCLAIM?

John 1:29

Related Texts: 1 Peter 1:19, 20; Revelation 5:12, 13; 13:8; Galatians 1:4; 1 John 2:2; 3:5; 4:10; Isaiah 53:5-7

Those who accept the grace of Jesus will be ready to do anything they can so that others for whom Jesus died, may share in His heavenly gift. They will do all they can to make the world a better place because they were in it. To be this way is the result of a heart truly changed. As soon as we come to Christ there is born in our heart a desire to tell others what a precious friend we have found in Jesus. This saving and life changing truth cannot be shut up in our heart. If we are covered with the goodness of Jesus and are filled with the joy of His Spirit living in us, we will not be able to keep from telling others. If we have found or ourselves that the Lord is good we will have something to tell the world. We will do like Philip when he found the Saviour. We will invite others into His presence. We will show them attractive things about Jesus and describe to them the things we cannot yet see about a better world to come. We will have a strong desire to follow in the path that Jesus walked. We will have a real desire for those around us to "behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" so that they, too, may come to know Him.

(4) WHAT IS THE RESULT OF UNSELFISH LABOR FOR OTHERS?

Proverbs 11:25

Related Texts: Proverbs 28:27; Isaiah 58:7-11; Job 29:13-17; Matthew 5:7; 25:34- 36; 2 Corinthians 9:6-13

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As we do things to help bless others it will result in blessings coming back upon ourselves. This was the reason God let us have a part to play in His plan to win back the lost. He has given us the honor of being able to partake of Christ's holy nature and then to share blessings with others. This is the highest honor and the greatest joy that it is possible for God to give to us. Those who in this way get involved in doing these acts of love are the ones who are brought nearest to their Creator.

God could have given the angels the joy of proclaiming the gospel or used other methods. But, in His endless love, He chose to let us become partners with Him in this loving ministry. He wanted us to share in the joy and spiritual blessings that comes from unselfishly serving others.

(5) WHAT EXAMPLE OF SELF-SACRIFICE DID CHRIST GIVE US?

2 Corinthians 8:9

Related Texts: 1 Peter 2:21; Philippians 2:6-8; Mark 10:44, 45; Matthew 20:28; John 13:3-5; 1 Timothy 6:17-19; James 2:5; Hebrews 2:9-18; Matthew 6:33

We are brought into sympathy with Christ when we go through the kind of suffering He went through. Every time we deny ourselves and do a good deed for someone else this makes the desire of giving even stronger in our heart. When we do this we become closer to Jesus, the One who saved the world. He "was rich, yet for your sakes ... became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." And it is only when we minister to the needs of others that life can be a blessing to us. This was God's reason for creating us.

If you will go to work for Jesus in the way He wants His followers to, and win souls for Him, you will feel the need to be closer to Him. You will want to learn more about spiritual things and will have a hunger and thirst for good. You will plead with God, and your faith will be made stronger. Your soul will drink larger amounts of water from the well of life. When you come face to face with trials and things go wrong, this will drive you to spend more time in the Bible and in prayer. You will grow in grace, learn more about Jesus and draw closer to Him.

(6) WHO GIVES US THE DESIRE TO REACH OUT TO OTHERS?

Philippians 2:13

Related Texts: Hebrews 13:20, 21; 2 Chronicles 30:12; Isaiah 26:12; Jeremiah 31:33; John 3:27; 1 Kings 8:58; 2 Thessalonians 1:11, 12; 2 Timothy 1:9

(7) WHAT BLESSING COMES TO THOSE WHO DEVOTE THEMSELVES TO UNSELFISH LABOR FOR THE GOOD OF OTHERS?

Isaiah 58:10, 11

Related Texts: Psalm 41:1-3; 112:4-9; Deuteronomy 15:7-10; Proverbs 11:24, 25; 14:31; 28:27; Matthew 10:39

The spirit of unselfishness shown by helping others develops, strengthens, and gives Christlike loveliness to the character. It brings peace and happiness to the one who has it. As a result our goals

are set higher and there is no room for laziness or selfishness. When we exercise these Christlike ways we will grow and become stronger in our work for God. We will have a clearer understanding of spiritual things, our faith will be steady and grow, and we will receive more power in our prayers. The Spirit of God, moving in our spirit, brings together holy things in our hearts as we are touched in a divine way. When we apply ourselves in this way to do unselfish things for the good of others we are most certainly choosing the way of salvation.

(8) WHAT TWO ACTIONS, BLESSED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, WILL RESULT IN OUR GREATEST SPIRITUAL GROWTH?

James 1:25

Related Texts: James 2:12; Luke 6:46, 49; 11:28; John 8:31; 13:17; 15:9, 10; Romans 11:22; 1 Timothy 4:16; Psalm 119:2, 3; 1 Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 22:14

The only way to grow in grace is to be doing the work which Jesus has asked us to do. Without being partial to anyone, we should help others the best we can. We can do this by blessing those who are in need with whatever help we can give them. Strength comes by exercise and activity which gives us spiritual life. Some people try to carry on a Christian life by just sitting by and accepting the blessings that come from the grace of Jesus. When they are doing nothing for Jesus they are simply trying to live by eating without working. It is the same in the spiritual world as it is in the regular world; this passiveness always results in loss and decay. If you refuse to exercise your arms and legs you will soon

lose the power to use them. It is the same way with Christians who do not exercise their God-given powers. They not only fail to grow to know Christ, but they lose the strength that they already had.

(9) WHAT MISSION HAS CHRIST GIVEN HIS CHURCH?

Matthew 28:19, 20

Related Texts: Acts 1:8; 26:16-18; 22:14, 15; Isaiah 49:6, 22; 52:10; Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24:47, 48; Matthew 5:13-16; 24:14

The church of Jesus is God's chosen tool that he uses to save men. The job of the church is to carry the gospel to the world. By using the talents we are given, we are to spread the gospel as Jesus has asked us to do. Once we have had the love of Jesus shown to us, we owe it to those who don't know Him to tell them about His love. God has given us light, not just for ourselves but to spread to others.

If all the followers of Christ were doing their duty, there would be thousands where there is only one telling the gospel in heathen lands today. And if all who could not personally help with the work would support it with their money, their sympathy, and their prayers, there would be far more earnest work and results in saving souls.

(10) AS CHRISTIANS, WHERE ARE WE CALLED TO WORK FOR CHRIST?

1 Corinthians 7:24

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Related Texts: Acts 16:25; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17, 23, 24; Isaiah 6:8; Philippians 4:11; 2 Corinthians 3:3; Matthew 25:36; 28:19, 20; James 1:27; Acts 22:21; 26:16, 17

We don't need to go to heathen lands, or even leave the narrow circle of the home, if this is where our duty is to work for Christ. We can work for Him in our homes, in the church, with those that we are around, and with those that we do business with.

The greater part of our Saviour's life on earth was spent in patient work in the carpenter's shop at Nazareth. Helpful angels were with the Lord of Life as He walked side by side with common people and workers. No one knew who He was or gave Him honor. Whether He was working at His humble job, healing the sick, or walking upon the storm-tossed waves of Galilee, He always faithfully did the task He was sent from heaven to do. We can follow His example and in the humblest duties and lowest positions of life, we may walk and work with Jesus.

The apostle Paul says, "Let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God." If we are businessmen we may do our business in a way that will glorify our Master by our faithfulness. If we are true followers of Jesus we will carry our faith into everything we do and show others what Jesus is like. The mechanic may be a hard working and faithful example of Jesus who worked in a typical livelihood among the hills of Galilee. Everyone who claims to be Christian should work so that others, by seeing his good works, may be led to bring glory to their Creator and Redeemer.

(11) THOUGH WE MAY CONSIDER THEM HUMBLE, WHY IS IT OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO EXERCISE OUR TALENTS FOR THE SERVICE OF CHRIST?

John 15:2

Related Texts: Luke 19:17, 24; 12:48; 8:18; Matthew 25:28; 1 Corinthians 1:27-29; 15:10

Many people make excuses for not using their gifts for the service of Jesus because others have greater ability and other advantages that they don't have. Many people think that only those who are very talented need to dedicate their abilities to the service of God. It has come to be understood by many that talents are given to only a certain chosen group and the rest are not included to share in the work or the rewards. But it is not this way in the story Jesus told. When the master of the house called on his servants, he gave to each one their work to do.

(12) WHEN LOVE FOR GOD FILLS OUR HEART, HOW WILL WE APPROACH LIFE'S HUMBLE DUTIES?

Ephesians 6:6, 7

Related Texts: Colossians 3:22, 23; 1 Thessalonians 2:3, 4; Matthew 7:2; 1 Peter 2:15; 4:2; Hebrews 13:5; 1 Timothy 6:6; Galatians 1:10

With a loving spirit we may do life's humblest duties for God [Colossians 3:23]. If the love of God is in the heart, it will be shown in the life. The sweet

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presence of Jesus will be all around us and the influence we have will lift up others and bless them.

(13) IF OUR RELATIONSHIP IS RIGHT WITH GOD, WHAT WILL BE OUR MOTIVATION IN ALL THINGS?

Colossians 3:23

Related Texts: Colossians 3:17; 1 Corinthians 10:31; 2 Chronicles 31:21; Psalm 103:1; 119:10, 34, 145

We are not to wait for great events or expect to have great abilities before we can go to work for God. We don't need to worry about what the world will think. When our daily life shows how pure and sincere our faith is, then others will be convinced that our desire is to help them and our efforts will not be lost.

(14) WHAT WILL RESULT FROM A LIFE OF FAITH AND SHARING?

2 Corinthians 9:6

Related Texts: Luke 6:38; Proverbs 11:18, 24; 22:9; Matthew 5:14; 1 Timothy 5:25; Psalm 41:1-3; Ecclesiastes 11:1, 6; Galatians 6:7-9; Hebrews 6:10

The humblest and poorest of the followers of Jesus can be a blessing to others even though they may not realize they are doing any special good. They may not know that by their influence they may start waves of blessings that will grow wider and deeper. The blessed

results they may never know until the day that the final rewards are given. They do not feel or know that they are doing anything great. They are not supposed to weary themselves with worry about whether their efforts will be a success. They only have to go forward quietly, doing faithfully the work that God's plan for them gives. If they do this their lives 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 by doing this are being prepared for the higher work and the unshadowed joy of the life to come.

I am thankful to Jesus for leaving the glory of heaven to minister to the needs of mankind.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I pray for the Holy Spirit to guide me to follow Christ's example of evangelism: first, to mingle with people and be a friend; second, to show compassion for their physical needs and gain their confidence; and then tell them the good news of the gospel.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am realizing that the richest spiritual blessings and growth will come to those who minister to others. I dedicate my life to God's service and pray that He will guide me into ministry for others.

Circle: Yes Undecided