



Especially
for
Young People

Volume One

Especially for Young People

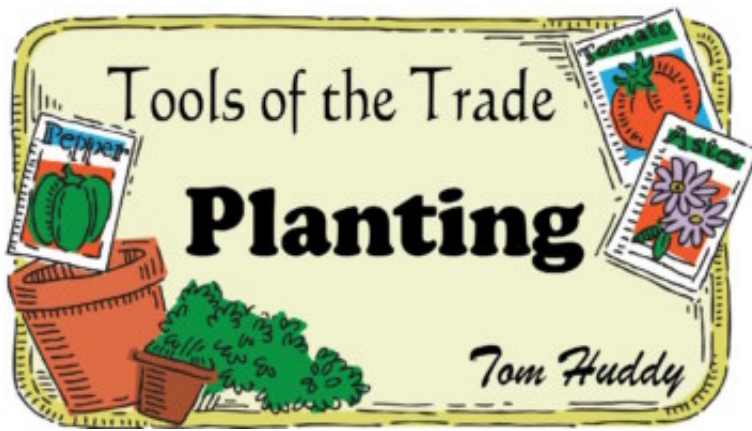
Volume One

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I do not have a Scripture for this lesson, but I would like to share the thoughts God has given me. I appreciate all the young people. At one time, I was young, but that was many years ago. I appreciate all the people who have helped me—both young and old, male and female—working around the tabernacle.

Now my thought for this little message is, How to Become a Master Gardener for the Lord. When God comes into your heart and saves your soul, a new seed is planted. It reminds me of the process of a flower plant. You can take the little individual packets, like they use in the greenhouses, and put

a little seed in there. Put it where it is warm, early in the spring, and it will start to sprout. This is just like your communion with God. If you study God's Word and let it work in your life, you will grow into a good soldier for Him. We have a master, the Lord Jesus Christ, and He is the One who will keep us. But we must put forth some effort. We have to pray to cultivate the seed. We have to work at becoming a good worker for God. In His gardens or His vineyards (in whatever line of work that God has given to us), God will help us. We must stay close to Him, remembering that the devil will always be there to cause problems. That is what he was designed to do, and he is good at his job.

When God saves your soul, you become a new creature in God. He took out the old, sinful spirit that was there. Now, you will have to use your imagination a little bit. Thinking of your Christian experience, imagine a monstrous garden, a big chunk of land. Next to this big garden is another chunk of land, but there is a hedge between. That is the devil's garden. He is always camped next door to see what is going on.

God has given each of His children a marked row in this garden. Each Christian has a row that has been marked out. No doubt, you have heard the old saying, "You've got a long row to hoe." That means you must labor down through life, day by day, week by week, year by year, right on through till God says, "You've been a good gardener," and He takes you home. As you work in this garden, you are going to find different types of soil. You are going to hit hard places; you are going to hit clay; you are going to hit rock. There will be stony places to work through. It will not hurt to leave knee prints in the ground where you have had to get down and pray for help from God. As you go along through life, you will see other saints ahead of you who have been good workers for God years and years before your time. You can look at their row and see where sometimes they must have went through a dry place. That was where faith had to come in. They had to keep going during the times when it seemed like God was not there.

Young person, when those times come, remember that God knows your thoughts. He knows everything that is going on. Do not forget that! Then when He does shower a blessing down on you, you will really rejoice. When you hear a good message that blesses you, it is just like a plant getting the water and sunshine it needs to make it grow into a healthy plant. When a Christian stays close to God, reads, prays, listens to the messages, and digs deeper, he will blossom into a beautiful person. People around you will notice that you are different. Maybe you will get a chance to testify to them, and they might become a Christian too. That is what we are here for—to be workers for God.

As time goes on in this garden, each one of us will have our problems, because Satan is right next door. He is watching, and he does not like anything that God has going on. Satan's garden is full of weeds, ragweeds, poison ivy, vines, and thistles. He has many people working for him, trying their best to keep up with the Christians. Satan will do anything to cause problems. He will get an armful of thistles and try to throw them over the hedge into our garden. If you are not up to power with God, those vines, thistles, and ivy will poison your heart, your thoughts, and your mind to the place that he can cause you to slip and fall. Satan needs more workers. He likes to get all the workers from God that he can. When he does, that makes his day. If Satan can get a saint to slip and fall, he will just jerk him over to his side of the hedge and make a disciple out of him.

Young person, as you work in your garden, problems will arise, but God will always come to your rescue. Do not be afraid to get down on your knees and pray and ask God to help you. He will send down the blessings. God sends down blessings on the unsaved, but they do not full appreciate them. Jesus said that God "sendeth rain on the just and

on the unjust" (Matthew 5:45). Rain is like the preaching of the Word. You need that spiritual food to help you grow. If you will obey that and walk close to the Lord, you will prosper in life. Then, when you get my age, you can look back and say, "I remember when I got victory over that."

I was a young boy when World War 2 came along. I was just ten years old on the day when Pearl Harbor was bombed. Although I was young, I was worried about having to go into war, because Hitler had his youth groups of eleven- and twelve-year-old boys. He had big armies of them, and the newspapers were full of that before we got into war with Japan. It worried me to death because I was just a kid. On the Sunday morning that Pearl Harbor was bombed, I kept asking my mom, "They're not going to take me away from home, are they?" Thank the Lord, I was not old enough to go at that time (but I was in the Korean War later on). During that war, we had gardens. The government wanted everybody to put in a victory garden to support yourself. There were vegetables in that garden, and everything was planted in a "V," which stood for victory. Every little space that was available in town or in yards was made into victory gardens.

I remembered those gardens as I thought about our spiritual garden. In this garden God will give you a row. That is your row of life, the path you are going to travel. It is nobody else's row, but it is your row. As you go along this row, there will be opportunities to talk with friends and relatives and with people you work with. You will get a chance to testify to them. That is what makes you a good gardener. When you tell them about God, there is a possible chance that God will talk to their hearts, and that will add to your basket of flowers, or souls. In a way, it is very similar to how you put the seed in the rich soil and then give it a shot of Miracle Grow. Miracle Grow will give the plant a little boost, a little extra show, a kick-off. Now it is a miracle when God saves your soul. We cannot figure that out, but God knows how it is done. We are just the ones who are blessed by it.

As I thought of this spiritual garden, I imagined that my row was next to the hedge in this big field, and I could look over the hedge and see Satan's workers. They were beating themselves to death; they had no plowed ground to work in, and they had dull hoes. They were beating the ground like they would beat snakes, trying to get the ground chopped up for planting. If that was not bad enough, then the devil gave the workers old seed—ragweed, poison ivy, vines, and thistles, anything that would choke out a healthy plant.

When I was a boy the farmers would hire us to succor the corn. They would pay us I think it was a quarter an hour, which was big wages at that time. We would take the bottom leaves off the cornstock, and we would pull off the wild morning glories or any kind of ivy that would wind around and choke the plant. As we went through there, someone would cultivate behind us. Then we would hill the corn in. It was important to remove what we called pea vines, because they would wind around the corn stalk and girdle that stalk until sap could not come up through. If that vine was not pulled off, when the ears came on, we would not have any full ears. So that was kind of a spiritual lesson to me.

As we look across to the devil's garden, we see that we are getting ahead of them quite a ways. Our plants look so nice, because God has given us a good crop. He has blessed our gardens as He does our souls. Yet, we see the workers for Satan just beating themselves to death. They say to us, "Maybe we can get you to come over or your Master Gardener to come and talk over the hedge to us and show us what we are doing wrong." But their weeds and vines are drooped; there is nothing pretty about them. The only blossoms they have are the kind that float away, and that is what the devil wants them to do. He will try to get a breeze to blow those blossoms toward our area because he wants that seed to get over there and get started. But God will not permit that. They are tares, not blossoms.

Another reason the sinner is having a hard time is because he does not get that good, spiritual rain that the Christian's garden gets. About the only thing a sinner can water with is booze, wine, or liquor of some sort. Plants do not thrive on that at all, but that is just another way the devil keeps the sinner in darkness. Satan promises a reward down the road, a vacation with many people, friends, and relatives. But we know where that vacation really is—hell! That will be their reward; that is the vacation at the end of their row. But it is different in God's garden. When we get to the end of our row, after we have lived a good life for God and have been a good worker, He will have a place for



us in paradise. It will be a victory for us! Oh, we will go through hard places, stony ground, and dry places, but God will send showers and blessings down on us, just as He does for the literal flowers, and we will blossom out and work for him and win others to God.

Young person, a lot of these things may sound foolish right now, but when you get to be my age, you will look back and see that it was not foolish after all. If I did not have a good praying mother and grandmother, I would not be where I am today. I might be living a life of sin or dead in a cemetery. How important it is to have someone praying for you when you are young, someone to guide you and show you the right way. My dad was a drunkard, and we were poor. It was back around the end of the Depression, and Dad would go straight from the job and spend his paycheck on himself. The only way we survived was to live on what we had put up in storage, in the cellar. Mother would sit and cry. I have seen her cry for as long as two days at a time, until her eyes were swollen shut. We kids would try to comfort her. That turned me against booze and cigarettes. Thank God, I have never taken the first puff on a cigarette or the first sip of alcohol. God has been good to me.

When I was in the Marine Corp, the guys would say, "Oh, Tom, come on, we've got some women lined up and we're going to have a good time." I said, "Hey, I've got a good wife at home waiting on me, a good Christian woman, and I'm not interested." They would say: "Man, you don't know what you're missing. Your wife is 6,000 miles from you. How is she ever going to find out?" Well, she would have found out some way or another, because you do not get by with sin. There is a payday for everything that you do in life. I have had people ask me, "Well, how come you never did this or that?" It was because I did not have any desire to.

Mother would take her three children, and we would walk five miles each way to Sunday school and church and Wednesday night prayer meeting. My dad would be at the bar, while we were walking on an old gravel road to church. We lived in a log house, and we were poor, but that did not affect us. God always made a way. Somebody might pick us up once in a while, but back in those days there were not very many cars traveling the roads, as there are today. So most of the time we would walk. We had some good times. The boys would run ahead of Mom and throw rocks and play in the creek, as boys will do, but it was a good life. I am so thankful I had a good mother! Where would I be if she had not prayed for me?

Before I went overseas, during the Korean fight, I took combat training. My buddies, whom I went through training with, were all ready to go, and I was too. But all at once they changed my MOS, and instead of sending me overseas, they made me the commanding officer driver. Now, isn't that something? The guys said, "Huddy, you lucky thing, how in the world did you get out of going over to Korea?" As time went on, I understood that it was God. My grandmother and mother were praying that God would keep me safe. (Although I did go overseas later, it was almost the end of the Korean War, and I did not have to fight.) My buddies went over and the stars and stripes came back three months later. They were all killed in action. That just goes to show you how God will put a protecting hand over you and your children if you serve Him. That is the reason I have a burden for my children. My children grew up in a Church of God congregation. They know what is right. Yet today, they will use any kind of excuse to stay away from the church services, because they do not want to come under conviction. They will give any kind of an answer as to why they cannot come: "Oh, Dad, I've got company coming," or "I've got to do this or that." My wife and I keep praying. Our children are getting up in age, and my daughter is not well. They know where they belong. So, we pray for them, holding onto God. We will not give up, for the only hope they have is if somebody is praying for them.

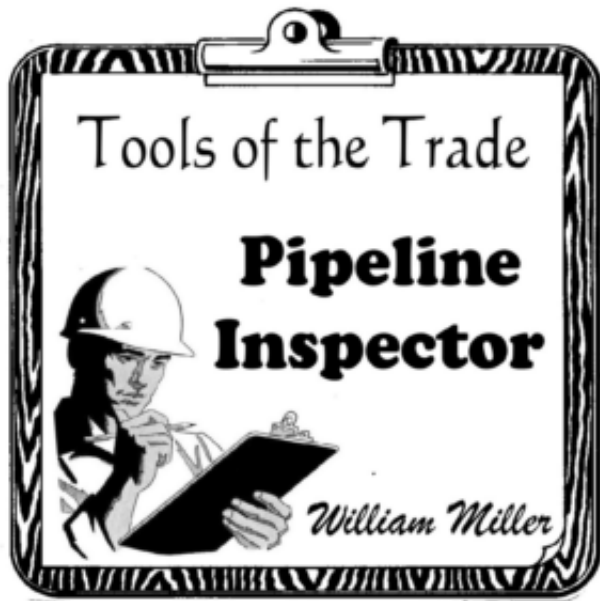
If you have praying parents, you are blessed! I was raised in the Church of God. I was a fortunate person. There were times when I got away from God, but that was through my own foolishness. I thought, "I want to go out and see what the world is all about for a while." But it did not take long. I never forgot where I was at spiritually. I never forgot what would happen to me if I were to get killed. I knew that I would lose my soul. That was always in the back of my mind. Young person, if you are unsaved, that is in the back of your mind as well. Be thankful that you have people who have told you about Jesus and God and about being saved. I thank the Lord for that in my life, and I brought my children up at God's Acres and down on Sixth and Locust Street. I have not given up hope for them. I will just keep right on hanging in there.

I want you young people to know that there is only one way to live. There is nothing out there but trouble. When young people go out into sin, they get in trouble. Even some of my own children have gotten into trouble. When they left the nest, in other words, when they got out from under Dad and Mom's roof, they decided to do what they wanted to do. When I had them where I would watch them, I liked that. I could wash their faces, get them ready, and take them

to church. I kept control of them. I knew what they were doing. During the church service, they sat only a couple of seats away. But when they got to a certain age, I could not hold them any longer. They were going to do what they wanted to do. I know it still bothers them, because they will not come around the house when it is a church night or a Sunday. They know if we are able, we will be at church. But they know where to find us.

I trust that in this message I have said something that might help you down through life. No matter where you go, this is a small world. God knows where you are at all the time. He knows your thoughts. He knows what you are doing, if it is good or if Satan has his claws in you. Our reward is to make Heaven our home. All of us want to go to Heaven. If you ask a sinner, "Do you want to go to Heaven?" he would say, "Sure, I want to go to Heaven." Yet, if you say, "Well, why not come to church and study on God and get saved?" he would answer, "Well, I've got time." No one knows how much time they have. You could be snatched out of this world at any time. God could take you. It is His mercy that you are here. It is His mercy that you can get out of bed every morning. When you put your feet on the floor and stand upright, you ought to say, "Thank You, God." God has been good to you. So trust in God, live for God, and you will never go wrong. There are all kinds of fancy things to look at out there in sin—that is what people lust after—but there is nothing like being able to get in touch with God quickly when you need Him, living so that when you need Him, He is there.





After working many years for the gas company, I saw a parallel of a Christian life and a gas pipeline. You might think of that as a strange comparison, but let me explain. When a steel gas pipeline is placed underground, a process of corrosion starts to take place. Understanding that this process was taking place, the gas companies have tried to combat it by coating the pipe to separate it from making contact with the earth. I liken this to us as Christians, who are in the world but not of the world. We are clothed with the cloak of salvation.

The process of corrosion is an electrochemical process. The type of earth in which a pipeline is laid has much to do with the speed of corrosion. Wet, mucky clay is very corrosive. This is due to it being a low resistivity soil. In other words, it is a good conductor of electricity.

Galvanic corrosion takes place when part of the pipeline becomes anodic and current flows from it to a part that is cathodic. As the current leaves the anodic part, it takes with it a part of the steel pipe. Normally, this is a low amount of

current measured in milliamps.

Like the pipeline, the Christian may find himself in low resistivity areas, which is a very bad environment. Sometimes it might be school, work, or some other environment. When the corrosion process takes place on a pipeline, it eventually leads to a hole in the line, resulting in a dangerous situation. When a Christian is exposed to a bad environment, he has to watch that he does not get "holes" in his cloak of salvation. He must keep himself unspotted from the world.

We install cathodic protection to correct corrosion of a pipeline. Magnesium anodes are fastened to the pipe by wires. These sacrificial anodes start to corrode and produce a small electric current, which flows through the earth, collects on the pipeline, flowing to the wire, then back to the anode. This controls the corrosion on the pipeline.

As Christians, we have a cathodic protection: the Holy Spirit is our protection. Jesus Christ was our sacrifice.

In order for the protected pipeline to work properly, it must be insulated, or isolated. The tie-ins and meter settings must not be directly connected, and dielectric insulators are installed. As Christians, working and living in the present world, we must be careful of our contacts with those of this world. If you are too close to the world, it will drain the Spirit of God from your life, causing a hole in your Christian experience.

This is an oversimplification of pipeline protection, but I believe you can see the parallel with the Christian experience. Your contact with the world and its many vices can be dangerous to your Christian experience.

Part of my job at the gas company was to monitor the cathodic protection. If the readings were too low, I had to search and find the reason for the drop in the readings. I liken this to when we read, pray, and attend the preaching services. God shows us the weak places that need to be corrected. We also had to do this with a pipeline. May God bless you.





Matthew 7:24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

Psalm 127:1 Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

In this lesson, I will relate something pertaining to my occupation or profession in the way of tools. I am a builder by trade. First, I would like to give you a brief background. I started working with my father more than twenty-five years ago. At that time, we mainly built houses and various other dwellings. Building those projects required the use of many different construction tools.

I like to work with my hands, and I like to see something accomplished physically. I find great satisfaction in seeing something improved. When an old house is remodeled and made into something very nice, the difference can be seen right from the start. If you were to take a before and after picture, you would see the difference. If you were to purchase a vacant piece of ground and build a house on it, you would see that something has been accomplished.

As I think about taking an old house and bringing it back to life, so to speak, it reminds me of a life in shambles. Just as the old house has broken windows, siding flapping, and doors hanging open, that is the same way many people appeared before they were saved. Their lives were in shambles, but the Lord took their wrecked lives and put them under construction. In the building process He added some things, removed some things, and changed some things. He makes us better, and we thank the Lord for that.

Salvation is what really brings the change and makes life better for everyone. It made my parents happy when I got saved. Christian young person, if your parents are saved, they are well pleased with you. That is the most important thing for you in this life. Sometime in your future, you may need a job, but the most important thing that you need to do is to keep your experience with Jesus Christ. You are building a spiritual house that you are going to live in forever.

Every one of us is in the building process. Before a person is saved, he has not built the way that God intended. These are the things I want you to consider. The foundation of a house is so important. You must ensure that what you construct can withstand whatever may come in the future. I would not want to be in a tent if a tornado were to come through. I would want everything to be secure. We must have our lives in order so that we can withstand the storms that come along. Our God has enabled us to do that, but we must follow His explicit instructions. Psalm 127:1 says, "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it." Many people are building for the future, but unless the Lord is in the building of our lives, we may not withstand the storms that come. We must not leave the Lord out of the picture. He is very important! I once tried to build without the Lord, but I built on sinking sand, as the Scripture says. It was not very long until storms came along, and my foundation started to slip. Young person, you need to make sure that you do what pleases the Lord now, and it will be a help to you when you get older. You need to realize the value in that.

We each are building a structure, saint and sinner alike. The saint puts forth effort to see the Kingdom of God furthered. God puts that desire within you when you get saved. After you are saved, you will want to see others saved. When you find something better, you want to tell everybody about it; that is the way it works. If you are not sold on something, you cannot convince anyone else of it. Once you know that you have the best, it is not hard to sell salvation.

Young person, if you are saved, you and others are workers together with Christ. You want to see more souls get saved. One song asks, "Are you building up or are you tearing down the Church of God?" Every child of God is in the construction phase, not the destruction phase. We each are workers together with Christ.

In the business of building, I have been taught and have tried to establish this philosophy: "It may take more time, it may cost a little extra, but if you do it right the first time, it will pay in the long run." Doing it right the first time may require more effort and cost more money, but if you do it right the first time, the chances are, you will never have to do it again. It is the same way with the things of God. If you will do it right the first time, you will not have to keep

backing up, retracing, and backtracking. I do not like to redo something. Once is enough.

If you will walk in truth, God will establish your steps so that you can be exactly what you ought to be; then you will not have to retrace them. In other words, "Don't half do something; do it right or don't do it at all." Young person, you need to make your decisions with the future in mind. You must think about the end result of your actions. Consider how you would be affected by the moves and the decisions you make.

Many people think about the physical and the material things of this life, but they do not think about things in the spiritual realm. If they buy a car or a house, they want the best. If they buy clothes, they want the best. However, when it comes to spiritual things, they feel they can be a little lax.

The first thing a person should do before building is sit down and count the cost of what they want. It would be foolish to say, "I've got a hundred dollars, and I want to build a new house." That house would not get very far. Before building, you must sit down and go into the details and think it through: "What is this going to entail when I start? I don't want to lay the foundation block and then run out of money."

When I was a child, I went to school on a road where the foundation of a house was laid, but nothing was ever built on it. Thirty years later it still sits there, and I wonder, "What happened?" It is better never to have started than to start and not finish.

When we start living for God, we should count the cost with full intentions to finish, by the grace of God. Serious consideration needs to be given to see if people have the means to do what they plan. In building a house, it may mean a loan payment for thirty years. One thing that many people lack today is a commitment. They say, "Well, if I can't pay for it, I'll let the bank have it back," or "If I can't make the payments, so what?"

You cannot be that way with the Lord. You will not even get started if you have that kind of attitude. You cannot start living for God with the attitude, "If this happens, I may not be able to live it." You must count the cost and determine that you are going to live for God no matter what comes your way. You need to commit to upholding your end of the contract in building.

A vow should be taken before the Lord, promising that you will be true to Him no matter what. Some of the same things that a literal builder must consider enter into building a spiritual house as well. Luke 14:28-30 says: "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish." Again, it is better never to have started than to start and not finish. Some people have started well for the Lord, but the terrible thing is, they gave up. Why did they start and not finish? What a distressing thought! They had a good start, but they never finished. Something happened. Perhaps they did not count the cost or something got in their way. Some things need to be fixed and settled before getting started.



One tool that I use as a builder is a hammer. I am thankful for power nailers and the different kinds of tools used to shoot nails, but a hammer is still a tool that I use. Two other tools that I have are a measuring tape and a level. They are some of the first tools that I take out of the truck. I use these tools to determine if something is placed correctly.

Once I have measured something, then I use a level to make sure it is plumb. Somebody might look at something and say, "Well, that looks good." However, he may be standing on a hill looking at it. How something looks depends on where you are standing. When you use the level and see that both of the bubbles are right in the middle, you know that it is correct. So it is with the Word of God.

You may hear something and think, "Well, that sounds right," but when you measure it with the Word, you realize that thing is way out of balance. A true level is something that you can measure from, and when something is standing exactly plumb, you can take a measurement from it and know it is correct. You can gauge anything by it. That is how the Word of God is. You can take a true measurement from it and know exactly where things stand.

As a builder, I know that I can trust my tools. If the bubbles are in the middle of the level, it is right on the mark. I can take the square and set it up, and it should line right up with that. Young person, you have something more sure

than any one of those tools, and that is the Bible. When something does not line up with God's Word, do not start building on it. If you do build on it, soon your dwelling will be completely out of kilter.

When I am building and get something plumbed and squared, then I fasten it, and that is where it will stay. I establish that this is where I want it to be, and I do not want it moved. There are some things you have to establish spiritually. When you count the cost of living for God and get things in the proper spiritual perspective, you need to make sure that you keep it fixed and do not move away from it.

There may be times when you do not understand something spiritually. If that is the case, you should not say, "That's not right." It might be that your spiritual eyes are a little blurry. You need to ask God to make it clear to you. Use the level (the Word of God) to measure with. As God makes things clear to you, then you should be immovable. In the good times and in the bad times, you need to stand firmly on what you know is true.

It is important to start building, but it is just as important to finish. When building a house, the most critical part is its foundation, because everything rests upon that. The foundation supports the walls, the floor, and the roof structure. That is the reason it is so important to make sure the foundation is properly established. If not, the building can waver and the footers can freeze out. A footer is part of the foundation. It is the furthest part down, and it is what the block is laid on.

The footer should be poured on the original soil. It must be on something solid, because once the building is built, if it is not supported properly under the footers, the walls will crack. One time we had to look at a house that had one end leaning out, and it was cracked in many places. As we looked at the foundation under the footer, we discovered that the footer was poured on leaves, sticks, and all kinds of rubbish. The builder of that house did not dig deep enough, and when the first freeze came, moisture got underneath the foundation and froze and raised the foundation. The owners of that house lost a lot of money, because the builder did not dig deep enough for the foundation so the footer would hold the foundation in place.

The same is true spiritually. You cannot build on just any kind of rubbish and expect to have a good foundation. A bad attitude is not something that you can build on, because it will cause you trouble. If jealousy or hatred is in your heart, you cannot build on them. If you try to do so, you can be sure that your foundation will be insecure. It will not stay in place very long. Everyone's foundation will be tried by something, and the true condition of the foundation will be revealed. The foundation must be built on something solid, something that will not move.

Another important thing that I use is a blueprint. For building any house or structure, the builder has a print to follow. That print tells how deep the footers must be, what should be put underneath them, and what kind of rebar should be put in them. These are very detailed instructions that the builder must follow.

An architect is one who draws up the blueprints. He has studied to know what is needed in order for these things to be performed. If the builder does not follow what the architect has prescribed, the builder will be responsible. Should something go wrong and the inspector checks it out, the architect can say: "I showed this explicitly in the blueprint and described how much rebar to put in the footer, how to pour the walls, and where to put drainage pipe to get rid of the water. I made sure the builder knew to do all these things to secure the foundation." The builder is held responsible to the owner and to the architect. He must follow the blueprint. Young person, God has designed everything around us, and He has described in explicit detail how to follow His instructions. The Lord wants you to have a proper dwelling.



Another tool that I use is a saw. It is very useful when I need to cut something down to size. I have had to rip a 2x10 down to a 2x4 to make it fit into a wall. In certain applications, I might have to do a lot of cutting, and I might have to plane it. This does a finer detail work than the saw does. Sometimes there is a knot on the side of a board, and I use a chisel to smack it off.

Spiritually, there are a lot of things like that with you. Sometimes the Lord has to take a saw or a chisel and cut this or that off. Then He has to fine tune you a little bit with a plane until everything fits. Ephesians 2:21 says we are "fitly framed [joined] together." For that to happen, the Lord might need to cut something off or add something. When He sees that you are ready, then He will place you where you fit. However, sometimes it does not feel good when He does it. If something is too big and the builder tries to force it in, it can cause problems. It is much better to whittle it down a little, and then you can put it in. It is the same way with people. If they get too puffed up, it can cause a lot of

trouble.

My Scripture text in verses 24-25 reads: Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock."

Young person, I would like to see you be successful in endeavoring to live for the Lord. You will be if you go the way that He has designed for you. You have the opportunity to pray, to read the Bible, and to get instructions from God. We are in the midst of a shaking time. It is a trying time and a proving time. Our dwellings are going to be shaken. It must be built and founded upon Jesus Christ. There is only one sure foundation. He will hold you fast and keep you.

May This Be Our Aim in All We Say and Do

When you think, when you speak, when you read, when you write.
When you sing, when you walk, when you seek for delight—
To be kept from all evil at home and abroad,
Live always as under the "eye of the Lord."
Whatever you think, both in joy and in woe,
Think nothing you would not like Jesus to know.

Whatever you say, in a whisper or clear,
Say nothing you would not like Jesus to hear.
Whatever you read, though the page may allure,
Read nothing of which you are not perfectly sure
Guilt at once would be seen in your look
If God should say, solemnly, "Show Me that book!"

Whatever you write, in haste or with heed,
Write nothing you would not like Jesus to read.
Whatever you sing, in the midst of your glees,
Sing nothing that God's listening ear could displease.
Wherever you go, never go where you fear
God's question being asked you—"What doest thou here?"

Whatever the pastime in which you engage,
For the cheering of youth or the solace of age
Turn away from each pleasure you'd shrink from pursuing.
Were God to look down and say, "What are you doing?"





Matthew 25:14-25 reads: "For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

"And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

"Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine."

Each young person has different talents. Some are inherited from their parents, some are learned from school training, and some are learned on their own; but all talents come from God. A young person may want to learn to sing and enroll in a music school, but if he does not have a talent for singing, he will never learn. However, he might have a talent in another field.

Tools are an important part of realizing your talents. In my job as an electronic technician for the telephone company, I use many basic tools to help me complete my job. They are just what I need. I would like to illustrate the tools I use, and what they accomplish on the job.

I work in several different offices, each office representing the first three digits of exchange of a telephone number. Every time someone dials their telephone, it goes through one of my offices, if a person is calling to or from certain exchanges. Years ago, before the computer system was established, we used a mechanical system. Every time someone picked up the receiver to make a telephone call, a "line finder" would complete the call. Each number dialed would be searched by a selector that absorbed each digit dialed until the line was connected to the number someone was calling.

After working on this mechanical system for about twenty-five years, I had everything memorized and could easily do my job. One day, however, this system was hit by lightning, and within thirty-six hours we had a new digital computer system. This was a different world than I had ever been involved in. I had no idea what was going on. The company sent me to several schools, and I had to learn my job over completely.

Now that we are in a digital system, I need to explain what the interiors of my offices look like. They contain several metal frames with thousands of feet of different colors of electrical wire attached by several small pins, plus several computers. One end of each wire goes to the computer system, and the other end of the wire goes through an underground cable system, out to a pole, and to people's homes.

The first tool I use often is a simple pair of needlenose pliers. I use them to get little pieces of wire out of tiny places. I thought of how I could liken those small pliers to my spiritual life. When God spoke to me one day, there were lots of little things in my life



that I could not reach, things I could not remove. When God reached down to me, He found all those little sins that I could not get out of my life and removed them. My literal pliers specialize in finding small things in hard-to-reach places and pulling them out. That is just the way it is when Christ finds us. You may say, "These are just small things." Yes, but the small things separate a person from God. Any small problem in an electrical circuit, such as a ground, will knock out a telephone line. The devil would like to knock out every one of us.

The next tool I want to tell you about looks just like a pencil; it is called a wire wrapper. Each wire is covered with plastic insulation and must be unwrapped to work with it. This tool really does a good job of unwrapping wire, but sometimes that little rascal can cause more trouble than you can believe. You can unwrap a wire and get called away from the job, and that little unwrapped wire blends in with the other wires; then you cannot find it until someone calls in having trouble with their phone. You can look and look for it, and it looks fine, but something is wrong. It is like the devil coming along and sneaking something into your life and saying, "There's no problem here," but there is!

After I skin the wire back, I use a tool called a wrap gun to shoot the wire on a pin that holds it on the frame. It does a neat job and holds the wire so tight that you cannot unwrap it from the frame. (It is just like a good connection with God. You must have it to live for Him.) When one of the guys with whom I work comes in and says we have a dead wire somewhere, I will look, and sure enough, there is a loose wire. We must have a good connection with the electrical circuit; likewise, we must have a good connection with God.

I also use a simple pair of side-cut pliers every day. I use them to cut and trim wire to make the finished job look neat. As I listen to our pastor or an evangelist whittling on me, digging around me, and skinning me a few times, I realize that he is just trimming me back and making me look better spiritually. I appreciate this!

The last tool I want to mention is an ohmmeter. An ohmmeter tells me if there is trouble on a line and where that trouble is. It will tell me if the current is flowing through a certain line. I compare my ohmmeter to my Bible. My Bible shows me all my trouble spots, all my weak places, and where the current has stopped flowing. That is the reason we each need to read the Word of God. If you study and eat it daily, you will save yourself much trouble.

The Bible is just like my tool belt. I just reach down and get whatever I need. I use some tools more than others, but my tools never get jealous of one another. They never say to me, "You use him more than you use me." None of us can do the same job equally. Some have talents greater than others. Some can sing, others play can the piano, and some can speak well; but we all have to do our part to utilize the talents that God has given us. God will help you with the talents He has given you.

Young person, if I could give you some advice, it would be not to neglect the good part of your life, which is serving God, to gain things from this world. One of these days you are going to leave this world, and then your earthly possessions will mean nothing to you. You will leave this earth completely to meet God, so why not work and use your talents for those things that will last eternally? You need to get as close to God as you can and use all your talents for Him.



It Matters Not

It matters not if I've been
hurt;
It matters not at all
That sometimes from my
weary eyes
The scalding teardrops fall.

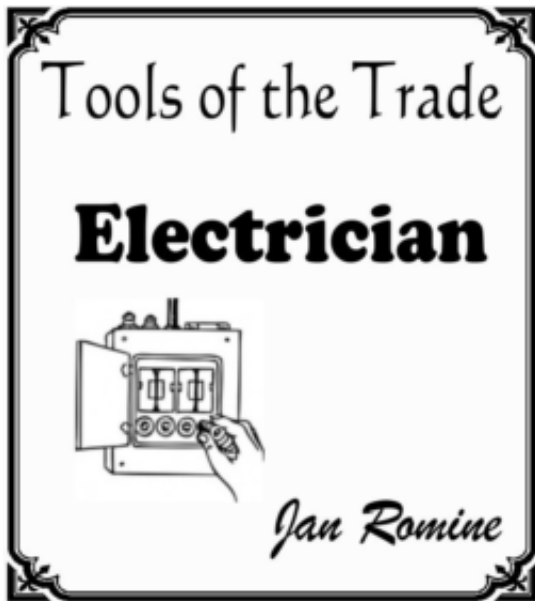
What matters most—is if
I've erred
And not confessed the sin
And through my lack—some
needy soul
Has failed to follow Him.

It matters not if cherished
friends;
On whom I leaned in vain
Have wounded me by word
and deed
And left me with my pain.

What matters is—Can I
forgive
Again, and yet again?
It's not, "Have they been
true," but "Lord,
Have I been true to them?"

'Twill matter not when
evening comes;
How rough the road I've
trod,
If only I have walked with
Him
And led some soul to God!

For when I wake to be like Him,
Who saved me by His grace
Earth's pain will vanish when I see
One glimpse of His dear face!



In my job as an electrician, I use many different types of safety tools. When working on a job, it is important to know what tool to use and where to use it. When I open the panel on an electrical box and start unbolting the fingers, I might think it is dead; however, just because the switch is in the off position does not always ensure that the power is off, so I use a safety tool called a lockout. This is a padlock that electricians put on one of the six holes in the box, along with a special required tag. This must display the electrician's name and the date that he is working on it.

When I put the padlock on, I am the only one who has a key to it. The reason is that we do not want anyone else working on that same circuit. It does not take much (only thirty-five volts) to kill a person. Many times we are working with hundreds or possibly thousands of volts. Therefore, this safety device is of utmost importance. Potentially, five other electricians could be working on the same panel, and they each would have their own padlocks on a circuit as well. Before that panel is ever cleared for operation, all those padlocks must be removed.

The Word of God has some good safety tools and good safety procedures for the Christian to utilize. In Ephesians, Chapter 6, some of these tools are mentioned. Verse 17 tells us to take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit. These help us to fight against the wiles of the devil. God did not put us here without giving us something with which to work. He gave us the Word, which tells us how He will save souls and forgive sins. Then He gave pastors, evangelists, Sunday school teachers, and other saints to help us in our walk with Christ. These safety devices help us along the way.

As an electrician on the job, I must follow the proper guidelines and OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) standards. We must adhere to many federal standards for safety. Safety is the number one thing that is taught on the job. As you know, equipment can be replaced, but it is impossible to replace a person.

A circuit breaker in a fuse cabinet may be in the off position and tagged, but one must not take it for granted that the power is off. A person must always treat it as though it is hot, or live. I use a tool called a voltmeter to test it. This tool does many different things, and there are lots of different attachments for it. When I use a voltmeter on a panel, it will tell me whether it is a three-phase system or if there are different lines powering it. I can check between each line and take each one right to the ground wire to make sure that phase is dead before I try to work on it. The voltmeter is another one of those safety devices. Even though the probes of that voltmeter are insulated, I must take extreme precautions when going into a circuit. I must put on special rubber gloves with leather over them for protection. Those gloves are good for up to five thousand volts. When I put on those gloves, I can work with live circuits; that is what the gloves are made for.

There are other types of safety tools called blankets. Many times I might have to take out the cutouts on high voltage. I use a ten-foot or longer fiberglass pole. The pole is good for up to 20,000 volts. I must use the pole because safety is the number one priority.

When I buy a tool, I buy the very best, like the gloves that I spoke of. I would not go out and buy just any pair of gloves. I want to know that I have the best available. The paperwork that comes with the gloves states that they have been tested and have passed certain criteria. I especially want to know this when I am the one using the gloves. I want to make sure that they are safe and that they do not have pinholes in them.

This is the same way it is with the plan of salvation. We are bought with a price. Salvation is not something cheap, but it is God's very best. This is the same attitude that I take with a tool. I do not like to work with cheap tools when I am working with high voltage.

God gave us the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit. He prepares us with the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. When I am working in the field, I check not only for voltage but also for phase rotation. This is checked by a meter on a three-phase system. If those phases are not in the right sequence, they can actually run backwards and possibly burn up a motor. If somebody is working on a piece of equipment and it starts to run backwards, many things

could happen. Someone could be hurt or killed. So it is with our spiritual lives. If we do not take the utmost precaution and go by the Word of God, listening and obeying, we can do more harm than good.

Most electricians carry a tool pouch. I carry many types of tools in my tool pouch, and I have a certain spot for each one. I liken these tools to the members in the body of Christ. There are many members in this body, and if any one of those members is out of place, it will hinder and things will not go right. If I pull out a tool to use, I put it back in the correct spot. Otherwise, when I need it again, if it is not in the right place, I would waste time fiddling around with the tools, trying to find the right one.

Each member of the body of Christ has his specific job. First Corinthians 12:1-12 reads: "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. . . . Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members."

Again, verse 12 says, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." There are many gifts in the body. The pastor's gift is to lead the body; that is his calling. Other gifts are custodians, song leaders, Sunday school teachers, young people's leaders, and helpers. Each one has a part in the body of Christ. You may think, "My job is little." It does not make any difference how little or how big the job is. We all are a part of the body of Christ. It may seem like a little thing, but often that little thing is more important than you may realize.

In my job as an electrician, the big fuses often will not operate in a circuit until the little fuses control the big fuses. Many times in a circuit, relays relay the interlock. Locking in requires pulling a coil, which is done by low voltage control circuitry. Sometimes control circuits are operated by temperature. For instance, in a heating system there are relays in the room and in cabinets. For a heater to trip on, it has to sense a certain temperature. A small control circuit energizes a relay, and when that relay pulls in, it makes contact. When the relays snap in, they snap in a millisecond. This is what energizes the big fuses to carry the load.

A 1600 amp fuse may be little, but it has a lot of impact on a big one. A big fuse is not going to work unless the little fuse is working. No matter how small you think your job is, it is big in the sight of God. However, you must always keep a humble spirit and a humble attitude. The gifts you have and the things you are doing are contributing to the body of Christ. You may think, "Well, I'm not doing much," or "What I'm doing is not really having the effect it ought to have." We read in 1 Corinthians 12:26, "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it." No matter how small that member may be, if it is suffering, the whole body suffers.

When using my tools, if I need to tighten a screw, I do not take a wrench out to turn the screw. Each tool has its own particular function. It is the same with the members of the body. I would be out of order if I stood in the pulpit and pretended to be the pastor. It would not work, because that is not my position.

Another great tool is a level. I use this so things will be straight. If I am hanging an electrical panel on a wall, I want it to be level. Isaiah 28:17 talks about laying judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet. I expect something to be straight, and it is important not to do a sloppy job. Many times sloppiness causes safety problems. Sagging pipes can cause trouble down the road by fracturing the insulation on a cable that carries the power. There are guidelines to prevent sloppiness.

The same is true in our Christian walk. We must listen to the pastor, stay in the Word of God, and always be in a spirit of prayer to prevent sloppiness. We must keep safety in place as we build by the plan of God's Word. If we build our lives according to the blueprint, or the Bible, we will be fitly framed together (Ephesians 2:21). I am glad that God's guidelines are not by trial and error. He established them from the foundation of the world, and they are from everlasting to everlasting. We can stand on the Word of God and build our lives around it. What if something happens? We have proper safety guidelines to follow in the Bible.



The story is told of an old man who lived on a farm in the mountains of eastern Kentucky with his young grandson. Each morning, Grandpa was up early sitting at the kitchen table reading from his old worn-out Bible.

His grandson who wanted to be just like him tried to imitate him in any way he could. One day the grandson asked: "Papa, I try to read the Bible just like you but I don't understand it, and what I do understand I forget as soon as I close the book. What good does reading the Bible do?"

The grandfather quietly turned from putting coal in the stove and said, "Take this coal basket down to the river and bring back a basket of water." The boy did as he was told, even though all the water leaked out before he could get back to the house.

The grandfather laughed and said, "You will have to move a little faster next time," and sent him back to the river with the basket to try again. This time the boy ran faster, but again the basket was empty before he returned home. Out of breath, he told his grandfather that it was "impossible to carry water in a basket," and he went to get a bucket instead.

The old man said: "I don't want a bucket of water; I want a basket of water. You can do this. You're just not trying hard enough," and he went out the door to watch the boy try again.

At this point, the boy knew it was impossible, but he wanted to show his grandfather that even if he ran as fast as he could, the water would leak out before he got far at all.

The boy scooped the water and ran hard, but when he reached his grandfather the basket was again empty. Out of breath, he said, "See Papa, it's useless!"

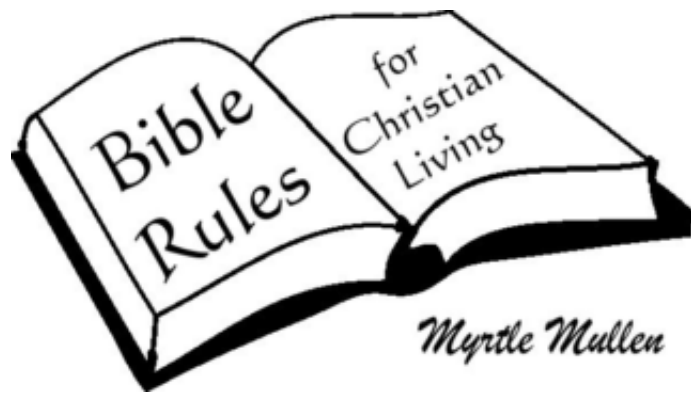
"So you think it is useless?" The old man said, "Look at the basket." The boy looked at the basket and for the first time he realized that the basket looked different. Instead of a dirty old coal basket, it was clean.

"Son, that's what happens when you read the Bible. You might not understand or remember everything, but when you read it, it will change you from the inside out.

That is the work of God in our lives. To change us from the inside out and to slowly transform us into the image of His Son.



Second Timothy 4:7 says, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Paul, who was an old saint at this time, said, "I have fought a good fight." I like that! It is not a weak, little wishy-washy statement, but he said: "I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course." He said this shortly before he died. And he said, "I have kept the faith." This is something every young person can do: you can keep the faith. The faith does not have to be let down or be changed. It is all there in the Word of God, and you can keep the faith.



Young person, perhaps you have recently started out to serve God for the first time. Maybe you have tried and decided, "I just cannot make it." I have heard some say that. I have heard some other young people say, "I would like to be saved, but I do not know if I could live it." My reply to them was: "Just look at the millions of people who have lived it. You are no different from anybody else. You are you, that is true, but you can live it. Praise God, you can live it!"

Paul said in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." I have tried it through the years. I started when I was young, and I found out that it works. But I have fought. You may have thought all a Christian has to do is stand around, maybe smile a little bit, do good things, and try to think right. There is more to it than that! When you get saved, you have something very valuable on your hands. You have Christ. The Holy Spirit lives within you, and you and He can make it.

I have asked the Lord, "What should I think when I am in a battle?" We must be aware that there is an enemy out there. The devil is after your soul because he never wanted you to get saved in the first place. He will put all kinds of excuses in your mind why you cannot get saved, such as, "I do not want to do it right now." I talked to a young man about his soul, and I asked him, "Don't you think it is time that you started serving God?" He sounded very humble, but his reply was: "I do not know if I can. I do not believe I can do it now. I want to do it, but I do not believe I can do it now." I did not say anything further, as I did not feel inspired at the time, but as I thought of it later, I should have said, "Today is the day of salvation."

Young person, you do not know how long you are going to live or what might happen to you. You do not know if you will be destroyed while you are out in sin. You must think about God, and you had better do it now. This is the time, and this is the day. You may not live until tomorrow; none of us has that assurance. Once you are saved, remember, it is a fight. You need to know that there is an enemy out there who is after your soul. It does not matter how long you have been a Christian, he is after your soul. But God has made provisions for that. The provisions that God has made need to be followed all through your Christian life. They are not just for young people; they are for people of all ages. I am old now, but the devil is after my soul too. I have decided, "I am going through."

The first thing you need to do when you get saved is to be determined that you are going through. Salvation is something that is not just for today, tomorrow, a week or two, a month, or even for a year, but it is for all of your life.

It is a protection to your life. It is essential to your life, and it is a wonderful way to live. I can tell you from my own experience, it is a wonderful way to live. There is nothing like it!

God has given me some thoughts I would like to share that might help young people know what to do. I thought of the Scripture in 1 Peter 2:2 that says, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." Some young people have started out in the Christian life and they go a little while and they make a mistake or two. So they begin to think: "I am getting weak and I do not know if I can hold out. I just do not know if I can do this or not." If you are struggling, the first thing you need to do is go back to the altar of prayer. I know, because I had to do it too. I never counted how many times I went back, but one day God spoke to me. (Oh, it is so important that you hear God!) God told me to make this a stepping stone. If you are truly sorry you did it, then promise God that you will not do it again, and make it a stepping stone in your life to get on higher ground. I have tried that, and it works. God



understands young people. He knows who you are, He knows you by name, and He knows your weakness and your strong points. (The devil knows some of those too.)

First Peter 2:2 uses the word "desire." You need a deep desire for the Word of God. You may say, "I have tried to read the Bible, but it just did not seem very interesting to me." Well, do it again and just keep on doing it. After a while you will begin to see it is the best Book in all of the world. It is a good Book. But, please do not start reading in the Book of Leviticus. Get something within your scope, something you can understand, and God will bless it. Oh, how He will bless it! I know that God deals with young people just as He deals with older people. We just need to wake up. We need to know and understand what He is doing.

The one thing that happens sometimes with young people is that they forsake the reading of the Word of God. (And older people do that too.) They forsake it because they are so busy. They say, "Oh, I am so busy I just cannot and I just do not know where to start." I will tell you one thing about Bible reading: you had better do it! There is a way, and you had better put it first in your life. As you begin to read, you will understand that God knows how important it is that you read the Word. Do not forsake the reading of the Word of God. It will get better and better and better. If you just continue to read His Word, then you will desire it.

I found this to be true after I broke my hip. I had always read the Word and enjoyed it so much. I just loved God's Word! But after that, I thought, "What am I going to do?" We had family worship, but I felt so starved for God's Word. I said, "Lord, what am I going to do?" The Lord said, "Start reading your Bible through in a year, and when you get the whole thing done, then read it again." I thought if I read it through once or twice, that would be it. After that, then, I would just read here and there. But when I got through reading it through twice, I could not quit. I went on for thirty some years reading it clear through, and I just cannot quit. By reading it this way, I get the whole meaning.

God speaks to me through the Word of God, and He will speak to you too. He does not just speak to adults. He speaks to young people as well. When my little niece was six or seven years old, she came to visit us. Every place I would go, she was there too. I would turn around, and there she was. I thought, "What in the world is this?" She wanted to talk to me. Finally, she said, "Auntie Myrtle, you know something?" I said, "No, maybe not." She said, "Did you know that you can pray with your eyes open?" "Oh, yes," I said, "I have known that for a long time, honey. But how did you know it?" "Well," she said, "God told me." I thought: "Isn't that something? She is just a child, yet God spoke to her."

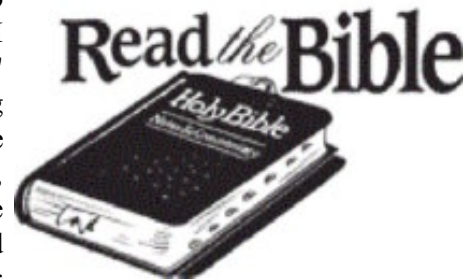
Many times I have prayed with my eyes open. Sometimes when we have been traveling down the road, I needed to pray fast. I did not have time to shut my eyes. I cried aloud, and God heard me. He hears children, and He hears young people. He knows your needs, and He will help you.

One thing that is very essential for young people to remember is that they had better read their Bible. Young person, you had better get with it. Start reading your Bible now and set a little pattern for yourself. Forget this idea of just flopping the Bible open and saying, "I am reading." I used to do that too, but I did not get very much out of reading my Bible that way. Begin where it is practical for you to start and read the Word and believe the Word. You will have quite an experience going down life's road. I tell you, it is really good!

The next thing you must do after reading the Word of God is have prayer. You just do not say, "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep." That little, old ditty will not do much for you. It does not help you a whole lot. If you have ever said that, I am not scolding you, but you must go deeper than that. You must remember that you can talk to God. You can say so much more than "now I lay me down to sleep." You might say: "Dear God, I want Your help. I need You, Lord. I need You to help me live this Christian life, to help me with my school life."

God will help you with your school work. I have told some of the young people, "If you come to church during revival time, maybe you really have to cram your homework just to make it, but if you come to services faithfully, I know that God will see you through and you will get good grades." Some tried it and found that it worked. They got A's and B's, because God quickened their mind. They actually did better than when they did it the other way. So I recommend it!

So, I have mentioned the importance of Bible reading and prayer. The next thing that is essential is to learn to hear the voice of God. God will speak to you, and that is wonderful! I will share one experience of the Lord speaking to me.



Shortly after my husband and I were married, we went to Bible school in Spokane, Washington, where I took a religious education course and my husband took a course that was for preachers. We thought it would be a great thing for us to take those courses.

As we were studying, they started making fun of the old pioneer preachers, saying, "They do not do anything unless the Spirit leads them." They made light of it, but I had always thought very highly of it. I was brought up to let the Holy Ghost have His way. I had thought preachers preached in the Holy Ghost. I thought they knew what they were doing, and I just respected that way.

This began to work on my mind. I did not know it could. In fact, I hardly recognized it until we had a young people's convention in Medford, Oregon. I was asked to lead the singing, and my religious educational teacher was there. She was the one who had been telling me a lot of those things. The preacher preached on prayer, and I was told that the last song was to be chosen according to what the preacher had preached about. That is what I was going to do, sing something on prayer. But then the Lord said, "I want you to sing *Just as I Am*." "Oh, Lord," I said, "The professor is sitting back there, and she taught me something else, and I am to sing *Just as I Am*?" I said, "Lord, I feel foolish." I did not know what to do. I felt so embarrassed. I thought she would be sitting back there, saying, "We taught her better than that."

But when the Lord leads, He put His finger right on it. He said, "You either do it, or I will get somebody else." I almost passed out, and I said, "Well, I will do it, Lord." I believed if I did not, somebody would call out from the congregation. One way or another, that song was going to be sung. So I called out the page number, and the altar began to fill up. I thought: "How can this be? He just spoke on prayer?" There were some actions of the Holy Spirit that I did not know about. I did not even dream that anybody wanted to come to the altar, but God knew it. That is why He told me to sing *Just as I Am*.

So, I began to get my eyes opened. I began to see that man was telling us what to do instead of the Holy Spirit. We cannot follow that pattern. There is no way that we can follow the pattern of man; we have to follow God. It is so important for young people to learn to hear the voice of God. I found out that sometimes He speaks quite loudly, and I hear it. I do not have much trouble hearing that, but sometimes He speaks very softly, saying, "Do not get into this; be careful here." He tells you to watch the company you keep. Do not get out there with those worldly crowds. You may lose your soul out there. When He warns you like that, you have to do something about it. You have to cut off your worldly friends and get with God's people. They are the best people in all the world, and you will find Christian young people to be very sweet and very lovely. They will do you good.

The thought came to me, concerning two armies who were at war. Let us say that one is an American army and the other is a German army. Now, what if a soldier from the American army went over to the German army and just buddied around with those guys on the German side? When it comes time for action, what are they going to do? They have become friends with the enemy. Young person, the devil gets after you right away when you get on the trail of salvation, and he tries to bring you down. He does not even want you to hold onto your experience until the week is out, and the next week he is right there again. You have to recognize who is talking. You have to ask God to help you. You say, "Well, this has been going on for years." Yes, it has, but if you want the victory, if you want to go to Heaven, you must say as Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

You have to fight, and God has provided the equipment to fight with. In Ephesians 6:11 Paul said, "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." The devil is very wily. You do not know what he is coming up with next, if you put on your armor, you will be prepared for what is coming. Ephesians 6:11-17 tells us what that armor is. This armor comes from God.

When David went to the battlefield, he found out that his brothers, the king, and all of Israel were scared to death of that old giant Goliath. Every time he came out and strutted around, they drew back in fear. But David was not afraid. I like that! (Young men and women are beautiful when they stand for truth. I like to hear them talk. I like to hear the determination in their voices to go through with God.)

When David was to fight against the giant, the king said, "Put on my armor." David tried it on in obedience to the



king, but it did not feel comfortable. First Samuel 17:39 tells us why: "I cannot so with these; for I have not proved them" So David trusted the Lord to help him. He told King Saul how the Lord had helped him kill a lion and a bear. He grabbed that old lion by his "beard" and killed him. I do not know how he did it. Many times I have wondered and wondered how he did that. I supposed he tore that lion apart. I do know God's Spirit came upon him and helped him.

Young person, you can do wonderful things for God, you really can, if you follow God closely. You can do bigger things than you ever thought you could do. Oh, yes you can! Listen for God's voice. God will speak to you, and He will tell you how you can do it.

I have memorized Philippians 4:13, which says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Christ gives me strength. I have tried it. I have tried it many times, and He is there. The devil will say, "You cannot do it," but I say, "In Jesus' name I can!" I did, and you can too. God stands behind His Word 100 percent. Yes, He does.

We are fighting the enemy of our soul. When I think of a beautiful young person who is full of sweetness, so lovely looking, and so precious, I realize that the devil is after him or her. Too many times, he gets that one before he or she makes any profession of salvation. The devil takes that sweet life and just mars it. He makes it look horrible. I have seen some whose countenance began to get dark. I have seen them when their whole spirit changed until they looked even fierce sometimes. It breaks my heart to see that.

God wants to save young people. When you hear the voice of God, take heed. Maybe He has spoken to you, but you just turned Him away, saying: "Well, I cannot do it right now. What would my friends think of me if I do that?" What does it matter what your friends think? As one man said: "What did they ever do for you anyway? They cannot take you to Heaven."

I have seen many young people start on the trail to Heaven, and it is beautiful, but I have also seen many of them slip off. I have seen them bruised, and I have seen them getting into terrible fixes because they did not trust God. Young person, you have to fight. Fight with the equipment that God has given you. When He saves you, then He gives you the armor. You ought to study and read for yourself about that armor. Then put it on and see what happens to you. You will have protection from the enemy, and you will have some equipment to fight with. God is so wonderful!

A very short time before Paul died, he said, "I have kept the faith." I want to tell you something that burdens my heart. Many, many years ago we had Brother S. O. Susag in our home. He was a great man of faith, and I know that many people have read and cherished his book. He held revival meetings for us, telling the people the importance of having faith in God, not only for the healing of the body but also for situations and problems that people get into.

I have read many times that it only takes about three generations before people begin to slip from the pattern. What do I mean by that? Well, at one time they believed the whole Word, but after a while they say, "The Bible does not really mean just that, it means this." It is something a little less, and in about three generations, it brings them to what we call apostasy.

I have seen little children in a church service go to an altar to be prayed for to be healed. I have no idea how many have been healed, but I am sure there were many who were healed. I have seen older saints come for prayer to be healed, and God undertook for them. We have many examples of healing. One is Brother Gordon, who had cancer. Brother Wilson prayed for him and God healed him. Later, Brother Gordon went to Hamilton, Montana, for a meeting and they said he jumped right over the altar. He went up and down the aisle, shouting and praising God. Brother Wilson said, "He has a right to praise God, because God healed his body!"

Hebrews 13:8 tells us, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever." He never changes. The only thing that happens is people change. As long as you hang onto that truth, you are going to get your needs supplied. The doctrine of healing is very important!

There is a very insidious move of the devil these days, telling people that they cannot live above sin. Oh, yes you can! That is a lie of the devil. You do not have to sin more or less every day. When I see a little inclining toward that, it grieves my heart. You can be set free from sin, but if you harbor a sin in your heart, there will soon be more. Young people, stand by the truth, and God will see you through. We can live above sin.

Then, God wants to use you. When you give your life to God, it is not just to be saved from your sins, but He wants to take your life and make you a channel to the world. There is a place for you in the body of Christ, a place just for you! You might say: "I am so bashful. I just cannot make it. I do not believe I can do that." Young person, it is a very good idea for you to start to testify. That will help you. You ought to be able to testify among the saints because they love you. If you cannot do it among the saints, how can you testify out there in the world? God's people love you and

believe in you. I recommend that you do that.

I will tell you what happened to me when I was first saved. I had only been saved about a week, and our youth leader asked me to lead in prayer. I was paralyzed. I thought: "How do I do that? I do not know how to do that." I was so scared that I did not do anything. My friend, who was standing right beside me, began praying, and that helped my situation a little bit. But God got after me! I told the Lord: "Oh, I feel so bad. Lord, if they ask me again, I will do it even if it kills me." I have led in prayer many times since then, and it has never killed me yet. So, you can do it too. It will make you feel good.

When we had testimonies, my hands used to sweat. I would say to myself, "I will wait until that older saint gets up." She would get up and testify. Then I thought: "I will wait until that brother over there testifies. He always does such a good job, and my testimony does not amount to that much." That is what the devil said to me: "Your testimony does not amount to that much." Well, it does! It amounts to something. The Lord chastised me, and I do not like to be chastised by the Lord, do you? It makes you feel bad in your heart. So, I thought, "Well, I will keep my word, and if they ever ask me again, I am going to do it." I did, and I felt better. When I was growing up, everybody who was saved was expected to testify. They said, "If you are saved, you will get up and tell somebody about it." As I listened to the different, beautiful testimonies, I thought, "After this one gets done, then I will do it." But I kept waiting until finally they said, "Amen," and the service was over. Then I would say, "Oh, Lord, I did not do it." He said, "You had better be getting with it." And I knew it. So, I got with it. I am not saying that I testified every time, but I was making progress. And you can too, precious soul.

God understands if you are shy. You might say: "I cannot do that. I just cannot get my mouth open." Do you like to be punished by the Lord? It makes you feel bad. It is so hard to go to sleep when God chastises you. In order to get along with God, I just had to say, "I will try, Lord, I am going to try." As you can see, I made it.

As a child of God, we are on our way, and one day our course will be finished. It may be that the Lord will come. I am looking forward to that! Wouldn't it be nice if He came while we were all in church? How glorious it will be to go up with the saints. We probably will not even see what the sinner is doing because we will be so excited. I do not know, but this is the way I feel about it. I feel like a change is going to come over our bodies, gravity is going to let loose, and we will go up to live with the Lord forever and ever.

I want to do my best. How about you? Your best is not any too good, but He accepts our best. The Christian life will get easier after a while, but it never, never gets to the place that you can become careless. Never! Do not be careless, or go to sleep on the job. We are living in a lukewarm time, but there is no time for sleeping in the service of God.

When one of the saints in our congregations got saved, she surprised me. We were talking on the phone, and she said, "I believe we are in the battle of Armageddon." I about toppled over. I thought, "Where did she learn that?" I said, "We truly are, and it is a hot battle." So, we need to do a good job of it. Do not have an "anything goes" attitude. That does not go over well with God. I want you to know that.

I like that song that says, "I am on the winning side, I am on the winning side with Jesus." God has a pep song for the saints of God. "I am on the winning side." Be optimistic about it; do not go around frowning with your lip hanging down. No one wants that kind of religion. I do not like that kind. I like the smiley kind. God loves you. Therefore, let us do our dead level best for Him!

Another song says, "Press the battle on." These are wonderful songs! If you stop short, nothing will count that you have done in the past. It will all be in vain. Only those that go the last mile of the way will win. It is not the first mile that is so important, but it is the last mile. If you have been saved many years, you must keep right on till the time of death. Then you will win. I like those old songs. They just do something for me. They make me feel like I can go on, that I can press the battle on for all I am worth. Young person, no matter what happens to you, you still have to press on. I may be blind and half lame, but these songs tell me that I can do it.

I have shared this with many young people over the years. I do not tell people to do things that I do not practice. I do not think that is right. When I tell them, "This is the way you should do it," I quote the Word to them. I have had some of those same young people encourage me. When something comes up, and I kind of halt a little bit, they have said to me, "Remember what you said about doing all things through Christ who strengthens you?" I say, "Oh, yes, I can, because I know it is true!"

Young people, I love you very much. I want to see you make it to Heaven. I want you to be able to stand by the

Word of God. That Word is so plain to see and understand, but you must do more than just hear it. James 1:22 tells us we must be "doers of the word, and not hearers only." If you want to have a successful ending, be a doer of the Word. Do not go away and forget what kind of person that you were (James 1:24). Listen to what the preacher says. Read the Word, think it over, study it, and ask God for understanding. It is God's Word. He does not go back on it. He is not going to tell you one thing and tell someone else something different. No, it is the same for you and for me. Let us not be just hearers of the Word!

There are a lot of exciting things in this Christian life, but there are some very hard places also. However, the hard places are good for you. You have to go through some valleys, but there are also mountaintops. We get all thrilled when we are on the mountaintop. You may have a mountaintop experience one week, but the next week you might go through a valley. The devil will be after you, and you have to watch out for him. The Bible tells us in Matthew 26:41, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation . . ." You need to keep your eyes open spiritually, lest you fall into temptation. Temptation is an awful thing, but you have to be tempted to see what you are made of.

Young person, may God bless your heart and may you grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. No doubt, you have seen older saints who had beautiful spirits. Do you want to be like them? Do you want to be like Jesus? He is the very best friend you will ever have. There is a great challenge in the Christian life. Some may not think there is any challenge anywhere, so they go and do terrible things. You can really be something for God if you will. I am depending on God to bless you and keep you and give you some advancement. A little growth is better than none at all. If you are moving rather slowly, you are gaining a little, and that is better than rushing around and then throwing it all overboard. Keep on growing, and God will bless you. He will be your best friend.

THE COST OF CONSECRATED LIVING

It cost **ABRAHAM** the yielding up of his son.
It cost **DANIEL** to be cast in the den of lions.
It cost **STEPHEN** death by stoning.
It cost **PETER** a martyr's death.
It cost **PAUL** to be beheaded.
It cost **JESUS** to die on the Cross.

DOES IT COST YOU ANYTHING?

Young person, God wants to set you in the body of Christ. You may think, "I don't know what my place is. I don't have much talent." God has a place for you in the body of Christ; He has a wonderful position for you to fill. The best thing you can do is to pray and seek God's face and ask Him what He would have you to do. I can tell you from experience, when you begin to ask God what He would have you to do, He will tell you. If you do not want to know, do not ask Him, because He will tell you.

I was privileged to be a young person on God's Acres, and I have precious memories that I treasure. You are in the process of making memories right now, and they will be very valuable to you in life. I can remember walking out across the campgrounds and talking with the Lord, saying: "God, You know about my life. I don't know where I am going. I don't know what Your plans are, but I know that my desire is to fit into Your plans." I am so thankful that I talked to the Lord that way, because He has given me such a beautiful life. He has given me above that which I could have ever thought or asked for.

Young person, you are in the dreaming stages. You do not know what God has for you. I remember some dreams that I had when I was a teenager, and I remember the disappointments I had. I know a little about how you feel, what your thoughts are, and the questions in your mind. Let me encourage you. The most important thing you can do is to develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

We could go through the Bible and read experience after experience of those who found favor in the eyes of God, and obtaining His favor today is possible for you. You do not have to wait until you have graduated from high school or college. You do not have to wait until you find a boyfriend or a girlfriend, a husband or a wife, and then say, "Well, now I will settle down and work on my experience." There is no better time than the present to begin to cultivate your relationship with the Lord. How do you develop a friendship? By spending time with someone. As you talk together, you learn about each other's interests, you learn how each other thinks, and you learn how each other reacts.

Often I tell my piano students: "You need to form a friendship with the piano. You need to get to know the piano and get to know what music is all about." When you form a friendship, often it is a beautiful bond for life. That is the way it is with the Lord. You need to get to know Him, and it all starts with being born again. When you are born again, God comes into your life, and that is truly a miracle and a beautiful experience; but it is only the beginning. From there you need to learn who Jesus is. He already knows who you are. The Bible says the very hairs of your head are numbered. Think of that! That Scripture is in the Bible partly to let us know how concerned God is about the tiniest details of our lives.

Christ has likened our relationship with Him to that of a bride and bridegroom. So much of what we put into practice in spiritual matters is applicable to our home lives when it comes to submission and the way we treat each other. That is how it is with the Lord. You want to get well acquainted with Him. You cannot hide anything from Him, even if you think you might want to or if you are a little embarrassed about something in your life. Hopefully, you do not want to hide anything from Him. As a mother, often I have said, "Whenever you have to hide something, that is a sure sign that it is wrong." If you are thinking that you need to do something on the sly, remember that it is wrong and you ought to refrain from it.

I would like to encourage you to read the Book of Proverbs. It is a wealthy Book in the Bible. The entire Bible is wonderful, but I think the Book of Proverbs is especially good for the youth to study. Proverbs 3:1-4 says: "My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favour [This is the way to find favor with God. Learn what the Word of God says, hold it close to you, bind it about your neck, and write it on the table of your heart and you shall find favor.] and good understanding in the sight of God and man."

God gave His Word as a road map for our lives. It has the answers for any problem that you could ever encounter. Young person, you need to find time in your busy schedule to read the Scriptures and meditate on them. If you can read



the Bible in the morning, God will bring what you have read back to your mind throughout the day, and it will be just what you need.

In thinking back to when I was a freshman in college, one morning at the breakfast table, I opened the Word and read the Scripture, "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Timothy 2:3). That day I needed to take a stand for the Lord in one of my classes, and I felt very intimidated in the situation. However, God brought that Scripture back to my mind on the spur of the moment: "Endure hardness; don't be ashamed. Square your shoulders for Jesus Christ." It gave me that special impetus and what I needed for the moment so that I did not cower down. That is just how God works through His Word. He will give you exactly what you need to fight every battle in this life.

You need to trust in the Lord with all your heart. You can safely trust in Him. Sometimes young people have said to me: "I want a Christian companion. I want to trust the Lord, but what if He gives me someone ugly?" Have you ever had that thought? God will not do that. The person God gives you will be the most beautiful person in the world in your eyes. That is just how God works. God will give you the very best.

Proverbs 3:5-6 says: "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." God wants you to acknowledge Him, and He really will direct your paths. The burden of my heart is to let you know from the voice of experience that God wants to direct you in your life right now. Are you seeking God's face for direction in your life? Are you talking to Him about the really personal things of life? You need to, because God knows.

I used to think, "I want a husband." You must wait until God brings the right one along. I remember telling my dad: "I am going to be an old maid. I don't have a husband, and everyone else does." Dad used to say: "Busy yourself in the work of the Lord. Do everything you can do for God. He knows that is a desire and a need in your life, and He will fulfill it." Sister, God made you to want to have a husband. By nature, a Christian young lady wants someone to take charge of the affairs of her life. My husband did not have to teach me that; it is a natural tendency. God designed us to be that way. You really need to talk to God about getting the right companion. You should do as much talking to God about it as you do to your friends. This is so extremely important!

I am going to tell you of an experience that I had. There was a fellow in my life at one point. He was very nice, and he was a nice-looking fellow. Also, he was very serious about the things of God. I remember his going to Honduras to help build buildings years ago. I was probably eighteen or nineteen years old. Our dating consisted of going to the house of worship, and he came to our home and visited. I thought maybe I had found the right one, but I kept talking to God, because I did not want to make any mistakes. (One thing worse than not having a man is having the wrong man; so you do not want to make a mistake.) God was mindful of where I was.

I was a sophomore in college. I had already met my husband, but he just came in for camp meeting and lived way out West. He was horrible about writing letters, and he called me on the phone once a year. I thought he was the neatest person I had ever met, but I wondered why he did not keep in touch. I thought that I must not have meant anything to him. Meanwhile, I was spending time with another young man.

One day God said to me, "This is not the right one." It was just astonishing to me, so I was thinking: "Okay, he is not the right one. There must be a good reason why he is not the right one." Well, there was a very good reason, but God did not choose to tell me. He just said, "This is not the right one." I thought: "Now what am I supposed to tell this fellow? What reason am I supposed to give him?" He was such a mannerly, respectful young man. That was a really difficult situation. One minister came to me and said, "You know, you really hurt that fellow by dropping him like a hot cake." Well, God just kept putting that on me, and I could not get away from it. When I prayed, it would come back again. So, as kindly as I knew how, I had to tell him that I could not spend time with him anymore.

Nothing took form quickly with the man who later became my husband. Several years down the road, we did begin to correspond a little more. As time went on, my heart grew fonder, and apparently his did too, because it culminated in marriage.

You know, the other young man to whom I am referring is now in a very drastic state of life, and he is out in Babylon. I am so thankful that God spared me, and I am so thankful that I knew enough to talk to God, and that I listened. He was a very sincere young man when I was with him. I did not know what the future held, but God did. To me, that is very personal. It is very dear to me that God took time to work with me and did not let me just go on my own foolish impulses. He cared and directed my footsteps because I listened to Him.

Young person, God knows your end from the beginning. Who would not want to go to God and communicate with Him when He has all the answers and knows the future? You only know what a person is today. You need to tune your ears in and listen to Him. There is no time in life when you can cease listening to God. All the experiences I have passed through in life are not enough to take me on to Heaven. You do not know what the future holds. You need God.

I am so extremely thankful that God gave me a companion who felt the same way I did. When my husband and I were dating, our courtship was spent at camp meetings, revivals, in his home, and in my home singing around the piano. Honestly, he would have me singing until I was ready to drop in a faint. I thought, "I believe this man would sing twenty-four hours a day!"

When he called me on the telephone, he always forgot the two-hour difference in time, so the phone calls often came at two or three o'clock in the morning. He apparently did not care, and I surely did not when I heard his voice on the other end. Often our time on the telephone was spent with him playing the piano and singing to me some new song he had just discovered. It may sound foolish to you, but it was wonderful to me. Every time we were together, our conversations centered around God's Word. The most beautiful thing was that we understood God's Word alike, because we had the same Spirit.

As I was growing up, I thought that God would give me someone from Newark and that we would spend the rest of our days there. Why did He have to bring someone from eighteen hundred miles away? I do not know, but He was fashioning that man to be the perfect man for me many years before He brought us together.

Young person, God is fashioning the right companion for your life. You just need to talk to Him and find out who he or she is. In the meantime, you need to deepen your roots in the things of God and spend your days serving Him. You cannot go wrong, because when you get the right one, you will have a jewel of a person. God is going to be working with that person too. Starting this process very early is really important, because marriage is a wonderful, divine creation from God, and it is so fulfilling.

When I was a teenager, I wanted twelve children, but God saw that seven was what I needed, and that is what He gave me. That is so fulfilling. When I had a child, I would think: "Oh, I hope God gives me another one. Children are so wonderful." And then God would give me another one. I remember after my first child was born, he was just the dearest little person in my life. I took him with me everywhere I went, and David took him with him everywhere he went.

God gives us wonderful blessings in life. If I go back and think about what all I wanted in life, and then I think of what God has given me, He has not left one of my needs unmet. That only comes by seeking God's divine will and living in the center of His will. Jeremiah 10:23 says, "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." No matter how learned you are, you are not capable of directing your own steps. God wants to direct your steps.

Prayer is such a wonderful thing. You can cultivate a close relationship with the Lord. The Bible says we need to be instant in prayer. We read in Romans 12:12, "Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer." You do not have to have long, drawn-out prayers. Now, sometimes you do need to spend a long time with God in prayer, but as far as God is concerned, God knows your need before you even ask.

No doubt, your life is very busy. Perhaps you are in school and you work nights. So, how do you get prayer built into your day? Cultivating the habit of praying and spending special time alone with the Lord is wonderful, but you can also pray throughout your day, even when you are driving the car. You can learn to pray wherever you are. I have special memories in my life of specific times when I was praying. I could take you to the high school where I graduated, to a spot in the hall where I really needed help from God. As I was walking through crowded halls, I remember having my own private conversation with God, and I remember God hearing and answering my prayer. You do not have to be

in a specific setting to pray.



Sometimes the devil tries to really pull one over on us, by causing us to think we have to be in a kneeling position in a closet with the door shut behind us. No, you can talk to God anywhere. Sometimes people think I am silly when I say, "I love to wash dishes." I have a dishwasher now, but I have not always had one. I love to wash dishes, because while I wash dishes, I can talk to God and meditate on the things of God. I grow through meditation.

Do you meditate? I am not talking about some weird kind of yoga meditation. I am speaking of wholesome meditation—being quiet and saying:

"God, what do You have to say to me today? Lord, I have this problem, and I don't know how to solve it. I need to hear from You." Then just be quiet. Finding those times is difficult. Sometimes I meditate and think upon the goodness of God. It builds me up spiritually and makes me feel so good. It often gives me the strength that I need to fight the battles of life.

Cultivating a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is so important. No one can take that personal relationship away from you. Only you can let go of it. You will pass through some very difficult scenes of life. I am not telling you that to frighten you, but I believe in being realistic. I am realistic with my children at home. Sometimes Mom is hurting, and they say, "What's wrong with you, Mom?" and I just spill it out. I say: "I am hurting, because this and this happened, and it hurts. I need to ask God to help me." I tell them how real life is, because I think they need to know. They need to know that I am a human being just as they are, and I am just as dependent upon God as they are.

There will be times in your life when you will not know which way to go, but you have an avenue. If you cultivate your friendship with God, He will be your best friend, and you can call on Him and say, "God, this is totally baffling." Then you will hear a voice whisper to you. Someone may try to influence you in the wrong way, but you do not need to be led astray, because God is faithful.

In thinking of our thirty years in the ministry and the decisions my dear husband has had to make from time to time, I can recall times when he had to separate himself from anything that I would say or any influence that I would cast on his life, because the decision involved people who were very dear to me; yet he was responsible for my spiritual welfare. I am so thankful that he did not listen to my groaning and my human feelings. He separated himself and listened to the voice of God, and then gave that direction to me. I appreciate it so much. The voice of God has always been faithful to give us the direction we have needed at the right time.

I am not afraid of going astray. What I am afraid of is ever releasing my grip on the hand of God. I fear to ever let go of His hand. I fear displeasing God in my thoughts, my actions, or my attitudes. This is what life is all about, young person: obeying God, listening to Him, pleasing Him, and watching Him bring to pass beautiful things in your life.

Another Scripture tells us that we need to labor to be accepted of God. In serving God, there is some work involved, some denying of self, and some things to lay aside; but God will be faithful to prick you on the shoulder and say: "You know, it would be a little better if you didn't do this. It would be better if you were a little more careful of how you are dressing." I learned years ago that I did not like that uncomfortable feeling that the Spirit of God causes one to have at times, when maybe what one was doing was not wrong but was getting too close to it. I learned that it was much better to please God.

I remember back many years ago when I first heard the message on long hair and that it is given to the woman for a glory. There was a fight going on inwardly when I first heard that message. The fight was: "I don't know what to do with my hair. You mean, I should never cut it again? How am I going to fix it in the front and in the back?" All these thoughts whipped through my mind in a moment's time. I did not like that inward strife that was going on, so it did not take me too long to say: "Wait a minute! If the Word says I need to have long hair, I need to have long hair. Quit the quibbling. Lord, I want to obey You. Would You help me?"

Soon after my husband and I were married, he moved me off into the mountains of Montana. I was very much a city girl, a very afraid city girl. He moved me into a darling, little, three-room cabin on a mountainside in a town of thirty-two people. There was a very fast-moving stream coming down by our bedroom window. Our bedroom window was open all the time, and you could hear that rushing water; it was a neat sound.

My husband was used to going up in the mountain and praying, so when he moved me there, he said, "Let's go pray." Trying to be a good, little, submissive wife, I trekked up the mountain with him to pray. When we got to the spot that he had picked out, I was looking around for mountain lions in the trees and bears behind us. I had a hard time shutting my eyes. Finally, we had to come to an agreement. I said, "Honey, you can go up the mountain to pray if you want to, but please let me stay in the bedroom to do my praying." I could not pray up there. I had to watch while he prayed, because I was afraid.

Then, he took a job working in a lumber mill all night long. He would leave me at ten or eleven o'clock at night and not come home until seven in the morning. I could not sleep. The bears often got in our garbage can right outside the window. He thought that was the neatest sound to have those bears rattling the garbage can right outside our bedroom window.

I learned a Scripture during that time, and I have never forgotten it to this day. It was Psalm 4:8, which says, "I

will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety." I would say that Scripture repeatedly until finally my eyelids closed, but the Lord was with me there. Wherever we have gone, God has been with us, and we have continued to acknowledge Him in our lives. He has directed our paths. That is the beauty of it all. I do not know how many more days or years I have to live for Him, but my greatest intentions are to continue walking with God and walking in the order of His will. God has given me an abundant life, and I know He is going to continue to do so. Do you know what? He is no respecter of persons. However insignificant you may feel, God is concerned about you, your life, and your future. He really cares about you.

Let us read a Scripture from the Amplified Version. Isaiah 49:15-16 says: "[And the Lord answered] Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, they may forget, yet will I not forget you. Behold, I have indelibly imprinted (tattooed) a picture of you on the palm of each of My hands. O Zion, your walls are continually before Me."

Did you know that God has a picture of you in the palms of His hands? That is how special you are to Him. You are always before His mind; He cares about you. I feel His care and concern in my own life, and God is no respecter of persons. He cares for you. Young person, if you feel discouraged and feel that you have failed, you can pick up where you left off.

I could talk all day of the wonderful goodness of our Lord and how He has been with us, how He has helped, and how He has guided us; but I want you to experience that too. That is the deepest desire of my heart. I trust that you will submit your heart and life to Jesus Christ.

Neglect

Miss Meant-To has a comrade
And her name is Didn't-Do.
Have you ever chanced to meet them?
Did they ever call on you?
These two girls now live together
In the house of Never-Win,
And I'm told that it is haunted
By the ghost of Might-Have-Been.



The most important decision that anyone will ever make in life is choosing whether or not to be a child of God. I was brought up in a godly home, and I was made to realize that. I was six years of age when I got saved, and I can still remember how I felt. I knew that I was a sinner. I felt that I was the worst sinner in that church building.

There are things in my treasure chest of memories that I am going to mention. My godly parents taught me the great value of prayer, and they taught me how to pray. We prayed in the car, in the house, and everywhere we went. We prayed about nearly everything. I lived in a wonderful atmosphere, but living in that atmosphere did not save me. It did instill wonderful

principles in me, but there came a time when I had to do something about salvation.

Divine healing is the first thing that I want to pull out of my treasure chest, but that is not my subject. When my mother was a baby, her parents trusted the Lord for divine healing. As a baby, she suffered blood poisoning, and they thought she was going to die. Her mother wrote to some people from the Church of God, and they sent her an anointed handkerchief. Now, there was no healing power in a handkerchief, but the healing came through obedience to the Word of God. She laid that handkerchief on my mother as a baby, and soon she was healed. My mother kept that handkerchief, and many times she shouted praises to God with that little hanky for how He healed her. God healed her many, many more times.

The main thing I want to focus on is how to find the right companion. The second most important decision that you will ever make is marrying the right person. This was instilled in me as a little girl. One of my favorite bedtime stories as a little girl was how Momma and Daddy met. I often said, "Tell me how God brought you together." I heard that story over and over. As I heard it repeatedly, it was instilled in me how serious it is to get the right companion. The things that you learn early in life are the things that stay with you. It created a fear in me of marrying the wrong person.

I want to tell you briefly how Mom and Dad met. Mother lived in Tennessee, and my dad lived in Oklahoma. My mother was one of seven children. She was a twin, and her daddy was a preacher. She wanted a minister for a husband, and she wanted one who trusted the Lord for healing. She said, "I covenanted in my heart that if I have to stay home with Mom and Dad for the rest of my life, that is what I will do, because I am not going to make a mistake and marry out of the order of the Lord."

She started praying, and the Scripture that she used was Psalm 37:4-5: "Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass."

My mother was in Tennessee praying, and Daddy was in Oklahoma. Young person, if you are still waiting for a companion, perhaps God still has to bring him or her in for you. You need to be patient. Mom put in her request, and that was fine as long as her petition was in line with the Lord's Word. My dad told his mother that he wanted someone who could play the piano, who could sing alto, and who had blue eyes. Well, he got everything but the blue eyes; Mom had hazel eyes.

My dad, in Oklahoma, was engaged to someone else. I want you to look at how God works. He was engaged to a United Brethren pastor's daughter. My dad had to drive sixty miles to go to the Church of God. So the family attended the United Brethren Church one Sunday, and the next Sunday they drove sixty miles to the Church of God. Back and forth they went.

This lady wanted my dad to marry her. She was teaching school, but he did not have a job. He had enough principle to know that it was not a good idea to get married when he did not have a job. Also, he said one argument they would always come down to was about the Church of God. She said, "Let's just forget both churches and join some other church." My dad did not like that idea. He just kept holding out for the Church of God, and one day she got out of the car, slammed the door, and was done with him. I will not go through all of how God brought my parents together, but they were a godly team for the Lord. They worked together everywhere they traveled.

As I heard my parent's story over and over, the fear of God was put in my heart, and I really sought the Lord. The years that I was dating, I was not always wise. I did not have enough sense to direct my own steps, and none of us do. If you think you are smart enough to choose who to marry, you need help. I was afraid, and even when I knew I was in love, I said, "Lord, I have to be sure that this is Your will." Momma told me as a little girl: "Almeda, you need to start praying for a companion right now as a little girl. You need to start praying for God to help you find the right companion, because finding the right companion is the second most important decision to getting saved." So I did.

As a Christian, the first qualification that you need to consider when seeking a companion is whether that person is a saved individual. First of all, you had better make sure that *you* are saved and connected to Christ so that you can hear from Him. A lot of people are deaf, spiritually speaking. They ask the Lord, "This is the right one, isn't it, Lord?" Then they shut their ears and say, "Oh, yes!" They do not wait for the Lord's answer.

Just because someone says he or she is saved does not mean that person is spiritual. Does that person live as a Christian should live? Is that individual obeying the truth? Is he or she submissive to the pastor? Is that person living what is preached or doing contrary to what is preached? Disobedience is not a good seedbed for Christian living.

I thought what it is like to cultivate a garden. The ground has to be prepared before you put seed in it; then you have to put good seed in it. Likewise, to have a happy home, you must have the right kind of ground. You have to be right with God, and you have to seek His counsel and direction. You must have good ground to start with; then you must put the right seeds in the ground so that you do it right. The world says you just get married and live happily ever after; that is a fairy tale. It does not happen that way.

You can make your own choice. You are free to choose who you want to marry, but you are going to pay for it if you do it wrong. If you get in a mess, you are going to know that you put yourself in the mess. Second Corinthians 6:14-15 says: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?"

How are you going to be in agreement if you marry someone who is unsaved? Are you foolish enough to think, "I can still live for the Lord and be married to this unsaved person"? The two of you would be going two opposite directions. You would have strife and division in the home, and that is not the happy way to go.

First Corinthians 7:39 gives the qualifications for the widow lady, but we know that God's Word does not have one standard for the young and another one for the older saints. Holiness is the standard for all of us. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 7:39, "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; [Everybody likes that, don't they? That is what they want to hear, but that is not all of it.] only in the Lord."

God has someone just for you. It is your job to find out who it is and wait until He brings that person along. My mother was twenty-five years of age when she got married. Back in those days, people got married really young, especially in Tennessee. She thought she was an old maid at twenty-five. She thought she would be single forever, but she settled it, saying, "Rather than to be out of the order of the Lord, I will just be single all my life."

The Scripture says you need to marry "in the Lord." God can let you know if a person is the right one for you, but you need to ask Him. If you are Church of God, he or she should be Church of God. You are going to have a divided home if he or she attends one church and you are going to another church. A divided home is not a good thing.

I had a wonderful godly home when I was growing up. I did not know what the word *divorce* meant. I do not even remember knowing anybody who was divorced. Children from divorced homes suffer greatly. You do not want to have to go down that road in life. Furthermore, you do not need to if you serve the Lord and do what He says. Some like to do what they want to do, and then they bring the mess to the Lord and say, "Here; fix it, Lord." Well, He can fix some things, but you still have to reap what you sow, and that is not always pleasant.

When I read the Scripture in 1 Corinthians 7:39 about marrying "in the Lord," I thought about when Samuel was choosing a king for Israel. All of Jesse's sons walked by Samuel. When Samuel saw the eldest son, he thought surely he was the one whom God had chosen, but he was not. He was tall and good looking, but God let Samuel know that he should not look on the outward appearance. When choosing a companion, we are not supposed to choose by the eye. Young person, you may think, "Oh, she is beautiful, so she has to be the one" or "He is handsome, so he has to be the one" or "Well, he has money" or "He is popular, and everybody



thinks he is great." You are judging by the outward appearance.

What the Lord said to Samuel then will work for this today. He said in 1 Samuel 16:7, "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." God is the only One who knows who the right companion is for you. The Bible tells us in Jeremiah 10:23, "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." If you choose your own companion, you might choose wrong, and then you will have to pay for it. You are not wise enough to see down the road.

Let us consider some men in the Bible who made wrong choices. Solomon was the wisest man in the Old Testament. I do not think you can qualify as the wisest person around. Although Solomon was wise concerning many things, he was not wise when it came to women; he was very unwise. The commandment all through the Old Testament was that God's people were not to marry outside the nation of Israel. They were not to marry their enemies.

First Kings 11:1-2 reads: "But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites [all of these were enemies of Israel]; Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love." I really do not think that it was love. I do not know how a man could love that many women at once; that would be a little hard to do.

Verses 4 and 6 go on to tell us: "For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. . . . And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father." Solomon built a place for idols for his wives, and the next thing, he was worshiping with them. This is what happens if you marry someone unsaved. That person can pull you away from the Lord.

We can read about another man in the Bible who was unwise in his choices. Samson lost out with God. He married a woman who was a Philistine, but that marriage did not last very long. After that, he went after another Philistine woman named Delilah. He flirted around with Delilah until she got him to tell her the secret of his great strength. He was playing with the devil, and the devil won. He lost his strength, his eyesight, and the presence of the Lord.

I have seen young people lose out with God because they would not obey God about seeking Him for the right companion. A lot of them are not even saved today because they chose that companion over God. Some may be saved, but they have terrible home situations. A broken home or a home in trouble is far worse than living by yourself. If you are saved, you should not date an unsaved person. God showed one young person that she should break up with a young man, but she would not do it. She lost out with the Lord, but she did not even marry that guy. She was determined to have him instead of God, and she is still lost today.

Young person, God has good things for you. You can start your own treasure chest. If you have been given treasures from your parents or grandparents, you can pass those treasures on. These are things that are going to affect you spiritually. The most important thing is to let God have charge of your life. If you are not going to listen to Him about other things, you are not going to listen to Him about choosing the right companion. He is going to start talking to you about other things first, saying, "Don't do this," and "Do that." You cannot be His child if you are not going to obey Him.

Some young people lose out with God because they are not getting hooked into God. They are not getting that personal relationship with God. You are not going to make it just because you are with a group. Salvation is not a group plan. You are not going to get to Heaven because you are Brother and Sister So-and-So's child. You can only get to Heaven because your heart is right with God and you are walking in 100 percent obedience to God. When you get to the Judgment, you cannot say, "Well, I sat in church, but I did not pay attention." Does that excuse work in school? No! If you did not hear what the teacher said, that is tough! If he or she said it, you are responsible. Salvation is a life and death matter. This is about your soul and where you will spend eternity.

Marrying out of the order of the Lord is just one of the many reasons people turn away from God. However, I think one of the basic reasons is that some are not getting a good handle on God in the beginning. You need to have a handle on Him and be determined, saying: "I am going to live for the Lord no matter what I have to do. If I have to be shunned at school, if I have to change all my friends at school, if I have to break up with a boyfriend or a girlfriend, I am going to be true to God." Being true to God has to be the most important thing in your life. Often people want the best of two worlds: they want to stay with the Lord and yet do what they want to do. It does not work that way. God is not going to accept anything less than your whole heart.

PROCRUSTINATION

Unto a youth the Gospel came,
Exhorting him in Jesus' name,
To turn from sin, embrace the truth
And serve God in the days of youth.

The youth replied, "I know that's right,
But I won't turn from sin tonight;
A few more pleasures I will seek,
And then I'll turn—perhaps next week."

But next week came, and still his heart
Was not inclined from sin to part,
"A few more days in sin I'll live,
And then my heart to God I'll give."

Days passed by, and months rolled on,
And still he sang that same old song:
"Not now, but after while I'll pray
For God to wash my sins away."

The months and years went by so fast,
From youth and middle age he passed;
And yet his sins were not forgiven
Nor his name enrolled in Heaven.

From middle aged to old he went;
His body 'neath the years was bent;
His conscience once so keen to feel,
No more was stirred at God's appeal.

Procrastination in its stealth
Had robbed his soul of Heaven's wealth;
And so at last—to sin a slave,
He died to fill a Christless grave.

Souls, behold, God says today
Turn now from all your sins away,
Lest you should reach your doleful fate,
And cry at last, "Too late! Too late!"

Ulysses Phillips



*I thank God for Bible truth,
Oh, yes, I love it well.
It tells us how to live for God
And shun a devil's hell.*

*Help me, dear Lord, in all I do
To live this truth each day,
And be a true example, Lord,
In everything I say.*

*Help me to fear Thy truth, my Lord,
Regardless of what others say,
Or how they twist Thy truth about,
I know strait is the way!*

*Only pure truth will stand at last
When God is on His throne.
So why let up or compromise?
God's Word lives on and on.*