



# My Bible School Lessons

Exploring the Word of God

## Lesson #31: "Daily Victory in Christ"

### Learning Her Value

"Just what I have been expecting for about seven years," said Miss Pauline Worthington, looking from an open letter in her hand.

"Is not your letter from Herbert, Lina?" questioned Mrs. Worthington, a tiny, silver-haired old lady with gentle expression.

"Yes, Mother, Essie is very ill with low, nervous fever, and they want me to come and stay until she is better. 'The carriage will be sent at three o'clock.'" Miss Pauline's eyes snapped, "I think it is about time Bert's tyranny over that little martyr was ended. He's killing her."

"Lina! He is your brother."

"I can see his faults even if he is."

"I never heard Essie complain."

"She never would. But look at her. Nine years ago when she was married, she was a lively sunbeam, so bright and pretty. Now, pale, quiet and reserved, her voice is seldom heard, her smile seldom seen. A wintry shadow of her former summer brightness! You have not seen her at home, but surely when she is here you see the change."

"Yes, dear, she has changed; but family cares -"

"Has Louise changed so? She has been twelve years married."

Mrs. Worthington was silent. Louise was her oldest child, and presided over the home in which her mother had been a crippled prisoner for fifteen years. She took all the household care, and had five children, and yet Louise had gained in beauty and cheerful happiness, since her marriage.

"Henry appreciates Louise," said Lina; "there lies the difference between her happiness and Essie's dejection. If there is any domestic trouble, Henry and Louise share it, while Herbert shifts it all upon Essie. He is a habitual faultfinder."

"Perhaps, dear, Essie is not as good a housekeeper as Louise. Herbert may have cause to find fault."

"Once in ten times he may. I never saw a faultless house or housekeeper; but Essie and her house are the nearest approach to perfection I ever did see."

"You never spoke so before, Lina."

"Because Louise and I thought it best not to worry you with trouble beyond your help. But firmly believing as I do now, that Herbert is actually worrying his wife into the grave, I intend to give him a lesson; that is, if you can spare me to go?"

## Lesson 31: Daily Victory in Christ

"You must go, dear. I can get along nicely."

So when Herbert Worthington sent his carriage, Lina was ready for the fourteen mile drive to her brother's house. It was a place where no evil spirit of repining and faultfinding should have been found. Spacious, handsomely furnished, with well-trained servants and all the comforts wealth could furnish, it seemed a perfect paradise to visitors. But a very demon lurked there to poison all, and this demon Lina had come to exorcise.

For the first two weeks Essie took all of Lina's time and care. Herbert snarled and fretted over domestic shortcomings, but Lina peremptorily forbade all mention of these in the sickroom. When convalescence commenced, Lina sent Essie to visit old Mrs. Worthington, and took control of Herbert, the children, and the household, fully determined to show her brother, how far he carried his absurd habit of faultfinding.

The first dinner saw the beginning of the lesson Lina meant to teach, by practically illustrating some of Herbert's absurdities. Herbert entered the dining room, his handsome face disfigured by a frown.

"Soup," said Herbert, lifting the tureen cover; "perfect dish-water!"

"Susan," said Lina sharply, before Herbert could lift the ladle, "take that tureen to the kitchen and tell Jane the soup is not fit to eat."

Susan promptly obeyed. Herbert looked rather ruefully at the vanishing dish. He was especially fond of soup. Essie would have had some gentle excuse for it, she never whipped off his dinner in that way. All dinner time Lina kept reminding Susan about that abominable soup, till Herbert heartily wished he had said nothing about it. Then his imagination detected a burnt flavor in the pudding, and before he could remonstrate, that dish followed the soup.

"I'll get this house in some sort of order before I leave it!" said Lina.

"Before you leave it," said Herbert, sharply. "Do you suppose you are a better housekeeper than Essie? Why, I have not a friend who does not envy the exquisite order of my house and my dainty table."

"Herbert, you do surprise me. Only yesterday I heard you say you did wish there was ever anything fit to eat on the table."

"I don't expect every word to be taken literally," said Herbert, rather sulkily. An hour later, finding a streak of dust in the sitting room, he declared emphatically it was not fit for a pig to live in! Coming into it the next morning, he found the curtains torn down, the carpets taken up, the floor littered with pails, soap, and brushes, and Lina in a dismal dress, directing two women, scrubbing vigorously.

"Goodness, what are you doing?"

"Cleaning this room."

"Why, in the fall Essie had the whole house cleaned until it shone, and didn't make half the muss," he added contemptuously.

"Well," said Lina, "I thought this room a marvel of neatness myself, but when you said it was not fit for pigs, I supposed you wanted it cleaned."

"The room was well enough," was the curt reply. "For mercy's sake, don't turn any more of the house upside down."

At breakfast a tiny tear in Louise's apron caught her father's eye. Because of his own angry statements: "She never had a decent stitch of clothes, and he did wish somebody would see to her," two days later a formidable dry-goods bill was presented at the store. Lina explained it to him in this wise: "You said, Herbert, that Louise hadn't a decent stitch, and you wished somebody would see to her, so I bought her

## Lesson 31: Daily Victory in Christ

a complete outfit. I could not see any fault myself, but of course I got more expensive articles, as you did not like those already provided. I am glad you called my attention to the poor neglected child."

"Poor, neglected child!" echoed astonished Herbert. "Why, Lina, Essie fairly slaves herself out over those children. I am sure I never see any better dressed or neater."

Lina merely shrugged her shoulders. A month passed. Essie gained strength in the genial atmosphere surrounding Louise and her mother, while Lina ruled Herbert's home with a rod of iron. Herbert began to experience a sick longing for Essie's gentle presence. Lina took him so very literally in all he said, and yet he could not rebuke her for doing exactly what he openly wished.

A chair with a tiny spot of dirt being declared absolutely filthy, was upholstered and varnished at a cost of eight dollars. A dozen new shirts, Essie's last labor of love, being said to "set like meal bags," were bestowed upon the gardener, and a new set sent from the furnishing store.

Every window was opened after a pettish declaration that the "room was as hot as an oven," and an hour later the stove was fired up to smothering heat because he declared it "cold enough to freeze a polar bear." In short, with apparently an energetic attempt to correct all shortcomings and put the housekeeping upon a perfect basis, Lina, in one month, nearly doubled her brother's expenses, and drove him to the very verge of distraction, keeping account of every complaint.

But Essie, well and strong again, was coming home. On the day of her expected arrival, Lina, with a solemn face, invited her brother into the sitting room for a few moments of private conversation.

"Herbert," she said gravely, "I have a proposition to make to you. You are my only brother, and I love you very dearly. It really grieves me to the heart to see how much there is to find fault with in your beautiful home."

Herbert twisted himself uneasily in his chair, but Lina continued:

"You know that mother is very dependent on me, Louise having the house and children to care for, but I think she would sacrifice her own comfort for yours. So, if you wish, Herbert, I will come here permanently, to keep things in order for you"

"You are very kind," he faltered, the instincts of a gentleman battling with the strong desire to tell Lina she would certainly drive him to a lunatic asylum by six months more of her model housekeeping.

"Not at all. A man who has made an unfortunate marriage certainly needs all the aid and sympathy his family can give him."

The last straw was laid upon the camel's back. Herbert spoke hotly:

"You are entirely mistaken, Lina! I have not made an unfortunate marriage. If ever a man was blessed in a wife, I am that man."

"You amaze me, Herbert," Lina cried out in well-feigned astonishment.

"I do not see why you should be surprised. Essie is gentle, loving, orderly, a model housekeeper, and a perfect home angel --God bless her."

"Herbert, is that true?"

"Certainly it is true."

"I cannot believe it," was the slow, hesitating response.

"Cannot believe it! Why?"

## Lesson 31: Daily Victory in Christ

"Because"--and Lina dwelt impressively upon every word-- "during the nine years of your married life, though visiting here frequently, I never heard you speak one word of encouragement or praise to Essie. I never saw one look of approbation upon your face or appreciation of any effort she made for your comfort. Continual faultfinding and constant blame have changed her from a happy, winsome girl to a pale, careworn woman. Even her last illness was but the unbroken despair of a heart crushed under a load of daily censure and constant striving for the approbation never given. And you tell me now she has never failed in her duty to you. There is a grave error somewhere."

The sadly earnest tone, the face of thoughtful gravity, sent every word home to Herbert's heart. He spoke no word of self-defense as Lina slowly left the room. In the silence that followed, conscience reviewed the past, and he knew that his sister had only spoken the truth. The habit of fault-finding meeting no resistance in Essie's gentleness, had gained in force till all its enormity stood revealed in the experience of the past month.

In the days when Essie lay dangerously ill there had been no self-reproach like this in her husband's sorrow. He had given his wife a fair home, an ample income, frequent social pleasures, many costly gifts, and loved her faithfully, while poisoning her whole life.

"God help me," he whispered, "to conquer this fault. Essie shall hear no more faultfinding, and if I see her drooping I will send her to Mother and have Lina back again."

Never had wife and mother warmer welcome than greeted Essie. The children were unchecked in their loudest exhibit of delight. Lina had to rush into the hall to hide her merry eyes when Herbert, kissing Essie, said: "We must let Mother have Lina now, dear; she has been very kind and worked hard for my comfort; but there is no home-fairy like my Essie."

The quick, glad look in his wife's soft eyes told Herbert that one step had been taken in the right direction. As the days glided by, and Essie found appreciation meeting every effort to home comfort, a word of praise for every little triumph of cookery or needlework, her pale face grew bright with untold happiness. Gradually the careworn expression was replaced by one of sweet content, and Herbert found his own heart lighted by the cheerful voice, the sunny smile, the bright eyes of the Essie he had wooed years before.

Lina, making a visit six months later, told her mother on her return, "Herbert has learned his lesson by heart, Mother, he appreciates Essie now at her value, and he lets her know it."

## Four Magic Words

Robert and Eleanor Ashfield sat at the breakfast table. "You had no right to say what you did!" she cried, stormily. It might have been their sixteenth or their sixtieth quarrel; he had long ago lost count. As it reached its unendurable climax he arose from the daintily set breakfast table, his food scarcely touched. Eleanor rose as soon as he had done so, saying bitterly, "I suppose you're going off without your breakfast just to annoy me!"

He flung back some violent answer, much like hundreds of others he had made before in those frequent recurring disturbances which well-bred people so scrupulously save for their nearest and dearest. Then he stalked from the room, and went to his office. The day was a miserable one.

Being a lawyer, he forced himself into his usual kindly professional air, and into an apparently personal interest in the woes of his clients.

In this way the morning passed; then came a tasteless luncheon, and the afternoon opened with more clients-to the same assumed interest. When he found himself facing the last one of the day, it was with

## Lesson 31: Daily Victory in Christ

a feeling half of relief that the work for the day was over, half of wretched distaste that he must go home and finish out the quarrel he had left. He knew perfectly well it would come up again in some way that very night.

This sort of thing had been going on now for three years; they had been married five. Applied maxims as to the folly of getting angry with a woman had all failed him. He became conscious that he was thinking too much of his own affairs, that he was staring too absently at his last client. The latter, his law matters satisfactorily adjusted, was indulging in some personal memories induced by Ashfield's kindly manner.

"It's for her sake I'm after bein' so glad I won," the old man was saying, happily. "Thirty years of good times we've had together, Rosy an' me. She's made this world so pleasant to me that I'm after fearing' I'll never want to leave it, barrin' she should go first."

The lawyer was conscious of a sudden, genuine interest, "You are talking of your wife?"

"Of who else could I be talkin'?"

"You say you've had thirty years of happiness with her? I suppose she's one of these yellow-haired saints."

"No, sir. Rosy an' her folks have all been redheaded, an' by the same token, had the highest of tempers."

"An you have been happy with her?" asked the lawyer, skeptically.

The old man answered, frankly, "Neither of us was happy the first five years. Trouble began almost in our honeymoon. It was just six months after we married that Rosy flung a fryin' pan at me and after just seven months I beat her. We scandalized the neighbors!"

"What changed it?" the lawyer asked, more skeptically still. "Did you get afraid of each other?"

"There's no scrap of 'fraid in either of us, Sir. Things was goin' from bad to worse. Me gittin' so I couldn't do me ditchin' decent because of thinkin' over the quarrels, when it come to me I might take counsel of Johnny Milligan, the very wise old man that lived behind us on the hill.

"'Tis said the woman should be the peacemaker,' I growled to Johnny when I finished me tale to him.

"'Tis said wrong,' says Johnny. 'Tis the man should handle all situations. There's four magic words which control an' subdue women, no matter what temper they are in; same as certain magic sounds will quiet a frantic horse. These four words, they never fail; they are hard to pronounce when a row is on, unless the man remembers how he is the superior, and 'tis his own fault if he doesn't say them.'

" 'Give me the words,' says I.

"'Use them when ye're angriest,' says Johnny. 'Use them when they strangle ye. Cough 'em out. Choke 'em out! –But out they must come!'

"So old Johnny wrote them four words on a piece of paper for me. When I'd puzzled them out, me jaw dropped, and I'd no faith at all, rememberin' the fryin' pan and what Rosy was when she fell into a rage.

"For an exception, we had no quarrel that night, an' time mornin' come, I was more doubtful than ever of Johnny's prescription. The next evenin' when I came home, we both flew into a rage over how much buttermilk the pig ought to have you wouldn't believe what small things we would quarrel over. I was about to say the worst things, when I remembered old Johnny and what he'd wrote out for me, an' how he said they'd be hard to say in a quarrel—an' they was hard! But I looked Rosy full in the eye, an' I said them out loud and distinct. She stared at me, flushed, and hesitated. I seen me advantage and I said them again. She tucked her head down and sidled away from the pigpen towards me. 'Oh, Tim,' says she, 'I didn't mean to be nasty! Feed the pig as much buttermilk as ye like.' "Well, I must be goin', Sir."

## Lesson 31: Daily Victory in Christ

"No hurry, Ryan," said the lawyer. "Did they always work—the words?"

"Always, Sir! An' I've been no miser with the prescription; I give it to more than one fella in difficulties with his wife." They both arose. The lawyer blushed, but he said with a dry little smile, "Give me the words?"

That night, business sent Ashfield to a place five hundred miles away. He returned a week later, the story of old Johnny only a hazy memory.

Eleanor's nerves and temper, the smoother for his week's absence, kept sweet the day of his return—until that night when a difference of opinion concerning a rug she had purchased (of a color he especially disliked) brought on a storm that was the fiercest of their whole married life.

They stood in their attractively furnished library, their feet on the offending rug, their tall, distinguished figures drawn up to full height, the woman passionately resentful, the man white with anger.

Suddenly, born apparently out of nowhere, a few sentences flashed vividly before him, "These four words—they are hard to say when a row is on, but they never fail. 'Tis the man's own fault if he doesn't use them."

Ashfield shook himself; his hands clenched. He made a wild effort, but his lips were soundless. The bitter powers inside were murdering the magic four. Then suddenly, impetuously, looking the angry woman before him straight in the eyes, he desperately flung out the sentence they made. They sounded grotesquely out of place in the midst of this wild quarrel; but he heard himself saying them clearly and distinctly, "Dear, I love you."

As the unexpected sentence fell on her ears, she stared; then she flushed. It sounded strangely sweet to her, strangely powerful; that sentence, flashing out in sheer gold from the base metal of their quarrel. Sudden remorse brought tears into her eyes. She had just wounded him all she could over a foolish thing like a rug! And yet, even in the midst of their mutual anger, he could say the sentence most beloved by every woman!

Like calming music, the words sang in her soul; her anger receded before them, then died utterly. Bowing her head, she said, "Oh, Robert! After all, why should I fuss about the hateful old rug? Let's send it back and exchange it for some color we both like."

He held out his arms mutely, then smiled down on the tear-wet face she lifted, and bent to kiss it.

### **The Law of Kindness.**

The story is told of a sweet young Christian wife whose husband was a drunkard. Night after night he would frequent the local bars, socializing and drinking with his buddies. On many an occasion he would brag about his wife, how sweet and considerate of him she was.

One evening, his buddies decided to find out if his boasts were true and asked if they could go home with him for an evening meal. It was already past midnight, but the husband was so sure of his wife's response to such a request, even at such an hour, that he immediately complied and led them to his home.

Upon arriving, they found his wife had already retired for the night. The husband woke her and let her know of his request. She quickly dressed and went into the kitchen to prepare a meal. And what a meal it was! No sandwiches roughly thrown together and tossed upon an empty table. The table was set as if for honored guests and the meal served was fit for a king.

The husband seated his friends around the table, beaming at the meal prepared by his lovely wife,

## Lesson 31: Daily Victory in Christ

satisfied that he had been proved right to his buddies. All during the meal his wife hovered near, waiting to see if any of them should like or need any thing further.

The husband began to realize what was happening. It finally occurred to him just how late it was getting, and just how tired his wife must be. Still, she smiled and complied with every wish that anyone made. Never did she speak a harsh word or give an impatient look to him or any of his guests.

When the meal was over and his friends had gone, he sat in the kitchen as his wife washed the dishes. As he watched her, a question kept gnawing at him. Finally he asked her, "Dear, why do you treat my friends and me in such a kind and sweet manner, especially at such a late hour?"

She looked at her husband with love in her eyes and replied, "Because this is the only world you will ever enjoy. I want you to at least be happy here."

Upon hearing this, his heart melted and he determined to surrender his life to the Lord. If his wife could have such love for him, then what love God must have for him also!

### **Plain Linda**

The last stroke of the bell was dying away when Linda Dahl walked timidly across the schoolroom floor, and sat down in the nearest empty seat.

"O, my, my!" whispered Jennifer Wilson across the aisle to her chum. "She is the plainest-looking girl I ever saw."

Elizabeth nodded her head very positively, and two or three others exchanged knowing glances. A few moments later a little piece of paper fluttered down at Jennifer's feet from a desk top. On it was written: "She's so plain. She's Rocky Mountainy-all ridges and hubbles.

Meanwhile Linda sat very still, her great black eyes fixed on the teacher's face.

Have you ever held a frightened bird in your hand, and felt its heart beat? That is the way Linda's heart was going. She was a stranger. Her father had moved to this place from a distant town, and she had walked to school that morning with a student who lived on the same street, but who had fluttered away into a little group of children almost as soon as she had shown the new girl where to hang her coat; and Linda, naturally a bit sensitive, felt very much alone.

This feeling was heightened when the bell struck, and one by one the students filed past into the schoolroom, with only a rude stare or indifferent glance, as if she were some specter on exhibition. When the last one had passed her, she clasped and unclasped her hands nervously. "It is because I am so homely!" she thought.

A month or more went by. Somehow Linda and her schoolmates had not made as much progress in getting acquainted as one would have thought. The new girl was unobtrusive, attended strictly to her studies, and made few demands on those about her; yet it was true that there was among them at least an unacknowledged conspiracy to taboo her, or an understanding that she was to be ignored almost completely.

This treatment Linda attributed to her looks. Ever since she could remember, she had been called "homely," "ugly," "plain," and similar names. Now, though she preserved a calm exterior, she could not help being unhappy because she was thus slighted.

One Monday morning a little flurry of excitement was visible among the pupils of the uptown grammar school. Elizabeth Weston had announced a party to come off later in the week, and several of them had been invited.

## Lesson 31: Daily Victory in Christ

"Will you invite Linda Dahl?" asked Jennifer, bending over her friend.

"I have been thinking about it," Elizabeth answered, slowly. "Miss Somers says she has the best lessons of any one in her class, and then she was so nice to Jimmy Flanders that day he sprained his arm. I have half a mind to." And so she did.

That night when Linda was telling her mother of the invitation she had received, she said, doubtfully, "I think I shall not go."

"Why not?" was the reply. "It can do no good to stay away, and something may be gained by going."

So it chanced that Linda found herself at Elizabeth's home on the evening of the party. Her hostess met her smilingly. "She is really glad that I came," thought Linda. And she felt her soul suddenly warm to life, just as the thirsty earth brightens and glows and sends up little shoots of new green at a patter of summer rain.

The long parlour was decorated in green and white. The bright lights, the merry figures moving beneath, and the shining faces, half of which were strange to Linda, formed a pretty picture, and the girl moved here and there in the constantly shifting kaleidoscope with a freedom and happiness she had not known since coming to the town.

At last she found herself, with the others, sitting very quietly and listening to two girls play a duet on the piano. Then one of them sang a Scottish song. Within the warmth and richness of the song it seemed you could hear the warbling of birds and the melody of brooks. Linda heard a half-sigh close beside her. "I wish I could sing! I've always wanted to be able to sing! "

Then for the first time she saw who sat there—a tall, beautiful, gracefully dressed girl whom she had noticed several times during the evening, and to whom everybody seemed to defer. She had heard vaguely that this was Elizabeth's cousin, Sarah, and wondered if it was for her that Elizabeth had given the party. "And can't you?" she asked, evincing instant interest.

The girl turned toward her with a smile. "Not at all," she answered. "Sometimes I used to try when no one heard, and once when I was in the hammock with my brother's little girl, I joined her in the song she was singing. She looked at me in a minute with a rueful countenance and said, 'Aunt Sarah, I can't sing when you are making such a noise!' " Linda laughed. "I haven't tried much since," the tall girl added.

"We have singing lessons at school twice a week," Linda said, presently, "but I like the everyday lessons better."

"Do you?" asked Sarah. "I like mathematics and using a hammer and nails and saw. Mother says I should be a carpenter. "

"But you don't look like one," Linda smiled, critically; and then continued: "We began physical geography this term. It is so interesting. And Miss Somers makes language beautiful; I can't help liking grammar!"

"Is that right," said Sarah. "I never could understand it!"

Linda was laughing again. The tall girl turned more fully toward her inquiringly. "I was thinking of what Johnny Weeks said down in the primary room the other day," Linda explained. "The teacher asked him what 'cat' was. I guess he was not paying attention. He looked all around, and finally said he did not know. She told him it was a noun. 'Then,' he said, after some deliberation, 'kitten must be a pronoun.' Thus the conversation continued between plain Linda and Sarah.

An hour afterward, all the lights but one in the house were out. Elizabeth sat with her cousin talking over the events of the evening.



## Lesson 31: Daily Victory in Christ

"And how do you like Linda Dahl?" she asked, and lent an eager ear, for Sarah's word could make or mar things irretrievably.

"Like her? I have never liked anyone better. Perhaps I would not have noticed, had you not spoken particularly about her."

"Well," said Elizabeth, "how is that?"

"Oh, she is all life and vivacity." said Sarah. "I thought you said she was so quiet and backwoodsy.

"But she was." defended Elizabeth. "I never saw her like this before.

"Then something must have awakened her. If anyone seemed ill at ease or lonely, she went to him or her, and before long they were talking and happy! I saw some of her schoolmates look at her wonderingly, and at least one sneered, but I watched. She had just one thought, and that was to make everyone happy. You could have spared any one of the girls better; in fact, any three of them."

Long after Sarah had gone to sleep, Elizabeth lay thinking. "Jimmy Flanders," she said, and counted off one finger. Then she recalled another good deed of Linda, and then another. After all, it was wonderful how many she could reckon up, and all so quietly done. Strange she had never thought of them all together before. How could Linda be so happy and giving among so many frowns and slights?

The next forenoon session of the grammar school was well under way. Linda opened her history, and in it was a little slip of paper that she had used as a book-mark since that first morning. An odd spirit seized her, and almost before she knew it, she had gone up the aisle and laid it on Elizabeth's desk. The next instant she would have given much to withdraw it. Elizabeth glanced down and flushed painfully. There it was: "She's so plain. She's Rocky Mountain--all ridges and hubbles." But Linda was back at her work again, evidently unruffled.

When the bell tapped for intermission, Elizabeth went to her. "Linda, I did write it. Oh, I am so ashamed!" she cried, and burst into tears. She hid her face on Linda's shoulder.

One of those smiles that somehow have the power of transforming the harshest features, swept over Linda's face, she squeezed Elizabeth's hand. From that day, Linda slipped into the queenly place she had a right to occupy, and it was not long before everyone forgot her plainness.

That was the beginning. But as the years went by, the strangest thing began to happen to Linda, though she did not seem to notice. As she grew older and matured, the rough lines mellowed and softened; the short figure stretched upward until she was as beautiful as her dearest wish had pictured. But her real beauty always remained her gracious spirit of love and unselfishness and her tender regard for others. That is a beauty that never withers away, for its roots are planted in the soul.

## **God Loves Jewels**

### **(But He Loves People More)**

God must love jewels, for He made the gates of the New Jerusalem out of pearls and the streets out of gold.

And yet He has a reservation about gold, jewels, and precious stones for mankind. It's not that He doesn't want us to be rich or to look beautiful, but for quite another reason.

You see, one of God's best friends became His worst enemy, and part of the reason was his inordinate love for precious stones.

## Lesson 31: Daily Victory in Christ

The Scriptures say that, "Lucifer was the anointed cherub who covers" (Ezekiel 28:14). That means that he was next to God, for the "covering cherub" is the one who stands beside the throne, as symbolized in the earthly sanctuary. The Bible goes on to say that he was "perfect," the "seal of perfection," and "full of wisdom and perfect in beauty" (Ezekiel 28:15, 12). He was also loved of God, for it says that Jesus, the "Son of Man," lamented over his fallen situation.

Somehow, over the course of time, Lucifer became proud. The Bible says his "heart was lifted up" because of his "beauty." He covered himself with "every precious stone . . . The sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold" (Ezekiel 28:17, 13).

He came to the place where he loved his beauty and jewels more than God. This led to selfishness and rebellion and eventually to a nightmare of sin resulting in the death of God's own Son.

When God first made the world, gold and jewels were plentiful upon the earth, but at the time of the Flood, along with the mighty forests that were buried making today's gigantic oil fields, so these precious stones were buried out of sight. Men's hearts, before the Flood, were filled with greed and violence, and out of mercy for man God hid these precious stones that had led to so much bloodshed.

A pastor was catching a plane in the Philadelphia airport when a member of the Hare Krishna movement offered him a book. Upon opening it, he was surprised to see their chief god decked out with all the jewels the Bible describes Satan as being covered with. Upon investigation he found that jewelry is associated with every eastern and heathen religion. Could it be that Satan is representing himself in these mystery religions?

And thus it is that God, though He loves beauty and though He wants mankind to be as happy as possible, nevertheless has concerns about mankind wearing jewelry because of the natural pride of the human heart.

God's desire is to save mankind. But He knows that when we get to heaven there is going to be an abundance of precious stones. How can He be sure that over a period of millions of years we will never make the same mistake Lucifer did and learn to love these created things more than the Creator Himself? There is one way He can know, by testing us here during this time of probation.

This world is a school in which we are to prepare for heaven. The Bible says that if we will be faithful over the little things here, we will be entrusted with larger things in heaven (Matthew 25:21, 23). But if He can't trust us with even a tiny diamond or piece of gold here for just a few years of probationary time, how can He trust us with the riches of heaven for all eternity?

Thus the Bible says that "women" should "adorn themselves in modest apparel with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing" (1 Timothy 2:9)

Again, the Bible says, "Do not let your beauty be that outward adorning of arranging the hair, of wearing gold, or of putting on fine apparel; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted God also adorned themselves" (1 Peter 3:3-5).

### **MARY'S DIAMOND**

Mary had unconsciously grown up with a love for jewelry. Probably she had heard comments as a little girl about how beautiful someone was because of some necklace or other ornament. This beauty and acceptance became associated with jewelry in her mind.

Though from the family of a Ford Motor Company worker in Detroit, she met a young man from a country town of Pennsylvania who gave her a beautiful diamond as an engagement present, and soon

## Lesson 31: Daily Victory in Christ

they were married and living in his home town.

Soon the glitter of marriage was not shining as brightly as the sparkle of her diamond. He was not a Christian and was acquainted with the ways of the world. He had tried drugs, and his ideals and ways were not the same as hers. Within six months they were on the verge of divorce, and yet he loved her as much as she loved him. There just appeared to be no common ground for this marriage.

In trying to find a solution, they read in the newspaper an announcement about a coming Prophecy Seminar in a hall. Since nothing else had worked, and as they had nothing to lose, for they were ready for divorce anyway, they decided to try religion.

Almost immediately their marriage began to improve. And so, as they had received so much benefit, they continued to study the Bible. After four months of study, they both decided to be baptized and join their lives with Christ.

But one day while preparing for baptism, the pastor had them read some texts about jewelry. Like the rich young ruler in the Bible, Mary became convicted that the Lord wanted her to give up her beloved diamond.

The conviction was sudden and the response was instant. She blurted out, "If I have to give up my diamond to get to heaven, I can never go!" And like the rich young ruler on the verge of the kingdom, she turned away *sorrowfully*.

Two days later the pastor visited her and her husband in their home. There he met two other pastors who were quite worldly in their beliefs and practices, trying to soothe her conscience and convince her that God wasn't so particular. And yet, in spite of all their arguments, she knew in her heart that she had been convicted by the Holy Spirit, in accordance with the Scriptures, to sacrifice her idol.

Never before had she known how much that tiny piece of stone meant to her. Without her knowing it, it was her idol and her God. Though she would have denied it before, she now fully realized that it meant more to her than even heaven itself!

She knew the Lord had led her in her study to that point. She knew the Lord had turned her marriage around during the last four months of study. She had tasted the joys of a clear conscience; could she give it all up for a little stone?

The day came for the baptism and she hadn't gained the victory, but she came to the baptism anyway with the diamond and the rest of her jewelry all in place. She knew she would not be baptized without gaining the victory, nor could she stay away. She had come too far to turn back now. She approached the pastor and asked him to study and pray with her again. It was time for the baptism to begin, and there were several others awaiting baptism, but Mary and the pastor went back into his study, opened the Bible and studied everything it said on the subject.

For over an hour the congregation and other baptismal candidates waited for the pastor. They sang song after song, not knowing the cause of the delay. But a soul was tottering in the balances between life and death; would she again turn away sorrowfully to her private god or would she, like Levi Matthew, leave all to follow the lowly Jesus?

It is interesting that God never requires anything that is not for our best interest. He doesn't require us to lie on a bed of nails, go on long pilgrimages, or starve ourselves.

In Mary's case, there was nothing physically painful, or humiliating, in not wearing her diamond. But it was her test, and she knew it. Satan, who was striving for her soul, was making it seem like the all-important thing in her life. At the same time, the Holy Spirit was also influencing her and painting the

picture of God's love and the value of eternal life. She was lingering in the balance.

Finally, after over an hour of prayer and study, with tears rolling down her cheeks she said, "I surrender." She had surrendered to the Holy Spirit. How surprised she was to find that she had a peace and joy from winning the battle over self that she had never known before!

That day twelve people were baptized, including Mary and her husband. Her baptism was not just a form as it is with so many, but it truly represented a new birth. The Holy Spirit could use her now as He never could before, and within a short period of time, she brought three new people to Christ, who were also baptized as she had been.

In every life there is some cherished sin that Satan has developed an intense desire for. The Bible calls it a "besetting sin" (Hebrews 12: 1). With the rich young ruler it was his money. With Mary it was her jewelry. The cost of eternal life requires the conquering of our besetting sins.

## **A Language the Whole World Understands**

General Robert E. Lee, who was one of the gentlest and kindest of men, was one day riding by train to the city of Richmond. The car in which he was riding was filled with officers and soldiers. At a small station along the route an elderly woman, poorly dressed, entered the car. Not finding an empty seat, she walked down the aisle toward the place where General Lee was seated.

Immediately he arose, bowed courteously, and offered the little old lady his seat. Noticing this act of kindness on the part of their general, a score or more of the men in the car arose instantly and urged their superior officer to be seated. "No, gentlemen," he said, "if you could not rise for an infirm elderly lady, you need not rise for me." It was a rebuke to those men, and most of them arose and went into another car, where they would feel more comfortable.

Jesus tells us we should love our neighbor as we love ourselves. That neighbor may live next door; or he might be of another nationality, he might speak another language, he might even live across the seas or in another land. His skin might be a different color.

Some years ago a black man was walking down a busy New York street, carrying two heavy suitcases. He could not afford a taxicab, so was carrying his heavy load from the railway station to a hotel some blocks away. As he struggled along with the heavy burden, a hand was laid upon his shoulder, and in an instant had reached down and taken hold of one of the heavy suitcases. A white man's smiling face looked into his, and a friendly voice inquired, "Pretty heavy, brother, isn't it? Let me take this grip. I am going your way." The black man wanted to say no. He tried to protest, but it was useless, for the strong arm already was carrying one piece of the heavy luggage, and this new-found, big-hearted friend was walking by his side. The black man was Booker T. Washington, and the white man was Theodore Roosevelt. Big people are kind.

The color of a man's skin didn't matter to Roosevelt. Here was a traveler whose burdens he could lighten, and he gave him a helping hand. No wonder he became President. It has been said that "no other President lived the life of America so completely." The door of the White House was open to all classes during his administration, and Roosevelt was universally loved. Genuine love which really comes from the heart cannot be valued in gold or silver. We may have a form of kindness without love in our hearts, but we just cannot love without being kind. There will never be love without kindness and courtesy and helpfulness.

A young storekeeper had closed his store after a hard, trying day, and was hurrying home to his evening meal, when he met a little girl. Her mother had sent her to the store to buy a spool of thread.

### Lesson 31: Daily Victory in Christ

Recognizing the young merchant, she told him of her errand. He retraced his steps, opened the store, secured the spool of thread for her, and registered the five-cent sale on the cash register. He was not obliged to do this, but it cheered her tiny heart and won many friends for the merchant.

One day Abraham Lincoln met a young girl on the street crying bitterly, and he stopped to see if he could be of any help. He asked what the trouble might be and if he could help, She was sobbing and crying, but managed to tell him that the drayman had promised to come and pick up her trunk and take it to the railroad station, for she was going away on the train. It was near train time, and the man had not come for the trunk. Mr. Lincoln asked her to show him where the truck was, so she led him into her house. He took the trunk on his back and carried it off to the station for her. She and her mother caught the train.

True courtesy has always been a real asset to people, and to business concerns, too. It has helped many young men and women to positions of trust and responsibility. The lack of kindness and courtesy has shut the door of opportunity against many, too. What a simple thing it is to say, "Thank you"; yet how important it is. Kindness pays big dividends. A kind deed will always leave at least two people happier. It blesses the doer of the deed as well as the one for whom it is done.