

THE PRESENT TRUTH

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The Qualifications Needed To Be a Slave of Satan

I have been shown the high and responsible position which God's people should occupy. They are the salt of the earth and the light of the world, and they must walk even as Christ walked. They will come up through great tribulation. The present is a time of warfare and trial. Our Saviour says in Revelation 3:21: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne." The reward is not given to all who profess to be followers of Christ, but to those who overcome even as He overcame. We must study the life of Christ and learn what it is to confess Him before the world. In order to confess Christ, we must have Him to confess. No one can truly confess Christ unless the mind and spirit of Christ are in him. If a form of godliness, or an acknowledgment of the truth, were always a confession of Christ, we might say: Broad is the way that leadeth unto life, and many there be that find it. We must understand what it is to confess Christ and wherein we deny Him. It is possible with our lips to confess Christ yet in our works deny Him. The fruits of the Spirit manifested in the life are a confession of Him. If we have forsaken all for Christ, our lives will be humble, our conversation heavenly, our conduct blameless. The powerful, purifying influence of truth in the soul, and the character of Christ exemplified in the life, are a confession of Him. If the words of eternal life are sown in our hearts, the fruit is righteousness and peace. We may deny Christ in our life by indulging love of ease or love of self, by jesting and joking, and by seeking the honor of the world. We may deny Him in our outward appearance by conformity to the world, by a proud look or costly apparel. Only by constant watchfulness and persevering and almost unceasing prayer shall we be able to exhibit in our life the character of Christ or the sanctifying influence of the truth. Many drive Christ from their families by an impatient, passionate spirit. Such have something to overcome in this respect.

The present enfeebled condition of the human family was presented before me. Every generation has been growing weaker, and disease of every form afflicts the race. Thousands of poor mortals with deformed, sickly bodies, shattered nerves, and gloomy minds are dragging out a miserable existence. Satan's power upon the human family increases. If the Lord should not soon come and destroy his power, the earth would ere long be depopulated. I was shown that Satan's power is especially exercised upon the people of God. Many were presented before me in a doubting, despairing condition. The infirmities of the body affect the mind. A cunning and powerful enemy attends our steps and employs his strength and skill in trying to turn us out of the right way. And it is too often the case that the people of God are not on their watch, therefore are ignorant of his devices. He works by means which will best conceal himself from view, and he often gains his object. Brethren have invested means in patent rights and other enterprises, and have induced others to interest themselves, who could not bear the perplexity and care of such business. Their anxious, overtaxed minds seriously affect their already diseased bodies, and they then yield to despondency, which increases to despair. They lose all confidence in themselves and think that God has forsaken them, and they dare not believe that He will be merciful to them. These poor souls will not be left to the control of Satan. They will make their way through the gloom and again fasten their trembling faith upon the promises of God; He will deliver them and turn their sorrow and mourning into peace and gladness. But such, I was shown, must learn by the things they suffer to let patent rights and these various enterprises alone. They should not allow even their brethren to flatter them to entangle themselves in such enterprises, for their anticipations will not be realized, and then they will be thrown upon the enemy's battlefield unarmed for the conflict. Means which should be put into the treasury of God to advance His cause is worse than lost by being invested in some of these modern improvements. If any who profess the truth feel at liberty to engage, and capable of engaging, in these patent rights and inventions, they should not go among their brethren and make that their field of operation, but go among unbelievers. Let not your name and profession as an Adventist decoy your brethren who wish to consecrate their means to God. But go out into the world, and let that class invest their means who care not for the advancement of the cause of God.

I was shown the necessity of opening the doors of our houses and hearts to the Lord. When we begin to work in earnest for ourselves and for our families, then we shall have help from God. I was shown that merely observing the Sabbath and praying morning and evening are not positive evidences that we are Christians. These outward forms may all be strictly observed, and yet true godliness be lacking. Titus 2:14: "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." All who profess to be Christ's followers should have command of their own spirit, not allowing themselves to speak fretfully or impatiently. The husband and father should check that impatient word he is about to utter. He should study the effect of his words, lest they leave sadness and a blight. Infirmities and disease especially affect women. The happiness of the family depends much upon the wife and mother. If she is weak and nervous, and is suffered to be overtaxed with labor, the mind becomes depressed, for it sympathizes with the weariness of the body; and then she too often meets with cold reserve from the husband. If everything does not move off just as pleasantly as he could wish, he blames the wife and mother. He is almost wholly unacquainted with her cares and burdens, and does not always know how to sympathize with her. He does not realize that he is aiding the great enemy in his work of tearing down. He should by faith in God lift up a standard against Satan; but he seems blinded to his own interest and hers. He treats her with indifference. He knows not what he is doing. He is working directly against his own happiness and

is destroying the happiness of his family. The wife becomes desponding and discouraged. Hope and cheerfulness are gone. She goes her daily rounds mechanically because she sees that her work must be done. Her lack of cheerfulness and courage is felt throughout the family circle. There are many such miserable families all through the ranks of Sabbathkeepers. Angels bear the shameful tidings to heaven, and the recording angel makes a record of it all.

The husband should manifest great interest in his family. Especially should he be very tender of the feelings of a feeble wife. He can shut the door against much disease. Kind, cheerful, and encouraging words will prove more effective than the most healing medicines. These will bring courage to the heart of the desponding and discouraged, and the happiness and sunshine brought into the family by kind acts and encouraging words will repay the effort tenfold. The husband should remember that much of the burden of training his children rests upon the mother, that she has much to do with molding their minds. This should call into exercise his tenderest feelings, and with care should he lighten her burdens. He should encourage her to lean upon his large affections, and direct her mind to heaven, where there is strength and peace, and a final rest for the weary. He should not come to his home with a clouded brow, but should with his presence bring sunlight into the family, and should encourage his wife to look up and believe in God. Unitedly they can claim the promises of God and bring His rich blessing into the family. Unkindness, complaining, and anger shut Jesus from the dwelling. I saw that angels of God will flee from a house where there are unpleasant words, fretfulness, and strife.

I have also been shown that there is often a great failure on the part of the wife. She does not put forth strong efforts to control her own spirit and make home happy. There is often fretfulness and unnecessary complaining on her part. The husband comes home from his labor weary and perplexed, and meets a clouded brow instead of cheerful, encouraging words. He is but human, and his affections become weaned from his wife, he loses the love of his home, his pathway is darkened, and his courage destroyed. He yields his self-respect and that dignity which God requires him to maintain. The husband is the head of the family, as Christ is the head of the church; and any course which the wife may pursue to lessen his influence and lead him to come down from that dignified, responsible position is displeasing to God. It is the duty of the wife to yield her wishes and will to her husband. Both should be yielding, but the word of God gives preference to the judgment of the husband. And it will not detract from the dignity of the wife to yield to him whom she has chosen to be her counselor, adviser, and protector. The husband should maintain his position in his family with all meekness, yet with decision. Some have asked the question, Must I be on my guard and feel a restraint upon me continually? I have been shown that we have a great work before us to search our own hearts, and watch ourselves with jealous care. We should learn wherein we fail, and then guard ourselves upon that point. We must have perfect control over our own spirit. "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." The light that shines upon our path, the truth that commends itself to our consciences, will condemn and destroy the soul, or sanctify and transform it. We are living too near the close of probation to be content with a superficial work. The same grace which we have hitherto considered sufficient will not sustain us now. Our faith must be increased, and we must become more like Christ in conduct and disposition in order to endure, and successfully resist, the temptations of Satan. The grace of God is sufficient for every follower of Christ.

Our efforts to resist the attacks of Satan must be earnest and persevering. He employs his strength and skill in trying to turn us out of the right way. He watches our going out and our coming in, that he may find opportunity to hurt or destroy us. He works most successfully in darkness, injuring those who are ignorant of his devices. He could not gain advantage if his method of attack were understood. The instruments he employs to effect his purposes, and transmit his fiery darts, are often the members of our own families. Those we love may speak or act unguardedly, which may wound us deeply. It was not their intention to do this; but Satan magnifies their words and acts before the mind, and thus hurls a dart from his quiver to pierce us. We brace ourselves to resist the one whom we think has injured us, and by so doing we encourage Satan's temptations. Instead of praying to God for strength to resist Satan, we suffer our happiness to be marred by trying to stand for what we term "our rights." Thus we allow Satan a double advantage. We act out our aggrieved feelings, and Satan uses us as his agents to wound and distress those who did not intend to injure us. The requirements of the husband may sometimes seem unreasonable to the wife, when if she should calmly, candidly take the second view of the matter, in as favorable a light for him as possible, she would see that to yield her own way and submit to his judgment, even if it conflicted with her feelings, would save them both from unhappiness and would give them great victory over the temptations of Satan.

I saw that the enemy will contend either for the usefulness or the life of the godly, and will try to mar their peace as long as they live in this world. But his power is limited. He may cause the furnace to be heated, but Jesus and angels will watch the trusting Christian, that nothing may be consumed but the dross. The fire kindled by Satan can have no power to destroy or hurt the true metal. It is important to close every door possible, against the entrance of Satan. It is the privilege of every family so to live that Satan can take no advantage of anything they may say or do, to tear one another down. Every member of the family should bear in mind that all have just as much as they can do to resist our wily foe, and with earnest prayers and unyielding faith each must rely upon the merits of the blood of Christ and claim His saving strength. The powers of darkness gather about the soul and shut Jesus from our sight, and at times we can only wait in sorrow and amazement until the cloud passes over. These seasons are sometimes terrible. Hope seems to fail, and despair seizes upon us. In these dreadful hours we must learn to trust, to depend solely upon the merits of the atonement, and in all our helpless unworthiness cast ourselves upon the merits of the crucified and risen Saviour. We shall never perish while we do

this--never! When light shines on our pathway, it is no great thing to be strong in the strength of grace. But to wait patiently in hope when clouds envelop us and all is dark, requires faith and submission which causes our will to be swallowed up in the will of God. We are too quickly discouraged, and earnestly cry for the trial to be removed from us, when we should plead for patience to endure and grace to overcome.

Without faith it is impossible to please God. We can have the salvation of God in our families, but we must believe for it, live for it, and have a continual, abiding faith and trust in God. We must subdue a hasty temper and control our words, and in this we shall gain great victories. Unless we control our words and temper, we are slaves to Satan. We are in subjection to him. He leads us captive. All jangling and unpleasant, impatient, fretful words are an offering presented to his Satanic majesty. And it is a costly offering, more costly than any sacrifice we can make for God, for it destroys the peace and happiness of whole families, destroys health, and is eventually the cause of forfeiting an eternal life of happiness. The restraint which God's word imposes upon us is for our own interest. It increases the happiness of our families and of all around us. It refines our taste, sanctifies our judgment, and brings peace of mind, and, in the end, everlasting life. Under this holy restraint we shall increase in grace and humility, and it will become easy to speak right. The natural, passionate temper will be held in subjection. An indwelling Saviour will strengthen us every hour. Ministering angels will linger in our dwellings and with joy carry heavenward the tidings of our advance in the divine life, and the recording angel will make a cheerful, happy record. {Testimonies Volume 1 Pg.302-310}

Sabbath-keepers will be tested and proved. A close and searching work must go on among the people of God. How soon, like ancient Israel we forget God and his wondrous works, and rebel against him. Some look to the world, and desire to follow its fashions, and participate in its pleasures in the same manner that the children of Israel looked back into Egypt, and lusted for the good things they had enjoyed there, which God chose to withhold from them to prove them, and thereby test their fidelity to him. He wished to see if his people valued more highly his service, and the freedom he had so miraculously given them, than the indulgences they enjoyed in Egypt while in servitude to a tyrannical, idolatrous people.

Every true follower of Jesus will have sacrifices to make. God will prove them, and test the genuineness of their faith. I have been shown that picnics, donations, shows, and other gatherings of pleasure, the true followers of Jesus will discard. They can find no Jesus there, and no influence which will make them heavenly minded, and increase their growth in grace. The word of God obeyed, leads us to come out from all these things and be separate. The things of the world are sought for, and considered worthy to be admired and enjoyed by all those who are not devoted lovers of the cross, and are not spiritual worshipers of a crucified Jesus. There is chaff among us, and this is why we are so weak. Some are constantly leaning to the world. Their views and feelings harmonize much better with the spirit of the world than with Christ's self-denying followers. It is perfectly natural for them to prefer the company of those whose spirit will best agree with their own. And such have quite too much influence among God's people. They take a part with them, and have a name among them, and are a text for unbelievers and the weak and unconsecrated ones in the church. These persons of two minds will ever have objections to the plain pointed testimony which reproves individual wrongs. In this refining time, these persons will either be converted wholly, and sanctified by obeying the truth, or they will be left with the world, where they belong, to receive their reward with them. {Review and Herald, February 18, 1862}

In these days, persecution and reproach for Christ's sake are scarcely known. Very little self-denial and sacrifice are necessary in order to put on a form of godliness, and have the name upon the church-book; but to live in such a manner that our ways will be pleasing to God, and our names registered in the book of life, will require watchfulness and prayer, sacrifice and self-denial. Very few of the youth know what experimental religion is. They have not a fixed principle to serve God. They sink under every cloud; they have no power of endurance. They appear to serve God; they make now and then a formal prayer, and are called Christians; but they do not grow in grace. They are not led to search their own hearts diligently, and to count the cost of becoming a Christian. As a result, they profess to be Christians without sufficiently trying their motives. The young are often urged to speak or pray in meeting; they are urged to die to self. At every step of the Christian way, they are urged. Such religion is worth nothing. Let the heart be changed, and it will not be such drudgery to serve God. The love of dress and pride of appearance will be gone. The apostle John exhorts, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." Then he adds the warning, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." It is an alarming fact that the love of the world predominates in the minds of the young, and the things that are in the world, and for this reason the love of God finds no room in their hearts. God is dishonored by the frivolity and fashion, and empty, vain talking and laughing that characterize the life of the youth generally. There will be no place for these things in the heart renewed by the grace of God; but there will be an earnest, anxious seeking for the Christian graces, the fruits of the Spirit of God.

Words and acts testify plainly what is in the heart. If vanity and pride, love of self and love of dress, fill the heart, the conversation will be upon the dress, the fashions, and the appearance, but not on Christ or the kingdom of Heaven. If envious feelings dwell in the heart, they will be manifested in words and acts. Those who measure themselves by others, and make no higher attainments, are feeding on husks, and will remain spiritual dwarfs.

Many have their hearts filled with the love of self. They are not aware that the great heavenly Artist is taking cognizance of every act, every word; that their deportment, and even the thoughts and intents of the heart, stand faithfully delineated; and that old and young will have the faithful picture presented to them in all its deformity at the execution of the judgment. Those vain, frivolous words are all written in the book. Those false words are written. Those deceptive acts, whose motives were concealed from human eyes, but discerned by the all-seeing eye of Jehovah, are all written in living characters. Every selfish act will be exposed. Solemn responsibilities rest upon the young, which they lightly regard. They should heed the injunction of the inspired word, "Obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right." "Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise), that it may be well with thee, and thou mayst live long on the earth." They should honor their parents by cheerful, loving obedience, and by doing what they can to make home happy. Often they would like to do this in their own way, by introducing amusements that lead away from God. They urge that they need something to enliven and divert the mind; and sometimes music is introduced into the home as a means of supplying this need. Music, when not abused, is a great blessing. God is glorified by songs of praise from a pure heart filled with love and devotion to him. But when put to a wrong use, it is a terrible curse. It excites, but does not impart that strength and courage which can be found only at the throne of grace. Frivolous songs and the popular sheet music of the day, which often seem congenial to their tastes, lead the mind from God.

Many seek after pleasures that prove bitter in the end. They love worldly society, where they receive praise and flattery that gratifies vanity, and fosters pride and self-esteem. They are led to believe that with such advantages and attractions as they possess, it is really a great pity for them to come out from the world and be separate. But the pleasures of earth will have an end, and that which is sown must also be reaped. Young friends, are your personal attraction, abilities, or talents too valuable to be devoted to God and used in his service? "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Young friends, when you are restless and unhappy, it is because you have strayed from this path of peace. You are trying to find out of Christ that happiness that is found only in him. In him are no disappointed hopes. Prayer,--oh, how is this precious privilege neglected! The reading of the word of God prepares the mind for prayer. One great reason that you have so little disposition to pray is that you have unfitted yourselves for this sacred duty by reading fascinating stories, which have excited the imagination and aroused unholy passions. The word of God becomes distasteful; the hour of prayer is forgotten. And yet to have the consciousness that the eyes of the Lord are upon us, and his ears open to our prayers, is a satisfaction indeed. To know that we have a never-failing Friend in whom we can confide all the secrets of the soul, is a privilege which words can never express. The consciousness of right-doing is the best medicine for diseased bodies and minds. The special blessing of God resting upon the receiver is health and strength. Those whose moral faculties are clouded by disease are not the ones to rightly represent the Christian life or the beauties of holiness. They are too often in the fire of fanaticism, or the water of cold indifference or stolid gloom. The words of Christ are of more worth than the opinions of all the physicians in the universe: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." This is the first great object,--the kingdom of Heaven, the righteousness of Christ. Other objects to be attained should be secondary.

Perhaps some will inquire how they are to know that they are accepted of God. The answer is, Study his word prayerfully. Lay it not aside for any other book. This holy book convinces of sin. It plainly reveals the way of salvation. It brings to view a bright and glorious reward. It reveals to you a complete Saviour, and teaches you that through his boundless mercy alone can you expect salvation. The hope of eternal life is not to be received upon slight grounds. It is a subject to be settled between God and your own soul,--settled for eternity. A supposed hope, and nothing more, will prove your ruin. Since you are to stand or fall by the word of God, it is to that word you must look for the testimony in your case. There you can see what is required in order to become a Christian. Compare your life with that of your Master, who made so great a sacrifice that you might be saved. Do not neglect secret prayer. Plead as earnestly as you would if your mortal life were at stake. Remain before God until unutterable longings for salvation are begotten within you, and the sweet evidence is obtained of pardoned sin. Do not lay off your armor or leave the battle-field until you have obtained the victory, and can triumph in your Redeemer.

Young friends, if found in the way of righteousness, you can exert a mighty influence. Ministers, or church-members advanced in years, cannot have one-half the influence on your young associates that you are capable of exerting; and you ought to feel that a responsibility rests upon you to do all you can for their salvation. Those who have themselves tasted the sweets of redeeming love will not, cannot rest, until all with whom they associate are made acquainted with the plan of salvation. You should inquire, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? How can I honor and glorify thy name upon the earth?" Souls are perishing all around us; what are you doing to win them to Christ? Oh, that you would use your powers of mind in seeking to so approach sinners that you may win even one soul to the path of righteousness! What a thought! One soul to praise God through eternity! One soul to enjoy happiness and everlasting life! One gem in your crown to shine forever and ever! But more than one may be won from sin to holiness, and the reward is rich in the kingdom of Heaven. Says the Lord by the prophet, "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever." {Signs OF The Times, May 1, 1884}