

THE PRESENT TRUTH

Bishop Stephen D. Lewis

Self-Respect

If we wish to do good to souls, our success with these souls will be in proportion to their belief in our belief in, and appreciation of, them. Respect shown to the struggling human soul is the sure means through Christ Jesus of the restoration of the self-respect the man has lost. Our advancing ideas of what he may become are a help we cannot ourselves fully appreciate. {Fundamentals of Education Pg. 281}

Wherever principle is not compromised, consideration of others will lead to compliance with accepted customs; but true courtesy requires no sacrifice of principle to conventionality. It ignores caste. It teaches self-respect, respect for the dignity of man as man, a regard for every member of the great human brotherhood. {Education Pg. 240}

Some with whom you are brought in contact may be rough and uncourteous, but do not, because of this, be less courteous yourself. He who wishes to preserve his own self-respect must be careful not to wound needlessly the self-respect of others. This rule should be sacredly observed toward the dullest, the most blundering. What God intends to do with these apparently unpromising ones, you do not know. He has in the past accepted persons no more promising or attractive to do a great work for Him. His Spirit, moving upon the heart, has roused every faculty to vigorous action. The Lord saw in these rough, unhewn stones precious material, which would stand the test of storm and heat and pressure. God does not see as man sees. He does not judge from appearances, but searches the heart and judges righteously. {Gospel Workers Pg.122-123}

Men of principle need not the restriction of locks and keys; they do not need to be watched and guarded. They will deal truly and honorably at all times--alone, with no eye upon them, as well as in public. They will not bring a stain upon their souls for any amount of gain or selfish advantage. They scorn a mean act. Although no one else might know it, they would know it themselves, and this would destroy their self-respect. Those who are not conscientious and faithful in little things would not be reformed, were there laws and restrictions and penalties upon the point. {Special Testimonies to Physicians Pg.62}

Moral purity, self-respect, a strong power of resistance, must be firmly and constantly cherished. There should not be one departure from reserve. One act of familiarity, one indiscretion, may jeopardize the soul by opening the door to temptation and thus weakening the power of resistance. {Letters to Young Lovers Pg. 64} Through indulgence in sin, self-respect is destroyed; and when that is gone, respect for others is lessened; we think that others are as unrighteous as we are ourselves. {Testimonies Volume 6, Pg. 63}

By wrong habits he loses his power of self-appreciation. He loses self-control. He cannot reason correctly about matters that concern him most closely. He is reckless and irrational in his treatment of mind and body. By wrong habits he makes of himself a wreck. Happiness he cannot have, for his neglect to cultivate pure, healthful principles places him under the control of habits that ruin his peace. His years of taxing study are lost, for he has destroyed himself. He has misused his physical and mental powers, and the temple of the body is in ruins. He is ruined for this life and for the life to come. By acquiring earthly knowledge he thought to gain a treasure, but by laying his Bible aside he sacrificed a treasure worth everything else. {Christ Object Lesson Pg.108-109}

Those who indulge in such language [impatient words] will experience shame, loss of self-respect, loss of self-confidence, and will have bitter remorse and regret that they allowed themselves to lose self-control and speak in this way. How much better would it be if words of this character were never spoken. How much better to have the oil of grace in the heart, to be able to pass by all provocation, and bear all things with Christlike meekness and forbearance. {Review Hereald, Feb 27, 1913}

Let not one word of fretfulness, harshness, or passion escape your lips. The grace of Christ awaits your demand. His Spirit will take control of your heart and conscience, presiding over your words and deeds. Never forfeit your self-respect by hasty, thoughtless words. See that your words are pure, your conversation holy. Give your children an example of that which you wish them to be. . . . Let there be peace, pleasant words, and cheerful countenances. {Child Guidance Pg. 219}

Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, "Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee." This is a daily matter. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ.

A life in Christ is a life of restfulness. There may be no ecstasy of feeling, but there should be an abiding, peaceful trust. Your hope is not in yourself; it is in Christ. Your weakness is united to His strength, your ignorance to His wisdom, your frailty to His enduring might. So you are not to look to yourself, not to let the mind dwell upon self, but look to Christ. Let the mind dwell upon His love, upon the beauty, the perfection, of His character. Christ in His self-denial, Christ in His humiliation, Christ in His purity and holiness, Christ in His matchless love --this is the subject for the soul's contemplation. It is by loving Him, copying Him, depending wholly upon Him, that you are to be transformed into His likeness. {Steps to Christ Pg. 70}

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