

Time to Contemplate

“Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).

“When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God.”—The Ministry of Healing, p. 58.

Suggested Readings: The Desire of Ages, pp. 359–363. Prophets and Kings, pp. 140–142.

Sunday January 11

1. NO WICKED THING BEFORE MY EYES

a. God has several reasons for calling His people to the country. What do your eyes notice when you enter the city? The country? What Bible principle do we need to understand? Psalm 101:3.

Psalms 101:3

[3] I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; *it* shall not cleave to me.

“So great is the wickedness of these cities that much of what the eyes see and the ears hear has a demoralizing influence.”—Manuscript Releases, vol. 10, p. 209.

b. What does God want us to concentrate upon? Philippians 4:8.

Philippians 4:8

[8] Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things.

“Instead of dwelling where only the works of men can be seen, where the sights and sounds frequently suggest thoughts of evil, where turmoil and confusion bring weariness and disquietude, go where you can look upon the works of God. Find rest of spirit in the beauty and quietude and peace of nature. Let the eye rest on the green fields, the groves, and the hills. Look up to the blue sky, unobscured by the city’s dust and smoke, and breathe the invigorating air of heaven. Go where, apart from the distractions and dissipations of city life, you can give your children your companionship,

where you can teach them to learn of God through His works, and train them for lives of integrity and usefulness.”—The Ministry of Healing, p. 367.

Monday January 12

2. CALLED BY ITS RIGHT NAME

a. Why is it so important what we look at and think about? 2

Corinthians 3:18.

2 Corinthians 3:18

[18] But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord.

“The mind of a man or woman does not come down in a moment from purity and holiness to depravity, corruption, and crime. It takes time to transform the human to the divine, or to degrade those formed in the image of God to the brutal or the satanic. By beholding we become changed. Though formed in the image of his Maker, man can so educate his mind that sin which he once loathed will become pleasant to him. As he ceases to watch and pray, he ceases to guard the citadel, the heart, and engages in sin and crime. The mind is debased, and it is impossible to elevate it from corruption while it is being educated to enslave the moral and intellectual powers, and bring them in subjection to grosser passions. Constant war against the carnal mind must be maintained; and we must be aided by the refining influence of the grace of God, which will attract the mind upward and habituate it to meditate upon pure and holy things.”— Testimonies, vol. 2, pp. 478, 479.

b. Why does God want our spiritual eyesight to be improved? Ezekiel 3:17; 44:23; Hebrews 5:14.

Ezekiel 3:17

[17] Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

Ezekiel 44:23

[23] And they shall teach my people *the difference* between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.

Hebrews 5:14

[14] But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

“In the existing state of religious declension, there is crying need of earnest, faithful Nehemiahs and Ezras—men who will not shun to call sin by its right name, and who will not shrink from vindicating the honor of God. Those upon whom God has laid the burden of His work are not to hold their peace, and cover prevailing evils with a cloak of false charity. Men of courage and energy are needed to expose fashionable sins. Iniquity must not be palliated and excused.”—The Signs of the Times, January 24, 1884.

“While the servant of Christ should seek with all patience and love to save sinners, he should on no account give license to sin. He must not allow his perceptions to be dulled by contact with iniquity, or his judgment to be perverted by the world's opinion. By excusing and palliating sin, we lose a sense of its heinous character. Compassion for the erring should not degenerate into indulgence for transgression. In order to preserve the safe mean, the Christian must add to patience godliness. Then he will see as God sees.”—The Review and Herald, December 20, 1881.

Tuesday January 13

3. ARE YOUR EARS TUNED?

a. Not only does Jesus want our spiritual eyesight improved, but also our hearing. What does He promise us if we follow His instruction? Revelation 2:7; Isaiah 30:21.

Revelation 2:7

[7] He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Isaiah 30:21

[21] And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This *is* the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

“Jesus does not, after giving us general directions, leave us to guess the way amid bypaths and dangerous passes. He leads us in a straight path; and while we follow Him, our footsteps will not slide. It was Jesus that led ancient Israel, though the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night concealed Him from their view; and in this important period of the world's history, He will as manifestly lead His people. The path is no uncertain one. The way is

marked out, and every step is ordered of the Lord.”—The Signs of the Times, March 6, 1884.

b. How can we foil the attempts of Satan to block our way to progress? James 4:7.

James 4:7

[7] Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

“It is not safe for us to linger to contemplate the advantages to be reaped through yielding to Satan's suggestions. Sin means dishonor and disaster to every soul that indulges in it; but it is blinding and deceiving in its nature, and it will entice us with flattering presentations. If we venture on Satan's ground we have no assurance of protection from his power. So far as in us lies, we should close every avenue by which the tempter may find access to us.”—Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, p. 118.

c. How do I learn to hear the voice of Christ personally? Hebrews 3:15.

James 4:7

[7] Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

“In offering the prayer that Christ has given, we surrender ourselves to the guidance of God, asking Him to lead us in safe paths. We cannot offer this prayer in sincerity, and yet decide to walk in any way of our own choosing. We shall wait for His hand to lead us.”—Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, pp. 117, 118.

“We must individually hear Him speaking to the heart. When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God. He bids us, ‘Be still, and know that I am God’ (Psalm 46:10).”—The Desire of Ages, p. 363.

Wednesday January 14

4. SLOW DOWN THE PACE

a. In today's hectic lifestyle, what is God calling us to do? Psalm 46:10.

Psalms 46:10

[10] Be still, and know that I *am* God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

“We must turn away from a thousand topics that invite attention. There are matters that consume time and arouse inquiry, but end in nothing. The highest interests demand the close attention and energy that are so often given to comparatively insignificant things.”— *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 456.

“But if you do only those things necessary to your temporal comfort and happiness, you will find time to read your Bible with prayerful interest and to perfect a Christian character.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 112.

b. Many have so much to do that it is hard to be still. What is God’s answer to this? Ephesians 2:10; James 4:15.

Ephesians 2:10

[10] For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

James 4:15

[15] For that ye *ought* to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

“Overwork sometimes causes a loss of self-control. But the Lord never compels hurried, complicated movements. Many gather to themselves burdens that the merciful heavenly Father did not place on them. Duties He never designed them to perform chase one another wildly. God desires us to realize that we do not glorify His name when we take so many burdens that we are overtaxed and, becoming heart-weary and brain-weary, chafe and fret and scold. We are to bear only the responsibilities that the Lord gives us, trusting in Him, and thus keeping our hearts pure and sweet and sympathetic.” —*The Review and Herald*, October 31, 1907.

c. Are there only bad things that we are to set aside to have quality time with our Lord and our families? Luke 10:38–42; 21:34.

Luke 10:38-42

[38] Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

[39] And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word.

[40] But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

[41] And Jesus answered and said unto her, **Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:**

[42] **But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.**

Luke 21:34

[34] **And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.**

“One of the dangers of the present age is devoting too much time to business matters and to unnecessary cares, which we create for ourselves, while the development of Christian character is neglected.”—The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 2, p. 359.

“The Lord remembers that we are but dust, and He does not expect more of us than we can do. . . . Do not try to crowd two days’ work into one.”—The Signs of the Times, August 5, 1897.

Thursday January 15

5. OUR EXAMPLE

a. Jesus prepared for His public work in many ways. Where and when did He commune with His Father? Isaiah 50:4.

Isaiah 50:4

[4] The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to *him that is* weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.

“[Jesus] seemed as one who was set apart. His hours of happiness were found when alone with nature and with God. Whenever it was His privilege, He turned aside from the scene of His labor, to go into the fields, to meditate in the green valleys, to hold communion with God on the mountainside or amid the trees of the forest. The early morning often found Him in some secluded place, meditating, searching the Scriptures, or in prayer. From these quiet hours He would return to His home to take up His duties again, and to give an example of patient toil.”—The Desire of Ages, pp. 89, 90.

b. Even in the midst of pressing needs, with multitudes clamoring for His time and help, what did Jesus do and where? Matthew 14:23.

Matthew 14:23

[23] And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

c. What can we learn from Christ's instruction to His disciples? Mark 6:31.

Mark 6:31

[31] And he said unto them, **Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while:** for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.

“A great work was before [the disciples], and first of all they must learn that their strength was not in self, but in God. Like Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, like David among the hills of Judea, or Elijah by the brook Cherith, the disciples needed to come apart from the scenes of their busy activity, to commune with Christ, with nature, and with their own hearts.”—The Desire of Ages, p. 360.