

Sisters, All!

A column for those whose interests are primarily home-centered, but who are also concerned to have "that good part which shall not be taken away . . ."

Dear Martha,

Your letter came this morning, so I'm letting the ironing wait while I answer it right away, while I'm in the mood. It read just about as a letter of mine would have a few years ago, so I certainly understand your problem.

Here was one New Year's resolution you made with determination because you felt it was really important, and already you are floundering in your efforts to maintain regular private devotions. You knew it would be difficult—hence the resolution. But self-discipline doesn't stop the telephone from ringing; your peace is disturbed, even if you resist answering it. Are perfunctory devotions better than none? What's wrong, anyway? you ask.

1. Probably your first trouble is in trying to force yourself into a groove.
2. Perhaps you have ignored the practical side — your usual schedule and your family's, regular interruptions of tradesmen, mail, etc.
3. You may be attempting too much, too soon.
4. Make allowance for a few failures.
5. Your discouragement may be an underlying fear that you can't succeed. Others achieve a rich devotional life, but you never will, you say.

If these are stumbling blocks to you, cheer up! I know I fell over them all with both feet at one time or another. Let's take them one at a time:

1. Try teaching yourself to relax—simply let go—physically and mentally as you seek God. "Come unto Me and rest" has no hint of vigorous activity and tension, no knit brows and rigid muscles. Only stillness, peace, quiet listening.
2. Devotions are a personal matter. Adjust them to your own way of life without apology. Some devout souls rise at four or five o'clock and pray for two hours, but I can't think two coherent thoughts before seven a.m. For others, after the family goes to school and work is ideal, or the children's nap time, or even late at night.
3. There is no virtue in reading a chapter a day just to get it done. A few verses or half a page may mean more if it is considered well and digested slowly. Or keep right on reading into the next chapter, if you feel so inclined.
4. You won't always make it. Interruptions come, the mind wanders; you fret over your shortcomings and inattention. That veteran churchman, Fénelon, said, "Many persons distract themselves, first by their fear of distraction and then by their regret of such distraction." His word to the Christian was, "Go on, without looking back." Waste no more time, but return quickly to the Presence of God.
5. Face that fear of failure for what it is—a fear, not a fact. The spiritual life is not a fragile castle-in-the-air, to be wafted gently to a few lucky souls. It is a solid structure that anyone can build slowly, day by day. And it won't collapse when we miss a day or two.

It is good to know that, in the Christian life, we never "arrive" and lapse into bored inertia. There are always so many things to learn, new heights to discover, fresh challenges every day!

Well, I can rhapsodize about it, but sometimes the challenges are rather tough. It's hard for a fun-loving girl like our Franny to keep her balance in the typical high school crowd. Fran doesn't want to miss out on the good times . . .

Sorry for the interruption. It was Mrs. Parker calling to ask if we could have the Young People's meeting here next Sunday. They are a lively bunch, and I enjoy them.

It's high time I began supper, so I'll just have to send this off to you as is and continue later.

Your loving sister, Mary.

THE LEAKAGE OF SPIRITUAL POWER

(Continued from Page One)

remember that there is no substitute for the Holy Ghost. He is life. He is power. And if He is sought in earnest, faithful prayer, He will come; and when He comes, the little meeting will be mighty in its results.

He should be earnestly sought, in secret prayer. Jesus said: "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." He will do it; bless His holy name!

I know of a man who, if possible, gets alone with God for an hour before every meeting; and when he speaks, it is with power and demonstration of the Spirit.

The man who wants power, just when it is most needed, must walk with God. He must be a friend of God. He must keep the way always open between his heart and God. God will be the Friend of such a man, and will bless him and honour him. God will tell him His secrets; He will show him how to get at the hearts of men. God will make dark things light, and crooked things straight, and rough places smooth for that man. God will be on his side, and will help him.

Such a man must

keep constant watch

over his mouth and his heart. David prayed, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips;" and Solomon said: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." He must walk in unbroken communion with God. He must not forget, but cultivate, a spirit of joyful recollection by which he will be always conscious that he is in the presence of God.

"Delight thyself in the Lord," said the Psalmist. Oh, how happy is that man who finds God to be his delight; who is never lonely, because he knows God, talks with God, delights in God; who feels how lovable God is, and gives himself up to loving, serving, trusting God with all his heart!

Comrade, "Quench not the Spirit," and He will lead you to thus know and love God; and God will make you the instrument of His own power.

POINTS FOR PRAYER

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Holy Spirit at this time of decision relative to contracts for the coming year; that they may be encouraged in their Christian service in spite of taxing duties, financial pressures, and trying inconveniences.

Pray for the Officers of Administration: as they govern the lives of seventy youth, wrestle with problems of administration, finance, and discipline.

Pray for the Students: that all may be saved; that the Christian students may develop in character and usefulness and find God's will for their lives; that students with special problems (emotional, financial, and other) may be helped.

Pray for the Alumni: that they may be true to Christ and their alma mater; that they may reach their goal of raising \$1,000. this year for the music department.

Pray for the Success of Bethany Sunday: that outstanding bills of \$3,000. may be wiped out.

The King's Highway