

# Looking Unto Jesus

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2).

“If those who today are teaching the word of God, would uplift the cross of Christ higher and still higher, their ministry would be far more successful. If sinners can be led to give one earnest look at the cross, if they can obtain a full view of the crucified Saviour, they will realize the depth of God’s compassion and the sinfulness of sin.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 209.

**Suggested Reading:** Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, pp. 199-202. (At the bottom of this page)

## 1. LAYING ASIDE EVERY WEIGHT

Sunday, March 17

**a. What is weighing us down in our Christian walk? Hebrews 12:1.**

Hebrews 12:1

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

“Envy, malice, evil thinking, evilspeaking, covetousness—these are weights that the Christian must lay aside if he would run successfully the race for immortality. Every habit or practice that leads into sin and brings dishonor upon Christ must be put away, whatever the sacrifice. The blessing of heaven cannot attend any man in violating the eternal principles of right. One sin cherished is sufficient to work degradation of character and to mislead others.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 312.

**b. How can we overcome these defects of character? Hebrews 12:2.**

Hebrews 12:2

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

“Looking unto Jesus we obtain brighter and more distinct views of God, and by beholding we become changed. Goodness, love for our fellow men, becomes our natural

instinct. We develop a character which is the counterpart of the divine character. Growing into His likeness, we enlarge our capacity for knowing God. More and more we enter into fellowship with the heavenly world, and we have continually increasing power to receive the riches of the knowledge and wisdom of eternity.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 355.

## 2. CHRIST’S JOY

Monday, March 18

**a. What was the main motive for Christ to die in our behalf? Hebrews 12:2 (last part); Isaiah 53:11.**

### Hebrews 12:2

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

### Isaiah 53:11

He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

“By offering Himself to make intercession for the transgression of the human race, Christ executed the office of priest. As a reward, He was to see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. His seed should prolong their days on the earth forever.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 402.

“What sustained the Son of God during His life of toil and sacrifice? He saw the results of the travail of His soul and was satisfied. Looking into eternity, He beheld the happiness of those who through His humiliation had received pardon and everlasting life. His ear caught the shout of the redeemed. He heard the ransomed ones singing the song of Moses and the Lamb.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 601.

**b. How can we follow Christ’s example of self-denial? Hebrews 12:3; Matthew 16:24.**

### Hebrews 12:3

For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

### Matthew 16:24

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

“Those who would gain the blessing of sanctification must first learn the meaning of self-sacrifice. The cross of Christ is the central pillar on which hangs the ‘far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.’ . . . It is the fragrance of our love for our fellow men that reveals our love for God. It is patience in service that brings rest to the soul. It is through humble, diligent, faithful toil that the welfare of Israel is promoted. God upholds and strengthens the one who is willing to follow in Christ’s way.”—*Ibid.*, p. 560.

“Men who have lived the nearest to God, men who would sacrifice life itself rather than knowingly commit a wrong act, men whom God has honored with divine light and power, have confessed the sinfulness of their nature. They have put no confidence in the flesh, have claimed no righteousness of their own, but have trusted wholly in the righteousness of Christ.”—*Ibid.*, p. 561.

“God bids you with one hand, faith, take hold of His mighty arm, and with the other hand, love, reach perishing souls. Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. Follow Him. Walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Walk even as He walked. This is the will of God, even your sanctification. The work you have to perform is to do the will of Him who sustains your life for His glory. If you labor for yourselves, it can profit you nothing. To labor for others’ good, to be less self-caring and more in earnest to devote all to God, will be acceptable to Him and be returned by His rich grace.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 170.

### 3. THE FATHER-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

Tuesday, March 19

**a. How does a loving father deal with his erring children? Hebrews 12:5–11; Revelation 3:19.**

#### Hebrews 12:5-11

And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: **6** For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. **7** If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? **8** But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. **9** Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? **10** For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. **11** Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

#### Revelation 3:19

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

“David learned wisdom from God’s dealings with him and bowed in humility beneath the chastisement of the Most High. The faithful portrayal of his true state by the prophet Nathan made David acquainted with his own sins and aided him to put them away. He accepted counsel meekly and humiliated himself before God. . . .

“Our Lord has said: ‘As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.’ ‘No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.’ Though bitter the discipline, it is appointed by a Father’s tender love, ‘that we might be partakers of His holiness.’”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 683.

**b. What is God’s purpose for us in our trials? Matthew 5:4.**

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

“God ‘doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.’ Lamentations 3:33. When He permits trials and afflictions, it is ‘for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness.’ Hebrews 12:10. If received in faith, the trial that seems so bitter and hard to bear will prove a blessing. The cruel blow that blights the joys of earth will be the means of turning our eyes to heaven. How many there are who would never have known Jesus had not sorrow led them to seek comfort in Him!

“The trials of life are God’s workmen, to remove the impurities and roughness from our character. Their hewing, squaring, and chiseling, their burnishing and polishing, is a painful process; it is hard to be pressed down to the grinding wheel. But the stone is brought forth prepared to fill its place in the heavenly temple. Upon no useless material does the Master bestow such careful, thorough work. Only His precious stones are polished after the similitude of a palace.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 10.

“It is God who has led you through strait places. He had a purpose in this, that tribulation might work in you patience, and patience experience, and experience hope. He permitted trials to come upon you, that, through them, you might experience the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

“God led you through affliction and trials that you might have more perfect trust and confidence in Him, and that you might think less of your own judgment.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 416.

#### 4. FOLLOWING HOLINESS

Wednesday, March 20

**a. What is the meaning of holiness and sanctification? 1 Thessalonians 4:3–7; 5:23, 24.**

##### 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7

For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: **4** That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; **5** Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: **6** That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. **7** For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

##### 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
**24** Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

“ ‘This is the will of God,’ the apostle Paul wrote, ‘even your sanctification.’ 1 Thessalonians 4:3. The sanctification of the church is God’s object in all His dealings with His people. He has chosen them from eternity, that they might be holy. He gave His Son to die for them, that they might be sanctified through obedience to the truth, divested of all the littleness of self. From them He requires a personal work, a personal surrender. God can be honored by those who profess to believe in Him, only as they are

conformed to His image and controlled by His Spirit. Then, as witnesses for the Saviour, they may make known what divine grace has done for them.

“True sanctification comes through the working out of the principle of love. ‘God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.’ 1 John 4:16. The life of him in whose heart Christ abides, will reveal practical godliness. The character will be purified, elevated, ennobled, and glorified. Pure doctrine will blend with works of righteousness; heavenly precepts will mingle with holy practices.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 559, 560.

## **b. What is one of the main agents of our sanctification? John 17:17.**

### **John 17:17**

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

“As darkness thickens and error increases, we should obtain a more thorough knowledge of the truth and be prepared to maintain our position from the Scriptures.

“We must be sanctified through the truth, be wholly consecrated to God, and so live out our holy profession that the Lord can shed increasing light upon us, and that we may see light in His light, and be strengthened with His strength.”—*Early Writings*, pp. 104, 105.

“ ‘Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.’ Romans 10:17. The Scriptures are the great agency in the transformation of character. Christ prayed, ‘Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth.’ John 17:17. If studied and obeyed, the word of God works in the heart, subduing every unholy attribute. The Holy Spirit comes to convict of sin, and the faith that springs up in the heart works by love to Christ, conforming us in body, soul, and spirit to His own image. Then God can use us to do His will. The power given us works from within outwardly, leading us to communicate to others the truth that has been communicated to us.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 100.

## **5. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND SANCTIFICATION**

*Thursday, March 21*

### **a. How can we receive the righteousness of Christ in our life? Matthew 5:6; Hebrews 10:37-39.**

#### **Matthew 5:6**

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

#### **Hebrews 10:37-39**

For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. **38** Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. **39** But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

“The sense of unworthiness will lead the heart to hunger and thirst for righteousness, and this desire will not be disappointed. Those who make room in their hearts for Jesus will realize His love. All who long to bear the likeness of the character of God shall be satisfied. The Holy Spirit never leaves unassisted the soul who is

looking unto Jesus. He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto him. If the eye is kept fixed on Christ, the work of the Spirit ceases not until the soul is conformed to His image. The pure element of love will expand the soul, giving it a capacity for higher attainments, for increased knowledge of heavenly things, so that it will not rest short of the fullness. [Matthew 5:6 quoted.]”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 302.

“By looking constantly to Jesus with the eye of faith, we shall be strengthened. God will make the most precious revelations to His hungering, thirsting people. They will find that Christ is a personal Saviour. As they feed upon His word, they find that it is spirit and life. The word destroys the natural, earthly nature, and imparts a new life in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit comes to the soul as a Comforter. By the transforming agency of His grace, the image of God is reproduced in the disciple; he becomes a new creature. Love takes the place of hatred, and the heart receives the divine similitude. This is what it means to live ‘by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.’ This is eating the Bread that comes down from heaven.”—*Ibid.*, p. 391.

“To sin, wherever found, ‘our God is a consuming fire.’ Hebrews 12:29. In all who submit to His power the Spirit of God will consume sin. But if men cling to sin, they become identified with it. Then the glory of God, which destroys sin, must destroy them.”—*Ibid.*, p. 107.

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

*Friday, March 22*

- 1. What are some weights that may be hindering my race for immortality?**
- 2. How can I share in the joy that motivated Christ while on earth?**
- 3. Explain the balanced responsibility of a good, loving father.**
- 4. What happens when we immerse ourselves in Scripture and apply its teaching?**
- 5. Why are reverence and godly fear so important—yet so rare—today?**

**Suggested Reading: Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, pp. 199-202.**

Many make a serious mistake in their religious life by keeping the attention fixed upon their feelings and thus judging of their advancement or decline. Feelings are not a safe criterion. We are not to look within for evidence of our acceptance with God. We shall find there nothing but that which will discourage us. Our only hope is in “looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith.” Hebrews 12:2. There is everything in Him to inspire with hope, with faith, and with courage. He is our righteousness, our consolation and rejoicing. **(5T 199.5) 2 I**

Those who look within for comfort will become weary and disappointed. A sense of our weakness and unworthiness should lead us with humility of heart to plead the atoning sacrifice of Christ. As we rely upon His merits we shall find rest and peace and joy. He saves to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him. **(5T 200.1)**

We need to trust in Jesus daily, hourly. He has promised that as our day is, our strength shall be. By His grace we may bear all the burdens of the present and perform its duties. But many are weighed down by the anticipation of future troubles. They are constantly seeking to bring tomorrow’s burdens into today. Thus a large share of all their trials are imaginary. For these, Jesus has made no provision. He promises grace only for the day.

He bids us not to burden ourselves with the cares and troubles of tomorrow; for “sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” Matthew 6:34. **(5T 200.2) 2 I**

The habit of brooding over anticipated evils is unwise and unchristian. In thus doing we fail to enjoy the blessings and to improve the opportunities of the present. The Lord requires us to perform the duties of today and to endure its trials. We are today to watch that we offend not in word or deed. We must today praise and honor God. By the exercise of living faith today we are to conquer the enemy. We must today seek God and be determined that we will not rest satisfied without His presence. We should watch and work and pray as though this were the last day that would be granted us. How intensely earnest, then, would be our life. How closely would we follow Jesus in all our words and deeds. **(5T 200.3)**

There are few who rightly appreciate or improve the precious privilege of prayer. We should go to Jesus and tell Him all our needs. We may bring Him our little cares and perplexities as well as our greater troubles. Whatever arises to disturb or distress us, we should take it to the Lord in prayer. When we feel that we need the presence of Christ at every step, Satan will have little opportunity to intrude his temptations. It is his studied effort to keep us away from our best and most sympathizing friend. We should make no one our confidant but Jesus. We can safely commune with Him of all that is in our hearts. **(5T 200.4)**

Brethren and sisters, when you assemble for social worship, believe that Jesus meets with you; believe that He is willing to bless you. Turn the eye away from self; look unto Jesus, talk of His matchless love. By beholding Him you will become changed into His likeness. When you pray, be brief, come right to the point. Do not preach the Lord a sermon in your long prayers. Ask for the bread of life as a hungry child asks bread of his earthly father. God will bestow upon us every needed blessing if we ask Him in simplicity and faith. **(5T 201.1)**

The prayers offered by ministers previous to their discourses are frequently long and inappropriate. They embrace a whole round of subjects that have no reference to the necessities of the occasion or the wants of the people. Such prayers are suitable for the closet, but should not be offered in public. The hearers become weary and long for the minister to close. Brethren, carry the people with you in your prayers. Go to your Saviour in faith, tell Him what you need on that occasion. Let the soul go out after God with intense longing for the blessing needed at that time. **(5T 201.2)**

Prayer is the most holy exercise of the soul. It should be sincere, humble, earnest—the desires of a renewed heart breathed in the presence of a holy God. When the suppliant feels that he is in the divine presence, self will be forgotten. He will have no desire to display human talent; he will not seek to please the ear of men, but to obtain the blessing which the soul craves. **(5T 201.3)**

If we would only take the Lord at His word, what blessings might be ours! Would that there were more fervent, effectual prayer. Christ will be the helper of all who seek Him in faith. **(5T 202.1)**