

Model of Christ: The Life of Christ—Gleanings from EGW

What a busy life He led! Day by day He might have been seen entering the humble abodes of want and sorrow, speaking hope to the downcast and peace to the distressed. Gracious, tenderhearted, pitiful, He went about lifting up the bowed-down and comforting the sorrowful. Wherever He went, He carried blessing. {MH 24.1}

Note: When I am “In Christ,” I will naturally follow His model and be a blessing to others everywhere I go. My priority in life will not be to focus on whatever is on my agenda at the time; but rather to continually watch for opportunities to be a blessing to others. Christ’s busy life did not distract Him from ministering to those around Him.

While He ministered to the poor, Jesus studied also to find ways of reaching the rich. He sought the acquaintance of the wealthy and cultured Pharisee, the Jewish nobleman, and the Roman ruler. He accepted their invitations, attended their feasts, made Himself familiar with their interests and occupations, that He might gain access to their hearts, and reveal to them the imperishable riches. {MH 24.2}

Note: When Christ went to parties he was not seeking a “good time”, He was seeking lost souls. If you’re going to catch fish, you have to go where the fish are. There is no record of Christ ever putting on a party which involved He and His disciples sitting back while others served them. He came to serve not to be served.

Note: In all classes of people, Christ sought ways to get close to them so that He could point them to His Father and save their lives. He saw this as a matter of life or death. If He didn’t get close to them and then tell them of their loving Father’s plan to save them, they would be eternally lost. When I see people –poor, rich or whatever, my focus is not to get close to them and to rescue them from death. I need to ask Christ each day to place in me a passion for others. That is one prayer that He will always answer so long as I have pleaded with Him to give me a passion for Himself. Passion for Christ results in compassion for others. “Father, give me a burning desire to be just like my Big Brother.”

Christ came to this world to show that by receiving power from on high, man can live an unsullied (clean, pure, unblemished) life. With unwearying patience and sympathetic helpfulness He met men in their necessities. By the gentle touch of grace He banished from the soul unrest and doubt, changing enmity to love, and unbelief to confidence. {MH 25.1}

Note: The only way I can reflect Christ is by allowing His Spirit to fill me with His power. If I have not submitted the control of my heart to Christ each minute, I may mimic Christ; but it will be an artificial façade done to make me feel good or to glorify self.

Those who are valuable in life and influence have felt the importance of following Jesus closely, of making the life of Christ their study and example. This will require effort, meditation, and earnest prayer. It requires exertion to obtain the victory over selfishness

and to make the interest of God's cause primary. Some have made the effort and practiced close discipline of self, and they have gained precious victories. Those who consider their own interest primary, live for self. Their character in the sight of God is as worthless dross. {2T 637.1}

Note: “This will require effort, meditation, and earnest prayer.” I am so much like my 2 ½ year old grandson, Collin. My attention span is about 20 seconds. I want to be just like Christ; but I have a hard time focusing on the “effort, meditation, and earnest prayer” part. “Father, as I look at Christ’s life in this section – what He did and how He did it, drive these thoughts into my memory and bring them back often. Translate these words for me so that they will inspire, encourage and impress me.”

Note: “Those who consider their own interest primary, live for self.” With every decision I make, is my thought process, “what do I want,” or is it, “Jesus, what do you want?” Am I being controlled by my feelings (I feel like doing this and this and this, or, I don’t want to do this and this) or am I being controlled by the gift of reason God has given me. Example: Do I eat primarily for enjoyment (it makes me feel good) or do I watch what and when I eat because it has a direct bearing on my ability to know God and hear His voice. Satan is constantly trying to side track me in this area. By tempting me to eat according to my feel-good feelings (sugar, fat & anytime), He is able to numb my mind so that I cannot discern the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

The work of Christ on earth was hastening to a close. Before Him, in vivid outline, lay the scenes whither His feet were tending. Even before He took humanity upon Him, He saw the whole length of the path He must travel in order to save that which was lost. Every pang that rent His heart, every insult that was heaped upon His head, every privation that He was called to endure, was open to His view before He laid aside His crown and royal robe, and stepped down from the throne, to clothe His divinity with humanity. The path from the manger to Calvary was all before His eyes. He knew the anguish that would come upon Him. He knew it all, and yet He said, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." Ps. 40:7, 8. {DA 410.1}

Note: Before Christ made the decision to come to this earth and die, He counted the cost. On one side of the slate was humiliation, pain, abuse, abandonment, and ultimate sacrifice. On the other side was our need for salvation. Christ put His needs aside and ministered to our great need. When Katrina first struck New Orleans, a star basketball player with tears streaming down his face pledged \$1M of his own money and was heralded for his sacrifice. But look what Christ gave up in heaven and knowingly accepted on earth prior to His 1st coming. We know very little about that kind of sacrifice.

Ever before Him He saw the result of His mission. His earthly life, so full of toil and self-sacrifice, was cheered by the prospect that He would not have all this travail for nought. By giving His life for the life of men, He would win back the world to its loyalty to God. {DA 410}

Note: At the "Last Supper," Christ took the bread, broke it and GAVE THANKS. Knowing that the broken bread represented His broken body, Christ was thankful. Why? Because He saw past the price He would pay in dieing for our sins to the great celebration when He would bring God's children home to their Father.

Although the baptism of blood must first be received; although the sins of the world were to weigh upon His innocent soul; although the shadow of an unspeakable woe was upon Him; yet for the joy that was set before Him, He chose to endure the cross, and despised the shame. {DA 410.2}

"Learn of Me," says Jesus; "for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest." We are to enter the school of Christ, to learn from Him meekness and lowliness. Redemption is that process by which the soul is trained for heaven. This training means a knowledge of Christ. It means emancipation from ideas, habits, and practices that have been gained in the school of the prince of darkness. The soul must be delivered from all that is opposed to loyalty to God. {DA 330.2}

In the heart of Christ, where reigned perfect harmony with God, there was perfect peace. He was never elated by applause, nor dejected by censure or disappointment. Amid the greatest opposition and the most cruel treatment, He was still of good courage. But many who profess to be His followers have an anxious, troubled heart, because they are afraid to trust themselves with God. They do not make a complete surrender to Him; for they shrink from the consequences that such a surrender may involve. Unless they do make this surrender, they cannot find peace. {DA 330.3}

Note: Christ was able to live above all earthly circumstances by being so closely connected to His Father at the heart that nothing –elation nor dejection could knock Him off course. He was here to do His Father's will every minute of every day. In so doing, He found the affirmation His human nature needed from His Father and not from the people He came into contact with.

It is the love of self that brings unrest. When we are born from above, the same mind will be in us that was in Jesus, the mind that led Him to humble Himself that we might be saved. Then we shall not be seeking the highest place. We shall desire to sit at the feet of Jesus, and learn of Him. We shall understand that the value of our work does not consist in making a show and noise in the world, and in being active and zealous in our own strength. The value of our work is in proportion to the impartation of the Holy Spirit. Trust in God brings holier qualities of mind, so that in patience we may possess our souls. {DA 330.4}

Jesus calls the attention of this young man directly to the defect in his character. He cites His own self-denying, cross-bearing life. He had left everything for the salvation of man, and He entreated the young man to come and imitate His example, and assured him that he should have treasure in heaven. {2T 679}

Note: Here is one time when Jesus talked about himself. But his motive was not to seek approval. It was to show the rich young ruler the way home.

Note: Christ's call to come is softened by His assurance of good things to come.

Like the disciples, we are in danger of losing sight of our dependence on God, and seeking to make a savior of our activity. We need to look constantly to Jesus, realizing that it is His power which does the work. While we are to labor earnestly for the salvation of the lost, we must also take time for meditation, for prayer, and for the study of the word of God. Only the work accomplished with much prayer, and sanctified by the merit of Christ, will in the end prove to have been efficient for good. No other life was ever so crowded with labor and responsibility as was that of Jesus; yet how often He was found in prayer! How constant was His communion with God! {DA 362}

Note: Victory over a cultivated or hereditary tendency is not about me working hard and Christ making up the difference. It is about me working hard to remain submitted to Him and Christ doing all to give me victory. When Mrs. White refers to Christ as my "Helper," she is not suggesting that I work on my sinful problem and He helps too. It's like taking my broken down car to a mechanic. He helps me get it going again; but I don't grab the tools and do part of the work while he does the rest. I submit to his expertise and he does all the work. My huge battle is to stay in the position of submission to Him while He does the changing in me.

I point you to the life of Jesus as a perfect pattern. His life was characterized by disinterested (unbiased, impartial) benevolence. Precious Saviour! What sacrifices has He made for us that we should not perish, but have everlasting life! Heaven will be cheap enough if we resign every selfish interest to obtain it. Can we afford to have our own way, and take ourselves out of the hands of God, because it is more pleasing to the natural heart? God requires perfect submission and perfect obedience. Eternal life is worth everything to us. You may come in close connection with God if you will agonize to enter in at the strait gate. {4T 218.2}

Note: Perfect submission is the key to perfect obedience. The battle is always over who is in charge of my heart.

We do not, as followers of Christ, realize our true position. We do not have correct views of our responsibilities as hired servants of Christ. He has advanced us the wages in His suffering life and spilled blood, to bind us in willing servitude to Himself. All the good things we have are a loan from our Saviour. He has made us stewards. Our smallest offerings, our humblest services, presented in faith and love, may be consecrated gifts to win souls to the service of the Master and to promote His glory. The interest and prosperity of Christ's kingdom should be paramount to every other consideration. Those who make their pleasure and selfish interest the chief objects of their lives are not faithful stewards. {3T 397.1}

Those who deny self to do others good, and who devote themselves and all they have to Christ's service, will realize the happiness which the selfish man seeks for in vain. Said our Saviour: "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple." Charity "seeketh not her own." This is the fruit of that disinterested love and benevolence which characterized the life of Christ. {3T 397}

Note: My talents and abilities and mental reasoning and every good thing in me are ALL on loan from God. That is why I cannot boast about anything I do or say. It's not me. It's Christ working through me. I am simply the tool that He chooses to use. He gets all the credit. My only reward is hearing His "still small voice" saying, "Well done, child. I love you."

The Jews thought that by taking the life of Christ, they could prevent his becoming king. But by murdering the Son of God, they were bringing about the very thing they sought to prevent....The crucifixion of Christ by his enemies made him the Redeemer of mankind the Saviour of the fallen race, and ruler over the whole world. The crime of his enemies was just as heinous, as though God's providential hand had not controlled events for his own glory and the good of man. {3SG 175.1}

Note: At Gethsemane and in the court rooms of Pilot and Herod and even at the cross, God was still in charge. The crucifixion of Jesus was the ultimate example of Romans 8:28 "ALL things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to His PURPOSE."

Note: God's children are not deceived by negative circumstances. By faith, they cling to the belief that their Father sees ALL, knows ALL and is in full control of ALL that touches their lives. It was so with His Son and it will be so with His followers.

The words, "Mine hour is not yet come," point to the fact that every act of Christ's life on earth was in fulfillment of the plan that had existed from the days of eternity. Before He came to earth, the plan lay out before Him, perfect in all its details. But as He walked among men, He was guided, step by step, by the Father's will. He did not hesitate to act at the appointed time. With the same submission He waited until the time had come. {DA 147.2}

Note: Christ knew when to act and when not to act. He knew when to speak and when not to speak. He was in such close communication with God that nothing happened by chance. Everything He did and said had a heavenly purpose. He was guided "step by step by the Father's will."

But though Mary had not a right conception of Christ's mission, she trusted Him implicitly. To this faith Jesus responded. It was to honor Mary's trust, and to strengthen the faith of His disciples, that the first miracle was performed. {DA 147}

Christ, the King of glory, went often alone to the mountains and desert places to pour out His soul's request to His Father; but sinful man, in whom is no strength, thinks he can live without so much prayer. {1T 504.2}

Note: "to pour out His soul's request to His Father." Even when I do take time in prayer, seldom to I pour out my soul's requests. Much of the time it's more like running down the check list of prayers so that I can get them done for the day and go off to work. How do I get the kind of passion for prayer requests that Christ had?

Christ is our pattern; His life was an example of good works. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He wept over Jerusalem because they would not be saved by accepting the redemption which He offered them. They would not come to Him that they might have life. Compare your course of life with that of your Master, who made so great a sacrifice that you might be saved. He frequently spent the entire night upon the damp ground in AGONIZING prayer. You are seeking your own pleasure. {1T 505}

The life of Jesus was filled with industry, and He took exercise in performing varied tasks in harmony with His developing physical strength. In doing the work that was marked out for Him, He had no time for indulgence in exciting, useless amusements. He took no part in that which would poison the moral and lower the physical tone, but was trained in useful labor and even for the endurance of hardship. {AH 506.4}

In His earth life Christ was an example to all the human family, and He was obedient and helpful in the home. He learned the carpenter's trade and worked with His own hands in the little shop at Nazareth. . . . {AH 507.1}

Note: Just as Christ was obedient to those in charge, I am called to follow His example in relating to those who are in positions of authority in my life. Example: following speed limit and other rules of the road, following directions of a museum guide etc. I tend to want to be in charge of minor matters like taking my camera to golf tour events when the rule specifically says cameras are not allowed. It is human nature to decide to do what we want in the minor things of life and not subordinate self to those in charge.

At the cross of Calvary, love and selfishness stood face to face. Here was their crowning manifestation. Christ had lived only to comfort and bless, and in putting Him to death, Satan manifested the malignity of his hatred against God. He made it evident that the real purpose of his rebellion was to dethrone God, and to destroy Him through whom the love of God was shown. By the life and the death of Christ, the thoughts of men also are brought to view. From the manger to the cross, the life of Jesus was a call to self-surrender, and to fellowship in suffering. {DA 57}

With the people of that age the value of things was estimated by outward show. As religion had declined in power, it had increased in pomp. The educators of the time sought to command respect by display and ostentation. To all this the life of Jesus presented a marked contrast. His life demonstrated the worthlessness of those things that men regarded as life's great essentials. The schools of His time, with their magnifying of

things small and their belittling of things great, He did not seek. His education was gained from Heaven- appointed sources, from useful work, from the study of the Scriptures, from nature, and from the experiences of life-- God's lesson books, full of instruction to all who bring to them the willing hand, the seeing eye, and the understanding heart. {MH 400.1}

"The Child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him." Luke 2:40. {MH 400.2}

Thus prepared, He went forth to His mission, in every moment of His contact with men exerting upon them an influence to bless, a power to transform, such as the world had never witnessed. {MH 400.3}