

FIRST WORDS
TO
YOUNG CHRISTIANS

by

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THE MOODY PRESS CHICAGO

CHAPTER THIRTEEN -

HOW TO MAKE A SUCCESS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

THERE are two classes of persons who start out in the Christian life: those who make a complete or partial failure of it, and those who make a complete success of it. The question at once suggests itself: Is it possible to point out a plain pathway, in which anyone who will, can walk, and following which will make success absolutely sure! I believe it is. GOD's Word gives a few simple instructions which if followed will make success in the Christian life a certainty.

There are seven steps in the path marked out in the Bible.

1. BEGIN RIGHT

What a right beginning is we see in John 1:12, "**But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of GOD, even to them that believe on His name.**"

Receive CHRIST. Take Him as your SAVIOUR who died for your sin. Trust the whole matter of your forgiveness to Him. Rest upon the fact that He has paid the full penalty of your sin. 2 Corinthians 5:21, "**For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.**" (Galatians 3:13), "**Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree.**"

It is in this first step that many make a mistake. They try to mix in their good works as a ground of salvation. They think if they are good GOD will forgive them, because of CHRIST's death and their goodness.

Take Him as your Deliverer, the one who will save you from the power of sin, who will quicken you when dead in trespasses and sins. Don't try to save yourself from the power of sin. Trust Him to do it.

Take Him as your Master. Don't seek to guide your own life. Surrender unconditionally to His Lordship over you. Say: "All for Jesus!" Many fail because they shrink back from this entire

surrender. They wish to serve JESUS with half their heart, and part of themselves, and part of their possessions. It is a wretched life of stumbling and failure, this life of half-hearted surrender. It is a joyous life all along the way, the life of entire surrender.

If you have never done it before and wish "to make a success of the Christian life," go alone with GOD, get down on your knees, and say: "All for Jesus!" Say it very earnestly; say it from the bottom of your heart. Stay there until you realize what it means and what you are doing. It is a wondrous step forward when one really takes it. If you have taken it already, take it again. Take it often. It always has fresh meaning and brings fresh blessedness.

Taking CHRIST as your Master involves obedience to His will, as far as you know it, in each smallest detail of life. This is one of the most essential conditions of receiving "**the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him**" (Acts 5:32).

2. CONFESS CHRIST OPENLY BEFORE MEN

Matthew 10:32, "**Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven.**" Romans 10:10, "**For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.**"

The life of confession is the life of full salvation. It is when we confess CHRIST before men that He confesses us before His FATHER in heaven, and that the fulness of His blessing comes.

It does not mean that we are to confess CHRIST just once, as, for example, when we unite with the church, but constantly. The one who would make the largest success of the Christian life should seize every opportunity of confessing CHRIST before men - in the home, in shopping, at work, in the church, everywhere.

I once heard a wise old preacher say: "If we make a good deal of CHRIST, He will make a great deal of us."

How many backsliders fell away from CHRIST at this point! They went to a new city, or a new place to work, and neglected to confess CHRIST, and now they are back in the world.

3. STUDY THE WORD

I Peter 2:2, "**As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.**"

The Word of GOD is the soul's food. It is the nourishment of the new life. One who neglects the Word cannot make much of a success of the Christian life. All who get on in the Christian life are great feeders on the Word of GOD.

Here many fail. Ask any backslider: "Have you fed on the Word daily?" I never have found one that could say that he had.

Two points on Bible reading are - first, read for food for your own soul; second, read a great deal on your knees.

The Bible has become in some measure a new book to me since I have taken to reading it on my knees.

4. "PRAY WITHOUT CEASING"

I Thessalonians 5:17.

The one who would succeed in the Christian life must lead a life of prayer.

That is easy enough if you only set about it. Have set times for prayer. The rule of David and Daniel, three times a day, is a good rule. Psalm 55:17, "**Evening and morning, and at noon will I pray, and cry aloud: and He shall hear my voice.**" Daniel 6:10, "**Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house: and, his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.**"

Begin the day with thanksgiving and prayer - Thanksgiving for the definite mercies of the past, prayer for the definite needs of the present day. Stop in the midst of the bustle and worry and temptation of the day for thanksgiving and prayer. Close the day with thanksgiving and prayer.

Then there should be the special prayer in special temptation - when we see the temptation approaching.

Keep looking to GOD. "**Pray without ceasing.**" It is not needful to be on our knees all the time. But the heart should be on its knees all the time. If "Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees," let us keep him trembling all the time. We should be often on our knees, on our faces, literally.

This is a joyous life, free from worry and care. Here is the point (neglect of prayer) where many fail.

There are three things for which the one who would make a success of the Christian life must especially pray:

- First, for wisdom, "**If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God**" (James 1:5);
- Second, for strength, "**They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength**" (Isaiah 40:31);
- Third, for the HOLY SPIRIT, "**Your heavenly Father shall give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him**" (Luke 11:13).

If you have not yet received the baptism with the HOLY SPIRIT you should offer definite prayer for this definite blessing, and definitely expect to receive it. If you have already received the baptism with the HOLY SPIRIT you should with each new emergency of Christian work pray to GOD for a new filling with the HOLY SPIRIT.

5. GO TO WORK FOR CHRIST

Matthew 25:29, "**For unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away, even that which he hath.**"

Note the context, and you will see that it this means that those who use what they have will get more, and those that let what they have lie idle will lose even that. The working Christian, the one who uses his talents, whether few or many, in CHRIST's service, is the one who gets on in the Christian life here, and who will hereafter hear the "**Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.**"

Find some work to do for CHRIST and do it. Seek for work. If it is nothing more than distributing tracts or invitations to meeting, do it. Always be looking for something more to do for CHRIST, and you will always be receiving something more from CHRIST.

6. GIVE LARGELY

Proverbs 11:25, "**The liberal soul shall be made fat.**" (II Corinthians 9:6, 8), "**He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. And God is able to make all grace abound towards you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.**"

Success and growth in the Christian life depend on few things more than upon liberal giving. A stingy Christian cannot be a growing Christian. It is wonderful how a Christian man begins to grow when he begins to give.

Give systematically. Set aside for CHRIST a fixed proportion of all the money or goods you get. Be exact and honest about it. Don't use it for yourself under any circumstances. A tenth is a good proportion to begin with. Don't let it be less than that. After you have given your tenth you will soon probably learn the joy of giving free-will offerings in addition to the tenth.

7. KEEP PUSHING ON

Philippians 3:1:3, 14, "**Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.**"

Forget that which lies behind; press on to the better things that lie before.

Forget the sins which lie behind. If you fail anywhere, if you fall, don't be discouraged, don't give up, don't brood over the sin. Confess it instantly. Believe GOD's Word - I John 1:9, "**If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**" Believe the sin is forgiven; forget it, press on. Satan beguiles many a poor soul here. He keeps us brooding over our failures and sins.

He even makes us think this is humility, as if it were humility to doubt GOD's Word and make Him a liar by not believing the sin is forgiven and put away, when He says it is.

Forget the achievements and victories of the past, and press on to greater. Here Satan cheats many of us out of the larger life. He keeps us thinking so much of what we have already obtained, and makes us so contented with it and so puffed up over it, that we come to a standstill, or even backslide. I have seen this in many individuals and many churches. "How well we have done!" they think. Our only safety is in forgetting those things which are behind, and pressing on. "Excelsior!" "Higher!" should be the soul's persistent cry. Press on!

There is always something better ahead. You may have received a second blessing, or a twenty-second, but there is still something better until we "**come . . . unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ**" (Ephesians 4:13)

Young Christian friends and older Christians, the road to certain success in the Christian life is plain enough. Shall we take it? The truths of this chapter are familiar; but are you practicing them? Read the chapter over often, and see if there is not some point at which you fail. If you find there is, correct your mistake AT ONCE.

~ end of chapter 13 ~
