

"Looking Unto Jesus"

32

From Glory to Glory



Character development is said to be the most important work ever entrusted to human beings. During the next hour, we will explore both our privilege and our responsibility to become Christ-like in character. Join us now for this powerful time of personal renewal as Pastor Stephen Wallace takes us "From Glory to Glory."

Good morning, good morning, and happy Sabbath. {Happy Sabbath} What happened to that delightful weather we had there for a spell? Thank you for braving the elements and coming out this morning. What a privilege it is to gather in God's house on God's day to study God's Word. Amen? {Amen} Well, my dear friends, we have gathered in vain unless the Holy Spirit joins us. {Amen} And He is prepared to do that upon our invitation. Yes, He's here, for He has promised, **"Where two or three are gathered in My Name, there I am in their midst."** {Mat 18:20} But my friends, please don't be satisfied to just have Him in our midst as a congregation. Make sure that He is in your midst as an individual. There's a difference; do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} There is a big difference.

You see, inspiration tells us that **the latter rain can be falling all around us and we won't even know it.** {LDE 195.4; EW 71.2} Why? Because though the Holy Spirit is present, it can only fill those whose hearts are open. Amen? {Amen} Yes, therefore, do you hear the knock this morning? Before we open the Bible, we must open our hearts. Remember that memory device, and personally invite God's Spirit to come in. **Spiritual things are only spiritually discerned** {1 Cor 2:13-14}, and you've heard me say that before. Please, don't resent me for reminding us, myself included, over and over again. We are, oh, so prone to be self-sufficient when it comes to the study of the Word of God. God forgive us. We are desperately dependant, my dear friends, upon the power of the Holy Spirit if we are going to have a life-changing experience in the study of God's Word. Sure, we can have an intellectual exercise without the power of the Holy Spirit. We can, you know, fill time without the power of the Holy Spirit. But God forbid that we just fill time with an intellectual exercise. Amen? {Amen} God grant that we have a life-changing experience today. That can and will be ours if we personally invite God's Spirit into our hearts. As you pray for yourself, I solicit your prayers. I need the Holy Spirit in a special way today. Would you pray for me too? Let's kneel, as is our practice, for a few moments of silent prayer.

My Father in heaven, I thank you so much for the privilege of gathering together on this Your day, in this Your place. And I thank You that You are here, for You have promised. Father, we want to personally invite You to come into our hearts. So each one of us chooses to open the door of our heart and say, "Come in, come in heavenly Guest." In the person of Your Spirit, Father, indwell us. Quicken and energize our mental and spiritual faculties; especially do that in my behalf. I am not worthy of the privilege of leading out in the study of Your Word. Nor am I adequate to the task. But by virtue of Christ's worthiness, and by virtue of the all-sufficiency, the adequacy of His grace, please condescend to use me. Empower me, enable me to speak truth and only truth, the truth as it is in Jesus. Guide my thoughts, my words; please touch my lips with a coal. Purge me and don't let me even flavor, let alone defile, the truth that You want to pour through me, please Father. Should anyone receive a blessing, we will all know who alone gets the honor and the glory, the gratitude and the praise. It is You, and not for one moment the poor earthen vessel You condescended to use. Oh, Lord, bless Your church that

she might arise and shine with the reflected character of the Bridegroom. This is my prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

We are in a several-part study on mental dietary. What is mental dietary? It's what we feed the mind. How do we feed the mind? Through our senses, especially our eyes and our ears. You see, the mind is a wonderful, marvelous, highly sophisticated and incredibly powerful computer. And that which directly determines how it functions is how it is programmed. What we feed the mind programs our thoughts and our feelings. And our **thoughts and feelings combined make up our, what? Our moral character.** {5T 310.1} That is precisely why **in beholding we are changed, changed into the likeness of what we behold.** {RH, Dec 6, 1881 par. 15} Because what we behold influences our thoughts and our thoughts determine what we are. You see the direct cause-effect relationship there, don't you? This makes it absolutely imperative my dear friends, that we select very carefully what we feed the mind. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen}

Are there different kinds of mental dietary available in the world today? Yes, there certainly are. That which is readily and naturally available however, is that which is calculated and prepared by the master chef of sinfulness, Satan himself. It's masterfully prepared to satisfy and gratify the perverted lusts of the flesh. And there's a whole lot of that food out there. And we all have a **natural tendency** {1MCP 105.4} to crave it anyway. Will you admit that? So it being readily available and our having a natural hungering and thirsting for it, it is only inevitable that we will gorge ourselves on that, except by divine help and grace.

Now to start off with, we have no natural appetite for anything but that which is carnal. So we've got to begin by getting a new heart, and that new heart has new desires, new appetites. And that we receive as a gift of grace at the foot of the cross, upon request. **"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."** {Ps 51:10} At that point, we receive the capacity. We receive the, what? The capacity to **hunger and thirst after the Word of God.** {EW 281.2} But my dear friends, we must develop and strengthen that new spiritual appetite by cooperating with the Holy Spirit and feeding ourselves spiritual food. {Amen} We must **"Taste and see that the Lord is good."** {Ps 34:8} The more we taste, the more we will see that the Lord is indeed good. We will develop and strengthen the spiritual appetites. We will cultivate the spiritual palette so that it enjoys the flavor of the Bread of Life.

But the challenge, of course, is that we have this old palette that has become addicted to that highly seasoned, carnal junk food. Are you following this? It is no small task to resist the temptation to throw the old man an occasional "McDonald's" every once in a while. Forgive me for dipping in to the physical realm, but I'm trying to make the spiritual more understandable. There are all sorts of mental "hamburgers" out there. Since the old man naturally craves it, and since it is so readily available - there's all sorts of "fast food" places where you can stop in for a minimum of time and money, and throw your mind some carnal junk food. You can sit down in your own living room and throw your mind some carnal junk food, if you've got a TV there. We dealt with that last night, and I'm going to try resist getting back into that today. Bless your hearts. You know I feel so strongly about that because of my own, my own pilgrimage. My brother, my sister, you see what I did for the longest time is I thought I could be selective and I could exercise discretion regarding what I would watch. The games we play with ourselves. Do you hear what I'm talking about?

You see, there is junk food and there is JUNK food.

I thought that I would only eat junk food, and get away with it. I'm here to tell you if you really want to grow consistently, you've got to **put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make NO provision for the flesh.** {Rom 13:14} {Amen} Not even slightly junk food should you feed your mind. Do I hear an "amen"? Come on, now! We've got to start getting serious if we're going to get ready for Jesus to

come. We've got to starve the old man and feed the spiritual man. Every time, I know this from personal experience, every time you indulge in a little relatively benign junk food, what do you do? You immediately strengthen those carnal appetites and he craves all the more. Okay? Then you run out real quick of relatively benign junk food, and because you've strengthened your appetite, you've got to start indulging in a little less benign junk food. Come on now, you know what I'm talking about. This whole game that I played with myself where I was going to be selective regarding what I watched.

By the way, we don't have a TV, but we do have a DVD player at our research center. You've got to have that; there's a lot of wonderful material on DVD that is available for spiritual edification, so we have a DVD player. But when I got it, I remember actually shaking as I brought it home, because I was so afraid of the potential that I had of using it to feed my carnal man.

For the longest time, I played this game with myself, where I would select only relatively good stuff. I wouldn't think of looking at the garbage, but the relatively good stuff. Every time I would do that, I would strengthen my carnal appetite, and I would revive my addiction. Then pretty soon you run out of relatively good stuff, and so what have you got to do? You've got to lower the standard a little bit, and start watching a little more.

My dear friends, in exposing ourselves to anything that is carnal, please follow this, we inevitably will desensitize ourselves to the offensiveness of carnality. Bless your hearts, some of you who were here last night, you probably thought, *"Man, this guy has really got a problem with television and videos and movies. What's so bad about that stuff anyway?"* I'm here to tell you, dear friends, if anything like that went through your mind, that is a bright red flag, and that should alert you that you are in advanced stages of desensitization. Do you hear what I'm trying to tell you? {Amen} If you don't recognize the grossness and the offensiveness of the carnal garbage that is pumped into human minds through these screens - television, videos and movies - then you are in advanced stages of desensitization. Please wake up! Determine by God's grace to **set nothing wicked before your eyes {Ps 101:3}**, and then as you get re-sensitized to the offensiveness of wickedness, you will find that it is really very, very offensive.

Even the *"comedies"* they're so foolish, there's so much foolishness. My dear friends, we are to be sober. Now that doesn't mean morose and grim and unhappy, but that means very earnest and serious and fully aware of where we stand in earth's history and how imperative it is for us to get ready and help others get ready in these closing moments of earth's history. Besides, we've got an enemy who is constantly trying to destroy us. We need to be sober-minded. And this lightweight foolishness, that is the relatively benign stuff that comes across these screens, if we feed our minds that, we will make ourselves lightweight and foolish. *"You are what you eat."* Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} Come on, admit it with me. *"You are what you eat."*

Please, you know, and I'm getting involved in television again. I wasn't going to do that but... What really amazes me, my dear friends, is that there is regularly shown on prime time television today in this nation stuff that would never have been allowed at any time just not all that long ago. In fact, you read, you read the official guidelines to govern television programming, that was put out by the government 20 years ago, and you have to just shake your head and laugh. They wouldn't allow anything, for example, that even approached profanity. Not anything that even, what? ...approached profanity. Now what do you hear? Almost all the time, incessantly, on even family television? Profanity. What happened? How did the enemy pull that off? Very, very subtly and gradually and incrementally by exposing us to it and thereby desensitizing us to its offensiveness. And profanity is just one illustration. Immorality, incredible, explicit, gross immorality portrayed in living color, never would have made it at any time on television just not that long ago. The whole nation not only doesn't rise up and cry out, but it sits back and enjoys it, and demands more. You know I'm telling you the truth. My dear friends, if we sit down and expose ourselves to this kind of garbage, we are not only

desensitizing ourselves to its offensiveness, we are cultivating a perverted appetite for it. Don't play games with yourself on this one. Please don't. I did for a long time and it was a constant hindrance and limitation to my spiritual growth. I had to really get serious and decide that I was through, with even the relatively benign junk food. I was going to feed my mind only the very best mental dietary. Only then have I been able to really experience consistent victory in my personal Christian experience and growth.

Oh friends, please, this mental dietary issue is so important, but what I want to turn our attention to today is particularly the importance of feeding yourself that which is wholesome. What we've been looking at is the importance of not feeding ourselves that, which is unwholesome. Now, let's get positive. Let's look at the necessity of feeding ourselves that which is wholesome.

The title of our study, "**Looking Unto Jesus.**" {**Heb12:2**}

We are in lesson 32, page 69. Lesson 32, yes 32, page 69. Now, the Christian experience is summed up in the words of Paul in **Romans 12:2. "Do not be conformed to this world, but be,"** what? **"...transformed by the renewing of your mind..."** What conforms us to this world? It's by programming our mind with the things of this world. Are you following me? If we are going to be transformed, we've got to stop programming the mind with the things of this world, and start programming them with the things of God. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} You see, **"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."** {**Prov 23:7**} So to be a Christian, we have got to change the way we think. We have got to come to have the mind of Christ. {Amen} Amen? We're back to basics here, but we've got to... We've got to remind ourselves of these things. **"Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus."** {**Phil 2:5**} That is the essence of the Christian experience.

Now, if we're going to do that, we have to program the mind with the things of Christ. That's why our key text comes into play here again. What is it - for the whole seminar? **2 Corinthians 3:18, "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."** How is the mind transformed? How are we **transformed by the renewing of our minds? By beholding the glory of Christ; and what's the glory of Christ? ...it's His character.** {**AA 545.2**} We are changed into the likeness of what we behold. Changed into the likeness of what we behold.

Now, we must come, my dear friends, to have a pure heart, a Christ-like mind, if we are going to be either effective witnesses for the King or fit citizens for the Kingdom. And that requires diligent effort on our part. It requires, what? Diligent effort on our part. But the effort is not to change ourselves, the effort is to keep our mind's eye fixed on Jesus. I said something very important there. The effort is not to change ourselves, the effort is to keep our mind's eye fixed on Jesus, that by His Holy Spirit He might change us from glory to glory. That is so crucial; listen: **Ministry of Healing, page 491: "We need a constant sense of the ennobling power of pure thoughts. The only security for any soul is (in) right thinking. As a man 'thinketh in his heart, so is he.' {Prov 23:7} The power of self-restraint strengthens by exercise."** Take courage; **"The power of self-restraint,"** what? **"...strengthens by exercise."** **"That which at first seems difficult, by constant repetition grows,"** what? **"...easy,"** praise God, **"...until right thoughts and actions become habitual."** You can make good habits as well as bad habits. Amen? But changing habit patterns requires persevering diligent effort, doesn't it? Especially when it comes to mental dietary. Back to our statement: **"If we will,"** If we, what? **...will,** and that involves the power of choice. **"If we will we may turn away from all that is cheap and inferior, and rise to a high standard; we may be respected by men and beloved of God."** But please notice, what is absolutely necessary if we are going to rise to a higher standard and grow from glory to glory? It is turning away from all that is cheap and inferior.

That's why we read last night in **Psalm 119:37, "Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, and revive me in Your way."** Do we need revival as a people? {Yes} **We all need revival as a people. {LDE 189.1}** But what is an absolutely essential requisite to revival? It's **turning our eyes away from worthless things.** Amen? And getting them fixed on, who? On Jesus. Getting them fixed on Jesus. But self and Satan will constantly oppose us, my dear friends, as we seek to take our eyes, particularly our mind's eye, off the things of the world, and get our mind's eye fixed on Jesus.

And by the way, please notice I'm talking about two things here. I'm talking about the physical eyes and the mind's eye. There is a difference; now, they are intimately associated, inseparably associated, but there is a difference. The physical eyes are what, of course, we use to look at various things with, and see images. But please know, that what the physical eyes look at has a direct and dramatic effect upon what the mind's eye is looking at. Doesn't it? There is a direct correlation there. Now granted, you can be looking at something with your physical eyes and your mind's eye can be someplace else. You know that. That's that TV stare that I get every once in a while. I can tell that, though you're looking at me, your mind is someplace else. But don't let me get sidetracked with TV again. The physical eyes have a direct and dramatic effect upon what the mind's eye beholds. That's why in beholding we are, what? Changed. Because what our physical eyes look at program the mind's eye, influence the focus of the mind's eye, which determines what we are. Now, keeping the mind's eye on Christ is no small challenge. But we must, by God's grace, learn to do it. Do I hear an "amen"?

Listen to this statement: **Mind, Character and Personality, Volume 2, page 595: "If Satan seeks to divert the mind to low and sensual things, bring it back again and place it on eternal things;"** and listen: **"...and when the Lord sees the determined effort made to retain only pure thoughts, He will attract the mind, like the magnet,"** Oh, I love that! **"He will attract the mind like the,"** what? **"...like the magnet, purify the thoughts and enable them to cleanse themselves from every secret sin."** Praise God for that! But, my dear friends, when will He attract the mind like a magnet? When? Please, did you notice? **"When the Lord sees the determined effort made to retain only pure thoughts."**

You see, again, we're back to the fact that God cannot unleash supernatural power on anyone who doesn't really want it; and **our choice to receive that power must be ratified by an effort to carry out that choice. {L24, p. 8}** Remember that study? And the miracles that Christ performed, for those of you who've been with us? So key here, so key. So **"when the Lord sees the determined effort... He will,"** what? **"...He will attract the mind like the magnet, purify the thoughts, and enable them to cleanse themselves from every secret sin."**

Then we have one of our key texts, **"Casting down imaginations, and every high things that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity,"** how many thoughts? **"...every thought to the obedience of Christ." {2 Cor 10:5}** Wow; every thought, my dear friends, You see that's our goal: is to have the mind's eye constantly and continually and exclusively on Jesus! **Every thought brought into captivity to who? ...to Jesus, yes.**

Now, how is this done? **"Finally, brethren," Philippians 4:8, "...whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate"** (or in the King James, **"think"**) **"...on these things."** My dear friends, there is your mental menu. Dear Christian, if you want to **be transformed by the renewing of your mind {Rom 12:2},** you must feed your mind only that which is on that menu that we just read. Do I hear an "amen"? You have got to start being very conscientious and selective regarding what you feed your mind. The choice is yours. But please know that **"no man can serve,"** what? **"...two masters." {Mat 6:24}** They have absolutely opposite appetites, the flesh and the spiritual nature. **They are contrary one to another. {Gal 5:17}** That's why Jesus says **"No man CAN serve two masters."**

Because you see, there is no food, there is no mental dietary, that will satisfy them both at the same time. Are you understanding this? Their appetites are so totally opposite that you can only feed one or the other; you can never feed both at the same time.

Therefore, what must you do? **"Choose you this day whom ye will serve."** {Josh 24:15} Which one are you going to feed? Now what most of us try to do... Hear me now, be honest with me. Though it's impossible to feed both at the same time, what we try to do is feed one for a while and then the other for a while. Come on now, will you admit that? And we start out in the morning for our allotted feeding time for the spiritual nature, and we feed him something, and then in the evening, because our favorite television program is on, we sit down and feed the carnal nature. That is precisely why we are Laodicean. Did you hear what I told you? That is precisely why **we are lukewarm.** {Rev 3:16} We haven't gotten serious about becoming Christ-like, and we haven't made, on the basis of that **serious commitment, consistent, appropriate decisions** {Dan 1:8} regarding mental dietary. We haven't decided to starve the old man, and feed only the spiritual nature. My dear friends, we will remain Laodicean until we make that decision. Do you hear what I'm telling you? Please know that; don't play games with yourself on this. You have got to get serious, you have got to get radical! If you're going to be changed from glory to glory and be ready for Jesus to come, and be useful to Him in helping anyone else get ready in the meantime. The choice is yours. But I have got to make it very plain to you what's involved. Please don't fool yourselves on this one. Please don't.

Where do we find all such things that are on this menu? **That which is true, that which is noble, that which is just, that which is pure, that which is lovely, that which is of good report, that which is virtuous, that which is praiseworthy...** {Phil 4:8} Where do we find all such things in their ultimately beautiful revelation? Where do we find it? In Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen? Therefore, the Christian's motto is that which Paul states so succinctly in **Hebrews 12:2, "Looking unto Jesus."** Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} My dear friends, that must not only be our motto, though, we must recognize that as our mandate. **"Looking unto Jesus."** I'm not even satisfied to leave it there. That which is our motto and our mandate must become our magnificent obsession: **"Looking unto Jesus,"** that's it. It is not until that becomes our magnificent obsession, that we will be able, through consistent cooperation with the Holy Spirit by fixing our eyes on Jesus, to **be changed from glory to glory** {2 Cor 3:18} and thereby become the people that God wants us to be. **"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 has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."**

You know, work with me on this word, **"looking."** **"Looking,"** it's weak in the English. It's a weak translation of the Greek. The Greek is a very unique word. The Greek word is **"aphorao"** "ah-fo-rah-o," {Strong's G872} and it is made up of two words: a prefix, **"apo"** {Strong's G575} which means **"from,"** and the verb **"horao"** {Strong's G3708} which means **"to stare at, to gaze constantly upon."** Are you following this? You put those together and you have our word that's translated **"looking," "aphorao."** Please understand what Paul is telling us, though, by using this unique verb. He's telling us that first of all we've got to turn away from looking at everything else - that's what the "apo" part is about. You've got to turn your eyes away from all that so readily distracts you, and you've got to rivet your mind's eye, focus your mind's eye, stare with constant steady gaze upon Jesus Christ. That's the essence of this verb. That's literally what it's saying. And by the way, the Strong's Exhaustive Concordance defines the verb this way: **"To turn the eyes from other things and fix them on something."** Right out of the Strong's - that's what "aphorao" means. "Apo" and "horao" together, you say it "ah-fo-rah-o." What does it mean? **To turn the eyes from other things and fix them on something.**

What's the something in this case? It's Jesus. My dear friends, that, in a nutshell, is our essential cooperative role, but that takes diligence. That takes persevering effort combined with divine power.

That takes the exercise of the will, and a spiritual mental discipline that most of us are totally unacquainted with. God help us get acquainted with that spiritual, mental discipline of turning our mind's eye from everything else and fixing it exclusively on Jesus. You see, this is absolutely imperative if we are going to be able to grow and to maintain victory.

Listen; **Testimonies, Volume 5, page 744: "Our daily and hourly work is set forth in the words of the apostle: 'Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith.'" {Heb 12:2}** Do we have a work to do in our Christian experience? Do we? Yes, what is it? Is it to change ourselves? No, you can't do that. **A leopard can't change his spots or an Ethiopian the color of his skin. {Jer 13:23}** You can't do that; you must be changed. But does that mean you don't have a work to do? No, please don't conclude that you have nothing to do just because you can't change yourself. Only the Holy Spirit can change you; but the Holy Spirit can't even change you unless you cooperate! Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} And how do you cooperate? By **looking unto Jesus**; so that He can change you into the likeness of what you behold. Amen?

There's no way that we can **be changed from glory to glory unless we are cooperating by beholding the glory of the Lord! {2 Cor 3:18}** Right there is the reason why we are so Laodicean, again. We haven't gotten serious about taking our eyes off the things of the world, and getting them fixed exclusively on Jesus. And that's why **we're lukewarm, neither hot nor cold. {Rev 3:16}** **We have a form of godliness {2 Tim 3:5}**; we go through the routine, and we behave pretty well, especially compared to others. But **it's just whitewash {Mat 23:27}**, dear friends. Come on now, admit it. I'm not trying to judge anyone in this room, I'm simply exploring with you **the verdict of the True Witness. {Rev 3:14-21}** This is His evaluation of the end-time church. We can't deny His verdict. The reason for it is because we have our mind's eye all together too frequently on the things of this world still, and we spend very little time fixing our mind's eye on Jesus. Of course, in beholding we are changed into the likeness of what we behold. I've got to tell it to you straight my friends, please don't resent me for talking so straight to you. And you notice I'm using the personal pronoun. I'm talking about us, "we."

We need revival as a people. {LDE 189.1} Amen? {Amen} So what have we got to do? We've got to turn our eyes away from worthless things and get them fixed on Jesus. We've got to "aphorao." We've got to "aphorao." That's our daily, hourly work - our daily, hourly work. What verb tense do you suppose "looking" is in the Greek? Come on, those of you who have been with me. That's the present active tense; and what does the present active tense mean? Ongoing, continuous action, whatever that is. Looking - this is in the present active tense in the Greek. It means we must be continually looking unto Jesus, not just occasionally. What? Continually. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} This is a radical spiritual discipline we're talking about. Most of us are totally unfamiliar with it. But it's what it's going to take if we're going to really gain two things. Follow this, two things:

1. consistent victory over temptation,
2. and continual growth into Christ-likeness of character.

We must "aphorao," turn our eyes away from everything else and get them fixed on Jesus, particularly the mind's eye, if we are going to gain consistent victory over temptation and experience continual growth into Christ-likeness of character. Now, let's work with both of those.

In our remaining time here, let's look at the necessity of doing this in order to gain consistent victory over temptation. Okay? **Testimonies, Volume 4, page 357: "Our chief danger is..."** Now, by the way, any sentence that starts out like that ought to cause you to sit up and really take note. What is our chief danger, dear friends? **"Our chief danger is in having the mind diverted from Christ."** That's our what? **Our chief danger. It's in having the mind's eye diverted from Christ.**

Now, if he were here this morning, who do you suppose would stand up in his big booming fisherman voice and say, "Amen, preach it brother"? Who? Peter. Peter, the apostle. Didn't he have a very tangible experience regarding **the chief danger of having the mind's eye diverted from Christ**? It's recorded in Scripture, and I used to wonder a long time why in the world it was recorded. I mean, it was kind of an exciting story, walking on water, wow, but I didn't understand the spiritual object lesson for a long time. But I do now. Do you? And by the way, why was Jesus Himself walking on water? Was He just showing off? "Hey, look what I can do. I'm God; I can walk on water." Is that what He was doing? No. Why was He walking on water? Because that's the only way He could have possibly gotten across? No. There were lots of other ways He could have gotten across. So why was He walking on water? My dear friends, please understand that to the Hebrew mind, water was the abyss, the domain and realm of the kingdom of darkness. The fact that Jesus could walk on water was a tangible example, an object lesson that by His power, we can walk above the kingdom of darkness, and we can keep from sinking into that pit. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} It's a profound spiritual object lesson. But Jesus wanted the disciples to know that not only He, as a man dependant upon the Father, could walk on water, but we as sinful men, dependant upon Him, can walk on water. Are you with me? That's why when Peter said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You," Jesus said what? "Come."

Listen. The story is recorded in **Matthew 14:25**. "Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying 'It is a ghost!' And they cried out for fear. But immediately," I like that, "...immediately," "Jesus spoke to them, saying 'Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.' And Peter answered to Him and said, 'Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.' So He said, 'Come.'" "Come." "And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus." So far, so good. What is he doing? He's "aphorao-ing." He's turning his eyes away from everything else and he's getting them fixed on Jesus. But then what happens? **Verse 30**, "But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, 'Lord, save me!' And immediately," there's our word again; I love it, "...immediately, Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, 'O you of little faith, why did you doubt?'"

My friends, please understand the profound spiritual object lesson here and learn from it; and apply it to your own personal experience, please. "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" Why did he doubt? He took his eyes off of Jesus. You see, "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our," what? "...faith;" {1 Jn 5:4} and how do we get faith? "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." {Heb 12:2} Amen? As we look to Him, He initiates our faith. As we keep looking to Him, He what? He matures, He develops, He strengthens, He perfects, He finishes it. But the moment we take our eyes off of Jesus, what happens? We begin to doubt; we lose faith; and when we lose faith, what happens? What happens, inevitably? The law of gravity takes over.

Now, please understand the spiritual equivalence here. Please understand the spiritual equivalence. The law of gravity is **our natural bent towards evil**. {Ed 29.1} Did you catch that? What is the law of gravity? It's **our natural bent towards evil**, our natural propensity to sink down into the cesspool of carnal thoughts and feelings. At least, if not words and actions. Are you following this? That is gravity. Now, my dear friends, the only way that you and I can overcome gravity, overcome that **natural bent towards evil**, is by keeping in constant communion with Him who alone has power to enable us to do it. {Amen} "Without Him we can do nothing." {Jn 15:5} But with Him we can walk on water. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} With Him, we can keep above that seething cesspool of carnal thoughts and feelings. You can do it even in the privacy of your mind, your thought life, but you can do it only if you keep your mind's eye what? Fixed on Jesus. The moment you break communion

with Jesus Christ, come on now, admit it... The moment you break communion with Jesus Christ, what happens? You sink... You sink!

And the devil knows this, that's why he is constantly trying to divert the mind's eye from Jesus Christ. He knows that nobody can walk on water. Nobody has the power within themselves to overcome gravity. They can only do so as they depend constantly on Jesus. So what is he constantly trying to do? Satan - what's he constantly trying to do? Break our connection with Jesus, you know that.

The moment Peter started looking at circumstances: the wind and the waves. By the way, inspiration tells us that **he looked over his shoulder to see whether the disciples were appreciating what he was doing.** {DA 381.5} A little pride involved there. By the way, my friends, **when we learn to walk on water, it's very, very easy to start taking personal credit, and get self-righteous and proud.** {BEcho, May 15, 1892 par. 5} Are you hearing what I'm telling you? Please know that every instant you're able to overcome gravity, it's only because of Him and not you. Do I hear an "amen"? You can take no credit for it. Don't be looking over your shoulder to see if anyone's appreciating what you're doing. It's only Jesus that makes it possible. Only Jesus that makes it possible.

Keep that constant communion and you will have continual access to divine power, and you can defy the law of gravity. You can defy your **natural bent towards evil.** Praise God! Amen? You can walk on water. You can. Believe Him. Look to Him. Trust Him, and in His power keep consistently from sinking down into that cesspool of carnal thoughts and feelings. By the way, if you for a moment take your eyes off of Jesus, and discover you're sinking, at least have the presence of mind that Peter did to cry out, **"Lord, save me!"** {Mat 14:30} Praise God, immediately you'll have a strong hand to pull you out of that cesspool.

But what have you done? Come on, what have you done? You've defiled yourself. You have defiled yourself. You have polluted your mind. But praise God, **"If we confess our sin, He's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to,"** what? **"...cleanse us from all unrighteousness."** {1 Jn 1:9} Praise God. But, my dear friends, let's **learn from our mistakes** {7T 244.4}, okay? Let's **learn from our mistakes.** Whenever we stumble and fall, because of want of watchfulness and prayer, let's sit down and ask God to help us **learn from the mistake, so that we can avoid doing it over again.** {ST, Feb 10, 1890 par. 7}

You know, whenever I do that, inevitably, do you know what the reason is that I have sunk? It's because for some reason or another, I took my mind's eye off of Jesus. I let something divert my mind's eye from Jesus. **Our chief danger is in having the mind diverted from Christ.** That's it. Please, my dear friends, recognize that if you are going to gain consistent victory then, you must discipline your mind's eye to be constantly on Jesus. Are you all with me on this? It's essential. It's essential. The moment you break communion with Jesus, gravity will take over and you will sink. You can't keep above the seething cesspool of your carnal thoughts and feelings without divine power any more than Peter could walk on the surface of the sea of Galilee without divine power. Direct parallel. Direct parallel. Please know that.

Review and Herald, July 11, 1907: "So long as you look to Christ." "So long as you," what? **"...look to Christ, you are safe; but the moment,"** the what? **"...the moment you trust in yourself, you are in great peril. He who is in harmony with God will continually depend upon Him for help."** Amen? {Amen} This is the secret, my dear friends, to continual, consistent victory. It's continual, total dependence upon Jesus Christ. That's the secret. Listen to the way David puts it in **Psalm 25:15, "My eyes are ever toward the LORD," "My eyes are,"** what? **"...ever toward the LORD," "for He shall pluck my feet out of the net."**

Signs of the Times, September 19, 1900: "We need," what, brothers, sisters? **"...constant communion with Jesus just as much as we need daily food to nourish the body. If there is a moment when we are in no danger of being deceived by the enemy, then for that moment we may dispense with divine aid."** But is there ever a moment when we are not in danger of being deceived by the enemy? Is there ever? No, there isn't.

And by the way, who is the enemy that we need to most fear that is always prepared to deceive us? Who is it? It's not Satan, it's self. **Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"** Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} Your worst enemy, the one you need to fear the most, is the one that resides within the camp. By the way, when you get victory over him, you get victory over his ally as well. {Hallelujah} That's why those of us who overcome the flesh with all of its lusts, its deceitful lusts as Paul tells us in **Romans 8:37**, are **"more than conquerors,"** because we not only conquer the flesh, we conquer the kingdom of darkness in the process. Praise God. Praise God.

Psalm 16:8, here's David's secret of victory. **"I have set the LORD always before me;" "I have set the LORD,"** how much of the time, my friends? **"...always."** Are you hearing a consistent, recurring theme here? We're talking about constant, continual communion with Jesus. **"I have set the LORD always before me. Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved."** Invincible to the attacks of sin, self and Satan; Why? Because **he sets the Lord always before him.** Do you want to be invincible? ... Come on, I need a little more response than that. Do you want to be invincible to the attacks of sin, self and Satan? {Yes} Then you too must learn to **set the Lord always before you.**

By the way, when did David get into trouble? When he took his eyes off of the Lord and **got them onto Bathsheba {2 Sam 11:2};** and how fast did he sink when he did that, folks? David was a **man after God's own heart. {1 Sam 13:14; PP 722.4}** He was a godly man. Please don't ever underestimate how fast and how deep you can sink if you take your eyes off Jesus.

This Day With God, page 232: "Take God with you in every place. The door is open for every son and daughter of God. The Lord is not far from the soul who seeks Him. The reason why..." Listen: **"The reason why so many are left to themselves in places of temptation is because they do NOT set the Lord ever before them. It is in the places where God is least thought of that you need to carry the lamp of life. If God be left out of sight, if our faith and our communion with God are broken, the soul is in positive danger. Integrity will not be maintained."** Did you hear that? Does she say, *"Integrity might not be maintained?"* No, she says, **"Integrity,"** what? **"...will not be maintained."** Why? Because gravity is going to pull you down the moment you break connection with the only source that can enable you to defy the law of gravity. You break communion with Jesus Christ and your bent towards evil WILL take over. **Integrity will not be maintained.** Please understand this. **"If God be left out of sight, if our faith and our communion with God are broken, ...integrity will not be maintained."** Got to drive that point home.

So what do we need to do, my dear friends, if we're going to gain consistent victory? We've got to draw near to God, and He will what? Draw near to you. Psalm 69:18. James 4:8 **"Draw near to God..."** I mean, **Psalm 69:18 is "Draw near to my soul, and redeem it; Deliver me because of my enemies." James 4:8, "Draw near to God and He will,"** what? **"...draw near to you."**

But how do we draw near to Him? How do we draw near to Him? By choosing not to resist the drawing power of His love. And by choosing to expose ourselves to the revelation of His love. Did you hear what we just said? That's very important. How do we draw near to God? By choosing not to resist the drawing power of His love, but rather choosing to behold the revelation of that love. **Jeremiah 31:3, "The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying 'Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with loving-kindness I have,"** what? **"...drawn you."** What is it that draws us to

God? It's His what? It's **His loving-kindness**. But we must choose to behold the revelation of that if it's going to have a drawing power on us. If you don't behold it, it can't draw you. Are you following me?

Where is the drawing power of God's loving-kindness ultimately revealed? In Christ and **Him crucified**. {1 Cor 2:2} Amen? This is why Jesus says in **John 12:32**, "**And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will,**" what? "**...will draw all peoples to Myself.**" Where is the **loving-kindness** most perfectly and fully revealed? It's in the **infinite sacrifice of God** {5T 515.1} to save us, which He made on the cross. As we behold that, that draws us; if we don't resist it, it will draw us. As we not only **behold the Lamb** {Jn 1:29.36}, but continually behold the Lamb, as we stay with our mind's eye riveted on Christ, we will be continually granted supernatural power to overcome. **Psalm 26:3**, "**For Your loving-kindness is before my eyes, and I have walked in Your truth.**" You keep your eyes on the loving-kindness of God as revealed in Christ and **Him crucified**, and you can walk on water. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} You can walk on water.

That I May Know Him, **That I May Know Him**, page 250: "**The soul that loves God loves to draw strength from Him by constant communion with Him. When it becomes the habit of the soul to converse with God, the power of the evil one is broken...**" Do I hear an "amen"? "**...for Satan cannot abide near the soul that draws nigh unto God. If Christ is your companion, you will not cherish vain and impure thoughts; you will not indulge in trifling words that will grieve Him who has come to be the sanctifier of your soul... Those who are sanctified through the truth are living recommendations of its power, and representatives of their risen Lord. The religion of Christ will refine the taste, sanctify the judgment, elevate, purify, and ennoble the soul, making the Christian more and more fit for the society of the heavenly angels**". Did you hear that last paragraph? Beholding Him constantly makes us what? Effective witnesses for the King and fit citizens for the Kingdom. My dear friends, **behold the Lamb** and you will gain victory. Let's pray.

Father God, thank You so much that we can walk on water if we will keep our mind's eye fixed on Jesus. In His name we praise You, amen. Thank you, my friends.