

15. What, No More Competition?

Did it ever seem strange to you that in God's plan we must recognize that only through godliness can we really have brotherly kindness? If we accept this Biblical principle, we are then face to face with a problem. Who is my brother? Jesus answers this in Luke 8:21, ". . . My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it." It is quite evident here that Jesus is not limiting "brethren" to those who perfectly obeyed the Word, but those who were *desiring* to obey. Matthew 12:49 tells us that as He spoke these words He was pointing to His disciples who were a long way from doing all that the Word had spoken. Competition was a continuous problem in each of them.

The spirit that promotes competitive thinking is the spirit of judging. The spirit of competition and of judging, from which it springs, are both of Satan and can only serve his purposes. Then, how can we truly be free from these hindering factors? Again, Jesus gives us the answer. His life was a perfect demonstration of how we are to live in relation to our brothers and sisters. In chapter three we referred to the quotation found in Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 71. We will quote it here again for it contains the answer to how Jesus' life was filled with brotherly kindness, even to those who treated Him with contempt.¹

"The Father's presence encircled Christ, and nothing befell Him but that which infinite love permitted for the blessing of the world. Here was His source of comfort, and it is for us. He who is imbued with the Spirit of Christ abides in Christ. The blow that is aimed at him falls upon the Saviour, who surrounds him with His presence. Whatever comes to him comes from Christ. He has no need to resist evil, for Christ is his defense. Nothing can touch him except by our

Lord's permission, and 'all things' that are permitted 'work together for good to them that love God.'" Romans 8:28."2

By Christ accepting everything that happened in His life as coming directly from the Father's hand, even though it originated with Satan, He had true peace. He was able to accept the worst abuse it was possible for any human being to experience, both mental and physical, yet treat with utmost kindness the human instrument through which it came. In fact, it was this that kept Him from seeing people as responsible for what they did to Him. He constantly looked beyond the human and saw Satan as the real enemy. This enabled Him to empathize with even His persecutors and treat them with brotherly kindness. He pitied *them* instead of *Himself*. He constantly tried to excuse His followers because of their ignorance. He knew that Satan was blinding them.

We are told that His source of comfort is also ours. Can you see what would happen in God's family if His brethren lived by the same policy He lived by as a human being here on earth? Brotherly kindness can come in no other way. We can not force ourselves to be kind and loving. It must be from inside— from the heart. Jesus' plan is the only way the heart can truly respond impartially for the eyes are then no longer focused upon men or their unkind acts.

The real test is found in the "all things" of Romans 8:28. We are quite ready to apply Christ's method in our lives to *some* things, but does it really mean *everything*? Yes, there are no exceptions. He is either Lord of all or not at all. God is so careful to protect us that He will turn every evil thrust Satan can hurl at us into a blessing if we accept the "all things" as a practical working principle in our lives.

"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.”³

Here is another very practical reason to believe, accept, and apply the Scriptures in daily living. If the “all things” includes both the good and the bad experiences of life, then Paul’s words in 1 Thessalonians 5:18 “In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” become very practical to us in our daily living. Jesus lived this way and if we are to be successful in our Christian life, we must follow His example. This does not mean that we must enjoy everything that happens to us, but we must give thanks to God—yes, even rejoice. Jesus did not enjoy the mistreatment of men acting as demons, but He knew that the world would be blessed thereby. We will not enjoy the “all things” that happen to us, but we can be thankful! We can thank Him for seeing something in us worth working upon. We are the material that, when polished, will be fit for His palace and every stone will have its place and be contented therewith. All competition will be gone forever, for the spirit of judging, pride and selfishness will be eradicated with their originator.

10/17/03

Notes

- 1 The Desire of Ages, p. 87.
- 2 Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 71.
- 3 Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 10.