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A Taste of the Classics
(volumes 1–4)

*Passionate Living:
Praises and Promises*

*Passionate Living:
Wisdom and Truth*

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SPECIAL MINISTRY UPDATE

Friends,

Did you notice our address change? Recent ministry growth and innovation have made it possible for us to increase our staffing beyond the Atlanta area. Reflections Ministries and Karen and I personally are still based in Atlanta, where ministry continues to multiply by the grace of God. I have four weekly studies and numerous individual and group discipling appointments in Atlanta, and I rejoice that the Lord's work has expanded beyond this home base.

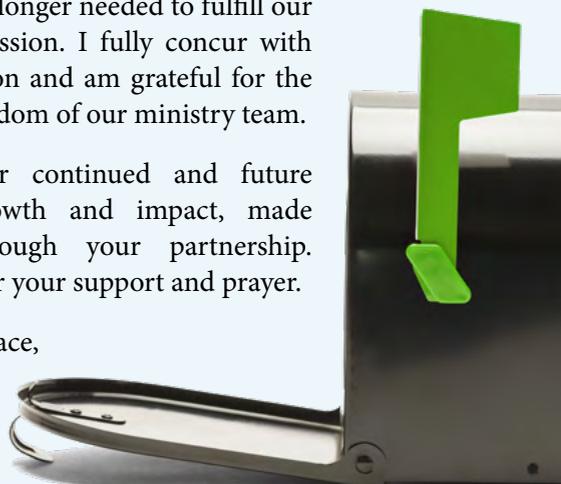
Your prayers and support—and the faithfulness of God—have created new staff positions spanning Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia. As a result, a dedicated team in North Carolina now processes our mail and resource distribution. That new address is **PO Box 780, Waxhaw, NC 28173**. We look forward to receiving your mail there (and you can still email us anytime at info@kenboa.org).

My hours in Atlanta consist primarily of study in my home office and ministering at various venues, from churches to coffee shops. Having considered these factors, the Reflections board and staff determined that the Atlanta office was no longer needed to fulfill our ministry's mission. I fully concur with this conclusion and am grateful for the collective wisdom of our ministry team.

We pray for continued and future ministry growth and impact, made possible through your partnership. Thank you for your support and prayer.

Grace and peace,

Ken



WITH GOD'S HELP

But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?" And He said, "Certainly I will be with you."

(Exodus 3:11–12)

There was a reason that Dwight L. Moody (1837–1899) led more people out of spiritual bondage into freedom in Christ than any other evangelist of his day; traveled more than a million miles in ministry; spoke to more than 100 million people; established schools for boys and girls, a Bible institute for the training of ministers, and publishing houses for the printing of evangelistic material. But the reason was not because of his background, training, or eloquence.

Dwight Moody was one of nine children under the age of 13 left fatherless by the death of an alcoholic father. He left home at age 17 with the equivalent of a fifth-grade education and journeyed to Boston, where he worked in a shoe store. He was denied church membership because of his spiritual illiteracy. Educating himself in the Bible, he advanced in business and began to preach. In 1873 a friend in England challenged him with what has become Moody's signature quotation: "The world has yet to see what God can do with a man fully consecrated to him." Moody's response: "By God's help, I aim to be that man." God's help was the reason behind the accomplishments of Dwight L. Moody.

Another man, born of even more humble means, discovered the same thing Moody did—but in a different way. Born a slave in Egypt, Moses grew up in poverty under the tyranny of Pharaoh until he escaped to the land of Midian. There, God called him to lead the rest of the Hebrews out of bondage into freedom. But Moses protested, saying he was not eloquent enough to speak God's words for Him.



"I made your mouth," God responded. "Therefore, I will help you to speak. I will teach you what to say when you need to say it" (Exodus 4:11–12). And God did exactly that.

Moses and Moody—both born in humble circumstances, both helped by God to accomplish great things for Him. None of us are born without need of God's help; it's just a matter of discovering where we need it most. Seeing the need for help, then God's willingness to give it, are the secrets to being used by Him.

GOD'S PROMISE:

*His help is for those who have
clearly seen their need.*

REFLECTIONS MINISTRIES

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JULY 2019



REFLECTIONS

*Reflections on God's
revealed truth*

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE GOSPEL

Dear Father, when I consider all the systems that humans have developed since time immemorial to find ways of controlling the events of this life and of meriting a better destiny in the next life, I marvel at the uniqueness of Christianity. In other religions, people are the ones who offer sacrifices and good works to their god or gods. In Your Word, You reveal that You are the one who made the sacrifice of Your Son for us. In other religions, people are portrayed as good enough to earn their way to the ultimate. In the Bible, You reveal that all have sinned and fallen short of Your glory. Jesus Christ is the only true Savior the world has ever known; and as the sinless Passover Lamb, He alone can take away the sins of the world. I take refuge in Him and though I have not yet seen Him, I love Him.

A teaching letter encouraging believers
to develop a clear mind and a warm heart



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A CHICKEN AND A PIG were walking down the road together. They passed a sign for a local diner advertising its breakfast special: “Ham and Eggs: \$2.95!” The chicken said, “That’s our whole contribution to society—breakfast food!” The pig replied, “For you, it may be a contribution. For me it’s a total commitment.”

Life in the modern world has programmed us to expect a life of ease. It’s not merely that we want everything to be easy (who wouldn’t want that?); what is troubling is that we now *expect* to receive abundant rewards with minimal effort. If something requires effort or time, we figure it’s not meant to be and feel thoroughly justified in giving up.

Worse yet are those who believe legitimate goals may be sought through illegitimate means, provided that those means offer a shortcut to the goal in mind. Take, for example, the professional athlete who chooses to illegally enhance his performance through the use of steroids. Not only has he cheapened himself, but he has robbed his fellow athletes of fair competition. He does this simply because he does not want to put in the time and effort necessary to better himself.

This is a dangerous road to travel. Common sense reveals that some of the best things in life demand effort and prove worthy of whatever amount of labor we endure in the pursuit. The best relationships require work. The best businesses have been built on the blood, sweat, and tears of their leaders. Even our spiritual growth is reflective of our faithful investment. G. K. Chesterton once quipped, “The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult and left untried.”¹

Of course, this is nothing new. Thousands of years ago, God asked, “Who is he who

will devote himself to be close to me?” (Jeremiah 30:21). We don’t want to hear it, but the fact is that following God involves sacrifice, effort, and devotion. We much prefer the spiritual growth plans that guarantee complete maturity in “15 minutes a day!”

Mark Oppenheimer has written of the proliferation of these mistaken ideas regarding what is truly involved in personal life change. These false notions can be found everywhere from books, jewelry, and bumper stickers to the awe-inspiring angelic visitations received in the lives of television characters. It all sounds good, but there’s rarely any kind of demand or call for commitment or life change involved. “Just Do It” doesn’t really mean, “Just run 100 miles every week like marathon runners do.” “Just Do It” means, “Just buy the shoes—swift feet sure to follow.”² As if you’ll become magically fit simply by purchasing the proper footwear.

Leaders know this is not so. Leaders know that such behavior used to have a name; it was called sloth. In “The Other Six Deadly Sins,” Dorothy Sayers said:

In the world it calls itself Tolerance; but in hell it is called Despair. It is the accomplice of the other sins and their worst punishment. It is the sin which believes in nothing, cares for nothing, seeks to know nothing, interferes with nothing, enjoys nothing, loves nothing, hates nothing, finds purpose in nothing, lives for nothing, and only remains alive because there is nothing it would die for. We have known it far too well for many years. The only thing perhaps that we have not known about it is that it is mortal sin.³

There is a great danger of succumbing to mediocrity not through incompetence or a

lack of integrity but simply from a lack of genuine commitment. To live without such commitment is to live in what Theodore Roosevelt called “the gray twilight that knows neither victory nor defeat.”

Effective leadership flows from being deeply committed to the right things. As followers of Christ, the single most important commitment of our lives is, obviously, to God. Any lasting success we experience will flow from that commitment.

LIVING SACRIFICES

The apostle Paul wrote of this total commitment in his letter to the Romans:

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:1–2)

The word “therefore” (12:1) points to all the apostle has written in the previous 11 chapters. In light of God’s mercy, which justifies, sanctifies, and will someday glorify us, we are to offer ourselves as living sacrifices to Him. In other words, we should allow God’s mercy to accomplish this additional work in our lives. We should let it drive us to absolute commitment. Those who have been taken captive by the love of God will affirm the lordship of Jesus Christ in their lives by heeding this call.

The word “offer” implies that this act, much like a wedding vow, occurs once. It may be renewed, but at some point we should be motivated by God’s mercy to

devote ourselves to Him. When we take this step, we’re acknowledging Christ’s leadership in our lives. We sacrifice our selfish desires and misguided ambitions as we strive to align ourselves with God’s will. Once this act of commitment occurs, our talents and dreams will be surrendered to His purpose. And the more we give ourselves to Him, the more He will bless and use us.

*No mere ceremony or ritual is enough.
God deserves the surrender
of every fiber of my being.*

The sequence is vitally important. In the Old Testament, there are two broad categories of sacrifice that one might offer to God under different circumstances. *Atonement sacrifices* were for the covering of sin with blood and the reconciliation of men with God or one another. These sacrifices were offered as a response to sin and guilt. On the other hand, the law of Moses also made provision for *celebration sacrifices*. When the crops were harvested, a child was born, or a great deliverance occurred, the people would come before God to offer gifts of thanksgiving and joy.

As Christians, we acknowledge one and only one atonement sacrifice: Jesus Himself. But we engage in perpetual sacrifices of celebration and thanksgiving to the God who has saved us. While we do offer God our talents, abilities, and money, the most fundamental sacrifice we give Him is our very bodies. This is no abstract or ethereal religion: our physical bodies are the instruments of all our actions in this world; therefore, it is our bodies themselves which must be yielded to God.

The word translated “spiritual” in Romans 12:1 is the Greek term *logikos*. The word fundamentally means “rational” or “reasonable.” In view of the mercy of God toward me, it is only rational or reasonable that I should give my heart, mind, and body to be shaped by His gracious control. In view of the personal relationship God has purchased and established with me, no mere ceremony or ritual is enough to offer Him; He deserves the intelligent and rational surrender of every fiber of my being to Him.

COMMITMENT, PART 1

BEING ALL IN

¹G.K. Chesterton, *The Collected Works of G. K. Chesterton*, ed. George Marlin (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1987), 4:61. ²Mark Oppenheimer, “Salvation Without Sacrifice,” *Charlotte Observer*, 30 October 2000, sec. 11A. ³Dorothy Sayers, “The Other Six Deadly Sins: An Address Given to the Public Morality Council at Caxton Hall, Westminster, October 23rd, 1941” (London: Methuen, 1943).