

## How To Keep A Clean Heart

**Samuel Logan Brengle:**

It is possible to lose the blessing of a clean heart, but, thank God, it is also gloriously possible to keep it. How to do this is a vital question. Two or three years ago, a brother, going to the foreign field, arose in one of my meetings and said, 'I got the blessing three times but lost it twice. The third time I got it the Lord taught me how to keep it through this text "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord so walk ye in Him"' (Col. ii. 6).

That is one of the simplest and completest statements of how to keep the blessing that can be given. The conditions of getting it are the conditions of keeping it.

I. To keep it, there must be continued joyful and perfect consecration. We have put all on the altar to get it. We must leave all on the altar to keep it. 'All the tithes' must be brought into God's house. We must present our bodies to Him as 'a living sacrifice,' recognizing ourselves as no longer our own, but His, by the purchase of His Blood, and ourselves as stewards only of all that is ours. Our health and strength, our time and talent, our money and influence, our body, mind, and spirit, all, all are His, to be used for His glory as fully as the fondest bride would use her all in the interest of her husband. And this consecration must keep pace with increasing light. The journey of life is not always through grassy lawns and flowery gardens, but often over burning, shifting, sandy deserts, rocky steeps, fetid swamps, and dark and tangled jungles, as the Lord leads the soul in ways it has not known. And at such times self-interest may cry out against the sacrifice. But if the consecration be perfect, and grounded in love, there will be no turning back, no plunging into seductive and easy by-paths, but a steady marching forward, if needs be to Gethsemane's lonely agony, Pilate's judgment hall of shame, and Golgotha's dark and awful hour. But, thank God, it will not be alone for He says, 'My presence shall go with thee.' (Exod. xxxiii. 14). Hallelujah!

II. To keep the blessing, there must be steadfast, childlike faith. It took faith unmixed with doubt to grasp the blessing. Unbelief was banished. Doubts were put away. The assurance of God's love in Jesus was heartily believed. His ability and willingness to save to the uttermost was fully accepted, and His word simply trusted when the blessing was received; and, of course, this same faith must be maintained in order to keep it. God cannot require less of the sanctified man to keep the blessing than He did of the unsanctified man to get it. Peter said, 'Who are kept by the power of God through faith' (I Pet. i. 5). Notice it is 'the power of God that keeps us, but it is faith that links us on to the power as the coupling links the railway carriage to the locomotive. Faith is the coupling. Paul said of himself, 'the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God' (Gal. ii. 20). And again he tells us that the Jews were cut off through unbelief, and that we stand by faith.

We may suffer prolonged trials, great perplexities, and fierce temptations -- they are a part of the discipline of life-but we must

Keep on believing, Jesus is near,

Keep on believing, there's nothing to fear:

Keep on believing, this is the way,

Faith in the night as well as the day.

III. To keep the blessing, we must pray to and commune much with the Lord. We pray when we talk to God and ask Him for things. We commune, with Him when we are still and listen and let God talk to us, and mold us, and show us His love and His will, and teach us in the way He would have us go. We should pray often and not be in too great a hurry, but 'take time to be holy' take time to 'taste and see that the Lord is good,' and to hear what He will say. And this we should do, if possible, in the morning, that we may be strengthened and nourished and gladdened for the day. Backsliding usually begins through neglected, or hurried, secret prayer.

Someone has said, 'Stay with God in prayer, stay till He melts you, and then stay when you are melted and plead with God, and He will answer, and you will get changed and transformed and renewed, and you will do execution.'

IV. To keep the blessing, we must give diligent attention to the Bible. The soul needs the food of truth, and Jesus said, 'Man shall not live, by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' (Matt. iv. 4) God commanded Joshua saying, 'This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night.' What for? 'That thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written

therein.' And what shall follow? 'For then thou shalt make thy way prosperous and then thou shalt have good success.' (Josh. i. 8). Then thou shalt keep the blessing.

David said of his blessed man, 'His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night.' (Ps. i. 2). And Paul tells us that the Scriptures are 'profitable for doctrine, for reproof for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works' (2 Tim. iii. 16-17). And Peter says, 'as new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby' (1 Pet. ii. 2). Some professors are smaller ten years after birth than when they were born, because they have not fed on God's word. Catherine Booth read the Bible through several times before she was twelve years old, and grew thereby, until it is not to be wondered at that she became a 'mother of nations.' I once gave a talk on the use of the Bible to my Soldiers, and some of them caught the inspiration, and carried their Bibles in their pockets after that and spent all the spare time they had in reading and praying, and we could fairly see them grow, until they became powers for God, and some of them are spiritual giants to this day.

V. To keep the blessing, we must confess it be aggressive, and seek to get others into it. 'For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation' (Rom. x. 10). The man who withholds his testimony to this grace will lose it. This light, hid under a bushel, will go out. God gives it to us that we may put it on a candle-stick and give light to all that are in the house, in the corps, in the community, in the nation. Don't limit the power of testimony by unbelief. A torch loses no light and heat by lighting a thousand other torches.

Touch a piece of steel with a magnet, and it in turn becomes a magnet. It can then be used to turn ten thousand other pieces into magnets with no loss, but rather with increase of power to itself. But hang it up in idleness, and it gradually loses its power. So with us, my comrades. Let the Holy Ghost touch us with cleansing power, and we become divine magnets, and in touching other souls we will quicken them and get added power and clearness of experience to ourselves. But let us withhold our testimony, and we lose our power and, like Samson, soon find ourselves 'as other men.'

Testify, testify, testify -- clearly, definitely, constantly, courageously, humbly -- if you would keep the blessing. When faith is weak and devils all around, definite testimony scatters the devils, strengthens faith and stirs up and brightens the inward witness. Testify to the Lord, tell Him you have the blessing and thank Him for it. Testify to your comrades. Testify to your own heart and to the devil. John tells us that the white-robed multitude in Heaven overcame by the Blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. So testify, if you would overcome and keep the blessing.

VI. To keep the blessing, we must constantly live in the spirit of self-denial. By yielding to fleshly desires, to selfish ambitions, to the spirit of the world, we may lose the labor of years in an instant. The hard hand of the old enemy is ever stretched forth to snatch from us our treasure. We must watch and pray, and keep low at Jesus' feet in profoundest humility, if we would keep it. It is all summed up in one word, 'walk in the spirit,' 'walk in love.'

Finally, there, must be no resting in present attainments. The Lord has clearer revelations of Himself for us. We may be filled to the limit of our capacity to-day, but we should ever pray, 'Oh, Lord, enlarge the vessel,' and this we should expect. Like Paul, 'forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,' we should 'press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,' (Phil. iii. 13-14), ever remembering that He 'is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think' (Eph. iii. 20). Not according to some mysterious power to which we are strangers, but 'according to the power that worketh in us,' the power of the Holy Ghost that converted us and made us His 'dear children.' Hallelujah!