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LIFE AS AN ADVENTURE

Mayan Revelation Number 254

Breaking The Chains of Childhood

The Higher Levels of Personality

**Fixations That Hamper The
Adventurous Spirit**

**Developing an Expansive
Personality**

Affirmation

Beloved Perfector:

Alfred Lord Tennyson wrote words in his poem, "Ulysses", which are a chart for life in the space age.

"Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and setting well in order, smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset . . . til I die.
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield!"

We live in a period of breathtaking adventure. In earlier centuries the words "discoverer" or "pioneer" were coined to describe those who pushed out beyond their then known world. In our generation the word "astronaut" is used to designate one who adventures into space.

You, too, were made to venture out into new paths, and to achieve new victories in the mind and spirit. The Apostle Paul gave us a slogan and a challenge when he said: "I count not myself to have attained, I press on." He was speaking, not of adventuring geographically, but of moving forward in the mental and spiritual world. He recognized that there was more ahead of him than there was behind him.

It is characteristic of those who possess personal power that they never assume they have completely gained their objectives, but they press on forever - learning, growing, and achieving. Life for them is an adventure which never ends, even when they come to the conclusion of existence here on earth. They press on with confident hope that the eternal life has new and greater expectations than any they have yet realized.

In this lesson we will examine the qualities which make for an adventure-some life. We will look at some of the forces which work within us to stifle the spirit of adventure. You will discover that it is not necessary to enter a space craft, and be hurled into orbit, in order to share the spirit of adventure. However limited you are physically in opportunity, you can press on to new heights of spiritual victory if you are willing to venture forth.

Approach this lesson with the expectant assurance that it is intended for you. You will shut off the flow of personal power if you assume the negative attitude that the days of adventure in your life are over. Be honest in facing your weaknesses. Determine that you will venture out in ways which may seem foreboding if those paths offer opportunity for growth in personal power and happiness. Life can be a thrilling experience. It isn't too late for you "to seek a newer world."

And now, before proceeding with the lesson, which we have called LIFE AS AN ADVENTURE, let us first repeat the following prayer.

PRAYER

Gracious God, create within us a spirit of adventure as we face life this day. Save us from boredom. Keep us from the temptation to be satisfied with what we are. Stir us with a desire to become what Thou wouldst have us be. Help us "to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

In Jesus' name. Amen.

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BREAKING THE CHAINS OF CHILDHOOD

OUR childhood years were golden years. They were a period of new discoveries, of physical and mental growth. But they were also years of security. Our physical needs were provided. We were protected from harm. Our lives were controlled and sheltered. When danger threatened we ran to the enfolding arms of father or mother, certain that no harm could come to us. Thus we were safe and secure.

If our development was normal and natural we ventured out with hesitant, but positive, courage to face the world around us. We felt insecurity when we tried to take our place socially in a group of boys and girls, but we made the adjustment. We sometimes faced tension, or even conflict, but we resisted the temptation to rush back to mother's arms rather than confront that which was difficult. All this was part of the process of growth and development.

Yet few of us entirely escape the chains of childhood. We are constantly tempted to return to a place of security in which someone else will make the decisions, and we will not be forced to face new situations.

The spirit of adventure is most frequently stifled and hampered by the

tendency to return to the state which is natural and normal in childhood. While it is acceptable for children it becomes a sign of weakness when it is evident in years of maturity. All of us have to struggle to break the chains of childhood which make us fear the unknown, and which tempt us to remain satisfied with what we now are.

In the terms of modern psychology the return to childhood security is called "reversion." By looking at an abnormal individual we may better understand how the process tends to work in normal lives. Dr. Harry A. Overstreet tells of an Australian soldier who was sent to a hospital with complete loss of speech, due to shell shock. He was improving rapidly when the hospital area was subjected to an air raid. None of the bombs dropped close to the hospital itself, but when it was over the young Australian had become a child again. He could not speak, or write, or walk; he could not feed himself. He played with blocks. Dr. Overstreet calls this "reversion to the infantile."

In other words, instead of going forward in a spirit of adventure, this young man went back as far and as fast as he could go. He gladly accepted the chains of childhood because they offered freedom from choice and promised security in the midst of an unpleasant world.

This is an extreme case, but if we examine our own experiences we find the continued temptation to revert to childhood ways. We put off disagreeable decisions. We avoid difficult situations. We dodge issues which may be controversial. We symbolically run to mother for shelter.

I think of a woman of forty-five who refuses to make choices. She wants everything decided for her. Her mother is deceased so she cannot return to her. Instead she pesters her friends constantly with questions about what she ought to do. She has made her husband into a father-image, and helplessly leans on him for every decision. She asks him whether she ought to get an appointment at the beauty parlor, or whether she should attend a "Tea" in a friend's home. She does not realize it, but she has lost all spirit of adventure in her life because she is held fast by the chains of childhood.

The man who hates to get up in the morning, dallies over the newspaper to avoid facing his obligations, who postpones as long as possible going to work - that man is reverting to childhood rather than adventuring on.

Tantrums, brooding to show displeasure or to attract attention, pouting, whining - these are all self-indulgent characteristics which suggest that the individual is going back to childish ways.

Boasting is a common indication that the chains of childhood have imprisoned a personality. Children boast about the size of their house, or the speed of their father's automobile. I heard two small boys arguing violently about which one's father had the larger feet. This is natural. It is a part of childhood. But when in maturity one substitutes boasting for achievement he loses all sense of life as an adventure. He becomes a child again.

We have numerous baby rattles in our American life. A current dance craze makes adults appear like four-year olds who are having a temper tantrum. Our humor is often childish. You have seen a child laugh gleefully when he smashes a pile of blocks which have been built into a tower for him. He finds pleasure in

punching something and hearing it squeak, in hitting someone over the head, or in tripping someone. Much of our humor is a reversion to childhood. Or consider the way a child will gorge himself or drink endlessly unless controlled by his parents. Many adults act like children when it comes to food and drink. They do not realize it, but they have reverted to childhood.

The late Sinclair Lewis drew an unforgettable picture of a law school graduate who returned to his home town to begin his practice of law. At first he was filled with ideals. Then, after a year, he would arrive at his office unshaved. Another year, he would not care whether his linen was clean or dirty. In three or four years he had slumped and slouched. He no longer walked erect. His eyes became shifty. He had started as a lawyer with ideals, but he ended with deals.

Lewis' book exaggerates purposely the leading character, but it allows us to see the slow disintegration of the spirit of adventure which had once inspired his life. It told of a reversion to childhood.

You will often feel the pull of these chains. All of us have that experience. You will long for the comfort and security of your early years, particularly when the problems facing you seem insurmountable. Resist the urge as you would a plague. Every surrender which you make will reduce the urge to adventure. Leave the childhood type of security far behind you. You broke the chains when you went to school, and when you learned the joys of mental and physical growth. Keep going onward. Life has more for you of victory than perhaps you realize. Press on.

THE HIGHER LEVELS OF PERSONALITY

Your life, if it is lived correctly, is an evolution. It involves a continuous process of rising from level to level. Whenever you cease pressing on, you go back.

A recent book points to the fact that many of the greatest achievements in literature and music were made by men and women in their twenties or early thirties. The author points to Shelley, Keats, Byron, and Brooke. But the author pushes his argument too far. He forgets that Edison made his greatest discoveries after he passed fifty-five. He neglected to consider Churchill, Eisenhower, MacArthur, Einstein, Beethoven and a host of others - all these made their greatest contribution to humanity after they were sixty years old.

We recognize that the twenties are a period of remarkable creativity. But the creative urge need not end there. If we keep alive the spirit of adventure we can keep on throughout life, rising continually to higher levels.

We go from kindergarten to grammar school, to high school, college, and university, then out into the university of life. In our affections we go from puppy love to romantic love, to parental love of children and home, to love of idealism, and to love of God. The highest stage of love is spiritual love centered both on those who are near and dear to us, and upon God. When we fail to reach this level of love, we regress, we go back.

An incident is told by Roy L. Smith about a day when he was climbing in

the Colorado Rockies. He came to a certain level, and turned around to see before him a breath-taking panorama of beauty. It was the most inspiring sight he had ever looked upon. He remained there for several minutes, drinking in the beauty, while his friend went on ahead. He did not want to leave the spot, but his friend kept calling, "Come up higher! Come up higher!" Finally, and reluctantly, Dr. Smith scrambled to his feet and, stumbling over boulders, caught up with his friend who was now standing on the summit. Then he faced a view which was so far superior in scope and wonder that there was no comparison. If he had not heeded the urgent call of his friend to "Come up higher!" he would have missed the majestic view which was spread before him.

This is the challenge of life on its higher level. We feel the urge to adventure on the nobler paths of spiritual truth and power. If we resist the urge we miss the glory of life at its best. If we adventure out we find beauty and power beyond all which we have dreamed.

Perhaps you are not satisfied with the level upon which you now are living. It may be comfortable; it may have rich rewards to offer you. But there is more ahead. Push out into the unseen. If your heart is adventurous you may find greater joy than you had ever dreamed was possible.

FIXATIONS THAT HAMPER THE ADVENTUROUS SPIRIT

Every student of mental processes is acquainted with the term "fixations" as descriptive of the attitudes which keep many of us from spiritual and mental growth. Laziness, fear, hate, jealousy, and pettiness all tend to keep individuals from reaching the intended goals for their lives. But, in addition to these, we need to examine certain fixations which may be the decisive influence in destroying an adventurous spirit.

The Mother Fixation:

You will be acquainted with individuals who have a "mother fixation." There are men who have been deprived of the happiness of marriage and children because they never gain release from the hold of their mothers. Even when mother is no longer with them they are controlled by the unconscious conviction that loyalty demands that they never look with deep affection upon another woman. Even more disastrous is the wife who runs to her mother whenever the least strain occurs in her marriage, or who insists that mother accompany them whenever she and her husband are going on a journey.

Victims of a mother-fixation or a father-fixation can never adventure out with expectancy that the future promises glorious rewards. They are held back, not by a worthy honor or respect for their parents, but by a relentless force which keeps them from growing.

When a boy or girl marries, he or she ought to be able and willing to cut loose from the past, as is the universal way, and go on to the next level of life and love. Not that the lessons of home are forgotten; not that affection for parents grows less. Rather it is that he or she discovers new joys which are

encouraged rather than controlled by the experiences of early years.

The Social Fixation:

Then there are social fixations. We tend to develop a snobbery about the type of people whom we think deserving of our friendship, or whom we feel would be interested in us as persons. It is wholesome to have a small circle of friends with whom we feel completely at home, but it is a tragedy when we shut out the possibilities of fellowship with people of different backgrounds.

Recently, in separate weeks, I had the privilege of being with people of low economic standards in the slum area of a great metropolitan city, then with farmers in the most rural section of an agricultural state. My horizons were lifted by each of the experiences. I found much to admire. I sensed the longing for something finer and better in both social groups. I grew in mind and spirit by the contacts.

Grow every day in your social relationships. Make room for new friends by demonstrating your interest in people. You will not only find in them much to stir your admiration, but you yourself will expand in outlook and personality by the associations.

The Religious Fixation:

No tragedy is more serious than the deadening weight of a "religious fixation." There are levels in religion as in every other phase of life. We must keep growing in faith and understanding. As Paul said, "I count not myself to have attained. I press on."

Some religious groups have the fixation that they are the only people who know the truth. Do not blame them, pity them. There are those whose fixation is centered on a few verses in the Bible. They quote these passages over and over, ignoring the remainder of the Bible as if it had never been written. There are fixations about the necessity of certain types of religious experience, or about certain modes of worship.

There are levels to be reached in religion. Faith involves growth. We may start with a great spiritual upheaval, as did Paul, or we may slowly develop certainties concerning our relationships with God. In every case we become dwarfed if we do not "press on." We are privileged to grow in faith and power.

Consider whether your spirit of adventure has been stifled by a fixation of some kind. Face it honestly. You will never move out to the broad expanse of spiritual assurance until you consciously face this blockage on your path and move it out of the way. New adventures of the mind and spirit await your willingness to overcome the fixations which have hampered your development.

Consider whether your spirit of adventure has been satisfied by a fixation of some kind. Face it honestly. You will never move out to the broad expanse of spiritual assurance until you consciously face this blockage on your path and move it out of the way. New adventures of the mind and spirit await your willingness to overcome the fixations which have hampered your development.

DEVELOPING AN EXPANSIVE PERSONALITY

Personality can broadly be divided into two types -- the contractive and the expansive.

The contractive is usually a timid person. He tends to distrust the motives of those about him; he is full of hate of those who disagree with him. He tends to be easily discouraged, is often melancholy. He is frequently a jealous person, sulky, morose, and bored. He usually adopts an attitude of false superiority. We meet him almost every day. He doesn't desire or want adventure. He insists that life remain exactly as it now is. He opposes violently any proposed changes, and imputes unworthy motives to those who are more adventuresome than he is.

The expansionist is a generous person. He sympathizes and suffers with those who are in trouble. He is the appreciative person, the expectant person. He is often mistaken, but he looks with hope upon his world. He seeks for new facts and experiences. He is certain that tomorrow can be better than today. From this group come the poets, the scientists, and the prophets.

We want to be counted with the expansionists because that is the way of growth. It involves a life of adventure. It leads us from level to level of mental and spiritual development.

- * Education is expansion.
- * Love makes for expansion.
- * Reading good books makes for expansion.
- * Listening to good music makes for expansion.
- * Serving those in need makes for expansion.
- * Learning more about God, and growing in understanding his purposes in the universe, makes for expansion.

Determine that you will grow every day that you live. Don't be satisfied with what you have already attained. Look for more and more of that which makes for the abundant life. If you will give room for the spirit of adventure which clamors for expression you will not only grow, but you will discover a happiness which you may never have known before in your life.

AFFIRMATION

I was made for a life of joyous adventure. I will strike off the chains of childhood which hold back my development. I will climb daily to higher levels of life. I will face the fixations which may be hampering my growth. I will begin today the adventurous life.

Blessings,