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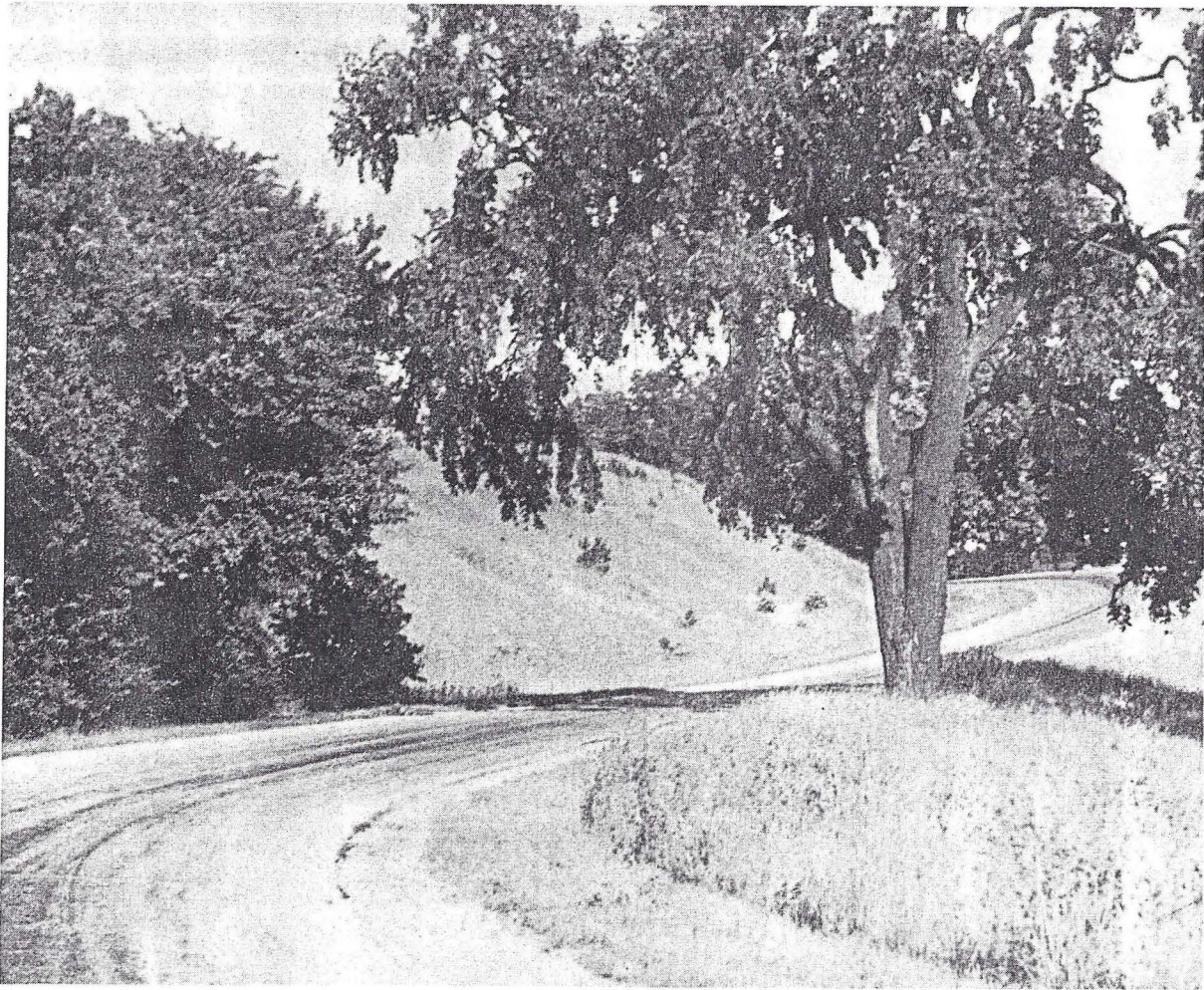
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The Road to Attainment Series

LESSON FIVE

THE ROAD TO INNER PEACE

Mayan Revelation Number 297

THE FUTILITY OF WORRY

THE MASTER KEYS TO PEACE
(Love, Sacrifice, Trust)

THE DANGERS OF WORRY

CONCLUSION

THE WAY TO INNER PEACE

AFFIRMATION

BELOVED PERFECTOR:

Within the circle of your acquaintance there are certain people who never know what it means to possess inner peace. They are often anxious about the future, especially about conditions over which they have as little control as they have over the weather. They talk pathetically about their burdens, many of which are of their own making. They never cease worrying themselves, and those about them. They are frightened of what may happen. Trouble is sure to be around the corner. Tomorrow it is certainly going to rain. If you suggest that they have more faith, and a full measure of patience, you can expect the old and feeble excuse that they can't change, for God has made them as they are. They never accept the Divine forces that could bring them inner peace.

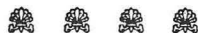
You know such people; but the question you must face is this: Am I that kind of person? Do you burden others continually with your fears, your illnesses, your disappointments? Do you resign yourself to the idea that you cannot become a triumphant person - free from worry, and walking daily with a sense of inner peace?

If you are at times that kind of person, this Lesson will offer suggestions by which you can be changed. Inner peace is a divine gift, available to all who will practice the principles by which God gives of Himself to his children. The measure of the peace you can know is not dependent upon the weight of the burden that you bear. The Bible and human history redound with the lives of those who were radiant with a sense of divine trust while facing obstacles and bearing burdens far heavier than we are called upon to bear.

This study will point up some of the reasons why we worry, and will indicate the way to triumph. The road may seem difficult, but it is clearly marked for us. If we walk this road with expectant hearts we will find inner peace at the end.

PRAYER

Gracious God, Thou art the source of all life. Give us grace to trust Thee more, and wisdom to accept the gifts that assure us of strength for every need. May our lives reflect an inner peace. Help us to claim a full portion of Thy love this day. Thus may we walk in quiet confidence as long as we live. In Jesus' name. Amen.



THE FUTILITY OF WORRY

THE habit of worry is both fatal and futile. It is fatal because it robs us of the happiness and contentment we might have known; it is futile because it accomplishes nothing except the undermining of our mental and physical health.

You fail to accomplish anything through worry. "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?" Ordinary intelligence should enable us to recognize the futility of worrying over matters that are beyond our ability to change or to help.

We should never attempt to bear more than one kind of trouble at once. Some people bear three kinds: All they have had, all they have now, and all they expect to have.

All the grieving in the world cannot change the things that are past. The sighs and moans and tears and regrets of all mankind cannot change one iota of what has taken place in the irrevocable past. Face this fact honestly and you will be relieved of endless worry. We are to take the energy and concern that are misdirected toward an unchangeable past and direct them toward making a better present and a still better future. Always remember that there is no resurrection for the buried past. The lament is voiced in the familiar lines:

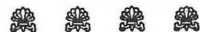
"For of all the sad words of tongue and pen,
The saddest are these: 'It might have been!'"

You are privileged to learn valuable lessons from the past, but misery and heart-ache and inner turmoil are the inevitable result of worry over that which is now buried in the yesterdays.

Inner peace is sacrificed if we worry about the present. We will consider in detail the means by which we can conquer the besetting worries of the here and now, but it is sufficient at this point to remind ourselves that it is futile to worry about either yesterday's mistakes or tomorrow's trials.

To fret about the future is equally as useless as to worry about the past. Immortal words spoken by Jesus were directed against this form of anxiety: "Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Our duty is to deal with the future as it becomes the present. When we try to anticipate the future, we are prone to magnify its pitfalls far out of proportion.

Life is difficult enough without burdening the present with regrets over the past, and anxieties concerning the future. Whatever difficulties beset you, you can hold out a little longer with God's power to aid you. You never know what is around the corner. Many times you appear to be approaching a blind alley, but if you persevere it opens into a broad avenue. When you courageously go forward you discover that you are walking the Road to Inner Peace.



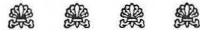
THE DANGERS OF WORRY

WORRY is a constant threat to both health and happiness. The physical effects on the body can hardly be exaggerated. Dr. W. C. Alvarez of the Mayo Clinic said: "Ulcers frequently flare up or subside according to the hills

and valleys of emotional stress." He tells of a patient in the fur business whose ulcer always became more serious about November 1st when the women in town rushed to his office to get their fur coats out of storage. He always worries about whether they receive the right coats, and if the coats have been damaged. A study of Wall Street revealed that attacks of diabetes multiply when stocks go down. Worry over trouble, offenses, or criticisms results in nervousness and physical illness. Inner peace is impossible in such an atmosphere.

Worry is a threat to faith. You need faith and trust in God if you are to lead a full life, but worry is the arch enemy of faith. You cannot have faith if you worry. These two opposite forces cannot exist in the same mind. They are irreconcilable.

The vitality of your faith, then, is dependent upon your willingness to banish worry from your mind. God will become, and remain, a stranger unless this unrelenting force is wiped out of your conscious thoughts.



THE WAY TO INNER PEACE

THE quest for inner peace is universal and age-long. It has gripped the interest of the founders of the world's religions in every age. It has been an obsession of people of every occupation and social position. In a book titled, "Legends of Northern India", which dates back to the Middle Ages, the universal quest for inner peace is pictured in dramatic form.

"And where for, friend?" asked the farmer heartily. The old man sighed as he answered: 'On my way to a town by the name of Quietude.' The farmer shook his head: 'There be none of that name 'bout here.'"

Many times we despair of ever finding a place or a time where genuine peace can be known. We are almost willing to conclude in our moments of depression that there is no such place this side of Heaven. At a time when civil war took countless lives in England, the poet Henry Vaughan wrote in weariness and despair about the hopelessness of the current situation:

"My soul, there is a country
Afar above the stars,
Where stands a winged sentry
All skillful in the wars.
There, above noise and danger,
Sweet Peace sits crowned with stars."

There are moments when you will cling to the assurance of the peace which Heaven promises to you and to those you love. But peace need not wait for eternity to make it real. The promise of our faith is that you can have peace here and now.

If you will pause to look deep enough into the thoughts of God you will

discover that one of the purposes behind the giving of this beautiful world is that, through it, you and I will experience a rich tranquility of spirit. If you are troubled by a thousand discomforts and anxieties, which together contribute to make an unbearable load, then walk, in imagination, to some vantage point. It may be a garden, or a spot where one can see the majesty of the inflowing waves, or of mountain heights. The sun is setting amid radiant colors. The trees are hushed. The birds are silent before the approaching nightfall.

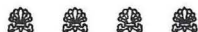
In such a moment the anxieties are gone. The gnawing jealousies are forgotten. The bitterness is wiped away. Burdens are lifted, and fears are dispelled. The calm of God's presence descends upon you, and you are in His care. His peace surrounds you.

This experience need not be reserved for moments when you can drink in the beauties of garden, ocean or mountains at a sunset hour. Through the use of imagination they can be made real in office or kitchen, at noonday, or in the dark hours of the night. Peace is a gift of God, but He gives it from within our minds and hearts. The beauty of the world outside contributes to the inner calm, but beauty has no value except as it is appreciated and grasped by the responsive mind.

If you are troubled by circumstances beyond your control, and if anxieties contribute to inner tension, exercise your imagination. Take time to create within your mind a different world. Think about the love of God. Consider the beauty of His creation. Let your mind rest in the assurance of His endless care.

Never forget that peace is the result of something that happens within you. You can be in a setting of unsurpassed beauty, yet have no feeling of peace. One day I stood gazing with wonder at the faces of our great presidents carved in the rock of Mt. Rushmore. It gave me a feeling of awe. My temporary discomforts were dwarfed by the presence of something vast and beautiful. I was silent, and at peace. Suddenly my reveries were disturbed by the raucous voice of a tour guide. Gathered about him were thirty or forty men and women. "Let's go!" he shouted, "We've got to get through Yellowstone Park before nightfall." The tourists rushed aboard the bus, and were soon on their way in a cloud of dust.

You can be in the presence of beauty, and feel no sense of peace. Conversely, you can live amid ugliness and hardship, yet possess an inner radiance. Peace comes with your glad and appreciative acceptance of the miracle of divine grace - grace that provides sufficient strength for every need, and adequate power for every worry.



THE MASTER KEYS TO PEACE

A continuous awareness of God's providential care for all our needs, as expressed in His works of creation, is indeed a way to inner calm and tranquility. But Jesus of Nazareth offers us more than this. He promised peace to

those who carry on his work and ministry. He said to his closest followers: "Peace I leave with you, my peace give I unto you." His peace meant much more than mere stillness, or freedom from strain and stress. He linked the possession of his peace with the acceptance of certain obligations and the assuming of certain attitudes. Let us look at them:

LOVE Jesus made love the companion of peace. As we practice the art of loving even the unlovable we remove our resentments and make room for peace. The Master had only three years of public ministry before His life was ended on the Cross. During those years His words and acts were a symphony of love. No one can separate His willingness to love from the peace which continually surrounded Him. His last message to His disciples is filled with the plea to love. He knew that without love they would be buffeted and defeated by what lay ahead.

When we love, or even when we observe love in another, we are calmed and quieted. Two English explorers discovered an Egyptian tomb a few years ago. Several weeks before they had sensed that an important discovery might be in the offing. They dug frantically. At night they were sleepless. They were irritable and anxious as the digging proceeded. Finally the moment came when they reached the iron gate which had been shut for three thousand years. They fought each other for the right to be first in the tomb. Inside they found an exquisitely carved sarcophagus of a small child, and over it an inscription. And this is what was written:

"O my life, my love, my little one,
would God I had died for thee."

All the heat and the weariness, the anxiety and the worries were forgotten by the explorers in the moment of discovery. The genuineness and the poignancy of the love enshrined there brought remembrances of values which had been forgotten. A peace came over them - a peace that was inspired by sacrificial love.

If you want to experience inner peace you must learn what it means to love. A life centered in self can seldom know peace. Look around you at the plight of others. Be alert to the anxieties and fears of those in your circle of friends, or in the larger company of your brothers and sisters of the community. As you show loving concern you will know peace within.

The late Bess Streeter Aldrich described love as "A Lantern in Her Hand." She told of a vivacious child who asked her grandmother what love really is. Abbey Deal had lived a full life. She had pioneered in building a home out of the wilderness. This is how she described love to young Katie:

"Love is something you can't define and you can't describe, but it is something which ought to go with you all your life. It is sort of like a lamp which goes with you wherever you go. First, childish happiness lights it, and then romance, and after that motherhood, followed by duty, and then sorrow. You wouldn't think sorrow could be a light, would you? But it can be. And, lastly, service lights it. Yes, I think that is what love is to a woman. It is a lantern in her hand."

Love illumines the dark places. It drives out fear and anxiety by filling our thoughts so full of that which is eternal that there is no room for the dark

shadows to enter.

Love is a gift of God. It is part of His master plan by which you can live every day, with joy and peace as your companions. He revealed this truth to you most fully in the One who walked the Galilean road so many years ago. In his life and teachings we learn that love is the essential ingredient of peace.

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SACRIFICE Jesus made sacrifice the companion of peace. He pleaded for the complete devotion of his followers. At one point in his ministry He said: "My meat is to do the will of my Father." The radiant calm that flowed from him day by day was a product of the willing sacrifice of his comforts and strength to help others. This was his "meat" and it was a source of his peace.

This principle is difficult to understand and more difficult to accept. It is at variance with most of the rules of our society. We prefer to believe that our pleasure and comfort is increased by the addition of gadgets and machines that make for leisure. Yet, it should be clear to us that the multiplication of devices and machines has not reduced the tensions in our society, nor the frustrations that we have.

The answer to the problems we face does not require us to toss aside our labor saving machines. It does demand, however, that we accept the fact that our peace is not dependent upon what we possess, but upon what we share. It is in giving that we receive. It is in sharing that we find our greatest joy and peace.

A failure to live in accordance with this principle may be the explanation of the worries that continually beset you. The wisdom of Jesus has been demonstrated by faithful men and women in every generation. Think of others and their needs. Give of yourself and your means with sacrificial devotion. In such moments you may be closer to inner peace than you think.

Victor Hugo pictured a scene that occurred during the French Revolution. The fields are devastated by the armies. Sickness and hunger are rampant. Not a garden has been left growing; everything has been ravaged down to the roots of the grasses. A French Captain and a common soldier are walking across a field when they see a stirring in a clump of blackberry bushes. The Captain orders the soldier to see what is hiding there. He walks to the spot and carefully thrusts his bayonet among the bushes, ordering whoever is there to come out. A mother and her two children step into view. They are evidently starving, having lived for days on roots and grass. The soldier leads the mother and children to the Captain. Feeling pity because of their pitiable condition, the Captain takes a small loaf of black bread from his knapsack and hands it to the mother. The mother grabs it, breaks it into two pieces, and hands one piece to each child. The soldier says to the Captain, "Sir, it must be that the woman is not hungry." The Captain, wiser in his understanding of love, responds: "No, soldier, it is because she is a mother."

The "mother-spirit" becomes completely Christian when we look upon every needy person as our child, or as our brother and sister. We are responsive to another's pain wherever it occurs, and whoever it happens to be. Jesus of Nazareth

not only challenged his followers to accept these obligations, but He assured them that the realization of the inner peace they craved would depend upon their devotion. You can have this peace. But to possess it places an obligation upon you that you be willing to sacrifice what you have, in abundance, that others may be encouraged and helped.

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TRUST Jesus made trust the companion of peace. He promised peace to those who were willing to place their trust in him. You may have financial troubles. You may be handicapped by poor health. You may be anxious about your children's future. Whatever your anxiety, listen to the assurance: "Here, brother; here sister; here is what you want. Put your trust in the Way of the Master and you shall have peace."

Are you at rest? Then you can say with all who have trusted: "Yes, I feel a peace which passes understanding."

A recent book about hurricanes presents an interesting picture. The author tells us that a tornado or hurricane may blow violently. It may destroy property with relentless force. Yet in the heart of the hurricane there is a place of calm. He tells of a bird from a tropical island which flew for hundreds of miles in the center of the hurricane, not a feather ruffled. The peace of Jesus has the same strange power. We can know peace even in the midst of the most violent troubles.

An American visitor in Northern India tells of an evening when he was hiking through a mountain pass, high in the Himalayas. Far above him he noticed a huge eagle caught in the currents of a terrific wind in a deep valley between two steep cliffs. He watched for half an hour. Every moment it appeared as if the eagle would be crushed to death against the cliff. But each time he would spread his huge wings and ride the currents of air out of danger, each time rising higher and higher until at last, with one tremendous spread of his wings, he swept to victory over the topmost peak. Yes, storms do come to every life. They threaten and baffle us; they bewilder and terrify us. But you have power available for your use every day. It is God-given. It enables you to ride out every storm until, at last, you find release.

The mystic Columba of Iona described the peace of Jesus in these words: "It is a joyous quiet which a man feels upon a rock." We understand his picture better when we remember the geographical position of Iona in Scotland. It juts out into the ocean, far above the raging waves and winds.

Trust in the Almighty offers to you and to me a place of security when buffeted by tempests. It provides a rock that stands firm, whatever may be the outward circumstances that surround us.

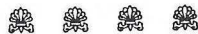


CONCLUSION

LIFE is not easy for many of us. Often we look with envy toward someone whose condition seems to offer few hardships. Our evaluation is frequently false. Most people are burdened by worries and anxieties. You may not know about another's concern for the welfare of his children, growing uncertainty about his job, impending illness, or separation from a loved one. Worry is widespread.

Many in the circle of your friends or acquaintances have not learned the secrets of inner peace. But you need not copy their faulty thinking. You can possess strength for every need.

The Road to Inner Peace is not difficult to plot. It involves a willingness on your part to recognize the fact that worries do knock on the door of every life. If you open the door wide, they will enter and take over your thoughts and your actions; your present and your future. Recognize them for what they are, and then accept the faith that is the key to inner peace. As you walk the pathway, clearly marked by the life and teachings of Jesus, you will wonder how you could have allowed worry to have such a large place in your mind. Through faith you will be triumphant.

AFFIRMATION

I will trust God this day to support me in every weakness, and to give me the strength to surmount worry, and to find inner peace.

Blessings,

Your Instructor.