Dear Readers,

This is our sixth issue of encouragement email passages and activities for our RE Teachers. We hope to encourage all RE Teachers to consider the example set by Jesus Christ and to emulate the exemplary believers in the Bible. We have six more issues, so do take this opportunity to send us your feedback and/or contributions using this email: scb.edu@tjc.org. Enjoy!

HAVING THE MIND WHICH WAS ALSO IN CHRIST

If Christians do not have the teachings of the Bible rooted in their hearts, they leave a foothold for the devil.

‘Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.’

(Colossians 1:28)

Have you ever once wondered, besides our life of faith, what else can we enjoy? What can we possess just like the non-believers, but yet do not cross the line of being a Christian? Actually in our life outside church or during our leisure time, not only can we behave in a manner befitting a Christian, we can live out the glory of our Lord Jesus. The problem lies with our faith and attitude.

In the eyes of unbelievers, Christianity is a rigid and boring religion. It lacks lively activities and youthful vitality. It is more of a routine where people come for service at appointed times. The lives of Christians are monotonous, boring, and are no different from the lives of any other people. In truth, Christians are made of the same flesh and blood like any other person, having moods, temperaments and impulsiveness. Christians even have moments of weakness and helplessness. The reason why unbelievers have such views about Christians is due to the fact that we ourselves as Christians do not know how to actively use God’s Word in our daily lives, nor do we use it in our relationships with people. In contrast, if we are able to comprehend the meanings behind the teachings of God, we will then have an enjoyable life and unbelievers will be able to experience the joy of Christianity.

Apostle Paul suffered a lot for the sake of preaching the gospel but in his letters to the various churches, he is able to express his continuous care and love. The source of his love came from treating Christ’s character as the top priority, thus imperceptibly expressing joy and care every moment of his life. This should be our example when we step out of church and into society. “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.” (Philippians 2:5-7). We often talk about emulating Christ; to be just righteous, holy, gentle, humble, loyal, trustworthy and to able to endure persecutions. We must show all these special qualities when interacting with the world.

Let’s start from families. The initial relationships between some married couples are smooth and loving, but as the days go by, conflicts start to arise. These lead to cold wars and quarrels and may ultimately result in each going their own ways and having a broken marriage. I once heard this fact about marriage: Before a couple is married, the man will give in to his girlfriend and treat her well. However, after the second day of marriage, the groom’s attitude would change completely and he would give minimal responses. After a child is born, the wife will not see the husband for a whole day. This will inevitably give rise to quarrels and the ending will not be hard to imagine. I have also heard a joke regarding marriage: before the honeymoon period, woman speaks and the man listens. During the honeymoon period, the man speaks and the woman listens. After the honeymoon period, both the man and the woman quarrel and the neighbor listens. Evidently in today’s chaotic generation, both husband and wife do not value each other’s feelings. This gives rise to many problems. It is due to them not establishing understanding with each other and this understanding is, as mentioned, God’s Word.

Originally God created Man and also created a partner for Man. This was because God felt that, “it is not good for man to be alone,” (Genesis 2:18). The motive is to help Man and how does it help Man?
The Bible tells us, “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but for the interests of others.” (Philippians 2:3-4).

A family including husband and wife, parents and children, and siblings, should adhere to this attitude when interacting with each other.

Undeniably, today’s families are impacted by democracy, which is different from the conservative values of the past. Siblings can form an alliance to oppose those whose views differ from them. Children can fight for affection, be it from their father or mother, or grandfather or grandmother. Spoiling a child can lead to the child using all sorts of methods to show his or her position in the house and finding fault with others. Of course, I have heard of clashes between brothers, completely forgetting that they are of the same parents. All these are mentioned in the Bible as going against its teachings. Youths longing for a more refreshing and exciting life is not altogether unjustifiable. However, if Christians do not have the teachings of the Bible rooted in their hearts, they will easily give place to the devil (Ephesians 4:27), and do something destructive. Therefore, “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.” (Proverbs 4:23).

By the same reasoning, in all our dealings with our relatives, friends and neighbors, we should consider the example set by Christ. This would allow others to view us favorably and admirably. There was this testimony about a rich merchant’s wife who could enjoy a life of luxury. However, she chose to do charity work in her spare time, helping the lonely elderly people. Besides helping to feed them and cleaning up the surroundings, she even helped the disabled to change beddings, doing chores which people were not willing to do. She would hide her status, not letting anyone know, not even her own family members. Her sincere attitude, gracious personality and kindness in speech left a deep impression on people. In a chanced gathering, some people happened to talk about her.

Suddenly someone said, “That lady is a believer in Jesus.” Subsequently, someone carried on by replying, “Those who believe in Christ are good people.” We thank God that a fellow believer in Christ actually lived out the glory of God in this world through her gentleness and amicability!

The coexistence between people is based on mutual trust and people must be careful about doing things for their own interests. After all, ‘Their silver and their gold will not be able to deliver them.’ (Ezekiel 7:19). This verse, ‘Who satisfies your mouth with good things,’ (Ps 103:5) reminds us that we should not covet. It is natural for parents to love their children, but in today’s context, this love has gone to the extent of spoiling the children. This will start to breed greed in a child. Think about this – when parents grant all the requests of the child, the child will be misguided in thinking that all requests will be granted when made known to his or her parents. In the future, when this child enters society, he or she will have the same demands when with friends. When their demands are not met, they will use the stick and carrot approach to get what they want. When they have something small, they are not satisfied and want bigger portions. This vicious cycle will lead to social problems and unthinkable consequences. Therefore, to correct this thinking, one must rely on spiritual food and allow God’s Word to take root in one’s heart.

All in all, when Christians interact with others, we should take up the chance to manifest the glory of Christ. In our daily lives, we should put in more effort to diligently read the bible and pray more to understand God’s way. ‘For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of the soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.’ (Hebrews 4:12). We must have the mind which was also in Christ, to understand interpersonal relationships, using more love, tolerance, compassion and care to accept all things. Whether in good times or bad, we must value harmony first. Our speech and actions must glorify God as this is the responsibility that we Christians should have.
**HANDY HOLDER**

**Whatcha Need:**
- 22 Craft Sticks
- Glue
- Variety of dry beans
- Styrofoam Rectangle (2-1/2” x 4”)
- Ribbon

**Whatcha Do:**
1. Lay two craft sticks on a desk or tabletop parallel to one another and 2” apart.
2. Glue 9 craft sticks to the parallel sticks horizontally to make a tight ladder as shown. All sticks must be touching.
3. Continue this process a 2nd time, thus creating the 2 sides of the holder.
4. Use various dry beans to form appropriate words and designs.
5. Glue decorative ribbon around the Styrofoam base.
6. Push the ends of the holder into the base as shown.

*This craft can hold a family devotional magazine and a pocket-size New Testament.*

**GIVE THANKS**

Give thanks with a grateful heart
Give thanks to the Holy One
Give thanks because He’s given
Jesus Christ, His Son
Give thanks with a grateful heart
Give thanks to the Holy One
Give thanks because He’s given
Jesus Christ, His Son
And now let the weak say I am strong
Let the poor say I am rich
Because of what the Lord has done for us
And now let the weak say I am strong
Let the poor say I am rich
Because of what the Lord has done for us

Give thanks!

*(Lyrics from Give Thanks by Don Moen)*

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