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#0804

Study given by W.D. Frazee

Turn to Nehemiah 8:10. Our chairman said this is the dessert. Most desserts are sweet. Having sweet is not always the wrong thing.

“Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength” Nehemiah 8:10.

What’s our strength? The joy of the Lord. Now, let us face the fact frankly, that ever since sin entered there has been pain. There’s no way to escape that. Life is not some picnic carnival. The realities of life include facing pain, problems, disappointments, sorrows. But the joy of the Lord is your strength.

And if there’s any place on this planet that’s to be a tower of strength, a center of joy, it’s the home. The home is the retreat where the weary ones come to be recharged, revived, refreshed. That is what your home must be to you, and it is that reviving, refreshing, recharging influence that you are to share with those who come into your home. There is enough of turmoil, of stress, of fret in the world outside. Home is to be the sunshine center for you, your immediate family, and your larger household.

“Ah, but,” someone says, “There are so many problems.” The more the problems, the more the battery must be recharged to meet the problems.

Why does a Christian worker need a home? Well, he needs it to be refreshed himself, a place of retreat. He needs it as a place to bring others that they may share those uplifting influences. And in all this, what is our strength? The joy of the Lord.

You know when we get home to the Father’s house; the Master is going to say to us:

“...Well done good and faithful servant...enter thou into the joy of thy Lord” Matthew 25:21.

But thank God that joy is not all reserved until we get through the pearly gates. Right now, it is our privilege to enter in, at least in part, to the joy of our Lord. And the joy of the Lord doesn’t come out of a jukebox. It doesn’t come by what clowns and comedians do, whether they are good at it, or just novices. The joy of the Lord comes from the Lord.

You and I are called to make our homes a demonstration of this joy. What a privilege. It's really easier than being sentenced to live in a penitentiary, isn't it? Yes, thank God for the privilege we have.

Now, let's go back to Deuteronomy 6 where we were looking the other day. Fifth verse: love the Lord with all your heart; six to eight: listen to His words; seventh: teach them diligently to your children in the house, in the yard, when you walk, when you lie down, all the time keep echoing the words of God.

Now let me give you an echo from this:

"Man's words, if of any value, echo the words of God"
Counsels to Teachers, page 423.

What's an echo? Were you ever in a place where there was a real, decided echo? And you said something, then you heard something. What did you hear? What you'd said, not only the word, but the tone. Did you ever hear your children echo something you've said? Yes, we are God's children. We are to echo what He says. But no echo ever echoed unless it heard something. And you and I cannot echo the words of God unless we hear the words of God.

But it is not enough to hear. These walls do not echo like some things do. You've been in circumstances, peculiar acoustic situations where even a whisper was echoed. God grant that my heart, my mind, my lips shall echo the slightest whisper of divine will.

"Man's words, if of any value, echo the words of God"
Ibid.

Will you repeat that with me?

"Man's words, if of any value, echo the words of God"
Ibid.

If I speak and I'm not echoing the words of God, then my words are not of any value, correct? They are idle words, if not worse. They are either neutral or minus numbers. They're either zeros or else they subtract.

"Man's words, if of any value, echo the words of God"
Ibid.

Now, would it be a good thing, then, for me to keep still if I do not know what God says? As Job said to his comforters:

"[If you should] altogether hold your peace, and it should be your wisdom" Job 13:5.

They weren't echoing the words of God. God had to tell them by and by after

they had sounded off for some time, “You haven’t spoken the thing that’s right.” They had multiplied words, but God was not in it.

So it is possible to speak on many subjects, and ventilate our opinions and even our convictions on this and that, and yet be worse off than if we hadn’t said anything.

“Man’s words, if of any value, echo the words of God”
Counsels to Teachers, page 423.

Let me ask you something. Right now while we’re in this little class, around this world there are millions, billions of words spoken every minute. How many of them echo the words of God? Not too many. Wouldn’t there be quite a silence in some areas if all the words that don’t echo the words of God should stop? Then perhaps some could hear His voice saying:

“Be still, and know that I am God...” Psalm 46:10.

Yes, it’s to the silence of the soul that God speaks.

This has a very practical application. Book 2, Selected Messages, page 363. Every homehead, every parent, every teacher, every minister, every counselor in any line, should know this statement that I’m about to read, and should know the principle that it enunciates:

“Therefore, let all be careful what they say; if they know not the mind of God in some matters, let them never speak from a guess or suppose so. If they know nothing definite, let them say so, and let the individual rely wholly upon God. Let there be much praying done, and even with fasting, that not one shall move in darkness, but move in the light as God is in the light” Selected Messages, Book 2, page 363.

Now the setting for this particular statement is this: Sister White, God’s prophet, for years, kept talking to our people in Battle Creek, and writing to them against building up a great center there. She kept saying that some ought to move out. Well, finally somebody got impressed, and a whole group of them decided, “Okay, the time has come to move out.” And they were getting ready to move without well defined, well thought through plans of what they were going to do and how they were going to survive and all that kind of thing. Sister White wrote them this message of caution.

This is interesting. God says, “Go!” And nobody moves. He says, “Go!” And nobody moves. He says, “Go!” And finally several some bodies wake up and say we’re going.

The Lord says, “Now, wait a minute!”

“Well, I thought you said years ago we ought to go?”

“Yes, you ought to.”

“Well, there is no question about it. It is time to go.”

“No,” the dear Lord said, “wait a minute!”

“Let there be nothing done in a disorderly manner that there shall be a great loss or sacrifice made upon property because of ardent, impulsive speeches which stir up an enthusiasm which is not after the order of God, that a victory that was essential to be gained, shall, for lack of levelheaded moderation and proper contemplation and sound principles and purposes, be turned into a defeat. Let there be wise generalship in this matter...”
Ibid.

Now, I'd just like to have us look at this for a little because there come up (I was going to say, ever day) at least nearly every day, questions, matters, on which it's very easy to express our opinion. Either our opinion is going to have weight or it won't. If it's not going to have any weight there's no use talking anyway. Save the breath. But if it's going to have weight, I want to be sure that it's put on the right side. Is that correct?

Now, this tells me that if I do not know the mind of God in some matters I'm never to speak from a guess or a suppose so. But frankly, this is what most people do. If you don't do it you're a rare bird. That's right. On a thousand questions of diet, dress, music, reading, association, courtship, marriage, education, Sabbath school work, evangelism, people are ventilating their opinions, what they think.

“Oh, I think that would be all right.” “I think that's a good thing.” “I saw it done over at such and such a place, in such and such an institution. It looked good to me.” And you say, “Why sure.” No, not sure at all. It's uncertain.

“Therefore, let all be careful what they say; if they know not the mind of God in some matters, let them never speak from a guess or suppose so” Ibid.

I sometimes tell this story, true story. It happened in World War I. General Pershing had taken the American troops and gone into France to join with the allies in the war against Germany. This particular camp was a large encampment near a French village where the soldiers were in intense training preparatory to joining the armies in the trenches. As part of the program, regular daily schedule, every day at noon the cannon was fired. And then everybody knew it was time to go to dinner. They knew that was 12:00.

Well, there was a man whose duty it was to fire the cannon. And so to be sure he was firing it on time, every morning he went into the French village where the

watchmaker there had a big clock, and he set his watch by that so that he would be sure to fire exactly on time—so far so good.

One day on his trip in there, he said to the watchmaker, “Are you sure that your clock is correct?”

“Oh yes,” he said. “I set it every day at noon by the firing of the cannon in that camp.”

Now this is what has been going on in too many homes and too many churches and too many institutions in the remnant church. For decades we have been setting our watches by sounds we heard which in turn were dependent on something that wasn't quite certain.

And if when I sit on a board or a committee, all I hear, and all I act on, is what are they doing in some other institution, and then in that institution, they're in turn getting feedback from this one, do you see what can happen? Just fifteen-seconds off a day in a certain direction and pretty soon we can be fifteen minutes off, a half hour off. And I'm sorry to say in some areas, we are a lot more than fifteen minutes off. We're way off. And yet people look at their watches and say, “Well, I guess we're about on time.” They agree with the firing of the cannon.

Now, let me warn you. Let me bring it close to home. If in my home that I'm homeheading I merely check with what they are doing at X home, Y home, and Z home on this campus, what could happen? Just what we're talking about could happen, couldn't? No home on this place is good enough for you to copy after. No person on this place is good enough for you to copy after. Learn anything you can from others, certainly, but put it through the sieve. Check it out. Know what the books say. And be sure you go by the books.

“Therefore, let all be careful what they say; if they know not the mind of God in some matters, let them never speak from a guess or suppose so. If they know nothing definite, let them say so, and let the individual rely wholly upon God” Ibid.

So more than once when somebody has come to me I have listened and then I've said, “Well, Brother, Sister, I can pray with you about this, but I don't know the answer. I don't know. But God knows the answer, and if you will seek the Lord with all your heart, He can give you the answer, or He can help you find it from somebody that knows, for I do not know.”

Never be afraid to admit that you do not know. Somebody might say, “Well, I think I ought to know.” Well, even if you ought to know, if don't know, pretending won't help, will it? Not a bit. No, no. Oh, how wonderful it is to put ourselves right alongside the seeking soul and say, “Friend, here is a promise for you and me both, Jeremiah 33:3.” Turn to it, one of my favorite travelers checks. What's the first word? Call. Call the pastor? Call the administrator? Call who? Me. Who's talking? God.

“Call unto me, and I will answer thee...” Jeremiah 33:3.

Say, if He would do it, wouldn't that be wonderful?

“Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things...” Jeremiah 33:3.

What does the margin say? Hidden things.

“...which thou knew not” Jeremiah 33:3.

Here is a promise in circumstances where you do not know the answer, and you can kneel down and pray with somebody that God will fulfill His promise and give them the answer. Isn't that a wonderful promise? Oh, yes, a wonderful privilege.

And you know, dear friends, instead of lessening confidence, this increases confidence. For us to admit we do not know everything, I repeat, can increase confidence in us as counselors. If students and fellow workers see that we don't just sound off on any and every subject, if they see that we frankly admit that there're some things we do not know, they will be more inclined to listen to us on things we do know, won't they? Certainly. So this instead of weakening confidence, it increases it.

Oh, how good God is to give us this instruction.

Now, I mentioned the other day encouraging students to ask questions that would lead to answers from the books. Let me add to that this thought. Even if you know the answer in the book, and know the page, it isn't always the thing to do, to say, “Well, the answer to that is in Ministry of Healing, page 474.” It may be that you are depriving the student of a most precious and rewarding experience—the joy of discovery.

When you were children, did you ever go on an Easter egg hunt? Did you find anything? What did you find? Some colored eggs. Why did you find them? Because you looked. There was another reason. Somebody put them there. I challenge you to go out over this campus this afternoon and find even one colored egg. But all through the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy God has hidden some colored Easter eggs to reward those who seek Him.

And of course, if you insist, you can take the student by the hand and say, “Now, we'll go along this trail, right. See there, there's the egg, right there.” And there's some satisfaction in that. But what has the child missed? The joy of seeking; the joy of discovery.

I was holding a meeting somewhere not long ago and I had presented a certain subject. Sometime after the meeting I was talking with somebody, and presently a young man came running in, panting. He had come to show me

something he had discovered in Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 1 on that subject. Well, it was wonderful. It was right on the point.

Of course, I had read it several times, but he was getting the joy of what? Discovery. And he was so pleased with it that he came running to me. And I didn't say, "Run along, fellow, I've seen that a lot of times." I commended him for the fact that he had discovered that reference, and it was right on the point. That reference will always mean more to him because he discovered it.

Encourage your students to share what they have found in their own personal study. There are various ways to do this. God will teach you how to do it; sometimes at morning worship, sometimes around the meal table. Not so much routinely. Not in a mechanical, computer-like way. "What did you find? What did you find? What did you find? What did you find?" No; A bit more un-programmed. But nevertheless, you're thinking about it, drawing out that which has been poured in.

You see, it's a wonderful thing when it dawns on the students that you are just as much under law as they are, and happily so; that you're not looking forward to some time, somewhere up the road when you graduate and are on your own then you can do as you please. Did you know that was a sign of immaturity?

Let me illustrate it: Suppose here is a child in the grammar grades of school. The teacher gives out the word "receive" and the pupil writes it down r-e-c-i-e-v-e. What would the teacher say? Wrong. But suppose I'm the pupil and I say, "Oh well, if you insist, I'll spell it like you say, but when I get out of school and do as I please, I'll spell it r-e-c-i-e-v-e." That shows that, that student is not yet ready to what? Graduate. Not simply because he doesn't know how to spell receive, but because of his state of mind.

And when a student whether it's in an elementary school or college, whether he's 9 years old, or 29, has the idea, "Well, I'll do what I'm told now, but I tell you, I can hardly count the days until my sentence is over and I'm out of prison and I can do as I please," he shows immaturity.

The great thing you and I have to demonstrate, my fellow workers, is that the joy of the Lord is your strength, and that if ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. That happiness comes in doing what God says in the home, in the school, in the church, everywhere. Just doing what God says. That's the way to be happy.

So we go to bed and sleep. God told us to. It refreshes us. It makes us happy. And we wake up. And we get out, not on the wrong side of the bed. We're happy. If we have burdens and problems, we take them to the Lord in prayer, and before we face our fellows in the work, we get the assurance from God that He's with us and that He's smiling.

We are never to bring to the table a clouded brow, a shadowed countenance. No, no. It would be better, perhaps, sometimes to say to somebody else, "You go ahead today," while we wrestle it out alone with God in our rooms. And we must

know in a very practical way, friends, that:

“The name of the Lord is a strong tower: and the righteous runs into it and is safe” Proverbs 18:10.

“...the joy of the Lord is your strength” Nehemiah 8:10.

You are engaged in making a wonderful demonstration.

But now a caution:

“The carrying of things to extremes is a matter to be dreaded” Counsels on Diet and Foods” page 210.

Now what is the matter to be dreaded? What does it mean to carry things to extremes? Is it extreme to drink whiskey? Is it? No, pardon me, it's just simply poison. There's no way to be extreme about not drinking whiskey, and there is no way to be extreme about drinking whiskey. It's already poison. It's just this way. It's poison, so don't touch it. Carrying things to extremes is taking a good thing and going too far with it. See?

Could I go to extremes in drinking water? Oh, yes. Could I go to extremes in eating salt? Yes. Could I go to extremes in refraining from salt? Has the Lord told us about that? Oh, yes. Do you see what I mean? Going to extremes is simply taking something that's true, something that's right, something that's proper and carrying it too far.

What did we read the other day is heaven's first law? Order. Can you carry that to extremes? Yes, you can carry that to extremes.

“Indolence, apathy, irregularity, are to be dreaded, and the binding of one's self to routine is just as much to be dreaded” Fundamentals of Christian Education, page 373.

It would be interesting if we could have a cross section of each mind here this afternoon and see which part of that sentence pleased you the most. It would tell us something. Which one did you say “Amen” to? It may be that you need the other part of it just a little more than the one you said “Amen” to. Shall I read it again?

“Indolence, apathy, irregularity, are to be dreaded, and the binding of one's self to routine is just as much to be dreaded” Ibid.

Were you ever in a home where if you would ask, if you were a guest in the home, “What time do we have breakfast in the morning?” That's a nice thing for a guest to ask, isn't it? Were you ever in a home where the answer would be, “Well, when we get around?” Or one member of the family would say to another, “Well, let's see, what time should we have it in the morning?” And so they maybe have a

little family conference in deference to the guest and decide when to do it. Were you ever in that kind of a fix? What does that indicate? Irregularity. And that's to be what? Dreaded.

But the binding of one's self to routine is what? Just as much to be dreaded. Are there times when it is impossible to have worship at 6:30, right on the dot? Yes, the house might be burning down or the neighbor's house might be burning down. Any one of a dozen less tragic things could be happening.

Now, then we are studying, right now, about this matter of going by the books, but being careful, in going by the books, not to carry the books to where? Extremes. That's the thing.

Now back to Counsels on Diet and Foods:

"If you err, let it not be in getting as far from the people as possible. ... Better err on the side of the people than altogether away from them, for there is hope in that case that you can carry the people with you, but there is no need of error on either side" Counsels on Diet and Foods, page 211.

Isn't that beautiful? There's an ideal, to walk that narrow plank without carrying to the extreme on the side of over strictness or on the liberal, less strict side. It's possible to be right in the middle of the road, God's road, not man's road. If we err, we are counseled to err in which direction? On the side of the people.

"You need not go into the water or into the fire, but take the middle path, avoiding all extremes" Ibid.

Oh, this is beautiful, dear friends. In diet, in dress, in music, in reading, in education, in all our practices and utterances, let us seek to be balanced, avoiding extremes.

"The great backsliding upon health reform is because unwise minds have handled it and carried it to such extremes that it has disgusted in place of converting people to it. I have been where these radical ideas have been carried out. Vegetables prepared with only water, and everything else in like manner. This kind of cookery is health deform, and there are some minds so constituted that they will accept anything that bears the features of rigorous diet or reform of any kind" *Ibid.*, page 212.

Now do you know where people that have this bent are likely to be attracted to? A place like Wildwood. That's right. And there could be somebody like that here this afternoon. In fact, I'll just be frank and put you at ease by telling you this is my

tendency. I found it out over 50 years ago. So I've been trying to watch it ever since.

There are some things you have to watch, aren't there? I doubt if there are many of you here who have to watch a tendency to smoke cigarettes. Of course, if you had that tendency and were battling against it, you know what that illustration means.

Some of you perhaps have a disposition to lose your temper. You have to watch that. Some of you may have a disposition to say foolish, jesting things. You might have to watch that. But some of us have to watch the tendency to take anything in the way of strict reform and suppose if it is stricter than something we heard before it must be that much nearer heaven. And in our endeavor to get closer and closer to the pearly gates, we want to remember that the One who's escorting us, guiding us there has said, "Don't go to" what? "Extremes."

A number of years ago a man came on this campus. He had come clear from the Pacific Northwest to put his young people in school down here. I was away at the time holding meetings at Madison College. He stopped there on his way back. He told me the sorrow that he felt. He said, "I have been looking for a place where I could put my children where they would have the proper influences around them." And he said, "Brother Frazee, I can't tell you how bad I felt when I looked in the pasture at Wildwood and saw those cows."

Now, that was his conscience. And to his conscience it wasn't the thing to do to have a cow on the place. Of course, he could come back now and he wouldn't see any cows in the pasture, but that doesn't mean that either now or then everybody was living without milk and eggs.

Is it all right if a person wants to live without milk and eggs? Yes, but the Lord never told us to set up an institution where nobody could have any milk and eggs. He never told us to do that. He told us to educate people in how to cook without milk and eggs, for the time would come when we'd need to get along without them. But He also said, "Be careful, don't make a time of trouble beforehand."

Now, I'm not studying the milk and eggs question. I'm studying, for just this brief moment, this matter of extremes. And so in our homes, in our classes, we want to avoid anything that savors of being extreme. And an interesting thing is on this milk and eggs question, and on a hundred other questions, people can select certain references and put them into a certain setting, and it sounds like you ought to do this or that or the other. But we have to remember that He that said, said also. We have to get the balance and the combination.

One of you was telling me the other day that when you were coming here somebody said, "You are going to Wildwood? That is the place where they are strict Adventists." God help us to be strict without being extreme. What do you say? It will be enough to do to keep us busy to just do what He said without carrying it to extremes.

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