

# How to Live 8 of 12

## *Self-Denial*

#0258

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—1964

The people living on this planet have two great ideas of what constitutes successfully living. Both of them are presented in this text. We have our choice, and they're mutually exclusive, so we have either one or the other. Let's read together, Matthew 20:28:

“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto,  
but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many”  
Matthew 20:28.

What's another word for "minister"? Serve, live for others. Now, some people, Jesus tells us here, live what for? To be ministered unto. They want to be waited on. They want other people to do for them all the time. That's one way of living. And the person who has that goal, he thinks how to live means, how to get other people to do what I want, to cook what I like to eat, to play the kind of music I like to hear, and so on and on and on.

Did you ever hear somebody ask a little child, “What would you like to be when you grow up?” That's catering to this very idea. What would you like to do? We're surrounded with that influence all our lives, friends. The idea that successful living is to find out what you want and do it, to find out what you like to eat and have it.

When it comes to the question of marriage, the average young man is looking for a girl that will do things the way he likes. And of course, the girl the other way around—she's looking for a husband that will, no, there's nothing funny about it. It's tragic. The thing is downright tragic because it results in disappointment and failure 99 times out of 100 in a marriage. That's why we're told that there is not one marriage in a hundred that results happily.

You see, the One who made us made us to work in a certain way. Just like a clock, it's made to be wound, and it's made to be oiled. When it's wound and oiled, why, it generally can tell us the time for many days. But it takes just a few simple things, and so the One who made us, made us to tick in a certain way. He didn't make us to be ministered unto. He made us to what? Minister.

Now, it's true that in the process, we receive the benefits of the ministry of other people. But that isn't our goal. That isn't what we are living for. We can take that, or get along without it as God's providence arranges it if we're truly converted, if we are Christians.

Now this verse, the primary statement in the verse is about somebody. Who is it? Jesus. He calls Himself here what? The Son of man. And He came for what purpose? To minister. And that means what? To serve. He came, where? To this earth, from where? From Heaven. Was that a bad place or a good place? A good place. You mean He gave up a good place? Well, the best place in the universe. I wonder whatever, as we would say, got into Him—Love, well, that's it. It was there all the time, and when the need arose, He was on His way.

He came not to be ministered unto, but to what? Minister. And what's the rest of it? To give His life, not loan it, but to give His life. Did He give Himself to this world? Is He still ours? He hasn't gotten tired of that? Has He? He still chooses to do that? Oh friends, what a life!

Well, I can tell you dear friends, how you can tell whether you're converted or not, if that appeals to you, if it's something desirable for you to have a part in, then you're converted. If it doesn't, then you're not converted. It's that simple.

Turn over to Romans 15. You see, I hope every one of you in this little class will find out whether you're converted or not. And if you are not, you can seek for that conversion. Romans 15, beginning with the first verse: "We that are strong out to make people please us." Is that what it says? If we're strong in money, can't we buy it? If we're strong in physical strength, can't we make people do it? If we're strong in intellect, can't we overpower them with our great wisdom?

"We then that are strong ought to do..."

What?

"...bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" Romans 15:1.

What does bear mean? Carry. You and I are supposed to be carrying around what? The infirmities of others. What are infirmities? Weaknesses. Yes, you know, it's an interesting civilization we're living in. Today in thousands of homes as soon as some member of the home gets weak and infirm what do they do with them? Put them out. The government can take care of that, or even if they have to pay out money, get rid of them. Why? "Well, we don't want to be bothered, on with the dance, on with the show, on with the party. We don't want wet blankets around. We want to do what? Please ourselves. And it might interfere with that to have someone around that's old or sick, infirm and weak. Ship them off." And today, millions of human beings are being waited on in their weakness and infirmity not by those that should have deep, loyal ties of love and devotion, but just by people who are paid so much an hour to go in there and take care of some of their elementary needs.

But I want to tell you something, friends. The people to feel sorry for aren't the infirm and weak ones. Yes, feel sorry for them. But you know the main ones to feel sorry for? The folks that are living what for? To please themselves.

Of course, here at Wildwood, there's no danger of that is there? No danger of pleasing ourselves? Everybody here is living a life of unselfish service. If it isn't Heaven, it's almost there, isn't it?

I want to tell you something, the Lord allowed the serpent to come even into where? Eden. And do you know what the essential temptation was? It was this very issue, whether you were going to live to please God or please yourself. That was it. And Eve decided to do what? Please herself. She got Adam to join in that deception. It happened to be a piece of fruit. It could have been any one of a hundred other things. God choose that test. And what God was seeking to do was to give Adam and Eve the same opportunity He has given to every intelligent creature He ever made, the opportunity to choose which way he wanted to go.

Now, some people can't give up alcohol. Do you know why? They want to please themselves. They get a certain kind of pleasure. Some people can't give up tobacco. Do you know why? Well, they want to please themselves.

I was talking to a young man on an airplane the other night. He was connected with a big company and just coming down from Chicago to Cincinnati. And as we visited together, I just thought, I think I'll ask this young man a question. He was sociable and so I said:

"Sir, would you mind if I ask you a question?" "No." He said, "I don't mind."

I said, "You know, I've never smoked" He was smoking one after the other there in the plane. I said, "Would you advise me to smoke? What do you get out of it?"

Well, He wouldn't advise me to smoke. But the thing he got out of it was that it calmed his nerves. I gave him my card before we parted, and told him if he ever wanted help to get rid of it, I'd be glad to send him some material. I haven't heard from him. No, most people are not willing to go through the struggle, if they can avoid it, of stopping to do the thing they don't like.

"Well," someone says, "why should I?"

Well, that's it. Why should you? This takes a miracle of conversion.

All right now, let us read the first three verses. All together:

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself..." Romans 15:1-3.

Wait a minute. Who didn't? Christ, even Christ. Why does it say, "even Christ?" He is God. He is the King of the universe. And the King of this universe doesn't live to please Himself. And when He came here, in a world all polluted with sin and the curse, He spent His whole life doing what? Pleasing others.

Now you notice, it says there in the second verse, "please his neighbor for his good to edification." This doesn't necessarily mean giving the crying baby the scissors or matches, or a lot of things it might cry for. We're to please people for their good. We're to do the thing that is best for them, whether they have sense enough to know it or not. But we are living all the while, what for? For others.

Now, this marvelous textbook on how to live—*Ministry of Healing*. Oh folks, I'm so thankful for it! And notice how this keynote is brought to us in such a clear way.

Page 395: What are we called to? To be missionaries. Do you know what a missionary is? Well, a missionary is somebody that's on a mission. Jesus is the great missionary. He came on a mission. Where to? This world. We've already seen what His mission was. What was it? To minister to others.

Now, just hold your finger on page 395 and turn over to page 409. What's the first word? Like.

"Like our Saviour, we are in this world to do service for God" *Ministry of Healing*, page 409.

Did you know that is how you happened to get born? You've come on a mission. Most people never find it out. That's why they go through life unhappy, dissatisfied, frustrated, always looking for something, never finding it. We have been born for what? For service.

"Like our Saviour, we are in this world to do service for God. We are here to become like God in character and by a life of service to reveal Him to the world" *Ibid.*

All right, now let's go back to page 395. Altogether, the first paragraph:

"True education is missionary training. Every son and daughter of God is called to be a missionary; we are called to the service of God and our fellow men; and to fit us for this service should be the object of our education" *Ibid.*, page 395.

I want to ask you something. Do you think the world can teach us how to do this? Come now, could the world teach us how to live a life of unselfish service, service for God and humanity? Is that what the world is doing? Why, no. The world isn't doing that at all. And true education, Christian education is going in an entirely opposite direction. It isn't just speed that's different—faster or slower. It isn't the method; the whole objective is fundamentally different.

Sometimes people that don't know much about this program say to me, "Well, tell me, after your students receive their training there at Wildwood, what can they

do? What job can they get? How are they going to make a living after they get through?"

I just have to smile at the utter unawareness of what this whole thing is about. We're not here just to go out and make a living in the sense of getting a job and getting money for it. My dear friends think of it. Your life is so precious that it was bought by the sufferings of Christ in Gethsemane and Calvary. He bought and paid for your service. And now you mean to tell me that a person who knows that will go out here and put that life, that precious life that cost so much on the auction block and say, "Who will bid the most for my time and service? Where can I go where I can get more money, more fringe benefits?"

Oh friends, to think of it. Don't misunderstand me; I am not blaming the people of the world. If I was going to work for the world, I would say, "Ok, the higher the bidder the better." Why not, if you're going that road?

But bless the Lord; we're not on that road. We're not on that road at all. It's a wonderful thing to be in something that no amount of money could lure you away from. What is it? Why it's living for Jesus and others. Doing the work for which you were born, the work of ministry.

Listen, this is what got hold of Matthew, and he never went back to tax collecting. He had been handling money, money, money. And you know, that gets into a fellow's blood. But something happened to Matthew. He got with Jesus, and he never went back to money collecting. He went into men collecting, soul collecting. He became a collector of the most valuable thing in this universe, human souls.

You can. That's your calling. That's your destiny.

We've been looking at some things in this chapter (True Education a Missionary Training, in *Ministry of Healing*, pages 395–406). I thought you would be interested in the introduction to it. This is really one of the most wonderful chapters in this book, one of the most wonderful chapters in all the Spirit of Prophecy writings. It grows on you. I invite you to study it. "True Education a Missionary Training." Notice that third paragraph:

"The children and youth, with their fresh talent, energy, and courage, their quick susceptibilities, are loved of God, and He desires to bring them into harmony with divine agencies" *Ibid*.

Now all together:

"They are to obtain an education that will help them to stand by the side of Christ in unselfish service" *Ibid*.

Will you stand by Jesus' side? Will you? Ah, this is what we were born for.

Well, the chapter goes on to extol this glorious destiny and tell us how we can carry it out.

Now, let's go over to page 399, we were looking at it earlier in the week, how Jesus came to show us how to do this. He secured His education in the home. He acted his part in bearing the household burdens and working in the shop with Joseph. And you remember at the top of 400, we were noting how He got from home to His work and from the shop back to His home. How did he get there? He walked. Now comes the paragraph that we haven't looked at yet:

"With the people of that age, the value of things was estimated by outward show. As religion had declined in power, it had increased in pomp" *Ibid.*, page 400.

The less there was inside, the more they put on outside.

"The educators of the time sought to command respect by display and ostentation. To all this the life of Jesus presented a marked contrast" *Ibid.*

What is contrast? It's how things are different. How things are alike, that's comparison, perhaps. But contrast is how they are what? Different. Into all of this, in the religious and educational and political and social and business world of His time, the life of Jesus presented what? A contrast. It was what then? Different.

"His life demonstrated the worthlessness of those things that men regarded as life's great essentials. The schools of His time, with their magnifying of things small and their belittling of things great, He did not seek" *Ibid.*

You mean He didn't go to school? He didn't go to their schools, did He? Remember the page before says Jesus secured His education where? In the home. Let's read this sentence together. All together:

"His education was gained from Heaven-appointed sources, from useful work, from the study of the Scriptures, from nature, and from the experiences of life,—God's lesson books, full of instruction to all who bring to them the willing hand, the seeing eye, and the understanding heart" *Ibid.*

Then it tells about how, prepared in this wonderful way, studying these four great textbooks, He went forth on His mission to bless others.

Now, what's the name of that paragraph at the bottom of the page? The Home Teaching. Here is where the training for loving service is to begin:

"The home is the child's first school, and it is here that the foundation should be laid for the life of service" *Ibid.*

I want to ask you something. You don't remember, so you can't answer me. But I want to ask it anyway. When you were a baby and cried, did you get your own way? If you did, the foundations weren't laid for a life of service. You were learning not to minister, but to be ministered unto.

Don't misunderstand me. There are things a baby has to have done for it. I understand that. But if a baby gets everything it thinks it wants, when it wants it, it's not learning this lesson. Self-denial is one of the first great lessons of life.

Now there is good news. If we didn't learn it when we were 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, or 10 years old, we can learn it now. But we'll never learn it by having our own way and living to please ourselves. We never will.

Now, I'll tell you a little secret. If you need to learn any of these lessons, and it would be possible to find a home situation here and a work situation and a class situation and an evangelistic district situation that are just what pleases you all the time, do you know what God would do? He'd kick you out of that. Not that He's trying to make things hard for you. Oh, no. He's trying to help you to learn this lesson.

So any time you find yourself in a situation where the work is not what you would choose, or the roommate is not what you would choose, or the group for class discussion is not what you would choose, or the missionary program is not what you would choose, remember, my dear friends, this is Jesus' hand beckoning you to live not to what? Not to please yourself. See now, He won't force you. Oh, no. But He'll give you an opportunity.

All right, let's take that top of page 401. This is talking about the little child. All together:

"Very early the lesson of helpfulness should be taught the child. As soon as strength and reasoning power are sufficiently developed, he should be given duties to perform in the home. He should be encouraged in trying to help father and mother, encouraged to deny and to control himself, to put other's happiness and convenience before his own..." *Ibid.*, page 401.

Do you see? Here's the heart of it. The little child is to learn where? In the home; to do what? To put other's happiness and convenience before his own. Did you learn that? Had you mastered that when you were 4, 6, 8, 10 years old? Well, if you didn't, thank God, you can learn it now.

All right, let's read on:

"...to watch for opportunities to cheer and assist brothers and sisters and playmates and to show kindness to the aged, the sick, and the unfortunate" *Ibid.*

Listen. Tell me, if the patients in the Wildwood Sanitarium could all of them be waited on every day by people who had learned this lesson when they were children, wouldn't it be wonderful? People that had already learned before they ever set foot on this campus to watch for opportunities to cheer and assist people—to show kindness to the aged, the sick and the unfortunate. You see, if you learned this before you ever came here, then you can just practice it while you are here. But if you didn't learn it before you came, is there a chance to learn it here? Thank the Lord. And oh, we should be watching for those opportunities.

All right, read on:

"The more fully the spirit of true ministry pervades the home, the more fully it will be developed in the lives of the children. They will learn to find joy in service and sacrifice for the good of others" *Ibid.*

Well, what kind of a tranquilizer pill do you have to give a child so that he'll find happiness in living for others? Is that what it takes, some kind of medicine? Why, no. This is the normal condition of life. The other is abnormal. Yes, there'll be many opportunities to do it.

You know, I was thinking. By and by, there will be Thanksgiving, and then there will be Christmas. Do you know what 99 out of 100 people in this country are going to think of at Christmas time? "What would I like?" What's Santa Claus going to bring me? Where can I go to have a good time? What can I do?" But maybe one percent are going to be thinking, "What can I do to make Jesus happy?" It's supposed to be His birthday, isn't it? Poor Jesus. Did you ever go to a birthday party and everybody gets birthday presents but the one whose birthday it was? Well, that's Christmas.

But there are going to be a few people that are going to be thinking about Jesus and others. Now, tell me. We have got several weeks and months before Christmas. What are you going to be planning between now and Christmas? Are you going to be thinking, "Well, I wonder where I can go Christmas?" Do you know what has got to happen? It's going to take a lot of people just to keep the wheels going right here on this campus, isn't it? But then we all go off and tell the patients, "Well, I'll see you in two weeks, if you are still here."

Well, you say, "Brother Frazee, this is getting kind of close to home."

Yes, it's real close to home.

My subject isn't what to do Christmas. My subject is what to live for 365 days in the year. That's the thing. Jesus came to teach us what? How to live. And He said the way to live was to live to what? Minister instead of being ministered unto, to live to please others instead of living to please ourselves.



Now, really folks, that's what this program is all about. This is it. And once you get that key, you'll understand a lot of things that otherwise will be mysteries. You wonder why this is here and why that and why something else isn't here. This is the key to the whole adventure. The dear Lord has planned this way of life to help you and me to learn what the real joy of living is. It's to live to please Him and please others.

And somebody put it this way (if we had a blackboard, we would just put it down): Jesus first; others next; yourself last. What is that capital letter in the first word? J, and the capital letter in the next word? O and the capital letter in that last word? Y, now the only way you can make it spell joy is to put yourself where? Last. That's it. J-O-Y. Jesus first; others next; yourself last. That is what this chapter is talking about. That's what Jesus is talking about.

Ah friends, a hundred times a day we have the opportunity of choosing one way or the other. In the sanitarium, on the farm, in the home, in the class, in our discussion groups, when we're alone, all the time, day and night, we choose. Ah, what a wonderful program to live the life of unselfish service.

Now, do you know what I'd do if I were the Devil? Shall I tell you what I'd do? I'd be right in here this afternoon whispering in somebody's ear, "That's pretty slick. They're trying to get you into a trap."

Well, were you ever in jail? Well, I've been locked in jail. Not as a prisoner, but I was in there talking with a person. I've been locked in jail. But I had to have three different guards let me out through three different locked gates.

But I want to ask you something. If you just saw a picture of a man with some bars in front of him like this, you know, like there are in jail, if all you saw where the man's face and the bars, could you tell whether he was outside the bars or inside the bars? No, no, you couldn't.

And these things that I've studied with you today are bars. They separate the selfish from the unselfish; those who live for self and those who live for others. And each side, bless your dear hearts, thinks the other is in jail. That's right. Both sides, each side thinks the other is in jail. You can tell which side you're on by which side you think is the jail. It's that simple.

All right, you're dismissed for today.

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