

**“STOP STRIPPING YOUR GEARS!”**

## SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 5:13-15; Proverbs 20:5, 24:27

A gear is a “toothed wheel which engages with another gear to operate for a single purpose.” This is Christianity. Christians gearing into life to pull it toward God.

A person who is not *geared into* something is wasting energy. A person fighting life is stripping his gears — and is there anything more nerve-racking or destructive?

Yet so many people today are either out of gear — pulling no weight at all or they are refusing to mesh smoothly where they and their lives are discordant, noisy and self-destructive.

A father said of his daughter one day: “She had all the potential in the world but she never could gear into life — and now her gears are worn so smooth, she never will be able to fit into anything.”

A gear worn smooth. What could be more useless? How important it is for us to start early and young to gear ourselves into *life!* Always be working for something, toward some goal; you can always shift gears, change machinery, alter your goal — but keep the “teeth” sharp so that when you do gear in, the motion will be effective and strong and tight.

Christ was perfectly geared into life every moment and what power he was able to generate in this world!

*Prayer: Lord, forgive me for being so lazy, for thinking that inactivity is harmless, that constantly fighting life is not destructive. Help me to protect these gears of my life that I may perform work smoothly and efficiently. AMEN*

**“THE POLITE SIN OF DISHONESTY”**

## SCRIPTURE:

Jeremiah 9:2, 3; Zechariah 8:14-17; Psalm 15:2-5

How honest are you . . . really? Can people take you at your word — or do they tend to cross-examine you?

Dishonesty even among Christians is one of the most insidious reasons for breakdown in relationships. It has become the “polite sin” and how quickly we defend it! “I couldn’t bear to hurt him . . . I didn’t want to be the one to tell her . . . I knew it would only lead to an argument . . . I didn’t want to get involved!”

Such self-centeredness, such cowardice can only lead to more trouble: you say you do not want to hurt him? Do you remember the hurt on the face of someone to whom you had lied? You say you do not want an argument: can you remember the scene when you finally had to defend your lie? You do not want to get involved: have you tried to extricate yourself gracefully from a lie *without* getting involved?

Most of our excuses are based on self-pride, on maintaining our “image” or they are due to cowardice, fear of rejection, or indifference.

But Jesus Christ never gave a false reply, never minimized truth — no matter how unpleasant, how unpopular the truth was, no matter what it did to people’s “image” of him.

It is time we, too, become people other people can count on. Dishonesty is an insidious form of escapism and it can only lead to more disillusionment and pain in the long run . . .

*Prayer: Lord, to be honest, I must be both humble and loving, both perceptive and forgiving, as you were with us. Help me to be a person others can trust because I try to be like you. AMEN*

The thought begins in the Bible verse;  
please take the time to read it first.

**MONDAY, MARCH 10, 2025****“WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO THE COMMANDMENTS?”**

## SCRIPTURE:

Deuteronomy 5:6-21; 6:4-9; Isaiah 59:20-60:3

A well-meaning manufacturer in this country some time ago sent a shipment of valuable machinery to a new nation. While the shipment was enroute, diplomatic relations with that nation became strained and though the shipment of merchandise was permitted to enter, the engineer who had been sent to demonstrate the machinery was denied entrance.

After futile attempts to go in, he left a complex manual of directions and returned to the United States.

Months later, the manufacturer received a letter forwarded by the government, in which the small nation bitterly denounced the “gift” as a fraud: the machinery did not work, several men had been killed attempting to run it and it had cost the small government a tremendous amount of money.

The engineer flew to Washington immediately and explained the situation. “No one can run the machinery without following the manual, and without me to demonstrate, it would make no sense.”

God created man, the most complex sensitive “spiritual machine” in the universe and with it, he included specific directions for its function. He sent an “engineer” — his own Son — to show us how it can best function, and like the young, rebellious nation, we have not only thrown out the engineer, but the manual as well

. . . and we wonder why we have lost so many lives, so much money, and still cannot make the human “machine” do what it is supposed to do.

We may think God’s laws archaic; we may think Christ unnecessary. But we are not doing very well without them, are we?

*Prayer: Lord, how proud and arrogant we are. Please forgive us for usurping what you have created and rejecting you, the Creator. God, come back into our lives, we pray! AMEN*

## TUESDAY

### “WHERE DID GOD GO IN ALL THIS?”

#### SCRIPTURE:

Hebrews 8:6-12; Matthew 19:3-9;  
Romans 1:18-25

Not long ago, a mother of a teenage daughter was asked to lead a seminar on the subject “The New Morality.” During her research, she read all the articles in the popular periodicals and magazines, and the more she read, the more perplexed she became.

Finally, having gathered what she could from what was available, she quietly did some research in another direction: ancient and new Scripture.

The day of the meeting arrived, and she began the seminar by one statement. “Ladies, we know the New Morality is apparently leading to more confusion than before, and we are not quite sure what to do about it. I have a question: where did God go in all of this . . . ?”

Pick up your latest magazine. It undoubtedly has an article on this most popular of all subjects. As you wander through the maze of words, rationalizations, arguments and support, do the words seem to ring a little hollow? Is there any sense at all in them?

How odd that a people so supposedly steeped in the Great Spiritual Search have omitted God.

Let us always remember that love is the willing of good to another, and that God showers his infinite love on those who love others. That love is not subject to limitation by any human concept of morality or to any restriction as to how that love is expressed.

*Prayer: Lord, we go our way today as though you are not even there! Please forgive us for not teaching our children your laws, for not giving them the real reasons for obedience. God, without you there is no sense to life. Make us who believe more courageous in our faith. AMEN*

## WEDNESDAY

### “WHY, EXACTLY, DID HE COME?”

#### SCRIPTURE:

Psalm 37:23-28, 73:21-26; I Peter 2:21-25;  
Psalm 85:13

A father and his young son were hiking one day. There was freshly-fallen snow on the ground and the father was concerned that the boy would be lost. The youngster looked up at his father and smiled. “I won’t get lost, Dad. I’ll just put my feet where yours have been.”

Jesus Christ is to us what the boy’s father was to him — the Way. Until he came, all man had was the written Word, the map of God; certain laws as signposts; but no guide, no step- by-step journey with another.

Yet unbelievably today, there are millions of people — some of them so-called Christians — who are still stumbling along without footprints, some even without the map or guideposts.

Why do we refuse to follow him? Why do we continue to try on our own? Here again, that familiar remark of Jesus’: “Except you become as little children —” We are still under the illusion that man does not need God or the Son he sent, that we are independent, fully sufficient.

Then why are so many of our people turning to drugs to escape the fact that they have lost the way? Why are so many turning against their neighbor because no one has helped them? *Why in your life is Christ’s will for you the last thing you really seek?*

If we cannot trust God’s will for our lives, whom do we trust?

*Prayer: Lord, you have given us the Bible as a map, your laws as guideposts, but because some of us are not able to follow even these without falling, you finally sent your Son to be our guide, to blaze a trail through this wilderness. O God, forgive me for my stubborn indifference, my waywardness in refusing his leadership as my Lord. AMEN*

## THURSDAY

### “THE HIGH COST OF REMORSE”

#### SCRIPTURE:

II Corinthians 7:9, 10; Hebrews 10: 14-18

A high school girl, in a spiteful moment one day, spread a malicious rumor about another student. This rumor multiplied beyond all proportion until the student was forced into an ugly confrontation with both teachers and fellow students.

The girl, who had started the rumor, became more frantic and depressed as the days went on; she was irritable, unable to work, short with her friends and suspicious of everyone.

Finally, a teacher who knew her well, asked her why she had done such a thing and she said, “I don’t know, but I’m suffering more that he is now. I’m paying for what I did!”

To which the teacher quietly replied, “Yes, but you are having to pay in installments and the interest is so high that you will always be in debt.”

This is what we face without the forgiveness of God: a debt so great that we can only pay in installments, and as the debts mount up, the rates go higher and we fall farther and farther behind. This is guilt, this debt, and it is destroying lives daily that need not be destroyed.

Jesus Christ, in every way he could, tried to tell people that he had come to take this debt for us.

The high school girl could ask forgiveness of the friend — but deep inside would be the debt of the destruction she had caused that could not be made up. It is this unseen, irrevocable debt that Christ takes. We do not know how — but he does totally eradicate it in the eyes of God.

*Prayer: God, may I never fall prey to the needless remorse of unpaid debts to other people. As I bring each one to you, will you lift the guilt and free me that I may go out with love and more freely forgive others. AMEN*