

GREAT RESOLUTIONS

Program Six

A Glimpse into the Life of D. L. Moody

What was it that made D. L. Moody the man he was? It is easy to observe a person's work and accomplishments and then think that we know that person. But a truer picture can be seen if we look at a person's attitudes, relationships and daily living. In this way that we can find the roots of a person's living and work. In this program, therefore, we will take another glimpse into the life of D. L. Moody. We will consider his daily life and his attitude toward several matters.

Mornings with the Lord

The roots of Moody's Christian life were nourished morning by morning. Like the children of Israel, Moody gathered a fresh supply from the Lord at the beginning of each day. He said, "A man can no more take in a supply of grace for the future than he can eat enough today to last him for the next six months, nor can he inhale sufficient air into his lungs with one breath to sustain life for a week to come. We are permitted to draw upon God's store of grace from day to day as we need it." Therefore Moody practiced spending time with the Lord every morning. "We ought to see the face of God every morning before we see the face of man," he said.

"I have never seen a man or woman who spent fifteen or twenty minutes alone with God every day that didn't have the dew all the while. I have never known one to backslide, either. You never get more than one day's journey from Christ if you come to Him every morning. Shut the world out. Get closeted with God and you will learn His secrets. I like to get up at five o'clock in the morning and turn the key and be alone, and let God talk with me."

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His Prayer Life

Moody learned in his service not to depend on himself, but to bring all matters to the Lord in prayer. God's children should be "careful for nothing, prayerful for everything, and thankful for anything," he said. And similarly: "Some people think God does not like to be troubled with our constant coming and asking. The way to trouble God is not to come at all." He realized the great privilege and opportunity it was to come to the Lord in prayer because "God sends no one away empty except those who are full of themselves." Moody also encouraged others to take time to come to the Lord in prayer. He would not take the excuse of being too busy to pray. He said, "If you have so much business to attend to that you have no time to pray, depend upon it that you have more business on hand than God ever intended you to have."

Moody had a high view of prayer: "Prayer does not mean that I am to bring God down to my thoughts and my purposes, and bend his government according to my foolish, silly, and sometimes sinful notions. Prayer means that I am to be raised up into feeling, into union and design with Him; that I am to enter into His counsel and carry out His purpose fully." Moody realized that in order for our prayers to be according to the will of God, they must be based upon the revelation of His will, and that if we are to pray acceptably, we need the hearing of the Lord's Word to learn of His purpose toward us and the world.

Concerning corporate prayer, Moody recommended that believers keep their prayers short. He said, "Some men's prayers need to be cut short at both ends and set on fire in the middle."

Mixing Prayer and the Word Together

Moody's faith was grounded on the Bible. He said, "I prayed for faith and thought that someday faith would come down and strike

me like lightning. But faith did not seem to come. One day I read in the tenth chapter of Romans, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." I had up to this time closed my Bible and prayed for faith. I now opened my Bible and began to study, and faith has been growing ever since." Moody knew that God's word could always be relied upon. "It is easier for me to have faith in the Bible than to have faith in D. L. Moody, for Moody has fooled me lots of times.

Moody liked to mix prayer with his reading of the Word. He said, "Prayer is important, but there is something else important. When I pray I am talking with God: when I read the Bible God talks to me. We need both.... If we read the Word and do not

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buildeth up. If we pray without reading the Word, we shall be ignorant of the mind and will of God, and become mystical and fanatical, and liable to be blown about by every wind of doctrine."

Therefore, Moody loved to take the Bible as his prayer book – especially the prayers of David in the Psalms. He recommended praying verses 23-24 of Psalm 139 daily. He said, "I do not know any better prayer that we can make than this prayer of David – 'Search me, O, God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.'"

Dealing with Temptation and Sin

D. L. Moody came from a good home where his mother taught him much with regard to proper human living. He was taught to be disciplined in his habits and to keep his promises. He was raised to have sympathy toward the poor and learned the

value of self-sacrifice.

As he grew up and ventured out on his own, he appreciated even more the importance of an upright character. "Character is what a man is in the dark." Yet Moody was well aware that he was a man in the flesh and a sinner. Testifying of his experience, he said, "I have more trouble with D. L. Moody than with any other man I ever met." He knew God's adversary, the devil. He said, "I believe Satan to exist for two reasons: first, the Bible says so; and second, I've done business with him."

Moody learned a few lessons which became a real help to him. He realized he could not trust in his own strength. He said, "When a man thinks he has got a good deal of strength, and is self-confident, you may look for his downfall. It may be years before it comes to light, but it is already commenced. Moody learned to flee to the Lord in times of temptation. He said that "temptations are like tramps. Treat them kindly, and they will return bringing others with them." He encouraged others saying, "My friends, you are no match for Satan, and when he wants to fight you just run to your elder Brother, who is more than a match for all the devils in hell."

Moody also practiced staying in the Word to be kept from sin. He said, "Sin will keep you from this Book or this Book will keep you from sin." This is according to the thought and prayer of the psalmist in Psalm 119, 'In my heart I have treasured up Your word that I might not sin against You (v. 11). Establish my footsteps in Your word, and do not let any iniquity have dominion over me (v. 133).'

Dwight Moody knew that "God hates sin, but loves the sinner, and that the law tells me how crooked I am; but grace comes along and straightens me out." He was quick to acknowledge his sins before God. He realized that "God has nothing to say to the self-righteous" so he practiced and advised others to keep short accounts and to exercise to be right with God and with man. When he would lose his temper, he apologized to the whole congregation and went on. He treasured the Lord's sweet forgiveness. He said, "The voice of sin is loud, but the voice of forgiveness is

louder.”

Moody understood that there are often long-term consequences of our offenses. He said, “If a man gets drunk and goes out and breaks his leg so that it must be amputated, God will forgive him if he asks, but he will have to hop around on one leg all his life.”

Finally Moody sought the prayer of others. As a young man, he wrote to his mother asking her to pray that he would be kept from temptations. Later, he thanked his critics for pointing out his shortcomings and asked them to pray for him. He hoped that through his fleeing to the Lord, abiding in the Word, confessing his sins and depending on the prayer of others, a holy life would be produced which would give others a deep impression of Christ. He said, “More depends on my walk than on my talk. Lighthouses blow no horns; they only shine.”

Overcoming the World

As a young brother, Dwight Moody had two great desires: first he wanted to become rich, and second he wanted to reach youth for Christ. As time went on, he began to accomplish both. But when he moved from Boston to Chicago, the demands on his time increased. He began to struggle with his aspirations and sensed that the Lord was calling him to let go of his first goal. Moody said, “The tendency of the world is down, but God’s path is up. If I walk with the world, I can’t walk with God. If we are full of pride and conceit and ambition and self-seeking and pleasure and the world, there is no room for the Spirit of God, and I believe many a man is praying to God to fill him when he is full already with something else.”

He testified that, “The greatest struggle I ever had in my life was when I gave up my business.” He had saved \$7,000 toward his goal of \$100,000 when he decided to surrender to the Father’s plans. He dropped his shoe sales, and began to serve the Lord with his full time. He determined to live off his savings, and then believed if his work was of the Lord, provision would be there to continue. He felt that if the Lord called him, the Lord would support him. No society or board guaranteed him a salary; his

dependence was upon God. He was being saved from his ambition for wealth, and was beginning to learn to trust in the Lord for his provision. From his youth he realized that he could stand affliction better than prosperity, for in prosperity man has a tendency to forget God.

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