



Sir John Templeton

NOVEMBER 29, 1912 – JULY 8, 2008

*Views, Values, & Vision*

The following words, largely by Sir John Templeton, are drawn from his book entitled: *Riches for the Mind and Spirit: A Treasury of Words to Help, Inspire and Live By*.

## INTRODUCTION

At the age of four or five, before I started school, I learned from my mother that one of the greatest blessings given to humanity is the gift of reading. Much of the world's wisdom resides in the written word. From the Bible, from philosophers and poets, and from other writers, we begin to form a clear understanding of the spiritual and ethical laws of life.

The world's literature teaches us valuable lessons that no amount of money can buy. Those lessons are there for everyone. They are free and they are priceless.

My purpose in assembling this collection of my favorite choices from the great works of inspiration is to pass on to others my love of reading and my joy in learning the valuable lessons of life. Because this anthology is the result of my reading over a lifetime, it would be impossible to include all of the Bible passages, works of theology and science, poems, songs, hymns, sermons, learned monographs, speeches, and works of fiction and history that have helped shape my life and make it richer. I would need many volumes! I am moved to mention, however, that Ruth Stafford Peale and Norman Vincent Peale have inspired and uplifted me and millions of others through their magazines *Guideposts* and

*Plus.* And, although I have been a lifelong member of the Presbyterian church, my mother imbued in me something of the spiritual philosophy of the Unity School of Christianity. I have benefited by reading the Unity books and magazines for more than sixty years.

But, you might wonder, what profit is there in studying the wisdom passed down to us? Why not simply live from day to day, taking things as they come? The answer is that our stay on this planet earth is a brief one and the time we are given to educate ourselves is all too short. For each person to grow spiritually, it is important to learn from others who may be wiser than we. From them, we can come to realize the impact of even a small gesture, word, or action upon another person.

One thing we learn from these wise people is that giving is a test of maturity. Those who are truly grown-up, give. The immature do not. It is wise to practice giving in every area of life. Give your feelings to others. Give money where it is needed and can truly help someone. Give attention. Give thoughtful, well-reasoned advice. If you are lonely, it's especially helpful to give. Give by taking on charity jobs or helping with fundraising. But—most of all—give thanks to the Lord for your many blessings. As Rabindranath Tagore put it so eloquently: “I slept and dreamed that life was happiness / I awoke and saw that life was service / I served and found that in service happiness was found.”

To pursue that thought further, the wisdom we can find in these pages teaches us that happiness does not come *to* us, but *through* us. It is a journey and not a stopping place. Achieving a goal brings less happiness than working with inspiration toward a goal. Happiness comes through the

work we do, the skills we struggle so hard to develop, the love and attention we show to others.

We learn, too, that happiness comes directly through prayer. The term “prayer” can mean *to trap a thought*. As one holds a thought in mind, it becomes a “state of mind,” or a general attitude. It is important to remember that we’re not products of circumstances or accident. We’re the end result of what we think. Our thoughts influence our words, our deeds, what other people think of us, and whether or not they want to associate with us. If we hope to lead a happy and useful life, mind power becomes essential. We can then make our mind a garden of indescribably beautiful flowers instead of a weed patch.

Giving, happiness, prayer, and mind power are four building blocks in the formation of a fulfilled existence on earth. I hope that this anthology can help you live in a manner that perhaps has never been better expressed than in the Apostle Paul’s Letter to the Romans (12:9-18, RSV): “Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; never be conceited. Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all.”

Now that I have reached the point of putting together my own personal collection of inspirational passages, I've found the hymnal a worthy model to follow in helping me organize my material. In the topical index at the back of the book, entries are placed in one or more of the following twenty categories: *charity, courage, creativity, enthusiasm, faith, forgiveness, giving, happiness, hope, humility, love, mind power, perseverance, positive thinking, prayer, pride, progress, thanksgiving, willpower, and work.*

I've been a devoted user of the church hymnal since my early youth. For me it has been a powerful teaching aid as well as a source of pleasure and solace. Hymnals of all churches are filled with inspirational literature, but no one hymn has been more inspirational for me than "Take Time to Be Holy," which you will find in part two of this treasury, "The Power of Spirit." I have selected other all-time favorites, among them "O God, Our Help in Ages Past," "I Am God's Melody of Life," and "All Things Bright and Beautiful." All religions have tended to picture God in limited human concepts, but some sense of His true infinity is expressed in the hymns included here. Although the words to these hymns are memorable, I feel that seeing them in context with their music lends them even greater meaning.

Many passages selected for this book have numerous applications and thus belong in more than one section. For example, I have included a moving chapter from Dr. Robert Schuller's book, *You Can Become the Person You Want to Be.* It tells the story of how a woman overcame grave physical problems—problems that could have left her bedridden

and helpless—to the point where today, against all odds, she is a practicing psychologist. The reader who uses the topical index will find this passage under *courage, faith, hope, perseverance, positive thinking, and willpower.*

The words that provide us with hope, inspiration, courage, happiness, and consolation come from all faiths and represent writers from many places and from various periods of our common history. In many different ways these writers say that life is a magic gift and that God is always ready to radiate His love and wisdom through our thoughts, words, and lives. It is my hope that readers, especially those who teach young people, will draw inspiration from these words and that, in the areas where individuals may feel most in need of help, some passage in this collection will point the way toward a brighter and more useful future.

— *John Marks Templeton*

## LOVE

Staggering amounts of manpower and money are devoted each year to discovering, understanding, and harnessing the forces of nature. Almost everyone agrees, however, that one of the greatest forces on earth is love. Should churches finance research into this elemental force? Should schools offer courses for credit, with homework, examinations and grades? The real wealth of a nation does not come from mineral resources but from what lies in the minds and hearts of its people.

The New Testament is full of vivid accounts of this love force, among them these passages from 1 John and Luke:

“Beloved, let us love one another for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation of our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No man has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

“By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his own Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we know and believe the love God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. In this is love perfected with us, that we may have confidence for the day

of judgment, because as he is so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and he who fears is not perfected in love. We love, because he first loved us. If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him, that he who loves God should love his brother also" (1 John 4:7-21, RSV).

"If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

"Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back (Luke 6:32-38, RSV).

This love force can be harnessed if we listen to our own hearts and minds, and follow its laws of life that lead to a joyous existence.

– *John Marks Templeton*



## MIND POWER

In February 1951, my first wife died and I was left with the care of our three small children and had to learn to be both mother and father to them while trying to build a business and earn a living.

It wasn't an easy period, but, along with my abiding faith in God, there were three qualities I began to develop more fully in myself: mind power, positive thinking, and willpower. I learned to quietly release negative thoughts. I would even say to these thoughts: "I lovingly release you to the vast nothingness from whence you came."

Eight years later I married a beautiful woman and our five children now have thirteen children who are a joy to us. My wife is active in the Christian Science church, which has yielded wonderful spiritual growth and strong faith for all the family.

Mind power, positive thinking, and willpower—they will take you far on your quest for wholeness.



## TWELVE THINGS TO REMEMBER

The Value of Time  
The Success of Perseverance  
The Pleasure of Working  
The Dignity of Simplicity  
The Worth of Character  
The Power of Kindness  
The Influence of Example  
The Obligation of Duty  
The Wisdom of Economy  
The Virtue of Patience  
The Improvement of Talent  
The Joy of Originating

*- An unknown author, but a favorite source of  
guidance and spiritual strength for Sir John.*

## POSITIVE THINKING

In my teenage years, like other young men the world over, I was inspired by the courage and vision of Rudyard Kipling's poem "If." It taught me to dream—but also to be master of my dreams, and to think without letting thoughts become an end in themselves. I learned from Kipling that the earth belongs to us all and that, with courage and enthusiasm, progress is certain to follow. The final stanza of "If" still rings in my ears:

*If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,  
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!*

Also in my teenage years, at fourteen, I memorized Longfellow's "Psalm of Life." It has encouraged me to use to the limit any gifts God may have given me.

We have to have the courage to try new experiences and the enthusiasm to carry them out. The result? Courage plus enthusiasm equals progress.

## HAPPINESS

Happiness sought eludes. Happiness given returns. The pursuit of happiness is never successful because happiness is always a by-product. Ralph Waldo Trine has said:

“There is no such thing as finding true happiness by searching for it directly. It must come, if it comes at all, indirectly, or by the service, the love, and the happiness we give to others. So there is no such thing as finding true greatness by searching for it directly. It always, without a single exception, has come indirectly in this same way, and it is not at all probable that this great eternal law is going to be changed to suit any particular case or cases. Then recognize it, put your life into harmony with it, and reap the reward of its observance, or fail to recognize it and pay the penalty accordingly; for the law itself will remain unchanged. Life is not, we may say, for mere passing pleasure, but for the highest unfoldment that one can attain to, the noblest character that one can render to all mankind. In this, however, we will find the highest pleasure, for in this the only real pleasure lies.”

If we endorse the humble approach, we should radiate love and happiness as faithfully as the sun radiates light and warmth. As sunlight is a creative source, so can our love be a creative source of new life and ideas. God is the source of love. Love cannot flow in unless it also flows out. The Spirit of God is like a stream of water and His disciples are like many beautiful fountains fed by this river of waters. Each one of us is such a fountain, and it is our task to keep the channel open so that God’s Spirit can flow through us and others can see His glory. Without God, we are not likely to

bring forth any good. If we think too much of the visible world or trust in our own ability, we become like a dogged fountain. We will never learn to radiate love as long as we love ourselves, for if we are characterized by self-concern, we will radiate self-concern.

Jesus then said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to be a follower of mine, he must leave self behind; he must take up his cross and come with me. Whoever cares for his own safety is lost; but if a man will let himself be lost for my sake, he will find his true self” (Matthew 16:24-25, NEB).

God loves us all equally and unceasingly. It is His nature to do so. We should seek always to let God’s love shine forth like the light inside an electric bulb illuminating all our habitation.

*– John Marks Templeton*

## LAWS OF THE SPIRIT

1. Happiness comes from spiritual wealth, not material wealth. Happiness is always a by-product, never a product. Happiness comes from giving, not getting. If we pursue happiness for ourselves, it will always elude us. If we try hard to bring happiness to others, we cannot stop it from coming to us also. The more we try to give it away, the more it comes back to us multiplied. If we try to grasp happiness, it always escapes us; if we try to hand it out to others, it sticks to our hands like glue.
2. The more love we give away, the more we have left. The laws of love differ from the laws of arithmetic. Love hoarded dwindles, but love given grows. If we give all our love, we will have more left than he who saves some. Giving love, not receiving, is important; but when we give with no thought of receiving, we automatically and inescapably receive abundantly. Heaven is a by-product of love. When we say "I love you," we mean that "a little of God's love flows from me to you." But, thereby, we do not love less, but more. For in flowing the quantity is magnified. God's love is infinite and is directed equally to each person, but it seems to gain intensity when directed to sinners. This is the wonder and mystery of it, that when we love God we get an enormous increase in the quantity flowing through us to others.
3. It is better to give than to receive. Giving is a sign of psychological and spiritual maturity. There are few diseases so childish and so deadly as the "gimmies," a disease that separates us from friends and from God and that shrinks the soul. The secret of success is giving, not getting. To get joy we must give it and to keep joy we

must scatter it. The greatest charity is to help a person change from being a receiver to being a giver.

4. Loneliness is the punishment for those who want to get, not give. Helping others is the cure for loneliness. If we feel lonely, we are probably self-centered. If we feel unloved, we are probably unloving. If we love only ourselves, we may be the only person to love us. Whatever we give out, we get back.
5. Thanksgiving opens the door to spiritual growth. If there is any day in our life which is not thanksgiving day, then we are not fully alive. Counting our blessings attracts blessings. Counting our blessings each morning starts a day full of blessings. Thanksgiving brings God's bounty. From gratitude comes riches—from complaints, poverty. Thankfulness opens the door to happiness. Thanksgiving causes giving. Thanksgiving puts our mind in tune with the Infinite. Continual gratitude dissolves our worries.
6. To be forgiven, we must first forgive. Forgiving brings forgiveness. Failure to forgive creates a hell for the unforgiver, not the unforgiven.
7. When Jesus was asked to name the greatest law, He said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:37-40, KJV).

— *John Marks Templeton*

## THANKSGIVING

Through belief in God there are countless ways that we can open a door into bright spaces of spiritual bliss. Thanksgiving offers each of us the opportunity to show that we do indeed give thanks for our many blessings.

For more than thirty years, my family has sent Thanksgiving cards rather than Christmas cards to our friends, desiring to spread our gratitude for the many gifts of life. One year we included in our Thanksgiving mailing a parchment copy of the prayer of St. Francis suitable for framing, another year a complete copy of *The Greatest Thing on Earth* by Henry Drummond, and still another year the text of Ralph Waldo Trine's *In Tune with the Infinite*.

Like Thanksgiving, giving is an open door to greater spiritual enlightenment; so is forgiveness. We give of ourselves, we give thanks, and we learn to forgive ourselves and others.

The door is there for all of us to open.



What is the shape of the future? As long as freedom lives, the future is glorious.

When I was born in 1912 in Franklin County, Tennessee, the United States had no color film . . . no refrigerators . . . no radios . . . no transcontinental telephones . . . no fluorescent lights . . . no traffic lights . . . no talking pictures . . . no plastics . . . no human-made fibers . . . no airplanes . . . no photocopiers . . . no fax machines . . . no sports broadcasts . . . no antibiotics . . . no herbicides . . . no nylon . . . no frozen foods . . . no television . . . no transistors . . .



no lasers . . . no genetic engineering . . . no nuclear energy . . . and no human-made satellites. The uniform wage for unskilled workers was ten cents an hour. Now the average for factory workers is ten dollars.

Even after adjusting for inflation, the increase is more than tenfold. The federal budget in nominal dollars is now almost three hundred times as great as at the peak of prosperity in 1929. In my lifetime real consumption per person worldwide—that is, the standard of living in real goods—has more than quadrupled.

A landmark for freedom was the publication 214 years ago of Adam Smith's great work called *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. In 214 years of relative freedom, the yearly output of goods and services worldwide has increased more than a hundredfold. This is a hundredfold increase in real goods and services consumed, net after eliminating inflation.

Before Adam Smith, less than one thousand corporations existed on earth, but now corporations are being created at the rate of four thousand every business day. In the days of Adam Smith, 85 percent of the people were needed on the farm, but now less than 4 percent of the people on the farms in America produce a surplus of food.

We now enjoy prosperity greater than ever dreamed of before this century. Will this rate of progress continue in the future? If we are able to preserve and enhance freedom, these trends may continue and accelerate. We may expect more rapid change and wider fluctuations. Life will be full of adventure and opportunity and never be dull or routine.

In America alone this year over \$100 billion will be dedicated to research and development—more in one year and in one nation than the total research for all the world’s history before I was born. Awesome new blessings are visible also in health, entertainment, spiritual growth, and charity. In America alone over \$100 billion will be donated to churches and charities this year. Each year the generous and voluntary giving by Americans alone exceeds the total income of all the world’s people in any year before Adam Smith.

We should be overwhelmingly grateful to have been born in this century. The slow progress of prehistoric ages is over, and centuries of human enterprise are now miraculously bursting forth into flower. The evolution of human knowledge is accelerating, and we are reaping the fruits of generations of scientific thought: Only sixty years ago astronomers became convinced that the universe is 100 billion times larger than previously thought. More than half of the scientists who ever lived are alive today. More than half of the discoveries in the natural sciences have been made in this century. More than half of the goods produced since the earth was born have been produced in the two centuries since Adam Smith. Over half the books ever written were written in the last half-century. More new books are published each month than were written in the entire historical period before the birth of Columbus.

Discovery and invention have not stopped or even slowed down. Who can imagine what will be discovered if research continues to accelerate? Each discovery reveals new mysteries. The more we learn, the more we realize how ignorant we were in the past and how much more there is still to discover.

If you do not fall down on your knees each day, with overwhelming gratitude for your blessings—your multiplying multitudes of blessings—then you just have not yet seen the big picture.

—*John Marks Templeton*



## A CHRISTIAN'S DAILY PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Almighty God, our loving heavenly father, through faith and the Holy Ghost, we are totally one unity with Thee.

Thou art all of us and we are a little part of Thee. Every little cell and every little vibration that sustains us is only an outward expression of Thy divine will in perfect health and harmony.

Thou art always guiding us and inspiring us to the right decisions in family matters, in business matters, in health matters, and especially in spiritual matters.

Dear God, we are deeply, deeply grateful for Thy millions of blessings and millions of miracles that surround us each day. We are especially grateful for the miracles of prayers answered. We are especially grateful for Thy healing presence, which gives us long and useful lives in which to love Thee more and more and to serve Thee better and better.

Dear God, help us to open our minds and hearts more fully to receive Thy unlimited love and wisdom and to radiate these to Thy other children on earth, especially today and all this year.

Dear God, we thank Thee for blessing and healing each of our families and friends and for helping each of us to be better and better Christians.

We thank Thee for Thy miraculous and continued blessing, guidance, and inspiration of our careers and daily work to serve others in business and churches and charities, so that all of these will be more and more in accord with Thy wishes, O Lord, not ours. We listen and obey and are grateful.

We thank Thee for our redemption and salvation and for Thy gift of the Holy Ghost, by grace, which fills us to overflowing and increasingly dominates our every thought and word and deed.

To Thee we pray, in the name of Thy beloved son, whom we adore and seek to imitate, our Savior and our God, Christ Jesus. Amen.

*— John Marks Templeton*

## GIVING

One of the laws of the spirit seems to be that self-improvement comes mainly from trying to help others—especially from trying to help others to enjoy spiritual growth. Growth comes by humbly seeking to be a more useful tool in God’s hands. Giving material things to others helps the growth of the givers but often injures the receivers. It is better to help the receivers to find ways to grow spiritually themselves. It is more farsighted to give advice and instruction, like a wise father to the son whom he loves. If, following Jesus, we teach “Seek ye first the Kingdom of God,” then the other material things will follow. Helping the poor to grow spiritually and to become givers themselves is the only real road to permanent riches, including material riches.

— *John Marks Templeton*

## PROGRESS

Youth is not a time of life, it's a state of mind: it is a temper of the will, a quality of the imagination, a vigor of the emotions, a predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite for adventure over love of ease. Nobody grows old by merely living a number of years; people grow old only by deserting their ideals. Years wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul. Worry, doubt, self-distrust, fear and despair—these are the long, long years that bow the head and turn the growing spirit back to dust. Whether seventy or sixteen, there is in every being's heart the love of wonder, the sweet amazement at the stars and the star-like things and thought, the undaunted challenge of events, the unfailing childlike appetite for what-next, and the joy and the game of life.

You are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt, as young as your self-confidence, as old as your fear, as young as your hope, as old as your despair. So long as your heart receives messages of beauty, cheer, courage, grandeur and power from the earth, from man and from the infinite, so long are you young. When the wires are all down and all the central place of your heart is covered with the snows of pessimism and the ice of cynicism, then you are grown old indeed and may God have mercy on your soul.

*- Unknown author, but this vision of progress was an inspirational base for Sir John's lifelong conviction regarding the benefits of progress.*

## HUMILITY

In my book *The Humble Approach*, I wrote: “By learning humility, we find that the purpose of life on earth is vastly deeper than any human mind can grasp. Diligently, each child of God should seek to find and obey God’s purpose, but none be so egotistical as to think that he or she comprehends the infinite mind of God.”

The problem with pride is that it puts you in competition with everyone and everything and thus makes it difficult to seek the truth. As C. S. Lewis says, “Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man.”

Humility and pride—the former is in tune with God, whereas the latter is out of harmony with His teachings. Pride can learn this lesson of great value from humility—that one need have no enemies or rivals, that in the eyes of God no one is better or worse than anyone else.



When man becomes humble in his approach to God, then he can think and speak in this way:

Billions of stars in the Milky Way are upheld in the dynamic embrace of God’s being, and He is much more.

Billions and billions of stars in other galaxies are creatively sustained in God in the same way, and He is much more.

Time and space and energy are all included within the power of God’s presence, and He is much more.

Men who dwell in three dimensions can apprehend only a very little of God's multitude of dimensions.

God infinitely surpasses all the things seen and also the vastly greater abundance of things unseen by man.

God is the only ultimate reality—all else is fleeting and contingent.

The awesome mysteries of magnetism, gratitude, joy, and love are all from God himself, and He is much more.

Five billion people live on earth and live and move and have their being in God, and He is much more.

Untold billions of beings on planets of millions of other galaxies are what they are in God, and He is much more.

God is beginning to create His universe and allows each of us His children to participate in small ways in this creative evolution.

God is infinitely great and also infinitely small. He is present in each of our inmost thoughts, each of our trillions of body cells, and each of the wave patterns in each cell.

God embraces all of us within the presence and power of His being, but we are a very little of all that subsists in Him.



We are perched on the frontiers of future knowledge. Even though we stand upon the enormous mountain of information collected over the last five centuries of scientific progress, we have only fleeting glimpses of the future. To a large extent, the future lies before us like a vast wilderness of unexplored reality. The God who created and sustains His evolving universe through eons of progress and development



has not placed our generation at the tag end of the creative process. He has placed us at a new beginning. We are here for the future.

Our role is crucial. As human beings we are endowed with mind and spirit. We can think, imagine, and dream. We can search for future trends through the rich diversity of human thought. God permits us in some ways to be co-creators with Him in His continuing act of creation.

Scientists have steadily been changing their concepts of the universe and laws of nature, but the progression is always away from smaller self-centered or human-centered concepts. Evidence is always accumulating that things seen are only one aspect of the vastly greater unseen realities. Human observational abilities are very limited and so are our mental abilities. Should we not focus ourselves on the unseen realities and not on the fleeting appearances? Should we not kneel down in humility and worship the awesome, infinite, omniscient, eternal Creator?

By learning humility, we find that the purpose of life on earth is vastly deeper than any human mind can grasp. Diligently, each child of God should seek to find and obey God's purpose, but none be so egotistical as to think that he or she comprehends the infinite mind of God.

Every person's concept of God is too small. Through humility we can begin to get into true perspective the infinity of God. This is the humble approach. Are we ready to begin the formulation of a humble theology which can never become obsolete? This would be a theology really centered on God and not our own little selves.



If the earth is a school, who are the teachers? One teacher is called adversity. Why did God put souls into a world of tribulations? Why did He not just make souls perfect in the first place? Is not God vastly more far-sighted and infinitely wise than we are? Maybe from God's perspective the sorrows and tribulations of this earth are the best way to educate souls.

Growth can come through trial and self-discipline. There is a wealth of evidence indicating that too much prosperity without work weakens character and causes us to become self-centered rather than God-centered. Spiritual growth and happiness do not come from getting but from learning to give. The great souls are the most rapidly growing souls. Trees and human bodies are limited in growth both in space and time, but is there any evidence that the individual soul is limited in its growth?

How could a soul understand divine joy or be thankful for heaven if it had not previously experienced earth? How could a soul comprehend the joy of surrender to God's will if it had never witnessed the hell people make on earth by trying to rely on self-will or on another frail human or on a soul-less, human-made government?

Maybe the earth was designed as a place of hardship because it is the best way to build a soul—the best way to teach spiritual joy versus the bodily ills. Why was it said that into every life some rain must fall? It is apparent that sometimes a great soul does not develop until that person has gone through some great tragedy. Let us humbly admit that God knows best how to build a soul. If the soul were born perfect, how would it understand or appreciate the absence of pain and sorrow? As a good father does not do his son's homework for him, so our Heavenly Father does what helps us to grow, not what we ask for.

—*John Marks Templeton*

## FAITH

When I was a small boy growing up in Winchester, Tennessee, Sunday school was an important part of my life. It was there that I began to sense the magical power of spiritual conversation. I learned that when God talks to us, His means of communication is the Bible. The great lessons of Jesus are narrated for our edification and, from Genesis to Revelation, light is shed on the mysteries of spiritual existence.

It was in Sunday school that I was introduced to the Golden Rule. People of all faiths have been inspired and uplifted by its message, which is repeated in the scriptures of the nine major religions. It was in Sunday school also that I first read the Sermon on the Mount, which is at the very heart of the Christian gospel and should be studied and memorized by every Sunday school student. Both the Golden Rule and the Sermon on the Mount are included in this section. As an adult, I taught Sunday school in the Presbyterian church in Englewood, New Jersey. I helped all of my students memorize Luke 6:27-38, where God speaks to us of the most profound matters.

When we talk to God we reach Him through prayer. We tell Him of our hopes and fears; we express our desire to help others and to become better human beings. In the Bible passages and prayers that follow, we can explore and experience the vital dialogue that takes place constantly between God and humans.

Because I find that some Bible translations express their ancient meanings in words I like better than others, I have drawn on three versions: the *King James Version* (KJV), the *Revised Standard Version* (RSV), and the *New English Bible* (NEB).



Some people put their trust in their wealth. Others in their beauty. Others in their intellect. Still others in their strength. But you're likely to be disappointed if you put your total trust in any of these.

The giver of each of these is God, not you. You have been given strength or beauty or intelligence in order to let you experience humility and duty. Certainly not pride. There are people who say, "I earn my money by hard work," which is true in a limited sense. But who gave them the ability to work hard?

We should realize that God is in charge. Ultimately we must call on God for solutions. His purposes are wiser than ours. Excessive worry only increases the problems, whereas prayer and thanksgiving to God for help in solving problems often lead to surprising solutions.

My mother reared my brother and me on the philosophy that only God could protect us from mistake and harm. She could not. For example, one time we were taking a canoe trip down a small and dangerous river. We couldn't call home at sundown as planned because our canoe had sunk. Four hours after nightfall we finally hiked to a phone. Our mother promptly drove out and picked us up. She hadn't worried about us. She knew that we were children of God and that He would watch over us. There was no reason for her to worry endlessly.

Since then I have always tried to think up every possible solution to a problem and then go to sleep at night, confident that through prayer God will guide me.

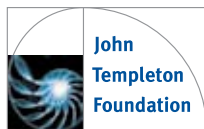
– *John Marks Templeton*

## UNLIMITED LOVE

### 1 Corinthians 13

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends; as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect; but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood. So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

*Revised Standard Version*



---

SUPPORTING SCIENCE - INVESTING IN THE BIG QUESTIONS

300 Conshohocken State Road, Suite 500  
West Conshohocken, Pennsylvania 19428  
Tel 610.941.2828 Fax 610.825.1730  
[www.templeton.org](http://www.templeton.org)