

Write Upon My Heart

Cheerfulness

Published by Keepers of the Faith

Write Upon My Heart—Cheerfulness is copyrighted by Jeff and Susan Zakula 2002.
Revised Copyright 2018

PDF TERMS OF USE

Keepers of the Faith retains all copyrights for these materials. With that said, you may print the books in whole or in part. As with any other of our materials, you are free to use them to suit the needs of your church, homeschool, or family group. They should *not* be modified, distributed, sold, or relicensed. We have put much thought and prayer into how and why this program works, and we wish to preserve that formula. From time to time, you will certainly use additional resources for projects or activities. We ask that you do not include them as part of the original work, but simply make them available as resources, so that people know that it is a distinct piece of intellectual property. We are happy for everyone to make what customizations they feel necessary for their groups. We would simply like new users to start with a program from the source, rather than something heavily modified that they might think came from Keepers of the Faith. If you have any questions, please feel free to write us at sales@keepersofthefaith.com.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

You can work right through from the first page until the last, or you can start anywhere in between. Just be sure to complete all the pages. Working a page or two a day will help you complete the book in a month's time.

Fill out a journal page *each* day regardless of where you are working in the book.

Keepers of the Faith®
sales@keepersofthefaith.com
www.keepersofthefaith.com

CHARACTER—WHAT IS IT?

What is character? Why do we say that one person has good character and another poor character, or that someone has character and someone else does not? What is being measured? It is not really a person's actions, for people often make mistakes acting in good faith, and we do not consider that bad character. No, it has to do with who a person is—or has become—by the *habits* that he or she has formed.

Good habits become good character, and bad habits become bad character; and yet character is not just the sum of one's habits. In many cases it has taken only a single bad habit to destroy a life. In other cases, just one outstanding good habit has prevented an otherwise mediocre life from totally crumbling. We cannot know which habit might be our most powerful support, or which might cause our complete downfall. So, the safest venture is to develop as many good habits or traits as we can, especially in areas displacing any habits that we have which may not be good.

It takes work to form habits, but the good news is that once they are formed they are a snap to keep, for then they come naturally to us! How nice it is to be so used to doing the right thing that we actually prefer to do it! *“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap,”* —Galatians 6:7. Develop good habits when you are young, and you will reap the benefits for all of your life.

Where can we look to find the best essence of good character? How about God's Word? It has the essence of everything good. Jesus was an example of perfect character. *“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps,”* —1 Peter 2:21. As we study His life and God's Word, they will give us the guidelines by which to form our own habits and lives.

HABITS—WHAT ARE THEY?

Habits are those things that we do most naturally or instinctively—without having to make a decision, because the decision has been made enough times that we do not have to think about it any more. Things said and done by habit are

sometimes done without thinking.

For example, you do not contemplate whether or not to dress in the morning. You do it out of habit. If you brush your teeth every morning, you do not ask yourself if you should each day. You do it out of habit. Each good habit that we build—diligently—doing the best thing in an oft-repeated situation—is like a fence that we build between ourselves and some sort of heartbreak. However, it requires no effort to develop bad habits, and bad character is exactly what lack of effort becomes. So, a little work early in life can do much to prevent the manifold grief and loss encountered as a poorly formed character limps on through the years of life.

HABITS—THEY BEGIN IN THE HEART

“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he,” —Proverbs 23:7a. That means that we are what we think. We say what we think, and we do what we think. What determines what we think? We do. Why do we think the way that we do? We taught ourselves to think that way. Often when people say, “I really didn’t think about it,” they had already taught themselves exactly what to think about “it.”

Each thought makes a tiny connection in the brain like a thread. Each similar thought strengthens that connection by adding another thread. Eventually, the threads become great enough in number that they become a rope. Often a mind becomes bound by such a rope, whether it is a good rope or a bad rope. Habit begins to affect our thinking. We begin to do things almost automatically because what we think is what we will do.

It is important to form good habits *now*. Later may be too late. We are becoming *right now* what we are going to be. We are going to become what we are thinking *now*, because *“as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.”* Our thoughts are very powerful. We cannot touch them or see them, but nevertheless, they are very real. They are more powerful than our actions because they control our actions. However, we can decide what we think! We can make our thoughts subject to our will and the will of God. We have access to a power stronger than our thoughts—the power of God. He tells how to control our thoughts. *“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) casting down imaginations, and*

every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ,” —2 Corinthians 10:3-5.

So, why is it so important to form good habits early? Is not God powerful enough to break bad habits? Yes, He has the power to break any habit, but there are very many that He never breaks. The reason is that people grow to like their habits. They begin to hate the thought of breaking them—even the bad ones. People do not like change. The ropes that bind their minds are of their own making, and they are loath to give them up. How many drug addicts live absolutely horrid lives, bound to drugs from which they wish they were free, yet who will lie, cheat, steal, fight, and even kill to continue taking the drugs causing them so much misery? People grow to like their bad habits so much that they often will not let them go for what they wish they could have.

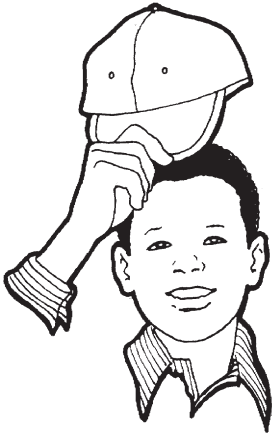
How do we learn not to like our bad habits? By learning to like new ones. Do what is right, and soon you will like doing it. There is a saying, “Your actions will determine your emotions.” We become comfortable with something only after we do it for a while. Another saying says, “Eat olives nine times and you will like them.” Proverbs 16:3 teaches, “*Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.*” Do you want to think rightly? Do you want to feel good doing right even if you do not like it right now? Just do it anyway! See how much it changes the way you think and feel. Replace bad habits and have good character by simply making new habits in place of the old ones!

Lastly, it is not enough to have good character. We can have the very best character, and yet become lost for eternity, for there are none who have not sinned. The Bible tells us that the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ. Jesus paid the price for our debt of sin. Only by trusting Him will we see the Celestial City.

It is said that “character has its own reward,” and so it does. People with good character instinctively feel much better about themselves than people without it. This is a far better and happier way to live. However, this reward pales at the prospect of eternal reward. It is great to have character. But, remember, it is infinitely more rewarding to belong to Jesus, and have character for His glory.

Cheerfulness

*If I am always downhearted,
If I am often gloomy and sad,
If I see the negative instead of the positive,
I know nothing yet of cheerfulness.*



We always enjoy being around cheerful people. When we are relaxing they make the time seem so enjoyable. When we are working they seem to make the time simply speed along. When we are troubled or afraid, we feel calmer around cheerful people. Even when the clouds are dark, cheerful people always seem to be walking in sunshine. If we like cheerful people (everyone does), and we like to be around cheerful people, we really should learn to *be* cheerful people. God wants His followers to be cheerful. What is the sense of having followers who follow with long, mopey faces and poor attitudes—followers who are always sad and depressed? Such people depress others as well.

People who are cheerful not only please God, but they encourage those around them. A follower of Jesus brightens the days of others by kind words and deeds. A cheerful person is like a cool breath of fresh air on a hot day. As we study cheerfulness, we should consider that cheerful people have problems and heartaches too, but they have learned that we can actually live above our problems, and that it makes our lives much happier.

Someone once calculated that it takes fourteen muscles to smile and eighty-seven to frown. No wonder grumpy people are so tired! They punish themselves. Frowning, pouting, and moping are all selfish activities, yet they damage us immensely more than they do others. Let's not punish ourselves! Let's learn to be cheerful.



LEARNING THE TRAIT

The word “cheerful” means full of good spirits or merry. To cheer is to brighten or bring gladness, joyfulness, and rejoicing. Cheerful means to be ungrudging such as in cheerful obedience. A cheerful person will dispel gloom and worry. Actually, even a room can sometimes be cheerful (a sunny, cheerful room). Look up the definitions of the following words using a dictionary, and write them in the space provided.

Brighten _____

Dispel _____

Glad _____

Joyful _____

Rejoicing _____



SCRIPTURE STUDY

Copy the following verse.

Matthew 9:2

What does this verse mean?

How can this verse be applied to your life?

BIBLE EXAMPLE



1. Read Acts 21:27 through Acts 23:11.
2. Answer the following questions.

(1) Paul found himself among many people. How did they feel about him?

(2) What did they want to do to Paul?

(3) What might have made you afraid if you had been Paul?

(4) Paul did not get upset. He encouraged himself. What did he do next?

(5) How did the people feel about that?

(6) What happened to Paul next?

(7) Paul was still not discouraged when he was brought before the council. What did he do there?

(8) What did the council do?

(9) What happened to Paul next?



SCRIPTURE STUDY

Copy the following verse.

John 16:33

What does this verse mean?

How can this verse be applied to your own life?

A Smile

A smile costs nothing but gives much—
It takes but a moment, but the memory of it usually lasts forever.

MORE ABOUT JESUS

Jesus was a great encourager. He noticed that others were often afraid or worried. He understood their fears. He did not laugh at them. He cared about them. And what did Jesus do when He saw the concern or worry of others? He spoke words of encouragement to them. He said, “Be of good cheer.” In other words, “Be encouraged. Don’t worry. I have overcome the world. Don’t be afraid.” Jesus was a Tower of strength, the Source of true strength; and, because Jesus was strong, He encouraged others to be of good cheer.

We can do that too. We are not so strong, but we know the One, Jesus, Who is strong. When we are worried or afraid, we can turn to Jesus, and He will encourage us too! We can leave our fears and troubles with Him. We can encourage ourselves in Him. He will make us cheerful. When we see that others are downhearted or worried, we, too, can say, “Be of good cheer. Jesus has overcome the world. He cares for me—He will care for you too.”

1. Why would it would be wrong to laugh at another’s fears?

2. What would be right to do for another’s fears?

3. Do you know someone who is fearful? If so, explain what their fear is, and how you could encourage them.

4. Do you know anyone who is downhearted or sad? Why?

5. What can you do to help?



LIFE'S MADE UP OF LITTLE THINGS

**LIFE'S MADE UP OF LITTLE THINGS,
NO GREAT SACRIFICE OR DUTY,
BUT SMILES AND MANY A CHEERFUL WORD
FILL UP OUR LIVES WITH BEAUTY.**

**THE HEARTACHES, AS THEY COME AND GO,
ARE BUT BLESSINGS IN DISGUISES,
FOR TIME WILL TURN THE PAGES O'ER
AND SHOW US GREAT SURPRISES.**

SELECTED

A STORY ABOUT CHEERFULNESS—

“I’M HARD OF HEARING, YOU KNOW.”

Isabella Alden

Sadie Lewis was cross. Things weren’t going right. She couldn’t find a certain plaything, and it was raining, and she wanted to have on her new dress and go out to walk. And oh, ever so many things were awry.

She tried to talk to Grandma.

“I think it is real mean anyway, to have it rain today,” she said.

“What did you say, dearie?” Grandma asked, putting her hand to her ear. “Grandma is hard of hearing, you know.”

“I said I thought it was horrid to rain today,” shouted Sadie, coming closer.

“A happy rain did you say? Oh, yes, lovely. It makes the grass almost laugh, and I shouldn’t wonder if the rose bud blossomed right out.”

“Grandma, I said it was mean to rain,” yelled Sadie.

“Clean rain? Oh, yes, it is; and it makes everything else clean too; just see how it has washed the dust off the trees!”

“Oh, dear!” said Sadie, “I do wish Grandma could hear. Then she tried again, going close up to Grandma: “I said I didn’t like the rain a *bit*.”

“You like the rain and the wet, do you? Well, so do I. It is so pleasant to sit here and watch it, and see how nice it is making everything look. By and by there will be a rainbow, and that will be nicer yet. Yes, I like the rain as well as *you* do.”

“Oh, dear me!” said Sadie, “Grandma, you haven’t heard a word I have said.”

“What do you say, dearie?” asked Grandma, with a odd little pucker around



the corners of her mouth. "I'm hard of hearing, you know."

Sadie saw the puckered mouth, and began to think it was odd that Grandma couldn't hear *anything*; she made up her mind to try once more. She went close to her, but didn't speak quite so loud, and said:

"Grandma, I love you."

"Do you, my darling?" said Grandma. "How glad I am; so do I love you, my little sunbeam. I'm hard of hearing, you know, but I can't help hearing when people say sweet and pleasant things."

Answer the following questions regarding the story.

1. Do you think Grandma really could not hear what her granddaughter was saying? Explain why.

2. Why do you think Grandma was not hearing Sadie's complaints?

3. What lesson did Sadie learn from Grandma?

*Smiles create sunshine in the home!
Why not make your home a sunny place?*



SCRIPTURE STUDY

Copy the following verse.
Romans 12:8

What does this verse mean?

How can this verse be applied to your life?



DIAGNOSE THE PROBLEM

Read the following example and answer the questions.

Who Cares?

John was sitting on the side of his bed with his head hung low. Just now he was complaining to his best friend, Joe, of how he did not want to go to church the next day. He did not really mind going to church, but he did not want to see the boys with whom he usually hung around. They were all going to a basketball camp for a week that was held each year on a college campus. His parents had not allowed him to attend. The college was secular, and after classes, the boys would be generally left on their own. His parents did not feel that it was wise to place John in such a situation. John could see their point, but a couple of the boys were making fun of him, and he was letting it bother him.

Joe tried to cheer him by saying, “Who cares what the guys think? Jim’s parents don’t care much about it. They are going to go for a vacation the same week and don’t even mind that Jim is not going with them. Maybe the other parents do not see the same dangers that your parents see. At least you know one thing. Your parents care about you, and they are trying to do right by you. Hey! If you don’t want the guys to needle you, beat them at their own game! Don’t let it bother you. Be cheerful. Be happy. Let them know you have other things to think about, so it is no big deal!”

“Yeah, you’re right. I really don’t even want to go that badly. My dad and I are going to go fishing next Thursday. Besides, if they laugh at me, what does that hurt? Nothing at all, I suppose. I can be thankful my parents do care about me. Even if those fellows do wrong, there is no reason for me to sin. I have plenty of reasons to be cheerful.”

1. Why was John feeling down?

2. How did his friend, Joe, encourage him?

3. Explain how Joe helped John to see the situation differently.

4. We should always be cheerful. Name three reasons that John had for being cheerful.

5. How do you think John's cheerfulness will affect the other boys?

6. How do you think John's cheerfulness will affect his own happiness?

7. Explain whether Joe handled himself as a Christian should.

8. Explain how some other people might have acted in Joe's place.

9. How could John have really behaved better?

The Cheerful Giver

Receiv'st thou freely? freely give;
Give of thy goods a part;
Not grudgingly, for God doth love
A cheerful giver's heart.

If thou hast much, give plenteously;
Of little though possessed,
If offered in the Saviour's name,
Each little will be blest.

The widow's mite was not despised;
Christ said, "This offering small
Is more than all the rich men's gifts;
It is the widow's all!"

If like th' Apostle thou dost say,
"Of silver none is mine,"
Such as thou hast, of that bestow,
Thy labor, talents, time.

Not all have gold they can bestow,
Not all have time to spare;
Yet none may say they've nought to give,
For all can give a prayer.

Selected



SCRIPTURE STUDY

Copy the following verse.
2 Corinthians 9:7

What does this verse mean?

How can this verse be applied to your life?

**Some people are too busy to give you a smile—
Give them one of yours—
For the good Lord knows that no one needs a smile so badly
As he or she who has no more smiles left to give.
Selected**

DIAGNOSE THE PROBLEM

Read the following example and answer the questions.

Sunshine and Clouds



Kathleen was in a sour mood. Her summer was nearly gone, and she was bemoaning the fact that she had not done a single one of the “fun” things that she had wanted to do that summer. It was Saturday, and she once again had a huge list of chores to do. It seemed that ever since Mother had hurt her back, Kathleen’s life had become one long list of things to do. She had never known there was so much work involved in keeping house. What if her mother never recovered? This and many other negative thoughts were crowding into her mind, and there was beginning to be a scowl on her face regularly.

Her dad came into the kitchen. After noticing the look on her face, he said, “Kathleen, dear Kathleen, where is my little sunshine?” He gave her a gentle hug and asked her what was the matter.

With such a sympathetic ear, she found herself quickly pouring out her troubles. A couple of tears just seemed to slip out in the process. Her dad was able to help her put the events of the summer in a different light.

“Kathleen, be of good cheer! Mother is getting better; this was only one summer in your whole lifetime; you are being a wonderful help to your family, and you are learning how to manage a home effectively! And, honey, up until today, your sweet and cheerful attitude, your “sunshine,” has been a great blessing to your mother. Just a little longer, and things will begin to go back as they used to be.”

“Yes,” said Kathleen to herself, “why let my sunshine be clouded over with self-pity and selfishness?” Right then and there, she resolved to put on “cheerfulness” and count her blessings instead of woes.

1. Why was Kathleen feeling sorry for herself?

2. What do grumpy thoughts do to our faces? How?

3. What do disagreeable thoughts do to our cheerfulness?

4. How did Kathleen's dad help her?

5. How can you help yourself when you are not feeling cheerful?

6. How can the memory verses help you to remain cheerful?

7. Why should a Christian be cheerful?



SCRIPTURE STUDY

Copy the following verse.
Matthew 14:27

What does this verse mean?

How can this verse be applied to your life?

Have you ever noticed how many cheerful things God has placed in His world to cheer you? Here are a few:

Bright, colorful, sweet-smelling flowers!

Bright sunrises and glorious sunsets!

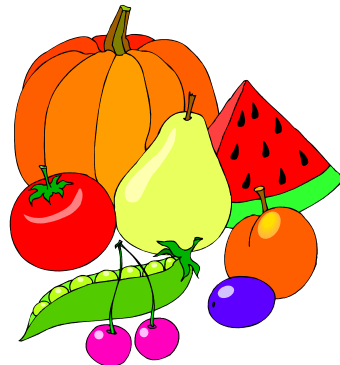
Cool breezes on hot days!

Fathers and mothers!

A variety of delicious food to satisfy our hunger!

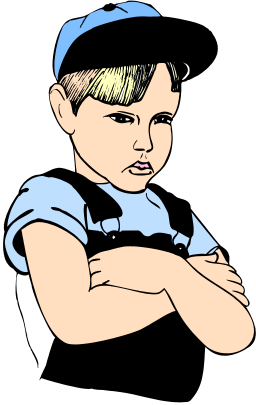
Forgiveness for our sins!

Can you think of some more?



INSTRUCTIONS IN CHEERFULNESS

“A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance.” —Proverbs 15:13a



There are some children who smile quickly and easily. There are others who pout and frown. There are those who always seem happy, and still others who are always complaining and down. Which one pleases the Lord? Which one finds happiness in each day? Take a moment to think about which type you are. Which do you want to be? The choice is up to you.

“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he,” —Proverbs 23:7a. Again, what we think is what we are! If we are willing, we can change what we are. Each thought is like a tiny groove in our brain. Each time the thought is repeated, it makes that groove deeper until it is a very deep groove or rut. It is a habit! So now we can understand that the thoughts we think, and think, and think help make us who we are. We are what we think!

Cheerfulness is the habit of thinking “good” thoughts. *“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things,”* —Philippians 4:8.

The trait of cheerfulness is really one of thought. What kinds of things are you thinking? Do you think thoughts like the following:

“I hate it when it rains. I never get to do anything fun. I always have to work. I don’t like schoolwork. It’s not fair. I got the smallest piece. I don’t feel like cleaning my room.”

Is there anything cheery about those statements? Do they reflect a happy heart or a gloomy heart? Do you think that the person thinking those kinds of things has a smile on his face? Try saying them with a great, big smile on your face. It’s pretty hard to do, isn’t it?

“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.” —Proverbs 25:11

How about rethinking those very same thoughts:

“There is something nice about the rain; it cleans the air and waters the grass. Though I sometimes work, I also get to do some fun things. When I work I get things done. I like that. I feel better when I have done a good job. Schoolwork teaches me things; it will help me do many of the things that I hope some day to do in life. Whatever works is fine with me; I hope that it is fair to everyone else. Thank you so much for giving me a piece. I am going to hurry up and clean this room so that I will feel better about it.”

Can you smile while thinking the above thoughts? Can you smile while saying them? Of course you can.

All people, even children, have problems in life. Some people have great big ones and others have smaller problems. Into each life problems and trials will come. It is a strange thing, but it is not the big problems that cause us the most trouble. It is the small, daily things which tend to make us gloomy. It is the insignificant things which make us impatient and put frowns on our faces. When little difficulties come our way we can concentrate on feeling as mean and ugly as possible, and on making ourselves miserable, or we can “think on whatsoever things are pure and lovely.” The choice is up to us.

We can actually decide to look upon disappointments as opportunities to perform acts of kindness or to change bad things into good things. Surely you have heard the popular cliché, “When life gives you lemons, make lemonade!” The difference is in the mind—cheerfulness. As Christians, we can also rest in the verse found in the Bible, “*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God,*” —Romans 8:28a.



Do you love your parents? Yes? You do? How do they know? If you do, try having a sunny, cheerful disposition. See how much it pleases them to have a happy, loving child.

How does one become cheerful? The answer is simple. Start thinking cheerful thoughts! Think happy thoughts! Think glad thoughts! Smile! Develop the habit of saying “hello” with a smile on your face. Smile at everyone you meet. Smile when you say thank you. Smile when you say please.

When a gloomy or cranky thought comes into your mind, chase it away with a

cheery thought. Try to find a bright side to every dark thought. Look for an “up” thought for every “down” thought. As some folks say, “Look for the sunshine above the clouds,” or remember that “The sun is shining somewhere today.” Why should we, as Christians, ever be less than cheerful, for we have a wonderful Saviour, our sins are forgiven, and we have a home in Heaven.

Lastly, don’t *just* smile. Put some actions into your smiles. Be helpful to others. Bring some cheer into their lives. It will please your heavenly Father. See how much it pleases you.

SEARCHING YOUR HEART

Answer the following questions.



1. Are you always cheerful? Explain.

2. Can you think of some times or situations when you have a hard time being cheerful? What are they? Explain why.

3. What effect does your attitude of “cheer” or “glum” have on those around you?

4. Can you think of any ways to change your thoughts about these times?

5. How can you help others who are sad or troubled?

6. Talk these things over with your parents. Ask them to help you begin changing. They will be happy to pray for you and remind you.





SCRIPTURE STUDY

Copy the following verse.
Proverbs 12:25

What does this verse mean?

How can this verse be applied to your life?

DECISIONS TO MAKE

Decisions are choices that we make. We are responsible for them. We can blame no one else but ourselves when we make wrong decisions. Our aim or goal should be to make good, godly decisions. Won't you decide now to—



1. Be cheerful—no matter what the job or problem you are facing is.
2. Ask Jesus to solve the problems that you cannot.
3. Keep a smile on your face.
4. Brighten the lives of others around you.

A STORY ABOUT CHEERFULNESS—

THE TIME TO BE PLEASANT

Selected

“Mother’s very cross,” said Maggie, coming out into the kitchen with a pout on her lips.

Her aunt and her elder sister were busy, and the former looked up and answered Maggie: “Then it is the very time for you to be pleasant and helpful. Mother was awake a good deal of the night with the baby.”

Maggie made no reply. She put on her hat and walked off into the garden. But a new idea went with her—“the very time to be pleasant is when other people are cross.”

“It’s true enough,” thought she. “That would do the most good. I remember when I was ill last year; I was so nervous that if anyone spoke to me, I could hardly help being cross; and Mother never got cross or out of patience, but was quite pleasant with me. I ought to be the same.”

And she jumped up from the grass on which she had thrown herself, and turned a face full of cheerful resolution toward the room where her mother sat soothing a fretful, teething baby.

“Couldn’t I take him out to ride in his carriage, Mother?” offered Maggie. “It is such a sunny morning.”

The hat and coat were brought, and the baby was ready for his ride with his sister.

“I’ll keep him as long as he’s good,” said Maggie, “and you must lie on the sofa and take a nap while I am gone. You are looking very tired.”

The kind words, and the kiss that accompanied them, were almost too much for the mother, and her voice trembled as she answered: “Thank you, dear; it will do me a world of good. My head aches badly this morning.”

What a happy heart Maggie’s was as she pushed the carriage up and down the walk! She resolved to remember and act on her aunt’s good words: “The very time to be helpful and pleasant is when everybody is tired and cross.”



Answer the following questions regarding the story.

1. Why is the best time to be cheerful when another person is cross?

2. Why is this a hard thing to do?

3. What do you think Jesus would do in this type of situation?

Brighten the Corner Where You Are

Brighten the Corner Where You Are was originally written as a poem. Later someone put the words to music, and it became a very famous hymn. It was written by Ina D. Ogdon. This dear, godly woman had many talents, and was offered a great position, which would have allowed her the opportunity to reach thousands for Christ. It also meant a good deal of travel. She had accepted this position. Just before she was to leave, her father was in a terrible automobile accident. She was torn. Her new position meant a great deal to her and would provide wonderful opportunities. But who would take care of her father as she could? She made the decision to care for her father. She had decided that instead of “brightening” lives far from her, she would brighten the lives of those near at hand. By doing so, she brightened her father’s life.

Brighten the Corner

INA DULEY OGDON

CHARLES H. GABRIEL



1. Do not wait un - til some deed of great-ness you may do, Do not
2. Just a - bove are cloud - ed skies that you may help to clear, Let not
3. Here for all your tal - ent you may sure - ly find a need, Here re-



wait to shed your light a - far, To the man - y du - ties ev - er near you
nar - row self your way de - bar, Tho' in - to one heart alone may fall your
flect the Bright and Morn - ing Star, E - ven from your hum - ble hand the bread of



now be true, Bright-en the cor - ner where you are.
song of cheer, Bright-en the cor - ner where you are. Bright-en the cor - ner
life may feed, Bright-en the corn-ner where you are.



where you are! Bright-en the cor - ner where you are! Some-one far from



har - bor you may guide a-cross the bar, Bright-en the cor - ner where you are.



A STORY ABOUT CHEERFULNESS—

FLORA'S DUTY DAY

Selected

“I will try this blessed New Year’s day to lead some one to the Saviour; to show this one that Christ is the Guide and joy of my life, and such I would have Him become to her.”

So wrote Flora Banscom in her new diary on New Year’s morning. The one she had decided to try to lead to the Saviour was Nancy Leroy, who was to be her companion on a drive to the city, a few miles away. The entry in the new diary was followed by a very earnest prayer that God would speak through her the Word of life.

A little later Flora stood by her window drinking into her very soul the beauty of this New Year’s day. Snow covered the ground and clothed the trees, which waved in the crisp air like banners of white. “The day is like my new diary, so pure and white,” thought Flora. “What sort of record shall I write upon it before night?” The thought added an increased seriousness to her face, and again her heart went out for special guidance for the special work planned for this new day. Then she went thoughtfully downstairs.

It took but a second’s glance into the dining room to show Flora that there would be no sleigh ride for her that day and no opportunity to speak a word for Jesus. She didn’t need Ned’s “Mother’s sick this morning, and we boys are as hungry as bears,” to show her that immediate action was necessary. Ned was dressing little two-year-old Tom, while Ted and Mack were chasing each other about the room, using their stockings as weapons, and making a deafening noise. Flora’s first duty was to dress them, and while she was talking cheerily to them there was an undercurrent of thought which ran something like this: “I just *can’t* stay at home today; I do so want to talk with Nan—and then there’s the ride. Oh, I *must* go!”

Then came the small voice, “But you *ought* to stay at home; it’s certainly your duty. Who’ll see to Mother? And who’ll amuse the children, and finish that pile of sewing and—” Flora suddenly forgot what she was saying to Ted in the thought that came to her:

“If God wants me to stay at home today, then I’ll stay, and I mustn’t let my

record soil the new white page of this New Year's day." That was all, but it meant a great deal. That night Flora went to her bedroom tired out with the unaccustomed duties of the day, yet happy amid her disappointment remembering her mother's words.

"You've been a great comfort to Mother today, Flora. I'm sorry you could not go on the ride, but I do not know what I should have done without you." She drew her diary toward her and, reading the words of the morning, said, "I could not go on the ride, and so did not have the talk with Nancy I planned, but I believe the day has been spent in doing just what God wanted me to do, though I've led no soul to Him."

While Flora was writing in her diary Ned was talking to himself in his own room.

"I didn't know there was so much in Flo. I know she wanted to go on that ride so much, and she never complained a bit because she had to stay at home and work. A while back she would have made no end of a fuss at having to stay home.

"She's certainly a changed girl. I remember lots of times when she has taken things as sweetly as an angel, though once—my!—well, if that's what love for Christ does, I want it. Talk is of some account when deeds back it up. Yes, I want this that makes Flo so cheerful and so willing to give up her own pleasures for others, and I'll seek it till I find it," finished Ned with decision.

In a quiet talk, which Ned and Flora had together some time after, he told her that the day she stayed at home from the ride was the day he began to open his heart to let the Saviour in.

"And it was just because you acted out what you profess to believe," he said.

That night Flora's entry in her diary was a song of praise. "Bless the Lord, O my soul! His ways are past finding out. I bless His holy name that He kept me that day, and that He gave me my brother as a token of His love for the new year. A soul for New Year's day! What if I had gone on the ride!" And Flora might have added out of her sweet experience—

*For simple duty, clad in homespun grey,
Is yet an angel fair with hidden wings.*

Lizzie Y. Butler.

Answer the following questions regarding the story.

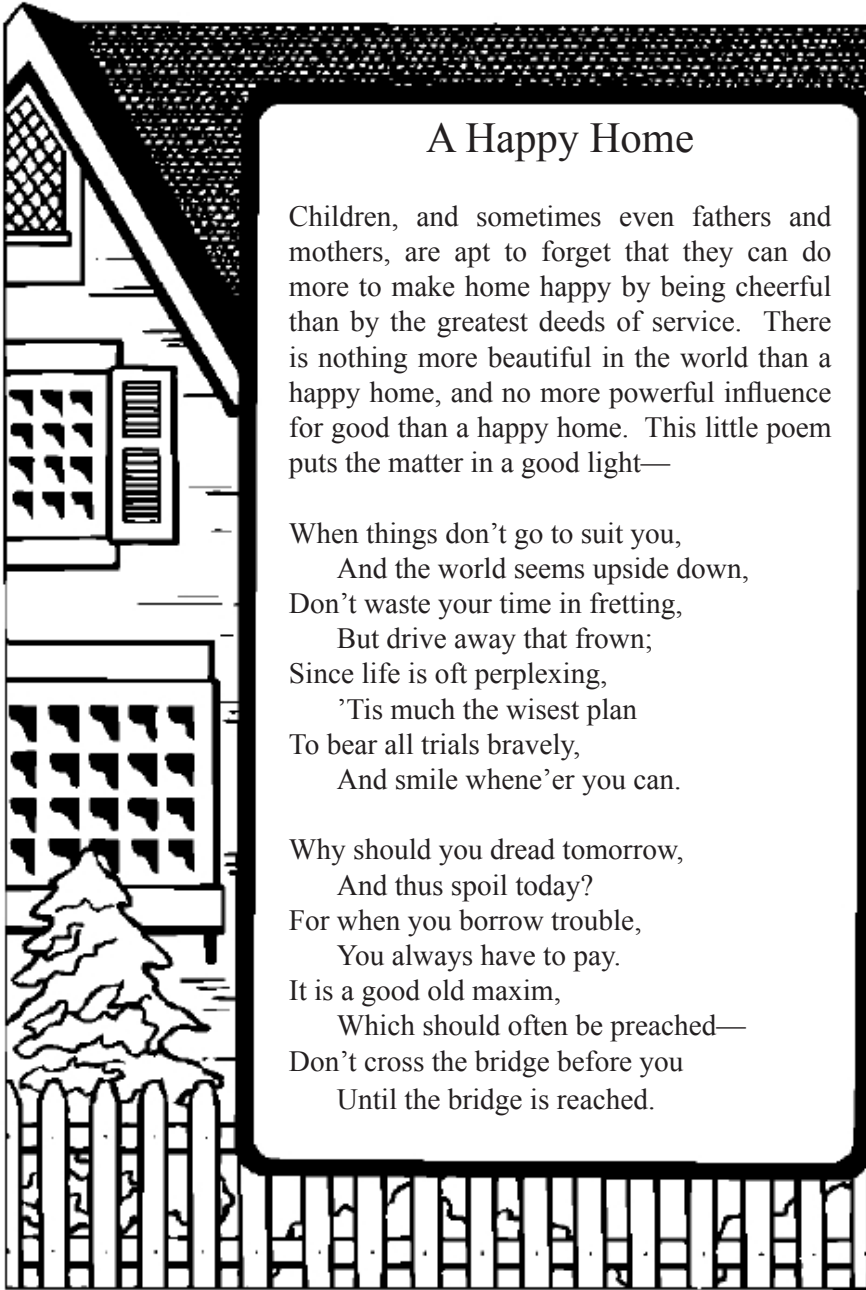
1. Flora had made wonderful plans for her day, but God had other plans. How did Flora respond to the unplanned changes?

2. How could Flora's choices soil the record of her day in her new diary?

3. How did Flora's cheerful attitude about giving up her plans affect her brother, Ned?

4. Romans 8:28 teaches us that all things work together for good. How did the mother's sickness actually work together for good in the lives of her children?

5. Explain how our attitudes regarding what happens to us during the day affect those around us?



A Happy Home

Children, and sometimes even fathers and mothers, are apt to forget that they can do more to make home happy by being cheerful than by the greatest deeds of service. There is nothing more beautiful in the world than a happy home, and no more powerful influence for good than a happy home. This little poem puts the matter in a good light—

When things don't go to suit you,
And the world seems upside down,
Don't waste your time in fretting,
But drive away that frown;
Since life is oft perplexing,
'Tis much the wisest plan
To bear all trials bravely,
And smile whene'er you can.

Why should you dread tomorrow,
And thus spoil today?
For when you borrow trouble,
You always have to pay.
It is a good old maxim,
Which should often be preached—
Don't cross the bridge before you
Until the bridge is reached.

A STORY ABOUT CHEERFULNESS—

The Sunny Face and the Shady Face or June and November

“How happy I am tonight!” said Willie to his mother, as he followed her from the dining room to the parlor.

What made Willie so happy? It was not because the day had been pleasant, and he had enjoyed himself outside. A chilling snow had been falling, and Willie had been obliged to remain in the house. It was not because he was well, for many hours of the day he had been lying on the bed too ill to sit up. It was not because he had received a handsome present, for none had been given him.

There had been nothing unusual to make him so happy, except a thought hidden in his heart. Shall I tell you what that thought was that made his face so bright and sunny? I will tell in his own words, and I hope you will treasure these words in your heart too. If you do, your face, too, will be cheerful and smiling.

When Willie told his mother how happy he was, she hugged him and asked, “What makes you so happy?”

“I suppose it is because I have been trying to be good,” he answered.

“That always makes people happy,” his mother replied.

Willie is generally a good boy, but he sometimes does wrong, and wrongdoing always makes him sad. He was happy that he had tried to be good, and had been able to resist evil.

All children are sometimes tempted to do wrong, and it often requires a struggle to decide to do right. But every child who resists evil feels happiness in so doing. I hope you will “try to be good.” If you do, and look to Jesus for strength, He will aid you, and through His grace you will be able to conquer the sins that “so easily beset you.”

Henry Maxwell lives in the same town with Willie, and is the same age. These boys often play together. I regret to say that Henry is not as good a child as Willie. He does not so willingly obey his mother, and of course, he cannot be so happy. Sometimes he sticks out his lower lip when his mother asks him to do something.

One day, I heard his mother talking to him about his teeth. She wished him to brush them again, as he had not done it thoroughly the first time. It was surprising to see how that fair, round face turned ugly, and it was sad to hear his unhappy “I don’t want to.” When his mother insisted on obedience, Henry reluctantly complied with her wishes, banging the door behind him.

His face was not sunny and bright like Willie’s, but was dark and shady, like a clouded sky. It was not pleasant to look upon, and it made the heart of his mother heavy and sad to see it. I hope Henry will learn to be cheerful and obey his mother promptly. If he should not, his face will grow more and more disagreeable. When he is a man, it will look more like a chilly day in November than a warm, happy day in June.

I do not wish that you should tell me, but I should like to have you ask yourself, when you have read about these two boys, which of them you are most like. Is your face sunny, or shady?

Answer the following questions regarding the story.

1. Why does each person feel happiness when he chooses to do right and obey God instead of doing wrong?

2. Which of these boys are you most like? Is your face sunny, or shady?

3. If it is shady, what are you going to do about it?

If you find yourself refreshed by the presence of cheerful people, why not make an effort to become a cheerful person? You can start by never sharing a gloomy thought.

THINGS TO DO

It's one thing to study a character trait, learn definitions, and ponder Scriptures. It is another thing to put those ideas into action and make them a part of your life. Following is a list of things that you can do to build the habit of cheerfulness into your life. Complete as many items as you can (no fewer than four) from the following list.

1. Make a phone call to a lonely person (a grandparent, aunt, uncle, widow, or sick person).
2. Offer to do one extra task for your mother.
3. Read a story to a bored younger sister or brother.
4. Write a letter to someone lonely.
5. Memorize a "cheerfulness" verse.
6. Bake some cookies to give to a senior citizen (a neighbor or someone from church).
7. Sing or hum a favorite hymn throughout each day.
8. Make a pleasant surprise for someone.
9. Bring an ice-cold drink to someone on a hot day.
10. Rub your father's (or mother's) feet after a long day.

Remember . . .

When you have a task before you—

- ✓ **Never frown.** You cannot be cheerful and frown at the same time.
- ✓ **Never pout.** Pouting is nothing more than quiet anger at not getting your own way.
- ✓ **Never complain.** Complaining and cheerfulness cannot go together.

Do say . . .

- ✓ "I'll be happy to do that."
- ✓ "That sounds good to me."
- ✓ "I like that."

Can you find these words in the puzzle?

be cheerful

contentment

joyful

be happy

good cheer

joyous

cheerfulness

happiness

smile

cheerily

jovial

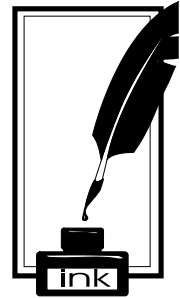
smiling

cheery

C	O	T	N	E	M	T	N	E	T	N	O	C
H	C	H	G	N	I	L	I	M	S	J	O	Y
C	H	E	E	R	F	U	L	N	E	S	S	O
L	E	E	L	I	M	S	E	E	L	Y	A	U
U	E	O	J	A	M	S	I	J	H	P	Y	S
F	R	H	C	O	Y	E	G	O	O	P	M	U
R	I	H	E	R	V	N	O	Y	M	A	D	O
E	L	I	E	M	S	I	M	F	A	H	Y	J
E	Y	E	I	L	E	P	A	U	P	E	C	O
H	H	C	H	A	P	P	A	L	C	B	H	Y
C	H	E	R	E	S	A	M	I	M	A	E	O
E	G	O	O	D	C	H	E	E	R	S	E	U
B	E	H	D	E	U	O	Y	O	J	Y	E	S

KEEPING A JOURNAL

Many people say that it takes thirty days to create a habit, and that is just what we are trying to do—create the habit of cheerfulness! The next thirty pages will be set aside to record your progress in making the character trait “Cheerfulness” an integral part of *your* character. At the end of each day ask yourself the following questions, and write down the answers, and anything additional concerning your “cheerfulness” trait.



Following are a few *reminders* or *goals* to help you begin focusing on cheerfulness each day.

1. Take a sheet of paper and write the word “cheerfulness” in large letters, and place it where you will see it the first thing in the morning when you awake.
2. Upon awakening and seeing the word “cheerfulness,” say a prayer asking God to help you to be cheerful that day.
3. Purpose in your heart to wear a bright, sunny smile all day.
4. Purpose in your heart to be cheerful no matter what happens that day.
5. Using index cards or small sheets of paper, write the word “cheerfulness” on them, and put them in places in the house where you will see them.
6. Place one of the cards in your Bible; place others in your schoolbooks or reading books.
7. At noon or lunchtime, go to your room and kneel down and pray and ask God to continue to help you to be cheerful.
8. At dinnertime, have another private prayer time with God and ask for continued help in establishing the habit of cheerfulness.



Day 1 Date _____

1. Did I keep a cheerful attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything about which I was not cheerful? What was it, and why was I not cheerful?

3. What sin or sins kept me from being cheerful?

4. How did I brighten the lives of others today?

5. What more could I have done to be cheerful today?

Day 2 Date _____

1. Did I keep a cheerful attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything about which I was not cheerful? What was it, and why was I not cheerful?

3. What sin or sins kept me from being cheerful?

4. How did I brighten the lives of others today?

5. What more could I have done to be cheerful today?

Day 3 Date _____

1. Did I keep a cheerful attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything about which I was not cheerful? What was it, and why was I not cheerful?

3. What sin or sins kept me from being cheerful?

4. How did I brighten the lives of others today?

5. What more could I have done to be cheerful today?

Day 4 Date _____

1. Did I keep a cheerful attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything about which I was not cheerful? What was it, and why was I not cheerful?

3. What sin or sins kept me from being cheerful?

4. How did I brighten the lives of others today?

5. What more could I have done to be cheerful today?

Day 5 Date _____

1. Did I keep a cheerful attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything about which I was not cheerful? What was it, and why was I not cheerful?

3. What sin or sins kept me from being cheerful?

4. How did I brighten the lives of others today?

5. What more could I have done to be cheerful today?

Day 6 Date _____

1. Did I keep a cheerful attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything about which I was not cheerful? What was it, and why was I not cheerful?

3. What sin or sins kept me from being cheerful?

4. How did I brighten the lives of others today?

5. What more could I have done to be cheerful today?

Day 7 Date _____

1. Did I keep a cheerful attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything about which I was not cheerful? What was it, and why was I not cheerful?

3. What sin or sins kept me from being cheerful?

4. How did I brighten the lives of others today?

5. What more could I have done to be cheerful today?

Day 8 Date _____

1. Did I keep a cheerful attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything about which I was not cheerful? What was it, and why was I not cheerful?

3. What sin or sins kept me from being cheerful?

4. How did I brighten the lives of others today?

5. What more could I have done to be cheerful today?

Day 9 Date _____

1. Did I keep a cheerful attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything about which I was not cheerful? What was it, and why was I not cheerful?

3. What sin or sins kept me from being cheerful?

4. How did I brighten the lives of others today?

5. What more could I have done to be cheerful today?

Day 10 Date _____

1. Did I keep a cheerful attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything about which I was not cheerful? What was it, and why was I not cheerful?

3. What sin or sins kept me from being cheerful?

4. How did I brighten the lives of others today?

5. What more could I have done to be cheerful today?

Day 11 Date _____

1. Did I keep a cheerful attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything about which I was not cheerful? What was it, and why was I not cheerful?

3. What sin or sins kept me from being cheerful?

4. How did I brighten the lives of others today?

5. What more could I have done to be cheerful today?

Day 12 Date _____

1. Did I keep a cheerful attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything about which I was not cheerful? What was it, and why was I not cheerful?

3. What sin or sins kept me from being cheerful?

4. How did I brighten the lives of others today?

5. What more could I have done to be cheerful today?

Day 13 Date _____

1. Did I keep a cheerful attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything about which I was not cheerful? What was it, and why was I not cheerful?

3. What sin or sins kept me from being cheerful?

4. How did I brighten the lives of others today?

5. What more could I have done to be cheerful today?

Day 14 Date _____

1. Did I keep a cheerful attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything about which I was not cheerful? What was it, and why was I not cheerful?

3. What sin or sins kept me from being cheerful?

4. How did I brighten the lives of others today?

5. What more could I have done to be cheerful today?

Day 15 Date _____

1. Did I keep a cheerful attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything about which I was not cheerful? What was it, and why was I not cheerful?

3. What sin or sins kept me from being cheerful?

4. How did I brighten the lives of others today?

5. What more could I have done to be cheerful today?

Day 16 Date _____

1. Did I keep a cheerful attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything about which I was not cheerful? What was it, and why was I not cheerful?

3. What sin or sins kept me from being cheerful?

4. How did I brighten the lives of others today?

5. What more could I have done to be cheerful today?

Day 17 Date _____

1. Did I keep a cheerful attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything about which I was not cheerful? What was it, and why was I not cheerful?

3. What sin or sins kept me from being cheerful?

4. How did I brighten the lives of others today?

5. What more could I have done to be cheerful today?

Day 18 Date _____

1. Did I keep a cheerful attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything about which I was not cheerful? What was it, and why was I not cheerful?

3. What sin or sins kept me from being cheerful?

4. How did I brighten the lives of others today?

5. What more could I have done to be cheerful today?

Day 19 Date _____

1. Did I keep a cheerful attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything about which I was not cheerful? What was it, and why was I not cheerful?

3. What sin or sins kept me from being cheerful?

4. How did I brighten the lives of others today?

5. What more could I have done to be cheerful today?

Day 20 Date _____

1. Did I keep a cheerful attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything about which I was not cheerful? What was it, and why was I not cheerful?

3. What sin or sins kept me from being cheerful?

4. How did I brighten the lives of others today?

5. What more could I have done to be cheerful today?

Day 21 Date _____

1. Did I keep a cheerful attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything about which I was not cheerful? What was it, and why was I not cheerful?

3. What sin or sins kept me from being cheerful?

4. How did I brighten the lives of others today?

5. What more could I have done to be cheerful today?

Day 22 Date _____

1. Did I keep a cheerful attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything about which I was not cheerful? What was it, and why was I not cheerful?

3. What sin or sins kept me from being cheerful?

4. How did I brighten the lives of others today?

5. What more could I have done to be cheerful today?

Day 23 Date _____

1. Did I keep a cheerful attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything about which I was not cheerful? What was it, and why was I not cheerful?

3. What sin or sins kept me from being cheerful?

4. How did I brighten the lives of others today?

5. What more could I have done to be cheerful today?

Day 24 Date _____

1. Did I keep a cheerful attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything about which I was not cheerful? What was it, and why was I not cheerful?

3. What sin or sins kept me from being cheerful?

4. How did I brighten the lives of others today?

5. What more could I have done to be cheerful today?

Day 25 Date _____

1. Did I keep a cheerful attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything about which I was not cheerful? What was it, and why was I not cheerful?

3. What sin or sins kept me from being cheerful?

4. How did I brighten the lives of others today?

5. What more could I have done to be cheerful today?

Day 26 Date _____

1. Did I keep a cheerful attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything about which I was not cheerful? What was it, and why was I not cheerful?

3. What sin or sins kept me from being cheerful?

4. How did I brighten the lives of others today?

5. What more could I have done to be cheerful today?

Day 27 Date _____

1. Did I keep a cheerful attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything about which I was not cheerful? What was it, and why was I not cheerful?

3. What sin or sins kept me from being cheerful?

4. How did I brighten the lives of others today?

5. What more could I have done to be cheerful today?

Day 28 Date _____

1. Did I keep a cheerful attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything about which I was not cheerful? What was it, and why was I not cheerful?

3. What sin or sins kept me from being cheerful?

4. How did I brighten the lives of others today?

5. What more could I have done to be cheerful today?

Day 29 Date _____

1. Did I keep a cheerful attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything about which I was not cheerful? What was it, and why was I not cheerful?

3. What sin or sins kept me from being cheerful?

4. How did I brighten the lives of others today?

5. What more could I have done to be cheerful today?

Day 30 Date _____

1. Did I keep a cheerful attitude all day? _____
2. Was there anything about which I was not cheerful? What was it, and why was I not cheerful?

3. What sin or sins kept me from being cheerful?

4. How did I brighten the lives of others today?

5. What more could I have done to be cheerful today?
