

# From Beholding To Sweet, Intimate Union With God

Hebrews 12:2 **Looking unto Jesus** the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with open face **beholding** as in a glass **the glory of the Lord**, are **changed into the same image** from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

**By beholding**, by “looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,” **we become changed into the same image.** [ST June 10, 1886, par. 2](#)

It would be well to spend a thoughtful hour each day **reviewing the life of Christ** from the manger to Calvary. We should take it point by point and let the imagination vividly grasp each scene, especially the closing ones of His earthly life. By thus contemplating His teachings and sufferings, and the infinite sacrifice made by Him for the redemption of the race, we may strengthen our faith, quicken our love, and become more deeply imbued with the spirit which sustained our Saviour. If we would be saved at last we must all learn the lesson of penitence and faith at the foot of the cross. Christ suffered humiliation to save us from everlasting disgrace. He consented to have scorn, mockery, and abuse fall upon Him in order to shield us. It was our transgression that gathered the veil of darkness about His divine soul and extorted the cry from Him, as of one smitten and forsaken of God. He bore our sorrows; He was put to grief for our sins. He made Himself an offering for sin, that we might be justified before God through Him. Everything noble and generous in man will respond to the **contemplation of Christ** upon the cross. {4T 374.1}

Tell every one how dangerous it is to neglect his own soul's eternal healthfulness by looking upon the diseased souls of others, by talking upon the uncomeliness of character found in those who profess the name of Christ. **The soul does not become more and more like Christ by beholding evil, but like the evil which it beholds.** The same love of self, the same indulgence of self, the same hastiness of spirit, the same petulance of temper, the same sensitiveness and pride of opinion, the same unwillingness to receive counsel, the same unsanctified, independent judgment, will be manifest in those who criticise as in those whom they criticise. *Review and Herald*, August 15, 1893, par. 4

**As the mind dwells upon Christ**, the character is molded after the divine similitude. The thoughts are pervaded with a sense of His goodness, His love. We contemplate His character, and thus He is in all our thoughts. His love encloses us. If we gaze even a moment upon the sun in its meridian glory, when we turn away our eyes, the image of the sun will appear in everything upon which we look. Thus it is when we behold Jesus; **everything we look upon reflects His image, the Sun of Righteousness.** We cannot see anything else, or talk of anything else. His image is imprinted upon the eye of the soul and affects every portion of our daily life, softening and subduing our whole nature. **By beholding, we are conformed to the divine similitude**, even the likeness of Christ. To all with whom we associate we reflect the bright and cheerful beams of His righteousness. We have become **transformed in character**; for heart, soul, mind, are irradiated by the reflection of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. { TM 388.2 }

This is the leaven of evil. The very act of **looking for evil** in others develops defects in those who look. { YI September 21, 1899, par. 7 }

"He who drinks from the water of the fountain of life, will be filled with the new wine of the kingdom. Faith in Christ will be the means whereby the right spirit and motive will actuate the believer, and all goodness and heavenly-mindedness will proceed **from him who looks unto Jesus**, the author and finisher of his faith. Look up to God, look not to men. God is your heavenly Father who is willing patiently to bear with your infirmities, and to forgive and heal them. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." **By beholding Christ, you will become changed**, until you will hate your former pride, your former vanity and self-esteem, your self-righteousness and unbelief. You will cast these sins aside as a worthless burden, and walk humbly, meekly, trustfully, before God. You will practice love, patience, gentleness, goodness, mercy, and every grace that dwells in the child of God, and will at last find a place among the sanctified and holy." {1888 1226.2}

"The theme that attracts the heart of the sinner is Christ, and him crucified. On the cross of Calvary, Jesus stands revealed to the world in unparalleled love. Present him thus to the hungry multitudes, and the light of his love will win men from darkness to light, from transgression to obedience and true holiness. **Beholding Jesus upon the cross of Calvary arouses the conscience** to the heinous character of sin as nothing else can do. It was sin that caused the death of God's dear Son, and sin is the transgression of the law. On him was laid the iniquities of us all. The sinner then consents unto the law that it is good; for he realizes that it condemns his evil deeds, while he magnifies the matchless love of God in providing for him salvation through the imputed righteousness of Him who knew no sin, in whose mouth there was found no guile." {1888 1074.1}

**It is by beholding Christ, through faith, that we are to be changed into his likeness.** As we meditate upon the perfection of his character, we shall desire to become wholly transformed and renewed in the image of his purity. There will be a hungering and thirsting of soul to be made like him whom we adore. The more our thoughts are upon Christ, the more we shall speak of him to others, and represent him to the world. We shall represent him in our words, in our love for the brethren, in our deep, earnest love for the souls for whom Christ died. – {HM November 1, 1890 Par. 12}

We need to study the Bible more, that our minds may  **dwell upon the infinite sacrifice of Christ**, and his mediation in our behalf. Let not Christ's words and the words of some finite being, bear with equal weight upon you.  **Fill the whole heart with the words of God**. They are the living water, quenching your burning thirst.  **They are the living bread from heaven**. Of this bread you must eat, and you will gain in spirituality and power, ever growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." {HM November 1, 1890 Par. 13}

"Talk as Christ talked; work as Christ worked.  **We must look to Christ and live**. Catching sight of His loveliness, we long to practice the virtues and righteousness of Christ.  **It is by beholding Christ that we become changed into His image**, and by renouncing self, giving our hearts up wholly to Jesus for His Spirit to refine, ennoble and elevate, we will be in close connection with the future world, bathed in the bright beams of the Sun of righteousness. We rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Then we are commanded to go in to other cities and towns and tell them the good news with hearts all aglow with divine love, even to them that are afar off, even as many as the Lord your God shall call." {4MR 310.3}

"Oh, how I wish that we would honor Christ by realizing what he wants to do for us, and taking him at his word. If we would do this,  **we should be sunshiny Christians**. By beholding Christ, we would be changed into his likeness. But  **we shall never grow in grace by beholding the faults and mistakes and defects of someone else**. { PC 318.4 }

"Do not keep your mind fixed on the defective example of professing Christians. You will, of course, see in their lives things that are not right. But **if you keep looking at their faults, you will become like them.** Instead of looking at the lives of your fellow men, look to Jesus. There you will see no imperfection, but perfection, righteousness, goodness, mercy, and truth. Take the Saviour as your example in all things. **In looking to men instead of beholding Christ, you have made a great mistake.**"—Letter written in 1903. {Ms87-1906.3}

Brethren and sisters, **it is by beholding that we become changed. By dwelling upon the love of God and our Saviour,** by contemplating the perfection of the divine character and claiming the righteousness of Christ as ours by faith, **we are to be transformed into the same image.** Then let us not gather together all the unpleasant pictures—the iniquities and corruptions and disappointments, the evidences of Satan's power—to hang in the halls of our memory, to talk over and mourn over until our souls are filled with discouragement. A discouraged soul is a body of darkness, not only failing himself to receive the light of God, but shutting it away from others. Satan loves to see the effect of the pictures of his triumphs, making human beings faithless and disheartened." { CCh 80.1}

"How much sweet peace we lose because we keep poring over the disagreeable items in ourselves and in our brethren. **We must look away from the disagreeable to Jesus.** We must love Him more, obtain more of His attractive beauty and grace of character, and cease filling the mind with the contemplation of others' mistakes and others' errors. No one is perfect but Jesus. **Think of Him and be charmed away from yourself** and from every disagreeable thing; **for beholding our defects faith is weakened.** Faith in God and His promises is lost sight of." { 15MR 146.2 }

**"Earnest workers have no time to dwell upon the defects of others. They behold the Saviour, and by beholding become changed into His likeness.** He is the One whose example we are to follow in our character-building. In His life upon the earth He plainly revealed the divine nature. **We should strive to be perfect in our sphere, as He was perfect in His sphere.** No longer are the members of the church to remain unconcerned in regard to the formation of right characters. Placing themselves under the molding influence of the Holy Spirit, they are to form characters that are a reflection of the divine character." { PH151 46.3 }

"Do not come at your brethren to pick at their faults, to make a drive at their peculiar traits of character. Educate them to better habits, and better traits, by the power of your own example. If you make it evident that you have come to correct them, you will only arouse their combativeness, and do more harm than if you had not come at all. **Reveal Jesus to them, that they may behold him and become like him.** If you cultivate fault-finding, and take it upon yourself to correct your brethren, you will soon have no other religion save that of picking flaws and finding defects. You cannot benefit the sinner by coming to him in your own way and in your own strength. Christ alone can save him." { ST July 1, 1889, par. 9 }

"Everything that can be done should be done to place ourselves and our children where we shall **not see the iniquity that is practiced in the world.** We should **carefully guard the sight** of our eyes and the hearing of our ears so that these awful things shall not enter our minds. When the daily newspaper comes into the house, I feel as if I want to hide it, that the ridiculous, sensational things in it may not be seen. It seems as if the enemy is at the foundation of the publishing of many things that appear in newspapers. Every sinful thing that can be found is uncovered and laid bare before the world." Adventist Home, 403.4

**“Fasten your eyes upon Jesus, dear friends, and by beholding you will become assimilated to his image.** Do not allow your thoughts to dwell continually upon things of the earth, but place them upon things that are heavenly, and then, wherever you are, you will be a light to the world.” Signs of the Times, October 20, 1887, par. 1

Hear these words of our Saviour: **“Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man,** which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock.” **It is the privilege of every one of us to build upon the Eternal Rock; then we shall not dishonor God, nor by our words and actions scatter away from Christ.** There are some who do this, and Jesus is ashamed to call them brethren.  
[ST August 18, 1887, par. 3](#)

The apostle continues: **“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith;** that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, **that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.**” While this divine fullness has been placed within our reach, how easily we are satisfied. **We have accustomed ourselves to think that it is enough to have a knowledge of the truth without its sanctifying power.** Just a little sip at the fountain of life quenches our thirst. We do not come again and again to drink. But this is not in accordance with the mind of God. Our souls should be continually athirst for the water of life. **Our hearts should ever go out after Christ, longing for communion with him. It is hungering and thirsting after righteousness that will bring us the full measure of his grace.** [ST August 18, 1887, par. 6](#)

**Enoch “walked with God;” but how did he gain this sweet intimacy?** It was by having thoughts of God continually before him. As he went out and as he came in, his meditations were upon the goodness, the perfection, and the loveliness of the divine character. And as he was thus engaged, he became changed into the glorious image of his Lord; for **it is by beholding that we become changed.** [ST August 18, 1887, par. 7](#)

**“It was in looking in faith to Jesus,** in asking of Him, in believing that every word spoken would be verified, that Enoch walked with God. He kept close by the side of God, obeying His every word. . . . His was a wonderful life of **oneness.** Christ was his Companion. **He was in intimate fellowship with God.**” Manuscript 11, 1898

“We read that he[Enoch] walked with God. He studied the character of God to a purpose. He did not mark out his own course, or set up his own will, as if he thought himself fully qualified to manage matters. **He strove to conform himself to the divine likeness.**” Letter 169, 1903

“Enoch was holy because he walked with God in God’s way. In him the world had an example of what those will be who, when Christ comes, are caught up in the clouds to meet Him in the air. **As Enoch was, so are we to be.**” Letter 97, 1902.6

“He[Enoch] did not make his abode with the wicked. . . . **He placed himself and his family where the atmosphere would be as pure as possible.** Then at times he went forth to the inhabitants of the world with his God-given message. Every visit he made to the world was painful to him. He saw and understood something of the leprosy of sin. After proclaiming his message, he always took back with him to his place of retirement some who had received the warning.” Manuscript 42, 1900.10

It is Christ dwelling in the soul that gives us spiritual power, and makes us channels of light. **The more light we have, the more we can impart to others around us.** The more closely we live to Jesus, the clearer views shall we have of his loveliness. As we behold him in his purity, we discern more clearly our own faults of character. We yearn after him, and for that fullness that is in him, and that shines out in the perfection of his heavenly character; and **by beholding we become changed into his image.** [ST August 18, 1887, par. 10](#)

We must daily cultivate faith, **daily contemplate him** who has undertaken our case, who is a merciful and faithful high priest; “for in that he himself hath suffered being tempted [not in a few things, but in all points like as we are], he is able to succor them that are tempted.” “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” Even now, in heaven, he is afflicted with our afflictions; and as a living Saviour, as an interested Advocate, he is making intercession for us. [YI October 18, 1894, par. 8](#)

He who denies the personality of God and of his Son Jesus Christ, is denying God and Christ. “**If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.**” If you continue to **believe and obey the truths** you first embraced regarding the personality of the Father and the Son, **you will be joined together** with him in love. **There will be seen that union for which Christ prayed just before his trial and crucifixion:** [RH March 8, 1906, par. 19](#)

“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” [RH March 8, 1906, par. 20](#)

**Christ is glorified** in his saints. **He**, the propitiation for their sins, **will be glorified** in all who believe in him as their Saviour, all who commit themselves and their interests to his guidance. They are on Christ's side, known by the manifestation that Christ makes through them of his power to save. They obtain victory after victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil. **They are made perfect in their victory through Christ.** [RH March 8, 1906, par. 21](#)

I am deeply solicitous that our people should preserve the living testimony among them; and that the church should be kept pure from the unbelieving element. **Can we conceive of a closer, more intimate relation to Christ than is set forth in the words, “I am the vine, ye are the branches”?** The fibers of the branch are almost identical with those of the vine. The communication of life, strength, and fruitfulness from the trunk to the branches is unobstructed and constant. The root sends its nourishment through the branch. Such is the true believer's relation to Christ. He abides in Christ, and draws his nourishment from him. [PH001 13.1](#)

**This spiritual relation can be established only by the exercise of personal faith. This faith must express on our part supreme preference, perfect reliance, entire consecration. Our will must be wholly yielded to the divine will, our feelings, desires, interests, and honor, identified with the prosperity of Christ's kingdom and the honor of his cause, we constantly receiving grace from him, and Christ accepting gratitude from us.** [PH001 13.2](#)

**When this intimacy of connection and communication is formed,** our sins are laid upon Christ, his righteousness is imputed to us. He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. We have access to God through him; we are accepted in the beloved... [PH001 13.3](#)

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**A union with Christ by living faith is enduring**; every other union must perish. Christ first chose us, paying an infinite price for our redemption; and the true believer chooses Christ as first and last, and best in everything. **But this union costs us something. It is a union of utter dependence, to be entered into by a proud being. All who form this union must feel their need of the atoning blood of Christ. They must have a change of heart. They must submit their own will to the will of God. There will be a struggle with outward and internal obstacles. There must be a painful work of detachment, as well as a work of attachment. Pride, selfishness, vanity, worldliness—sin in all its forms—must be overcome, if we would enter into a union with Christ.** The reason why many find the Christian life so deplorably hard, why they are so fickle, so variable, is, they try to attach themselves to Christ without first detaching themselves from these cherished idols.

PH001 15.1

After the **union with Christ** has been formed, **it can be preserved only by earnest prayer and untiring effort.** We must resist, we must deny, we must conquer self. Through the grace of Christ, by courage, by faith, by watchfulness, we may gain the victory. PH001 15.2

Believers become one in Christ; but one branch cannot be sustained by another. The nourishment must be obtained through the vital connection with the vine. **We must feel our utter dependence on Christ.** We must live by faith on the Son of God. **That is the meaning of the injunction, "Abide in me."** The life we live in the flesh is not to the will of men, not to please our Lord's enemies, but to serve and honor Him who loved us, and gave himself for us. **A mere assent to this union,** while the affections are not detached from the world, its pleasures and its dissipations, only emboldens the heart in disobedience. PH001 15.3

2 Corinthians 4:6 "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, **hath shined in our hearts,** to give the light of the **knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.**"

1 John 3:2 "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, **we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.** 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

Isaiah 45:21 Declare ye, and bring it forth; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath showed this from ancient time? who hath declared it of old? have not I, Jehovah? and there is no God else besides me, a just God and a Saviour; there is none besides me. 22 **Look unto me, and be ye saved,** all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.

Exodus 33:17 And Jehovah said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken; for thou hast found favor in my sight, and I know thee by name. 18 And he said, Show me, I pray thee, thy glory. 19 And he said, **I will make all my goodness pass before thee,** and will proclaim the name of Jehovah before thee; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.

Philippians 4:8 "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.**"

**Conclusion:** "Bread of life in; bread of life out. Or, garbage in; garbage out. Our choice." -Sid