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THE "KNOW THYSELF" SERIES

LESSON NUMBER TWO

Seven Ways To Selfhood

PLANT THE QUALITIES YOU WANT TO GROW

The garden of life

Plan your crop

How do you go about it?

What if you change your mind?

Three questions

REVELATION NUMBER 129

Beloved Centurion:

The Questionalyses which were sent out with Lesson No. 1 of SEVEN WAYS TO SELFHOOD are being filled in by the members and returned to Headquarters. I have gone over the answers very carefully and have found them most interesting. For the most part the questions were answered very satisfactorily, but the answers to those questions which many of our members were unable to answer, will be found as we go along in this series of lecture lessons.

Any question which a member may find difficult to answer at the beginning of this series can be answered with confidence when the series is finished, FOR THE ANSWERS ARE THERE.

Be sure, as you study, to keep this in mind and at the finish of your study course you will know that you have learned and it will be proof of your progress.

I note, in some of the Questionalyses which have come back to us at Headquarters, that under the question, "Do you know yourself?", so many of our members have answered "No", and this is true; I venture to say that not one person in one hundred really knows himself. I cannot stress strongly enough the importance of knowing yourself if you are to be a success in life - whether it is business, social, domestic or love life, in all ways. All things can work more completely to your advantage when you understand your own traits or characteristics, whether good or bad. The psychologists sometimes refer to this mechanism as "what makes you tick."

For example, I know quite intimately a very fine person whose whole life has been frustrated because she doesn't recognize one great fault which she has. She is over-critical and because she is over-critical, she is never happy in her job, with her friends, and with many other facets of her life. She realizes, of course, that she changes jobs quite frequently; she certainly knows that she does not hold her friends; she has changed her religious affiliations many times; - she knows all of this, but what she has never realized is that the fault lies within herself. She thinks all of these changes are brought about through the fault of someone else or some other series of conditions; in other words, she is so critical of others around her that she becomes unhappy in her surroundings and therefore feels she must make a change. As a result, she doesn't remain steadfast long enough to make a success of her job, her friends, or any of the other conditions that make a life. She is a very efficient person, a very personable young woman, one who could go far if it were not for this one quality which keeps her from success.

And then, there is the person whose desire is for continuous CHANGE, which is, of course, good in many respects, but when the person or persons constantly seek change in their domestic life, in their business life, and in their location, because of restless characteristics, then it is a destructive force.

Another type of person who is in great need of learning more about himself is the neurotic person, the person who is not really an invalid but who is living like one, refusing to mingle with people, taking no interest in what goes on in

the world, allowing himself to get in a rut mentally and physically. He doesn't recognize this condition, whereas if he had an understanding of himself, he would correct this situation by going places where he would see the activities of others; attending social gatherings, interesting himself in some hobby or other; perhaps nothing more than leaving his home every day for a short time and seeking the company of other people. This would bring about a healthy, normal outlook and could bring about a complete cure for the neurotic illness, but, once again, the subject is not able to recognize what is causing the trouble within himself.

Please do not misunderstand me, the neurotic illness is really a sickness, but is a sickness which can be overcome. Most of the cure lies within the individual through knowledge of himself. This situation exists in men, women, and sometimes manifests itself even in children.

Believe me, please, when I say that in my many years of experience in coming in contact with the characteristics and problems of people, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, people who have these negative characteristics ARE UNAWARE OF IT because they have never taken the trouble to learn all they could about that most interesting person - themselves. This is the reason I, as your instructor, am very eager that you derive the utmost from this series, THE SEVEN WAYS TO SELFHOOD, which I call KNOW THYSELF. It can be the difference between success and failure.

You may study a lesson and not realize you are being helped. Perhaps there is no tangible thing in the lesson you can point to and say, "This has helped me." But, believe me, my Companion, every word that you read has its effect on your subconscious mind and will bring about an improvement in your life, even though you may not realize it at this time.

Another important thing which I would like to stress is the importance of reading your lessons more than once. You will find that the second reading will bring you more TRUTH than the first, and the third reading will be even more illuminating than the second.

When you KNOW YOURSELF you are better equipped to cope with life, you are better able to recognize what is your fault or the fault of someone else. You are better able to realize what is keeping you from success. If you have such a characteristic and you are able to recognize it for what it is, you may then realize what is keeping you from success, and will be able to do something about it. You will be better able to get along with associates if you know of some fault which you have, for you will strive to overcome it.

If you are totally unaware of characteristics which are keeping you from success in any facet of your life, you naturally are not going to do anything about it, so I say again, "KNOW THYSELF", if you would be successful.

DECIDE WHAT KIND OF PERSON YOU WANT TO BE, pray about it and know that God will answer your prayer if your request is good.

With these thoughts in mind, let us now proceed with Lecture Lesson No. 2 entitled PLANT THE QUALITIES YOU WANT TO GROW.

THE GARDEN OF LIFE

Inanimate things are shaped by one mechanical process or another, but living things grow to a life pattern. There is such a thing as seeds falling by chance and plants coming up volunteer, but that is no way to grow anything desirable. It is not likely to yield what you want, and in such a case the plants soon become wild and degenerate into weeds.

In other words, this fundamental YOU we have been talking about is like a fertile field. Almost anything you plant in it will grow. That is the way a human life builds up, whether for joy or regret. We sow what we will, and we reap what we sow.

If you just leave this productive life of yours alone and trust to chance, it will grow up in weeds just as any field will do. If you plant it with just anything you happen to have at hand, maybe you will reap what you want and maybe not, but rest assured you will get what you plant. If you plant your field with the qualities you want but do not prepare the ground well, the seeding will be shallow, much of it will blow or wash away, and the rest will not take deep enough root to grow very well. If you plant what you want and do not keep the weeds out, they will choke your crop. If you do the same and do not cultivate the growth, your yield will be of poor quality. Even though you prepare the soil, cultivate, and weed, if you do not protect your crop against blight, insects, and frosts, your efforts will be lost. If you do all these things, you will at least be well repaid.

Whether in the soil of earth or of life things can happen to a crop at any stage, so the care and watchfulness of the grower must be unceasing to the end. The writer once asked a wheat grower in the Northwest when he considered his crop safe. Was it when it had matured, or not till it was harvested? "Not till it is in the grain elevator and the check for it is in my pocket", was his reply. The grower of anything has to be diligent and watchful till the process is complete. Do not assume that just because you have started developing the personal qualities you want, the result is assured. Races are decided not by how they begin, but by how they end. When you have prepared your personality ground, and selected and planted your seed, that is good, but it is only a beginning.

We have all watched the growth of plant life in the ground. What a miracle it is! We go out and see a garden blooming with flowers or a field greening with grain stalks just because someone has planted funny looking little seeds there. But those funny looking seeds were bearers of the marvelous germ of life handed down through countless generations of their kind.

So do not plant dead qualities, hopes, plans, and ideals in your life. They will not grow. You will have the work to do all over with seeds that have vitality in them. When you do that according to the laws of life and growth, the results will change the world for you even more wonderfully than if you were planting a garden or a field in the Spring.

The husbandman does not look backward but forward. He knows that no matter how lovely yesterday was, it was only a means to the fuller development of today,

even as today is of tomorrow. On the other hand, if yesterday was marred with error or loss, that may as well be disregarded now. It is done, and nothing can be gained by dwelling upon it now. The capable grower lets bygones be bygones, and goes on from there. He knows he has the harvest - the final result - to think of. If he could cling to the springtime because it is beautiful and he loves it, there would never be a harvest. Life is always moving on, and if you want to develop an ever more adequate self, you must move with it.

When you have the opportunity watch a good gardener or a capable farmer at work. Observe him carefully the whole season through and see how he adapts his work to the needs of each stage of growth. Ask him questions and try to understand what he does and why he does it in that way. Be sure to see the final result of the season's effort. It is something new under the sun. Last Spring it existed only as a possibility. That is what has come of a man working with God and the productive powers of the ground. Even more wonderful are the results you can get from working with God and the productive power of your own being.

What has the land done by the time harvest comes? The will of the husbandman - no more and no less. The golden fields are his dream come true, his plan realized. It is an over-all plan, for if he is wise, he has allowed for some failure and loss but has tried to keep it to a minimum. What do you dream for your life? What qualities do you plan to grow? Whatever you plan to do, or have, ask yourself now what it is you plan to be.

PLAN YOUR CROP

Every Spring we see people crowding around the seed counters deciding what plants and varieties of them they want in their yards and gardens or on their land. Flowers, vegetables, grains, or whatever it may be they have in mind, they have a large assortment from which to choose. Nature has been very kind in this regard.

In a similar way you are joining a crowd around the seed counters of human qualities, trying to decide what you want to develop as a part of the totality you call your life. A wide assortment is offered. You can have almost anything you wish. Your own desires and powers of decision are greatly respected in this process. God has created you with these powers, and they are seldom interfered with.

> Is it truth you want, or honor, or wisdom, or goodness, or kindness? You can have ANY or ALL OF THEM, AND THEY WILL GROW AND INCREASE IF YOU WILL PLANT AND NURTURE THEM. Is it capacity for friendship you want, or the will to helpfulness, or strength of purpose, or a cheerful and hopeful disposition, or courage of soul, or the spirit of justice? Then take them, and start your planting. Heaven will furnish the sunshine and the rain if you will furnish the soil and the labor.

Perhaps you have already allowed some weeds to get started in the field of your personality. Are you disposed to be unappreciative of others? Are you weak in your ethical judgments? Are you prone to discouragement? Are you disposed to

demand too little of yourself? Just find the opposite of the thing you wish to get rid of and let the good choke out the bad. It will do it, if you give it the exclusive care and cultivation.

Stop troubling about remodeling the lives of other people, and concentrate on the improvement of your own. You can't make others over, and if you could, you might bungle the job and make it worse than ever. You can really do something with yourself, and that is your responsibility. Perhaps all others need is a good example in you. Remember that leaven always grows from the center, each cell for itself alone. And, after all, the others seem to do very well too.

As far as you can, make your plan now, and keep working on it till you have it as good as you can make it now. Then, as you go along, you will see ways you can improve it, but the immediately important thing is to get started.

Let us change the figure temporarily from that of a field to that of a building. In California there is a house built by a wealthy woman who was obsessed with the idea that if she stopped building on it she would die. There it stands today with all kinds of useless, unplanned space, corridors leading nowhere, doors opening on nothing - a baffling, useless maze without scheme, unity or design. An unplanned life becomes something like that - the result of building on according to fancy and whim, year after year.

Some years ago a great architect published an article in which he declared that four elements are important in any good piece of building. They are planning, materials, construction, and decoration. That is, a good plan, well executed of good quality materials in a beautiful and attractive way, is the goal of the good builder. Is that not also a desirable formula for the building of the YOU that is to be?

Now let us get back to the seed planting analogy. There are certain virtues and values you will need in your life, whatever the other details may be. In any profession, situation, or relationship, you will need such things as honor, wisdom, kindness, courage, and conscience. Special situations in life will require special qualities, such as appreciation of art, love of learning, understanding of children, discrimination in questions of justice, the spirit of service, religious discernment, the historical viewpoint, and all sorts of other things. There they are on the seed counter. Get them, prepare your soil, and start planting. Remember it will take time. A plant is a shoot long before it is a mature stalk.

Let us hope that by now you have visualized the selfhood you wish to attain. That is your chart, your plan, your blueprint. It is a good thing to have for two reasons. One is that it gives you a visible pattern to work by. The other is that visualizing anything tends toward its realization. As Ernest, in Hawthorne's story, The Great Stone Face, looked at the benign countenance on the mountainside till he resembled it, so we all tend to become like the patterns we visualize, whether they are good, bad, or indifferent. That is how important it is to build a good plan and keep it before your mind's eye.

HOW DO YOU GO ABOUT IT?

We have been discussing this process under the figure of planting seed. This has served the purpose very well up to this point, but let us now throw all figures aside and use very plain, everyday terms. We have said that one should plant and cultivate in his life the qualities and powers he wishes to have grow there. Exactly what do we mean by that, and exactly how is one to go about it? What are the mechanisms and the processes to be used? How do we plant such seed in such a field? We must leave no room for doubt and uncertainty.

The first thing to do is to want those qualities. They are not going to force themselves upon you. They are extremely sensitive about getting a welcome at the door. Probably no one ever developed an element in his life he did not want there. He may have claimed otherwise, but he made it welcome or it would not have come. What one deeply desires the creative powers are always consciously or unconsciously trying to bring to pass, and so is he. He naturally does everything he can, and pays whatever price is necessary to bring about the fulfillment of his desire.

Life is always trying to be kind to each of us. Like any fond parent she wants us to have what we crave and what is best for us, and is always trying to give it to us. But the more cooperation she gets from us, the better able she is to accomplish her purpose. There seems to be some deep, sure law by which the very fact of desiring a thing tends to bring it about. It may be a phase of the creative power of the subconscious mind, but whatever it is the important thing to recognize is that it exists and functions, always trying to make our desire worlds our real ones. There must be truth in that line of an old hymn which declares that prayer is the soul's sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed.

Speaking of prayer, that is one of the ways to do this work of cultivating selfhood. If you believe in a Heavenly Father be sure to talk over all these desires and plans with Him. You will find two things happening, both of them good. First, the unwise and questionable desires will begin to disintegrate and disappear. Second, you will have unseen and potent help in realizing the ones that are good. You may even begin to find that things have happened before you get around to trying your hand at them, and usually in some utterly unexpected way at that.

How are such amazing things wrought by prayer? Who can say, and what does it matter? The important thing is that they are wrought, and that whatever does them is as available to one of us as another. We do not ask why or how electricity turns the motor. No one knows, or needs to. Probably no one ever will. The important thing is that it does, and that it will do it for anyone who will press a button or close a switch.

If you have not yet found reason to believe in and trust a Supreme Being, here is your chance to apply the laboratory test. Why not do some reverent and sincere experimenting with honest prayer, and see if you do not make some surprising discoveries? The Power that made and controls the universe does many things for you already, even though you do not ask. If it did not, you would not get on at all. Recognition of it and harmony with it would enable it to do much more. It is a good thing to have the help of the supreme power, and a

rather hopeless thing not to.

We have already referred to the creative power of the subconscious mind. It is one of your readiest and powerful servants. Whatever the explanation of it may be, it has been found by experience to have certain constructive powers, powers to create both things and conditions in the sense of bringing them into expression, things and conditions which to any conscious powers we possess would be impossible.

> How do you use the aid of this capable and faithful helper? Just refer things to it and keep them committed to it till results occur. Declare what you desire as though it had already happened. DENY what you do not desire, as though it did not exist. Keep doing this, and you will build up some inner force that will take both your affirmations and denials, work at them, and ultimately make them true. Has not the Great Teacher Himself told us to pray for things believing that we already have them? What is that but affirming and denying according to our desires? If it seems paradoxical, it is not the only thing in His teachings that is paradoxical yet true.

Sit down in silence once or twice a day and proclaim to the universe that these good things to which you aspire are realized in you. Somewhere you will be heard, and somehow forces will go to work to actualize the pattern you have set for yourself.

Of course, you must realize that you are dealing with forces of inconceivable power. You dare make no mistake in dealing with them, and you must seek nothing that is not just, and right, and good. Always keep up the proviso of our Lord's devising - thy will be done. It would be a fearful thing to get into the wrong relation to the forces created only for good when they are the strongest ones in the universe.

You must work unceasingly for the qualities you want. Live them as of now, and you will build them as well as get practice with them. If now and then you forget or make a mistake, never mind and be more careful next time. It is by practicing the qualities you seek that the conditions are set up and the habit grooves formed that will one day make them natural and easy, like a musician's command of his trained and disciplined fingers.

WHAT IF YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND?

One trouble about personal development is that the deeper understanding and wider viewpoint it develops may cause us to change our minds about the course we want to pursue. That is good, and yet it can become a problem. If you make the best plan and program of which you are capable today, the time may come when you will see that it needs improvement or change. That may not happen to you, but it does to some; and the necessary revamping has to be done with care. As you develop, your sense of values often changes; things that seem of vast importance today, you may find that in the great Life pattern they are very unimportant.

You may start out to be a certain kind of person and render a certain service in the world, and change your mind more than once before your stand stays put. That is especially likely if you are young in either years or viewpoints. Remember that it happens only because you are growing, and because you are now capable of attaining something better than before. Many people are now thankful for certain times when they changed their minds - for the better.

We change our minds about both the ideals we want to attain and the qualities that make them possible. We should do so unless our concepts are perfect to begin with, which is not very likely.

After Abraham Lincoln made that famous flatboat trip to New Orleans in his youth he was perfectly sure that he wanted to live the life of a river boatman. He asked his father to permit him to do so, and the world owes Thomas Lincoln a debt of gratitude for persuading the boy not to make up his mind just yet but to work on where he was till life unfolded more and gave him a clearer view. That clearer view came, and with it very different ideals and plans. It so happened then that the trip to New Orleans fitted into the complete pattern of those plans.

Probably the best precaution we can take against having hard and costly readjustments to make later on is to be as careful and sure as we can at the outset. If we know ourselves well enough to know when a conclusion is or is not final, that will safeguard us. Meanwhile build all the qualities you can that are basic to effective living anywhere and doing anything. If you see the necessity for change coming, make it before you lose any more time and get into more confusion. If you change the course of your life, save as much as you can of what you have done.

Years ago, the writer of this lesson saw a great cathedral under construction. It was well advanced along one style of architecture. He admired it and went his way. Some years afterward he went to see the completed structure, and what stood before him was a great building, conforming to an altogether different style of architecture. He wondered at the first building, so far advanced, having been torn down and another erected in its place, but he was told that the original work had not been torn down. When it was decided to change the style of architecture in the midst of the enterprise, an architect had been found who had devised a way to merge most of what was already there into a building of another final plan. This had been done without violation of good building methods or safety provisions. It was done without leaving so much as a hint of the change in plans that had occurred.

Now and then, someone has to do something like that with himself. He discovers that the original plan was not adequate or in some other way not satisfactory. Building a life is a serious matter, and one must do it as wisely as he can. We only have one chance at it in this world, and we cannot afford to let anything cause the result to be less than our best. If there are readjustments to make, it should be done without losing more than necessary of what has already been done, and certainly it should be done without weakening or marring the structure.

In Simon, the rough and impetuous fisherman, was the making of a saintly world leader. In Jean Valjean, the escaped convict, hated and hating, was the

germ of the good mayor of M. sur M. and of the gentle old man whose last years were spent under the domination of a beautiful and selfless love. In Edison the newsboy was the pattern of a great inventor. In Henry Ford, the gas plant mechanic, was the making of a great industrialist and public servant. If one can catch that inevitable image and work to it from the first, he is indeed fortunate. If he cannot, the next best thing is to work on the best pattern he sees till he gets more light, and shift to a better one when it becomes clear to him. But, be vigilant, - act only when you are sure, and have a care how you do it.

It helps to know something of the lives of the great and good who have gone before. Flippant and irreverent biography will only confuse you, but you will find sincere biography constantly suggesting good patterns to work to. That way you may see more clearly the mature conclusions others came to about the spirit and direction of their lives, and set your own sights more nearly where they are likely to stay. Even on the printed page it will do you good to watch people live who had learned to do it well.

THREE QUESTIONS

In concluding this lesson, let us consider three questions that seem to grow from it. The first one is, how far can this process of self-development go? Well, how far can the multiplication of a grain crop go?

We know that the physical life gets its growth and stops developing. Does something like that happen to personality itself? Let us look at certain facts from which you may draw your own conclusions.

We know that while we see the physical body maturing, aging, and beginning to break, we see no such thing happening to the true self. It is capable of going right on developing and extending its powers and qualities as long as it remains where we can observe it. There is no limitation on it as far as we can see.

Most of us believe that life goes on permanently and passes safely from one sphere of existence to another. Can there be any good reason for supposing that, since it keeps right on growing through this earthly cycle, it should not do the same through any and all others?

The more we develop in understanding, the more clearly we see that the best we can know, understand, and do here, is only a beginning. Most people nearing the end of the earthly journey feel that they have only just started. Would not life defeat its own purposes if its limits were reached when one is only started?

The second question is, how rapidly can personality grow? The answer may be found in physical growth which, though more limited, follows the same laws. How rapidly does the physical self grow? As rapidly as it receives and assimilates food. Too little nourishment causes starvation, and too much causes malassimilation. Normal development calls for the needed amount of food day by day. There is a ratio between nourishment and time.

That is also the way to nourish selfhood to its highest strength and worth. You cannot build a great life in a day or with a few efforts. It is built gradually by regular amounts of what makes it grow - the things that nurture the qualities

you want. Its growth is also encouraged by doing the kind of things the kind of person you want to be would do. What you are to be you are now becoming, and partly by constantly striving to be the kind of person you wish to seem to be.

The third question is this: is mere self-realization an adequate goal? The answer is no, but without it an adequate goal cannot be attained. The only adequate goal is the best possible self, expressing its powers in the best possible way. That means wellbeing, achievement, service, progress, and brotherhood at their best. These are the results, but the well-developed self is the means by which they must be obtained. How can there be effects without the necessary cause?

The question, though frequently asked, does not point to anything possible anyway, and for two reasons. One is that selfhood which did not function for good would not be of the highest grade. The other is that, as we have already suggested, first-rate selfhood requires expression of itself in action in order to develop at all. Self-realization is too closely bound up with self-expression for any question of preference between them to have any point.

To build a high order of selfhood without using it for the accomplishment of good, if such a thing were possible, would be very wrong, of course. At the same time, we must remember that works are temporary while the life that performs them is eternal. Good works have their value both to the doer and the beneficiary, but after all, eternal selfhood is the real object of the whole process.

Of course, we do not try to develop the I Am element within ourselves just to have something to be self-satisfied about. We build it partly to upgrade the quality of human life in general, partly to do our duty by the immortal spark within us, and partly to be able to do more for mankind and to do it better. The work proves the value of the tool, but the tool makes the work possible.

These questions will not help much in the development of selfhood, but they may fortify you against critics. The husbandman knows that his work is of planting, cultivating, and reaping, not trying to find answers to abstract questions. The results of his work will speak for themselves better than any excuses he can offer for doing it. You may not care to bother to justify your quest to others, but of course you do want to justify it to yourself. For that reason we have considered some of the queries you may meet. Those who love dispute may be able to break down an argument, but they will have no answer to a golden harvest field and a full garner.

You will find joy in your planting. The forces of Nature unite to help make things grow. You will have the satisfaction not only of seeing your crop increasing, but of knowing that the value of the harvest will be beyond all reckoning.

May God bless and reward your efforts as you build a more confident you, ... KNOW THYSELF.

Your Class Instructor.

In your next lesson, we take up THE THREEFOLD LIFE, in which the three Trinities of Life will be discussed. Following are the subjects:

The Trinity of Life
Being, or the "I Am" Element
The Physical Mechanism
Your Radiated Self

This is Your Subject