

We should follow the instructions

One headache that physicians experience (yes, they have headaches, too!) is when a patient has gargled his eardrops, has swallowed the lotion for his skin or has forgotten to take the medication for his heart. Soon afterwards, when the patient is suffering the consequences, he realizes that he did not pay close attention to the instructions, possibly due to his pride of believing he knew everything.

Many devices for the home or workplace come with loose pieces, along with a sheet of paper that indicates the way to assemble the device step by step. Nevertheless, there is a high percentage of buyers who in their enthusiasm and impatience to make their new purchase function, continue with their intuition instead of taking notice of the manufacturer's warnings. Later, they feel disillusioned when the new device does not function well.

If something you have bought does not work well, it is very probable that you have not read the manufacturer's instructions carefully. The manufacturer knows all the possible difficulties and can tell you right away the cause of the problems and how to solve them.

Therefore, it shouldn't be too difficult to appreciate that something similar can take place with a very complicated creation. That is, a human being. Body, soul, spirit, mind, feelings, memories, conscience and personality are only a few of the words that are used to describe this "apparatus" which is so intricate that it allows for no comparison, not even to the most advanced thing that man has ever made or can possibly make in the future.

Yet, the Creator has given us a book with instructions on how we can "function" well; it is the Bible.

When we set aside this book, which is the "Manual of Instructions for Life", we suffer the consequences. The wars, the battles between social classes and the bad interpersonal relationships are results in part from

not wanting to pay attention to what the Bible has to say or obey it. Ignoring the warnings that we find in God's word produces severe consequences.

If we sincerely ask ourselves why the lives of many people are filled with failure, we will come to the conclusion that it is because we do not desire to obey the instructions of the Author of the Manual. This leads us to make wrong decisions concerning very important matters in life, such as the choice of a career, a marriage commitment, buying and selling



contracts, and a thousand decisions of lesser importance. Yet, they can still impact our success or failure.

Still, as is the case with medications and machines, doing things wrong is not necessarily the end. Manufacturers want their products to function well because their name and company are at stake.

In our case, God knows that we need help and He has provided what is necessary. That is why the Lord Jesus Christ said, *"Come to Me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"* (Matthew 11:28). Jesus Christ came to this world as a man and He offers His help to all those who seek it. If you search for Him, you will find Him. He has said, *"Whoever comes to Me I will never cast out"* (John 6:37). □

Your life is escaping

Where are the dreams of your past? Look at your actual situation. Have you reached the goals that you had set in your youth? Do the years behind you disappoint you? You worked hard and made sacrifices. Maybe you have property, a new automobile, a business and money in the bank.



But, for some reason, they don't satisfy you. There must be more to life than just the things that are material.

Your children have left to establish their own families and homes. In a true sense, you hardly know them. You had been too occupied with your own matters during their childhood. They have their friends and their interests that generally do not coincide with yours. Many times they do not agree with your way of life. They look for other values. They live in a different world. They do not only do that, but they seem to live a better and happier life without you.

Your friends from the club or the bar, no matter how important they may seem at times, in the end have their own personal interests and aren't overly concerned about you. Soon you will be alone with your possessions. And given that you cannot take them to the end, you will be truly alone.

God has a message for you, even if up to this point you have never stopped to listen to His counsel. He says: *"What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his soul?"* What you really need is something that lasts for a long time. Otherwise, you do not feel secure.

For this reason Jesus said: *"Do not be anxious saying 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?'"* For the unbelievers seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matthew 6:31-33).

Friend, do something now. Take a step towards being saved while you still have time. Look for advice from an understanding friend; maybe even from the person who gave you this literature.

"For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5). □

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The painted smile

The life of a clown seems so entertaining! He's always laughing and making other people laugh. He always sees the humor in every situation. He does not have worries or problems. Everyone loves him. And what child, if they were able, would not take his place?

But, wait. That smile is painted! He has memorized his jokes, and he automatically repeats his laughter when his program calls for it. Everything is well calculated ahead of time, and given that this is how he makes a living, it is crucial that the audience laugh. But it is not necessary to go to a circus or the theater in order to find men and women who have smiles that are "painted".

They are everywhere. The fact that someone smiles often or makes jokes all day does not mean that they are necessarily happy.

The social person or friend with the kind smile might be hiding a spiritual situation that needs to be dealt with. If a person shows that they are unhappy, it would be much easier to help them. But if they are using a mask, the situation gets complicated.

How many of the smiles that surround us are truly spontaneous and genuine? A high percentage of them are artificial. Although there is much laughter, the world is filled with fear and suffering.

Generally, it is better that we reveal who we

really are so that we are able to reach a solution to our problems more quickly. But it is not easy. It takes courage to look at oneself in the mirror and to say with all sincerity: "I am unhappy. I do not like the way I am. I want to look at the causes and determine what needs to be done in order to change".

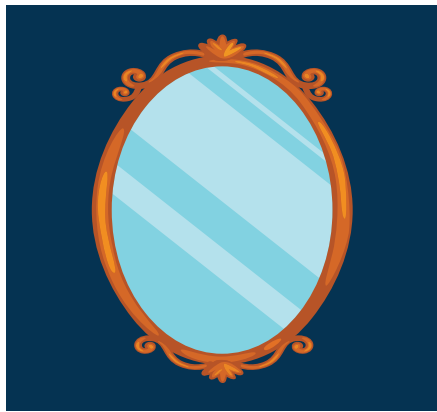
This action is called repentance. This means that we tell God, and we tell ourselves what we have known all along about ourselves. The promise we have from the Word of God is that *"if we confess our sins, He (God) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:9).

A person might have a job where they are in contact with people all day and need to smile and greet them, but if their happiness is not genuine, it will eventually become evident. Meanwhile they might be feeling like a total failure.

The need arises for us to become aware of the things that cannot always be hidden. If we are willing to put aside our fake smile, God can give us a true smile resulting from a heart that has been transformed by Him.

We begin by asking God to forgive us for our sins and for pretending to be someone we are not. If we read the Bible, we will find that when we have a relationship with God, we will have an innumerable amount of reasons to truly smile. □

If your mirror could speak, what would it tell you?



Of course, mirrors do not speak, but if they did I think they might say something like this: "You are only a counterfeit. You are not who you want people to think you are, and you know it. You cannot deny it, because I know all your secrets".

Sometimes, when you make a mistake, you blame others although you know for a fact that the fault is yours. You always have an excuse ready for when you do not do the right things you should, but inwardly

you know that you simply do not have the desire to do what's right. In other words, you are selfish.

You talk about the sins you do not commit, but you know full well in the bottom of your heart that the only reason you do not commit these sins is that you want to conform socially or because you are afraid of being exposed. You do many things that you know are wrong, but since everyone else does the same things, you think your actions are not that serious. You commit other sins with your mind and actions, and you feel innocent because you believe no one will find out. Yet, you know that God knows and that maybe many of your inward conflicts are caused by sinful behavior.

Think seriously. You say you are religious and a Christian. But, what type of Christian are you? Barely on the surface? Actually, does Christ and His will for you mean anything to you?

What difference would there be if you truly surrender your life to Christ? What issues would you need to change? Or what would need to be confessed and corrected?

"For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just penalty, how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" (Hebrews 2:1-3a).

If you believe the Gospel, you will understand why Paul the apostle, in his letter to the believers in Rome, said: *"Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Romans 5:1). □