

Heavenly Minded, Earthly Good: Ordinary Christians Living Ordinary [Extraordinary] Lives¹

H*eavenly Minded, Earthly Good* is a book that will give you a layman’s perspective of what is required to live a life for God in Christ Jesus. Its pages cover a wide array of topics that deal with current issues, life-challenges, simple areas of living, and sundry items that occur on a daily basis. It is the combination of a devotional, textbook, —a sort of “devotionalbookjournalofideasaboutbeingthebestChristianwecan.” The topics will meet you in places that you have lived and talk plainly about what it means to be Heavenly Minded so that you might live Earthly Good. This book does not assume anything about the reader or point the finger at you; rather, this book is intended to help you better understand yourself and your relationship to God as a ‘non-clergy’ individual—someone who has not studied at seminary or earned a PhD in Biblical Studies. It speaks like we speak and shows love to us as ordinary Christians, living the best life we can for God in Christ.

This book speaks to the normal things of your life, like children, work, loss, salvation, paying your bills, the economy, and just the everyday demands of life on you. But everyday demands—for the Christian—also require that we understand that our lives are to be led by a Heavenly Minded approach as we put into practice the truths of our God as we move through this life doing Earthly Good—to be ordinary Christians actively living extraordinary lives.

For example, what makes the Christian different from the non-believer? Do *they* not pay their bills on time? Do *they* not volunteer for community service? Or are unbelievers so detrimental to the neighborhood that we place a sign in their yard that reads: “A Non-believer lives here: Run for your lives!” The difference is made in the heart of the believer and translated in the actions of the individual who has been saved in Christ Jesus.

Thus, *Heavenly Minded, Earthly Good*, will take you on a journey that will guide you to forming the habit that for us to live in victory and in God’s Love, we must be ***Heavenly Minded*** at all times so that everything we do—***Earthly Good***—will be goodness to our fellow man, family members, friends, and to “love our neighbors as ourselves.”

In Christ, Ken Scott, A Fellow Christian

¹ © Dr. Ken Scott, ‘A DevotionalbookjournalLayman’sText’, (January 2016); Biblical References may be cited from various Translations, e.g., NIV, NKJB, CER, NASB, and others.

Chapter 1: A Challenge Like No Other

Life Application Verses:

Mark 12: 29 – 31. Jesus answered, “The foremost is, ‘Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ “The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

Do you think that you have what it takes to do what Jesus said in Mark 12, 29-31? Before you respond, let me urge you to think it through. You are to love God with everything that you have, nothing held in reserve, not one secret thought stored away for you to ponder at some future quiet time. This means, then, you Love God with “...ALL of your heart ...soul ...mind ...and ...strength.” That’s a tall order, tall enough to reach to the Heavens! Let’s look at each of these in the context of being *Heavenly Minded, Earthly Good*.

Think of your heart as your treasure-detector, similar to a metal-detector. “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Luke 12: 34). Wow! Are you willing to set aside your treasure-detector pegged to self and redirect it to loving God? Are we able to move from self to making God, in Christ, our treasure? Heavenly Minded says that this is *VERITAS*, or truth. God said it was right and true, and for us to live it as Earthly Good, we have to have one of those infamous paradigm shifts. Or, as my daughter said some years ago, “Dad, what is a pair-ah-digum?” The joys of children and their Heavenly Minded wisdom! You see? You have to pair-ah-digum from yourself as the treasure to God as the treasure, and the most important treasure-gift is Jesus Christ. Your paradigm shift, then, is to give ALL of your heart to God by committing your life to Jesus Christ as your most prized possession. If He is your most precious Earthly Good treasure, your paradigm shift from self to God’s salvation will be complete and Heavenly Minded! *Set your treasure-detector on Jesus and you will know God!*

Your soul, or that which is your everlasting core element in these Earthly bodies; can you reach down that deep and give ALL that you are to God? This is leagues above your treasure—this is all that you are or will ever be. God said to Love him with all your soul! In Luke, Chapter 12, verses 19-21, 31, & 34, Jesus was telling the story of the rich man who stored up so many of life’s goods that when he looked at his fortune, he quipped, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.” But God

said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you, and *now* who will own what you have prepared?’ “So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is *not rich toward God.*” The conclusion: if you love God with ALL your Soul, will you not be eternally rich beyond your comprehension? Your fortune will be Heavenly Minded and spent on Earthly Good in service to others. I think you can see the logic of this wisdom. But can we do it? Can we love our God with all our soul? To do so is to be ‘rich toward God’ and who—consciously or otherwise—does not want this kind of wealth? To do Earthly Good in Christ is to store up treasure for self AND gain the most important riches known—Heavenly Minded IN Heaven!

If you responded yes to the previous question(s), what about that ‘little thing’ we call our mind? I am referring to the right and left hemispheres, memories, thoughts, cogitations, and how we process our experiences. To control our mind for the purpose of Earthly Good, guided by Heavenly Minded practice, it takes discipline. In their book, *12 Disciplines of Leadership Excellence*, Tracy and Chee (2013, p. xi), noted: “Resolve to persist in the development of your new discipline for 21 days, without exceptions. Twenty-one days is the average time that it takes for you to develop a new habit pattern of medium complexity.” Did you get the transition here? Love God with ALL your mind because this is Heavenly Minded; to be Earthly Good, it takes self-leadership and self-discipline; SELF-discipline ... through prayer, **true** fellowship with God, and study in the Word of our God. Do you see the complexity issue?

How often does our mind wander in places it shouldn’t be wandering? Do we have the Biblical discipline to return to thinking about things acceptable to God? How complex is this in our lives? I believe it is one of the more difficult things to do; that is, to discipline our minds and to do so in order that we might love our God with ALL of our minds. This means, what we think, perceive, say, write, read, consider, treasure, desire, love, and so forth...ALL of these things are guided and disciplined so that we will give our mental faculty over to God because we desire to Love Him that much. Talk about complexity!!! The Holy Spirit will enable us to move towards this goal if we seek God’s help to learn to love Him unconditionally!

Then there is the almost miniscule, lonely part of us that without it, we might not otherwise achieve too many things in life—our strength. We gain strength by keeping ourselves as fit as we can, mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Strength gives us

stamina for the journey, and this *Heavenly Minded, Earthly Good* journey is going to be a challenge in every way imaginable. The Enemy is going to attack you in every facet of your life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness. He WILL be relentless! So, you must be fit for the journey and the fight. Remember a time when you were so tired that your eyes were open but you were on ‘standby?’ You moved your body around, but your mind was on auto-pilot and your body was running on fumes? If you met with God in your quiet time of fellowship, what was it like? Were you able to concentrate? Did your mind do some more wandering?

You see, it is important to be properly rested. I am not a physical trainer, but I am a physical being. Like the quote, “We are spiritual beings having a physical experience.” If true, then to maximize the spiritual experience (Heavenly Minded), we must be strong in our physical self to deal with doing the Work of God *in and through* the Word of God *in and through* the Spirit of God (Earthly Good). Can we love God with ALL of our strength if we are always run down, tired, over eat, or fatigued to exhaustion? Will an athlete do his or her best if they are out-of-shape? Listen...***I’m not making any judgment*** about your physical condition; I am just saying that for us to love God with all our strength, we need to understand what this means. Do what you can when you can and as often as you can—and Pray to God for strength to build your strength so that you can Love Him with all your strength! Another way to say this: be as strong in your Prayer life as your strength will allow and strive to gain as much strength as you can achieve. If that’s not a pair-ah-digum shift, what is?

Moving forward a bit, and assuming that we have figured out how to Love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, what’s left? Well, believe it or not, Jesus added something that creates havoc in so many lives. The havoc stems from the following Truth as Jesus pointed out: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ Right about now, you might begin to think about ‘your neighbors.’ Are these the people who literally live next door? As a Christian lay person, I say yep, that’s one neighbor: what about those at work, in the grocery store, jogging in front of your domicile, and even people in your local church? Yep, I think God intended ‘neighbor’ to be all those people. No exceptions. But love them as I love myself? No way! How can that even begin to be possible? Well, if you love God with all of your heart, mind, soul, and strength, then He will give you the power to do just that. But, you are going to have

to commit that love to God, in Jesus, before you can achieve loving your neighbor as yourself. Why? ***Read the following carefully and Pray earnestly in the Holy Spirit for its meaning...***

Let me explain it like a recipient myself. I desire to Love my God more than all things in this life. I read his Word; study its meaning; practice its truths; seriously strive to give Him ALL my love of heart, mind, soul, and strength; and, I begin to see progress as I feel the Spirit of God in my life. Then, I read the message Jesus adds to this already tough assignment—Love my neighbor as I love myself. Well, sometimes I don't love myself because I do something that causes me grief or results in feeling like an unworthy Sinner Saved by Grace. As long as we are on this Earth, we will be sinners saved by the Grace of God, and subject to make mistakes. But, loving our neighbor as ourselves—that is—when we love ourselves, is probably not as easy as we might think for the average person. Then again, if we are outside the Saving Grace of God, is this real self-love or deluded self-love? We'll get to that later...

How do we do this? How can we love someone who is a neighbor that we barely know? Maybe Jesus gave us the perfect example. He taught and demonstrated compassion like no other individual that ever lived. When He saw a need, He responded; when someone asked for help, He responded; when the blind could not see and called out to him repeatedly even while being rebuked, He responded; and, today, if we will call out to God in Christ, He will respond—including helping us to live the directive from Jesus to love others as we love ourselves.

When we see someone in need, we should—**no, we must**--respond; when the hungry need food, we should—**no, we must**--respond; when they need transportation, we should—**no, we must**--respond; when they need their grass cut, we should—**no, we must**--respond; when they need someone to cry with, we should—**no, we must**--respond; when they need to hear that Jesus saves people of all colors, creeds, and backgrounds, we should—**NO, WE MUST**--respond with the Message of Salvation. Are these not the very things we want others to do for us? If we love ourselves and want these needs met, do not our neighbors have the same needs and desires? If this is true, then we must do for our neighbors as we want done to us because this is what Jesus commanded us to do—and because to love our neighbors as ourselves means that we do for them no less than we would do for ourselves or want them to do for us, our task is indeed going to be difficult.

To Love God with ALL of our heart, mind, soul, strength, as well as love our neighbors as ourselves, is nothing less than a challenge like no other. I believe this with all my heart, mind, soul, and strength: God will never fail to be with us at every moment if we do as Jesus commanded. We will not be a Moses in the desert for 40 years because if we Love Him to this degree, we will be Heavenly Minded in all our Earthly Good ways. Oh, don't get me wrong—the rose will still have thorns, life will still rise and fall, and we will shed tears of joy, heartache, and solitude. But, we will NOT be alone. If we Love God as He requires, Jesus told us that He would never leave us nor forsake us. The Holy Spirit, our comforter, is always with us. ALWAYS! Remember that and keep the Prayer Hotline Open 24x7. And don't forget your neighbor!!!

So, at this point, I Hope and Pray that what Jesus said in the Life Application scripture does not cause you to despair. Will you, in this imperfect body, be able to reach nirvana or perfection in the struggle to Love your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, as well as love your neighbor as yourself? You will not reach perfection in this life, but perfection is not what God requires of us. He knows who and what we are, and He wants total surrender of your Life to Christ. He desires your Heavenly Mindedness to bear Earthly Good fruit. Self-discipline, self-driven-leadership, praying without ceasing—these are the things to help you achieve the mandate from Jesus. His words are a challenge like no other. But you are NOT ALONE!!!

A Question of Curiosity:

What evidence would God cite as proof that we Love Him with all our heart, mind, soul, strength? As the saying goes, could He gather enough evidence to convict us of our Love? How many neighbors would He call as witnesses during the Heavenly Hearing?

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“Tears shed for self are tears of weakness, but tears shed for others are a sign of strength.”
~ Billy Graham ~

“If you can't do the good you would, do the good you can.”

~ Charles Swindoll ~

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My Prayer For You:

Father, I pray that we might heed the Words that Jesus gave us. For those who take this challenge, I ask you Oh Lord to bless them in their efforts, give them Divine Strength to move forward in their fellowship with You, and move upon their lives through the Holy Spirit to demonstrate Your Love. It is also my humble prayer before Your Throne of Grace and Mercy that we might know in Your Love and Wisdom what it means to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. Thank you Lord God for the most precious gift of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, for us to be able to know what true Love really is and that we might respond to You. Teach us and grant us the wisdom to know what it truly means to Love You, God, with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength and to share this Love with our neighbors. For in the name of Your Son, our Savior, Christ Jesus, I humbly ask these things. Amen.

What does it mean to truly love the unlovable?

Read the following story from *Christianity Today*²

Loving the Unlovable

Surely, Jesus didn't mean to love everybody ...

I hit the red button in front of me. A light bulb lit up and a *buzzzz* sound rang out. My scholastic bowl coach, Ms. Lemon, had just asked the last question of our practice match. The score was tied. And I knew the answer. The question: "Who wrote *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*?"

Mrs. Lemon called on me as I started laughing so hard I couldn't get the name "Jules Verne" out. "Time's up," she said. And then, the other team won.

As I was leaving practice, Ms. Lemon pulled me aside. "You lost that for your team," she said, her voice shaking. "And I know why. Jules Verne made you think of Vern didn't it?"

Everyone at my school knew Vern. He smelled. He wore big work boots and torn shirts every day. And he didn't seem too bright. When Jules Verne came to mind, I was laughing at the idea of Vern writing a book.

"Vern doesn't deserve to be treated that way," Ms. Lemon said. "What makes you think he's so unlovable that he doesn't deserve simple respect?"

I had no answer. Suddenly feeling hot and sweaty, I apologized to her and left. But one word stuck with me for days: unlovable. I kept thinking about all the people in my high school who did seem downright unlovable. There were strange outcasts like Vern. There were mean kids like Justin, the bully who always called me fat. And there were crabby, annoying people like those guys in my algebra study group who never agreed about anything. *Clearly*, I thought, *all of these people are unlovable*.

But as a Christian, I'm supposed to love them all.

² Hertz, Todd. (2012). Loving the unlovable: Surely, Jesus didn't mean to love everybody. *Christianity Today*, Retrieved from <http://www.christianitytoday.com/iyf/truelifestories/ithappenedtome/unlovable.html?start=1>.

Perhaps Jesus' toughest teaching is to "love your neighbor as yourself" ([Mark 12: 31](#), NIV). Sure, that seems easy enough—until you really think about what it means. He didn't say "like" them. He said "love" them. And you don't get to pick who your neighbor is. It's everyone—from Vern to Justin to your little brother who shampoos your hair while you sleep. (OK, maybe only my brother did that.)

Were Jesus' expectations too high? I mean, he never had to go to high school. If so, surely he'd know that it's not so easy to love everybody.

Well, that's a cool thing about Jesus. He wasn't just God on High shouting down orders. He experienced what we experience. When he told us to live a certain way, it was coming from a guy who'd been there. He lived on Earth—and probably knew his share of Verns and Justins. And he had little brothers.

However, Jesus understood two important truths:

1) Everyone is created in God's image. So if we are worthy of love, so is everyone else because of who made them. 2) Because of sin, we're all really unlovable. But Christ changed the rules by offering love, grace and forgiveness ([Romans 5:8](#)). If God can love us, surely we can love those around us.

But how do we do it?

Recently, I heard a pastor give a sermon about [John 13](#). It changed how I view treating the hard-to-like people around me.

Here's the big thing the pastor said that blew my mind: At the Last Supper, Jesus was in the same room with a bunch of people about to betray him, deny him and desert him. And he knew it. Talk about hard-to-like people. But what does Jesus do? "He got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him" ([John 13:4-5](#), NIV).

Whoa. He's surrounded by guys who don't deserve his love or respect. And he washes their feet.

Right here, Jesus shows how to love the unlovable. It's not to just tolerate them. Or just not make fun of them. Or to pretend you love them. Instead, we should serve them.

Here's why: 1) Serving gives us an easy way to see how we should love. It's not just some mushy, hard-to-grasp emotion, but an action. 2) Serving someone has a way of changing the way we see them. If you are continually looking out for a way to help someone, it's very hard to think they're worthless. It's very hard to stay mad at them.

Of course, it'd be weird to whip out a towel and lather up a bully's feet. But serving them starts with praying for them. And then look for opportunities. Maybe it's holding a door open when someone is carrying his band instrument. Or spotting someone a quarter when she's short for a soda.

I wish I could say that I helped Vern with math problems. Or helped Justin jump his car. But I didn't. However, those regrets push me to make the choice to serve the Justins and Verns in my life now. And that's exactly what it is: a choice. [Galatians 5:13](#) puts it like this: "It is absolutely clear that God has called you to a free life. Just make sure that you don't use this freedom as an excuse to do whatever you want ... Rather, use your freedom to serve one another in love" (The Message).