

Luke Lesson 18 Handout

Luke 4:38 ³⁸Then He got up and left the synagogue, and entered Simon's home. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Him to help her.

³⁹And standing over her, He rebuked the fever, and it left her; and she immediately got up and waited on them.

Isaiah 7:14 (NASB95)

¹⁴"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.

Matthew 1:23 (NASB95)

²³"BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US."

John 1:1-3 (NASB95)

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

²He was in the beginning with God.

³All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

John 14:6 (NASB95)

⁶Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

Matthew 7:13–14 (NASB95)

¹³Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it.

¹⁴For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Luke 4:40 While the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and laying His hands on each one of them, He was healing them.

⁴¹Demons also were coming out of many, shouting, “You are the Son of God!” But rebuking them, He would not allow them to speak, because they knew Him to be the Christ.

Luke 4:42–44 (AMP)

⁴²And when daybreak came, He left [Peter’s house] and went into an isolated [desert] place. And the people looked for Him until they came up to Him and tried to prevent Him from leaving them.

Once, when my wife, Gail, and I were hiking the high meadows of the Swiss Alps, we saw two farmers cutting the high-standing mountain grasses with scythes, -(sithes) a hand-mowing tool that has been around since ancient times.

Drawing closer, we noticed that both paused periodically and produced from their pockets something resembling a flat stone. Then in the same graceful manner, they drew the stones back and forth across the scythes’ blades. The purpose? To restore sharpness.

The sharpening done, each returned to the cutting.

We observed them repeat this process—cut and sharpen, cut and sharpen—several times: ten minutes (give or take) of cutting followed by five minutes of sharpening.

[But] why waste five minutes sharpening the blades? We're talking here about 20 minutes of unproductive time each hour. Why not keep cutting, get the job finished, and head home at an earlier hour? Because with every swing of the scythe, the blade becomes duller. And with the increasing dullness, the work becomes harder and less productive. Result: you actually head home much later. Cutting and sharpening are both part of a farmer's work.

In my [younger] years, I didn't appreciate this cutting/sharpening principle. I'm embarrassed to admit that I usually gave attention to the sharpening (or the spiritual) dimension of my life only when I needed something beyond my natural reach or when I found myself knee-deep in trouble.

The cumulative results of a life lived like this became alarming. It led to dullness of the soul.

While talking a lot about God, I had very little practice in listening to him I tended to become bogged down in matters of secondary importance, neglecting truly important things.

I often complained of fatigue: not only physical fatigue, but spiritual and emotional emptiness. Sometimes I became flooded with temptations to envy, impatience, ambition, discontent, wandering thoughts.

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Adapted from Gordon MacDonald, "Cut and Sharpen," Leadership Journal (Fall 2011)

Luke 4:43 But He said to them, I must preach the good news (the Gospel) of the kingdom of God to the other cities [and towns] also, for I was sent for this [purpose].

44 And He continued to preach in the synagogues of Galilee.

Ephesians 2:10 (NASB95)

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.