

Keeping One's Life in Tune

by J.R. Miller

To keep our life in tune, we must come into communion with God, practice daily, and live in harmony with His will.

Scripture: Psalm 51:10, Matthew 11:28, John 15:10, Romans 12:1

Topics: "Spiritual Renewal", "Harmony with God"

Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes the necessity of keeping our lives in tune, much like a piano requires regular tuning to avoid discord. He explains that life's experiences can exhaust us, making it essential to seek spiritual renewal through communion with God, especially after a long day. Miller illustrates that just as a piano can fall out of tune through disuse or misuse, our lives can also become discordant through neglect or sin. He encourages us to align our lives with God's will, as true harmony comes from obedience and love. Ultimately, the goal is to submit our lives to God, allowing His grace to help us create beautiful music in our daily existence.

Transcript

Pianos have to be kept in tune. Every now and then the tuner comes and goes over all the strings, keying them up, so that there will be no discords when the instrument is played. Our lives have a great many more strings than a piano, and much more easily get out of tune. Then they begin to make discords, and the music is spoiled. We need to watch them carefully, to keep their strings always up to concert pitch.

One way in which a piano is put out of tune--is by use. The constant striking of the strings stretches them, and they need to be keyed up from time to time. Just so, life's common experiences have an exhausting effect.

It is said of Jesus that "virtue went out of him" as he went about healing those who were sick. Virtue always goes out of us as we work, as we sympathize with pain or sorrow, as we minister to others, as we strive and struggle. Duty drains our life fountains. We have our daily tasks, temptations, burdens, cares, trials--and at the close of the day we are tired, and the music our life makes is naturally not as sweet as it was in the morning. Night has a blessed ministry in renewing our physical vitality, so that our bodies are ready with the new day for new service. The songfulness of life, is far more dependent upon the bodily health, than we dream of. It is much easier to be joyous and sweet--when we are fresh and strong--than when we are jaded and weary.

But the body is not all. We are made for communion with God. We need also to come into his presence at the end of the day, to be spiritually renewed. The other day a young woman whose work is very hard, with long hours and incessant pressure, took a little time from her noon hour to call upon an older friend, saying, "I felt that if I could see you for five minutes, to get an encouraging word, I could get through the afternoon better."

What is true of a human friend, is true yet more of God. If we can get a little while with him when we are weary, when our strength is running low--our life will be put in tune, so that the music will be sweet again. We cannot afford to live a day without communion with Christ--to get his strength, joy, and peace into our hearts. One of the principle ways in which Sunday helps us--is by lifting us up for a little while into accord with heavenly things. We withdraw from the toil, bustle, and noise of our weekday work--into the quiet, where we can hear the songs of peace, catch sight of the face of God and commune with holy thoughts. The effect, if we avail ourselves of the possibilities of such a privilege, is to start us anew on a higher plane of living.

Henry Ward Beecher tells of visiting a painter. "I saw on his table some highly colored stones, and I asked him what they were for. He said that they were to keep his eye up to tone. When he was working in pigments, insensibly his sense of color was weakened, and by having a pure color near him he brought it up again, just as the musician, by his test fork, brings himself up to the right pitch.

Now, every day men need to have a sense of the invisible God. No nature is of such magnitude, that it does not need daily to be tuned, chorded, borne up to the idea of a pure and lofty life.

Another way in which a piano is put out of tune is by disuse. If it is kept closed, its strings will lose their tone. The best way to take care of the instrument, is to keep it in constant use. It is the same with our lives. They keep in tune best when they are fully occupied. It is a law of nature, that a power not used wastes--at length shrivels and dies. This is true of all our faculties. Musicians can maintain their skill only by unceasing practice. A great pianist said that if he missed his hours at his instrument for three days, the public would know it; if for two days, his friends would be aware of it; and that if he failed in his practice even for one day, he himself would be conscious of it. Only daily practice would keep his fingers up to their standard of skill.

If we would keep our life in tune, we must not allow its powers to lie unused. We make the sweetest music, when we are living at our best. An idle person never can be truly happy--nor can he be the best maker of happiness for others. We learn to love more--by loving. We grow more joyous--by rejoicing. If we cease to be kind even for a few days, it will show in the lowering of the tone of our life as others know us. If for only a day we fail in showing kindness--our hand will lose something of its skill and deftness in life's sweet ministries.

One who strives to make such a wish come true, will always keep the harp of his life in tune. All the lessons set for us to learn, may be gathered into one--the lesson of loving. Love is life's sweetest, best music.

A piano is put out of tune also by misuse. A skillful musician may spend hours in playing upon it without affecting the tone of any of the strings--but inexperienced and unskillful playing, jangles the chords and makes the instrument incapable of producing sweet musical effects. Many people so misuse and abuse their lives--that they destroy their power to give out sweetness. The consequence of sin--is not merely the breaking of the divine law. Every sin also leaves marring and hurt in the life of him who commits it! Every

time we violate our conscience or resist the divine will--we lower the moral tone of our being.

In the familiar song, the bird with the broken wing never soared so high again. If we would keep our life in tune, so that it will make sweet music every day and wherever we go, we must avoid doing things that are wrong--and do always the things that are right.

We cannot think too seriously of the hurt which sin inflicts upon our lives. We readily believe that the grosser sins do irremediable harm whenever they are indulged in. One who commits them is never the same again. Though a Christian is forgiven and restored to divine favor--the effects of the sins remain. But in a measure, the consequences of every form of evil are the same. A wicked thought leaves a stain. A moment of anger wounds and scars the soul. A grudge cherished hardens the heart. Bad temper works ruinously amid the affections. Envy is like a canker, eating out the life's finer texture. Jealousy sweeps amid all the gentle things of the heart like a fire--and nothing is ever so beautiful as before! Lost innocence comes not again. We do not know what harm we are letting into our life--when we open the door to an unkindly feeling, a prompting of pride, any emotion which is not in accordance with the will and love of God. They put the harp of a thousand strings out of tune!

Musicians have a standard pitch by which they tune all their instruments. The standard for our lives--is the will of God. The Word of God gives us the keynote. Our lives will make music, only when they are in harmony with God. Jesus himself said, "I do always those things that please him." Then he said that, because of his unfailing obedience, the Father never left him alone. There was never any discordance or disharmony between his life--and the Father's. Our lives are in tune--just in so far as they are in harmony with God's will. Jesus said that if we keep his commandments, we shall abide in his love, which means that there shall be nothing discordant between his life and ours. "Nearer, my God, to you," is a prayer for the lifting of our spirits into such relations with God, that the communion between him and us shall be perfect and unbroken.

The bringing of the powers of our own lives into tune--is really the great problem of all spiritual culture. It takes all life here, to work out the problem. All our mortal years, we are in training. The object of all the discipline of experience, is to bring our faculties and powers under the mastery of the Holy Spirit, and to school our affections and feelings, our longings and desires--into the beauty of love.

While the audience is waiting for a concert to begin--they hear a strange clangor back of the scenes. The instruments are being brought into accord. At first they are far apart in their tones--but in a little time they all come into perfect harmony. Then the music begins. Each human life is a whole orchestra in itself. But it is not always in tune, and before it can begin to make sweet music--its many chords must all be brought into accord. This is the work of spiritual culture. It is achieved only by the submission of the whole life to God. This is the work which divine grace sets itself to do in us. If we would have this result achieved we must sweetly and earnestly yield ourselves to God--that he may bring us into tune with his own Spirit and teach us to make heavenly music in this world.

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