

The Famous “As If Principle”

(Notes on a talk given by Sterling W. Sill)

If you want a virtue, act “as if” you already have it. The “as if principle” is one of the most potent ideas in the world. Pick out any part in life that you wish to play and then play it with all your heart, and that is what you will become. It is as simple as that.

Some people are too easily disheartened. They sometimes come to look upon everybody with suspicion and believe the worst about everyone, including themselves. As long as a man carries about with him this poorhouse atmosphere, he will always make a poorhouse impression. If we are always over emphasizing the bad in ourselves, if we are always criticizing our own shortcomings and weaknesses and castigating ourselves for not doing better, we only deepen the unfortunate pictures in our consciousness and make them more influential in our lives.

Self-depreciation is a sin. You may be sure that your success will never rise higher than your confidence in yourself. You must see a better world before you can ever hope to live in it. You get the role in life which you, yourself, select.

What else but the “as if principle” did Isaiah have in mind when he said, “as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he”! Isaiah did not say “As a man thinketh in his *mind* so is he”. The heart was thought of as the seat of consciousness. That is where we feel and live, that is also where we “become”.

This “as if” philosophy reached it’s highest expression in the life and teachings of the Master himself. Jesus said, “All things are possible to him that believeth”. It would be difficult to get a stronger expression than this. He didn’t say a FEW things are possible. He said ALL things are possible. It might have been said, “As a man *expecteth* in his heart, so is he.” Be careful what you expect, for you will probably get it.

Confidence and faith are the very basis of all achievement. Jesus said, “According to your faith, be it unto you.”

If we don’t get courage inside of us, how can it ever come out? It is wonderful for us to believe in God, but it might be even more wonderful to live so that God can also believe in us, and so that we can believe in ourselves. You must believe in yourself and you must like yourself. You must believe in your work and you must like your work. If you want to be great, believe in greatness and live the part.

Jesus, Himself, said, “Be of good cheer – rejoice and be exceeding glad.” The prophet Lehi said, “Men are that they might have joy.” (2nd Nephi 2:25) The Lord wants us to get started in the right direction as soon as possible. Why not just do what He says? If we expect to be great souls in heaven, we ought to start being great souls here. If we want to be happy in the eternity, we ought to get in practice. And if we want to be happy we should not act as though we disliked everybody and everything. Rather we should act “as if” we are already happy.

Everyone has a job to be done which he or she is supposed to do and which he can do better than anyone else in the world.

The thing for which we are better suited than anything else is to assist in the work of human salvation. It is our job. It will be our blessing. Undertake it with a high ambition and a sense of responsibility that will not be denied. Then dullness will lesson, inaptitude will vanish and day by day there will develop in you a power previously unknown. YOU must succeed in doing YOUR part of the Lord’s work.

May we not leave our call unanswered or our work for someone else to do. One of the greatest possible sins would be to return to God the life which He has given us with our abilities undiscovered and our talents undeveloped and unutilized. We remember that one of the most bitter rebukes ever given by Jesus was to him who buried his talents in the ground. Fractional devotion or partial use of our God-given talents is displeasing to our creator.