

† LOVE OTHERS

This doesn't mean we have to "feel" loving toward everyone all the time. We're human and sometimes other people are going to upset us.

The point is that we should act in loving ways — even to people who aren't very lovable.

Remember, Jesus said if we're only kind to people who are kind to us, it means nothing. Even people who don't have God in their lives do that. The thing that sets believers apart is their willingness to try to love even difficult people.

† PRAY REGULARLY

Here are the five ideas Billy Graham stresses over and over again in his written and spoken words. Practice them in your daily life and Heaven is definitely in your future:

† PRAY REGULARLY

Rev. Graham has often said that too many people use prayer as a last resort — praying only when they need God to get them out of a jam. But as long as people think of God as some kind of errand boy or lifeguard, Heaven will always be out of reach.

Jesus tells us God wants to be our friend. We wouldn't treat a friend that way. We want to spend time just talking and listening to our friends, enjoying their company.

God wants us to visit Him regularly — for no other reason than that we like Him and He likes us. So it's important to spend time in prayer every day, even when things are going well.

† READ THE BIBLE

Rev. Graham says even he has not done as much Bible reading as he feels he should have. "I wish I had studied a great deal more. I wish I knew the Bible better than I do," he said not long ago.

But he says it's never too late to start.

He says that studying and reading the Bible can not only lead us toward Heaven, it can also help us get more enjoyment from our lives on Earth.

† RESIST TEMPTATION

The charismatic evangelist admits

that in the past he's spent too much time railing about hellfire and damnation. "I was too emotional in my early years," he says.

Nevertheless, yielding to temptations of the flesh can give the Devil a grip on your life and pull you away from Heaven.

When asked how he has managed to avoid the indiscretions that have brought down other, weaker evangelists, Rev. Graham says one prayer always works: "Lord, help me RIGHT NOW!"

God will help us resist temptation if we ask Him.

† BE HUMBLE

Always remember, if there's good in your life, it's God who put it there. Taking credit for God's kindness will only separate you from Him and His Kingdom.

To be humble is to be teachable.

We all have a lot to learn. And an openness to learning more about God is consistent with citizenship in Heaven. Of course, no one can practice these five things perfectly. Rev. Graham freely admits that even he has fallen short of the mark many times.

But doing your best to practice these principles will ensure you a place in Heaven. ▲

HOW BEAUTIFUL UPON THE MOUNTAINS

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings," says Isaiah (52:7). Not how beautiful are the herald's lips which proclaim the good tidings, or his eyes as he proclaims them, or even the good tidings themselves, but how beautiful are the feet—the feet without which he could never have made it up into the mountains, without which the good tidings would never have been proclaimed at all.

Who knows in what inspired way the heart, mind, spirit of

the herald came to receive the good tidings of peace and salvation in the first place, but as to the question whether he would actually do something about them—put his money where his mouth was, his shoe leather where his inspiration was—his feet were the ones that finally had to decide. Maybe it is always so.

When the disciples first came upon the risen Christ that Sunday morning of their confusion and terror, it wasn't his healing hands they touched or his teaching lips or his holy heart. Instead it was those same ru-

ined, tired dogs that had carried him to them three years earlier when they were at their accounts and their nets, that had dragged him all the way from Galilee to Jerusalem, that had stumbled up the hill where what was to happen happened. "They took hold of his feet and worshipped him," Matthew says—emphasis mine (28:9).

Generally speaking, if you want to know who you really are as distinct from who you like to think you are, keep an eye on where your feet take you.

FREDERICK BUECHNER