

Lessons From Locks and Keys

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The oldest known lock and key which may be lying in an archeological archive somewhere, were found in the ruins of the Near-Eastern place of Khorsabad near ancient Ninevah dates from about 2000 BC. Since that time, skilled locksmiths have devised ingenious variations of locks and keys. Prominent among them is the 19th century American locksmiths' Linus Yale and his son, Linus Yale Jr. They improved on the designs and security of locks and keys and mass produced them for widespread use (see >#1 reference below).



With the reopening of school, the giving out of classroom keys to new teachers so that they can open their doors upon arriving and locking them before leaving, is part and parcel of most new teachers' orientation programs. The lockers for the students use which can be seen along the walls of school corridors and hallways will have metal locks and keys of various sizes, shapes and colours dangling from them.

Today, new security technology threatens the dominance and widespread use of metal locks and keys. The keycard, for example, which is used in many hotels has a magnetically imprinted code allowing its holder to enter the room he or she has rented. The code, however, is changed when the person checks out.

What spiritual lessons can we, as Christian educators, learn from locks and keys? Most likely the readers will come up with many more lessons than the writer. However, here are three spiritual "key" points I think worth pondering:

a. The first point is that the natural human heart can be likened to a lock which is a fastening contrivance consisting of a bolt and the mechanisms for propelling it. Because locks are opened by keys specially designed to fit and move the bolt mechanism, I would like to suggest that the Holy Spirit represents the key specially designed and given to us by God. The Holy Spirit is to make our hearts pure.

No one is safe in attempting to work without the Holy Spirit. As an educator, you may present the best lessons to your students but they will be valueless unless they are accompanied by the Holy Spirit. When we submit to the control of the Holy Spirit, new thoughts, new feelings and new purposes are awakened. Our minds will be changed and our faculties are set to work. Like David, let us ask God to give us two things every day - a clean heart and a right spirit.

The second point is that the keycards have imprinted code. I would like to suggest that this imprinted code is love. I am not talking about the indulgent kind of love but rather true love as described by Dr. Benjamin De Jong. He said that perfect love is:

Slow to suspect - quick to trust

Slow to condemn - quick to justify

Slow to offend - quick to defend

Slow to expose - quick to shield

Slow to reprimand - quick to forebear

Slow to demand - quick to give

Slow to provoke - quick to conciliate

Slow to belittle - quick to appreciate

Slow to hinder - quick to help

Slow to resent - quick to forgive (see #2 reference below)

The good news is, that unlike the changing of the imprinted code in hotels keycards, the code imprinted in our keycard by God - His perfect love, will not be changed as long as we are controlled by the Holy Spirit.

The third and final point is, Christian teachers are one of many keys in the life of their students. What kinds of doors are you locking? What kinds of doors are you opening? Are those keys for those doors that have been locked for whatever reasons thrown away for good? Are those doors you are opening wide open or half open? There are many more questions that one could ask, but more importantly are the answers given to each question. By the way, when you are obliged to correct a child, do you raise your voice to a *high* (**emphasis mine**) key? Do you lose your self-control?

I will conclude with Ellen G. White's account of William Miller's Dream as recorded in her book *Early Writings*. She said that "I dreamed that God, by an unseen hand, sent me a curiosity wrought casket about ten inches long by six square, made of ebony and pearls, curiously inlaid. To the casket there was a key attached. I immediately took the key and opened the casket, when, to my wonder and surprise, *I found it filled with all sorts and sizes of jewels, diamonds, precious stones, and gold* (**emphasis mine**) beautifully arranged in their several places in the casket. Thus arranged they *reflected a light and glory* (**emphasis mine**) equalled only to the sun." (see #3 reference below)

What spiritual applications can you deduct from the casket and its contents as it relates to your role as a Christian educator during the 1998-1999 school year?

References:

1. The New Grolier Multimedia Encyclopaedia, 1993 Online Computer System
2. Benjamin R. De Jong, *Quotebook*, (Harvest House Publishers, Irvine California 1976), 226

