Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up. James 4:8-10, NKJV.

Here is a work for families to engage in before coming up to our holy convocations. Let the preparation for eating and dressing be a secondary matter, but let deep heart-searching commence at home. Pray three times a day, and, like Jacob, be importunate. At home is the place to find Jesus; then take Him with you to the meeting, and how precious will be the hours you spend there. But how can you expect to feel the presence of the Lord and see His power displayed when the individual work of preparation for that time is neglected?

For your soul’s sake, for Christ’s sake, and for the sake of others, work at home. Pray as you are not accustomed to pray. Let the heart break before God. Set your house in order. Prepare your children for the occasion. Teach them that it is not of so much consequence that they appear with fine clothes as that they appear before God with clean hands and pure hearts. Remove every obstacle that may have been in their way—all differences that may have existed among themselves or between you and them. By so doing you will invite the Lord’s presence into your homes, and holy angels will attend you as you go up to the meeting, and their light and presence will press back the darkness of evil angels....

Oh, how much is lost by neglecting this important work! You may be pleased with the preaching, you may become animated and revived, but the converting, reforming power of God will not be felt in the heart, and the work will not be so deep, thorough, and lasting as it should be. Let pride be crucified and the soul be clad with the priceless robe of Christ’s righteousness, and what a meeting will you enjoy. It will be to your soul even as the gate of heaven.

The same work of humiliation and heart-searching should also go on in the church, so that all differences and alienations among the members may be laid aside before appearing before the Lord.... Set about this work in earnest ...; for if you come up to the meeting with your doubts, your murmurings, your disputings, you bring evil angels into the camp and carry darkness wherever you go.—Testimonies for the Church 5:164, 165.

This devotional is taken from Be Like Jesus by Ellen G. White.