

HISTORIC
LANDMARKS

OF ADVENTISM

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From the Editor

John J. Grosboll

Are You Humble Enough to go to Heaven?

"And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Matthew 23:12).

The truth always corrects erroneous ideas. Jesus said, "If you continue in My word ... you will know the truth and the truth will make you free" (John 8:31, 32). Unfortunately, the truth is unpopular. "Truth was unpopular in Christ's day. It is unpopular in our day. It has been unpopular ever since Satan first gave man a disrelish for it by presenting fables that lead to self-exaltation." *The Desire of Ages*, 242.

The scribes and Pharisees prided themselves upon the idea that they were God's chosen people, but when He came to them, they did not receive Him. "He did not flatter the Pharisees or exalt them in any way. He received the publicans and sinners whom the Jews heartily despised, and because His lessons of humility, compassion, and love rebuked their selfishness and pride, they would have none of Him, but turned from Him in scorn. They made great ostentation, wore long robes, and stood praying on the corners of the streets, but none of these pretensions to piety awed the great Teacher or drew from Him one word of approval. ... The teaching of Christ was against all vanity and pride, for these were abhorrent to the Most High. It is the humble and the contrite whose

prayers are heard in heaven. The Lord declares that He knoweth 'the proud afar off' (Psalm 138:6). He says, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word' (Isaiah 66:2)." *The Signs of the Times*, May 24, 1899.

"Many look upon the great work to be accomplished for God's people, and their prayers go up to God for help in the great harvest. But like the Jewish nation, if help does not come in just the manner they have arranged, they will not receive it, but turn from that help as the Jewish nation turned from Christ, because disappointed in the manner of His appearing. Too much poverty and humility marked His advent, and in their pride they refused Him who came to give them life. ... Had the church all humbled themselves before God, and corrected their past errors so fully as to meet the mind of God, they would not be so deficient in estimating moral excellence of character." *Testimony for the Church at Battle Creek* (1868), 53.

"Be sure that Christ is in you, that your heart is broken and submissive and humble. God will accept only the humble and contrite. Heaven is worth a lifelong, persevering effort; yes, it is worth everything. God will help you in your efforts if you strive only in Him." *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 259. **LM**

HISTORIC

LANDMARKS

OF ADVENTISM

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LANDMARKS is a magazine of Steps to Life, a ministry established in 1988 by Seventh-day Adventists. It is dedicated to the publication of the historic doctrines held by God's true people in all ages. Its special emphasis is to present truth (2 Peter 1:12)—those historic doctrines espoused by Seventh-day Adventist pioneers in the nineteenth century. Its purpose is to help all of God's remnant people to press together in unity, holding high the banner on which is inscribed the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This magazine is designed to help believers to defend the faith and to expose the flood of false doctrine by which the truth is being assailed in these last days. It is the goal of LANDMARKS' editors to present articles based on truth from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. Viewpoints of writers and/or contributors expressed outside of articles printed in this publication are not necessarily the views of this magazine's editors and are not endorsed by Steps to Life Ministries.

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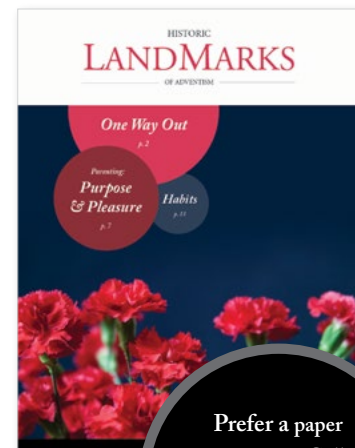
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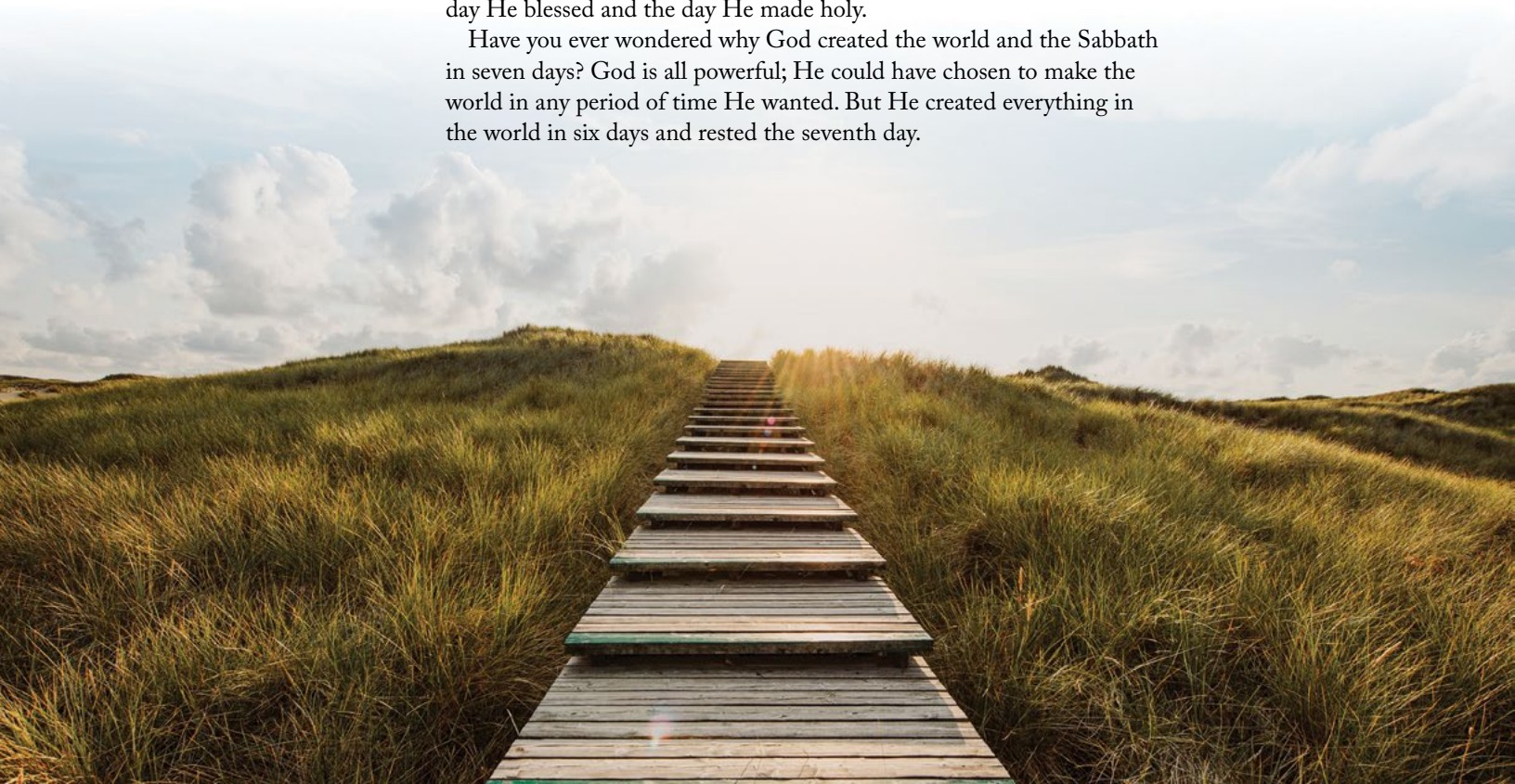
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One Way Out

By John J. Grosboll

The Bible says, “On the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it [made it holy], because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made” (Genesis 2:2, 3). Notice He blessed the seventh day and made it holy, and then He rested. The seventh day has a triple significance: it’s the day that God rested from His work, the day He blessed and the day He made holy.

Have you ever wondered why God created the world and the Sabbath in seven days? God is all powerful; He could have chosen to make the world in any period of time He wanted. But He created everything in the world in six days and rested the seventh day.



The Bible makes clear that everything God does is significant. So there is something significant about the fact that after He created the world in six days, God rested on the seventh day. Reading through the Bible, we find that the number 7 is a special number. People who study Biblical numbers say there are four perfect numbers in the Bible: numbers 3, 7, 10 and 12. Let's look at the number 7.

While studying Hebrew, I found that the number 7 comes from a verb that means *to swear* or in other words, *to take an oath* or *to make something complete* or *official*. Seven, in the Bible, signifies spiritual perfection and is used in ways that no other number is used in Scripture. For example, the first word in the Hebrew Bible has seven letters. The first sentence in the Hebrew Bible has seven words. The first commandment in the Hebrew Bible has seven words. In addition to that, the fourth commandment lists seven categories of individuals that are to rest, and the tenth commandment lists seven things that you should not covet. The number 7 occurs multiple times in the ten commandments. In the New Testament the Lord's Prayer has seven petitions (Matthew 6:9-13). So 7 indicates totalness or completeness.

The number 7 is used many times in the book of Revelation. It talks about 7 churches, 7 seals, 7 trumpets, 7 thunders, 7 last plagues, etc. In *The Acts of the Apostles*, 585, it says, "The names of the seven churches are symbolic of the church in different periods of the Christian Era. The number 7 indicates completeness, and is symbolic of the fact that the messages extend to the end of time." As Adventists, we look at them through the seven periods of time and discover that we are living in the last period of time, found in the message to the church in Laodicea. However, any church could have the experience of any one of the seven churches. Ellen White often used the Sardis church, a dead church, when describing the experience of the Sev-



enth-day Adventist Church. She also referred to the experience of the church in Ephesus, a loveless church.

There is something to note when reading through the seven churches. In every church, the person promised salvation must be an overcomer.

In Revelation 2:7, speaking to the church of Ephesus, the Bible says, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."

To the church of Smyrna is written: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death" (verse 11).

In verse 17, speaking to the church of Pergamos, we read, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it."

The Bible says of the church of Thyatira: "He who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations" (verse 26).

We need to especially study the church of Sardis. Revelation 3:5 says, "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I

will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."

If a person's name is written in the Book of Life, they are an overcomer. How important is it to have your name written there? Revelation 20:15 says, "Anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."

When you surrender yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ and your name is recorded in the Book of Life, can it be blotted out? Revelation 3:5 says, "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life." Notice, if I don't overcome, my name will be blotted out of God's book. Exodus 32:33 says, "And the LORD said to Moses, 'Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.'" And Acts 3:19, 20 continues, "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out . . ." So if you repent and are converted, in the judgment your sins will be blotted out. If you do not overcome and choose to continue in sin, your name will be blotted out. When you surrender yourself to Jesus Christ, your name is registered in the Book of Life, but it is there on probation.

In Revelation 3:12, we find God speaking to the church of Philadelphia: "He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New

Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.”

Finally, to the church of Laodicea, God says, “To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne” (verse 21).

In the New Testament, salvation is not promised except to those who overcome, but God gives His Holy Spirit so you will have divine power to overcome. Only those who are overcomers will be saved out of the seven churches, but some people outrage the Holy Spirit. Hebrews 10:26–29 says, “For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses’ law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?” We must be careful not to insult the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is given as a divine power to help us overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil. Ellen White says, “Sin could be ... overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead.” *The Desire of Ages*, 671. Divine power is promised to those who give their hearts to the Lord to make it possible to overcome. Then, continuing to sin is an insult to the Holy Spirit.

The Acts of the Apostles, 482, says, “The work of gaining salvation is one of co-partnership, a joint operation.” You can’t save yourself; only God can save you, but God will not save you if you don’t co-operate. “There is to be co-operation between God and the repentant sinner. This is necessary for the

formation of right principles in the character. Man is to make earnest efforts to overcome that which hinders him from attaining to perfection.” *Ibid.* We are to go to the Lord claiming the promise of the power to overcome our besetting sins; exerting all human effort, but understanding that we are totally helpless unless the divine power works in our lives. This is a co-partnership. God gives the Holy Spirit. We do the best we can. We work together with the Spirit.

Revelation 21:1–4 is one of the most comforting descriptions in all the Bible, describing how wonderful it will be for God’s saved people. But note who will enjoy all these things: “He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son” (verse 7). Who receives the promise of salvation and this inheritance? The one who overcomes. That promise is given to everyone in the seven churches, all those who choose to follow Christ.

When There is Only One Way Out

When Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, His soul longed for another way out. He said to His Father, “Lord, everything is possible with You” (Mark 14:36). Everything is possible with God, but we could not be saved any other way. There was silence in heaven. No harp was touched (see *The Desire of Ages*, 686, 690, 693.) The whole universe was silent as it watched this battle that would not only decide the future of this world, but also that of the whole universe. The only way out for Jesus was the cross.

There are many people who say they are sorry for their sins, but make no attempt to turn away from them. To be truly sorry for a sin committed means to confess it and turn away from it. If you are looking at something bad, look somewhere else and do not look at it again. If you are listening to worldly music, turn it off and don’t listen to it anymore. If you are convicted that you are eating something forbidden by the word of God, get it out of your house and do not bring it in again.

True repentance involves not just being sorry, but being sorry enough to stop. When you are sorry enough to say, “Lord, I’m

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True repentance involves not just being sorry, but being sorry enough to stop.

choosing not to do this anymore,” the Lord will send His Holy Spirit to enable you to stop.

“No repentance is genuine that does not work reformation.” *The Desire of Ages*, 555. Genuine repentance results in a changed life. Repentance, turning away from sin, does not cover up something already done. “The righteousness of Christ is not a cloak to cover unconfessed and unforsaken sin.” *Ibid.*, 555, 556. To be forgiven, the Bible says, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just [righteous] to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Repentance will be followed by confession. If it is a secret sin, it should be confessed to God. Secret sins are not openly confessed (see *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 635–650). Much harm has been done by people openly confessing that which should be confessed to God alone. But sins that have harmed others need to be confessed openly.

Sins that are unconfessed are unforgiven. Someone might say that there is not enough time to confess their sins before Jesus comes. Then let the Lord take care of that and make a start. The Bible says, “If there is first a willing mind . . .” (2 Corinthians 8:12, *first part*). This speaks of a person willing to confess everything.

Is there a possibility that there is some sin that is impossible to confess? Yes, if a sin is committed against someone and that person dies there is no way confession can be made. Consider the thief on the cross. He wasn’t able to make right what he had stolen, but he confessed to the Lord and the Lord saved him. The Lord will do the same for you. Remember, “If there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have.” Don’t worry about what you don’t know. The Lord will help you to make right what you know and what you need to make right that you don’t know, the Holy Spirit will bring to your attention



There are many people who say they are sorry for sins, but make no attempt to turn away from them.

at the right time. Repentance is sorrow for sin enough to turn away from it, to confess and make things right, and surrender to the Lord.

Just as the cross was the only way out for Jesus, there is only one way out for you and me. Matthew 16:24–26: “Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?’” To follow Jesus means denying self and taking up your cross. Jesus also said, “All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him” (Matthew 11:27). It is only through the Son that you can approach the Father.

In John 14:6 we read, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” And the apostle Peter said, “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). There is only one way out of this world. Ellen White says, “One fountain only has been

opened for sin, a fountain for the poor in spirit.” *The Desire of Ages*, 300.

Let’s look at the only way out of this world. It answers the question: What must I do to be saved and get out of this world alive? “He [Christ] has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning.” *Ibid.*, 311. Notice, there are two things in that sentence. When a person repents, they receive the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit enables them to stop sinning. “Without Me [Christ] you cannot overcome one sin, or resist one temptation.” *Ibid.*, 676. In fact, Ellen White says that without Jesus, “We cannot keep ourselves from sin for one moment.” *The Ministry of Healing*, 180. We are totally helpless without divine help because of the cravings of our own sinful nature. Without divine help every moment of every day, we cannot control our nature.

The meaning of the Greek word translated *repentance* means *to change your mind*. “True repentance is more than sorrow for sin. It is a resolute turning away from evil (2 Corinthians 7:7–10).” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 557. “At every advance step in our Christian experience our repentance will deepen.” *The Acts of the Apostles*, 561. So, repentance is sorrow for sin; not just sorrow for sin, but a resolute turning away from sin.

The Desire of Ages, 523, says, “Self-surrender is the substance of the teachings of Christ.” “If we ever attain unto holiness, it will be through the renunciation of self and the reception of the mind of Christ.” *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, 143. “The battle which we have to fight—the greatest battle that was ever fought by man—is the surrender of self to the will of God, the yielding of the heart to the sovereignty of love.” *Ibid.*, 141. This is one of the reasons many people do not overcome. They do not fully surrender, so they do not receive the power they need.

We are now living in the great age of unbelief spoken of in 2 Peter 3. Ellen White wrote, “There is no escape from its power [the power of sin], no hope of the higher life, but through the submission of the soul to Christ.” *Steps to Christ*, 32. There is no other way out. *The Desire of Ages*, 825, says, “Now unbelief separates the church from her divine Helper.” And *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, 160, says, “Christ cannot share a divided heart; sin and Jesus are never in co-partnership.” “The devil has a power over humanity that we are not able to overcome except through Jesus. “It is only through Christ that Satan’s power is limited. This is a momentous truth that all should understand.” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 294.

As we approach the end of the world, everyone is going to be marked. Most of the world will receive the mark of the beast, the mark of destruction or the mark of anti-christ (Revelation 13, 14). Those who do not receive the mark of the beast will receive the seal of God, the mark of deliverance (Revelation 7). Everyone will receive a mark. What determines which mark a person receives is described by Ellen White in *The Desire of Ages*, 324: “We must inevitably be under the control of the one or the other of the two great powers that are contending for the supremacy of the world. . . . We have only to neglect to ally ourselves with the kingdom of light



Repentance does not cover up something already done.

in order to come under the devil’s control.” *Ibid.* The devil will take control of your life without your permission. God will not take control of your life without your consent. He leaves you free to choose. At the end of the world, everyone will either become more and more like the devil or they will be filled with the Spirit of God and become more and more like Jesus.

God will have a people at the end of the world, not just a few people, but a church. What will God’s church be like as we approach the end? In *The Desire of Ages*, 680, Ellen White writes, “Christ designs that heaven’s order, heaven’s plan of government, heaven’s divine harmony, shall be represented in His church on earth.” She says it is Christ’s design.

There will be a church at the end that will be governed according to heaven’s plan of government. Heaven is perfectly organized. Heaven has no hierarchy, is not a democracy or a republic; it’s a kingdom with one king. Hierarchical governments are all of the devil. We should study and understand the New Testament church organization. The

New Testament church followed heaven’s organizational plan.

God will have a church filled with the divine harmony of heaven. “The church, endowed with the righteousness of Christ, is His depositary, in which the riches of His mercy, His grace, and His love, are to appear [notice, this is a prophecy] in *full* and *final* display.” *Ibid.* [Emphasis supplied.] What an amazing statement!

The riches of God’s mercy, grace and love will not be in “full display and final display” in heaven. Why? It is not needed. If you and I are ever going to display the mercy of God, it will be here. God will have a church through which the riches of His mercy and grace will be displayed in full and final display.

The day is coming when all opportunities will be over. There are many in the world who love Jesus, even enough to die for Him, but they do not keep His commandments or understand the three angels’ messages, the sanctuary truth or the Spirit of Prophecy. Who will tell them, if not us? We must ask the Lord to help us, not just as individuals, but as a church to display His mercy, grace and love to a world that is perishing. If we don’t do it, the Lord will use someone else.

Friend, we have to pray that our first love will be restored. Because when God has a people that have that love in their hearts and have the final message to the world, there will be a display of the mercy, grace and love of God not seen in this world since the time of Jesus and the apostles. I would like to be part of it. Wouldn’t you?

(Unless appearing in quoted references or otherwise identified, Bible texts are from the New King James Version.) **LM**

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Purpose — & — *Pleasure*

By Damien Jenkins

If this Covid-19 pandemic has done anything good, it would be the opportunity to be together as a family. Too often, the cares and demands of the world: making a living, the care and upkeep of the physical dwelling, even participation in church activities and responsibilities, have made us unaware of the needs within our own home. As a minister of the gospel, I spend my time tending to the needs of others, so when our ability to freely move about was restricted and I had the opportunity to spend more time with my family, I was able to more clearly see the needs of my own house and my own life.



“

Samson knew he was to deliver his people from the Philistines. A weighty expectation to live with.

We hear so many things these days about the end of time, the mark of the beast, the slow erosion of religious liberty, forces in the background manipulating everything in the world; and they cause us concern. But as a Seventh-day Adventist parent, we often hear the words we never want to hear from a child. “Dad. Mom. I already know all this stuff. I’ve heard it my whole life. I get it about love, but this is all over my head and I just want to live my life, hang out with my friends, do and be what I want.”

The first thought is, what did I do wrong? Young people losing or leaving their faith and the church is happening throughout Adventism. God has a message for us. He has a purpose for your life, youth and adult. And we can find that message in one of the most familiar stories in the Bible. Beginning in Judges 13, we find the story of Samson, a young man for whom God had a purpose, but who had his own ideas about how he wanted to live his life. The story of Samson is one both of tragedy and redemption.

Judges 13:1–5 says, “Again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years. Now there was a certain man from Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren and had no children. And the Angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, ‘Indeed now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son. Now therefore, please be careful not to drink wine or similar drink, and not to eat anything unclean. For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.’”

Then we see that Manoah and his wife sought the messenger and asked God to send him again so that Manoah might hear the instructions that had earlier been given to

his wife regarding their son. He returns and at first they believe He is a prophet, but as the conversation continues, Manoah and his wife realize that the Angel of the Lord who has delivered this message to them is actually the Son of God; that through Him, they have been speaking with God (Judges 13:22). Finally, in Judges 13:24 and 25 we read, “So the woman bore a son and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him. And the Spirit of the LORD began to move upon him”

As a Nazarite, an individual would be consecrated to God and a vow taken to commit himself for a holy purpose. Numbers 6:3, 4 gives us a clear understanding of the life of a Nazarite. It says, “. . . he shall separate himself from wine and similar drink; he shall drink neither vinegar made from wine nor vinegar made from similar drink; neither shall he drink any grape juice, nor eat fresh grapes or raisins. All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, from seed to skin.” The Nazarite was held to a higher standard regarding diet much like Seventh-day Adventists today. Continuing in Numbers 6, “All the days of the vow of his separation no razor shall come upon his head; until the days are fulfilled for which he separated himself to the LORD, he shall be holy. Then he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow. All the days that he separates himself to the LORD he shall not go near a dead body . . . he shall be holy to the LORD” (verses 5, 6, 8).

Judges 13:5, 6 and Numbers 6:5 confirm, that Samson’s hair was divided into seven locks and was not to be cut, as a Nazarite’s hair was a sign of his consecration to God. The seven locks is a parallel to the seventh-day Sabbath which is a sign of consecration of those who keep it. God’s purpose for Samson was that he would begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.

So, we find that from the day Samson was born, he was consecrated to the Lord for a holy purpose. He took a vow of commitment to that purpose. He refrained from strong drink and ate according to a specific diet. Also, his hair was never to be cut as a sign of his consecration to God. It is likely



It is likely that Samson was reminded daily of his holy purpose, not just by his parents, but by his diet, the length of his hair and by the fact that he could not partake in certain things.

that he was reminded daily of his holy purpose, not just by his parents, but by his diet, the length of his hair and by the fact that he could not partake in certain things. He knew he was to deliver his people from the Philistines. A weighty expectation to live with.

As Samson grew, he began to associate with the Philistines and friendships developed. When he became a young man, he was well aware of the Nazarite vow he had taken and the restrictions that accompanied that vow, but he began to look around and the world looked inviting. He began to socialize more with the Philistines when a young woman came to his attention in the city of Timnah whom he determined should become his wife.

Samson went to his parents and said, “I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore, get her for me as a wife” (Judges 14:2).

His parents’ response, found in verse 3, was, “Is there no woman among the daughters of your brethren, or among all my people, that you must go and get a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?” And Samson said to his father, ‘Get her for me, for she pleases me well.’”

“Just as he was entering upon manhood, the time when he must execute

his divine mission—the time above all others when he should have been true to God—Samson connected himself with the enemies of Israel. He did not ask whether he could better glorify God when united with the object of his choice, or whether he was placing himself in a position where he could not fulfill the purpose to be accomplished by his life.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 563.

Samson’s only interest was in pleasing himself. “To all who seek first to honor Him, God has promised wisdom; but there is no promise to those who are bent upon self-pleasing.” *Ibid.*

Though his parents tried to dissuade him, Samson was determined to go his own way, so Manoah and his wife yielded to his wishes and he married the woman from Timnah.

Friends, consider how Samson is an example of what is happening in the Seventh-day Adventist Church today, primarily with our young people. As children of God, we also are called to be separate, consecrated for a holy purpose. 1 John 3:1 tells us, “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!”

In addition, notice what we find in 1 Peter 1:15: “... but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.” We have been called to be holy in

our conversation and lifestyle. We read further, “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9). Here is a picture of God calling Christians to be separate from the world like the Nazarites of the Old Testament.

Luke 4:18 and 19 tells us what our mission is. “The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.” This is the same message Jesus gave to the apostles in Matthew 28:19 and 20, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.” This is a God-given commission for His people.

As God’s people, we have been instructed regarding our diet (see Revelation 22:2). We have been given the Sabbath day as a holy day, consecrated and set apart to commune with God (see Ezekiel 20:12). Samson was strong

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We have been called to be holy in our conversation and lifestyle.



because he did not cut his hair, but his strength was not in his hair, rather in his relationship with and obedience to God. It is the same with the Sabbath. The power is not in the Sabbath, but in our relationship with God and that we obey His commandment to keep the seventh day holy. Our purpose is to love

God and love man; and in loving and serving Him, we will desire to love and serve others (see Matthew 22:37–39). Once we know what God has done for us, we will want to share it with others. The more time we spend with Christ, the more feelings and affections we will have for other people.

We are to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and spirit and when we do this, when He is in our hearts, then His purpose for our lives will become our pleasure. We will seek to fulfill His purpose for our lives. Without Him in our hearts, we will love the things that turn us from His purpose. There are so many things that can and will distract us from doing God’s purpose, if we allow it. This is particularly so for young people.

We preach the three angels’ messages found in Revelation 14:6–12 warning people of the coming judgment. We preach about Babylon and prophecy, the seal of God and the mark of the beast. We raise our children with the Bible. We have camp meetings, Revelation seminars, evangelistic meetings. We live a temperate lifestyle. We keep the Sabbath. We provide biblical instruction to our children and diligently work to raise them to follow and obey the Lord. But even with all of this, everything that is available to them, they do something that seems so contrary to what we would expect.

Let me give you an example. We have all heard the name J. P. Morgan. His father, Junius Spencer Morgan was a financial businessman who learned and trained under the house of Rothschild. His purpose and intention for his son was

to make him a better financial investment businessman than he was himself. Did he succeed? Yes, he did. The father was responsible for how the son presented himself. This is a worldly example. How much more then, as Christians, are we responsible for how our children are raised?

We live in a broken world and because of that, there are broken homes, so this may not apply to everyone in the strictest sense. Not all homes have the privilege of having two parents in the household, but in those homes where both parents are present, we need to be diligent that we are taking advantage of the opportunity of being in touch with our children, of connecting with them.

There are Adventist parents who come to the pastor or Sabbath School teacher because they are having trouble with their child and expect the pastor or teacher to fix the problem. The question to be asked is, “What are you, the parents, doing?” Many fathers and mothers place the responsibility of seeing their child converted into the hands of others. Do not depend on others to do the work of training your children in the way that they should go. Follow the example of Manoah and his wife before and after the birth of Samson, be responsible for your own life and relationship with God and bear the responsibility toward your children, with prayer and searching for God’s guidance in their lives as well.

We must heed the guidance provided in *The Adventist Home*, page 190, “Some parents do not understand their children and are not really acquainted with them. There is often a great distance between parents and children. If the parents would enter more fully into the feelings of their children and draw out what is in their hearts, it would have a beneficial influence upon them.

“The father and the mother should work together in full sympathy with each other. They should make themselves companions to their children.

“Parents should study the best and most successful manner of winning the

love and confidence of their children, that they may lead them in the right path. They should reflect the sunshine of love upon the household.”

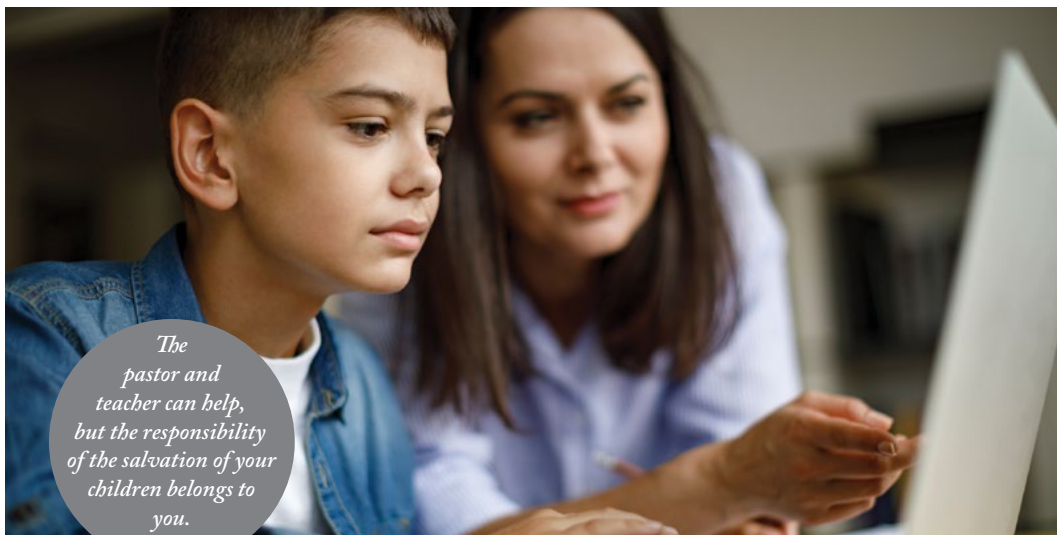
We must encourage and commend our children. As Adventists, we tend to focus on all the don'ts and when a child does something right, our feeling is, that's what they were supposed to do. We seem to feel that encouragement and commendation are bad, but notice what it says, “Young children love companionship and can seldom enjoy themselves alone. They yearn for sympathy and tenderness. That which they enjoy they think will please mother also, and it is natural for them to go to her with their little joys and sorrows. The mother should not wound their sensitive hearts by treating with indifference matters that, though trifling to her, are of great importance to them. Her sympathy and approval are precious. An approving glance, a word of encouragement or commendation, will be like sunshine in their hearts, often making the whole day happy.

“Parents should encourage their children to confide in them and unburden to them their heart griefs, their little daily annoyances and trials.

“Kindly instruct them and bind them to your hearts. It is a critical time for children. Influences will be thrown around them to wean them from you which you must counteract. Teach them to make you their confidant. Let them whisper in your ear their trials and joys.

“Children would be saved from many evils if they would be more familiar with their parents. Parents should encourage in their children a disposition to be open and frank with them, to come to them with their difficulties and, when they are perplexed as to what course is right, to lay the matter just as they view it before the parents and ask their advice.” *The Adventist Home*, 190, 191.

This also requires that the father and mother are connected, individually, with God, and by God's grace, to each other. Without this, there will only be discord



The pastor and teacher can help, but the responsibility of the salvation of your children belongs to you.

and strife. There are books and many other resources that can be of help. I strongly recommend *The Adventist Home*.

We must ask ourselves these questions: How much time do I spend praying for my spouse? How much time do I spend praying for my children? How often do I interact with them and ask them how they are feeling, how they are doing? If your response is, “Not enough,” then a change must be made. We must make ourselves available to our children, even be vulnerable. Let them see that you struggle with weakness just as they do.

Do not imagine that there is no help at all from your church family. Older individuals with more life experience and married couples can be guardians and a help to young people. Even the pastor and teacher can help, but the responsibility of the salvation of your children belongs to you.

Following are four reasons that I believe explain why young people are losing and leaving their faith.

1. **Compromise** – Is there compromise in your home? If so, it is likely that as your children grow they will begin to do things they have observed rather than as they were taught. For example, have you violated the edges of the Sabbath by heading to an activity or event that is not acceptable for the

Sabbath rest and before the Sabbath hours are completely passed?

2. **Legalism/Too much head knowledge** – We have so much powerful information/doctrine that is stimulating to the mind. The Seventh-day Adventist teachings really grab the intellect. But the danger is that we can fill our young people with so much head knowledge, yet we leave out the Giver and the Teacher of the doctrine. There is nothing wrong with knowledge and doctrine, but if what you teach does not lead your children to a relationship with God that changes the heart and mind, then it is meaningless.

3. **Turned off by the Church** – How often do we observe that God's people are not perfect? Gossiping, backbiting, church politics, hypocrisy; all these things can simply wear out a person. These may be legitimate reasons to become disillusioned by your church, but they are not real reasons to leave.

4. **They Just Decide to Leave** – This probably surprises us the most, mainly because the general feeling is that if our children do not stay in the faith, we must have done something wrong. Let me ask a question: Can you think of a single case in the history of the

world, after sin entered, that there were perfect parents? No, not one. But here is another question: When Lucifer sinned, what did God do wrong? Parents do the best they can. They raise their children to love the Saviour. They encourage them to read the Bible and learn its promises. God gave us all a free will. You can train your children while you can, but when they reach a certain age, they choose for themselves. Too many parents carry the burden that because their children have left the faith, it must be their fault in some way when it is simply that many Adventist young people choose to do as they please.

Let's look again at Samson. "And he came up and told his father and his mother, and said, 'I have seen a woman in Timnah ... Get her for me, for she pleases me well.'" Samson was clear on the purpose God had for him. He had lived his whole life as a Nazarite, but he chose to follow his own desires. He was not considering what would bring glory to God or if he was placing himself in a position where he would be unable to fulfill that purpose.

Maybe you relate to the story of Samson. Maybe you are a parent watching your child potentially throwing his or her life away on frivolous pursuits. Maybe you are a child who is turned off by the church or is just tired of all the knowledge and strictness of the faith. You need to know that it was God's pleasure to die for you. Hebrews 12:2 says, "... looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." His pleasure was to fulfill His purpose in saving you and me. You, too, can have pleasure in following His purpose for your life.

I am reminded of a song written years ago by Keith Green. He lived a life of rock and roll, but God changed his heart. Maybe this is you.

My eyes are dry
 My faith is old
 My heart is hard
 My prayers are cold
 And I know how I ought to be
 Alive to You and dead to me

But what can be done
 For an old heart like mine
 Soften it up
 With oil and wine
 The oil is You
 Your Spirit of love
 Please wash me anew
 With the wine of Your blood

My eyes are dry
 My faith is old
 My heart is hard
 My prayers are cold
 And I know how I ought to be
 Alive to You and dead to me

We must ask the Lord to help us see that doing what is outside His will, will hurt us. But when we do what pleases Him, we will never go wrong.

(Unless appearing in quoted references or otherwise identified, Bible texts are from the New King James Version.) **LM**

Pastor Damien Jenkins was raised in a non-religious home, but at the age of 18 was introduced to the Gospel and his life was forever changed. Today he is pastor of the Water of Life Free Seventh-day Adventist church in Hohenwald, TN. He enjoys apologetics, Bible history, expounding on the topic of righteousness by faith and making the Bible simple and easy to understand.





By Judy Rebarchek

For most of my work life I have not had to “punch the clock,” meaning clocking in and out daily at a time clock. I’ve either recorded my time on a paper form on a weekly or bi-weekly basis or entered the number of hours I worked through a company timekeeping application.

So when I began a new job that required me to once again use a time clock, it was difficult to remember that my first stop of the day should be to clock in. I don’t really have trouble remembering to clock out to go to lunch and back in when I return, nor do I have trouble remembering to clock out at the end of the day. But clocking in each morning has become a frustrating exercise for me, because I keep forgetting and have to ask my supervisor to clock me in.

You see, even though my supervisor is very gracious about clocking me in when I forget to do it myself, I feel that it should be my responsibility. This is a new, necessary habit I should be developing.

So, that got me to thinking, what exactly is a habit? The Merriam-Webster Dictionary has several definitions of the word *habit*. Let's look at just two:

- An acquired mode of behavior that has become nearly or completely involuntary
- An addiction

In the spiritual realm, humans by nature tend toward addiction. Our natures compel us toward sin. We are addicted to sinning and nothing short of divine intervention can change this habit of sinning. However, let's keep one thing in mind regarding addiction: it is necessary that the addicted one makes the choice to end the power addiction has over his or her life. It may not be possible to end it without outside help, but the addiction cannot be overcome until the addicted one chooses that the addiction will no longer have control over them. Remember also, that while an addicted person may no longer choose to allow their addiction to have sway over their life, the addiction itself remains and can regain control without daily, determined effort on the person's part.

Spiritually our natures are wicked. The Bible says this repeatedly:

"All have turned away, all have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one" (Psalm 14:3 NIV).

"The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. The LORD regretted that He had made human beings on the earth, and His heart was deeply troubled" (Genesis 6:5, 6 NIV).

"For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders" (Matthew 15:19 NASB 1995).

"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that

He will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue has muttered perversity. No one calls for justice, nor does any plead for truth. They trust in empty words and speak lies; they conceive evil and bring forth iniquity. ... Their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands. Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths" (Isaiah 59:1-4, 6, 7).

Until we recognize what we are and choose to no longer allow sin to have domination over our lives, we will continue to sin. But understand this is not like choosing to wear red socks or blue socks today; once you make the choice, you wear those socks. This choice is an ongoing effort. I am afflicted with this spiritual habit of sinning. I can choose to change this habit, but it is rare that one chooses to change a habit (going cold turkey) and then tomorrow or next week or next year, there is no future temptation.

Let's look at our first definition of habit – an acquired mode of behavior. *Acquired* suggests *doing or having done something*: learning, developing, gaining, or achieving as a result of one's choosing until it becomes completely involuntary; until we do it without thinking or because to not do it would be unthinkable. Let's look at some examples from the Bible of individuals who cultivated/achieved the habit of doing what was right.

DANIEL

"Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, *as was his custom since early days*" (Daniel 6:10). [Emphasis supplied.]

SHADRACH, MESHACH and ABEDNEGO

"Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. To them the chief of the eunuchs gave names: he gave Daniel the name

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Isaac understood what was being asked of Abraham and himself, and still he did not refuse; he did not run away. He submitted with complete trust.

Beltshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach, to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abed-Nego.

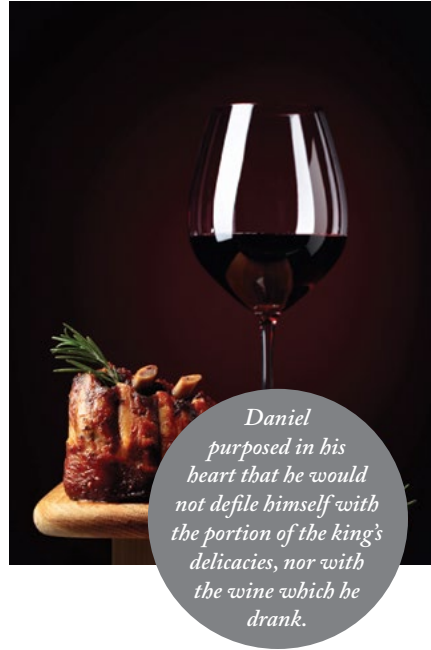
“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself” (Daniel 1:6–8). [Emphasis supplied.]

After being threatened with death in the fiery furnace for refusing to worship the golden image, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, ‘O Nebuchadnezzar, *we have no need to answer you in this matter.* If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that *we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up*’” (Daniel 3:16–18). [Emphasis supplied.]

JOSEPH

“Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there. The LORD was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD made all he did to prosper in his hand. So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority. So it was, from the time that he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian’s house for Joseph’s sake; and the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had in the house and in the field. Thus he left all that he had in Joseph’s hand, and he did not know what he had except for the bread which he ate.

“Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. And it came to pass



after these things that his master’s wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, ‘Lie with me.’ But he refused and said to his master’s wife, ‘Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. *How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*’” (Genesis 39:1–9). [Emphasis supplied.]

ABRAHAM

“Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, ‘Abraham!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’

“Then He said, ‘Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you’” (Genesis 22:1, 2).

Imagine Abraham’s agony and confusion. God doesn’t require child sacrifice. Isaac was the child of promise. How was Abraham to do this thing? Could you sacrifice your child, if God asked it, if you had not developed a lifelong faith in and habit of obedience to God?

“So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, ‘My father!’ And he said, ‘Here I am, my son.’ Then he said, ‘Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?’ And Abraham said, ‘My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.’ So the two of them went together” (verses 6–8).

Notice, Isaac does not refuse. He understood what was being asked of Abraham and himself, and still he did not refuse; he did not run away which he easily could have done. He submitted with complete trust to His father.

“Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

“But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, ‘Abraham, Abraham!’ So he said, ‘Here I am.’ And He said, ‘Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, *since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me*’” (verses 9–12). [Emphasis supplied.]

Why were all these men able to do the right thing? Do you think they woke up on that particular morning and said, “Today, I’m only going to do what’s right.” I think there are a lot of people who think doing right works just that way. Today I will be better. Today I’m not going to sin at all. What did Daniel do? He purposed in his heart. What did Joseph say? I cannot do this thing. The three worthies said we will not bow down. These are statements of commitment, the kind of commitment developed over a lifetime.

Continued on page 18

Jesus Before Pilate

Clues – Matthew 27

Across:

- B1 Judas _____ down his returned silver v. 5
- B9 Color of royalty they put on Jesus v. 28
- C6 Field’s name known unto this _____ v. 8
- C15 Article of clothing put on Jesus v. 28
- E2 Pilate did this at Jesus’ silence..... v. 14
- E14 Pilate washed these to make a point..... v. 24
- G8 Where Judas returned the money..... v. 5
- H14 The Jews wanted Jesus to be this vs. 22, 23
- J4 What Jewish leaders did to the multitude v. 20
- K17 The leaders wanted a _____ use of Judas’ money..... v. 6
- L10 Jesus _____ nothing to the accusations v. 12
- M2 Soldiers bowed this before Jesus..... v. 29
- M19 Pilate received a message when he was _____ down v. 19
- N10 Pilate acknowledged Jesus was called this v. 17
- O2 Pilate’s wife did this..... v. 19
- P9 Pilate knew the leaders had this emotion v. 18
- P19 Judas cast _____ his money..... v. 5
- Q4 They smote Jesus here..... v. 30
- R9 First thing the band of soldiers did to Jesus..... v. 28
- S2 Pilate claimed to be _____ vs. 4, 24
- S17 The Jews insisted by doing this..... vs. 22, 23

Down:

- A13 This many of the chief priests and elders wanted Jesus dead v. 22
- B4 Jesus betrayed for this many pieces..... v. 3
- B7 All the soldiers took Jesus here..... v. 27
- B10 Judas saw too late that Jesus was this..... v. 3
- B15 The leaders would not put Judas’ money here v. 6
- B18 Soldiers said Jesus was king of these..... v. 29
- B21 Barabbas was this kind of prisoner v. 16
- D12 Strangers were buried here v. 7
- E2 What all the soldiers did to Jesus v. 29
- E6 Pilate: “What _____ hath He done?” v. 23
- E8 Jews: “_____ Him be crucified.” v. 22
- F19 Had a dream relating to Jesus..... v. 19
- H17 The leaders volunteered these to suffer v. 25
- I5 Pilate asked Jesus: “_____ Thou not ...?” v. 13
- J7 Pilate ordered Jesus to be _____ v. 26
- J12 The leaders convinced the people to _____ Jesus v. 2
- J21 Pilate acknowledged Jesus to be _____ v. 24
- K3 Judas realized too late that he had _____ v. 4
- K19 Pilate did this symbolizing he was clean from guilt v. 24
- O9 At the time of this a prisoner was released v. 15

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- P15 Soldiers hit Jesus with this v. 30
- P21 Jesus never answered a v. 14
- Q2 Soldiers said this in mockery v. 29
- Q4 Mocking/pretend scepter put in Jesus' right v. 29
- Q18 The Jews cried out the in determination v. 23

Continued from page 15

We've all heard that it takes 21 days to form a new habit. Phillipa Lally, a health psychology researcher at University College London, and her team did a study on just how long it takes to form a habit and published her findings in the *European Journal of Social Psychology*. The study included 96 subjects studied over a 12-week period. Each subject chose the habit they wanted to develop and "reported daily on whether or not they did the behavior and how automatic the behavior felt." In short, this is what they found:

1. It's supposed to take time to form a new habit.
2. Making mistakes is okay, but develop a strategy to get back on track quickly.
3. It's a process, not an event.

(taken from *How Long Does it Actually Take to Form a New Habit?* (Backed by Science) written by James Clear)

Spiritually, the first and third findings can be combined and applied to the habit (addiction) of sinning. Living like that cannot be changed or broken except by choosing to allow the Holy Spirit to transform the life. We can ask as did David, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10). While the original creation, in which God had perfect material to work with took only a few days, after 6,000 years of sin, change is just going to take time. And then there is that second finding, the one that says we'll make mistakes. We are, after all, sinners by nature ever able to choose to sin, no matter how truly committed we are not to.

David is referred to in the Bible as "a man after God's own heart," and yet David, when he saw Bathsheba bathing on her roof, rather than turning away and seeking God's deliverance from the temptations that were assailing him, he lingered (see James 1:14, 15). He

began a not-so-secret relationship with Bathsheba. She became pregnant and in an effort to hide what he had done, he had her husband Uriah killed. Even worse, David's sin with Bathsheba came nigh to spiritually destroying the children of Israel. He made a mistake, but didn't utilize that strategy to get back on track mentioned in the second of the study findings.

Peter walked and talked with Jesus for three and a half years during His earthly ministry. Peter committed himself to be ever faithful to Jesus. He refused to believe that he would ever deny Christ and yet, he did three times, just as Jesus said he would (Matthew 26:33). The problem for Peter, and I'd say David and us as well, is that he didn't know himself as well as he thought he did; so sure of himself that he didn't know what he really lacked. As the sound of the final denial disappeared into the night, it was then that Peter recognized what he was: a sinner in need of a Saviour. "Peter denied his Lord in the hour of trial, but Jesus did not forsake His poor disciple. Although Peter hated himself, the Lord loved him, and after His resurrection He called him by name and sent him a loving message. Oh, what a kind, loving, compassionate Saviour we have! And He loves us though we err." *That I May Know Him*, 285.

Yes, the idea that forming habits takes time and is a process, not an event, reminds us that the development of a Christian character is described in the Spirit of Prophecy as "the work of a lifetime." *My Life Today*, 267. The Bible calls this process sanctification – "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Sanctification is accomplished by our *willingness* to be transformed and then through the power of the Holy Spirit *being* transformed day by day.

Sometimes, even when we have fully made the commitment for the Holy Spirit to work this process of sanctification in our lives, we may still make mis-

takes. But by recognizing what we are and what the remedy is, we know that we can confess those mistakes, repent and be forgiven.

However, we should be keenly aware of how important sanctification and character building are. Ellen White says, "A character formed according to the divine likeness is the only treasure that we can take from this world to the next. Those who are under the instruction of Christ in this world will take every divine attainment with them to the heavenly mansions. And in heaven we are continually to improve. How important, then, is the development of character in this life." *Child Guidance*, 161.

"It is your work to advance toward perfection, making constant improvement, until at last you are pronounced worthy to receive immortal life. And even then the work of progression will not cease, but will continue throughout eternity." *In Heavenly Places*, 186.

I'm working hard every day to develop the habit of clocking in, but am I working as hard to commit my life to the formation of a perfected character by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit?

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. . . .

"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. . . .

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me" (Psalm 51:1, 2, 7, 10, 11).

(Unless appearing in quoted references or otherwise identified, Bible texts are from the New King James Version.) **LM**

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Practical Christianity

What is needed today is practical Christianity, not merely for a day or a year, but for a lifetime. The man who professes to be a Christian, and yet reveals in his life no practical godliness, is denying Christ. Opposite his name in the books of heaven are written the words, Unfaithful steward.

How is the world to be enlightened, save by the lives of Christ's followers? You profess to believe in Christ, to be a follower of His. Do you do His works? Can the world see plainly that you have been with Jesus, and learned of Him? How are unbelievers to know that you belong to Christ if you show no zeal in His service, but instead cherish worldly ambition and follow worldly plans? ...

There are many whose lives are but a pretense of godliness. They are a law unto themselves, and they always will be, unless the grace of Christ subdues their hearts. They lift up their souls unto vanity, and God has no use for them in His service.

Our sanctification is God's object in all his dealing with us. He has chosen us from eternity that we might be holy. Christ gave Himself for our redemption, that through faith in His power to save from sin, we might be made complete in Him. ...

As Christians we have pledged ourselves to fulfil the responsibilities resting on us, and to show to the world that we have a close connection with God. Thus, through the good words and works of His disciples, Christ is to be represented and honored.

God expects of us perfect obedience to His law. This law is the echo of His voice, saying to us, Holier, yea, holier still. Desire after the fulness of the grace of Christ, yea, long – hunger and thirst – after righteousness. The promise is, “Ye shall be filled” (Luke 6:21). Let your heart be filled with a longing for this righteousness, the work of which God's word declares to be peace, and its effect quietness and assurance forever.

God has plainly stated that He expects us to be perfect, and because He

expects this, He has made provision for us to be partakers of the divine nature. Only thus can we gain success in striving for eternal life. The power is given by Christ. “As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name” (John 1:12).

God's people are to reflect to the world the bright rays of His glory. But in order for them to do this, they must stand where these rays can fall on them. They must co-operate with God. The heart must be cleansed of all that leads to wrong. The word of God must be read and studied with an earnest desire to gain from it spiritual power. The bread of heaven must be eaten and assimilated, becoming part of the life. Thus we gain eternal life. Thus is answered the prayer of Christ, “Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth” (John 17:17).

This is the will of God, even your sanctification. Is it your will that your desires and inclinations shall be brought into harmony with the divine mind? *The Review and Herald*, January 28, 1904. **LM**



The Way to be Happy

A very long time ago, there was a king whose name was Henry. He lived in a fine house, and he had many servants to wait upon him. He had fine clothes, beautiful horses, strongboxes full of gold, and many ships that sailed upon the sea.

He had everything that anyone could wish for. And yet he was not happy.

In the same country there was a poor miller who had a little mill close by the river Dee.

This miller was busy every hour of the day, and he was as happy as he was busy. People who lived near the mill heard him singing all the time from morning till night.

When anyone asked why he was so happy, he said, "I have all that I need, and I do not wish for more."

One day the king was in great trouble. "Tell me," he said, "if there is one happy man in all this land."

His friends said, "We have heard that there is one such man. He is a miller, and he lives by the river Dee."

"I must see this miller of the Dee," said the king. "I will learn from him how to be happy."

The very next day King Henry rode down to the river Dee. He stopped his horse at the door of the little mill. He could hear the miller singing at his work:

"I envy nobody; no, not I,
And nobody envies me."

The king went into the mill. He said to the miller, "You are wrong, my friend; for I envy you. I would give all that I have if I could be as happy as you."

The miller said, "I will help you to be happy if I can."

"Then tell me," said the king, "why it is that you can sing this song in your little mill on the Dee, while I, who am king of all the land, am sad every day of my life?"

The miller smiled and said, "This is why I am happy in my little mill: I trust in God each day. I work, and earn my food. I love my wife and children, and I love my friends. I owe no man, and the good river Dee turns the mill that grinds the corn to feed my family and me."

The king turned sadly away. "Good-by, my friend," he said. "Be happy while you may. I would rather be the miller of the Dee than king of all this land."

"So would I," said the happy miller.

The miller was happy because he trusted in God, he had good friends, he owed no man, and he did not wish for things which he could not have.

The king was not happy for he knew that men did not love him, and he was never content with what he had. He did not have God's love in his heart.

"Happy is that people, whose God is the LORD" (Psalm 144:15).

Strong and True, Pensacola Christian College, © 1973, 37-41. **LM**

Quality — or — Quantity

Heaven — or — the World

Jeremy and Justin were two sweet boys, that I loved dearly. I was close friends with their aunt and was able to spend a lot of time with them.

Jeremy was close to five years old and he loved cars, so one Christmas I bought him a remote-control monster truck. Justin was still just a little boy and I thought he would enjoy something fun so got him two \$2 plastic water pistols.

I don't know who had greater anticipation come Christmas morning, Jeremy or me. He tore open his gift and was overjoyed to find the monster truck. In the meantime, Justin had opened his gift and was happily playing with each of the water pistols.

All was well until Jeremy realized that he had one gift, but Justin had two. Jeremy couldn't understand the value of his one gift. He cried and cried and would not be consoled, while Justin blissfully and almost obliviously enjoyed his plastic water pistols.

The next day, the truck was returned to the store and exchanged for two water pistols just like his brother's. Jeremy and Justin played happily together with those inexpensive plastic water pistols.

Years later, I wonder about the spiritual concept of quality vs. quantity – heavenly vs. earthly.

I thought Jeremy would have been completely happy with that monster

truck, but it was only one and his brother had two things. The devil loves to surround us with things, and lots of them. Things that are loud and fast, bright and pleasing, but they don't last. You see, like those two plastic water pistols and all the fun that Jeremy and Justin had playing with them, it wasn't long before they were broken and useless. Neither of them understood the value of the rejected gift. The devil's temptation is always to want more.

Jesus offers us one thing – salvation. That one gift involves many other things – love, peace, forgiveness, mercy, grace, power and ultimately heaven. Just one thing, but oh, the quality of it.

We can choose to be mesmerized by the quantity of things the devil offers and blissfully, almost obliviously, live day to day blinded to the lack of quality in these things. Or, we can choose the one gift, the gift that is ours simply for the taking; the greatest gift that heaven could give.

The devil's way is easier, luring the unsuspecting with its hollow glitter and charm, while the path to heaven sometimes just seems too hard. However, the rewards are everlasting.

“All heaven appreciates the struggles of those who are fighting for the crown of everlasting life, that they may be partakers with Christ in the city of God.

... God wants you there, Christ wants you there, the heavenly host wants you there.” *Our High Calling*, 368.

“I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. ... The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil; He shall preserve thy soul” (Psalm 121:1, 2, 7).

“The pure, heavenly graces are received and flourish in mind, heart, and character only as man becomes a partaker of the divine nature. ... Heaven must begin on earth for every soul who will enter the heavenly mansions above.” *Our High Calling*, 368.

“Every provision has been made that we may attain a height of stature in Christ Jesus that will meet the divine standard.” *The Review and Herald*, December 16, 1884.

Dear Lord, there is nothing this world can offer of greater value or quality than what You have done for us and are preparing for those who love You. Help us to always look to You and not the world. Amen. **LM**

Join us online for
Two Weekends
of special spiritual emphasis

Friday evenings:
May 21 and 28
7:00 PM each evening

Sabbaths:
May 22 and 29
9:00 AM, 11:00 AM, 3:00 PM, 7:00
PM each day

Times are approximate. The final
schedule will be posted on our
website:

www.stepstolife.org/watch-or-listen/

Scheduled speakers:
Pr. John Grosboll
Pr. Domingo Nunez
Pr. Ivan Plummer
Pr. Mamon Wilson

May Sermon of the Month

The Church When Jesus Returns

By John J. Grosboll

Jesus is coming for a church without
spot or wrinkle. It will be holy and
without a blemish.

All who
have donated in
the past month will
automatically receive this
Sermon of the Month
free of charge.

May 2021

Dear Friend,

It is sad to consider that many people die from disease that they could have been cured from had they taken judicious action at the onset. There is, however, something infinitely sadder. The redemption price has been paid for every person on this planet and yet we see very few who will take advantage of a more wonderful offer than can be made by any human being.

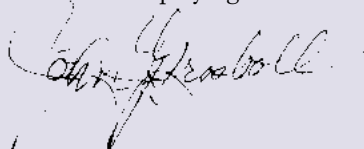
It will someday soon be evident to all that the wages of sin are not noble independence, but slavery, ruin and death. The far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory was despised when offered them, and the wicked will see what they have forfeited by their life of rebellion. Oh, how desirable it will then appear!

“How my heart has been agonized as I have seen souls accepting the inducements held out to them to unite with those who were warring against God. When they once accept the bait it seems impossible to break the spell that Satan casts over them, because the enemy works out the science of deception as he worked it out in the heavenly courts. He uses human agencies to carry on his work with other human beings. He has worked so diligently with men in our day that he has won the game again and again. ...

“What, I ask, can be the end? Again and again have I asked this, and I have always received the same instruction—*Never leave a soul unwarned*. Those who are bound in Satan’s toils are the most confident and the most boastful. They will protest at the thought that they are ensnared, and yet it is the truth.” *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 11, 212, 213. [Emphasis supplied.]

No language can express the longing which the disobedient and disloyal feel for that which they have lost forever—eternal life.

Your brother praying for a finished work,



John J. Grosboll

13th Sabbath Offering



Miraculous Opportunity in Nigeria

Evangelist Joshua and Daniel Teryila were invited for a four-day prophecy seminar, held February 4–7, 2021, by a Pentecostal church at Tyowanye about 130 km away from Makurdi. Morning and evening sessions were conducted on the subjects of prophecy and living the life of Jesus.

The Pentecostal pastors were so touched by the presentations and requested further study and promised to invite them back to present to their congregations. One senior pastor confessed that he had taken notes particularly during the discussion on Mathew 5. After each presentation, the pastors continued to study with them.

One pastor praised God that the Sabbath truth was revealed to him. Previously, he had been the senior pastor of a church founded by a former chief justice of the Nigeria Supreme Court and his wife. The wife had brought ma-

terials to him regarding the Sabbath and requested that they begin worshipping on the seventh day, but he had rejected the proposal. Now the truth had been made plain to him.

An opportunity arose to demonstrate hydrotherapy treatment on one of the Pentecostal pastors who had an accident a few hours before his attendance to the program and was experiencing severe back and waist pain. Praise the Lord for the health message! They massaged and applied balm on him and he was relieved of the pain before our departure. They remain in contact with this pastor.

National Sunday Law books were distributed. The host pastor promised to send two of his church members to begin medical missionary training with 17 students. More information on the medical missionary training, with pictures, will be included in a future report. **LM**



1. Some of the pastors seated with Evangelist Joshua in front of camera.
2. The congregation during the morning sessions in the church hall.
3. Testimony of the senior Pentecostal pastor admitting the truths presented.

from the
Mission Fields



Guadalajara, the second largest city in Mexico, is a sprawling metropolis of 5 million people.

Radio Station *Guadalajara, Mexico*

Over the last two to three years, Steps to Life has supported a radio station in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico, located very close to downtown Guadalajara City. This FM radio station has been operating under the direction and responsibility of Brother Jedial for the last three years broadcasting programs about the three angels' messages. Brother Jedial is a faithful Seventh-day Adventist believer who has been convicted to preach the three angels' messages.



Brother Jedial at work running the radio station.



Radio antenna on the roof of the radio station.

For the last three years, this has been the only station in the city preaching the gospel of the three angels' messages, and now, for the first time, they are encountering restrictions and other obstacles. However, over the last ten months, due to the Coronavirus crisis, the Lord intervened and the people have become more receptive, more willing to listen. People are coming to the station seeking more information about the three angels' messages; they are calling by phone for the free books and other materials advertised on the programs, books such as *The Great Controversy*, *Steps to Christ*, *The Desire of Ages* as well as Bibles.

Many of the people reading these books and materials are now calling the radio station wondering where they might find a local church. Unfortunately, there currently is no church building in Guadalajara City. We have been working for almost a month in this endeavor, and are very excited at the prospect of helping our friends in Guadalajara City to establish the first church to preach the gospel to the people there. With the increased interest from the radio programs we are asking for your help and prayers in seeking the Lord's guidance in locating and purchasing a building adequate enough to meet the needs of this work.

This building will not only serve as a place of worship, but also will provide space for a recording studio to produce the radio programs, as well as space for a printing department so that materials can be produced and distributed for local, public outreach.

“

The proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages has been located by the word of Inspiration. Not a peg or pin is to be removed. No human authority has any more right to change the location of these messages than to substitute the New Testament for the Old. The Old Testament is the gospel in figures and symbols. The New Testament is the substance. One is as essential as the other. The Old Testament presents lessons from the lips of Christ, and these lessons have not lost their force in any particular. The first and second messages were given in 1843 and 1844, and we are now under the proclamation of the third; but all three of the messages are still to be proclaimed. It is just as essential now as ever before that they shall be repeated to those who are seeking for the truth. By pen and voice we are to sound the proclamation, showing their order, and the application of the prophecies that bring us to the third angel's message. There cannot be a third without the first and second. These messages we are to give to the world in publications, in discourses, showing in the line of prophetic history the things that have been, and the things that will be” *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, 26, 27. **LM**



Evolution versus Creation: ***The Bombardier Beetle***

Bombardier beetles are some of the smaller beetles ranging in size from .25 inches to 1.5 inches. Most are under an inch. There are many different species of bombardier beetles and they come in various colors, predominately black, brown or green with yellow or orange heads. They can live up to two to three years and are found on all continents except for Antarctica.

The beetle has many predators, and this beetle protects itself by ejecting a hot noxious, acidic spray from tubes, approaching 212°F, that come from its underneath side. This acidic spray is very irritating to the membranes of the eyes, nose and lungs and can even kill some insects. This chemical spray is made and then stored in two reservoirs in its lower abdomen and upon ejection with force, it creates an explosive sound, which also helps to ward off predators. The explosive sound is actually a series of sequential explosions, about 1000 that

occur so rapidly that they can be heard individually only when the sound is greatly slowed down. This spray can be aimed toward the predator with some bombardier beetles having a 270° angle of spraying rotation. Because this is actually a series of explosions that can be aimed, the beetle is then protected from being blown away from the force and injured or destroyed. They can also bite their predator multiple times leaving blistering of the skin.

Some argue that these defense mechanisms could have formed over long periods of time, but common sense would tell you that in order for the beetle to protect itself and not be injured by its own protective mechanisms, all of this had to be present at one time.

It seems to take a lot more faith to believe that this could have all evolved, than to believe an intelligent and loving Creator designed our world and everything in it. Knowing more about

the bombardier beetle has strengthened my belief in creation by the design of an all-knowing and loving God. How about you?

This is a series of short, intermittent articles on creatures that defy evolution. These articles are based on a series of videos created by Dr. Jobe Martin. Dr. Martin was a college professor and dentist. In the fall of 1971, he gave a lecture at Baylor College in Houston, Texas, on the evolution of the tooth. After class, two students asked him if he had ever looked at the assumptions that evolution was based on and if he had looked into the claims of creationism. This began a five-year journey into the study of evolution and some of the incredible creatures in our world. During these five years, his belief was questioned, challenged and changed. Now he teaches and believes in creation by God. He also has a video series entitled, Incredible Creatures that Defy Evolution. [LM](#)

Q:

Why aren't my prayers answered when and in the way I want?

A:

To every sincere prayer an answer will come. It may not come just as you desire, or at the time you look for it; but it will come in the way and at the time that will best meet your need. The prayers you offer in loneliness, in weariness, in trial, God answers, not always according to your expectations, but always for your good." *Messages to Young People*, 250.

"God does not always answer our prayers the first time we call upon Him; for should He do this, we might take it for granted that we had a right to all the blessings and favors He bestowed upon us. Instead of searching our hearts to see if any evil was entertained by us, any sin indulged, we would become careless, and fail to realize our dependence upon Him, and our need of His help." *The Review and Herald*, June 9, 1891.

"I saw that every prayer which is sent up in faith from an honest heart, will be heard of God and answered; and the one that sent up the petition will have the blessing when he needs it most, and it will often exceed his expectations. Not

a prayer of a true saint is lost if sent up in faith, from an honest heart in faith." *Gospel Workers* (1892), 114.

"Take time to pray, and as you pray, believe that God hears you. Have faith mixed with your prayers. You may not at all times feel the immediate answer; but then it is that faith is tried. You are proved to see whether you will trust in God, whether you have living, abiding faith." *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 167.

"It is our privilege to come to Him with holy boldness. As in sincerity we ask Him to let His light shine upon us, He will hear and answer us. But we must live in harmony with our prayers." *Child Guidance*, 499.

"When our prayers seem not to be answered, we are to cling to the promise; for the time of answering will surely come, and we shall receive the blessing we need most. But to claim that prayer will always be answered in the very way and for the particular thing that we desire, is presumption. God is too wise to err, and too good to withhold any good thing from them that walk uprightly." *Steps to Christ*, 96. **LM**





Depression

In all my years of attending church, I have noticed that there are some subjects, two in particular, DEPRESSION and its twin sister ANXIETY, that are rarely if ever mentioned. It is as if it does not exist among Christians, or that Christians should be above such behavior and therefore there is no need for its acknowledgment.

Having been employed in psychiatric institutions for many years, I can assure you that this illness knows no boundaries or discrimination: wealthy or poor, famous or infamous, anyone can be affected by this silent killer.

Depression comes from the root word *depressed*, *pressed down*. It is an intense feeling of sadness, anger, hopelessness, helplessness, uselessness, and extreme fatigue. If it is not treated, it may lead to psychosis and suicide. It is often triggered by a traumatic event: the loss of a job, death of a loved one, psychological and physical abuse and a host of other reasons.

The following statistics from the National Institute of Mental Health for individuals from ages 18 and older in America reveal the prevalence of mental health disorders:

- Major Depressive Disorder – 16 million (worldwide – 350 million)
- Social Anxiety Disorder – 15 million
- Phobias – 19 million
- PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) – 7.7 million

Staggering, is it not?

When my daughter decided to take psychology as her major in college, a church official suggested that she not waste her time. Really? I wanted to chip in; have you seen the statistics of our society? I am so happy that my daughter is receiving education in how to reach out to humanity, to be a blessing, whether it be in Christian counselling, social work, psychotherapy, whatever the direction. The Lord knows we need it.

Throughout our world history there have been many in leadership positions who have suffered with depression. I will mention just a couple.

Abraham Lincoln was known to have battled depression and suicide all his adult life. <https://rogerjnorton.com/Lincoln&4.html>

Sir Winston Churchill called depression his “black dog.”

You may ask the question: Should a Christian ever be depressed, and if so, would this mean a lack of faith? If you are someone who is sensitive, loving, caring, giving, feeling, nurturing, empathetic, you are sure to have experienced depression to some degree.

Consider these few excerpts from *Adventist Review Online*, January 3, 2017, “Ellen White and Depression,” by Tim Poirier.

“In her autobiographical accounts, Ellen White frequently describes times of depression and melancholy. Many were merely a passing sadness over present conditions, but others were extended periods of gloom and discouragement. She often attributed her depressed spirits to physical ill-health, which she suffered throughout her life, in part a result of her life-threatening accident she experienced at age 9.

“In 1859 Ellen White candidly informed church members, ‘For years I have been afflicted with dropsy (edema) and disease of the heart, which has had a tendency to depress my spirits and destroy my faith and courage.’ She described having felt ‘no desire to live,’ and being unable to muster enough faith even to ‘pray for my recovery.’ *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 185. During this time, she confided in her diary, ‘Oh, why is it that such gloom rests upon everything? Why can I not rise above this depression of spirit? ... I have no health and my mind is com-

pletely depressed.’ *The Ellen G. White Letters and Manuscripts with Annotations*, vol. 1, 632, 633.

“As the Lord’s messenger, she was uniquely sensitive to the spiritual deficiencies of individuals and the church generally. Both she and James carried the state of the church continually upon their hearts: ‘Our happiness has depended upon the state of the cause of God. When

God’s people are in a prospering condition, we feel free. But when they are in disorder and backslidden, nothing can make us joyful. Our whole interest and life have been interwoven with the rise and progress of the third angel’s message. We are bound up in it, and when it does not prosper, we experience great suffering of mind.’” *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2, 297.

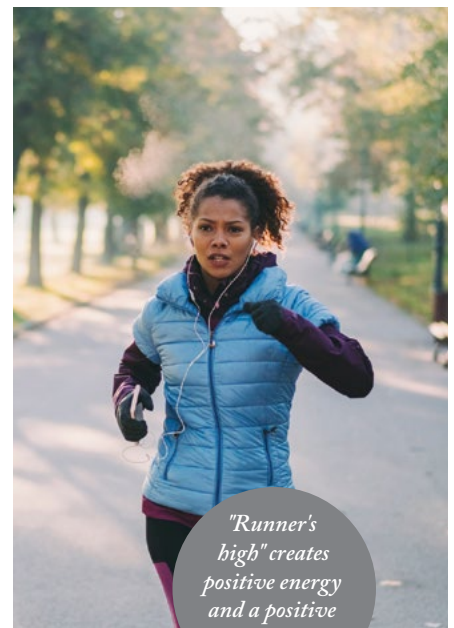
“She knew the darkness of losing children and even one’s life companion to death. Recalling the bereavement for her 3-month-old son John Herbert, she wrote, ‘After we returned from the funeral, my home seemed lonely. I felt reconciled to the will of God, yet despondency and gloom settled upon me.’ *Ibid.*, 296.

“Ellen White found hope in Biblical accounts of spiritual giants who experienced periods of deep discouragement, yet who were not abandoned by God: individuals such as, Elijah, David, and Paul. Even Jesus, she noted, was not free from such feelings. (Matthew 26:38; John 12:27.) *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, 94.





When we exercise, endorphins act as analgesics and reduce the perception of pain and trigger positive feelings.



"Runner's high" creates positive energy and a positive outlook on life.

"Of Elijah she wrote, 'If, under trying circumstances, men of spiritual power, pressed beyond measure, become discouraged and desponding, if at times they see nothing desirable in life, that they should choose it, this is nothing strange or new. . . . Those who, standing in the forefront of the conflict, are impelled by the Holy Spirit to do a special work, will frequently feel a reaction when the pressure is removed. Despondency may shake the most heroic faith and weaken the most steadfast will. But God understands, and He still pities and loves.' *Prophets and Kings*, 173, 174.

"Writing to her son Edson, who had a tendency to 'look on the dark side' of things, Ellen White reminded him that 'With the continual change of circumstances, changes come in our experience; and by these changes we are either elated or depressed. But the change of circumstances has no power to change God's relation to us. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever; and He asks us to have unquestioning confidence in His love.' *In Heavenly Places*, 120.

"Recalling the feelings of overwhelming despair that followed her

childhood accident, Ellen White reflected, 'I concealed my troubled feelings from my family and friends, fearing that they could not understand me. This was a mistaken course. Had I opened my mind to my mother, she might have instructed, soothed, and encouraged me.' *Life Sketches of James and Ellen G. White*, 135."

On days when you feel "pressed beyond measure" and sinking fast into despair, remember Peter's words, "Lord, save me" (Matthew 14:30). Then Ellen White recommended the benefits of outdoor activity, gardening, enjoying nature, and simply praising God. "Go right along, singing, and making melody to God in your hearts, even when depressed by a sense of weight and sadness, I tell you as one who knows, light will come, joy will be ours, and the mists and clouds will be rolled back." *Selected Messages*, Book 2, 242, 243.

Yes friends, EXERCISE is very important. When we exercise, our body releases chemicals called endorphins. These chemicals act as analgesics and reduce the perception of pain and triggers positive feelings. For example,

the feeling after a workout or a run described as "euphoric" or as a "runner's high" creates positive energy and a positive outlook on life. There is no excuse for inactivity, unless you are in a coma!

Claim God's promises: "And the LORD, He it is that doth go before thee; He will be with thee, He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed" (Deuteronomy 31:8).

"I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD" (Psalm 40:1-3).

Let's encourage one another to trigger our happy chemicals. And always remember what Paul said, "But it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Corinthians 2:9).

May God bless and keep you. **LM**



Blessed are the Meek

By John J. Grosboll

It has been widely taught and believed that the strongest and the fittest are the ones who survive. But there have been philosophers, as well as some Bible writers who have claimed that in the end it will be a completely opposite class who actually survive.

Many men who are considered to be the greatest in the world are actually proud and arrogant and many believe that you have to be this way in order to succeed and survive in this world. But Jesus stated something completely opposite from this. The third beatitude, found in Matthew 5:5 says,

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”

There are eight beatitudes found in the Sermon on the Mount, steps in the ladder of spiritual progress. The first beatitude is “Blessed are the poor in spirit” (verse 3). If we recognize our spiritual poverty, that will lead us to mourn over our spiritual condition. The second is, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted” (verse 4). If we feel our need of Jesus because of our sins and we are grieving over them, we will not only receive forgiveness from Him, but we will also learn meekness, because He is meek and lowly in heart.

Spiritual pride cannot exist in a person who has passed through the experience of the first two beatitudes, for such an experience humbles a person who has been spiritually proud. *Meekness* is a synonym of the word *humility*. Some other definitions of meekness are: gentleness, peaceableness, modesty, humbleness, unostentatiousness. These characteristics are just the opposite of haughtiness and pride. Meekness also conveys the idea of submission to God’s will. The apostle Peter, who was present when the beatitudes were spoken, enlarges on this idea in his first letter. He says, “Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time” (1 Peter 5:5, 6).

It sounded strange to the people who first heard it, just like it sounds strange to many people today, because we’re used to hearing that it will be the strong and those who are

most fit who will survive. But Jesus said that those who survive and inherit the earth will be the meek, the gentle, the unobtrusive, the humble. This actually was not a new idea but is stated several times in the Old Testament. For example, Psalm 37:11 says, “The meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.” And in Psalm 138:6, the psalmist wrote, “Though the LORD is high, yet He regards the lowly.” And again, Psalm 149:4, *last part*, KJV, says, “He will beautify the meek with salvation.”

The meek are blessed with a beautiful character, the character of the Saviour. The wise man Solomon said, “He gives grace to the humble [lowly]” (Proverbs 3:34, *last part*). So, those who are meek, those who are gentle, are under divine favor. This truth also is stated many times in the negative. The opposite of meekness is pride or haughtiness. Proverbs 16:5 says, “Everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD.”

Proverbs 21:4 says, “A haughty look, a proud heart ... are sin.” And then, “He who is of a proud heart stirs up strife” (Proverbs 28:25, *first part*). You see, friend, the proud in heart are actually troublemakers, because they are sensitive and easily offended. They are always seeking to justify themselves and to defend their reputations. Their feelings of superiority make them feel miserable if they are not given the preeminence. Spiritually proud people are the cause of all the strife that has disturbed the peace and harmony of the church since the time of the apostles. The proud and haughty have ever been a disrupting element in the world.

Jeremiah said, “Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the LORD hath spoken” (Jeremiah 13:15 KJV). How different it sounds from the philosophy of the world in which we live. Men and women in the world today, live by the principle that the strongest, the fittest, and the most proud will be the ones who survive and succeed. The world’s great philosophers and conquerors have not considered meekness a virtue. Most all war heroes have been proud and arrogant men. And this is the spirit that dominates the prince and god of this world and all the citizens of

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Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Matthew 5:5

his kingdom. It was this principle that led Lucifer to revolt against the government of God back at the beginning of the sin problem.

Isaiah 14:12-14 says, “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’” I, I, I, I will exalt myself. It was the idea of self-exaltation that led to sin in the first place.

Speaking through a serpent, he deceived Eve into thinking that if she ate the forbidden fruit that she would become like God (Genesis 3:4, 5). And so, when Eve and Adam ate the forbidden fruit, their eyes surely were opened. They did gain a knowledge of good and evil, a knowledge of what we have known ever since – pain, suffering, loneliness, sorrow, death. Neither they nor we would ever have known any of these things, except they wanted the forbidden knowledge, just like many people want today.

In the 28th chapter of Ezekiel, speaking again of the devil, it says, “You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; ... You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you” (verses 12, *last part*–15).

What was it that led to this iniquity, this sin at the beginning? Verse 17 says, “Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty.” It was pride, self-exaltation.

There are only two roads for travelers. There is the broad, easy, liberal road. On that road the proud in spirit can travel to their own destruction and carry along



The proud in heart are actually troublemakers, because they are sensitive and easily offended.

anything that they like. But there is also a narrow road, a restricted way, in which only the meek, and gentle, and humble can travel toward eternal life and happiness. Meekness or gentleness, or humbleness is the only pathway to a high and holy estate, while pride and self-exaltation may appear to lead to temporary success in this world, but eventually will lead to ruin. In Proverbs 16:18 and 19, Solomon said, “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.”

Jesus stated the same thing. Notice what He said in Matthew 23:12: “And whoever exalts himself will be humbled [abased], and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” The eternal law of justice has been demonstrated in the past, in the experience of Lucifer and Michael, in the lives of Haman and Mordecai and in the lives of Saul and David.

Jesus was a perfect example of gentleness and meekness. He said unto the people, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28–30).

Some people think that meekness means cowardice, just giving in to anything and being a pushover. It really doesn't mean that at all. Gentleness and humbleness were two of the outstanding character traits of Jesus Christ. Concerning Jesus, the apostle Paul says, “Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery [that is, a thing to be grasped] to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the

cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:6–11).

Jesus, being equal with God, humbled Himself and came to this world as a man. And He came not just as a man, but as a servant of the human race. One of the last acts of His life was to act the part of a servant. Remember the story in the upper room on the night of His betrayal. At that time, it was the custom when entering a house before a meal for a servant to come and wash the feet of the guests.

However, on this occasion there was no servant to perform this task and the apostles were too proud to do it. While they waited, Jesus arose and took off His outer clothes and girded Himself. Then He poured water into a basin and began to wash the feet of His disciples. One after the other He washed the feet of all of them (John 13).

He has been described as a servant of servants. See what Jesus said in Matthew 20:25–28, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles [that is, the worldly people] lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you [that is, among Christ’s disciples], let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Jesus came not to be served, but to serve. Now this divine meekness that Jesus manifested was not at all related to timidity. It is not another name for fear, or anxiety, or weakness, or cowardice. In fact, the truly meek are the truly brave who alone can be calm in the midst of the storm, and not be easily ruffled or disturbed in spirit

because things are going wrong. Meekness does not at all imply a negative, passive attitude that surrenders to any and every foe. Moses was declared to be the meekest man on the face of the earth (Numbers 12). And yet, when you read the story of his life, you find that he was a successful general of armies; that he faced the mightiest empire in the world at that time. He and his brother faced that whole empire alone and demanded that they yield to the sovereignty of the God of heaven.

Daniel and his companions were meek. They were humble and gentle, just like lambs, but when it came to moral principle, they stood their ground and they fought with the courage and boldness of lions. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused the authority of Nebuchadnezzar who commanded them to worship the golden image instead of the God of Heaven, even though it meant they were cast into the burning, fiery furnace. For Daniel, disobeying the king’s decree meant that he was cast into the den of lions. Meekness does not imply weakness. These brave men were not afraid to defy the decrees of the most powerful kings in the world at that time, whose word was law and whose authority embraced the whole then-known world.

After the crucifixion when the disciples saw what their Lord had done for them, their pride was abashed, abased, humbled. They could never strive for the highest place again. They knew that in the kingdom of Christ the highest position is for those who are the lowliest in servitude.

During the years of persecution and martyrdom, the disciples stood brave and firm for the truth, even though, as is recorded, 11 out of the 12 were martyred. And the one who was not martyred was banished to the isle of Patmos, after he was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil, in an effort to destroy him.

So, a meek person is not a weak person. In fact, meek people end up being the bravest people in the world. Abraham Lincoln was a very meek man, but also very great. His greatness grows with every passing year as people begin to appreciate more and more

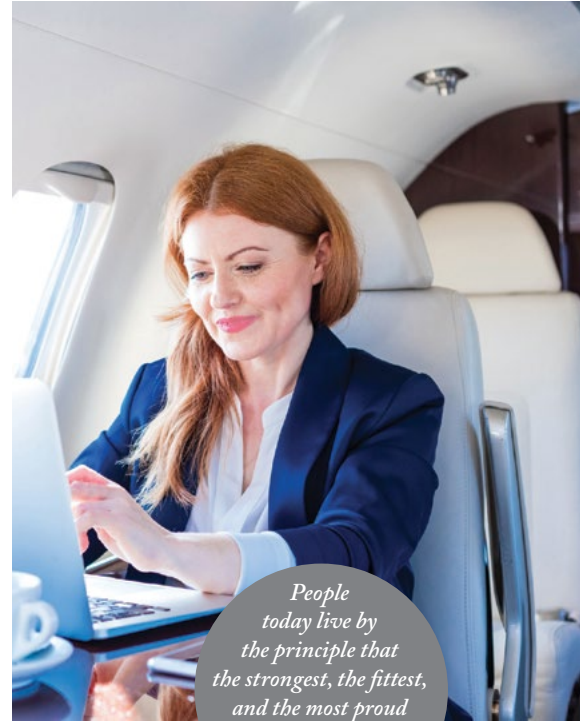
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*God opposes the proud
but shows favor to the
humble.*

1 Peter 5:5 (NIV)



Spiritually proud people are the cause of all the strife that has disturbed the peace and harmony of the church since the time of the apostles.



People today live by the principle that the strongest, the fittest, and the most proud will be the ones who succeed.

his character. Abraham Lincoln is said to have had a favorite poem that was entitled, "O, Why Should the Spirit of Mortal Be Proud?" Lincoln was a humble man, but no one could question his courage. No person would dare say that he was weak because he was meek.

Jesus is symbolized in the Bible as a Lamb. The outstanding characteristics of a lamb are meekness and innocence. But Jesus is also characterized in the Bible as a lion, the king of beasts and the monarch of the forest. Jesus was meek and gentle and at the same time He was bold, strong and courageous. He was filled with love for men's souls and was willing to do anything so that they could have eternal life.

He did not permit Himself to fret over the trivial things that so often try our souls today. He was too busy with important things to pay any attention to insults which did not in the least affect the high and noble principles for which He stood. So Jesus submitted meekly

to a traitor's kiss. He submitted to be arrested by a mob. He submitted to be questioned by envious and hypocritical priests. He submitted to be condemned without any substantial evidence of any guilt. Pilate said three times that he found no guilt in Him at all and nothing to justify His death.

Jesus was made the subject of jest and ridicule by corrupt king Herod and his court. He also endured the mocking injustice of a weak, vacillating Roman judge. He submitted to being scourged, to be spit upon, to be insulted, and to be mocked by Pilate's soldiers, and finally, to be crucified, the most cruel and ignominious death that was available in those days. All without the least sign of resistance. Yet, this was the same Jesus that so often demonstrated that he was not afraid of any man, or group of men, or devils.

He calmly faced the raging demoniacs and threatened the Pharisees and Sadducees with unflinching courage. With

eyes flashing with indignation, He drove the merchandizing traffickers from the sacred precincts of the temple with a scourge of small cords that seemed to them like a flaming sword of divine justice and vengeance.

So, while He was meek, He was bold and courageous, and made no compromise with evil or evil doers, regardless of rank or position. Jesus wants to recreate your heart, your spirit, into the image of His own character, if you will surrender for Him to do this. He wants to make you meek like He is. Will you consent to have Him do it?

(Unless appearing in quoted references or otherwise identified, Bible texts are from the New King James Version.) **LM**

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May 30 – June 5, 2021

Developing a Christlike Character

Key Text

“Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 3:20).

Study Help: *Maranatha*, 229; *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, 641–651.

Introduction

“As through Jesus we enter into rest, heaven begins here.” *The Desire of Ages*, 331.

Sunday

1 PROPER AND IMPROPER USE OF THE IMAGINATION

1.a. Where did Jesus gather examples to illustrate truth? Matthew 13:9–13, 16.

Note: “Through the imagination He [Christ] reached the heart. His illustrations were taken from the things of daily life, and although they were simple, they had in them a wonderful depth of meaning. The birds of the air, the lilies of the field, the seed, the shepherd and the sheep—with these objects Christ illustrated immortal truth; and ever afterward, when His hearers chanced to see these things of nature, they recalled His words. Christ’s illustrations constantly repeated His lessons.” *The Desire of Ages*, 254.

1.b. How does Paul counsel us to use our imagination? Philippians 4:8.

Note: “Christ withheld no truths essential to our salvation. Those things that are revealed are for us and our children, but we are not to allow our imagination to frame doctrines concerning things not revealed.” *Medical Ministry*, 100.

“Through Christ you may and should be happy and should acquire habits of self-control. Even your thoughts must be brought into subjection to the will of God and your feelings under the control of reason and religion. Your imagination was not given you to be allowed to run riot and have its own way without any effort at restraint or discipline. If the thoughts are wrong the feelings will be wrong, and the thoughts and feelings combined make up the moral character. When you decide that as Christians you are not required to restrain your thoughts and feelings you are brought under the influence of evil angels and invite their presence and their control. If you yield to your impressions and allow your thoughts to run in a channel of suspicion, doubt, and repining, you will be among the most unhappy of mortals, and your lives will prove a failure.” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 310.

1.c. How did the wrong use of the imagination prepare the world to be destroyed in Noah’s day? Genesis 6:5.

Monday

2 HABITS

2.a. What is the natural, moral tendency of human nature? Jeremiah 13:23; Romans 7:14–24.

Note: “One neglect, often repeated, forms habit. One wrong act prepares the way for another. That act, repeated, forms habit. Bad habits are more easily formed than good ones, and are given up with more difficulty. It takes far less time and pains to spoil the disposition of a child than it does to imprint upon the tablets of the soul principles and habits of righteousness. It is only by constantly watching and counterworking the wrong that we can hope to make the disposition right. The Lord will be with you, mothers, as you try to form right habits in your children. But you must begin the training process early, or your future work will be very difficult.” *The Review and Herald*, December 5, 1899.

2.b. What is essential in the formation of correct habits?
Matthew 7:24, 25.

Note: “The word of God abounds in general principles for the formation of correct habits of living, and the testimonies, general and personal, have been calculated to call their attention more especially to these principles.” *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 323.

“Once formed, habit is like an iron net. You may struggle desperately against it, but it will not break. Your only safe course is to build for time and for eternity.” *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, 596.

Tuesday

3 RELATING TO OTHERS

3.a. What is our moral obligation to our fellow men? Leviticus 19:18; Romans 13:8; Matthew 24:12; 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

Note: “The reason there are so many hardhearted men and women in our world is that true affection has been regarded as weakness and has been discouraged and repressed. The better part of the nature of persons of this class was perverted and dwarfed in childhood, and unless rays of divine light can melt away their coldness and hardhearted selfishness, the happiness of such is buried forever. If we would have tender hearts, such as Jesus had when He was upon the earth, and sanctified sympathy, such as the angels have for sinful mortals, we must cultivate the sympathies of childhood, which are simplicity itself.” *Testimonies*, vol. 3, 539.

3.b. What does Bible prophecy predict about social problems in the last days in regard to human relations? Matthew 24:12; 2 Timothy 3:1-8.



Jesus' illustrations were taken from the things of daily life, and although they were simple, they had in them a wonderful depth of meaning.

Note: “In our association with one another we are to remember that all have not the same talents or the same disposition. The workers differ in plans and ideas. Varied gifts, combined, are necessary for the success of the work. Let us remember that some can fill certain positions more successfully than others. The worker who has been given tact and ability that fit him for the accomplishment of some special line of work should not blame others for not being able to do that which he, perhaps, can do readily. Are there not things that his fellow workers can do far more successfully than he?” *Evangelism*, 103.

Wednesday

4 KEEPING ETERNITY IN VIEW

4.a. What character quality destroys peace? Isaiah 48:22 (cf. Isaiah 57:21).

Note: “It is the love of self that destroys our peace. While self is all alive, we stand ready continually to guard it from mortification and insult; but when we are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God, we shall not take neglects or slights to heart. We shall be deaf to reproach and blind to scorn and insult.” *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, 16.

4.b. How does the company we keep affect our character? Proverbs 13:20; 28:7; 29:3, 24.

Note: “It has been truly said, ‘Show me your company, and I will show you your character.’ The youth fail to realize how sensibly both their character and their reputation are affected by their choice of associates. One seeks the company of those whose tastes and habits and practices are congenial. He who prefers the society of the ignorant and vicious to that of the wise and good shows that his own character is defective. His tastes and habits may at first be altogether dissimilar to the tastes and habits of those whose company he seeks; but as he mingles with this class, his thoughts and feelings change; he sacrifices right principles and insensibly yet unavoidably sinks to the level of his companions. As a stream always partakes of the property of the soil through which it runs, so the principles and habits of youth invariably become tintured with the character of the company in which they mingle.” *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 221.

“God wants us to help one another by a manifestation of sympathy and unselfish love. There are those who have inherited peculiar tempers and dispositions. They may be hard to deal with; but are we faultless? They are not to be discouraged. Their errors are not to be made common property. Christ pities and helps those who err in judgment. He has suffered death for every man, and because of this He has a touching and profound interest in every man.” *Testimonies*, vol. 9, 222.

Thursday

5 HAPPINESS

5.a. How does Ezekiel describe the new birth or conversion experience? Ezekiel 36:26, 27. What practice brings happiness to man? Matthew 7:12.

Note: “[Matthew 7:12 quoted.] The Saviour taught this principle to make mankind happy, not unhappy; for in no other way can happiness come. God desires men and women to live the higher life. He gives them the boon of life, not to enable them merely to gain wealth, but to improve their higher powers by doing the work He has entrusted to mankind—the work of searching out and relieving the necessities of their fellowmen. Man should work not for his own selfish interest but for the interest of every one about him, blessing others by his influence and kindly deeds. This purpose of God is exemplified in Christ’s life.” *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, 645.

5.b. What protection and watchcare has Jesus promised to His followers? Proverbs 18:24; John 14:18; Revelation 7:15–17, *last part*; Hebrews 13:5, *last part*.

Note: “This is Jesus, the life of every grace, the life of every promise, the life of every ordinance, the life of every blessing. Jesus is the substance, the glory and fragrance, the very life itself. [John 8:12 quoted.] Then the royal path cast up [for] the ransomed to walk in is not discouraging darkness. Our pilgrimage would indeed be lonely and painful were it not for Jesus. ... Then let us gather every registered promise. Let us repeat them by day and meditate upon them in the night season, and be happy.” *Selected Messages*, Book 2, 244.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 How can a person’s imagination be brought under proper control?
- 2 How is Godly character formed or developed?
- 3 How does a person’s social life affect his character?
- 4 What do you think will happen to people who are difficult to get along with when Jesus comes?
- 5 What are the secrets of true happiness?

June 6–12, 2021

Battle for the Control of the Mind

Key Text

“They cried to God in the battle, and He was intreated of them; because they put their trust in Him” (1 Chronicles 5:20, *last part*).

Study Help: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 683–689; *The Story of Redemption*, 32–41.

Introduction

“The perils of the last days are upon us. *Satan takes the control of every mind that is not decidedly under the control of the Spirit of God.*” *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, 79. [Emphasis author’s.]

Sunday

1 ANCIENT AND MODERN DAY SPIRITUALISM

1.a. How did Satan beguile men in the past and how is he preparing to gain complete control over human minds today? Exodus 7:11, 22; Acts 8:9–11; Revelation 13:4, 13, 14; 16:13, 14.

Note: “It was the hand of God, and no human influence or power possessed by Moses and Aaron, that wrought the miracles which they showed before Pharaoh. Those signs and wonders were designed to convince Pharaoh that the great ‘I AM’ had sent Moses, and that it was the duty of the king to let Israel go, that they might serve the living God. The magicians also showed signs and wonders; for they wrought not by their own skill alone, but by the power of their god, Satan, who assisted them in counterfeiting the work of Jehovah.

“The magicians did not really cause their rods to become serpents; but by magic, aided by the great deceiver, they were able to produce this appearance. It was beyond the power of Satan to change the rods to living serpents.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 264.

1.b. How did Ellen White explain the term “empty deceit” of Colossians 2:8?

Note: “Thousands, I was shown, have been spoiled through the philosophy of phrenology and animal magnetism, and have been driven into infidelity. If the mind commences to run in this channel, it is almost sure to lose its balance and be controlled by a demon. ‘Vain deceit’ fills the minds of poor mortals. They think there is such power in themselves to accomplish great works that they realize no necessity of a higher power. ... He [Jesus] did not direct the minds of poor mortals to themselves, to a power which they possessed. He was ever directing their minds to God, the Creator of the universe, as the source of their strength and wisdom.” *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 297.

Monday

2 MEDIA, MOVIES, AND ADVERTISING

2.a. What is the result of watching other people sin whether through media or in real life? 1 Corinthians 15:33; Psalms 101:3, 4.

2.b. How is the ninth commandment broken in all dramatic productions? Exodus 20:16; Zechariah 8:16.

Note: “Vicious habits and sinful propensities are strengthened and confirmed by these entertainments. Low songs, lewd gestures, expressions, and attitudes, deprave the imagination and debase the morals. Every youth who habitually attends such exhibitions will be corrupted in principle. There is no influence in our land more powerful to poison the imagination, to destroy religious impressions, and to blunt the relish for the tranquil pleasures and sober realities of life than theatrical amusements. The love for these scenes increases with every indulgence, as the desire for intoxicating drink strengthens with its use. The only safe course is to shun the theater, the circus, and every other questionable place of amusement.” *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 653.

Tuesday

3 THE EFFECTS OF VISUAL IMAGES

3.a. What moral responsibility do we have for what we look at? Luke 11:34.

Note: “We must pray more and exercise faith continually. I feel the necessity of drawing nearer and closer to Jesus. I see I must labor to the point to keep my mind ascending to God continually if I would maintain the victory over Satan’s temptations.” *The Upward Look*, 127.

3.b. What are the three things in worldly entertainment (tv, movies, video) that the Christian is advised to leave alone? 1 John 2:16, 17.

Note: “You know our bodies are made up of the food assimilated. Now, it is the same with our minds.” *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, 491.

“The mind is controlled either by Satan or by Jesus.” *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 495.

“None are in greater danger from the influence of evil spirits than those who, notwithstanding the direct and ample testimony of the Scriptures, deny the existence and agency of the devil and his angels. So long as we are ignorant of their wiles, they have almost inconceivable advantage; many give heed to their suggestions while they suppose themselves to be following the dictates of their own wisdom. This is why, as we approach the close of time, when Satan is to work with greatest power to deceive and destroy, he spreads everywhere the belief that he does not exist. It is his policy to conceal himself and his manner of working.

“There is nothing that the great deceiver fears so much as that we shall become acquainted with his devices.” *The Great Controversy*, 516.

“We carefully secure our houses with bolts and locks to protect our property and our lives from evil men; but we seldom think of the evil angels who are constantly seeking access to us, and against whose attacks we have, in our own strength, no method of defense. If permitted, they can distract our minds, disorder and torment our bodies, destroy our possessions and our lives.” *Ibid.*, 517.

Wednesday

THE POLLUTION OF HUMAN THOUGHTS

4.a. What kind of worldly conduct is the Christian to avoid? Ephesians 4:17–23.

Note: “It is one of Satan’s devices to combine with falsehood just enough truth to give it plausibility.” *The Great Controversy*, 587.

“The tempter assured Eve that as soon as she ate of the fruit she would receive a new and superior knowledge that would make her equal with God. He called her attention to himself. He ate freely of the tree and found it not only perfectly harmless but delicious and exhilarating . . . He further told them that they could not die. Had they not eaten of the tree of life which perpetuates immortality? He said that God was deceiving them to keep them from a higher state of felicity and more exalted happiness.” *The Story of Redemption*, 34, 35.



Our bodies are made up of the food assimilated. It is the same with our minds.

4.b. What works of the flesh are portrayed on television and other worldly entertainment? Galatians 5:19–21.

5.b. What kind of location did God prepare as the home of our first parents? Genesis 1:28–31; 2:8, 15.

Note: “It was when the Israelites were in a condition of outward ease and security that they were led into sin. ... It is thus that Satan still seeks to compass the ruin of the soul. A long preparatory process, unknown to the world, goes on in the heart before the Christian commits open sin. The mind does not come down at once from purity and holiness to depravity, corruption, and crime. It takes time to degrade those formed in the image of God to the brutal or the satanic. By beholding we become changed. By the indulgence of impure thoughts man can so educate his mind that sin which he once loathed will become pleasant to him.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 459.

“Do not for a moment acknowledge Satan’s temptations as being in harmony with your own mind. Turn from them as you would from the adversary himself.” *Our High Calling*, 85.

Note: “The home of our first parents was to be a pattern for other homes as their children should go forth to occupy the earth. That home, beautified by the hand of God Himself, was not a gorgeous palace. Men, in their pride, delight in magnificent and costly edifices and glory in the works of their own hands; but God placed Adam in a garden. This was his dwelling. The blue heavens were its dome; the earth, with its delicate flowers and carpet of living green, was its floor; and the leafy branches of the goodly trees were its canopy.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 49.

Thursday

5 RETURNING TO GOD’S ORIGINAL PLAN

5.a. What does friendship with the world do to our relationship with Jesus Christ? 1 John 2:15–19; James 4:4. What separation is required? 2 Corinthians 6:14–18.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 Describe Satan’s techniques to gain control over human minds.
- 2 How does the media, movies and videos, advertising, etc., exercise a powerful influence over the thoughts and actions of men?
- 3 How do visual images affect the thoughts?
- 4 Discuss Satan’s use of mingling truth and error to suit his purposes.

June 13 – 19, 2021

Guarding the Avenues of the Soul

Key Text:

“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:13).

Study Help: *The Ministry of Healing*, 261–268; *Testimonies*, vol. 8, 312–328.

Introduction

“The mind should not be left to wander at random upon every subject that the adversary of souls may suggest.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 460.

Sunday

1 CONTROL OF THE MIND

1.a. What battle is being waged for the control of our minds? Why is it important to be under the constant control of the Spirit of God? Acts 26:18; Luke 11:24–26.

Note: “We must inevitably be under the control of the one or the other of the two great powers that are contending for the supremacy of the world. It is not necessary for us deliberately to choose the service of the kingdom of darkness in order to come under its dominion. We have only to neglect to ally ourselves with the kingdom of light. If we do not co-operate with the heavenly agencies, Satan will take possession of the heart, and will make it his abiding place. The only defense against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith in His righteousness. Unless we become vitally connected with God, we can never resist the unhallowed effects of self-love, self-indulgence, and temptation to sin. We may leave off many bad habits, for the time we may part company with Satan; but

without a vital connection with God, through the surrender of ourselves to Him moment by moment, we shall be overcome. Without a personal acquaintance with Christ, and a continual communion, we are at the mercy of the enemy, and shall do his bidding in the end.” *The Desire of Ages*, 324.

1.b. What has Satan been doing for the last 6,000 years? Isaiah 14:3–17.

Note: “For thousands of years Satan has been experimenting upon the properties of the human mind, and he has learned to know it well. By his subtle workings in these last days he is linking the human mind with his own, imbuing it with his thoughts; and he is doing this work in so deceptive a manner that those who accept his guidance know not that they are being led by him at his will. The great deceiver hopes so to confuse the minds of men and women that none but his voice will be heard.” *Medical Ministry*, III.

Monday

2 THE CHOICE IS OURS

2.a. What choice is every man given? Revelation 3:20; 22:17 (John 7:37); Matthew 16:24.

Note: “I entreat you to open the door of your heart and let your Saviour in. Give Him the whole heart—that which He has purchased. Ever bear in mind that it is you who must choose. God forces no man. He has chosen you, and engraven your name in the palms of His hands. Will you not give yourself fully to Him?” *The Upward Look*, 25.

2.b. What precious hope does the follower of Christ have regarding the final victory over sin? John 16:33, last part; 2 Timothy 4:7, 8.

Note: “Today, Satan has great power in the world. He has been permitted to have proprietorship of this earth for an appointed time. During this period, when iniquity prevails, men and women are given a chance to take sides. In every possible way, Satan tries to make the broad road attractive and the narrow road grievous, humiliating, and objectionable. He lays ingenious plans to allure men and women to indulge appetite. Cheap, unsatisfying pleasures are made all and in all in this degenerate age. Satan throws his glamour about these amusements, which eclipse eternal things. Many will sell their birthright, as did Esau, for trifling consideration . . . worldly pleasure will appear more desirable to them than the heavenly birthright.

“But Christ has overcome in our behalf.” *The Upward Look*, 39.

Tuesday

3 CAUTION REGARDING MUSIC

3.a. Describe the effectiveness of Lucifer’s musical ability in heaven. Ezekiel 28:13.

Note: “Satan had led the heavenly choir. He had raised the first note; then all the angelic host had united with him, and glorious strains of music had resounded through heaven in honor of God and His dear Son.” *The Story of Redemption*, 25.



Young people have a keen ear for music, and Satan knows what organs to excite to animate, engross, and charm the mind so that Christ is not desired.

3.b. Research information indicates that music is a powerful stimulant affecting the whole body through the mind. How can Satan in his fallen state use music to deceive, if possible, even the very elect? Exodus 32:17–19.

Note: “They [the Israelites] ventured upon the forbidden ground, and were entangled in the snare of Satan. Beguiled with music and dancing, and allured by the beauty of heathen vestals, they cast off their fealty to Jehovah.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 454.

“They [young Sabbath-keepers] have a keen ear for music, and Satan knows what organs to excite to animate, engross, and charm the mind so that Christ is not desired. . . .

“The introduction of music into their homes, instead of inciting to holiness and spirituality, has been the means of diverting their minds from the truth. Frivolous songs and the popular sheet music of the day seem congenial to their taste. The instruments of music have taken time which should have been devoted to prayer. Music, when not abused, is a great blessing; but when put to a wrong use, it is a terrible curse.” *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 497.

“The low, common pleasure parties, gatherings for eating and drinking, singing and playing on instruments of music, are inspired by a spirit that is from beneath. They are an oblation unto Satan.” *Messages to Young People*, 382.

Wednesday

4 LOOKING UP

4.a. Where are we to focus our attention and our thoughts? Colossians 3:1, 2.

Note: “You should control your thoughts. This will not be an easy task; you cannot accomplish it without close and even severe effort. Yet God requires this of you; it is a duty resting upon every accountable being. You are responsible to God for your thoughts. If you indulge in vain imaginations, permitting your mind to dwell upon impure subjects, you are, in a degree, as guilty before God as if your thoughts were carried into action.” *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 561.

4.b. How only can man have proper thoughts and a “right mind”? Hebrews 12:1, 2; John 17:17, 19; Psalms 119:9, 97.

Note: “We have a work to do to resist temptation. Those who would not fall a prey to Satan’s devices must guard well the avenues of the soul; they must avoid reading, seeing, or hearing that which will suggest impure thoughts.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 460.

“Christ alone can direct the thoughts aright. He alone can give noble aspirations and fashion the character after the divine similitude. If we draw near to Him in earnest prayer, He will fill our hearts with high and holy purposes, and with deep longings for purity and righteousness.” *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 323.

Thursday

5 THEMES FOR CONTEMPLATION

5.a. How is the book of nature useful in quickening the mind? Romans 1:20.

Note: “Through the creation we are to become acquainted with the Creator. The book of nature is a great lesson book, which in connection with the Scriptures we are to use in teaching others of His character, and guiding lost sheep back to the fold of God. As the works of God are studied, the Holy Spirit flashes conviction into the mind. ...

“Too often the minds of students are occupied with men’s theories and speculations, falsely called science and philosophy. They need to be brought into close contact with nature.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 24, 25.

5.b. How can Christ’s presence be made more real to each of His followers? Psalms 1:1–3; 8:3, 9. On what topics should our minds dwell? Matthew 5:5, 8; Philippians 4:8; 2 Peter 3:13.

Note: “On the holy rest day, above all other days, we should study the messages that God has written for us in nature. We should study the Saviour’s parables where He spoke them, in the fields and groves, under the open sky, among the grass and flowers. As we come close to the heart of nature, Christ makes His presence real to us, and speaks to our hearts of His peace and love.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 26.

“Our minds should be constantly dwelling on the goodness of God and the future home of the saints, and we should ever be striving for perfection of character, that at last we may be given entrance into the City of God.” *The Upward Look*, 325.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 Discuss the battle being waged for the control of the human mind.
- 2 Discuss the individual freedom to choose.
- 3 How does the enemy of souls use music to influence the human mind?
- 4 How is the mind brought under “right control” and how does it become “right-minded”?
- 5 Where should the mind’s eye be focused? Mention some practical ways in which this aim can be achieved.

June 20 – 26, 2021

Winning the Battle of the Mind

Key Text:

“I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19).

Study Help: *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, 141–144; *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, 797–806.

Introduction

“Thoughts and meditations upon the goodness of God to us would close the avenues of the soul to Satan’s suggestions.” *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 222.

Sunday

1 STRENGTH FOR TODAY

1.a. What defense is available to us in the battle against temptation? Psalms 17:4; 119:11, 130.

Note: “Let the youth ... be taught to give close study to the word of God. Received into the soul, it will prove a mighty barricade against temptation.” *Education*, 190.

1.b. What is to be our guide in directing our steps and making choices in life? Psalm 119:105; Proverbs 18:10; Matthew 4:4, *first part*.

Note: “I counsel you to receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your soul. The word of God is your haven. It is a tower of strength, into which you may run and be safe.” *The Upward Look*, 125.

Monday

BEING ABLE TO THINK CLEARLY

2.a. How can the follower of Christ obtain positive and clear spiritual discernment? 1 Corinthians 2:9–13; Revelation 3:18, *last part*.

Note: “Satan has summoned the hosts of darkness to war against the saints. We cannot afford to be indifferent to his attacks. He comes in many ways, and we must have clear spiritual discernment, that we may be able to discern when he is seeking to gain possession of our minds.” *Our High Calling*, 19.

“Do not permit yourself to be discouraged. Do not permit yourself to be provoked, but let intelligent reason control your actions.” *The Upward Look*, 139.

2.b. How is one to deal with the negative feelings of depression, fretfulness, hate, anxiety, sadness, etc.? Psalm 100:2, 4; Ephesians 6:10, 11; James 4:7, 8.

Note: “When you see iniquity all around you it makes you all the more glad that He [Christ] is your Saviour, and we are His children. Then shall we look at the iniquity around us and dwell upon the dark side? You cannot cure it; then talk of something that is higher, better, and more noble.” *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, 490.

“It is our right, our privilege, to dismiss gloomy depression.” *The Upward Look*, 38.

“It is our duty not to live for self, but for the good of others—not to be controlled by feelings, but to consider that our influence is a power for good or evil.” *Ibid.*, 55.

“It is not our efforts that bring victory. It is seeing God behind the promise, and believing and trusting Him. Grasp by faith the hand of infinite power. The Lord is faithful who hath promised.” *Ibid.*, 133.

Tuesday

3 WEAPONS AGAINST THE ADVERSARY

- 3.a. How can we fight the battle victoriously as Christ did? Isaiah 26:4. What are some spiritual antidotes?
1. For fear: Isaiah 41:10, 13
 2. For depression/sadness: Jeremiah 31:10–13
 3. For worry: Psalm 37:5; 1 Peter 5:7
 4. For impurity: 1 Corinthians 6:15–20
 5. For worthlessness: 1 John 3:1, 2.

Note: “The word of God must not be kept apart from our life. It must be entertained in the mind, welcomed in the heart, and be cherished, loved, and obeyed. We need also much more knowledge; we need to be enlightened in regard to the plan of salvation. There is not one in one hundred who understands for himself the Bible truth on this subject that is so necessary to our present and eternal welfare.” *Selected Messages*, Book 1, 360.

- 3.b. What theme for meditation is provided for the Christian? 2 Corinthians 4:6; Ephesians 2:6.

Note: “It is only by long and persevering effort, sore discipline, and stern conflict that we shall be overcomers.” *Testimonies*, vol. 3, 324.

“With the great truth we have been privileged to receive, we should, and under the Holy Spirit’s power we could, become living channels of light. We could then approach the mercy seat; and seeing the bow of promise, kneel with contrite hearts, and seek the kingdom of heaven with a spiritual violence that would bring its own reward. We would take it by force, as did Jacob. Then our message would be the power of God unto salvation. Our supplications would be full of earnestness, full of a sense of our great need; and we would not be denied. The truth would be expressed by life and character, and by lips touched with the living coal from off God’s altar. When this experience is ours, we shall be lifted out of our poor, cheap selves, that we have cherished so tenderly.” “Ellen G. White Comments,” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, 1089.

Wednesday

4 REACHING GOD’S STANDARD

- 4.a. How will true followers of Jesus be perceived by others? 1 Corinthians 4:9, 13.

Note: “When we reach the standard that the Lord would have us reach, worldlings will regard Seventh-day Adventists as odd, singular, strait-laced extremists.” *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 289.

“We are to make the line of demarcation decidedly apparent.” *Ibid.*

“Those who are uniting with the world are receiving the worldly mold and preparing for the mark of the beast. Those who are distrustful of self, who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their souls by obeying the truth—these are receiving the heavenly mold and preparing for the seal of God in their foreheads.” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 216.

- 4.b. How can we develop characters fit for eternity? Micah 6:8; Zephaniah 2:3; 2 Corinthians 10:5.

Note: “If we are Christ’s, our thoughts are with Him, and our sweetest thoughts are of Him. All we have and are is consecrated to Him. We long to bear His image, breathe His spirit, do His will, and please Him in all things.” *Steps to Christ*, 58.

“By the life we live through the grace of Christ the character is formed. The original loveliness begins to be restored to the soul. The attributes of the character of Christ are imparted, and the image of the Divine begins to shine forth.” *The Desire of Ages*, 312.



“

*The armor is prepared.
Put it on, and fight
bravely for the Lord.*

Thursday

5 THE RESULTS OF INNER RENEWAL

5.a. As our mind is renewed, where will our thoughts and vision be directed? Romans 12:2; Hebrews 11:16; 12:2.

Note: “We should live for the next world. It is so wretched to live a haphazard, aimless life. We want an object in life—to live for a purpose. God help us all to be self-sacrificing, less self-caring, more forgetful of self and selfish interest; and to do good, not for the honor we expect to receive here, but because this is the object of our life and will answer the end of our existence. Let our daily prayer go up to God that He will divest us of selfishness.” *Our High Calling*, 242.

“Let every thought, every feeling be that of remembrance of God’s love. Let us gather up one token after another. ...

“The evidence we have of God’s care and love for us is expressed in the lessons Christ gave to His disciples upon the things in nature.” *The Upward Look*, 15.

“Let nothing, nothing discourage you, and make you sad. Think of the goodness of God. Recount His favors and blessings.” *Ibid.*, 30.

5.b. What assurance do we have of victory? Philippians 1:6; 2 Timothy 1:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:24.

Note: “The more we love Jesus, the more entirely will self be humbled and forgotten. ...

“Our God is a very present help in time of need. He is acquainted with the most secret thoughts of our hearts, with all the intents and purposes of our souls. When we are in perplexity, even before we open to Him our distresses, He is making arrangements for our deliverance.” *The Upward Look*, 46.

“If we trust in the Lord, we shall triumph in the warfare against unseen foes, but if we trust in our own strength, we shall surely meet with defeat. The armor is prepared. Put it on, and fight bravely for the Lord.” *Ibid.*, 129.

“When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 69.

Friday

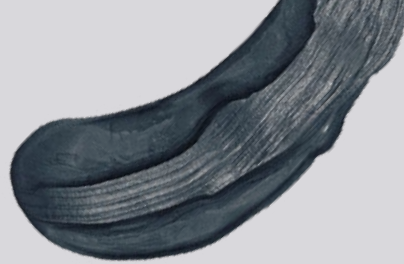
PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 What is the source of the Christian’s strength and how is this strength received?
- 2 What promises does God give to the person who is struggling to control his thoughts?
- 3 What tools are given to each of us to win the battle for control of the mind?
- 4 What does God require of the Christian in regard to control of the thoughts?
- 5 How can you tell whether or not your mind has been renewed?

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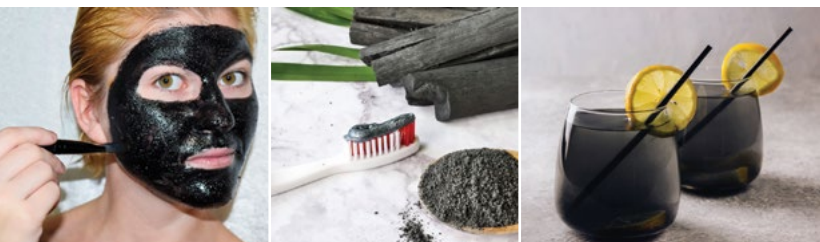
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Coco Palm

Coconut—is it a fruit? a nut? a seed? Coconut can be a fruit, a nut, and a seed. Scientifically, it is a fibrous, one-seeded drupe. Brown and hairy on the outside, white and creamy on the inside, coconut is a fruit which grows on coconut palm trees and is widely found in the tropics and subtropics.

Coconut is from the *Arecaceae* family, also known as the palm family. Theories of where the plant originated stretch from the Americas, the Indo-Pacific region, and Australia. The coconut tree grows up to 80 feet tall with large sweeping leaves about 19 feet long, producing the first fruit at about 6-10 years, but not producing its peak crop until 15-20 years old.

The coconut has four layers: the smooth, greenish, thin outermost “skin” of the drupe or the exocarp; the fibrous husk known as the mesocarp; the hard woody layer surrounding the flesh, called the endocarp; and the white, fleshy, edible meat or endosperm, which surrounds the hollow, fluid-filled, central cavity housing a translucent, sweetly flavored fluid.

Depending on the age of the coconut, the texture of the meat will vary. Younger coconuts produce a gelatinous, jelly-like meat with a light flavor that can easily be eaten from its shell with a spoon. More mature coconuts provide firmer, sweeter meat that is rigidly attached to the shell.

Most parts of the tree and fruit can be used for a range of culinary and non-culinary uses, earning it the Malayan title of “the tree of one thousand uses.” The fruit of the coconut yields milk, oil, water, flour and solids, making it an extremely versatile fruit for cooking and baking. **LM**

**Fruit**

Vegetables

Legumes

Nuts/Seeds

Grains



MAPLE ALMOND ICE CREAM

Ingredients

3 cups almond milk, unsweetened
1 can lite or full fat coconut milk (depending on preferred richness)
1 ½ cups cashews
¾ cup maple syrup (less, if desired)
1 Tbsp. vanilla extract, alcohol-free
pinch of salt

Process

- Put all ingredients into a high-speed blender. Blend until creamy and smooth.
- Pour the mixture into an ice cream maker and follow manufacturer’s instructions.
- Churn for about 45 minutes or until solid.
- Or freeze mixture in ice cube trays until solid. Place cubes in blender and blend lightly.
- Sprinkle with crushed pistachios, roasted pecans or walnuts.
- Enjoy this creamy, smooth, delectable dairy free dessert.



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