

HISTORIC
LANDMARKS

OF ADVENTISM

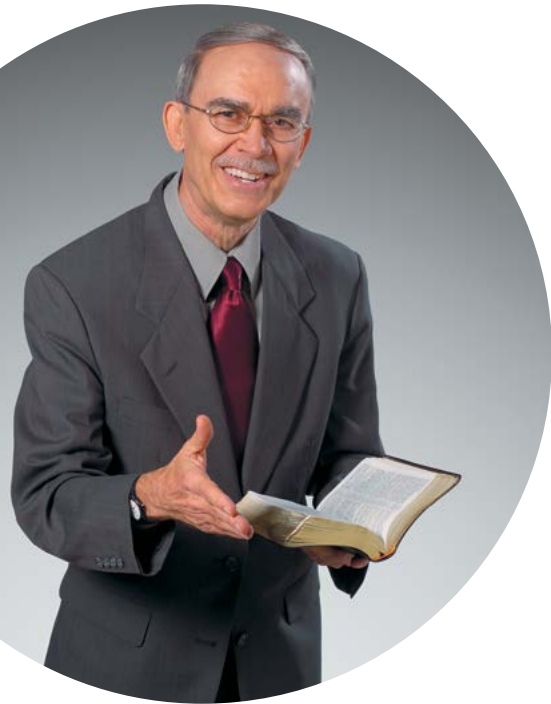
*No Fear
in Love*

*The denial of God's love
produces depression which
results in suicide—the leading
cause of death among young
people in America today.*

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*Testimony:
From High School
Failure to Successful
Career*

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From the Editor

John J. Grosboll

The Everlasting Gospel

God's remnant people have been commissioned to take a message to the world. Outlined below are the elements of that message:

The everlasting gospel is the good news that the Son of God paid an infinite price for man's redemption and all who will repent of their sins and unreservedly commit their lives and be baptized will be forgiven and will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

In 1844, angel messengers connected earth with heaven and all the deeds of man, good or evil, were opened before the eye of Infinite Justice. The hour of God's judgment had come.

God, our Creator, is to be worshiped by man (see Exodus 20:8–11).

We are to forsake all worship, religious systems and philosophies which cause us to break any of the Ten Commandments.

We are not to worship the beast power of Revelation 13:1–10. "It was apostasy that led the early church to seek the aid of the civil government, and this prepared the way for the development of the papacy—the beast. . . . So apostasy in the church will prepare the way for the image to the beast." *The Great Controversy*, 443.

We are not to worship the image to the beast power described in Revelation 13:11–17. "When the leading churches of the United States, uniting upon such points of

doctrine as are held by them in common, shall influence the state to enforce their decrees and to sustain their institutions, then Protestant America will have formed an image of the Roman hierarchy, and the infliction of civil penalties upon dissenters will inevitably result." *Ibid.*, 445.

We are not to accept the mark of the beast. This special mark is the deliberate attempt to change the times in the law of God (see Daniel 7:25).

"As the sign of the authority of the Catholic Church, papist writers cite 'the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of; . . . because by keeping Sunday, they acknowledge the church's power to ordain feasts, and to command them under sin.'" — Henry Tuberville, *An Abridgment of the Christian Doctrine*, page 58.

We are to keep all the commandments of God (Revelation 14:12; James 2:10–12).

We are to have the same faith that Jesus had. "Amid the awful darkness, apparently forsaken of God, Christ had drained the last dregs in the cup of human woe. In those dreadful hours He had relied upon the evidence of His Father's acceptance heretofore given Him. He was acquainted with the character of His Father; He understood His justice, His mercy, and His great love." *The Desire of Ages*, 756. **LM**

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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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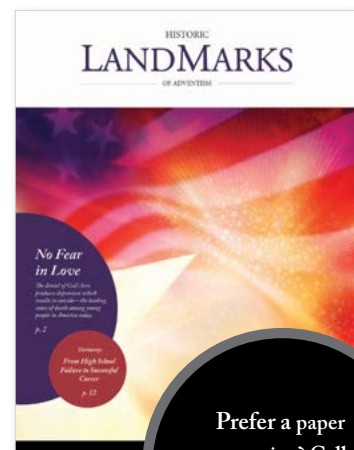
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No Fear in Love

By John J. Grosboll

Do you believe that God's work is soon to close? When God's work is finished, everything in this world is coming to an end. The Bible gives us a lot of instruction about being ready for the end. As Adventists, we believe that we must help others get ready as well as being ready for the end ourselves.

A spirit of unity and harmony is needed among God's professed people that has not yet been experienced. This is only possible if we are united on Bible truth. There is a true and a false unity. True unity is based on

the word of God, but a false unity is based on negotiating. We see a movement to unite the Catholic and Protestant faiths, including Adventism, to be in harmony with one another. This movement also seeks a way to unite with Buddhists and the Muslims. However, Revelation 16 says it will not work and all such supposed unity will crumble.

The Upward Look, 149, tells us, "The great apostasy ... began in a denial of the love of God, as it is plainly revealed in the Word." The person who first made this denial was one of the highest

angels in heaven. We know him by his Latin name, the name given to him by the translators of the King James Bible – *Lucifer*. Before the translation of the King James Bible, people thought *Lucifer* was a wonderful word. The Hebrew word with the closest translation means a *shining one* or a *brilliant one* or a *star*. Before he fell, *Lucifer* was also called a morning star. He is not a morning star anymore. Jesus Christ is the true morning star. But with this one angel (*Satan* as we know him today), the greatest apostasy began because he denied the love of God.

Denying the love of God has resulted in discouragement, despair and depression. It is such a great problem that suicide has become a leading cause of death among young people. Denying the love of God has led people to fear the future and, as a result, there is great discouragement and despair in our society today. The fear of not knowing how things will work out brings darkness in the life.

Would you like to have light instead of darkness? 1 John 1:5-7 says, "This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."

Jesus spoke about this with His disciples just a few days before His crucifixion in John 12:35: "Then Jesus said to them, 'A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going.'" Walking in darkness without Jesus, the Light, produces a feeling of great hopelessness, which is the reason for so much sorrow, discouragement and despair in the world today.

Many people turn to other things – drugs, alcohol, gambling, adultery – all in an effort to replace the negative feelings, the depression and darkness in their lives, when what they need is to experience the love of God. Doubting the love of God can result in a number of mental or psychological issues. We all have to meet difficulties, trials, troubles and uncertainty. So, what do we do?

First of all, know that darkness and distress are not caused by our heavenly Father. These things are caused by demons, supernatural powers that have rebelled against and denied the love of God for thousands of years. These demons do not want you to know it, but faith enables you to pierce the dark-



ness so that you can know that there is Someone who loves and cares for you, Someone close who wants to help you to work things out.

If you know and understand the love of God, then when trouble comes and you see no way out, you can know that God is with you. You may not know how things will turn out, but you will have a chart book that tells you. When David was in this situation, he said, "Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance. O my God, my soul is cast down within me; therefore I will remember You. . . . All Your waves and billows have gone over me. The LORD will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me. . . . I will say to God my Rock, 'Why have You forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?' As with a breaking of my bones, my enemies reproach me, while they say to me all day long, 'Where is your God?' Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance" (Psalm 42:5-11). With praise and thanksgiving David had faith that God would bring him out right.

Praising the Lord is one of the most powerful weapons against discouragement and depression. (See *The Ministry of Healing*, the chapter titled, "Mind Cure.") Thanksgiving and praise are the very keynotes of heaven. If you are going to sing with the angels someday, you have to learn to sing the songs that they sing. The angels' songs are of praise and thanksgiving and when people experience the love of God, they begin to praise and sing to the Lord.

When Adam and Eve sinned as a result of the devil's deceptive arts, they and all of their descendants were doomed to death. And the Bible says, "Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin" (Romans 5:12). Reading further in *The Upward Look*, 149, we find, "Provision was then made whereby fallen man might have a powerful revelation of the love of God, and be given an opportunity to return to his allegiance to Jehovah." This revelation of the love of God was so powerful that throughout all eternity there will never again be the need for another.

The apostle James wrote in James 1:13-15, "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does

He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire [lust, a strong or overwhelming desire] has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.” So all of mankind is doomed to die and this is the reason why. “He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He” (Deuteronomy 32:4). Psalm 89:14, *first part*, further describes it as: “Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne.”

Because righteousness and justice are the foundation of God’s throne, Lucifer said God could not forgive what the people had done. How could God be just, upholding the requirements of His law and forgive those who break it? How could a single member of the human race be saved from eternal death? There was a way that God could devise so that He could be both just and forgiving. The plan of salvation was the only way.

The plan of salvation was conceived before the earth was created, before Lucifer fell and before Adam and Eve sinned (see *The Desire of Ages*, chapter 1). The Godhead, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, knew that man would sin and that a plan would be needed to save mankind. Jesus told the angels that He would become a man and go down to earth Himself. He would teach man about the love of God and show them that Satan was wrong. He told them that He ultimately would be condemned to die, to hang between heaven and

earth. It would be a terrible thing for the angels to see, but after He had died as a man, on the third day He would rise up from the dead and by His sacrifice and resurrection He would save every one of the human race who would come back to allegiance to the law of God.

And in dying to save man, He would also destroy the destroyer (Hebrews 2:14).

As the angels listened, they could not rejoice because they realized what the plan of salvation would cost

Him. There were among the angels some who suggested that one of them would take His place, but Jesus told them it could not be a created being subject to the law. As the Son of God, one with His Father and Creator of the law and the world, He would have to be the One to save mankind.

Contrary to what Satan might tell us, the use of force is against the principles of God’s government. People are saved when they see and comprehend the love of God and what He is really like. The majority of the people in the world are serving the devil. 1 John 3:8 says, “He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” If you are living in sin, the devil claims you as his child, and you will eventually go where the devil is going because sin brings people into bondage. But, if you don’t want to serve the devil anymore, you can choose to be God’s child and be free from his bondage.

Jesus says, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall

make you free” (John 8:31, 32). The way to be free is to know Jesus Christ, to know and experience His love, and to surrender to His divine power. The way to learn about the love of Christ is to study the record of His life on earth. Christ’s life on earth is so important that it was recorded in all of the first four books of the New Testament.

“For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts though faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think . . .” (Ephesians 3:14–21).

In recent years, the human race seems to have become more fearful than ever before. This leads to depression, hopelessness and discouragement. They are tormented with fear. But the solution for fear is found in 1 John 4:16–18: “We have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.” This Scripture tells us that if we experience the love of God, there is no fear because perfect love casts out fear.

Ellen White, writing about Jesus’ thoughts while on the way to Calvary, says He did not even have a murmuring thought and as He hung on the cross He did not curse, but instead He said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not

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Denying the love of God has resulted in discouragement and depression. Suicide has become a leading cause of death among young people.”

know what they do” (Luke 23:34). He wasn’t trying to think of a way out of the situation. He wasn’t wondering why He had to go through this. His heart was breaking as He looked around Him and saw so many who did not believe in Him, yet weeping from human sympathy for Him, but He knew that in a few short years they and their children would perish in the destruction of Jerusalem. With His attention focused on them, He said, “Do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children” (Luke 23:28).

Few realized at that time that Jesus was dying for the sins of the world. Peter later said, “Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust” (1 Peter 3:18). Imagine the thief on the cross, first ridiculing Jesus with the other thief, but then realizing the truth about himself and even more, the truth about who Jesus was. Knowing he was a sinner and going to die soon, he said to the other thief, “Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong” (Luke 23:40, *last part*, 41). Then realizing that Jesus was dying for the sins of the world, for his sins, he asked, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom” (Luke 23:42). Quickly the reply came. In modern English it would be: “Most assuredly, I say to you today, you will be with Me in Paradise” (verse 43).

Friends, the same One who saved the thief on the cross, Peter and Mary Magdalene can save any sinner who is willing to come to Him. You must experience His love so that you can escape the darkness that is all around us in this world. We might not always be able to see how, but we can know where we are going.

The Christian religion is the most spiritual religion in the world. It is not based on some ceremony or rite, but rather on the decision you make regarding who your Lord is going to be and if you are determined to follow and obey



*True
unity is
based on the word
of God, but a false
unity is based on
negotiating.*

Him. If you make the right decision, you will have light in your mind, the love of God in your heart and songs of praise to the Lord on your lips. With thanksgiving and praise you will talk about the love of God. The devil will no longer have control of your life because now you are following a different leader. No one can make the decision for another. Your husband or your wife cannot make the decision for you. Your father or your mother or your son or your daughter cannot make the decision for you. You must decide for yourself if you are going to be saved.

Peter said, “There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Only Jesus can save you, if you commit to Him. It is absolutely vital for you to know what it means to make that decision. This is not an intellectual decision where you just believe something. The decision to follow Jesus involves commitment.

Jean Francois Gravelet, a Frenchman known professionally as Charles Blondin, had a tightrope stretched across Niagara Falls. After pushing a wheelbarrow blindfolded across the tightrope, he asked the crowd below if they believed that he could carry a person across on the tightrope. “Yes,” was the answer, they believed he could do it. But then he said, “Okay, if you believe, get in the

wheelbarrow!” Getting in the wheelbarrow involved commitment, and it is commitment you must have if you are going to be saved. You must say, “Lord, I am committing my life to You and I am going to follow You regardless of the consequences, whether I live or die, whether I can understand or not. I am committing to You because I trust You. You have demonstrated to me that You are trustworthy.”

Dear friend, if you haven’t made that commitment, you are not saved and you never will be saved until you make that commitment. But here is the good news – Jesus Christ has never ever lost one case that has been committed to Him. In the final day of judgment, not one will be able to say, “Lord, I committed everything to You and now I’m lost.” There are millions of half-hearted Christians that will not be in the kingdom of heaven. Be serious, friend. Time is short, choose today to commit your life to His sovereignty as your Lord and Saviour.

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

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God Never Quits He Keeps Appealing

By Damien Jenkins

As Seventh-day Adventists, we could identify with Samson, in particular regarding young Seventh-day Adventists who have been raised in the Adventist faith and teachings, but who like Samson, have come to a point in their life where they have said, “That’s it. I don’t want to do this anymore. I want to live my life, I just want,” as Samson said, “to please myself well.” There are several reasons why this is happening:

- Compromise
- Legalism
- Turned off or hurt by the church
- They just decide to leave
- Trials, heartache, loss or trauma

None of these are a good reason to leave Jesus because He is true and faithful to us whether we are faithful to Him or not, but some people leave for one or a combination of these reasons.

“Had Samson obeyed the divine commands as faithfully as his parents had done, his would have been a nobler and happier destiny. But association with idolaters corrupted him. The town of Zorah being near the country of the Philistines, Samson came to mingle with them on friendly terms. Thus in his youth intimacies sprang up, the influence of which darkened his whole life. A young woman dwelling in the Philistine town of Timnath engaged Samson’s affections, and he determined to make her his wife. To his God-fearing parents, who endeavored to dissuade him from his purpose, his only answer was ‘She pleaseth me well’ (Judges 14:3, *last part*). The parents at last yielded to his wishes, and the marriage took place.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 562.

Some people say this is where Samson’s parents went wrong; they compromised. Telling his parents to arrange the marriage was merely a formality. Samson was a grown man. Had they said no, he would most probably still have done it. Samson’s parents simply recognized that they weren’t going to change his mind. This left the door open so that he could return if things didn’t turn out as planned. It is an example to us as well for our children, to return rather than being too embarrassed or afraid to seek us out at a time they need us most. We should tell them if we do not agree with their decision, but we need to recognize that it is their choice to make and yet be available should they need us. One thing we can be sure of, Samson’s parents did not stop praying for their son, and we also should continue to pray for our children, interceding with God on their behalf.

Ultimately our children have a mind and a conscience of their own. They have the liberty as free moral agents when



*Our
adult
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they become adults to make their own decisions. As parents, we are not responsible for those decisions. When children begin to make their own decisions, to do their “own thing,” they are responsible for their own choices and their own lives. We are only responsible to confess and repent of our own shortcomings.

If a young person has left the church for any one or all of the five reasons listed above, we all need to know something about God: He does not give up. You can’t just simply ignore Him and His calling for your life, because He will leave no stone unturned until He has given you every opportunity to return. You can leave, you can please yourself, you can watch what you want, go where you want, wear what you want, marry who you want, but ultimately God will say to you, “Let’s try this one more time.” That is the God that we serve.

Samson’s parents were unable to change his mind. Then is stated one of the most interesting verses in the Bible. It says, “His father and his mother knew not that it was of the LORD, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel” (Judges 14:4 KJV).

As we look at this story in Judges 14 and 15, we find God’s people are in apostasy. As a result, God allows the enemy

to overcome them. The children of Israel cry out to Him to save them, and God raises up a deliverer. Samson was a judge among the Israelites and was meant to be an example for the people. God had a mission laid out for him, a purpose to deliver the Israelites from the dominion of the Philistines, the enemies of God.

Every chapter in the book of Judges tells about a judge who had a mission, except for chapter 9 which tells us about Abimelech who was not a judge, but a usurper. Ehud, Othniel, Gideon, Deborah, and Jephthah each had a mission that they fulfilled. But in Judges 14 and 15 we find a judge who is called from birth with miraculous powers, in the spirit of God, a Nazirite consecrated to be the deliverer of God’s people. And what was his mission? To get married.

So looking at these two chapters, we will be looking at Samson’s life as it relates to Judges 14:4. Was Samson fulfilling God’s mission for him at this time? No. Does God want us to marry people who are not of our faith? No. So how could this be of the Lord?

The Bible tells us that God’s ways are not our ways. “‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,’ says the LORD. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways,

“

Associate yourself with people of good quality, for it is better to be alone than to be in bad company.

and My thoughts than your thoughts. ... So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:8, 9, 11). So even if we blunder, God’s purposes will still be fulfilled.

Looking at Isaiah 55:11 from The Bible in Basic English (BBE) translation, it says, “So will My word be which goes out of My mouth: it will not come back to Me with nothing done, but it will give effect to My purpose, and do that for which I have sent it.” God’s purposes are not limited by you and me. He wants us to cooperate with Him and co-labor with Him, but even if we refuse, things will still work out according to His will.

We see clearly from Samson’s experience that we can be in line with God’s will and fulfill His purpose in cooperation with Him or we can indirectly be used by Him to fulfill His purpose. And this is where we find Samson. If you are a young person trying to live your own life and leave out the things that you learned as a young Adventist, this is the experience you will have.

“Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath: and, behold, a young lion roared against him. And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done” (Judges 14:5, 6 KJV).

There are some things that we need to stress here. First of all, Samson was walking alone through the vineyards having separated from his parents somewhere along the journey. According to the Nazarite vows he was not to have anything to do with wine, but here he is walking through the vineyard. Then he is attacked by a lion. The Bible says, “... your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8, *last part*). So we see

Samson walking in a place where he should not be walking and then the lion appears, but notice how he overcomes the lion. The Spirit of the Lord came upon him and that is when he had the power. “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,” says the LORD of hosts” (Zechariah 4:6). In order to overcome temptation, even if on temptation’s ground, you need the Spirit of the Lord. 1 Corinthians 10:13 tells us, “... but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.” Claim that promise when you fall into hard times. God is powerful and if you trust in Him, even in the worst circumstances, He can show you what He can do in your life, just as we see here.

Returning to the story, several months later Samson is on his way to Timnath to be married. He decides to stop at the vineyard to see what has happened to the lion he killed. The lion is now nothing but bones, but bees have made a hive in the bones and Samson scoops out some honey to eat and he took some to give to his parents. This lion is an unclean, dead thing and to touch it was a violation of his Nazarite vow. You will also recall that Samson had not told his parents that he had killed the lion. Samson repeatedly shows himself to be an intemperate man; though strong physically, he was morally weak.

Samson’s decision to marry the woman from Timnath was not a wise one. Remember, God’s instructions to Israel when they went into the promised land, “When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites ... and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against

you and destroy you suddenly” (Deuteronomy 7:1-4).

There is a valid reason why the Bible tells us not to have close association with friends or family who are not interested in or who despise spiritual things. It says, “Do not be deceived: ‘Evil company corrupts good habits’” (1 Corinthians 15:33). How often do we surround ourselves with people who have no desire to know God, no desire for the Word believing that we will witness to them, but instead we are influenced by them, and our standard of holiness is lowered just like Samson? Booker T. Washington said, “Associate yourself with people of good quality, for it is better to be alone than to be in bad company.”

“At his marriage feast Samson was brought into familiar association with those who hated the God of Israel. Whoever voluntarily enters into such relations will feel it necessary to conform, to some degree, to the habits and customs of his companions. The time thus spent is worse than wasted. Thoughts are entertained and words are spoken that tend to break down the strongholds of principle and to weaken the citadel of the soul.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 563. This will happen to all of us. We are drawn to and influenced by the things around us. We are not strong enough to resist and very subtly, we become demoralized by those with whom we associate.

Associating with these Philistine fellows, Samson bragged showing them what an intelligent guy he was by giving them a riddle. If they were not able to answer the riddle, then they would have to give him some clothing, but if they were able to find the answer to the riddle, then he would give them the clothing. Here was the riddle:

“Out of the eater came something to eat, And out of the strong came something sweet” (Judges 14:14).

Of course, this riddle was about the lion Samson had killed and the honey in the lion’s bones, but the Philistines were



unable to figure it out. Not wanting to lose, they demanded Samson’s new wife to find out the answer to the riddle or they would kill her and her family. She begged Samson to tell her the answer, but he refused. Becoming very insistent because she had been threatened, she said, “You only hate me! You do not love me! You have posed a riddle to the sons of my people, but you have not explained it to me” (Judges 14:16). Samson told her that he had not even told his parents, so why would he tell her? But, “Now she had wept on him for seven days while the feast lasted. And it happened on the seventh day [because he had no peace] that he told her, because she pressed him so much. Then she explained the riddle to the sons of her people” (Judges 14:17). Then the Philistines came to him with the answer to the riddle. “And he said to them: ‘If you had not plowed with my heifer, you would have not solved my riddle’” (Judges 14:18, *last part*)!

So what is all this really about? Let’s think about it: Samson was a Nazarite, a judge, from birth given a special mission or purpose by God to deliver the Israelites out of the hands of His enemies, the Philistines, but what was Samson doing? He was associating with the enemy, taking a wife from among them.

At that moment he had no interest at all in God’s plan. He associated with the enemy, he gave them a riddle, made a bet with them and then felt betrayed when they did wrong to him. Then, “The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle. And his anger was kindled, and he went up to his father’s house” (Judges 14:19 KJV). This is the first mention of Samson doing anything against the Philistines and what was his reason? He had to pay a debt. He felt betrayed, he was angry, so he killed 30 men from Ashkelon to give their clothes as payment for the debt and went home.

Time passed and Samson determined to see his wife again. But her father, believing that Samson had completely forsaken her, gave her as wife to Samson’s friend and offered him her younger sister. His response is found in Judges 15:3-5 KJV: “Samson said concerning them, Now shall I be more blameless than the Philistines, though I do them a displeasure [or hurt]. And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took firebrands, and turned tail to tail, and put a firebrand in the midst between the two tails. And when he had

We
become
demoralized by
those with whom
we associate.

set the brands on fire, he let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards and olives.”

This was an agricultural society and losing the corn in the fields, the vineyards and olives might not mean a lot to us today, but that is how people then survived. By

Samson’s actions, their livelihood is ruined. We do not know how many people may have died from famine because of what Samson had done.

So, let’s take a closer look at why Samson did this. The father of Samson’s wife had given her to another man because Samson had left and the father thought he would not be coming back. Samson left because he felt betrayed when his wife had pressured him to give her the answer to the riddle when her life and the lives of her family were being threatened. But ultimately, if Samson had not chosen to befriend the Philistines and marry a Philistine woman, none of this would have happened in the first place. So who was really to blame for this and all the terrible consequences?

The Philistines, realizing that Samson was responsible for the destruction because his wife had been given to another man, went where the woman and her father were and burned the whole house down killing them inside. “And Samson said unto them, ‘Though ye have done this, yet will I be avenged of you, and after that I will cease.’ And he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter: and he went down and dwelt in the top of the rock Etam” (Judges 15:7, 8 KJV).

Do we see Samson consulting with God before he does any of these things? Has he asked as David did when he said, “Lord, shall I go up, shall I not go up. Shall I forebear?” No. He killed 30 men in Ashkelon, then he destroyed the crops and the economy of one of the Philistine cities which would result in many deaths and killed a great number of

people. As a result, his wife and her family are horrifically killed by her own people. So what are we seeing here? Samson was not thinking of God at all. His sole desire was to please himself and seek revenge for the slights and betrayals that he had suffered. Yet, he was indirectly fulfilling God’s mission for him as the deliverer of Israel.

By this time the Philistines were really upset and they went down to Judah to find him. They told the people of Judah, “We have come up to arrest Samson, to do to him as he has done to us” (Judges 15:9, 10, *last part*). How did the people of Israel respond? Three thousand of Samson’s own people came to him at Etam and said, “Do you not know that the Philistines rule over us? What is this you have done to us?” ... “We have come down to arrest you, that we may deliver you into the hand of the Philistines” (Judges 15:11, 12). Not wanting to harm his own people, he allowed them to take him as long as they swore not to kill him themselves. They bound him with two new ropes and took him to the Philistines.

We need to understand from Samson’s story that if God has a purpose for your life, you cannot escape it. Samson’s whole issue at this point was “‘As they did to me, so I have done to them’” (verse 11). Is there anything about the Lord here on his mind? No. That’s the reason he was in this situation. He wasn’t interested in doing God’s will, he just wanted to please himself. Even still, God’s will was fulfilled.

The Bible then says in Judges 15:14, “The Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him; and the ropes that were on his arms became like flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds broke loose from his hands.” Samson took the jawbone of a donkey and again takes revenge on the Philistines killing a thousand men. “Then Samson said: ‘With the jawbone of a donkey, heaps upon heaps, with the jawbone of a donkey I have slain a thousand men!’ And so it was, when he had finished speaking, that he threw the jawbone from his hand, and called that place Ramath Lehi” (Judges 15:16, 17). Samson gave himself the glory for what he had done.

“

*Ultimately our children
have a mind and a
conscience of their own.*

So what happened to finally make Samson see that he was not in control of his life? Verse 18, *first part*, says, “Then he became very thirsty, so he cried out to the LORD.” For the first time in this entire story that you see Samson call on the Lord. Continuing in verse 18, “ ‘You have given this great deliverance by the hand of Your servant; and now shall I die of thirst and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?’ ” Samson still sounded a bit arrogant, but God knew his heart and answered his prayer, cleaving a hollow place so that water would come gushing out (verse 19). Without water, Samson would have died. He thought he was so mighty and strong, but he realized he had a need. When he called on God, God filled that need. After he drank his fill, he renamed the place where he had killed all the Philistines from Ramath Lehi (the lifting up of the jawbone) to En Hakkore (fountain of one calling).

As the dust settled, the screaming stopped, the clanking of armor died down and the survivors had all run away, Samson looked around and realized that the very thing he had been running from had found him anyway and everything he had wanted, he had lost. He had been running for so long and finally he realized the very thing he had wanted nothing to do with was the one thing he couldn't get away from – the purpose God had for his life.

Friends, if you have fallen off the path, given up, or felt like you have no purpose anymore because of compromise, legalism, apostasy in your church, or because you wanted to see what the world was like, or because of trial or trauma, you will finally realize that the Lord's way is always better. His purpose for you is for you to love Him with all your heart, soul and mind, to love your neighbor as yourself and to go home with Him. That is His purpose for all of us.

Jesus, I love You and I want to be Your child,
but for now I'm busy, will You come back in a while.
I'm sorry, Lord, but for now I have other things to do.
It's just in the plans I've made, I've made no time for You.
How many times have you pushed the Lord aside
to make room for your foolish, earthly pride?

Time and time, God waits for you to open up to Him,
but instead of giving Him our hearts, we cast Him out again.
Jesus, I'm sorry, Lord, for the way that I have been.
Pushing you aside for things that always seem to win.

Now my eyes are open, Lord, and I can see Your light
shining on my pathway to eternal life.

His desire is to save us, and He will not leave one stone
unturned until He has given us every opportunity to make
that decision.

(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 Hobenwald, Tennessee. He enjoys apologetics, Bible history, expounding on the topic of righteousness by faith and making the Bible simple and easy to understand.*



From High School Failure to Successful Career

By Revella Knight

Without a doubt, everyone has a story to tell of how the Lord turns failures into success. I was born in Calcutta, India, to Armenian parents. My earliest memories of home were of my loving mother, aunt, grandparents and my brother, the nucleus of our family. My father, who I only saw on occasion, was a business owner. When I was six years old, my father enrolled me in the

Davidian girls' school, an Armenian primary boarding school. We were allowed home one weekend every three months, and I was terribly homesick. I still recall begging my father not to take me back to school after the weekends I went home, however my pleas came to naught. A few hours later, after the tears were over, all the girls would gather together telling stories of all the fun that was had.

My scholastic achievements were negligible due to the fact that I was sick often and missed days of schooling. I was never given homework to catch up what I had missed, so as a consequence, my grades were pitiful. My father was never informed of my lack of school attendance because of high fevers, stomach complaints and lack of nutrition. He thought that I was not very bright and hired tutors to give me special tutoring.

Years later when I was in my teens, my mother, who had remarried and was living in Sydney, Australia, wrote and asked me to join her. After several discussions with my father, he relented and saw me off to the “land down under.”

My stepfather was the principal of the Castle Hill Seventh-day Adventist church school and we lived across from the church. We had morning and evening worship and my mother was very gentle in her ways of encouraging me to read my Bible and pray. The church pastor, who had a daughter my age, often visited with us. The atmosphere of the church was friendly and happy.

I attended Bible studies for several months and when a large group of young people decided to be baptized, I joined them. At that time in my life I was not fully committed, but I did believe in Jesus and I was willing to make a lot of necessary changes. The hardest change for me was my outward appearance. Picking clothes for this “baby Christian” was a great challenge. The other challenge was trying to fit into the school system with a completely different curriculum, so my parents decided to return to India for me to complete years 11 and 12.

We returned to Calcutta, India, where my stepfather opened a primary school. It started with only five children enrolled, but within a few months the school grew and flourished. These little children who came from non-Christian homes learned about Jesus. They sang songs, learned Bible stories and influenced their families who would also enquire about Jesus.

In the meantime, my challenge was attending the same school I had left, the Armenian College, to complete my last two years of high school. I had left the school as an Armenian Orthodox and returned a Seventh-day Adventist. One of the classes was Religious Knowledge and the teacher was the same Armenian priest I had before. He was intrigued that I was not in church on Sundays and



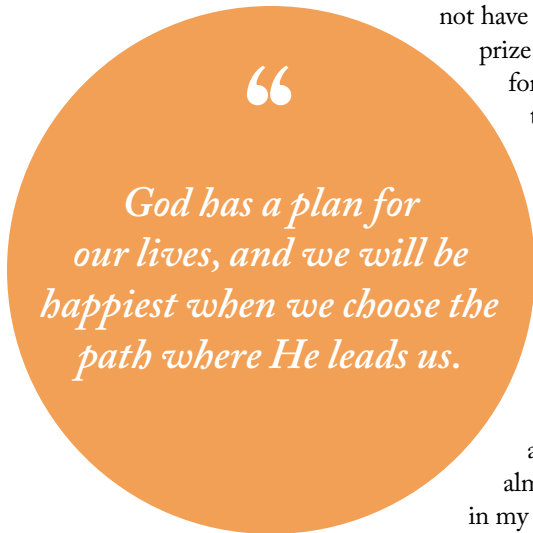
“Revella, Revella, get up, you won!” I rose to my feet in disbelief and walked to the front.

when I explained that I went to church on Saturday, he was infuriated and tried in every way to humiliate me in front of 40 teenagers. He said I should feel ashamed that I had abandoned my Armenian heritage. He would make fun of the Adventist faith and the students would laugh. The friends that I once had did not want to associate with me for I was now considered the laughing-stock of the class. The priest took great delight in making me stand through the whole class period every week for several months. I would tell my mother the events that occurred and we would pray together. She always encouraged me and would tell me that Jesus sees and would take care of things.

I praise Jesus, for He gave me the strength and courage to bear the insults, the laughter and remarks instigated by a so-called man of God. Then, something strange started to happen that took me by surprise. My friends were curious and started asking me questions: “What has changed you?” “You are not the same.” One by one a small group who were interested enough to talk and spend time during the breaks would tell me private information because they knew

I would not break their trust. Another strange occurrence took place shortly after. While standing in the priest’s class as he made fun of me and laughed, no one laughed with him. The students no longer saw the humor. The priest’s game was over, at least for the time being.

I made a special effort to study hard and by God’s grace my grades improved a great deal. In year twelve, we were ready to take our school final exams which were before we could take the state exam. In order to graduate to take the state tests, we had to pass the second language test. So I prayed and asked the Lord to please help me pass the Armenian language exam. After the tests were completed, the priest gave us our grades. I had passed and was so thankful to the Lord because now I would be able to take the Senior Cambridge exam. But the priest accused me of cheating and motioned for me to stand and stay standing until I confessed. After a while, from the back of the class came a voice saying, “Excuse me sir.” All turned to see the most brilliant student in our class stand and say, “I know Revella, if she says she did not cheat, I believe her.” Again, the priest was silenced.



A few days later it was graduation day. All the students sat at the back of the huge auditorium and the guests sat towards the front. The prizes for various subjects were distributed and I was just so glad that I would not have to face the priest again. The last prize to be distributed was the prize for English Literature. It was given to the student with the highest grade in that subject for years 10, 11 and 12. No one ever knew who the student was until the name was revealed. All of a sudden one of my friends called to me: “Revella, Revella, get up, you won!” I rose to my feet in disbelief and walked to the front. The roar in that auditorium was so loud it was almost deafening, and I felt certain in my heart that angels were present.

All glory and honor go to our Lord. As I walked the stairs to the platform, I knew the Lord had a sense of humor when I saw the person chosen to give me my prize. It was none other than the priest.

Finally, the day came to take the Senior Cambridge exam in our English subjects and in the Armenian language. The Armenian language test papers were given to the priest to correct. In this final exam, we were not given our tests back to see why we were given a particular grade. So, whatever the results were, we had to accept them. I did not feel good about not seeing the Armenian paper, but I had done my best and felt I should get a reasonable grade.

In the meantime, my parents and I had moved to London, United Kingdom, and after about four months, a large envelope containing my exam results arrived in the mail. My initial excitement fell to despair and my brain could not compute the large letter I was staring at – F. All my hard work was for nothing. Then it dawned on me that the priest knew I would not have access to my paper, so he had his final revenge. He knew that in India, if you fail your second language, you fail the whole exam. Although I had taken six subjects, a failure on the Armenian language paper caused a failure in all

six subjects. My hope for enrolling in Pacific Union College was dashed.

With nothing to show for all of my effort, we prayed in earnest and my parents asked the Lord to lead in whatever direction He wanted. I am ashamed to say that at that moment, filled with self-pity and hopelessness, I had no faith, even though I had seen the leading of the Lord just a few months before. Waiting on the Lord is difficult when your faith is weak and courage is gone.

In the chapter, “God Will Provide” in *The Ministry of Healing*, 480–482, Ellen White wrote, “Let us be hopeful and courageous. Despondency in God’s service is sinful and unreasonable. He knows our every necessity. To the omnipotence of the King of kings our covenant-keeping God unites the gentleness and care of the tender shepherd. His power is absolute, and it is the pledge of the sure fulfillment of His promises to all who trust in Him. He has means for the removal of every difficulty, that those who serve Him and respect the means He employs may be sustained. His love is as far above all other love as the heavens are above the earth. He watches over His children with a love that is measureless and everlasting.

“In the darkest days, when appearances seem most forbidding, have faith in God. He is working out His will, doing all things well in behalf of His people. The strength of those who love and serve Him will be renewed day by day.”

After several months of asking the Lord to direct us, my parents decided to relocate to Perth, Western Australia. My aunt had married an Australian and was living there and my brother was still living in Sydney. In 1975 we arrived in Perth and found an apartment overlooking the Swan River. My parents encouraged me to visit the nurses board to make inquiries as to the programs available at that time, so I made an appointment with the secretary to see the director.

A week later I met with the director of nursing, taking with me my high school final exam papers of which I was not proud. Mrs. Chamberlain had a kind, gentle face, and was very professional. After explaining the reason for no diploma and adding my grades,

she informed me that with a couple of subjects added I could get a grade that would be accepted before applying for the nursing program. My fears of rejection turned to hope as she instructed me on what two subjects I needed. I could take evening classes as an external student at the University of Perth. It seemed as though she had taken on the responsibility to get me where I wanted to be and I knew the Lord was opening a door. At the university, I was encouraged along the way by my instructor who wrote kind notes along with the lessons he sent.

Six months later I again saw Mrs. Chamberlain, and she was just as excited as I was to be in a position to apply for nursing school and recommended what she believed to be the best school. The application process for nursing was in several stages with questions, interviews, paperwork to fill out and psychological tests. After the principal's interview I was told, "We will contact you." Months passed with no word, but strangely I did not lose hope this time thinking of Mrs. Chamberlain and how excited she was to launch me into my career.

Finally, a letter arrived, and I was overjoyed to be accepted into the second intake for the year of 1976. I praise God for leading, directing and placing in my pathway the people who helped me on my journey.

After three years of study and working in the various units in the Royal Perth Hospital, we were ready to take the final nursing school exam. We were informed that the hospital exam would be more difficult than the state exam, because the school had a reputation of very few failures. The school exams were on two days, each took four hours. I thanked God that He had led me thus far and I did not want to fail Him. Out of my class of 75, I stood with the 69 students who graduated that day and proudly repeated the Florence Nightingale Pledge:

"I solemnly pledge myself before God and in the presence of this assembly, to



*In
the darkest
days, when
appearances seem most
forbidding, have faith
in God. He is working
out His will.*

pass my life in purity and to practice my profession faithfully. I will abstain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous and will not take or knowingly administer any harmful drug. I will do all in my power to maintain and elevate the standard of my profession and will hold in confidence all personal matters committed to my keeping and all family affairs coming to my knowledge in the practice of my calling. With loyalty will I endeavor to aid the physician in his work and devote myself to the welfare of those committed to my care."

One by one our names were called. I was so excited and even more so when I noticed that it was Mrs. Chamberlain who was handing out the certificates. She was so happy that I had finally become a nurse.

Forty-one years have passed since graduation and I can say with confidence that only God can turn a high school failure into a successful career. We do serve an AMAZING GOD. He can take our nothingness, which we are, and turn it into something, which we are not, for His glory. Therefore, there is no room in our lives for pride, envy, jealousy and strife. It does not matter your culture, your background, your past, your heritage or any other human experience, Jesus has the final say and He will win

in the end. Let us cling to Jesus and to one another and live to praise God and bless others.

God has a plan for our lives, and we will be happiest when we choose the path where He leads us. He can open and close doors for us and when at times we feel abandoned, know that He is already working on a better path of which we know nothing. Looking back, I can truly say that His way is the safest and best. He led my life in a direction I never thought possible, and I am so grateful to Him.

"Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His Providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ." *Steps to Christ*, 70.

"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen" (Ephesians 3:20, 21 NKJV). **LM**

Revella Knight continues to serve others working as a nurse and writes from her home in North West Arkansas.

Death

Clues – KJV

Across

- B14 When we die we return to _____ Psalm 104:29
 C3 These perish the very day you die Psalm 146:4
 D12 We will not have this negative emotion after death Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6
 D18 Even this will die at death Ezekiel 18:4
 E2 The lake of fire gives the wicked their _____ death Revelation 21:8
 F16 In the resurrection some awake to everlasting _____ Daniel 12:2
 G2 Sodom and Gomorrha were burned with _____ (two words) Jude 7
 H12 Those now dead do not have this Ecclesiastes 9:5
 I17 Those who do this not, will be destroyed 2 Thessalonians 1:8, 9
 J8 In the resurrection some awake to everlasting _____ Daniel 12:2
 K2 When Stephen died, he “fell _____” Acts 7:59, 60
 L14 We’ll not be like Jesus until we _____ from death Psalm 17:15
 M6 No one will be immortal until this sounds 1 Corinthians 15:51–53
 N1 No one receives reward until resurrection of these Luke 14:14
 N14 Jesus said death is like this John 11:11–14
 P2 In the destruction of sinners, they will be this Isaiah 1:28
 Q16 This will bring about the resurrection of all dead John 5:28, 29
 R7 In death we will not have any _____ Ecclesiastes 9:10
 S5 Satan’s first lie: you will not _____ Genesis 3:4
 S16 After burning Sodom and Gomorrha became this 2 Peter 2:6

Down

- A9 Jesus said when He comes our reward will be _____ Him Revelation 22:12
 A12 The resurrected dead and living righteous will go to heaven 1 Thessalonians 4:13–17
 B5 The dead know not when their children receive this Job 14:21
 B14 Old Testament dead and buried man still not in heaven Acts 2:29, 34
 B21 Jesus Christ who _____ has immortality 1 Timothy 6:14–16
 C19 We will not have this positive emotion after death Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6
 D2 Even Satan will become this after fire Ezekiel 28:18
 E17 No one will have this in death Ecclesiastes 9:10
 F10 Dust of ground + God’s breath of life = _____ soul Genesis 2:7
 G4 The wicked will suffer _____ separation from God’s presence 2 Thessalonians 1:8, 9
 G15 Jesus: eternal life begins at resurrection in _____ day John 6:40, 54
 I6 When this is gone, we die Psalm 104:29
 J14 The dead cannot do this to God Psalm 115:17
 K16 Death is the result or _____ of sin Romans 6:23
 K20 Jesus will not do this to us until He comes back John 14:3
 L12 The wicked will be burned up and be _____ Malachi 4:1
 N18 The wicked will ultimately do this (forever) Job 20:4–7
 O7 This only will be left of the wicked Psalm 37:20
 P2 We’ll not receive this until Jesus returns 1 Peter 5:4
 R11 The dead know not when their children are “brought _____” Job 14:21

A	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		10	11		13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	A
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Answer Key:

22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
S	S	S	H	S	V	A	S	E	D	I	E	M	S	N							
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Praise Ye the Lord

*“Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord” (Psalm 150:6).
Have any of us duly considered how much we have to be thankful for?
Do we remember that the mercies of the Lord are new every morning
and that His faithfulness faileth not? Do we acknowledge our de-
pendence upon Him and express gratitude for all His favors? On the
contrary, we too often forget that “every good gift and every perfect gift
is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.”*

James 1:17





“

If in the providence of God we are called upon to endure trials, let us accept the cross... Let us trust Him in the darkness as well as in the day.

God is love. He has a care for the creatures He has formed. “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him” (Psalm 103:13). “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God” (1 John 3:1). What a precious privilege is this, that we may be sons and daughters of the Most High, heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. Then let us not mourn and grieve because in this life we are not free from disappointments and afflictions.

If in the providence of God we are called upon to endure trials, let us accept the cross and drink the bitter cup, remembering that it is a Father’s hand that holds it to our lips. Let us trust Him in the darkness as well as in the day. Can we not believe that He will give us everything that is for our good? “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things” (Romans 8:32)? Even in the night of affliction how can we refuse to lift heart and voice in grateful praise, when we remember the love to us expressed by the cross of Calvary?

What a theme for meditation is the sacrifice that Jesus made for lost sinners! “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5). How shall we estimate the blessings thus brought within our reach? Could Jesus have

suffered more? Could He have purchased for us richer blessings? Should it not melt the hardest heart when we remember that for our sakes He left the happiness and glory of heaven and suffered poverty and shame, cruel affliction and a terrible death? Had He not by His death and resurrection opened for us the door of hope, we should have known nothing but the horrors of darkness and the miseries of despair. In our present state, favored and blessed as we are, we cannot realize from what depths we have been rescued. We cannot measure how much deeper our afflictions would have been, how much greater our woes, had not Jesus encircled us with His human arm of sympathy and love, and lifted us up.

We may rejoice in hope. Our Advocate is in the heavenly sanctuary, pleading in our behalf. Through His merits we have pardon and peace. He died that He might wash away our sins, clothe us with His righteousness, and fit us for the society of heaven, where we may dwell in light forever.

Dear brother, dear sister, when Satan would fill your mind with despondency, gloom, and doubt, resist his suggestions. Tell him of the blood of Jesus, that cleanses from all sin. You cannot save yourself from the tempter’s power, but he trembles and flees when the merits of that precious blood are urged. Then will

you not gratefully accept the blessings Jesus bestows? Will you not take the cup of salvation that He presents, and call on the name of the Lord?

Do not show distrust of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Do not for a moment pain the heart of the pitying Saviour by your unbelief. He watches with the most intense interest your progress in the heavenly way; He sees your earnest efforts; He notes your declensions and your recoveries, your hopes and your fears, your conflicts and your victories.

Shall all our devotional exercises consist in asking and receiving? Shall we be always thinking of our wants and never of the benefits we receive? Shall we be recipients of His mercies and never express our gratitude to God, never praise Him for what He has done for us? We do not pray any too much, but we are too sparing of giving thanks. If the loving-kindness of God called forth more thanksgiving and praise, we would have far more power in prayer. We would abound more and more in the love of God and have more bestowed to praise Him for. You who complain that God does not hear your prayers, change your present order and mingle praise with your petitions. When you consider His goodness and mercies you will find that He will consider your wants.

Testimony Treasures, vol. 2, 108–110. **LM**

The Lady With the Lamp

When Florence Nightingale was a very little girl, everyone noticed how kind she was to other people and to animals. Every person and every animal in the village loved her. She made friends with even the shy squirrels.

Near the village in England in which she had her home, there lived an old shepherd named Roger. Roger had a favorite sheep dog called Captain.



One day when Florence was riding with a friend, she saw the shepherd feeding his sheep. But Captain was not there to help him, and the sheep were running about in all directions. Florence stopped to ask the shepherd

what had become of his dog.

"Oh, Miss Florence," he replied, "Cap will never be of any more use to me. He will have to be killed."

"Killed!" Florence exclaimed. "Oh, Roger, how can you say so? What has poor Cap done?"

"He has done nothing," replied Roger; "but a cruel boy threw a stone at him yesterday and broke one of his legs." And the old shepherd wiped away the tears that filled his eyes. "Poor Cap!" he said, "he was as knowing as a human being."

Florence and her friend rode on to the shepherd's cottage. They went in to see the poor dog.

"Poor old Cap!" said Florence gently. The dog began to wag his tail. Then he crawled from under the table and lay down at her feet. She took hold of one of his paws, patted his rough head, and talked to him while she examined the injured leg.

It was very badly swollen, and it hurt him much to have it touched. But though he moaned with pain, he licked the hands that were hurting him, for he knew that it was meant kindly.

"It's only a bad bruise. There are no bones broken," said Florence. "Rest is all Cap needs. He will soon be well again. Plenty of hot water to bathe his leg will ease the pain and help to cure him too."

Florence lighted the fire, got ready some hot water, and began to bathe the poor dog's leg. It was not long before he began to feel less pain. The grateful dog tried to show his thanks by his looks and by wagging his tail.

On their way back they met the old shepherd coming slowly homeward.

"Oh, Roger!" cried Florence, "You are not going to lose poor old Cap. We have found that his leg is not broken after all."

"Well, I am very glad to hear it," said the old man; "and many thanks to you, Miss Florence, for going to see him."

The next morning, Florence was there early to bathe Cap's leg. She found it much better. The next day, she bathed it again, and in two or three days, the old dog was able as before to go with his master and to look after the flock.

This happened many years ago, and that kindhearted little girl grew up to be one of the kindest and bravest of women. She spent her youth in learning how to nurse the sick and how to manage hospitals.

During the Crimean War, the wounded soldiers were very badly off for want of proper care and good hospitals. Florence Nightingale took a band of trained nurses and went away to take care of them. At that time she wrote, "We have four miles of beds not eighteen inches apart. Tomorrow five hundred more wounded men are coming."

It was not long before she could hardly find time for rest or sleep and once, her hard work made her very ill.


After the war was over and the hospitals all closed, and the last sick soldier was on board the train for home, Florence Nightingale quietly returned to her home in England. She wanted to avoid the public demonstrations of the people, so even her own family were not expecting her. The people were disappointed, but they said, "None but the truly great could be so meek and unassuming."

But they could not let her heroic work pass without some expression of their appreciation. So a purse of fifty thousand pounds, or about two hundred fifty thousand dollars, was gathered and presented to her. She was deeply touched.

"I shall treasure your kind thought in my heart forever," she said, "but I do not need the money. Please use it to build a training school for nurses."

With this money, "The Nightingale Home" was built. In it is a beautiful statue of Florence Nightingale. She wears her simple nurse's dress and carries in her hand a tiny lamp, just as she used to do in the hospitals. This is why she has been called "The Lady With the Lamp."

After that, Florence Nightingale did a great deal to improve English hospitals. Her whole life was spent helping the sick, and especially those who were poor.

True Education Series, *Goals*, 43-46. 

Don't Just Feel Ready, Be Ready!

How many have started the week with, “Man, I can’t wait until Friday.” And as each day of the week passes, you become more passionate in the declaration that Friday can’t come soon enough, “I am sooo ready for this week to be over.”

What does it mean to be ready? What about the week’s activities, events or experiences has made you ready?

In American English, *ready* is used as either an adjective or verb.

An example of the word used as an adjective shows that something is all set, in a fit state. Used as a verb it indicates the action of becoming prepared or equipped.

Things may have been tough this week, some bad things happened or you were just overwhelmed and that has made you feel like you are ready for the week to be over. But when we think of spiritual readiness, just because we feel ready, are we ready?

Hebrew 13:21 tells us, “[May the God of peace] ... make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ.”

And “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

You won’t be ready if you don’t get ready. “Suppose that today Christ should appear in the clouds of heaven, who ... would be ready to meet Him? Suppose we should be translated into the kingdom of heaven just as we are. Would we be prepared to unite with the saints of God, to live in harmony with the royal family, the children of the heavenly King? What preparation have you made for the judgment? Have you made your peace with God? Are you laboring together

with God? Are you seeking to help those around you, those in your home, those in your neighborhood, those with whom you come in contact that are not keeping the commandments of God? ... Are we getting ready to meet the King? ...

“If it were possible for us to be admitted into heaven as we are, how many of us would be able to look upon God? How many of us have on the wedding-garment? How many of us are without spot or wrinkle or any such thing? How many of us are worthy to receive the crown of life? ... Position does not make the man. It is Christ formed within that makes a man worthy of receiving the crown of life, that fadeth not away. ...

“Get ready, get ready, get ready. Ye must have a greater preparation than ye now have. ... Sacrifice all to God. Lay all upon His altar—self, property, and all, a living sacrifice. It will take all to enter glory.” *Maranatha*, 98. **LM**

Lord, give us the desire to get ready. Help us to seek to be a people without spot or wrinkle, worthy of the crown of life.



Sometimes we get a letter that is so uplifting that we feel compelled to share it with our readers. Such is the case with one we recently received.

Dear Staff—

Happy Spring! to all of us!! How gracious He is to bring new life for us after the dead of everything in nature of the winter. But more than that, that thru His incredible love, He saw fit to go thru that hideous death of “winter” for our (my) sins and be raised to a new life of spring in our hearts when we completely give our whole selves freely to Him. What incomprehensible love is that!! ...

I pray for all of you and the mission projects all the time. May our Father in Heaven keep everyone of you safe is my prayer.

Love in Christ,

—JA, Colorado

July Sermon of the Month

The Fallen Church

By John J. Grosboll

Sadly, many who are doctrinally pure and enthusiastic when they first join the church, fall away and lose their first love. Only the Holy Spirit can reignite that fire and recover that first love.

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

July 2021

Dear Friend,

Our Mission is to take the three angels messages to the world. Jesus said, “Let your light so shine” (Matthew 5:16). Many people seem to be perplexed about how they can do this since they are neither preachers, teachers, medical workers, nor salesmen. Perhaps the following will give you a few ideas:

“The greater part of our Saviour’s life on earth was spent in patient toil in the carpenter’s shop at Nazareth. Ministering angels attended the Lord of life as He walked side by side with peasants and laborers, unrecognized and unhonored. He was as faithfully fulfilling His mission while working at His humble trade as when He healed the sick or walked upon the storm-tossed waves of Galilee. So in the humblest duties and lowliest positions of life, we may walk and work with Jesus.

“The apostle says, ‘Let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God’ (1 Corinthians 7:24). The businessman may conduct his business in a way that will glorify his Master because of his fidelity. If he is a true follower of Christ he will carry his religion into everything that is done and reveal to men the spirit of Christ. The mechanic may be a diligent and faithful representative of Him who toiled in the lowly walks of life among the hills of Galilee. Everyone who names the name of Christ should so work that others, by seeing his good works, may be led to glorify their Creator and Redeemer.

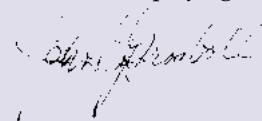
“Many have excused themselves from rendering their gifts to the service of Christ because others were possessed of superior endowments and advantages. The opinion has prevailed that only those who are especially talented are required to consecrate their abilities to the service of God. It has come to be understood by many that talents are given to only a certain favored class to the exclusion of others who of course are not called upon to share in the toils or the rewards. But it is not so represented in the parable. When the master of the house called his servants, he gave to every man *his* work.

“With a loving spirit we may perform life’s humblest duties ‘as to the Lord’ (Colossians 3:23). If the love of God is in the heart, it will be manifested in the life. The sweet savor of Christ will surround us, and our influence will elevate and bless.

“You are not to wait for great occasions or to expect extraordinary abilities before you go to work for God. You need not have a thought of what the world will think of you. If your daily life is a testimony to the purity and sincerity of your faith, and others are convinced that you desire to benefit them, your efforts will not be wholly lost.” *Steps to Christ*, 81–83. [Emphasis author’s.]

The humblest and poorest of the disciples of Jesus can be a blessing to others.

Your brother praying for a finished work,



John J. Grosboll

O Here Are the Reapers

Zambia-Malawi Division

By Pastor Domingo Nunez

Regular readers of *LandMarks* will be familiar with the work of Henry Mwesa, our Bible worker volunteer in Zambia. His outreach efforts are bearing fruit. A recent report from him stated in part, “We as a division in Zambia have been supporting one Bible worker and have a burden to support two more: one from Palabana which is 40km from the city of Lusaka where a congregation is growing after recently being organized.

“Another one is in Kitwe town where massive progress has been witnessed and new members are being added daily to the church and we recently had a baptism.”

A request for \$400 was received to obtain herbs which these two Bible workers/medical missionaries will use to sustain themselves as they labor in the

vineyard. The idea is to order indigenous herbs to sell thereby supporting themselves from the proceeds and continuing to do so from the revolving fund that this venture will create.

Brother Mwesa also reported that the division has been printing *The Sanctuary Made Simple*, a book which has been instrumental in their evangelism. However, their efforts have hit a snag, as the printer drum and fuser light assembly for their Xerox printer has become obsolete. Only one company in Zambia handles Xerox, and the components are extremely expensive. They are currently seeking a way to resolve this problem by trading in their current machine for a more cost effective one.

To assist Brother Mwesa in his work in Zambia, please mark your donations *Zambia*. **LM**



from the
Mission Fields



The Third Sunday *in Santa Cruz*

“Satan succeeded in shutting away from our people, in a great measure, the special power of the Holy Spirit that God longed to impart to them. The enemy prevented them from obtaining that efficiency which might have been theirs in carrying the truth to the world, as the apostles proclaimed it after the day of Pentecost.” *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 1, 130.

To thwart Satan’s efforts to prevent the spreading of the gospel as described above, there is a group of faithful souls in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, who are working together to proclaim the gospel according to the divine commission.



It is encouraging to see the Santa Cruz Free Seventh-day Adventists, especially the youth, working to reach the people of their own city. The third Sunday of each month, the city of Santa Cruz organizes an event in a local park where the people of Santa Cruz gather to socialize. Members of the Santa Cruz Free Seventh-day Adventist Church participate in this event, setting up a table to distribute literature and to teach and preach the gospel.

The gospel is openly preached during these events exhibiting a different theme each month. One such topic was the prophecies of the second chapter of Daniel. The message focused on how the Lord gave Daniel the interpretation of the vision of the times to come and that we are today in the final stage of that vision. The church prepared flyers and brochures regarding the books of Daniel and Revelation, with explanatory images in an understandable version that could be given to the people.

In addition, to attract the attention of the public, the church made a foam copy of the statue with the head of gold, arms and chest of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron and feet a mixture of iron and clay that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream as related to him by Daniel and recorded in Daniel 2. The statue stood 80 inches high and 40 inches wide on a pedestal. It, along with other cardboard graphics, was used to help explain the vision of Daniel 2 to those interested. It was quite a job, but very helpful in allowing the public to achieve a clearer understanding of the prophecies.

Every third Sunday of the month, almost the entire church comes together in teams ready to go out to reach public places in the city of Santa Cruz. There is the girls' team, the boys' team, the youth team and the church team. As you can see in the accompanying photo, they arrive at the park early to set up with the hope of catching the attention of the early-morning joggers. The event starts at 7:30 a.m. and is over at noon. All the

teams then come together to fellowship over lunch at the church.

Pablo, one of the church's deacons, relates an amazing experience with a gentleman in a red shirt who stopped at the table one Sunday. He was so impressed with what he learned that he came to the church the next Sabbath saying, "You are teaching me things I did not know." And now he and Pablo regularly study the Bible together.

Please continue to keep the people of Bolivia and in particular the church in Santa Cruz in your prayers as they work to spread the gospel of Christ to all who will hear. To financially support the work in Bolivia, please mark your donation as *Bolivia*.

"The church of God is made up of many vessels, both large and small. The Lord works through the men and women who are willing to be used. He will bless them in doing the work that has brought blessing to many in the past—the work of seeking to save souls ready to perish." *Pamphlet 078 – Sowing Beside All Waters* (1912), 71. **LM**

The Woodpecker

The woodpecker is a creature that breaks the rules of evolution in such a way that it could not possibly have evolved. Consider these nine unique features that together declare the Creator of woodpeckers.

The first is its industrial-strength beak which was designed to hammer into the hardest of trees. Secondly, its feet have two toes at the front and two in the back. This feature allows it to crawl on a tree all directions and positions. Thirdly, its unique tail feathers are spongy, yet strong and tough and able to spread out and bend so that they can be used, along with its feet, to tripod on a tree and stabilize itself for drilling into wood.

Now you have to ask, why don't woodpeckers have terrible headaches from all the drilling? The answer is the fourth and fifth unique feature. Between the beak and skull is a special cartilage that absorbs the pressure of drilling. The skull is the thickest bone per body weight of any creature and its brain is tightly encased within the skull. In fact, brain surgeons study this anatomy to see how best to prevent brain trauma in humans.

Even with all of these unique features, the woodpecker would still have another problem if it were not for its amazing design. Once the hole is drilled, how does it get the larva out of the tree? Unlike most birds, the woodpecker's tongue does not end at his beak, which brings us to the sixth feature. Its tongue can extend up to ten inches past its beak allowing it to reach the larva, but how does he get it out? On the end of its tongue, the woodpecker has a spear like tip and little barbs that point rearward on the body of the tongue allowing it to literally stab the larva, sinking the barb into it. It also has a little factory,


feature seven, that coats its tongue with a glue-like substance so the larva is held in place until it reaches the beak. To prevent it from swallowing its tongue with the bug, which is glued on, and strangling itself, amazingly feature eight kicks in. Another chemical that is manufactured in its mouth dissolves the glue allowing the bug to be swallowed alone and the woodpecker survives to get another bug.

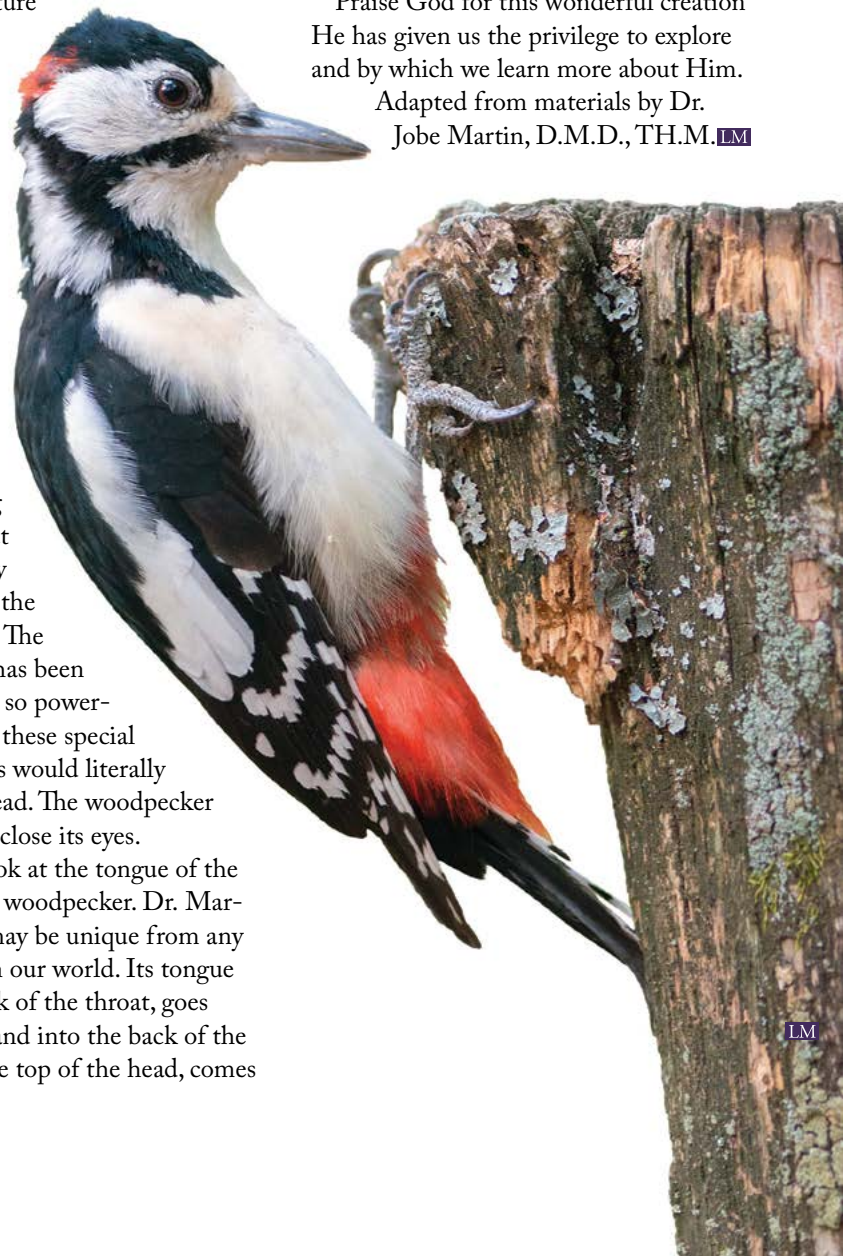
The ninth feature is its eyes and eyelids. Woodpeckers open their eyes with each peck to the tree, focus on the drilling spot, aim, then close their eyes and drill 15 to 16 times a second! Closing its eyes each time allows its especially strong eyelids to protect its eyes from any wood chips and the force of drilling. The drilling impact has been measured and is so powerful that without these special features, the eyes would literally pop out of its head. The woodpecker never forgets to close its eyes.

Lastly, let's look at the tongue of the European green woodpecker. Dr. Martin thinks this may be unique from any other creature in our world. Its tongue starts in the back of the throat, goes down the neck and into the back of the neck, up over the top of the head, comes

out a little hole between the eyes, down into one nostril and then out the beak. Dr. Martin has asked evolutionists how and where this came from. They say it came from another creature, but no other creature has a tongue like this. In reality, they actually have no idea. Dr. Martin believes that God made this woodpecker to challenge the evolutionary community who know that this tongue could not have just evolved.

Praise God for this wonderful creation He has given us the privilege to explore and by which we learn more about Him.

Adapted from materials by Dr. Jobe Martin, D.M.D., TH.M. 



Q:

How Can I Know When Jesus Will Come?

A:

“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.”

Matthew 24:36

The above verse is what Jesus said to His disciples regarding the second coming and He repeated in verses 42–44 that the hour of His coming is unknown to man, “Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

Jesus Himself was very clear on the subject of the time of His second coming. Ellen White writes just as clearly regarding the danger of trying to determine the specific time, be it day, month and/or year, for Jesus’ return. We find one of these very clear statements in *Selected Messages*, Book 1, page 188: “Again and again have I been warned in regard to time setting. There will *never again* be a message for the people of God that will be based on time. *We are not to know*

the definite time either for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit or for the coming of Christ.” [Emphasis supplied.]

Here is what matters:

Are you in a saving relationship with Jesus Christ, today? God decides the number of heartbeats a man has, as well as the number of days allotted to him. And when that point has been reached, there is no more time. Do you want to know when Christ will come? For me, for you, it could be today. It will be the last day of your life on this earth.

That is why Ellen White says, “I was pointed to the remnant on the earth. The angel said to them ... ‘Get ready, get ready, get ready. Ye must have a greater preparation than ye now have. ... Sacrifice all to God. Lay all upon His altar—self, property, and all, a living sacrifice. It will take all to enter glory.’”

“Christ is coming with power and great glory. He is coming with His own glory and with the glory of the Father. ... To His faithful followers Christ has been a daily companion and familiar friend. They have lived in close contact, in constant communion with God. ... They are prepared for the communion of heaven; for they have heaven in their hearts.

“If you are right with God today, you are ready if Christ should come today.”

Maranatha, 98. **LM**



Early Warning Signs of a Stroke

Every 40 seconds – according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), this is how often someone in America has a stroke. At least 80 percent of these strokes are ischemic, which means an area of the brain dies after circulation of blood and oxygen to that area becomes blocked, either due to a clot or narrowing of blood vessels.



“

Someone dies as a result of a stroke every four minutes in the United States.

Someone dies as a result of a stroke every four minutes in the United States of America. Understanding stroke causes and risk factors is paramount for prevention. But when stroke prevention won't do and the unthinkable occurs, seek medical help ASAP ... and research suggests there may be warning signs of an impending stroke hours or days in advance.

Many people have heard of the acronym **BE FAST** as a way to remember the sudden warning signs of stroke. The earlier a stroke victim receives medical care, the better chances they have of recovery, so *everyone* should be aware of these warning symptoms:

- **B**alance difficulties
- **E**ye blindness (sometimes accompanied by a severe headache)
- **F**ace drooping
- **A**rm or leg weakness
- **S**peech and communication problems (words are garbled or slurred)
- **T**ime (call 911)

Amazingly, research published in 2005 by the *American Academy of Neurology* found that these warning signs may present in some ischemic stroke sufferers up to a *week* before their actual stroke occurs!

The phenomenon is due to something known as a transient ischemic attack, or TIA. TIAs are considered “mini-strokes” because they can lead to similar symptoms, but only last about five minutes and cause no permanent injury to the brain.

Researchers of the study, published in the peer-reviewed journal *Neurology*, determined that out of 2,400 stroke sufferers, over one in five had TIAs *before* their stroke actually happened. In most cases, the mini-strokes happened within a week prior.

Strokes are incredibly common, and with the aging of our population many health experts expect we will only see more people suffer their life-changing effects in the future. The good news, however, is that many of the major stroke causes are preventable.

Here are five key things you can do, according to the CDC and other organizations, for reducing your risk of stroke:

1. **Get enough sleep – anywhere from 7 to 9 hours per night on average.** One study found that getting fewer than six hours of sleep per night *significantly* increases a person's risk of stroke and heart disease.
2. **Maintain a healthy weight.**
3. **Don't smoke.** Someone who smokes 20 cigarettes per day is six times more likely to have a stroke than someone who doesn't smoke at all, according to the UK's Stroke Association.
4. **Stay physically active.** Regular exercise is considered an independent risk factor of stroke, but it also reduces other stroke causes such as obesity, high blood pressure, and chronic stress.
5. **Maintain a healthy diet.** Avoid processed foods, eating plenty of fruits and veggies.

In addition, many integrative health-care providers emphasize the importance of increasing your intake of antioxidants like, vitamin C to protect the health of your circulation.

Excerpts from www.naturalhealth365.com/warning-signs-stroke-3572.html **LM**



Have Mercy

By John J. Grosboll

Matthew 5:7, gives us the fifth step in the ladder of spiritual progress leading a person to the kingdom of heaven. Jesus said, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” Another translation reads, “Blessed are the compassionate, for they shall receive compassion.” Of all the beatitudes, this is one that causes us to search our hearts. How many times have I made cutting criticisms of someone? How many times have I passed prejudiced judgments before I had all the facts? How many times have I said or done something that has resulted in wounding somebody else? When we think about it, the prayer of the tax collector seems very appropriate. He said, “O God, be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13, *last part*)! But the Bible makes it abundantly clear that there is a certain kind of person who will not be allowed any mercy in the day of judgment.

Without the experience of the first four steps it will be impossible for a person to experience the fifth step, because no person can really be compassionate in his dealings with others until he has first recognized his own spiritual destitution, mourned over his sins, become meek and humble in heart causing him to hunger and thirst for a righteousness outside of himself, which he cannot generate. Only when a person has experienced these things is he able to be compassionate or merciful to others who may be stumbling and making mistakes like himself.

Those who are spiritually blind do not understand their condition or need and they tend to become more unmerciful to those with whom they are dealing. The Pharisees in Jesus' time were destitute of mercy and sympathy because they were proud in spirit. Remember, the beatitudes begin with the declaration, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3).

Having themselves never been humbled by a recognition of their own spiritual poverty, the Pharisees looked with contempt and disdain upon the weaknesses of others. Since they believed that they were perfect (Luke 18), they were harsh and even cruel in dealing with the imperfections of others. This spirit is sure evidence of what the Bible calls a carnal or fleshly mind, an unregenerate heart.

This spirit is characteristic of people who have not been born again for the spirit of Phariseeism is not something foreign to us, but is the natural spirit of human nature. In fact, this same spirit controls everyone who has not been made a new creature and a partaker of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:3, 4). However, there are given to us promises, "... exceedingly great and precious promises" (verse 4) so that we might be partakers of the divine nature.

If we are unconverted, if we have the spirit of the Pharisees, then we will use human standards to judge all who



*Those
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others.*

fail to come up to the standard that we have made. This spirit creates an atmosphere of selfish and narrow criticism and causes men to become self-centered judges and petty spies. Their own ideas and attainments are made the standard of morality by which they judge and condemn their fellow men who are not coming up to the standard that they have set.

If we are unmerciful, then we cannot obtain mercy ourselves. Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." In this beatitude, there is restated by Jesus, not something new, but an old truth, an eternal and unchanging law. It is everywhere and always operative in nature and in human society. It has been called the self-acting law of retribution or, in simple language, "we get what we give." What we give to others eventually comes back in full measure to us. Jesus stated this truth to Peter on the night of His betrayal. Notice in Matthew 26:52: "But Jesus said to him, 'Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.'" If you deal the sword to others, you will receive the sword from others.

How accurately this has been fulfilled in the history of mankind. The great

kingdoms of the past have perished by the very weapons they used against others. Those who showed no mercy, received no mercy. Proverbs 18:24 says, "A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother."

If I am friendly to others, I will have friends in return. But if I give out enmity to others, I will receive enmity in return. Friendship bestowed upon others brings a reward in friendship. But if I deal out captivity, the sword, death to others, the same will return to me. It's restated again, many times in the Bible. Revelation 13:10 says, "He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints."

Proverbs 11:25, literal translation, says, "The liberal soul [one who has a giving spirit] shall be made fat: and he that waters shall also be watered himself." As Jesus said, even if you only give a cup of cold water to someone, you are not going to lose a reward. What you give to someone else will eventually come back to you.

A stingy person will eventually receive back in the same measure that they give. Jesus said, "Give, and it will be given

unto you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you” (Luke 6:38).

This is a natural, a self-operating law even in this life. And it is the law by which God will measure the reward that will be given to His servants. “And, behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work” (Revelation 22:12). Jesus said that you will be rewarded for what you work out here, whether good or bad (Matthew 16). The apostle Paul stated the same thing in 2 Corinthians 5:10. Jesus further developed this principle in Matthew 7:12, calling it the golden rule. It is the greatest of all codes of ethics and the basic principle of all true courtesy and genuine culture. Jesus said, “Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.” If we are merciful to others, we will receive mercy. If we retaliate, we will receive retaliation. If we are unjust with others, we will receive injustice ourselves. If we impart evil to others, that evil will return to us again.

Jesus also stated the golden rule in the negative when He said, “Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the same measure you use, it will be measured back to you” (Matthew 7:1, 2).

To be merciful is to show a person compassion, forgiveness, and forbearance. The merciful person does not nurse grudges nor does he brood over wrongs or show a revengeful spirit. He does not go about with a microscope hunting to find the mistake or the flaw in someone else’s character when he knows he has flaws in his own character. If we render judgment before evidence, then we can be sure that we will receive the same kind of judgment in return. In fact, prejudice is simply an abbreviated form for pre-judgment. Pre-judgment is the result

of prejudice. This instruction regarding judgment is more evident in the principles of the fifth beatitude when we read Luke 6:36, 37, “Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.”

Mercy includes having a spirit of forgiveness. In fact, this is so important that Jesus said, “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 6:14, 15).

To receive mercy and forgiveness from God, I must have the same spirit toward those who have injured me. This law of reciprocity is stated in different ways in several places in the Bible. Paul says, “Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God” (Romans 2:1–3)?

Jesus illustrated this in a very striking parable that is hard for many people to read and accept. He said, “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:15–20).

“

*Blessed are the merciful,
for they shall obtain mercy.*

Matthew 5:7

Jesus gave His disciples explicit instructions about how they were to deal with someone who was sinning against them. They were to go directly to the person who had sinned against them and talk to them about it in an effort to resolve the matter. If the matter could not be resolved, then they were to take two or three others and talk to this person about the matter that was disturbing the whole church. If they would not listen to them, then the third step was to “tell it to the church.” The church then needs to labor with the brother or sister, but if they will not listen to the church at large and persist in living a sinful life, then let them live outside the church. As Peter was listening to this, he thought, if my brother sins against me, how many times should I forgive him?

In Jesus’ day the Jewish leaders had rules about how many times you needed to forgive someone. Some thought that three times was plenty. Peter thought that he would be very liberal and very forgiving in spirit. The Bible says, “Then Peter came to Him and said, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?’” (verse 21)? Surely, if my brother hasn’t ceased to sin against me after forgiving him seven times, then I shouldn’t have to forgive him anymore, should I?

In response to that request, “Jesus said, ‘I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents’” (verses 22–24).

This person did not have enough money to pay his debt. The Bible says, “But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold [into slavery] with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, ‘Master, have



patience with me, and I will pay you all’” (verses 25, 26). Now actually, he never would be able to pay that big a debt and the master knew it.

And so it says, “Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii [that is, just a few dollars]; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’ So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ And he would not, but went and threw him into prison” (verses 27–30).

So this man was thrown into debtor’s prison until he should pay the debt. “So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’ And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses” (verses 31–35).

You see, if we do not forgive, then we cannot be forgiven. We must realize just how much we have been forgiven. As a result of my sins, Jesus Christ went to the cross of Calvary. That was the price that had to be paid to cancel our debt of sin; it is a price that we cannot pay. The only way that we could pay this debt is if we were to die eternally and never wake up. But to make it possible for us to enter the gates of paradise and not have to die eternally, Jesus Christ went to the cross of Calvary, to pay the price in our behalf and forgive our debt.

And, after having done that, if we do not forgive and exercise mercy toward our fellow servant, then Jesus said, our heavenly Father will not have mercy upon us, either. The Bible is very clear that the Lord is very merciful, even to His enemies because He delights in mercy (Micah 7:18). James 5:11 says, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.

O friend, if you and I want to be forgiven, we must become merciful people ourselves, because the Bible says in James 2:13, that “judgment will be without mercy upon him who has shown no mercy.” **LM**

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Can We Truly Be Free?

By Judy Rebarcek

America! Prophecy foretold that this country would be established, a place where the ideal of freedom could exist. Freedom: the “power or right to act, speak or think” what you believe. It is the absence of subjection to a foreign or oppressive government, the state of not being a slave, but instead being unrestricted in what you believe, where and how you worship, what you love, where you work, basically to engage in any activity that does not violate the laws of the land. These rights are guaranteed to us as citizens by the Constitution of the United States.

The Constitution also provides for the establishment of justice, common defense, the promotion of the general welfare, to insure domestic tranquility and secure the blessings of liberty. The Declaration of Independence states that all men are created equal under God and given certain rights by Him including the assurance of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

I think, though, we can agree that this hasn’t always happened. One has only to look around today to see the hatred, distrust, abuse, unfairness and violence, all in the name of freedom. People everywhere ask why is it this way? Why can we not find a way to live together in harmony? I’m not going to wax political here, but let’s talk about why this country and the world are the way they are.

I want to talk about spiritual freedom because without that, we truly are not free. We find this additional definition of freedom in the dictionary as “the power of self-determination attributed to the will.” The Bible also talks about the exercise of the will.

Sin is what keeps us from being free. And if we do not exercise our will to do what is right, then we condemn ourselves to be slaves of sin. Isn't it interesting that as bad as things have been in this world for its entire history, and they get worse day by day, many will still choose to continue in sin.

"Sin has degraded and corrupted the human family, but Christ did not leave men to perish in their degradation. ..." *Pamphlet PH078*, 54

The Bible tells us there is only one way to be truly free. This can be found in many Scriptures, John 8:32: "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Romans 8:2: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." Also "And I will walk at liberty, for I seek Your precepts" (Psalm 119:45).

Martin Luther said to John Eck, "Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason – I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other – **my conscience is captive to the word of God.** I cannot and I will not recant anything, for **to go against conscience is neither right nor safe.**" *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* by Roland H. Bainton.

To be truly free, I must submit my will, my desires, all of myself to God. If I do not, then I remain a slave to my own nature, a slave to the one who then has power over me.

"The tempter has no power to control the will or to force the soul to sin." *The Faith I Live By*, 327.

"In no case can Satan obtain dominion over the thoughts, words, and actions, unless we voluntarily open the door and invite him to enter." *The Adventist Home*, 202.

"The tempter can never compel us to do evil. He cannot control minds unless they are yielded to his control." *The Desire of Ages*, 125.

"Christ is our tower of strength, and **Satan can have no power over the soul** that walks with God in humility of mind. The promise, 'Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me' (Isaiah 27:5). In Christ there is perfect and complete help for every tempted soul." *My Life Today*, 316.

"Every soul that refuses to give himself to God is under the control of another power. He is not his own. **He may talk of freedom, but he is in the most abject slavery.** He is not allowed to see the beauty of truth, for his mind is under the control of Satan. While he flatters himself that he is following the dictates of his own judgment, he obeys the will of the prince of darkness. Christ came to break the shackles of sin-slavery from every soul. 'If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed' (John 8:36). 'The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus sets us free from the law of sin and death' (Romans 8:22).

"In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, **man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself.** True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine

energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God.

"**The only condition upon which the freedom of man is possible is that of becoming one with Christ.**" *The Desire of Ages*, 466.

I have written elsewhere that the reason the world is as it is and has been for so long is because mankind and the universe ultimately must see the heinousness of sin so that no one will want to sin anymore.

That is true, but more importantly, sin and the terrible condition

of the world has gone on for so long because God is preparing a people. Anyone who will accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour, who will submit fully to Him will be a part of this people. He has given and continues to give to every man, woman and child in every generation the opportunity to choose to turn away from sinning to become one with Him.

Stand fast in the liberty which Christ has made possible for us and do not entangle yourself in the yoke of sin any longer (Galatians 5:1). Instead rejoice in this freedom, having been set free from sin, "and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life" (Romans 6:22).

"Spiritual freedom will come to those who consecrate themselves unreservedly. ... The saving influence of truth will sanctify the soul of the receiver." *Letter 108, March 18, 1907, to "Our Brethren in Graysville, Tennessee."*

"Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Corinthians 3:17). [All emphasis supplied.] **LM**

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We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal.

The Declaration of Independence of the United States

August 1 – 7, 2021

Occupation and Service

Key Text

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest” (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

Study Help: *Education*, 262–271.

Introduction

“Real happiness is found only in being good and doing good. The purest, highest enjoyment comes to those who faithfully fulfill their appointed duties. No honest work is degrading.”
The Youth’s Instructor, December 5, 1901.

Sunday

1 CHOOSING AN OCCUPATION

1.a. What is the purpose of a useful occupation? 2 Thessalonians 3:11, 12.

Note: “The things of earth are more closely connected with heaven and are more directly under the supervision of Christ than many realize. All right inventions and improvements have their source in Him who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working. The skillful touch of the physician’s hand, his power and nerve and muscle, his knowledge of the delicate mechanism of the body, is the wisdom of divine power, to be used in behalf of the suffering. The skill with which the carpenter uses his tools, the strength with which the blacksmith makes the anvil ring, come from God. Whatever we do, wherever we are placed, He desires to control our minds, that we may do perfect work.” *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 277.

1.b. What does the Bible teach about idleness? Proverbs 6:6–11; 2 Thessalonians 3:10.

Note: “One of the surest safeguards against evil is useful occupation, while idleness is one of the greatest curses; for vice, crime, and poverty follow in its wake. Those who are always busy, who go cheerfully about their daily tasks, are the useful members of society.” *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 275.

Monday

2 AN ACCEPTABLE SERVICE

2.a. How do our capabilities determine our place in life? Give examples. Matthew 25:14, 30.

Note: “As regards life’s possibilities, who is capable of deciding what is great and what is small? How many a worker in the lowly places of life, by setting on foot agencies for the blessing of the world, has achieved results that kings might envy! ...

“The specific place appointed us in life is determined by our capabilities. Not all reach the same development or do with equal efficiency the same work. God does not expect the hyssop to attain the proportions of the cedar, or the olive the height of the stately palm. But each should aim just as high as the union of human with divine power makes it possible for him to reach.

“Many do not become what they might, because they do not put forth the power that is in them. They do not, as they might, lay hold on divine strength. Many are diverted from the line in which they might reach the truest success. Seeking greater honor or a more pleasing task, they attempt something for which they are not fitted. Many a man whose talents are adapted for some other calling, is ambitious to enter a profession; and he who might have been successful as a farmer, an artisan, or a nurse, fills inadequately the position of a minister, a lawyer, or a physician. There are others, again, who might have filled a responsible calling, but who, for want of energy, application, or perseverance, content themselves with an easier place.

“We need to follow more closely God’s plan of life. To do our best in the work that lies nearest, to commit our ways to God, and to watch for the indications of His providence—these are rules that ensure safe guidance in the choice of an occupation.” *Education*, 266, 267.

2.b. Whatever our talents and calling, what is an important aspect of our lifework? Hebrews 6:10; Galatians 6:9, 10.

Note: “Pure, sanctified love, such love as was expressed in Christ’s lifework, is as a sacred perfume. Like Mary’s broken box of ointment, it fills the whole house with fragrance.” *Testimonies*, vol. 6, 84.

Tuesday

3 WORK ETHICS

3.a. What should be our goal with reference to our work? 1 Corinthians 3:12–14; 2 Thessalonians 2:17; Ephesians 6:6–8.

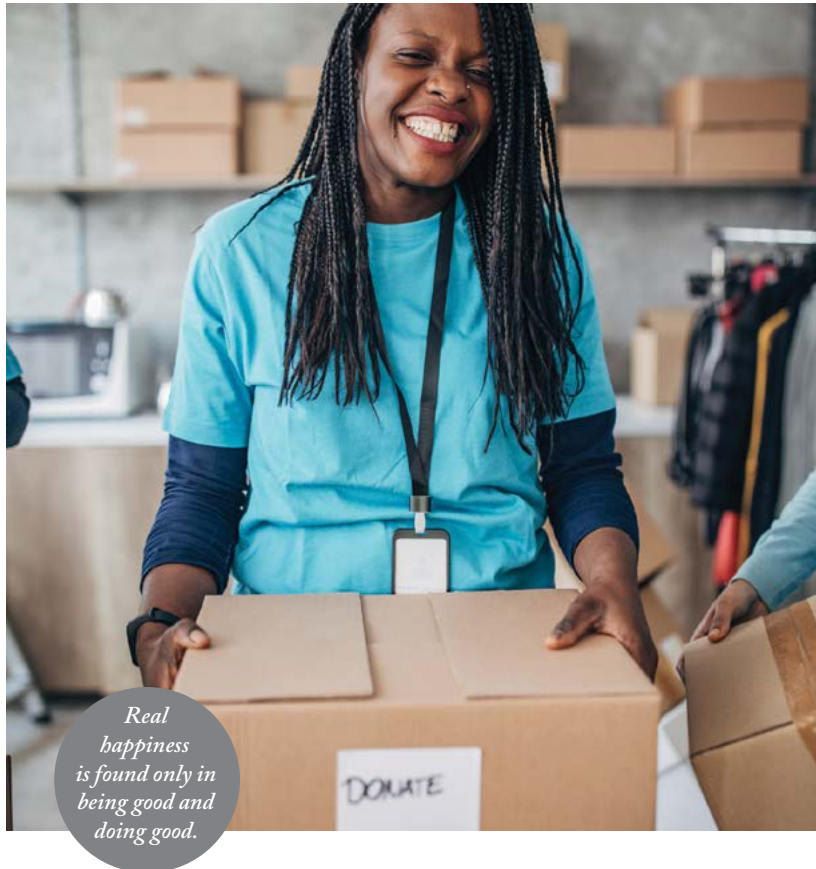
3.b. What is the Christian’s work ethic? Colossians 3:22–24.

Note: “Practical religion is to be carried into the lowly duties of daily life. The greatest qualification for any man is to obey implicitly the word of the Lord.

“Because they are not connected with some directly religious work, many feel that their lives are useless; that they are doing nothing for the advancement of God’s kingdom. But this is a mistake. If their work is that which someone must do, they should not accuse themselves of uselessness in the great household of God. The humblest duties are not to be ignored. Any honest work is a blessing, and faithfulness in it may prove a training for higher trusts.

“However lowly, any work done for God with a full surrender of self is as acceptable to Him as the highest service. No offering is small that is given with true-heartedness and gladness of soul.

“Wherever we may be, Christ bids us take up the duty that presents itself. If this is in the home, take hold willingly and earnestly to make home a pleasant place. If you are a mother, train your children for Christ. This is as verily a work for God as is that of the minister in the pulpit. If your duty is in the kitchen, seek to be a perfect cook. Prepare food that will be healthful, nourishing, and appetizing. And as you employ the best ingredients in preparing food remember that you are to give your mind the best thoughts. If it is your work to till the soil or to engage in any other trade or occupation, make



a success of the present duty. Put your mind on what you are doing. In all your work represent Christ. Do as He would do in your place.

“However small your talent, God has a place for it. That one talent, wisely used, will accomplish its appointed work. By faithfulness in little duties, we are to work on the plan of addition, and God will work for us on the plan of multiplication. These littles will become the most precious influences in His work.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 359, 360.

Wednesday

4 THE MOST IMPORTANT WORK

4.a. What is the highest work in which a Christian can engage? Matthew 28:19, 20; Psalm 96:3.

Note: “The work above all work—the business above all others which should draw and engage the energies of the soul—is the work of saving souls for whom Christ has died. Make this

the main, the important work of your life. Make it your special life-work. Cooperate with Christ in this grand and noble work, and become home and foreign missionaries. Be ready and efficient to work at home or in far-off climes for the saving of souls. Work the works of God, and demonstrate your faith in your Saviour by toiling for others. O that young and old were thoroughly converted to God, and would take up the duty that lies next them, and work as they have opportunity, becoming laborers together with God! Should this come to pass, multitudes of voices would show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvelous light." *The Youth's Instructor*, May 4, 1893.

"Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary. He who drinks of the living water becomes a fountain of life. The receiver becomes a giver. The grace of Christ in the soul is like a spring in the desert, welling up to refresh all, and making those who are ready to perish eager to drink of the water of life." *The Desire of Ages*, 195.

4.b. Why is the missionary full of joy at his or her labor?
 Luke 15:6, 7; Psalm 51:12, 13.

Note: "The conversion of souls to God is the greatest, the noblest work in which human beings can have a part. In this work are revealed God's power, His holiness, His forbearance, and His unbounded love. Every true conversion glorifies Him and causes the angels to break forth into singing." *Testimonies*, vol. 7, 52.

"We can have no higher joy than to be laborers together with God, rescuing souls from the slavery of sin; and upbuilding the kingdom of Christ. This joy is Christ's joy, and every soul who partakes of it has his joy full. Again and again we may drink of this fountain of joy, and rejoice in it, knowing that no other joy can bear any comparison to it." *The Review and Herald*, February 13, 1894.

Thursday

5 OTHER OCCUPATIONS

5.a. How can common labor extend the work of saving souls? Ephesians 4:28; 1 Corinthians 15:58.

- 1) **Medical Work.** "There is no missionary field more important than that occupied by the faithful, God-fearing physician." *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 448.
- 2) **Business.** "There is need of businessmen who will weave the grand principles of truth into all their transactions. And their talents should be perfected by most thorough study and training. ... He [Daniel] was a sample of what every businessman may be." *Christ's Object Lessons*, 350, 351.
- 3) **Teachers.** "Teachers are needed, especially for the children, who are calm and kind, manifesting forbearance and love for the very ones who most need it." *Testimonies*, vol. 6, 201.
- 4) **Singers.** "Those who have the gift of song are needed. Song is one of the most effective means of impressing spiritual truth upon the heart." *The Review and Herald*, June 6, 1912.
- 5) **Other Employment.** "Real happiness is found only in being good and doing good. The purest, highest enjoyment comes to those who faithfully fulfill their appointed duties. No honest work is degrading." *The Youth's Instructor*, December 5, 1901.

5.b. Does God condemn wealth honestly gained? Deuteronomy 8:18.

Note: "The Bible does not condemn the rich man because he is rich; it does not declare the acquisition of wealth to be a sin, nor does it say that money is the root of all evil. On the contrary, the Scriptures state that it is God who gives the power to get wealth. And this ability is a precious talent if consecrated to God and employed to advance His cause. The Bible does not condemn genius or art; for these come of the wisdom which God gives. We cannot make the heart purer or holier by clothing the body in sackcloth, or depriving the home of all that ministers to comfort, taste, or convenience." *Counsels on Stewardship*, 138.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 How can we benefit from useful labor?
- 2 What factors should influence our choice of occupation?
- 3 How can one use his or her occupation as a blessing?
- 4 In what lifework can we all have a taste? Why is it such a delight?
- 5 Give some examples of wonderful opportunities for soul-saving.

August 8 – 14, 2021

Get Rich Schemes

Key Text

“A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent” (Proverbs 28:20).

Study Help: *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 225, 226.

Introduction

“All the advantages which God has given are His means to throw ardor into the spirit, zeal into effort, and vigor into the carrying out of His holy will.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 360.

Sunday

1 GET-RICH-QUICK

1.a. What will be the result of haste to acquire means?
Proverbs 21:5.

Note: “The spirit of gain-getting, of making haste to be rich, of this all-absorbing worldliness, is painfully contradictory to our faith and doctrines.” *Counsels on Stewardship*, 231, 232.

1.b. What is the blessing in waiting patiently? Psalm 37:7;
1 Peter 2:20.

Note: “Satan watches the peculiar, selfish, covetous temperament of some who profess the truth, and he will tempt them by throwing prosperity in their path, offering them the riches of earth. He knows that if they do not overcome their natural temperament, they will stumble and fall by loving mammon, worshiping their idol. Satan’s object is often accomplished. The strong love of the world overcomes, or swallows up, the love

of the truth. The kingdoms of the world are offered them, and they eagerly grasp their treasure and think they are wonderfully prospered. Satan triumphs because his plan has succeeded. They have given up the love of God for the love of the world.” *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 142.

Monday

2 RICHES THROUGH WISE LABOR AND MANAGEMENT

2.a. Identify wise principles of management and labor in earning and providing for family means. Proverbs 27:23; 28:8; 31:16, 24.

Note: “Many times, when the Lord has opened the way for brethren to handle their means to advance His cause, the agents of Satan have presented some enterprise by which they were positive the brethren could double their means. They take the bait; their money is invested, and the cause, and frequently themselves, never receive a dollar.” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 154.

“Every movement ... which comes in to excite the desire to get riches quickly by speculation, takes the minds of the people away from the most solemn truths that ever were given to mortals. There may be encouraging prospects for a time, but the end of the matter is *failure*. The Lord endorses no such movements. If this work is sanctioned, many would be attracted by these speculative schemes that could not in any other way be led away from the work of presenting the solemn truths that must be given to the people at this time.” *Counsels on Stewardship*, 234, 235. [Emphasis author’s.]

“Work is a blessing, not a curse. Diligent labor keeps many, young and old, from the snares of him who ‘finds some mischief still for idle hands to do.’ Let no one be ashamed of work; for honest toil is ennobling. While the hands are engaged in the most common tasks, the mind may be filled with high and holy thoughts.” *The Youth’s Instructor*, February 27, 1902.

2.b. What is the problem of engaging in speculative ventures? Proverbs 27:20.

Note: “It is a dangerous experiment for our people to engage in speculation. They thereby place themselves on the enemy’s ground, subject to great temptations, disappointments, trials, and losses. Then comes a feverish unrest, a longing desire to obtain means more rapidly than present circumstances will admit. Their surroundings are accordingly changed, in hope of making more money. But frequently their expectations are not realized, and they become discouraged and go backward rather than forward. ... They are backsliding from God.” *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 617.

Tuesday

3 KNOW THE ENEMY’S STRATEGY

3.a. Even in the fast-paced era in which we live, what does God mercifully provide—and why? Ecclesiastes 3:1.

Note: “The value of time is beyond computation. Christ regarded every moment as precious, and it is thus that we should regard it. Life is too short to be trifled away. We have but a few days of probation in which to prepare for eternity. We have no time to waste, no time to devote to selfish pleasure, no time for the indulgence of sin.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 342.

3.b. What factors should we take into consideration as we plan our use of time? James 4:13–15.

3.c. In all things, why is it important to be sober and vigilant? 1 Peter 5:8.

Note: “We have no time to lose. The powers of darkness are working with intense energy, and with stealthy tread Satan is advancing to take those who are now asleep, as a wolf taking his prey. We have warnings now which we may give, a work now which we may do, but soon it will be more difficult than we imagine. God help us to keep in the channel of light, to work with our eyes fastened upon our Leader, and patiently, perseveringly press on till the victory is gained.” *The Review and Herald*, November 12, 1914.

3.d. What does Inspiration teach about the struggle before us? Ephesians 6:12; Matthew 24:12, 13.

Note: “With intensified zeal and energy we are to carry forward the work of the Lord till the close of time.” *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 548.

Wednesday

4 BE USEFUL

4.a. What should we do with the talents entrusted to us? Luke 19:13.

Note: “The Lord bids us all, ‘Occupy till I come’ (Luke 19:13). By His own wisdom He has given us direction for the use of His gifts. The talents of speech, memory, influence, property, are to accumulate for the glory of God and the advancement of His kingdom. He will bless the right use of His gifts.” *Counsels on Stewardship*, 116.

“However large, however small the possessions of any individual, let him remember that it is his only in trust. For his strength, skill, time, talents, opportunities, and means, he must render an account to God. This is an individual work; God gives to us, that we may become like Him, generous, noble, beneficent, by giving to others. Those who, forgetful of their divine mission, seek only to save or to spend in the indulgence of pride or selfishness, may secure the gains and pleasures of this world; but in God’s sight, estimated by their spiritual attainments, they are poor, wretched, miserable, blind, naked.



It is
a dangerous
experiment for our
people to engage in
speculation. They thereby
place themselves on the
enemy's ground.

“When rightly employed, wealth becomes a golden bond of gratitude and affection between man and his fellow-men, and a strong tie to bind his affections to his Redeemer.” *The Review and Herald*, May 16, 1882.

**4.b. What can we learn from the experience of Solomon?
Ecclesiastes 2:10, 11.**

Note: “We must turn away from a thousand topics that invite attention. There are matters that consume time and arouse inquiry, but end in nothing. The highest interests demand the close attention and energy that are so often given to comparatively insignificant things.” *The Ministry of Healing*, 456.

“The energy now concentrated on cheap, perishable goods should be enlisted in the work that is to enlighten the world. Let every energy God has given be used in the work which bears with it the blessed satisfaction that it is for time and for eternity.” *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 6, 267.

“Let none waste time in deploring the scantiness of their visible resources. The outward appearance may be unpromising, but energy and trust in God will develop resources.” *Prophets and Kings*, 243.

Thursday

5 A PURCHASED POSSESSION

5.a. How is the attitude of the rich and foolish man with the barns a warning for us? Luke 12:16–21.

Note: “There is a sad withholding from God on the part of His professed people. The means and efforts that should be given to Christ are devoted to self-pleasing. God is robbed of time, money, and service. Self-love, self-gratification, exclude the love of Jesus from the soul, and this is why there is not in the church greater zeal and more fervent love for Him who first loved us. So many indulge selfish ease, while souls for whom Christ died are perishing.” *The Signs of the Times*, December 22, 1890.

**5.b. When considering the price paid for our redemption, what should always remain foremost in our mind?
1 Corinthians 3:23; 6:20.**

Note: “Whether or not we give mind, soul, and strength to God, it all belongs to Him. God speaks to each human being, saying: ‘I have a claim on you. Give me your zeal, your capabilities, your energy, your means.’ He has a right to ask this; for we are His, redeemed by His boundless love and by the agony of the cross of Calvary from the service of sin. On no account are we to devote our powers to self-serving. Day by day we are to return to the Lord that which He has entrusted to us.” *The Signs of the Times*, January 2, 1901.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 What can be the result of participating in get-rich-quick schemes?
- 2 How should we gain our wealth?
- 3 What should give us incentive to work for Christ?
- 4 Name some ways by which we can be more faithful stewards of our finances.
- 5 What is too often excluding the love of Christ from our hearts?

August 15 – 21, 2021

Stewardship as a Talent

Key Text

“His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Matthew 25:23).

Study Help: *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, 165–170.

Introduction

“God has committed to each of us sacred trusts, for which He holds us accountable. It is His purpose that we so educate the mind as to be able to exercise the talents He has given us in such a manner as to accomplish the greatest good and reflect the glory to the Giver.” *Testimonies*, vol. 3, 32.

Sunday

1 GOD’S GIFTS

1.a. What does the Lord Himself give to every faithful steward? 1 Corinthians 12:8–11.

Note: “The talents that Christ entrusts to His church represent especially the gifts and blessings imparted by the Holy Spirit. [1 Corinthians 12:8–11 quoted.] All men do not receive the same gifts, but to every servant of the Master some gift of the Spirit is promised.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 327.

1.b. What does the Giver expect from His stewards? Luke 19:23.

Note: “God bestows various talents and gifts upon men, not that they may lie useless, nor that they may be employed in amusements or selfish gratification, but that they may be a blessing to others by enabling men to do earnest, self-sacrificing missionary work. God grants man time for the purpose of promoting His glory.” *The Youth’s Instructor*, November 6, 1902.

“Our heavenly Father requires no more nor less than He has given us ability to do. He lays upon His servants no burdens that they are not able to bear. ‘He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust’ (Psalm 103:14). All that He claims from us we through divine grace can render.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 362.

Monday

2 DEVELOPING YOUR TALENTS (I)

2.a. How should faithful stewards find out, develop, and use their talents? Proverbs 1:7; 2:3–9; James 1:5.

Note: “Many apparently unpromising youth are richly endowed with talents that are put to no use. Their faculties lie hidden because of a lack of discernment on the part of their educators. In many a boy or girl outwardly as unattractive as a rough-hewn stone, may be found precious material that will stand the test of heat and storm and pressure. The true educator, keeping in view what his pupils may become, will recognize the value of the material upon which he is working.” *Education*, 232.

“God has a great work to be done in a short time. He has committed to the young talents of intellect, time, and means, and He holds them responsible for the use they make of these good gifts. He calls upon them to come to the front, to resist the corrupting, bewitching influences of this fast age, and to become qualified to labor in His cause. They cannot become fitted for usefulness without putting heart and energy into the work of preparation.” *The Youth’s Instructor*, May 7, 1884.

2.b. How are talents increased? 2 Corinthians 9:6.



God has committed to each of us sacred trusts, for which He holds us accountable.

Note: “Talents used are talents multiplied. Success is not the result of chance or of destiny; it is the outworking of God’s own providence, the reward of faith and discretion, of virtue and persevering effort. The Lord desires us to use every gift we have; and if we do this, we shall have greater gifts to use.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 353.

“Some of the youth have been diligent and persevering, and they are now making their mark, and are occupying important positions in the cause of God. We often hear persons speak of the talents and ability of these youth as though God had bestowed upon them special gifts; but this is a mistake. It is the use we make of the talents given us, that makes us strong. There are many who might be well qualified to engage in the work of the Lord, who fail to improve upon the ability God has given them.” *The Review and Herald*, March 25, 1880.

Tuesday

3 DEVELOPING YOUR TALENTS (II)

3.a. What should be understood by those who feel they have the least amount of talent? 1 Corinthians 7:20–24; Mark 14:8; Matthew 25:14–30.

Note: “Many of the youth repine because they have not ability to do some large work, and they covet talents by which they might do some wonderful things; but while they are spending their time in vain desires, they are making a failure of life. They are overlooking opportunities which they might improve in

doing deeds of love in the path of life in which their feet are set.” *The Youth’s Instructor*, March 2, 1893.

3.b. How does the Lord evaluate the use of our talents? 2 Corinthians 5:10; Luke 12:47, 48.

Note: “When the Lord takes account of His servants, the return from every talent will be scrutinized. The work done reveals the character of the worker.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 360.

“Those who might have exerted an influence to save souls had they stood in the counsel of God, yet failed to do their duty through selfishness, indolence, or because they were ashamed of the cross of Christ, will not only lose their own souls, but will have the blood of poor sinners upon their garments. Such will be required to render an account for the good that they could have done had they been consecrated to God, but did not do because of their unfaithfulness. Those who have really tasted the sweets of redeeming love will not, cannot, rest until all with whom they associate are made acquainted with the plan of salvation.” *Testimonies*, vol. 1, 511.

“We shall individually be held responsible for doing one jot less than we have ability to do. The Lord measures with exactness every possibility for service. The unused capabilities are as much brought into account as are those that are improved. For all that we might become through the right use of our talents God holds us responsible.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 363.

Wednesday

4 INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

4.a. What are the responsibilities of those who are strong toward weaker members? Romans 15:1.

Note: “The special gifts of the Spirit are not the only talents represented in the parable [of the talents (Matthew 25:13–32.)]. It includes all gifts and endowments, whether original or acquired, natural or spiritual. All are to be employed in Christ’s service. In becoming His disciples, we surrender ourselves to Him with all that we are and have. These gifts He returns to us purified and ennobled, to be used for His glory in blessing our fellow men.” *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 328.

“The power of speech is a talent that should be diligently cultivated. Of all the gifts we have received from God, none is capable of being a greater blessing than this. With the voice we convince and persuade, with it we offer prayer and praise to God, and with it we tell others of the Redeemer’s love. How important, then, that it be so trained as to be most effective for good.” *Ibid.*, 335.

“Our time belongs to God. Every moment is His, and we are under the most solemn obligation to improve it to His glory. Of no talent He has given will He require a more strict account than of our time.” *Ibid.*, 342.

“Parents should teach their children the value and right use of time. Teach them that to do something which will honor God and bless humanity is worth striving for. Even in their early years they can be missionaries for God.” *Ibid.*, 345.

“God also entrusts men with means. He gives them power to get wealth. He waters the earth with the dews of heaven and with the showers of refreshing rain. He gives the sunlight, which warms the earth, awakening to life the things of nature and causing them to flourish and bear fruit. And He asks for a return of His own.” *Ibid.*, 351.

“Our money has not been given us that we might honor and glorify ourselves. As faithful stewards we are to use it for the honor and glory of God. Some think that only a portion of their means is the Lord’s. When they have set apart a portion for religious and charitable purposes, they regard the remainder as their own, to be used as they see fit. But in this they mistake. All we possess is the Lord’s, and we are accountable to Him for the use we make of it. In the use of every penny it will be seen whether we love God supremely and our neighbor as ourselves.” *Messages to Young People*, 310.

Thursday

5 STEWARDS FOR THE KINGDOM

5.a. What should be the focus of all our various talents? Philippians 3:7–14.

Note: “You are a spectacle unto the world, to angels, and to men. ... Make the most of the golden moments, putting to use the talents God has given you, that you may accumulate something for the Master, and be a blessing to all around you. Let the heavenly angels look down with joy upon you because you are loyal and true to Jesus Christ.” *The Youth’s Instructor*, July 12, 1894.

“It is the wise improvement of your opportunities, the cultivation of your God-given talents, that will make you men and women that can be approved of God, and a blessing to society. Let your standard be high, and with indomitable energy, make the most of your talents and opportunities, and press to the mark.” *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 87.

“Are you going to give yourselves to the Lord? Are you ready to engage in the work He has left you to do? Jesus said to His disciples, ‘Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature’ (Mark 16:15). In the face of this command, will you appropriate your time and your energies as inclination may dictate, instead of following the counsel of God?” *Sons and Daughters of God*, 273.

“Here, in this world, in these last days, persons will show what power affects their hearts and controls their actions. If it is the power of divine truth, it will lead to good works. ...

“Young and old, God is now testing you. You are deciding your own eternal destiny.” *Maranatha*, 43.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 How can specific talents best be cultivated for the Master?
- 2 How does the church benefit from talent stewardship?
- 3 What should I, personally, be considering more seriously about those talents entrusted to me?
- 4 What must I realize about my accountability before God for my talents?
- 5 Describe the responsibility of all Christians, regardless of age or ability.

August 22 – 28, 2021

The Importance of Charity

Key Text

“And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing” (1 Corinthians 13:2).

Study Help: *Counsels on Stewardship*, 20–23.

Introduction

“Learn that Christlike love is of heavenly birth, and that without it all other qualifications are worthless.” *The Review and Herald*, July 21, 1904.

Sunday

1 A CHAPTER FOR TODAY

1.a. How is the faithful steward affected by prayerful study and meditation on 1 Corinthians 13? 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 John 4:19–21.

Note: “The Lord desires me to call the attention of His people to the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. Read this chapter every day, and from it obtain comfort and strength.” *The Review and Herald*, July 21, 1904.

“In the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians the apostle Paul defines true Christlike love. . . . This chapter is an expression of the obedience of all who love God and keep His commandments. It is brought into action in the life of every true believer.” “Ellen G. White Comments,” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, 1091.

1.b. What should be deeply considered by all who profess and seek to share the present truth in these last days? 2 Peter 1:10–12.

Note: “How careful we should be, that our words and actions are all in harmony with the sacred truth that God has committed to us! The people of the world are looking to us, to see what our faith is doing for our characters and lives. They are watching to see if it is having a sanctifying effect on our hearts, if we are becoming changed into the likeness of Christ. They are ready to discover every defect in our lives, every inconsistency in our actions. Let us give them no occasion to reproach our faith.” *The Review and Herald*, June 5, 1888.

Monday

2 TALK IS CHEAP

2.a. Why is knowledge along with a polished ability to express it insufficient to glorify Christ? 1 Corinthians 13:1.

Note: “If the knowledge of the truth produces no beauty in the soul, if it does not subdue, soften, and recreate the man after God’s own image, it is of no benefit to the receiver; it is as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.” “Ellen G. White Comments,” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, 1181.

“It is not the ready speaker, the sharp intellect that counts with God. It is the earnest purpose, the deep piety, the love of truth, the fear of God that has a telling influence. A testimony from the heart, coming from lips in which is no guile, full of faith and humble trust, though given by a stammering tongue, is accounted of God as precious as gold; while the smart speech, the eloquent oratory, of the one to whom is entrusted large talents, but who is wanting in truthfulness, in steadfast purpose, in purity, in unselfishness, are as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. He may say witty things, he may relate amusing anecdotes, he may play upon the feelings; but the spirit of Jesus is not in it. All these things may please unsanctified hearts, but God holds in His hands the balances that weigh the words, the spirit, the sincerity, the devotion, and He pronounces it altogether lighter than vanity.” *Ibid.*, vol. 6, 1091.

2.b. What is the warning against a self-centered employment of God’s blessings? James 2:15, 16.

Note: “The sin which is indulged to the greatest extent, and which separates us from God and produces so many contagious spiritual disorders, is selfishness. There can be no returning to the Lord except by self-denial. Of ourselves we can do nothing; but, through God strengthening us, we can live to do good to others, and in this way shun the evil of selfishness. We need not go to heathen lands to manifest our desire to devote all to God in a useful, unselfish life. We should do this in the home circle, in the church, among those with whom we associate and with whom we do business. Right in the common walks of life is where self is to be denied and kept in subordination.” *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 132.

Tuesday

3 A TRAP FOR THE FAITHFUL STEWARD

3.a. Although scriptural doctrines, accurate prophetic understanding, and uncompromising courage are essential, what is the warning to all who believe the present truth? 1 Corinthians 13:2, 3.

Note: “No matter how high the profession, he whose heart is not filled with love for God and his fellow men is not a true disciple of Christ. Though he should possess great faith and have power even to work miracles, yet without love his faith would be worthless. He might display great liberality; but should he, from some other motive than genuine love, bestow all his goods to feed the poor, the act would not commend him to the favor of God. In his zeal he might even meet a martyr’s death, yet if not actuated by love, he would be regarded by God as a deluded enthusiast or an ambitious hypocrite.” *The Acts of the Apostles*, 318, 319.

3.b. What are potential besetting dangers? Revelation 3:17; Isaiah 65:5.

Note: “A legal religion has been thought quite the correct religion for this time. But it is a mistake. The rebuke of Christ to the Pharisees is applicable to those who have lost from the

heart their first love. A cold, legal religion can never lead souls to Christ; for it is a loveless, Christless religion. When fastings and prayers are practiced in a self-justifying spirit, they are abominable to God. The solemn assembly for worship, the round of religious ceremonies, the external humiliation, the imposed sacrifice—all proclaim to the world the testimony that the doer of these things considers himself righteous. These things call attention to the observer of rigorous duties, saying, This man is entitled to heaven. But it is all a deception. Works will not buy for us an entrance into heaven. The one great Offering that has been made is ample for all who will believe. ... Look up to God, look not to men. God is your heavenly Father who is willing patiently to bear with your infirmities, and to forgive and heal them.” *The Review and Herald*, March 20, 1894.

“There is nothing that can so weaken the influence of the church as the lack of love.” *Ibid.*, June 5, 1888.

Wednesday

4 DRAWING FROM A PURE FOUNTAIN

4.a. What type of service is unacceptable to God, and why? Isaiah 58:4, 5; Jeremiah 2:13. How can we overcome this problem?

Note: “Watch unto prayer. In this way alone can you put your whole being into the Lord’s work. Self must be put in the background. Those who make self prominent gain an education that soon becomes second nature to them; and they will soon fail to realize that instead of uplifting Jesus they uplift themselves, that instead of being channels through which the living water can flow to refresh others, they absorb the sympathies and affections of those around them. This is not loyalty to our crucified Lord.” *Counsels on Health*, 560.

“It is the daily dying to self in the little transactions of life that makes us overcomers. We should forget self in the desire to do good to others.” *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 132.

4.b. Describe the result of true religion. James 1:27.

4.c. How is the Christian to be a blessing to his fellow man? John 7:37, 38; Compare Isaiah 58:6–11.

Note: “The pure religion of Jesus is the fountain from which flow streams of charity, love, self-sacrifice.

“A Christian is a Christlike man, a Christlike woman, who is active in God’s service, who is present at the social meeting, whose presence will encourage others also. Religion does not consist in works, but religion works; it is not dormant.

“Many seem to feel that religion has a tendency to make its possessor narrow and cramped, but genuine religion does not have a narrowing influence; it is the lack of religion that cramps the faculties and narrows the mind. When a man is narrow, it is an evidence that he needs the grace of God, the heavenly anointing; for a Christian is one whom the Lord, the God of hosts, can work through, that he may keep the ways of the Lord of the earth and make manifest His will to men.” “Ellen G. White Comments,” *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, 935.

Thursday

5 POWER FOR GENUINE STEWARDSHIP

5.a. What is the highest rung of the ladder of Christian development? 2 Peter 1:4–7. What must we realize in seeking to cultivate all the Christian qualities?

Note: “We are to add to faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. You are not to think that you must wait until you have perfected one grace, before cultivating another. No; they are to grow up together, fed continually from the fountain of charity; every day that you live, you can be perfecting the blessed attributes fully revealed in the character of Christ; and when you do this, you will bring light, love, peace, and joy into your homes.” *The Review and Herald*, July 29, 1890.



Learn that Christlike love is of heavenly birth, and that without it all other qualifications are worthless.

5.b. Explain how we can become imbued with new spiritual life and right motives. Ezekiel 37:1–14; Mark 2:22.

Note: “When self is renounced, then the Lord can make man a new creature. New bottles can contain the new wine. The love of Christ will animate the believer with new life. In him who looks unto the Author and Finisher of our faith the character of Christ will be manifest.” *The Desire of Ages*, 280.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 Why should the faithful steward daily study 1 Corinthians 13?
- 2 In what ways can the faithful steward be in danger of being as “sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal?”
- 3 Why could a martyr professing Christ be lost?
- 4 When will our attitude and work be pleasing to God?
- 5 How does charity operate with the other qualities in 2 Peter 1:4–7?

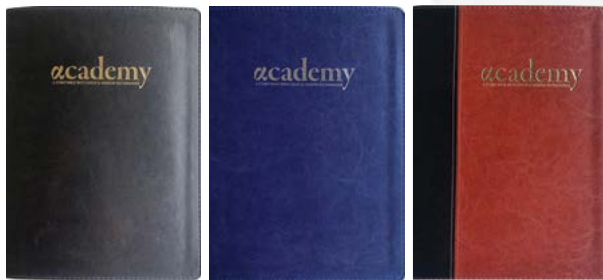
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**Fruit**

Vegetables

Legumes

Nuts/Seeds

Grains



RAW OR BAKED FRUIT CRISP

Ingredients

3 cups chopped fruit [stone fruit and berries (i.e., peaches, blackberries)]

1/8 tsp. cardamom

1/8 tsp. coriander

1 drizzle maple syrup or honey

1 drizzle coconut oil (if baking)

Topping

1/2 cup unsweetened shredded coconut

1/3 cup almond flour or 1/4 cup coconut flour

1/8 tsp. cardamom

1/8 tsp. coriander

sea salt, pinch

1/4 cup raw pecans

Process

Add fruit of choice to an oven-safe dish (if baking), or to a serving bowl. Top with cardamom, coriander, and maple syrup or honey; toss to combine.

To a food processor or blender add shredded coconut, almond or coconut flour, cardamom, coriander, salt, pecans, and dates, maple syrup or honey, coconut butter and coconut oil (if baking); pulse until a loose meal is achieved, being careful not to over-blend.

If too dry, add more dates or maple syrup and pulse. Taste and adjust flavor as needed. Spoon over raw fruit for baking.

If baking, bake for 20-28 minutes at 325 F. or until fruit is tender and topping is golden brown.

Enjoy raw or baked. Top with dairy-free yogurt, ice cream, or whipped topping.

2-3 medjool dates, pitted (more for sweetness/texture)

1 Tbsp. maple syrup or honey

1-2 Tbsp. drippy coconut butter, optional (blend coconut shreds in high-speed blender until butter-like)

1 Tbsp. melted coconut oil (if baking)

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