

HISTORIC

LANDMARKS

OF ADVENTISM

*The Lesson of
Thanksgiving*

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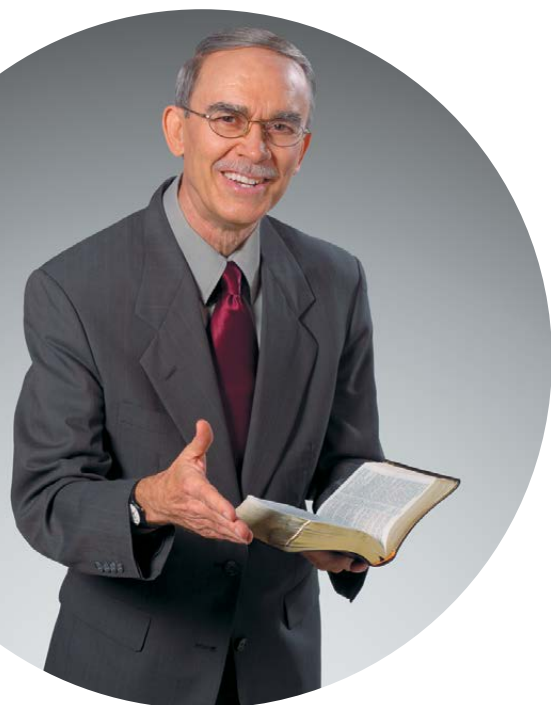
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From the Editor

John J. Grosboll

The Future of Babylon and Jerusalem

The destruction of the ancient city of Babylon is a symbol of the coming destruction of the entire world. The destruction of the city of Jerusalem and its stately temple is also a symbol of the destruction of the world. In the New Testament, Jerusalem and the Jews are used as a symbol of the professed Christian church and Babylon is used as a symbol of the entire religious world. And yet both of these—Babylon and Jerusalem—are portrayed as objects that will be totally destroyed (see for example *The Desire of Ages*, 743, 816; *The Youth's Instructor*, December 29, 1890).

Why is the world going to be destroyed at the end?—because of its wickedness. “The destruction of Babylon pictures to some degree the final destruction of the world [see Isaiah 13]. Babylon is a symbol of the world at large. ... When the doom of a nation is fixed, it seems that all the energy, wisdom, and discretion of its former time of prosperity, deserts its men of position, and they hasten the evil they would avert. Outside enemies are not the greatest peril to an individual or a nation.

The overthrow of a nation results, under the providence of God, from some unwise or evil course of its own. But the people who fear God, who are loyal to His laws, who carry out the principles of righteousness in their lives, have a sure defense; God will be the refuge of those who trust in Him.” *The Signs of the Times*, December 29, 1890

“Could the curtain be rolled back before the youth who have never given their hearts to God, with others who are Christians in name, but who are unrenewed in heart and unsanctified in temper, they would see that God’s eye is ever upon them, and they would feel as disturbed as did the king of Babylon. ...” *The Youth’s Instructor*, May 26, 1898

“We are never alone. We have a Companion, whether we choose Him or not. ... Wherever you are, whatever you are doing, God is there. To your every word and action you have a witness,—the holy, sin-hating God. Nothing that is said or done or thought can escape His infinite eye. ... In the deepest darkness and solitude He is there. No one can deceive God; none can escape from their accountability to Him.” Ibid **LM**

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LANDMARKS

OF ADVENTISM

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

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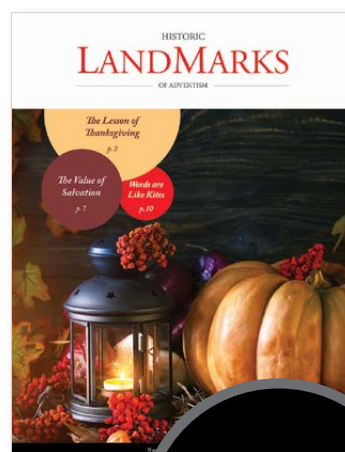
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All Bible texts, unless appearing in quoted references or otherwise identified, are from the New King James Version.



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The Lesson of Thanksgiving

By John J. Grosboll

On October 3, 1863, less than two years before he was assassinated, President Abraham Lincoln sent a proclamation to the people of the United States. In part, this proclamation said:

“The year that is drawing toward its close has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature that they cannot fail to penetrate and even soften the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever-watchful providence of Almighty God. ...

“No human counsel hath devised, nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy.



"It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and one voice by the whole American people. I do, therefore, invite my fellow-citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next as a Day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens. And I recommend to them that, while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience ... [they] fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty hand to heal the wounds of the nation, and to restore it, as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes, to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquillity, and union."

Some of us, it seems, still need to learn more of the lesson of thanksgiving to the Lord. As I perform the responsibilities of a pastor, I visit many people whose lives are so filled with difficulty and discouragement that there is nothing for which they are thankful. But God says His mercies and blessings toward each one of us are more than the hairs of our head. And though we today, like America in 1863, are in terrible trouble, it does not mean that we should not, cannot, be thankful.

On October 20, 1906, Ellen White gave a lengthy sermon to the Oakland Adventist church in California. The sermon was based on Romans 15 and she gave a specific counsel 22 times, in a number of different ways. Do you think if you said something to someone that many times that they might get the point? When you first look at this sermon, one might think that it really doesn't have much to do with thankfulness or thanksgiving. But sometimes the best way to learn what something is,



is to start from the opposite direction. Let's read Romans 15:1-3:

"We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, 'The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.'"

We find a tremendous amount of instruction in these three verses. We are not to live simply to please ourselves, but should ask how we can please someone else. We are not to live to make ourselves happy; instead we are to live to bring happiness to others. How you live your life makes all the difference in your outlook on life. Jesus didn't live to please Himself. He came, with a determined commitment, to do something for us that we could not do for ourselves.

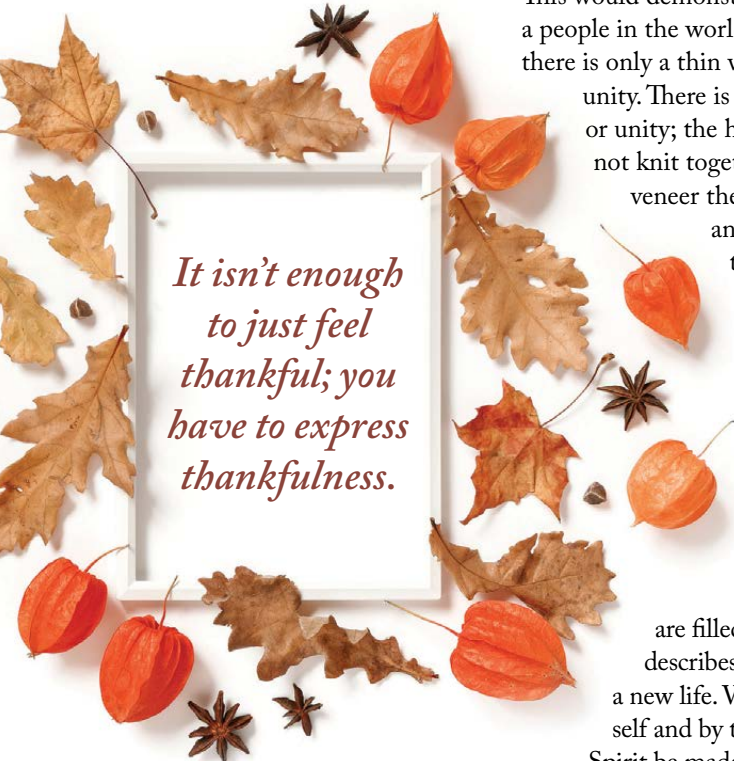
Romans 15:5-7 says, "Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God." Notice Paul says, "be like-minded toward one another." If we are following God, we should not be of half-a-dozen different or a great variety

of minds. To better explain these verses Mrs. White asks a question and provides the answer:

"What does this injunction entail? It places us under obligation to God. It leaves us where we must understand that we are amenable to Him alone. It leads us to realize that when the Holy Spirit is abiding in our hearts and working through us, we shall love one another, in the place of manifesting animosity toward one another." *The Review and Herald*, December 13, 1906

Animosity toward others seems to be a natural trait of our fallen human nature. But when we receive the Holy Spirit in our hearts, we begin to love other people rather than harbor feelings of animosity toward them. "My dear brethren and sisters, God is not pleased with a spirit of criticism and faultfinding." Ibid. Having a spirit of criticism and faultfinding is the opposite of thanksgiving.

There are many people who have a lot to eat on Thanksgiving Day, but they do not have a spirit of thankfulness and gratitude because they have a completely opposite spirit. We need to ask ourselves if we truly have a spirit of thanksgiving or a spirit of criticism and faultfinding. We cannot have both and if we have the spirit of thanksgiving, there will be no dissension among God's children.



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The strongest evidence of the truth of the three angels' messages is a people in harmony and unity with Christ and with each other. This would demonstrate that God does have a people in the world because at present, there is only a thin veneer over harmony and unity. There is no real spirit of harmony or unity; the hearts of the people are not knit together. Underneath that

veneer there is only dissension and bickering, even among those who claim to be God's elect.

Jesus prayed in John 17:20–23, pleading with the Father that His followers might be one as He and the Father are one. But so many, while attempting to give the impression of harmony and unity, are filled with dissension. If this describes us, then we must have a new life. We must become dead to self and by the power of the Holy Spirit be made new.

“... keep the mind fixed on Jesus. Keep the heart uplifted in prayer to God. Behold Jesus and what He endured and suffered for us in order that we might have that life which measures with the life of God. How can any of us wear our nerves on the outside, ready to break forth into disaffection if every movement made by someone else is not in exact accordance with our ideas? All this super-sensitiveness is to be put away.” *Sermons and Talks*, vol. 1, 363

“... it is time now that we were looking unto Jesus to see whether we are reflecting His image. It is time now that we put away everything that will grieve the Holy Spirit of God—divisions, dissensions, faultfinding, incriminations. God wants us to come to the light, that our light may shine forth in good works. Let the praise of God be in heart and voice.” *Ibid.*, 365

It isn't enough to just *feel* thankful; you have to *express* thankfulness. Thanksgiving and praise will be a large part of the tremendous bliss and joy that the people of God will experience in heaven, because they will

be praising the Lord and will be thankful to Him all the time.

“Let us cherish a spirit of gratitude and thanksgiving. We want our faces shining, reflecting the glory of God.” *Ibid.* Then you will speak about God's goodness and praise His holy name. We will not spend our time dwelling on negative things and the imperfections of others.

Do you know what happens to the person who dwells on the negative or the imperfections of other people? They actually take on the imperfections they dwell upon. It is astonishing that in the process of studying the defects of character in someone else, we will become like those defects as well.

“We may make mistakes, and we may have to ‘admonish one another.’ But there has come into the churches at Oakland and the surrounding community a spirit of backbiting, of faultfinding and evil-speaking, which demonstrates that you are not converted. Words are uttered that never should pass the lips of a Christian. My brethren and sisters, when you have nothing better to speak of than something about the faults of others, remember that ‘silence is eloquence.’ Cease to dwell upon the shortcomings of others. Keep the tongue sanctified unto God. Refrain from saying anything that might detract from the influence of another; for by indulging in these words of criticism, you blaspheme God's holy name as verily as you would were you to swear. I am instructed to present these things before you, that you may see how you dishonor the name of Christ Jesus.” *Ibid.*, 367

“When I feel oppressed, and hardly know how to relate myself toward the work that God has given me to do, I just call upon the three great Worthies, and say; You know I cannot do this work in my own strength. You must work in me, and by me and through me, sanctifying my tongue, sanctifying my spirit, sanctifying my words, and bringing me into a position where my spirit shall be susceptible to the movings of the Holy Spirit of God upon my mind and character.

“And this is the prayer that every one of us may offer.” *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 7, 267, 268

This cannot happen as long as we retain a spirit of criticism and backbiting. If we want to be receptive to the influence of the Holy Spirit, we must develop a spirit of thanksgiving so that the Holy Spirit can change our minds and enable us to speak differently than the people of the world speak. The time we have been given is to be used to glorify God.

Paul describes in Romans 15:14–16 how we are to strive together. We need to learn to work together, strive together in prayers to God and not be looking for faults in one another. He says that instead of entering into conversation that tends to tear down, speak a word of encouragement. Our talent of speech is to be sanctified by God and cleansed from every form of negativity and faultfinding.

Do you know someone with the disposition to quarrel and find fault? This is very serious.

“I feel an intense interest regarding every faultfinder; for I know that a quarrelsome disposition will never find entrance into the city of God. Quarrel with yourself, but with no one else; and then be converted. Confess your sins right here where you are, before you return to your homes. With words of confession, humble your hearts before God.

“When you are tempted to speak unadvisedly, be on guard. If someone else approaches you with words of criticism regarding one of God’s children, turn a deaf ear to every such word. If you are spoken to harshly, never retaliate. Utter not a word. When under provocation, remember that ‘silence is eloquence.’ Silence is the greatest rebuke that you can possibly give a faultfinder or one whose temper is irritated. Keep your eye fixed on Jesus. Keep your eye on the One who never finds fault with you, only to lay before you perils from which He would deliver you.” *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 7, 271

“The Lord is anxious to save us. He is anxious that everything separating us from Him should be put away, that our hearts may beat in unison with heaven.



It is time to be in harmony with God. Let us spend a little while in clearing the King’s highway. If we have been indulging in the sin of telling others’ faults, let us confess it before the Lord and before our brethren.” *Sermons and Talks*, vol. 1, 378

Brothers and sisters, the time is coming when probation will close and if we haven’t overcome this kind of character, we will be lost. “When probation ends, it will come suddenly, unexpectedly—at a time when we are least expecting it.” *Last Day Events*, 230. It won’t matter if we are Sabbathkeepers. The people who crucified Jesus were Sabbathkeepers. We need to be right with God today, because if we delay, it will be too late.

At the end of her sermon to the Oakland church, Mrs. White offered a long prayer. I will not share the entire prayer, but here are a few lines from it:

“Our heavenly Father, we come to Thee this evening, as our only Refuge, as our only Helper, as the only One who can save us from ourselves. Thou alone can break the iron bands of the heart. Thou alone can cause the blind eyes to discern what sin is.

“Oh, my Father, my Father, the blindness, the terrible blindness, that comes over the people, that they do not discern what manner of character Thou can accept and what Thou wilt be compelled to reject! Oh, that Thou would impress upon all the terrible nature of sin, and how Thou dost regard sin.

“Yet, there are hearts that are becoming more and still more hardened, less and still less sensitive. By familiarity with sin, we lose our sensitiveness as to how awful it is. I pray Thee Lord that they may not go on hardening their hearts any longer.

“I pray Thee that this awful manifestation of self may be broken up. I pray Thee that self may be crucified, and that self may die, in order that there may be a reconversion in the midst of us, and that souls may be brought to humble themselves before Thee, and be reconverted. Break up this hardness of heart! I pray Thee, to melt and subdue the soul. Help them to remove the stumbling blocks out of the way, and to take themselves out of the way. Wilt Thou, Lord, break up this coldness, this iciness, this frozen-heartedness!

“Oh, give them no rest, day or night, until they see the necessity of transformation of character; until they see the necessity of clearing the King’s highway. Oh, help us to be converted. Thou hast a whole heaven of blessings that Thou art waiting to pour out upon a people who are ready to receive it, and use it.” [See *Sermons and Talks*, vol. 1, 379–382.]

We must learn to have a spirit of thanksgiving, a spirit of praising the Lord and not one of finding fault with everything and everyone. We can spend our entire lives studying and talking about all the many things that are wrong in this world, but we will spiritually destroy ourselves if we do, and we won’t be ready for heaven.

“To praise God in fullness and sincerity of heart is as much a duty as is prayer. We are to show to the world and to all the heavenly intelligences that

“
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we appreciate the wonderful love of God for fallen humanity and that we are expecting larger and yet larger blessings from His infinite fullness. ... After a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, our joy in the Lord and our efficiency in His service would be greatly increased by recounting His goodness and His wonderful works in behalf of His children.

“These exercises drive back the power of Satan. They expel the spirit of murmuring and complaint, and the tempter loses ground. They cultivate those attributes of character which will fit the dwellers on earth for the heavenly mansions.”
Christ's Object Lessons, 299, 300

This is the experience that will fit us for heaven because part of getting ready for heaven is praising the Lord in a spirit of thankfulness, appreciating the love of God and what He has done to save the human race. We should have regular praise meetings in our homes, just as Jesus did when He worked in the carpenter shop each day. “His praises seemed to drive away the evil angels, and fill the place with sweet fragrance. He carried the minds of His hearers away from their earthly exile to their future, eternal home.

“All this has its lesson for us. We also may commune with God in words of holy song. Our house of worship may be very humble, but it is none the less acknowledged by God. If we worship in spirit, and in truth, and in the beauty of holiness, it will be to us the very gate of heaven. As lessons of the wondrous works of God are repeated, and as the heart's gratitude is expressed in prayer and song, angels from heaven take up the strain, and unite in praise and thanksgiving to God.” *The Review and Herald*, October 24, 1899

What is heaven like?

“Heaven is full of joy. It resounds with the praises of Him who made so wonderful a sacrifice for the redemption of the human race.” *Heaven*, 63

The angels of heaven understand, in a way we do not, the condescension Christ made to

come down to this world as a human being. They know what He went through. They know all about the cross and when they see what God has done to save us, night and day, they praise the Lord for His wonderful love. Don't you think we, too, should be praising the Lord for what He has done for us?

“Should not the church on earth be full of praise? Should not Christians publish throughout the world the joy of serving Christ? Those who in heaven join with the angelic choir in their anthem of praise must learn on earth the song of heaven, the keynote of which is thanksgiving.” *My Life Today*, 359

Friends, I want to be praising the Lord. I want to be involved in the song of heaven, do you? It won't matter whether you can carry a tune in this world or not if you know how to praise the Lord and give Him thanks for what He has done for you. If it is worthwhile for the angels to praise the Lord for what He has done, shouldn't we do the same?

Remember, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross was not something that He was required to do; it was not something that He had to do. He could have left us here and we all would have perished. He didn't have to save us, but He chose to do it because He was willing to do anything so that we would not have to die.

“Jesus will receive you, all polluted as you are, and will wash you in His blood, and cleanse you from all pollution, and make you fit for the society of heavenly angels, in a pure, harmonious heaven. There is no jar, no discord, there. All is health, happiness, and joy.” *Heaven*, 63

Do you want to live a life that never ends in a place where you will always feel the freshness of the morning? It is difficult for us to understand God's love, but we can ask Him to put within our hearts a spirit of praise so that we can sing the song of thanksgiving to our Saviour. **LM**

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The Value of Salvation

By John R. Pearson

As a people, Seventh-day Adventists, to a degree that is sometimes incomprehensibly difficult to understand or appreciate, have a library of prophetic writings that give the ardent seeker a clear understanding of God's will and thorough guidance in fulfilling that will in their daily lives. However, in providing that understanding and guidance, the reader sometimes encounters passages that cause varying degrees of puzzlement. Such is the case with the testimony entitled "The Sufferings of Christ."

This extremely enlightening testimony is found in volume two of the *Testimonies* beginning on page 200, and provides an in-depth look at Christ's suffering as well as a wealth of uplifting clarity on the plan of salvation.

The testimony begins with this statement: "In order to fully realize the value of salvation, it is necessary to understand what it cost." The testimony then explains that cost as the sufferings experienced by our Saviour when He left the glories of heaven and assumed the likeness of man.



“
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 throne of God.*”

The unfathomable nature of this sacrifice is a recurring theme in the Spirit of Prophecy, but it is quite succinctly explained in this passage from *The Desire of Ages*, 131:

“Never can the cost of our redemption be realized until the redeemed shall stand with the Redeemer before the throne of God. Then as the glories of the eternal home burst upon our enraptured senses we shall remember that Jesus left all this for us, that He not only became an exile from the heavenly courts, but for us took the risk of failure and eternal loss. Then we shall cast our crowns at His feet, and raise the song, ‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.’ Revelation 5:12.”

Even though our understanding of Christ’s sacrifice and suffering will not be complete until we stand before the throne, inspired writings provide abundant insight into the suffering He experienced while paying the penalty for man’s sin. However, in providing that insight, there are occasional statements that, as stated earlier, provoke a bit of uncertainty on first reading.

Continuing with this statement from this testimony: “Christ consented to die in the sinner’s stead, that man, by a life of obedience, might escape the penalty of the law of God.” *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 200, 201

A question that might come to mind from this statement is: If one is obedient, why is there a need for Christ to die? By definition, obedience eliminates transgression. Doesn’t obedience to the law do away with the requirement for the second death?

Or perhaps one has progressed in the path of sanctification to the point of having achieved in his sphere the equivalent level of perfection that God possesses in His sphere. This principle is given in volume four of the *Testimonies*, 591:

“The perfection of God’s work is as clearly seen in the tiniest insect as in the king of birds. The soul of the little child that believes in Christ is as precious in His sight as are the angels about His throne. ‘Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.’ *As God is perfect in His sphere, so man may be perfect in his sphere.* Whatever the hand finds to do should be done with thoroughness and dispatch. Faithfulness and integrity in little things, the performance of little duties and little deeds of kindness, will cheer and gladden the pathway of life; and when our work on earth is ended, every one of the little duties performed with fidelity will be treasured as a precious gem before God.”

Even though this achievement may be the case with a given individual, it does not negate the fact that we are descendants of Adam and have inherited his sinful nature. This is made very clear at least a half dozen times in Romans 5, where Paul acknowledges that “by one man sin entered into the world.” (See Romans 5:12–21.) That one man, of course, was our first father, and as a child of Adam, having inherited his sinful nature, I have a sinful nature at birth, even though no sinful act would have been committed at that specific point in time. Paul confirmed the death sentence our inherited nature casts upon us in his first letter to the Corinthians when he wrote “... in Adam all die.” 1 Corinthians 15:22

Therefore, even though one may have achieved a certain level of sanctification, the sinful nature and corrupt heart for which an atonement must be offered remains.

There is another statement in the original testimony cited that provokes a question directly illustrating the value of salvation and the suffering that Christ endured:

“Taking human nature fitted Christ to understand man’s trials and sorrows and all the temptations wherewith he is beset.” *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 201

We concede that Christ is omniscient. That being true, should He not understand “man’s trials and sorrows and all the temptations wherewith he is beset” without having to experience them firsthand?

Common sense dictates that of course He knows. Then why did Christ have to take human nature? Was it solely so that He could gain an understanding of man’s condition? Perhaps it was so that man could know without doubt that Christ Himself experienced and therefore understands our temptations and sorrows, having experienced them Himself in His humanity.

One might be tempted to say that Christ never experienced the untimely death of a child, the sufferings of a beloved spouse, an overdue mortgage, or any of a myriad other trials, but He did indeed suffer physically and emotionally far more than any human ever will. It can be asserted that He experienced this suffering in both His humanity and in His divinity, and perhaps more in the latter. By God’s grace, anything that we might experience pales in comparison with the extreme physical, mental, and spiritual nature of Christ’s sufferings.

A clearer explanation of why Christ had to incur suffering is provided as we continue examining our subject testimony.

“Angels who were unacquainted with sin could not sympathize with man in his peculiar trials. Christ condescended to take man’s nature and was tempted in all points like as we, that He might know how to succor all who should be tempted.

“... As the sinless One, His nature recoiled from evil. He endured struggles and torture of soul in a world of sin. His humanity made prayer a necessity and privilege. He required all the stronger divine support and comfort which His Father was ready to impart to Him, to Him who had, for the benefit of man, left the joys of heaven and chosen His home in a cold and thankless world.



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Christ found comfort and joy in communion with His Father. Here He could unburden His heart of the sorrows that were crushing Him. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

“As the Son of God bowed in the attitude of prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, the agony of His spirit forced from His pores sweat like great drops of blood. It was here that the horror of great darkness surrounded Him. The sins of the world were upon Him. He was suffering in man’s stead as a transgressor of His Father’s law. Here was the scene of temptation. The divine light of God was receding from His vision, and He was passing into the hands of the powers of darkness. In His soul anguish He lay prostrate on the cold earth. He was realizing His Father’s frown. He had taken the cup of suffering from the lips of guilty man, and proposed to drink it Himself, and in its place give to man the cup of blessing. The wrath that would have fallen upon man was now falling upon Christ. It was here that the mysterious cup trembled in His hand.

“We can have but faint conceptions of the inexpressible anguish of God’s dear Son in Gethsemane, as He realized His separation from His Father in consequence of bearing man’s sin. He became

sin for the fallen race. The sense of the withdrawal of His Father’s love pressed from His anguished soul these mournful words: ‘My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.’

“The sword of justice was now to awake against His dear Son. He was betrayed by a kiss into the hands of His enemies, and hurried to the judgment hall of an earthly court, there to be derided and condemned to death by sinful mortals. There the glorious Son of God was ‘wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities.’ He bore insult, mockery, and shameful abuse, until ‘His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.’

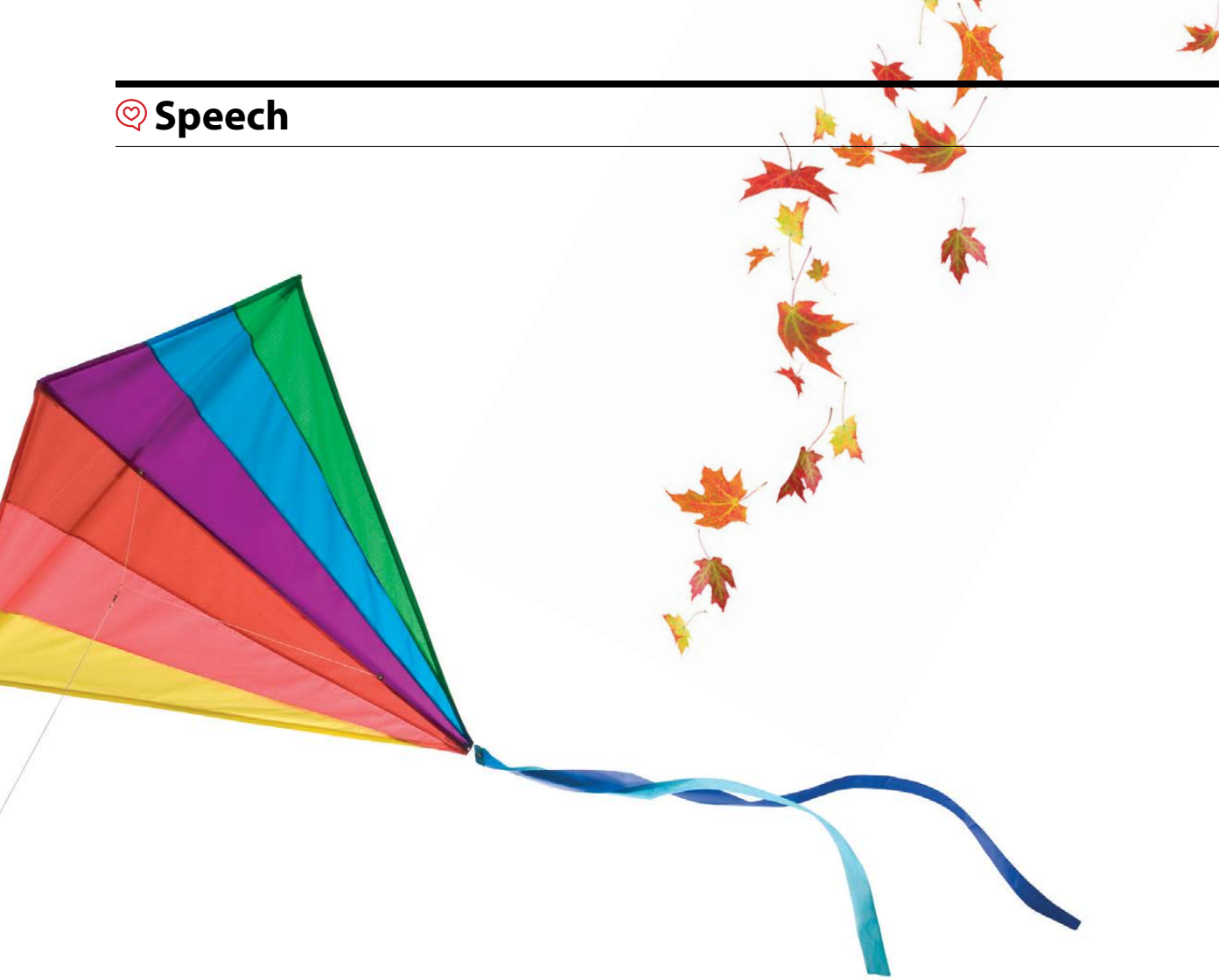
“Who can comprehend the love here displayed!” Ibid., 202–207

And who can truly comprehend the suffering of body, mind, and spirit endured by our Redeemer to provide sinful man an escape from the penalty of transgressing the law?

Truly, “Worthy is the Lamb.”

[All emphasis supplied.] **LM**

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Words are Like Kites

By Judy Rebarcek

When I was young, my mother would tell me, “If you can’t say something nice, don’t say anything at all.” If only I had followed that advice throughout my life. There have been many times that I have spoken when I should have kept my mouth closed. The important thing to understand about what we say, as damaging as the words can be, is what is in the heart.

Speaking to the Pharisees, Jesus said in Matthew 12:34, 35: “Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? *For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.* A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.” Clearly what comes out of our mouths is indicative of the condition of our hearts. Alarming, this also can be a strong indication of whether or not we are in a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Have you been driving down the road when suddenly someone cuts you off? What was your response? Driving is a very humbling experience for me, on a daily basis. There was a time when I lived about 30 miles from where I worked. The road I took home was a state highway, so the speed limit was 65. One day I was driving home, doing about 68, and a large pickup truck came up behind me, so close that all I could see in the rear view mirror was its front grill. He followed me that way for some time and then suddenly, like he’d been shot out of a cannon, he pulled around me, accelerated past me and then pulled right in front of me barely before he had cleared the front of my car. Then, just seconds after getting past me he abruptly slowed down to exit the highway. I slammed on the brakes, said some very colorful things and even wished some very uncharitable things about the driver. Immediately the thought came to me, Is this what Jesus would have done? Did my words and thoughts have any effect on that driver? No. Did they have an effect on me? Yes. Did the experience help me to change my behavior? I’d like to say yes, but the truth is, probably not. So, what does that say about my relationship with Christ?

“Shall we not remember this? If the love of God is in our hearts, we shall not think evil, we shall not be easily disturbed, we shall not give loose reign to passion, but we will show that we are yoked up with Christ, and that the restraining power of *His Spirit leads*

us to speak words that He can approve. The yoke of Christ is the restraint of the Holy Spirit, and when we become heated by passion, let us say, No; I have Christ by my side, and I will not make Him ashamed of me by speaking hot, fiery words.” *The Voice in Speech and Song*, 146, 147

How many times have you had difficulty with someone at work or at home or at church and been able to keep your mouth shut at the moment. But later, after you stewed about it for a while, had plenty to say to someone else about what happened and more specifically about the person with whom you had the difficulty? Not only did your words bring more harm to yourself, but they also caused a problem for someone who wasn’t even involved. By this action you also have caused someone else to have ill feelings against another person and together you shared your misery and then perhaps shared it again with someone else and then another and another. Homes and churches have been divided and jobs have been lost because of careless words.

How many times has someone died and suddenly we hear how people really felt about them? Terrible words are spoken about the individual who now has no ability to defend himself/herself against those words. And what about the effect those words have on their family members? It may be that every word spoken is truth, but I just keep hearing the wise words of my mother, say something nice or don’t say anything. If we can speak terrible words about each other or someone who has died, what does that say about our relationship with Christ?

“There is often a great temptation to talk of things which do not profit the speaker or the hearer, but which bring evil and barrenness to both. Our probationary time is too brief to be spent in dwelling upon the shortcomings of others.

“The truly converted man has no inclination to think or talk of the faults of others. His lips are sanctified, and as God’s witness he testifies that the grace of Christ has transformed his heart. ... Those only will enter heaven who have overcome the temptation to think and speak

evil.” *Ibid.*, 145

James 3:6–10 tells us, “And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.”

Years ago, Pastor Marshall Grosboll shared excerpts from “The First Settler’s Story,” written as a poem by Will Carleton and published in his book *Farm Festivals* in 1881. The story of a man and his young bride who went to settle in the western territory, the poem is written in the first-person perspective of the man and had to do, in part, with the man’s inability to control his impatience and his words toward his wife. Here are just a few passages from that poem:

“
However provoked
you may feel, keep back
every word that would stir
up the evil in another heart.
Let every word you speak
bless and elevate.”

“Well, neighborhoods meant counties, in those days;
The roads didn’t have accommodating ways;
And maybe weeks would pass before she’d see
And much less talk with anyone but me. ...”

“And finally I thought that I could trace
A half heart-hunger peering from her face.
Then she would drive it back, and shut the door;
Of course that only made me see it more.
‘Twas hard to see her give her life to mine,
Making a steady effort not to pine;
‘Twas hard to hear that laugh bloom out each minute,
And recognize the seeds of sorrow in it.”

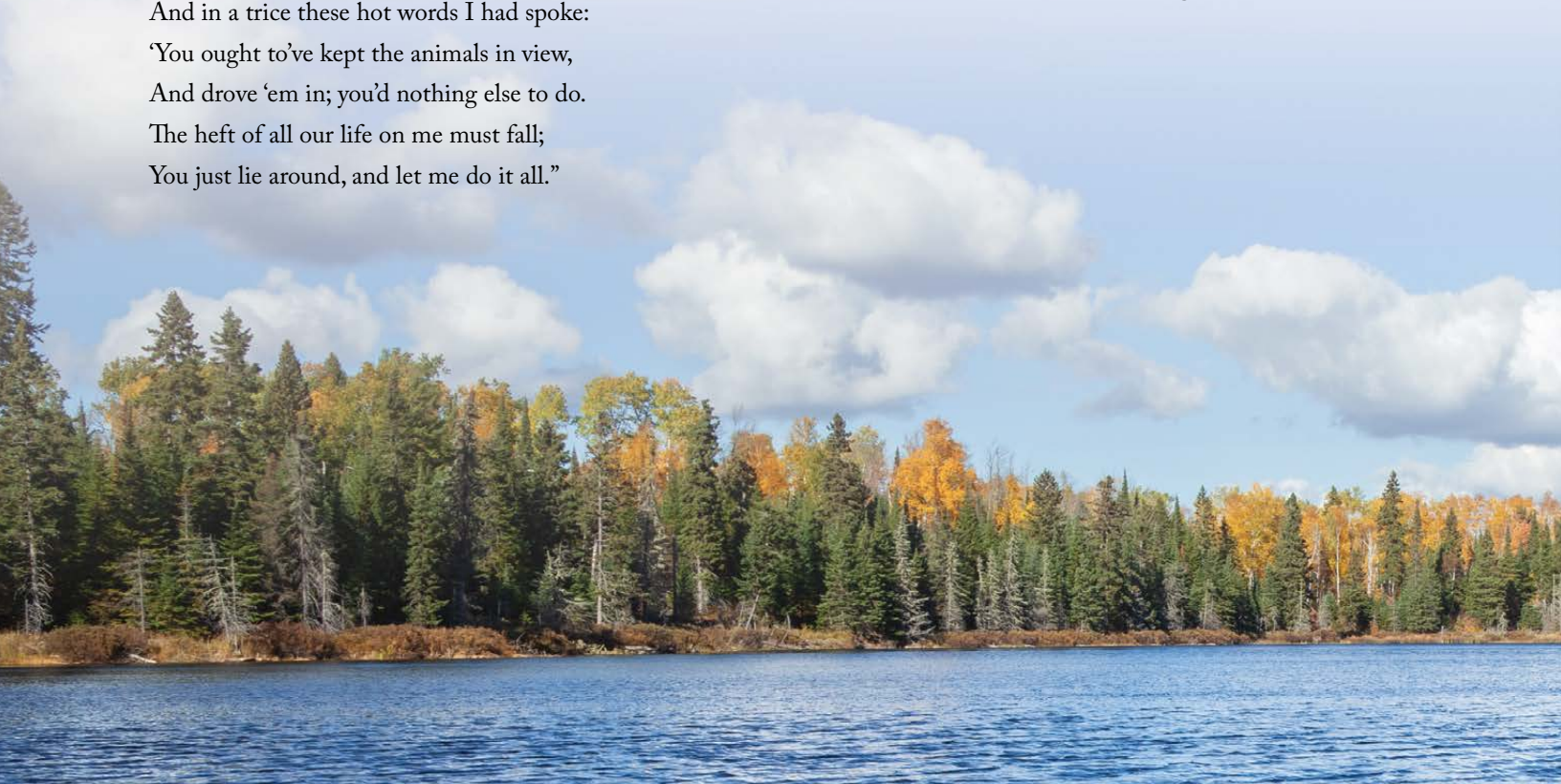
Time passed and the isolation, bad weather, failed crops,
poverty and lack of almost everything began to take its toll.

“One night, I came from work unusual late,
Too hungry and too tired to feel first-rate,
Her supper struck me wrong (though I’ll allow
She hadn’t much to work with, anyhow);
And when I went to milk the cows, and found
They’d wandered from their usual feeding ground,
And maybe left a few long miles behind ‘em,
Which I must copy, if I meant to find ‘em;
Flash-quick the stay-chains of my temper broke,
And in a trice these hot words I had spoke:
‘You ought to’ve kept the animals in view,
And drove ‘em in; you’d nothing else to do.
The heft of all our life on me must fall;
You just lie around, and let me do it all.”

He knew right away he was in the wrong, but he was a proud
man and he left the apology unsaid. With a quick good-bye
the next morning, he left his young bride. But that afternoon,
sensing a storm coming, he left work early and hurried home.

“Half out of breath, the cabin door I swung,
With tender heart-words trembling on my tongue;
But all looked desolate and bare;
My house had lost its soul – she was not there!
A penciled note was on the table spread,
And these are something like the words it said:
‘The cows have strayed away again, I fear;
I watched them pretty close; don’t scold me, dear.
And where they are, I think I nearly know;
I heard the bell not very long ago.
I’ve hunted them all afternoon;
I’ll try once more – I think I’ll find them soon.
Dear, if a burden I have been to you,
And haven’t helped as I ought to do,
Let old-time memories my forgiveness plead;
I’ve tried to do my best – I have, indeed.
Darling, piece out with love the strength I lack,
And have kind words for me when I get back.’”

As he finished reading her note, the storm swept in. Once
the storm had ended, he and his dog went in search of his wife.



“All night we dragged the woods without avail;
 The ground got drenched – we could not keep the trail.
 Three times again my cabin home I found,
 Half hoping she might be there, safe and sound;
 But each time ‘twas an unavailing care:
 My house had lost its soul; she was not there!
 When climbing the wet trees, next morning sun
 Laughed at the ruin that the night had done,
 Bleeding and drenched – by toil and sorrow bent –
 Back to what used to be my home I went.
 But, as I neared our little clearing-ground
 Listen! I heard the cowbell’s tinkling sound;
 The cabin door was just a bit ajar;
 It gleamed upon my glad eyes like a star!
 ‘Brave heart,’ I said, ‘for such a fragile form!
 She made them guide her homeward through the storm!’
 Such pangs of joy I never felt before
 ‘You’ve come!’ I shouted, and rushed through the door.
 ‘Yes, she had come – and gone again. She lay
 With all her young life crushed and wrenched away –
 Lay the heart-ruins of home among
 Not far from where I killed her with my tongue.
 The rain drops glittered mid her hairs’ long strands,
 The forest thorns had torn her feet and hands,
 And midst the tears – brave tears – that one could trace
 Upon the pale but sweetly resolute face,
 I once again the mournful words could read –
 ‘I’ve tried to do my best – I have indeed!’ ...
 “Boys flying kites haul in their white-winged birds;
 You can’t do that when you’re flying words.
 ‘Careful with fire,’ is good advice, we know:
 ‘Careful with words,’ is ten times doubly so.
 Thoughts unexpressed may sometimes fall back dead;
 But God Himself can’t kill them once they’re said.”

I have remembered that last verse of the poem for at least 30 years now. Each time I have heard it or read it, it has brought me to tears, even now writing it in this article. And yet, I still struggle myself with impatience and my words. And with every thoughtless, angry, and unkind word spoken, I am reminded of the question: What does it say about my relationship with Jesus Christ?

“God desires your words to be life-giving. Not a word of irritation is to be spoken. However provoked you may feel, keep back every word that would stir up the evil in another heart. ... Let every word you speak bless and elevate.” *The Voice in Speech and Song*, 144, 145

“The love of God in the heart will always lead us to speak gentle words. ‘Charity (love) suffereth long and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil. Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth.’” *Ibid.*, 146

“Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles.” Proverbs 21:23

Friends, let us all remember that our mouths only speak what is in our hearts. If we have not surrendered ourselves to the in-working of the Holy Spirit, then there will be no change and we will continue to speak evil. We must cry out to the Lord, “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, Oh Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.” Psalm 19:14

“As God works upon the heart by His Holy Spirit, man must cooperate with Him. The thoughts must be bound about, restricted, withdrawn from branching out and contemplating things that will only weaken and defile the soul. The thoughts must be pure, the meditations of the heart must be clean, if the words of the mouth are to be words acceptable to heaven, and helpful to your associates. ... ‘For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.’” *The Review and Herald*, June 12, 1888

[All emphasis supplied] [LM](#)

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God's Test or Satan's Temptation?

By John R. Pearson

On January 31, 2020, I had triple bypass surgery. I praise the Lord that the problem was discovered before I had a heart attack and that there was no damage to my heart muscle. That incident, though, made me consider my living situation—particularly with respect to my children and grandchildren. They all live a thousand miles away in Tucson, Arizona, and for several reasons I wanted to be closer to them.

First, if I ever had another serious physical problem, I thought it would be better if I were close to them so that they could provide any help I might need. But secondly, I am concerned for their salvation. I felt—and still feel—that being more involved in their daily lives might have a beneficial effect on their spiritual growth.

After pondering those factors and other considerations, I began a search for a place to buy in Tucson. I engaged the same real estate agent who had helped me with a previous property sale and initiated the search for a two-bedroom condominium.



After a bit of searching, my agent found a great unit in a small complex of 20 units near Saguaro National Park. It had a huge swimming pool, which I thought would be a great magnet for my kids and grandkids. I made an offer, which the buyer accepted; so I took a few days off from work and went to Tucson for the inspection prior to the close of the deal.

While the inspection was in process, I walked around the complex and met a man who it turned out had lived there for a year or so. He loved the place because “everything you need is within walking distance—both a McDonald’s and a Burger King.” That got me to thinking about what I *really* needed and was reminded of the abundant counsel we are given about leaving the cities.

I am truly blessed to be currently living in a rural environment. Deer and turkey regularly walk through my yard. I often hear coyotes howling at night. How foolish it seemed to go against counsel and move to a city of almost a million people!

So I backed out of the deal.

A few months later I was praying for guidance, still harboring the desire to move closer to family and freely ignoring the counsel that the Lord had already provided through His testimonies to live in the country.

In hindsight, I was doing what many have done who recognize the Sabbath truth for the first time and pray, “Lord, if you want me to keep Saturday as the Sabbath, give me a sign.” He’s not going to do that. He’s made it very plain in His word that He wants His faithful followers to observe and keep holy the seventh-day Sabbath.

Now let me tell you how I continued to rationalize my desire to do what I wanted to do.

Tucson is surrounded by mountains on four sides: the Catalina Mountains, the Rincons, the Santa Ritas and the Tucson Mountains. West of the Tucson Mountains, about a 30-minute



*Saguaro
National
Park East and
Rincon Mountains,
Arizona.*

drive from the heart of Tucson and a 45-minute drive from my children, is an area called Picture Rocks. It is an area with an eclectic assortment of residences, most on a minimum of an acre of land. So I thought, Why not check there? It might provide what I wanted—being close to family and in a relatively rural location.

So I booted up Zillow.com, typed in the ZIP code for Picture Rocks and there was what seemed to be the perfect place. It was a two-bedroom home with an office addition and a hobby room. There were two good-sized outbuildings, one of which was insulated and air conditioned. It sat on an acre and a quarter of land and had an abundance of irrigated fruit trees. It was a complete fulfillment of what I wanted.

I called up my real estate agent and asked him to check it out for me. He called me and said that it was a real oasis and in excellent condition, but, while he was there looking at it, there were several other interested parties checking it out as well. He said that if I really wanted it, I would have to offer more than the asking price. So I offered almost \$3,000 above the listed price. My agent said that the seller was going to review all offers on the following Wednesday afternoon.

While I was waiting for his call, I kept trying to ignore the counsel to leave the cities. I would be close to my family, only 30 minutes from town yet with a mountain range in between. The yearning heart can easily overrule an otherwise rational mind.

Then as I was thinking about being closer to my family, the Holy Spirit kept reminding me of the quote from *Adventist Home* that I printed out and placed in the edge of the picture frame holding a photo of my three children:

“We must not center our affections on worldly relatives, who have no desire to learn the truth. We may seek in every way, while associated with them, to let our light shine; but our words, our deportment, our customs and practices, should not in any sense be molded by their ideas and customs. We are to show forth the truth in all our intercourse with them. If we cannot do this, the less association we have with them the better it will be for our spirituality.” Op. Cit., 462. (See also *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 543.)

All this time, I was also thinking of Balaam, the prophet who kept asking the Lord to let him do something that he wanted to do, but that the Lord had initially made clear to him He didn’t

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Colossians

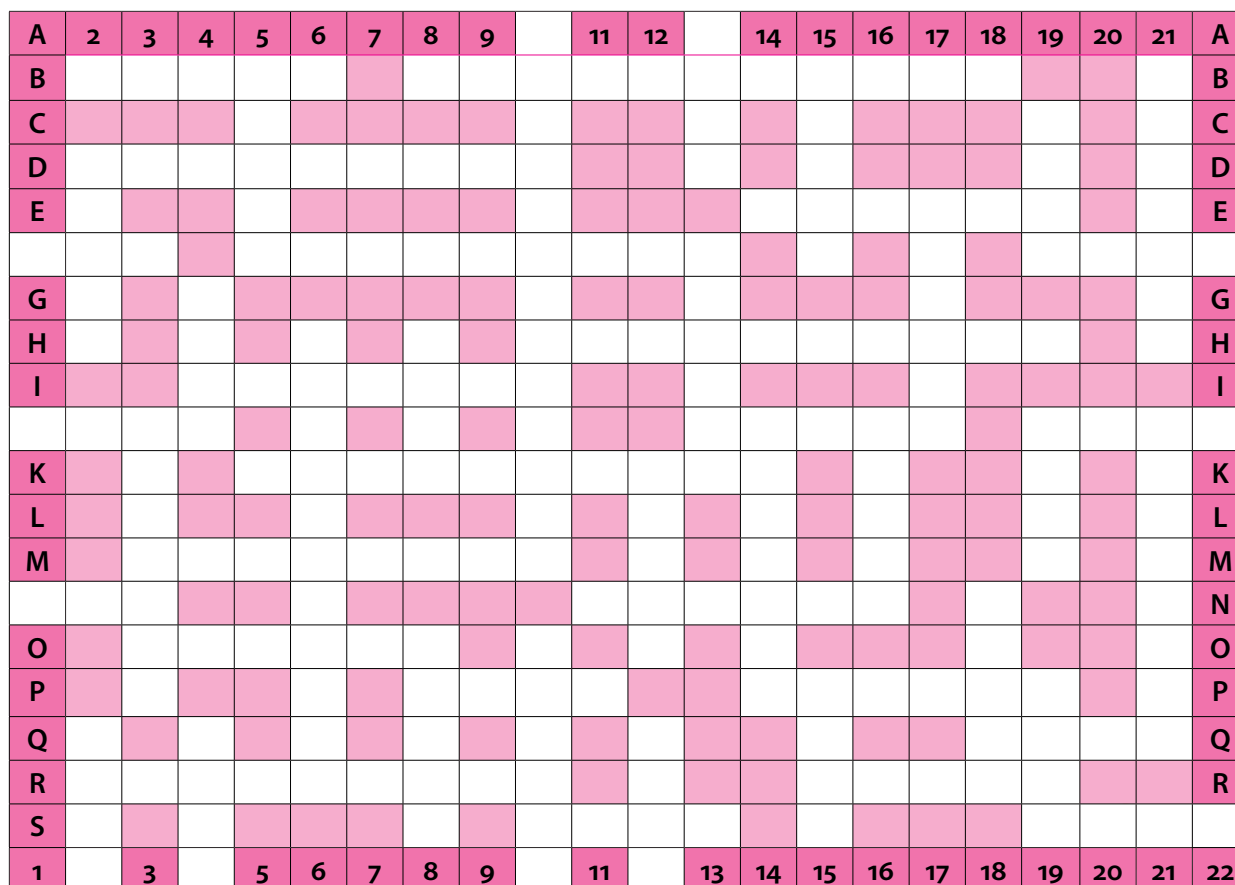
Clues – KJV

Across

- B2 If we are faithful until the second coming, we shall be with Christ in3:4
 B8 Baptism represents the of the penalty of our sins (two words)2:12-14
 D2 We should be quick to display this attitude toward others3:13
 E14 As a converted Christian, we should put this on (two words)3:10
 F1 The complete understanding of Christ's mission was from ages1:26
 F5 In Christ and the Father are hid all the of wisdom and knowledge2:2, 3
 F19 When we have put off our old man of sin, we will not have his (singular)3:9
 H10 As a converted Christian, we should be this towards others3:13
 I4 Fathers should never do this to their children3:21
 J1 Everything we do or say should be done in the of Jesus Christ3:17
 J13 Jesus Christ is this of the Father1:13-15
 J19 As a converted Christian, this should be hid with Christ in God3:3
 K5 We can avoid the wrath of God by never indulging affection3:5, 6
 M3 We can be doing this with hymns and spiritual songs3:16
 N1 As a converted Christian, we should never do this3:9
 N11 Paul: We that you be filled with spiritual understanding1:9
 O3 As a converted Christian, we should be this in Christ2:7
 P8 We can avoid the wrath of God by never indulging desire3:5
 P14 We are no longer bound by those Levitical precepts which were a2:17
 Q18 We must constantly be on our guard lest we fall victim of deceit2:8
 R2 Though once from God by sin, we can still be reconciled to Him by Christ!1:21
 R15 We should never worship these (singular)2:18
 S10 What children must do to their parents3:20
 S19 Through Christian love our hearts can be together with fellow believers2:2

Down

- A10 As a converted Christian, we should display this character trait3:12
 A13 As a converted Christian, we should strive to know the complete of God1:9
 B5 Christ's throne is on the side of God.3:1
 B15 God will accept us whether we are or any other nationality3:11
 B21 As a converted Christian, we should strive to be this4:12
 C19 Charity (love) is the of our perfectness3:14
 D2 Paul was thankful for their in Christ Jesus1:3, 4
 E17 As a converted Christian, we will never display this3:8
 F13 What wives must do to their husbands3:18
 G4 If we remain grounded and settled in the truth, we should not lose this1:23
 H6 Truly converted Christians will never indulge in this3:5
 H8 We should pray for a of opportunity to open to share the gospel4:3
 J3 "Christ in us" and the hope of another life was this to the Gentiles1:27
 J14 As a converted Christian, we should reveal this in all our relations3:12
 J16 We should sing with this in our hearts to the Lord3:16
 J19 What husbands must do to their wives3:19
 J21 Rising in baptism represents our sins being this2:12, 13

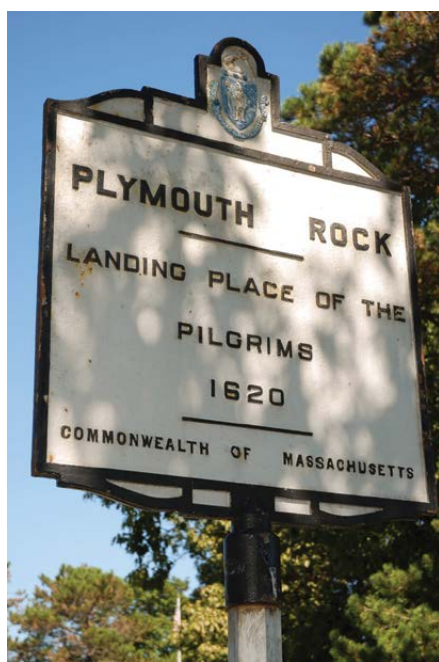


Answer Key:

22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
I	N	K	D	A	V	B	O	H	V	N	T	S	L	S	R	A	V	L	I	T	R
D	N	I	V	A	E	S	V	A	N	E	I	T	R	S	D	O	I	N	A	V	R
P	E	W	O	D	A	H	S	L	I	L	I	A	I	A	P	O	I	N	A	V	R
O	A	B	E	R	W	D	E	T	O	R	A	O	I	L	O	I	N	A	V	R	R
N	I	A	E	R	S	I	R	E	D	E	S	I	R	E	D	E	S	I	R	E	D
W	G	H	C	C	G	N	I	H	C	T	E	A	V	A	N	N	I	S	L	K	R
L	R	A	V	A	R	N	N	N	I	I	S	L	K	R	A	V	A	R	N	N	N
K	O	O	R	D	I	E	N	R	D	O	N	I	I	A	I	S	L	K	R	A	V
E	F	T	I	E	M	A	G	E	R	O	E	E	M	A	G	E	R	O	E	E	M
I	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	
H	T	G	N	I	R	A	R	B	E	A	R	B	E	A	R	B	E	A	R	B	E
G	C	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	
D	E	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	
E	F	N	V	W	W	E	N	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	
D	R	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
C	E	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	
B	P	I	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
A	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2

- K12 As a converted Christian, we should never display this3:8
- N18 We should set our affection on things3:2
- O8 We can be reconciled to God because of the of Jesus1:21, 22
- O10 We should display this when dealing with non-Christians4:5
- P15 Christ is this of the church1:16-18
- P19 Our daily with the Lord should be filled with good works1:10
- Q2 All our speech should be seasoned with4:6
- Q4 As a converted Christian, we should have humbleness of this3:12
- Q12 To be accepted by God, it matters not whether you are a prisoner or3:11

At the First Thanksgiving



The summer days were full for the busy Pilgrims. In the fields there were only twenty men and a few boys to do all the work. There was corn to hoe, and there were gardens to weed and care for. When time could be spared from this work, there were barns to be built, and the fort to finish.

The brave men worked from morning till night preparing for the next long winter. The sun and the rain helped them. The crops grew wonderfully, and soon the hillsides were green with growing corn, and wheat, and vegetables.

When the warm days of early summer came, there were sweet wild strawberries on the sunny hills. A little later, groups of boys and girls filled their baskets with

wild raspberries and juicy blackberries from the bushes on the edge of the forest. Sugar was too scarce to be used for jellies and preserves, but trays of the wild fruits were placed in the sun to dry for winter use.

The fresh green of the wheat fields began to turn a golden brown. The harvest was ripening. Before long the air rang with the steady beat of the flail, as the Pilgrims threshed their first crop of golden grain.

Soon the corn was ready to be cut and stacked in shocks. Then came the early frosts, and the Pilgrims hurried to gather the sweet wild grapes from vines which grew over bushes and low trees near the brook. The frost had opened the prickly burs and hard brown coats of the nuts, and every day Squanto went with a merry group of boys to gather chestnuts, hickory nuts, beechnuts, and walnuts.

At last the harvest was all gathered in. The Pilgrims rejoiced as they saw the bountiful supply of food for the winter. Some of the golden ears of corn they hung above the fireplace to dry for seed. The rest they shelled and buried in the ground, as Squanto showed them how to do.

As the evenings grew longer and cooler, the Pilgrims often went in to spend an hour or two at Elder Brewster's. The men piled great logs upon the fire. Then the girls and boys drew the chairs and benches nearer the huge fireplace, and all would sit in the twilight and talk.

Sometimes they spoke of old times in England, or Holland, but usually it was

of their work and the life in their new home. On this November evening everyone talked of the harvest which had just been stored away.

"Friends," said Governor Bradford, "God has blessed our summer's work, and has sent us a bountiful harvest. He brought us safe to this new home and protected us through the terrible winter. It is fit we have a time for giving thanks to God for His mercies to us. What say you? Shall we not have a week of feasting and of thanksgiving?"

"A week of thanksgiving!" said the Pilgrims. "Yes, let us rest from our work and spend the time in gladness and thanksgiving. God has been very good to us."

So it was decided that the next week should be set aside for the harvest feast of thanksgiving, and that their Indian friends should be asked to join them.

Early the next morning Squanto was sent to invite Massasoit with his brother and friends to come the following Thursday.

When he returned, a party of men went into the woods for two days of hunting. They would need many deer and wild ducks to feed so large a company. When the men came back from their hunt they brought a bountiful supply of deer, rabbits, wild ducks, and turkeys.

The next few days were busy ones in Plymouth kitchens. There were the great brick ovens to heat, and bread to bake and game to dress.

"Priscilla shall be chief cook," said Mistress Brewster. "No one can make such delicious dishes as she."

As soon as it was light on Wednesday morning, a roaring fire was built in the huge fireplace in Elder Brewster's kitchen. A great pile of red-hot coals was placed in the brick oven in the chimney.

Then Mary Chilton and Priscilla tied their aprons around them, tucked up their sleeves, and put white caps over their hair. Their hands fairly flew as they measured and sifted the flour, or rolled and cut cookies and tarts.

Over at another table Remember Allerton and Constance Hopkins washed and chopped dried fruits for pies and puddings. Out on the sunny doorstep Love Brewster and Francis Billington sat cracking nuts and picking out the plump kernels for the cakes Priscilla was making. What a merry place the big kitchen was!

In the afternoon all of the girls and boys went to the beach. While they were gone, some of the men, brought boards, hammers, and saws and built two long tables out-of-doors near the common-house. Here the men would eat, and a table would be spread in the elder's house for the women and children.

It was Thanksgiving morning, and the Pilgrims were up early to prepare for the guests they had invited to the feast of thanksgiving. The air was mild and pleasant, and a soft purple haze lay upon field and wood.

"We could not have had a more beautiful day for our feast," thought Miles Standish, as he climbed the hill to fire the sunrise gun.

Just then wild yells and shouts told the astonished Pilgrims that their guests had arrived. Down the hill from the forest came Massasoit, his brother, and nearly a hundred of his friends, dressed in their finest skins, and in holiday paint and feathers.

The captain and a number of other men went out to welcome the Indians, and the women hurried to prepare breakfast for them.

Squanto and John Alden built a big fire near the brook, and soon a broth was simmering in the great kettle.

The roll of the drum called all to prayers, for the Pilgrim's never began a day without asking God's blessing upon it. "The white men talk to the Great Spirit," Squanto explained to Chief Massasoit. "They thank Him for His good gifts." The Indians seemed to understand, and listened quietly to the prayers.

They all sat down at the long tables. The women were soon busy passing great bowls of broth to each hungry guest. There were piles of brown bread and sweet cakes; there were dishes of turnips and boiled meat, and later, bowls of pudding made from Indian corn.

While they were eating, one of the Indians brought a great basket filled with popped corn and poured it out upon the table. The Pilgrims had never seen popcorn before. They filled a large bowl with this new dainty and set it on the children's table.

When breakfast was over, there was another service of thanksgiving, led by Elder Brewster. Then Governor Bradford took his friends to the grassy common where they would have games.

A number of little stakes were driven into the ground, and here several groups of Indians and Pilgrims played quoits, the Indians often throwing the greater number of rings over the stakes.

Then the Indians entertained their friends with some wonderful feats of running and jumping. After this Governor Bradford invited the Indians to sit down on the grass and watch the soldiers drill on the common.

The Indians sat down, not knowing what to expect, for they had never before seen soldiers drill. Suddenly they heard the sound of trumpets, and the roll of drums. Down the hill marched the little army of only nineteen men, the flag of old England waving above their heads.


To right and to left they marched, in single file or by twos and threes, then at a word from the captain, fired their muskets into the air. The Indians were not expecting this, and some sprang to their feet in alarm. Many of the Indians looked frightened.

"The white men are our friends," Massasoit told them. "They will not harm us."

Soon the last day of the feast arrived. How busy the women were preparing this greatest dinner! Of course the men and boys helped too. They brought water from the brook, and wood for the fire.

You should have seen the great dishes of purple grapes, the nuts and the steaming puddings. The table seemed to groan under its load of good things. The Indians had never seen such a feast. "Ugh!" said Massasoit, as he ate the puffy dumplings in Priscilla's stew. "Ugh! The Great Spirit loves His white children."

So the happy day ended, and the Indians returned to their wigwams. The Pilgrims never forgot their first Thanksgiving day. Each year when the harvests were gathered, they would set aside a day for thanking God for His good gifts, and for years their Indian friends joined in this feast.

Stories of the Pilgrims, Margaret B. Pumphrey, ©1991, 155-163. 



Parable of the Straying Sheep

The parable of the straying sheep should be treasured as a motto in every household. The divine Shepherd leaves the ninety and nine, and goes out into the wilderness to seek the one that is lost. There are thickets, quagmires, and dangerous crevices in the rocks, and the Shepherd knows that if the sheep is in any of these places, a friendly hand must help it out. As He hears its bleating afar off, He encounters any and every difficulty that He may save His sheep that is lost. When He discovers the lost one, He does not greet it with reproaches. He is only glad that He has found it alive. With firm yet gentle hand He parts the briers or takes it from the mire; tenderly He lifts it to His shoulders and bears it back to the fold. The pure, sinless Redeemer bears the sinful, the unclean.

The Sin Bearer carries the befouled sheep, yet so precious is His burden that He rejoices, singing: "I have found My sheep which was lost" (Luke 15:6). Let every one of you consider that your individual self has thus been borne upon Christ's shoulders. Let none entertain a masterly spirit, a self-righteous, criticizing spirit; for not one sheep would ever have entered the fold

if the Shepherd had not undertaken the painful search in the desert. The fact that one sheep was lost was enough to awaken the sympathy of the Shepherd and start Him on His quest.

This speck of a world was the scene of the incarnation and suffering of the Son of God. Christ did not go to worlds unfallen, but He came to this world, all seared and marred with the curse. The outlook was not favorable, but most discouraging. Yet "He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgment in the earth" (Isaiah 42:4). We must bear in mind the great joy manifested by the Shepherd at the recovery of the lost. He calls upon His neighbors: "Rejoice with Me; for I have found My sheep which was lost" (Luke 15:6). And all heaven echoes the note of joy. The Father Himself joys over the rescued one with singing. What a holy ecstasy of joy is expressed in this parable! That joy it is your privilege to share.

Are you, who have this example before you, cooperating with Him who is seeking to save the lost? Are you collaborators with Christ? Can you not for His sake endure suffering, sacrifice, and trial? There is opportunity for doing good to the souls of the youth

and the erring. If you see one whose words or attitude shows that he is separated from God, do not blame him. It is not your work to condemn him, but come close to his side to give him help. Consider the humility of Christ, and His meekness and lowliness, and work as He worked, with a heart full of sanctified tenderness. "At the same time, saith the Lord, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people. Thus saith the Lord, The people which were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; even Israel, when I went to cause him to rest. The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee" (Jeremiah 31:1-3).

In order for us to work as Christ worked, self must be crucified. It is a painful death; but it is life, life to the soul. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isaiah 57:15). *Testimonies*, vol. 6, 124, 125 **LM**



Be Thankful

At this time of thanksgiving, let's look at what the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy say regarding thankfulness.

"In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

1 Thessalonians 5:18

"Educate the soul to cheerfulness, to thankfulness, and to the expression of gratitude to God for the great love wherewith He hath loved us." *Child Guidance*, 146

"Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever."

1 Chronicles 16:34

"Come to the Lord with hearts overflowing with thankfulness for past and present mercies, and manifest your appreciation of God's bounties by bringing to Him your thank offerings, your freewill offerings, and your trespass offerings." *The Review and Herald*, January 4, 1881

"... giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Ephesians 5:20

"Of all things that are sought, cherished, and cultivated, there is nothing so valuable in the sight of God as a pure heart, a disposition imbued with thankfulness and peace." *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 559

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." Psalm 103:2

"Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Habakkuk 3:18

"O come, let us sing unto the Lord! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. For the Lord is the great God, and a great King above all gods." Psalm 95:1-3

"I love the Lord. ... I love Him because He first loved me. He gave His life for me. ... It seemed to me that we should have praise seasons, and that constantly our hearts should be filled so full with thankfulness to God, that they would overflow in words of praise and deeds of love. We should cultivate a spirit of thankfulness." *Sermons and Talks*, vol. 2, 234

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6, 7

"The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart greatly rejoices, and with my song I will praise Him." Psalm 28:7

In joy or in sorrow, we have so much to be thankful for. Our God has prepared a way that we might once again be united with Him as His children. He supplies all our needs. He comforts, He forgives, He loves.

Dear Lord, let this be our prayer, "Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands! Serve the Lord with gladness; come before His presence with singing. Know that the Lord, He is God; it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations." Psalm 100 LM



Your Letters

"Thank you again for the DVDs and *LandMarks* magazine. May the Lord bless you all."

—LF, Florida

"As you know, I love my *LandMarks*. I so look forward to the Crossword puzzle each month."

—JA, Colorado

"Praying for you. Many thanks for the *LandMarks* and CDs."

—KR, California

"May the Lord keep on blessing your ministries to continue spreading the word. I have learned and am learning a lot from the *LandMarks* magazine and by reading and working the crossword puzzle. It is aiding my understanding of the word."

—JT, Florida

November Sermon of the Month

The Fourfold Witness of Jesus' Divinity

By John J. Grosboll

What did the disciples testify about Jesus? What does the world testify about Jesus? What is your testimony about Jesus?

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

From the Desk of Pastor John J. Grosboll

November 2021

Dear Friend,

What is the most powerful witness that you can give to the truth of God's word and the plan of salvation? What can you do to arouse the most compelling motives in the minds and hearts of others to follow Christ and to be prepared for His return?

Here are a few ideas to try:

"The most powerful sermon that can be given the unbelieving world in recommendation of our faith is a well-disciplined family." *Pamphlet 123*

"Let us remember that a Christlike life is the most powerful argument that can be advanced in favor of Christianity." *Testimonies*, vol. 9, 21

"The truth is designed to sanctify the receiver, to fashion and mold the entire man, externally as well as internally, by abasing pride and disposing his heart to be kind and amiable and condescending. Yes, the religion of Christ is a system of the truest politeness, and its triumphs are complete when a world may look on a people professing godliness with a united front, believers showing habitual tenderness of feeling and kindness of deportment and sincere regard for the reputation of each other. ... Tender mercy is to soften whatever is harsh in the disposition and to smooth, refine, and elevate whatever is coarse and rough in deportment. Love and faith carried out in our words and actions bear a testimony to the world that they cannot resist. It is the most powerful ministry that a church can have." *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 15, 128

"The second great commandment, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,' will be faithfully kept by all true Christians. Our influence will be perpetuated. Our example, whether good or evil, will live when we are no more. Then let us so live that those with whom we associate may see and feel that we are governed by the divine rule, full of wisdom and love. This is the strongest argument that can be presented in favor of the religion we profess. A pure, unselfish Christian life will prove to all beholders that there is a divine reality in the gospel of Jesus Christ." *The Review and Herald*, September 6, 1881

"The truth expressed in living, unselfish deeds is the strongest argument for Christianity." *Gospel Health*, June 1, 1897

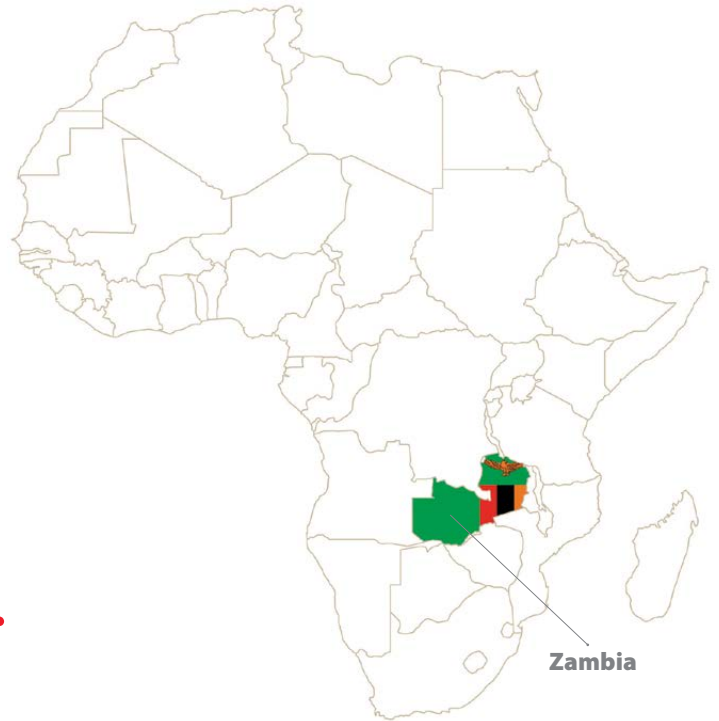
Your brother in Christ,



John J. Grosboll

13th Sabbath Offering

Camp Meeting in Zambia



Our camp meeting was initially scheduled to begin on Sunday, August 15, 2021. We usually time our camp meetings in a way that they coincide with the dates that the government schools are closed to allow for students and teachers to attend.

However, due to the ravaging cases of Covid-19, the time table this year was not certain. When the government suddenly decided to open the schools, we were forced to adjust the dates. Due to this crisis, we had to think quickly and decided to hold camp meeting from August 1st through the 7th. This meant that Pastor Nunez was unable to be our main speaker and many people were unable to attend.

We were, however, blessed during the week as we studied the subjects of the sanctuary, medical missionary work,

stewardship, and family life. Our focus was on Christ's ministration in the most holy place of the sanctuary of the new covenant in heaven as found in Daniel 8:14, Revelation 15:8, and Revelation 11:15–19, the Spirit of Prophecy and many other references.

Our camp meeting resulted in an unprecedented number of first time attendees from the conference church and from other districts. The last night of the meetings, I made an altar call inviting those who wanted to be baptized to come forward and fifteen people responded. On Sabbath these souls were baptized in a nearby reservoir. The camp meeting ended with a communion service. **LM**

Henry Mwesa



The Zambia camp meeting was concluded with baptisms.

from the
Mission Fields



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



New Headquarters *in Guadalajara, Mexico*

By Pastor Domingo Nunez



The Seventh-day Adventist gospel message came to Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico, 95 years ago. But over the years it has not been progressing due to significant opposition from the Catholic Church and many other churches opposed to keeping the Sabbath.

Now after almost a hundred years, the Lord has provided the opportunity to buy a building in the city of Guadalajara. For the past few years, we have been praying to God to find a way to provide a building for us, and He has answered our prayers. The legal paperwork is being processed and the purchase of the building will soon be finalized.

This will be a multi-purpose building to house not only a worship center, but also both the radio station and television studio. The local radio station, supported by Steps to Life, has presented the three

angels' messages for the last three years in the heart of Guadalajara. With this building the programs will be broadcast every week and will continue to enable those listening to call in to the station after every program to request Bible studies and to obtain information regarding the local church so they can meet with local Seventh-day Adventist believers to worship the Lord on the Sabbath.

The building will also contain a library and will house the training program center for Bible workers, evangelists, medical missionaries and for the training of church leaders and lay pastors so that they can preach and teach the gospel throughout Mexico. There are many who want to take the training from Chiapas, Mexico City, the state of Guerrero and Oaxaca Mexico. This new building will help provide a stable environment for

these individuals to learn and become workers for God.

The dimensions of the building are 50 feet by 130 feet with three floors, each with 6,500 square feet, for a total of 19,500 square feet for the entire building. The first floor will house the church, restrooms, classrooms, the library, offices, a multi-purpose conference room, and a kitchen. The second floor will house the classrooms for the training program, the radio and television studios, restrooms, and another large, multi-purpose conference room that can be used for zoom meetings and conference meetings. The third floor will house a full kitchen, large dining room, and living quarters for the Bible workers.

We need your continued support and prayers for this challenging endeavor so that all will be accomplished to the honor and glory of God. **LM**

Frost Flowers



Take a walk in the early morning, in the late fall or early winter, at or after the first hard freeze and you just might see a frost flower.

Frost flowers are a group of delicate clusters of ice crystals that form directly from water vapor. They are produced when freezing weather conditions are present, but the ground is not yet frozen. The water in certain plant stems begins to freeze and expand, resulting in long, thin cracks along the length of the stem. Through a process called “capillary action” (the ability of water to flow in narrow spaces without assistance), water is drawn through these cracks and freezes upon contact with the frigid air. The form the flower takes depends on where

the slits are in the stem and the amount of pressure exerted, so each flower is unique.

Interesting side note: Leonardo di Vinci was the first to record the observation of capillary action.

As more water is drawn through the cracks, the thin ice layers are pushed farther from the stem resulting in the formation of a thin “petal.”

Another form of frost flower is called needle ice. These are needle-shaped columns of ice formed by groundwater when the soil temperature is above freezing, but the surface air temperature is below freezing. In the same capillary action, water is forced up out of the ground, growing into these needle-like columns.




Frost flowers are very delicate and will break when touched. They melt when exposed to sunlight and are found in shaded areas in the early morning hours.

Frost flowers aren’t found everywhere, but can be found where annual plants with thin stems such as frostweed are found.

A frost flower is created by the internal pressures and forces exerted upon its host plant. It is fragile, short-lived. Neither it nor the host plant survive the winter’s “death” and will not live again in the spring. But we are placed under divine pressure so that those things that must be removed from our lives, enabling us to “die” and be born again into a beautiful new creation, can be accomplished.

“Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.” James 1:12 NASB

Sources: *Wikipedia and Phys.org* 

Q:

What does it mean to be unequally yoked?

A:

“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?” 2 Corinthians 6:14

Imagine two oxen yoked together. One larger, more mature, accustomed to the yoke after many years of service in it; the other, younger, new to the yoke with little experience. How well do these two very different oxen work together? Does the young ox yield to the leading of the experienced ox or does it fight the yoke, determined to have its own way?

If we are yoked with the world, then we cannot be yoked up with Christ. Ellen White writes, “All combinations with unbelievers that bind as a yoke must be broken.” *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 8, 108. These words apply to any association with an unbeliever that gives them a prevailing influence over us.

“When we accepted Christ as our Redeemer, we accepted the condition of becoming laborers together with God. We made a covenant with Him to be wholly for the Lord. ... Every follower of Christ stands pledged to dedicate all his powers, of mind and soul and body, to Him who has paid the ransom money for our soul.

“In your connection with worldly societies, are you keeping your covenant with God? ...

“Are you serving, honoring, and magnifying God, or are you dishonoring Him and sinning against Him? Are you gathering with Christ or scattering abroad?” *Evangelism*, 618

If we are yoked with Christ, He will guide and teach us what we need to know to labor with Him. Our experience may be small and we may have much to learn. For our part, we may be weaker, but if we do our best and follow His lead, His strength will augment our



Being unequally yoked applies to any association with an unbeliever that gives him/her a prevailing influence over us.

weakness until we are able to follow Him wholly and completely.

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

Matthew 11:28, 29 **LM**



Gratitude

How can I sing praises when things are so bad?
“It is not happy people who are thankful; it is thankful people who are happy.”

The scientific evidence is conclusive when it comes to mood, outlook, and health. Happy people live 7–10 years longer than unhappy people. Additionally, optimistic people have a 77% lower risk of heart disease than pessimistic people. But how can you be happier and more optimistic in the world we live in today?

“Stop feeling sorry for yourself,” we are often told. And while it can be hard to avoid self-pity entirely, mentally strong people choose to *exchange* self-pity for *gratitude*.

Gratitude is more than just an adjective. It is a habit and practice that may actually change your perception of well-being. We all have the ability and opportunity to cultivate gratitude. Rather than complain about the things we think we deserve, we should take a few moments to focus on all that we have. Developing an “attitude of gratitude” is one of the simplest ways to improve your satisfaction with life.

“Gratitude is good medicine,” says Robert A. Emmons, Ph.D., a professor of psychology at the University of California, Davis and author of *The Little Book of Gratitude*.

“Clinical trials indicate that the practice of gratitude can have dramatic and lasting effects in a person’s life. . . .”

It appears that being grateful is the gift that seriously keeps on giving.

Here’s a simple way to get started:

Write these down before you go to bed or share them around the dinner table. In five minutes, you can practice gratitude from the heart.

1. Health: What did your body do for you today?

Did you know you take about eight million breaths a year? Your feet can take you up a mountain; your arms can hold someone you love. Take a minute to marvel at the finely-tuned machinery of your body, and be thankful for the steps you take every day to keep it safe and healthy.

2. Eat: What did you feed your body to nourish yourself today?

Was it an old favorite, something you made or something new and different? If you eat three meals a day, you’ll eat about a thousand meals this year! Take a minute to savor something especially yummy.



3. Activity: What did you do that you really enjoyed today?

Did you give it your all when exercising, did you finally finish that craft project you started a while ago or did you find a quiet moment while sitting in traffic to reflect? Take a minute to think back on one particularly awesome moment.

4. Relationship: To whom do you look forward to connecting with?

Is it someone who always has a smile for you, has your back or makes you laugh until you cry, or maybe someone you haven’t seen in a long time? Take a minute to smile as you think about this special person.

5. Time: What are you doing right now?

Every single day you wake up with 24 brand new hours. The past is history, the future is a mystery and today is a gift. That’s why they call it the present! Take a minute to be thankful for the gift of time.

As God’s children, we will want to appreciate the gifts that He has given to us. Daily we will express our gratitude to Him.

“Gratitude, rejoicing, benevolence, trust in God’s love and care—these are health’s greatest safeguard.

“The power of the will and the importance of self-control, both in the preservation and in the recovery of health, the depressing and even ruinous effect of anger, discontent, selfishness, or impurity, and, on the other hand, the marvelous life-giving power to be found in cheerfulness, unselfishness, gratitude, should also be shown.

“There is a physiological truth—truth that we need to consider—in the scripture, ‘A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.’ Proverbs 17:22

“The true principles of Christianity open before all a source of inestimable happiness.

“We should encourage a cheerful, hopeful, peaceful frame of mind; for our health depends upon our so doing.” *My Life Today*, 151

Sources: heart.org; perfectmadness.com/blog/not-happy-people-thankful-thankful-people-happy; Powerofpositivity.com and *Psychology Today*. Amy Morin is a psychotherapist and the author of *13 Things Mentally Strong People Don’t Do*. **LM**

Judy Rebarchek is a member of the LandMarks team. She can be contacted at: judyrebarchek@stepstolife.org

I Came to Fulfill, Not Destroy

By John J. Grosboll

Many people today are very confused about what the word *love* means. They think it refers to sexual passion or a wonderful romantic feeling, but actually, it is a spiritual condition that multitudes of people have not experienced.

There was a time when Moses, the man of God, made a request of the Lord, “Show me Your glory.” Exodus 33:18. The Lord said that he would be allowed to see as much as it was possible for him to see and live (Exodus 33, 34). In Exodus 34 when the Lord answered his prayer, it says, “And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, ‘The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.’” verses 6, 7, *first part*. So the Lord on this occasion told Moses what His character is like. The Lord clearly articulated the principle of the kingdom of heaven when He gave the children of Israel His law upon Mount Sinai. That law is an enunciation of the principle of love.



The Bible says repeatedly that the person who has love in his heart will keep the ten commandments (1 John 5:2, 3; Romans 13). The giving of the ten commandments was a reiteration to the children of Israel and to all the peoples of this earth, of the law that governs the kingdom of the heavens. This law was ordained in the hand of a Mediator. It was spoken by Him who has the power to change the hearts of men to bring them into harmony with the divine principles.

God had revealed the purpose of giving this law to the children of Israel before He gave it to them on Mount Sinai (Exodus 22:31). The Lord said to Israel, "You are to be holy men to Me." The Bible says that no one can see the Lord, and no one can have eternal life if they are not holy (Hebrews 12:14). Without holiness we can never see the Lord.

The trouble was, and still is, that Israel did not perceive the spiritual nature of the law. It was seen as a series of things to do or not to do. Notice what the apostle Paul says in Romans 7:14: "For we know that the law is spiritual."

Too often Israel's professed obedience was simply an observance of forms, rituals, or ceremonies and not the surrender of the heart to the sovereignty of love. When Jesus Christ came to this earth, He represented to men what God is like in His character, His work, and His teachings, His holiness, His benevolence, and His paternal attributes. At the same time, He presented to them the worthlessness of mere ceremonial obedience. But when He did these things, the Jewish leaders did not understand what He was talking about, thinking He dwelt too lightly upon the requirements of the law, when He actually was setting before them the foundational principles on which the law is based.

Since these rulers were only looking at the externals and not at the principles underlying them, Jesus was accused of trying to overthrow the law. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus revealed in



*To
keep the
law of God in its
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reveal the character
of Jesus Christ.*

unmistakable language that this was not at all His purpose. He says in Matthew 5:17, 18: "Do not think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled."

Notice that it is Jesus Christ, the Creator of mankind, who is speaking. The Bible says very clearly that He created the world and upholds everything by the word of His power. He gave the law on Mount Sinai. He declared that it was not His purpose to set aside any of the precepts of the law, not even the smallest part of a letter of the law. When we study science or nature, whether something under a microscope or something in the heavens through a telescope, we know that everything in the natural world is under a law. Upon obedience to these natural laws, the order and the harmony of the natural world depend.

In the same way that there are laws that govern nature, there are also great principles of righteousness that control the lives of all created beings. And upon conformity to these righteous principles, the well-being of the entire universe de-

pends. Before this world was ever called into existence, God's law existed. The angels of heaven were governed by it and for the inhabitants of the earth to be in harmony with heaven, man also must be obedient to the divine statutes.

Psalms 103:20 says that the angels obey God's commandments. To man in Eden, Christ made known the precepts of the law. When Jesus came to earth, He made it clear that His mission was not to destroy the law, or even part of it. His purpose was, by His grace, to bring man back into obedience to the precepts of the law of God. The beloved apostle John, who listened as Jesus spoke these words on the Mount, writing many decades later under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, described this law as a perpetual obligation saying, "Sin is the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:4, and that whoever commits sin transgresses also the law. He makes it very clear that this law is not some new commandment. This law existed from the beginning (1 John 2:7), at creation, and was later reiterated on Mount Sinai.

Study the book of Genesis, and you will find that the people of that time understood the ten commandments and knew that to violate those principles was

“

Love is a spiritual condition that multitudes of people have not experienced.

wrong and worthy of death. They called the breaking of these principles sin. I encourage you to read through the book of Genesis and write down every time one of the principles of the ten commandments is mentioned.

So speaking of the law, Jesus said, “Do not think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.” Matthew 5:17. He uses the word *fulfill* in the same sense that He said to John the Baptist, “Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to *fulfill* all righteousness [that is, fulfill the measure of the law’s requirement, to give an example of perfect conformity to the will of God].”

Matthew 3:15

In the Old Testament we see the prophetic mission of the Messiah was to magnify the law, to make it honorable (Isaiah 42:21) and to show mankind its spiritual nature, to present its far-reaching principles and to make plain its eternal obligation. We see that Jesus does this in His sermon. He names the different commandments and shows that they extend not merely to outward observances, what you do or don’t do, but also to the heart and mind.

When we look at the character of Jesus, we see there a divine beauty, of whom the most noble, the most gentle among mankind are but a faint reflection. Concerning His character, the wise man Solomon wrote in prophecy concerning Him, that He is “chief among ten thousand. Yes, He is altogether lovely.” Song of Solomon 5:10, 16

When David saw Him in prophetic vision, he wrote, “You are fairer than the sons of men.” Psalm 45:2. Jesus is spoken of in the New Testament as the express image of the Father’s person, the brightness of His glory (Hebrews 1:3). And the self-denying Redeemer, throughout all of His pilgrimage of love on earth, was a living representation of the character of the law of God. To keep the law of God in its purpose and intent from the heart is to reveal the character of Jesus Christ. He said, “I have kept My Father’s

commandments.” John 15:10. He also said, “I do always those things that please Him.” John 8:29

Jesus made manifest in this world what heaven-born love is like and how it reveals itself. Christlike principles underlie the principles of the ten commandments. He said, “[T]ill heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle [that is, part of a letter] will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.” Matthew 5:18. In His own life and character, He showed the unchangeable nature of God’s law. He proved that by His grace God’s law can be perfectly obeyed by every son and daughter of Adam. He said, “And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail.” Luke 16:17

Jesus proved and taught that the law of God, the ten commandments, are unchangeable and will last forever. He did not teach that the law would be repealed or lose any of its authority, or that He had come to do away with it because the law of the Lord is perfect and it cannot be changed.

So long as heaven and earth continue, the holy principles of God’s law will remain.

It is impossible for sinful men, in themselves, to meet the standard of the law’s requirement. The apostle Paul said, “[T]he law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.” Romans 7:14. That is why you and I need the gospel. That is why Jesus came as our Redeemer. It was His mission, not only to pay the price in His own body for our sins, but to make us partakers of His divine nature (2 Peter 1:3, 4). It was His mission to bring us back into harmony with the law that governs the entire universe.

When we forsake our sins, when we choose to quit breaking God’s law and come to Jesus, and we see and accept Him as our Saviour from sin, as the Lord of our life, then the law is not done away with, but exalted. He then gives to us the Holy Spirit and enables us, by His grace and power, to live a life that is in harmony with His law. The apostle Paul says in Romans 3:31, “Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.” How is the law established? When



a person repents of his sin and chooses to forsake it, he realizes that he needs to come into harmony with the law that governs the whole universe of God, and Jesus gives him the Holy Spirit, enabling him to keep that law (Romans 8). Hebrews 10:16 says, “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them.” But you must take care, because if you receive the Holy Spirit and do not obey God, then you are insulting the Holy Spirit.

Now it is true that the systems of types and ceremonies that pointed to Christ as the Lamb of God that would take away the sin of the world would pass away at His death, but the principles of righteousness embodied in the ten commandments are just as unchangeable as God’s throne. Not one command has ever been annulled. Not one precept has been changed. Those principles were made known to man in paradise as the great law of life and those principles will exist unchanged in paradise restored. When Eden again blooms on the earth, God’s law of love will be observed by all.

Think of this: the seventh commandment says, “You shall not commit adultery.” It is one of the most widely broken commandments all over the world today. But even before the ten commandments were ever given, the people in the time of Genesis knew that it was wrong to commit adultery.

Joseph was a slave manager in Potiphar’s house, and the Bible says, “It came to pass after these things that his master’s wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, ‘Lie with me.’ But he refused and said to his master’s wife, ‘Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and



Adultery is one of the most widely broken commandments in the world today.

sin against God?’ So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her.” Genesis 39:7–10

As a result of his refusal to commit adultery, Joseph was thrown into prison. He would rather go to prison an innocent man than commit adultery. He said, “How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” Genesis 39:9

The Bible says that in heaven, God’s word is forever settled (Psalm 119:89). Nobody in heaven has any question about God’s law. Psalm 111:7, *last part*, 8, says, “All His precepts are sure. They stand fast forever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.”

Psalm 119:152 says, “Concerning Your testimonies, I have known of old that You have founded them forever.” If you really love God, you will keep His commandments. The apostle John says, “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.” 1 John 4:7, 8

How do you know that you really love God? First John 5:2, 3 says, “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His com-

mandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.”

The same problem existed in the days of the apostle John that we see in the Christian world today. People said that they loved God, but they hated their neighbor and they did not keep His commandments. John says in 1 John 3:7–11, “Little children, let no one deceive you [on this point]. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. 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. Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. For this is the message that you heard from the beginning.”

Oh, friend, is the love of God truly in your heart today? **LM**

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Continued from page 15

want him to do. The story is found in Numbers 22.

Inspiration offers this account of the story:

“Balaam inquired of God if he might curse Israel, because in so doing he had the promise of great reward. And God said, ‘Thou shalt not go;’ but he was urged by the messengers, and greater inducements were presented. Balaam had been shown the will of the Lord in this matter, but he was so eager for the reward

that he ventured to ask God the second time. The Lord permitted Balaam to go. Then he had a wonderful experience, but who would wish to be guided by such an experience? There are those who would understand their duty clearly if it were in harmony with their natural inclinations. Circumstances and reason may clearly indicate their duty; but when against their natural inclination, these evidences are frequently set aside. Then these persons will presume to go to God to learn their duty. But God will not be trifled with. He will permit such persons to follow the desires of their own hearts. Psalm 81:11, 12: ‘But My people would not hearken to My voice.’ ‘So I gave them up unto their own hearts’ lust: and they walked in their own counsels.’” *Testimonies*, vol. 3, 73

It dawned on me that I was on the verge of committing the same error that Balaam had done by walking in my own counsel. So I finally said, “Lord, Your will be done. Close the door firmly and decidedly if You would not be honored by my moving to Tucson. You know whether or not I would have a beneficial and lasting effect on my children’s

spiritual growth. I will accept whatever happens as Your will.”

Wednesday afternoon, my real estate agent called. “Bad news, John. The seller didn’t accept your offer. In fact, they accepted an offer that

was several thousand dollars below yours,” explaining that the offer they accepted was all cash. The seller wanted a quick close, which the cash offer made possible. I could not help but think that the Lord had intervened and structured circumstances to prevent me from

making a big mistake.

“Okay,” I thought. “The Lord has spoken.” Once I accepted that, I had a complete change of mindset. The draw of my family and the desire to move back to Tucson and the Sonoran Desert completely left me. I had a wonderful feeling of peace and contentment, knowing that the Lord had intervened and that I was doing His will. By accepting what I felt was the hand of the Lord moving in this situation, I had successfully resisted the temptation to move.

But that’s not the end of the story ...

Two days later, my real estate agent called again. “I have some good news, John. The original buyer backed out of the deal. It was an older woman and her kids felt that the location was too remote and too far from medical care if anything should happen. The house is yours.”

An unnumbered jumble of thoughts was coursing through my head, resulting in a long, silent pause. Finally the agent asked, “Has there been a change of plans?”

I tried to explain to him briefly what I had gone through spiritually, but he

brushed it aside clearly uninterested in my being guided by a higher purpose and said, “Do you want to buy the place or not?” There wasn’t any irritation in his voice, just “Let me know by tomorrow afternoon.”

The question I was asking myself was “Is this a temptation from Satan or a test from God—or both?” As I pondered that question, the Holy Spirit gave me insight into what my life would have been like if I had moved.

First, I would have no significant spiritual fellowship in my daily life. In fact, the prominent daily influences would be entirely of the world. Second, I would have no meaningful, edifying Sabbath worship. The nearest Seventh-day Adventist church would have been an hour away. The few times I had previously attended worship there, I was truly appalled by the lack of reverence in the sanctuary between Sabbath school and church. Quiet meditation between services had been impossible. Plus, the messages I had heard during the main worship service varied from travelogues to “feel good” sermons. Rarely, if ever, had I heard any encouragement regarding overcoming an inherited sinful nature.

There was absolutely no question in my mind that God had intervened and showed me what He wanted me to do. Was He trying to determine the depth of my conviction by giving me this one last test? Or was Satan trying to lure me away from a situation to which I had been called to be in God’s service?

I called my real estate agent and told him of my decision to pass on the purchase. I thanked him for his efforts on my behalf and hung up, certain that I was doing God’s will.

[All emphasis supplied.] **LM**

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“The less association we have with our unbelieving relatives the better it will be for our spirituality.”



The Prayer of Self

One knelt within a world of care
And sin, and lifted up his prayer:
“I ask Thee, Lord, for health and power
To meet the duties of each hour;
For peace from care, for daily food,
For life prolonged and filled with good;
I praise Thee for Thy gifts received,
For sins forgiven, for pains relieved,
For near and dear ones spared and blessed,
For prospered toil and promised rest.
This prayer I make in His great name
Who for my soul’s salvation came.”

But as he prayed, lo, at his side
Stood the thorn-crowned Christ and sighed:
“O blind disciple! came I then
To bless the selfishness of men?
Thou askest health amid the cry
Of human strain and agony;
Thou askest peace, while all around
Trouble bows thousands to the ground;
Thou askest life for thine and thee,
While others die; thou thankest Me
For gifts, for pardon, for success,
For thine own narrow happiness.

“Nay, rather bow thy head, and pray
That while thy brother starves today,
Thou mayest not eat thy bread at ease;
Pray that no health nor wealth nor peace
May lull thy soul while the world lies
Suffering and claims thy sacrifice;
Praise not, while others weep, that thou
Hast never groaned with anguished brow;
Praise not, thy sins have pardon found,
While others sink, in darkness drowned;
Canst thou give thanks while others nigh,
Outcast and lost, curse God and die?

“Not in My name thy prayer was made,
Not for My sake thy praises paid.
My gift is sacrifice; My blood
Was shed for human brotherhood;
And till thy brother’s woe is thine,
Thy heart-beat knows no throb of Mine.
Come, leave thy selfish hopes, and see
Thy birthright of humanity;
Shun sorrow not; be brave to bear
The world’s dark weight of sin and care;
Spend and be spent—yearn, suffer, give,
And in thy brethren learn to live.

“So shalt thou enter in My way;
So shalt thou learn, with Me, to say
Our Father; so the whole deep life
Of man shall call to thee—its strife,
Its pain, its tenderness, its shame.
Yea, as from endless joy I came
To bear the whole of human woe,
And all my brothers’ pain to know,
So he who follows Me shall find
Self’s weak petitions left behind,
And, loving, suffering, strong, shall be
One with his brethren and with Me.” **LM**

Priscilla Leonard

Printed in *The Review and Herald*, November 14, 1899



November 28 – December 4, 2021

God's Plan to Finance His Work

Key Text

"We are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9).

Study Help: *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 571–575, 645, 646.

Introduction

"God has made men His stewards. The property which He has placed in their hands is the means that He has provided for the spread of the gospel." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 529.

Sunday

1 SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

1.a. What is God's method of perfecting and uniting His scattered sheep? Ephesians 4:11–16.

Note: "In sending forth His ministers our Saviour gave gifts unto men, for through them He communicates to the world the words of eternal life. This is the means which God has ordained for the perfecting of the saints in knowledge and true holiness." *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 237.

1.b. How does this involve a duty and a privilege for every believer? 1 Corinthians 3:7, 8.

Note: "The Lord has made the proclamation of the gospel dependent on the consecrated ability and the voluntary gifts and offerings of His people. While He has called men to preach

the Word, He has made it the privilege of the whole church to share in the work by contributing of their means to its support." *In Heavenly Places*, 303.

Monday

2 LEARNING GOD'S WAY

2.a. What was the basis of the sin of Nadab and Abihu? Leviticus 10:1, 2.

Note: "Where, in God's directions for the support of His work, do we find any mention of bazaars, concerts, fancy fairs, and similar entertainments? Must the Lord's cause be dependent upon the very things He has forbidden in His word—upon those things that turn the mind away from God, from sobriety, from piety and holiness?

"And what impression is made upon the minds of unbelievers? The holy standard of the word of God is lowered into the dust. Contempt is cast upon God and upon the Christian name. The most corrupt principles are strengthened by this un-Scriptural way of raising means. And this is as Satan would have it. Men are repeating the sin of Nadab and Abihu. They are using common instead of sacred fire in the service of God. The Lord accepts no such offerings." *Counsels on Stewardship*, 204, 205.

2.b. What can we learn from the way Moses raised funds—and from the Israelites' response? Exodus 35:4, 5, 21, 29; 36:3–7.

Note: "The plan of Moses to raise means for the building of the tabernacle was highly successful. No urging was necessary. Nor did he employ any of the devices to which churches in our day so often resort. He made no grand feast. He did not invite the people to scenes of gaiety, dancing, and general amusement; neither did he institute lotteries, nor anything of this profane order, to obtain means to erect the tabernacle for God. The Lord

directed Moses to invite the children of Israel to bring their offerings. He was to accept gifts from everyone that gave willingly, from his heart. And the offerings came in so great abundance that Moses bade the people cease bringing, for they had supplied more than could be used." *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 529.

2.c. What should we keep in mind with regard to giving?
2 Corinthians 9:7.

Note: "Have you brought to God your gifts and offerings out of the abundance He has bestowed upon you? Have you given Him that which He claims as His own? If not, it is not yet too late for you to make the wrong right. The Spirit of Jesus can melt the icy selfishness that pervades the soul." *The Review and Herald*, October 13, 1896.

Tuesday

3 PRACTICAL COUNSEL

3.a. How may we risk receiving the curse placed on Meroz? Judges 5:23.

Note: "[Judges 5:23 quoted.] What had Meroz done? Nothing. This was their sin. The curse of God came upon them for what they had not done." *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 284.

"The fruits of selfishness always reveal themselves in a neglect of duty, and in a failure to use God's entrusted gifts for the advancement of His work." *Counsels on Stewardship*, 26.

"Only a small amount of means flows into the Lord's treasury to be appropriated to the saving of souls, and it is with hard labor that even this is obtained. If the eyes of all could be opened to see how prevailing covetousness has hindered the advancement of the work of God, and how much more might have been done had all acted up to God's plan in tithes and offerings, there would be a decided reform on the part of many; for they would not dare to hinder the work of advancing the cause of God as they have done." *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 483.

3.b. What does Scripture teach about personal economy?
Proverbs 21:20; John 6:12.

3.c. What does the Christian seek to do when he hears a Macedonian cry today? Acts 16:9, 10.

Note: "Each one should strive to do for Jesus all that it is possible for him to do, by personal effort, by gifts, by sacrifices. There should be meat in the house of the Lord, and that means a full treasury, that responses may be made to Macedonian cries coming from every land. How pitiful it is that we are obliged to say to these who cry for help, 'We cannot send you men or money. We have an empty treasury.'" *Counsels on Stewardship*, 298.

"We are to place in the Lord's treasury all the means that we can spare. For this means, needy, unworked fields are calling. From many lands is sounding the cry, 'Come over, ... and help us' (Acts 16:9). Our church members should feel a deep interest in home and foreign missions. Great blessings will come to them as they make self-sacrificing efforts to plant the standard of truth in new territory. The money invested in this work will bring rich returns." *Testimonies*, vol. 9, 49.

Wednesday

4 OUR PART IN GOD'S PLAN

4.a. How is tithe to be appropriated? 1 Timothy 5:17, 18.

Note: "The tithe is the Lord's, and those who meddle with it will be punished with the loss of their heavenly treasure, unless they repent. Let the work no longer be hedged up because the tithe has been diverted into various channels other than the one to which the Lord has said it should go. Provision is to be

made for these other lines of work. They are to be sustained, but not from the tithe. God has not changed; the tithe is still to be used for the support of the ministry. The opening of new fields requires more ministerial efficiency than we now have, and there must be means in the treasury." *Gospel Workers*, 227, 228.

"If all the professed people of God, both old and young, would do their duty, there would be no dearth in the treasury. If all would pay a faithful tithe and devote to the Lord the first fruits of their increase, there would be a full supply of funds for His work." *Testimonies*, vol. 6, 385.

4.b. How does David encourage us to be liberal givers?
1 Chronicles 29:10–14.

Note: "It is God who blesses men with property, and He does this that they may be able to give toward the advancement of His cause. He sends the sunshine and the rain. He causes vegetation to flourish. He gives health and the ability to acquire means. All our blessings come from His bountiful hand. In turn, He would have men and women show their gratitude by returning Him a portion in tithes and offerings—in thank offerings, in freewill offerings, in trespass offerings. Should means flow into the treasury in accordance with this divinely appointed plan—a tenth of all the increase, and liberal offerings—there would be an abundance for the advancement of the Lord's work." *The Acts of the Apostles*, 75.

"Had God's plan been followed, means would now be flowing into His treasury; and funds to enable ministers to enter new fields, and workers to unite with ministers in lifting up the standard of truth in the dark places of the earth, would be abundant." *Testimonies*, vol. 6, 386.

Thursday

5 A RESPONSIBILITY AND A PRIVILEGE

5.a. How do God's people hasten or delay Christ's return in the clouds of glory? 2 Peter 3:11, 12.

Note: "Had the church of Christ done her appointed work as the Lord ordained, the whole world would before this have been warned, and the Lord Jesus would have come to our earth in power and great glory." *The Desire of Ages*, 633, 634.

"The work of God, which should be going forward with tenfold its present strength and efficiency, is kept back, like a spring season held by the chilling blast of winter, because some of God's professed people are appropriating to themselves the means that should be dedicated to His service. Because Christ's self-sacrificing love is not interwoven in the life practices, the church is weak where it should be strong. By its own course it has put out its light, and robbed millions of the gospel of Christ." *Counsels on Stewardship*, 54.

5.b. What privilege is extended to every believer? 1 Corinthians 3:9.

Note: "God has made men His almoners, copartners with Himself in the great work of advancing His kingdom on the earth; but they may pursue the course pursued by the unfaithful servant, and by so doing lose the most precious privileges ever granted to men. For thousands of years God has worked through human agencies, but at His will He can drop out the selfish, the money-loving, and the covetous. He is not dependent upon our means, and He will not be restricted by the human agent. He can carry on His own work though we act no part in it. But who among us would be pleased to have the Lord do this?" *Counsels on Stewardship*, 198, 199.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 What is one way we can help to perfect and unite God's people?
- 2 How do wrong methods of raising funds contrast with God's way?
- 3 How can little personal expenditures hinder God's work?
- 4 What would happen if all cultivated the magnanimity of David?
- 5 How may we be hastening or delaying our Lord's return?

December 5 – 11, 2021

Biblical Principles of Finance

Key Text

“All these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God” (Deuteronomy 28:2).

Study Help: *The Acts of the Apostles*, 70–76; *Education*, 135–145.

Introduction

“No man can lay up treasure in heaven without finding his life on earth thereby enriched and ennobled.” *Education*, 145.

Sunday

1 PERSONAL FINANCES

1.a. What may result now and eternally from neglecting the Lord's cause? Haggai 1:5–11.

Note: “Those who are selfishly withholding their means need not be surprised if God's hand scatters. That which should have been devoted to the advancement of the work and cause of God, but which has been withheld, may be entrusted to a reckless son, and he may squander it. A fine horse, the pride of a vain heart, may be found dead in the stable. Occasionally a cow may die. Losses of fruit or other crops may come. God can scatter the means He has lent to His stewards, if they refuse to use it to His glory. Some, I saw, may have none of these losses to remind them of their remissness in duty, but their cases may be the more hopeless.” *Testimonies*, vol. 2, 661, 662.

“The neglect to confess Christ in your account books cuts you off from the great privilege of having your name registered in the Lamb's book of life.” *Our High Calling*, 192.

1.b. What should be considered by all who habitually tend to ask help, instead of offering it? Deuteronomy 28:12, 13.

Monday

2 CONDITIONAL PROMISES

2.a. What does God desire for His people even today? Deuteronomy 28:1–6.

Note: “The word comes to every believer, ‘Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God’ (Isaiah 40:3). Economize in your expenditure of means upon yourself. The first step of self-denial is generally the most difficult, but begin without delay. Your self-denying offerings shall be used in this field to supply workers to give the last message of mercy to a fallen world.” *The General Conference Bulletin*, April 1, 1899.

“It is not God's purpose that Christians, whose privileges far exceed those of the Jewish nation, shall give less freely than they gave. ‘Unto whomsoever much is given,’ the Saviour declared, ‘of him shall be much required’ (Luke 12:48). The liberality required of the Hebrews was largely to benefit their own nation; today the work of God extends over all the earth. In the hands of His followers, Christ has placed the treasures of the gospel, and upon them He has laid the responsibility of giving the glad tidings of salvation to the world. Surely our obligations are much greater than were those of ancient Israel.” *The Acts of the Apostles*, 337, 338.

2.b. What promises are assured to all who follow God's financial plan? Malachi 3:11, 12.

Note: “All may feel that they can act a part in carrying forward the precious work of salvation. Every man, woman, and youth may become a treasurer for the Lord, and may be an agent to meet the demands upon the treasury. Says the apostle, ‘Let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him’ (1 Corinthians 16:2).

“Great objects are accomplished by this system. If one and all would accept it, each would be made a vigilant and faithful treasurer for God; and there would be no want of means with which to carry forward the great work of sounding the last message of warning to the world. The treasury will be full if

all adopt this system, and the contributors will not be left the poorer. Through every investment made, they will become more wedded to the cause of present truth." *Messages to Young People*, 304, 305.

Tuesday

3 LESSONS FROM THE DAYS OF CHRIST

3.a. How can the wise men's devotion to the Child of Bethlehem serve as an encouragement to us? Matthew 2:1, 2, 11.

Note: "The magi had been among the first to welcome the Redeemer. Their gift was the first that was laid at His feet. And through that gift, what privilege of ministry was theirs! The offering from the heart that loves, God delights to honor, giving it highest efficiency in service for Him. If we have given our hearts to Jesus, we also shall bring our gifts to Him. Our gold and silver, our most precious earthly possessions, our highest mental and spiritual endowments, will be freely devoted to Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us." *The Desire of Ages*, 65.

3.b. What could we learn from Mary's anointing of Jesus? Mark 14:3.

Note: "In determining the proportion to be given to the cause of God, be sure to exceed, rather than fall short, of the requirements of duty. Consider for whom the offering is to be made. This recollection will put covetousness to flight. Only consider the great love wherewith Christ has loved us, and our richest offerings will seem unworthy of His acceptance. When Christ is the object of our affections, those who have received His pardoning love will not stop to calculate the value of the alabaster box of precious ointment. Covetous Judas could do this; but the receiver of the gift of salvation will only regret that the offering has not a richer perfume and greater value." *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 485.

3.c. How can those who are habitually dependent on charity become like Mary—givers of charity? 2 Thessalonians 3:10–14.

Note: "If those who have not made life a success were willing to be instructed, they could train themselves to habits of self-denial and strict economy, and have the satisfaction of being distributors, rather than receivers, of charity. There are many slothful servants. If they would do what it is in their power to do they would experience so great a blessing in helping others that they would indeed realize that 'it is more blessed to give than to receive' (Acts 20:35)." *Testimonies*, vol. 3, 400, 401.

Wednesday

4 IN THE TIME OF THE APOSTLES

4.a. In proclaiming the gospel, what intensity of purpose should we share with the early Christians? Acts 4:32–37.

Note: "[Acts 4:34, 35 quoted.] This liberality on the part of the believers was the result of the outpouring of the Spirit. The converts to the gospel were 'of one heart and of one soul' (verse 32). One common interest controlled them—the success of the mission entrusted to them; and covetousness had no place in their lives. Their love for their brethren and the cause they had espoused, was greater than their love of money and possessions. Their works testified that they accounted the souls of men of higher value than earthly wealth.

"Thus it will ever be when the Spirit of God takes possession of the life. Those whose hearts are filled with the love of Christ, will follow the example of Him who for our sake became poor, that through His poverty we might be made rich. Money, time, influence—all the gifts they have received from God's hand, they will value only as a means of advancing the work of the gospel. Thus it was in the early church; and when in the church of today it is seen that by the power of the Spirit the members have taken their affections from the things of the world, and that they are willing to make sacrifices in order that their fellow men may hear the gospel, the truths proclaimed will have a powerful influence upon the hearers." *The Acts of the Apostles*, 70, 71.

4.b. What can we learn from Ananias and Sapphira's artful deceit and its dire consequence? Acts 5:1-11.

Note: "Desiring to gain a reputation for self-sacrifice, liberality, and devotion to the Christian faith, Ananias and Sapphira sold their property, and laid part of the proceeds at the feet of the apostles, pretending they had given it all. They had not been urged to give all they had to the cause. God would have accepted part. But they desired it to be thought that they had given all. Thus they thought to gain the reputation they coveted, and at the same time keep back part of their money. They thought they had been successful in their scheme; but they were cheating the Lord, and He dealt summarily with this, the first case of deception and falsehood in the newly formed church. He slew them both, as a warning to all of the danger of sacrificing truth to gain favor." *Medical Ministry*, 126, 127.

Thursday

5 SYSTEMATIC SELF-DENIAL

5.a. What must we realize in the operation and financial sustenance of God's cause in this earth? 1 Corinthians 14:33.

Note: "He [God] desires His work to be carried forward with thoroughness and exactness so that He may place upon it the seal of His approval. Christian is to be united with Christian, church with church." *The Acts of the Apostles*, 96.

5.b. What must we learn from the ways in which God's faithful people have exemplified self-denial? Hebrews 11:8-10, 24-26, 37-40.



God
can scatter
the means He has
lent to His stewards,
if they refuse to use
it to His glory.

Note: "There was a time when there were but few who listened to and embraced the truth, and they had not much of this world's goods. Then it was necessary for some to sell their houses and lands, and obtain cheaper, while their means were freely lent to the Lord to publish the truth, and otherwise aid in advancing the cause of God. These self-sacrificing ones endured privations; but if they endure unto the end, great will be their reward.

"God has been moving upon many hearts. The truth for which a few sacrificed so much has triumphed, and multitudes have laid hold of it. In the providence of God, those who have means have been brought into the truth, that, as the work increases, the wants of His cause may be met. God does not now call for the houses His people need to live in; but if those who have an abundance do not hear His voice, cut loose from the world, and sacrifice for God, He will pass them by, and will call for those who are willing to do anything for Jesus, even to sell their homes to meet the wants of the cause. God will have freewill offerings. Those who give must esteem it a privilege to do so." *Counsels on Stewardship*, 215.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 How can a receiver of charity become its distributor?
- 2 How should our benevolence compare to that of the ancient Jews?
- 3 What examples of generosity in Christ's day should inspire us?
- 4 What can we learn from the spirit of the early Christian church?
- 5 How can the self-denial of the pioneers of present truth be revived today?

December 12 – 18, 2021

Enlightening the Whole World

Key Text

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).

Study Help: *Testimonies*, vol. 9, 51–60; *Ibid.*, vol. 3, 382–385.

Introduction

“Those who rejoice in the precious light of truth should feel a burning desire to have it sent everywhere.” *Counsels on Stewardship*, 42.

Sunday

1 ANSWERING THE MACEDONIAN CRY

1.a. Although literature is a powerful missionary tool, what step must follow in order to complete the gospel commission? Matthew 28:18–20. How can this need for diligent gospel workers be fulfilled? Isaiah 52:7, 8.

Note: “This work of faithfully bringing in all the tithes, that there may be meat in the house of God, would supply laborers for both home and foreign fields. Although books and publications upon present truth are pouring out their treasures of knowledge to all parts of the world, yet missionary posts must be established at different points. The living preacher must proclaim the words of life and salvation. There are open fields inviting workers to enter. The harvest is ripe, and the earnest Macedonian cry for laborers is heard from every part of the world.” *Counsels on Stewardship*, 39.

1.b. What urgent work needs to be done? Mark 16:15.

Note: “The magnitude of our work calls for willing liberality on the part of the people of God. In Africa, in China, in India, there are thousands, yes, millions, who have not heard the message of the truth for this time. They must be warned. The islands of the sea are waiting for a knowledge of God.” *Testimonies*, vol. 9, 51.

Monday

2 THE IMPORTANCE OF GOD’S TITHE

2.a. How does Inspiration emphasize the personal, human element in soul-saving? Romans 10:13–15. How can we all be involved? Revelation 22:17.

Note: “The preaching of the gospel is God’s appointed way for converting the souls of men. Men must hear in order to be saved. They cannot hear without a preacher, and the preacher must be sent. This makes it necessary to have funds in the treasury in order to provide means whereby the missionary may reach destitute fields. In the light of this fact, how can those who profess to follow Christ, rob God of His own entrusted talents in tithes and offerings? Is it not refusing bread to starving souls? To withhold the means which God has claimed as His own, whereby He has made provision that souls shall be saved, will surely bring a curse upon those who thus rob God. Souls for whom Christ has died, are denied the privilege of hearing the truth, because men refuse to carry out the measures which God has provided for the enlightenment of the lost.” *The Home Missionary*, April 1, 1895.

2.b. What does God require if we neglect to return His tithe on time? Leviticus 27:31. What experience of a local church in the year 1889 can encourage all today?

Note: “Some of those who had not been dealing justly with God, and consequently had been separating themselves from Him, began to restore that which they had withheld. One brother had not paid tithes for two years. He gave his note to the secretary of the conference for the tithe he had withheld

and the interest on it, amounting to \$571.50. I thank the Lord that he had the courage to do this. Another gave his note for \$300. Another man who had backslidden from God so far that but little hope was cherished that he would ever turn his feet into the path of righteousness again, gave his note for \$1,000. It was proposed that these long-withheld tithes and offerings be devoted to the Central European Mission; so with these and the Christmas donations, nearly \$6,000 has come into the treasury from this church to be applied to the missionary cause.”

Testimonies, vol. 5, 643, 644.

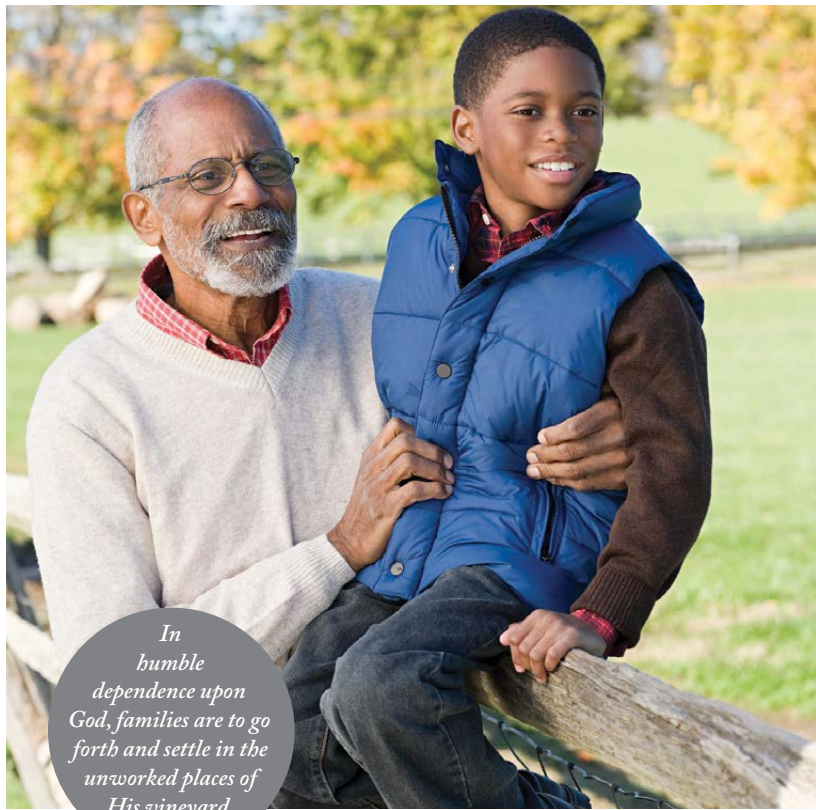
Tuesday

3 LEARNING FAITHFUL FORESIGHT

3.a. What objection was made against Mary’s generosity towards Jesus? John 12:3–6. How did Christ commend Mary? Mark 14:7–9.

Note: “We make progressive movements; but at every step prejudice and false ideas must be removed. This has been the case with every reformatory movement the world has ever seen. To some of small faith and selfish, money-loving disposition, each advance move has portended general disaster and an extravagant outlay of means. They have felt as did that poor man Judas when the ointment was poured upon the head of Jesus. Why this great waste? said he; this ought to have been sold, and the money given to the poor. Again and again, when some advance step has been taken, the selfish, cautious one[s] have thought that everything was going to ruin; but when the battle has been fought against all odds, they have hailed the victory as a token that God was in the movement. When it has been so fully demonstrated that the work was of God that unbelief has had to yield, the men who led out, whose foresight was greater than that of others, who worked against all opposition, are hailed as men raised up for the time, and led by the Spirit of God. Do those men who blocked the way realize the work they have done? Do they see that the addition of their money, their strength, their faith, and courage, might have made the work stronger and more influential, and that their neglect to do what they could is sin? ...

“Would that we lived so near the cross that we could see as God sees, and work as He would have us work.” *The Review and Herald*, February 5, 1884.



*In
humble
dependence upon
God, families are to go
forth and settle in the
unworked places of
His vineyard.*

3.b. To what realities should we now awaken? John 4:35, 36.

Note: “Money is not to be furnished for the carrying out of the work of the gospel in some mysterious way, and through unseen, mysterious agencies. God will not shower money from the windows of heaven to do His appointed work, to spread the truth in our world, and to save souls unto eternal life. He has made His people stewards of His means to be used for His glory in blessing humanity.” *The Home Missionary*, April 1, 1895.

Wednesday

4 SAVORY SALT

4.a. What exhortation comes to all who seek to honor Christ? Matthew 5:13.

Note: “How much more eager will every faithful steward be to enlarge the proportion of gifts to be placed in the Lord’s treasure house, than to decrease his offering one jot or tittle. Whom is he serving? For whom is he preparing an offering?—For the One upon whom he is dependent for every good thing which he enjoys. Then let not one of us who is receiving the grace of Christ, give occasion for the angels to be ashamed of us, and for Jesus to be ashamed to call us brethren. ...

“Those who are recipients of His grace, who contemplate the cross of Calvary, will not question concerning the proportion to be given, but will feel that the richest offering is all too meager, all disproportionate to the great gift of the only-begotten Son of the infinite God. Through self-denial, the poorest will find ways of obtaining something to give back to God.” *Counsels on Stewardship*, 200.

4.b. How is the present truth to be spread throughout the earth? Ecclesiastes 11:1, 6.

Note: “The waste places of the earth are to be cultivated. In humble dependence upon God, families are to go forth and settle in the unworked places of His vineyard. As the reward of their self-sacrifice in order to sow the seeds of truth, they will reap a rich harvest.” *The Review and Herald*, August 26, 1902.

4.c. What is the most urgent call of today, and why? Matthew 9:36–38.

Note: “Who is to blame for the loss of the souls who know not God, and who have had no opportunity for hearing the reasons of our faith? What obligation rests upon the church in reference to a world that is perishing without the gospel? Unless there is more decided self-denial on the part of those who claim to believe the truth, unless there is more decided faithfulness in bringing all the tithes and offerings into the treasury, unless broader plans are laid than have yet been carried into execution, we shall not fulfill the gospel commission to go into all the world, and preach Christ to every creature.” *The Home Missionary*, April 1, 1895.

Thursday

5 ENLIGHTENING EVERY CORNER

5.a. What will be the glorious result of the gospel commission, and how can we be blessed by taking part in it? Revelation 18:1.

Note: “All heaven is looking with intense interest upon the church, to see what her individual members are doing to enlighten those who are in darkness. The field is the world, and the openings are so many, the work has so enlarged, that it is beyond the proportion of the means on hand to supply the necessary demands. For years the Lord has been warning His people to bind about their wants, to incur no needless outlay of means. But notwithstanding the counsel of Him who knows the end from the beginning, how needlessly has money been expended. The cautions given have been lightly esteemed, and the minds of men have misinterpreted, turned aside, or wrested the counsel of God, in order that they might follow their own ambitious projects, although by so doing, the very means by which God might have been glorified and honored in extending His truth, is lost to the cause. The Lord has graciously honored man, employing him as the human agent to cooperate with heavenly intelligences, that the light of truth may shine in all parts of the earth. The Lord has His agents who will act a part in the mightiest conflict which the world has ever seen. If the workers remain humble, learning daily, in the school of Christ, meekness and lowliness of heart, the Lord Jesus will work with them. He who is a coworker with Christ will realize that in conferring heavenly benefits on others, he himself will be benefited. He will know that ‘he that watereth shall be watered also himself’ (Proverbs 11:25).” *The Review and Herald*, February 27, 1894.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 In what sense is literature limited in its soul-saving ability?
- 2 What reveals the importance of punctuality in tithing?
- 3 How may we be in danger of repeating the sin of Judas?
- 4 What should we consider when deciding how much to give for Christ?
- 5 How will the world be enlightened—with us or without us?

December 19 – 25, 2021

Our Last Opportunity!

Key Text

“I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (John 9:4).

Study Help: *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 476–485; *Ibid.*, vol. 6, 445–453.

Introduction

“We are nearing the end of this earth’s history, and the different departments of God’s work are to be carried forward with much more self-sacrifice than has yet been practiced.” *Evangelism*, 631.

Sunday

1 BEFORE LIFE EXPIRES

- 1.a. To what realities are we all subject? Hebrews 9:27.
What should this make each of us consider, whether old, young, sick, or healthy? Romans 12:11.

Note: “It often happens that an active businessman is cut down without a moment’s warning and on examination his business is found to be in a most perplexing condition. In the effort to settle his estate the lawyers’ fees eat up a large share, if not all, of the property, while his wife and children and the cause of Christ are robbed. Those who are faithful stewards of the Lord’s means will know just how their business stands, and, like wise men, they will be prepared for any emergency. Should their probation close suddenly, they would not leave such great perplexity upon those who are called to settle their estate.

“Many are not exercised upon the subject of making their wills while they are in apparent health. But this precaution should be taken by our brethren. They should know their financial standing and should not allow their business to become entangled. They should arrange their property in such a manner that they may leave it at any time.” *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 482.

- 1.b. In planning our wills, what should we consider?
Isaiah 38:1.

Monday

2 PREPARING FOR THE END

- 2.a. Since thousands of dollars are lost because people die without making a legal will, what need should be brought to the attention of the believers? 1 Corinthians 4:2.

Note: “Some wills are made in so loose a manner that they will not stand the test of the law, and thus thousands of dollars have been lost to the cause. Our brethren should feel that a responsibility rests upon them, as faithful servants in the cause of God, to exercise their intellect in regard to this matter, and secure to the Lord His own.

“Many manifest a needless delicacy on this point. They feel that they are stepping upon forbidden ground when they introduce the subject of property to the aged or to invalids in order to learn what disposition they design to make of it. But this duty is just as sacred as the duty to preach the word to save souls. Here is a man with God’s money or property in his hands. He is about to change his stewardship. Will he place the means which God has lent him to be used in His cause, in the hands of wicked men, just because they are his relatives? Should not Christian men feel interested and anxious for that man’s future good as well as for the interest of God’s cause, that he shall make a right disposition of his Lord’s money, the talents lent him for wise improvement? Will his brethren stand by and see him losing his hold on this life and at the same time robbing the treasury of God? This would be a fearful loss to himself and to the cause; for, by placing his talent of means in the hands of those who have no regard for the truth of God, he would, to all intents and purposes, be wrapping it in a napkin and hiding it in the earth.” *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 479.

“Death will not come one day sooner, brethren, because you have made your will. In disposing of your property by will to your relatives, be sure that you do not forget God’s cause. You are His agents, holding His property; and His claims should have

your first consideration. Your wife and children, of course, should not be left destitute; provision should be made for them if they are needy. But do not, simply because it is customary, bring into your will a long line of relatives who are not needy." Ibid., 482.

2.b. Whether we live or die, what does God expect each of us to remember? Romans 14:8, 12.

Tuesday

3 THE FINAL WORK

3.a. What is our duty in these last days? 1 Thessalonians 5:1–6; Zechariah 10:1. How can we receive the latter rain or “refreshing”? Acts 3:19–21.

Note: “The great outpouring of the Spirit of God, which lightens the whole earth with His glory, will not come until we have an enlightened people, that know by experience what it means to be laborers together with God. When we have entire, wholehearted consecration to the service of Christ, God will recognize the fact by an outpouring of His Spirit without measure; but this will not be while the largest portion of the church are not laborers together with God. God cannot pour out His Spirit when selfishness and self-indulgence are so manifest; when a spirit prevails that, if put into words, would express that answer of Cain—‘Am I my brother’s keeper?’ (Genesis 4:9).” *Counsels on Stewardship*, 52.

“God calls for men to give the warning to the world that is asleep, dead in trespasses and sins. He calls for freewill offerings from those whose hearts are in the work, who have a burden for souls, that they shall not perish, but have everlasting life.” *Testimonies*, vol. 6, 446.

3.b. What should be foremost in our mind today, as individuals and as a church organization? John 9:4.

Note: “We ought now to be heeding the injunction of our Saviour: ‘Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not’ (Luke 12:33). It is now that our brethren should be cutting down their possessions instead of increasing them. We are about to move to a better country, even a heavenly. Then let us not be dwellers upon the earth, but be getting things into as compact a compass as possible.” *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 152.

“For what shall we hoard up treasures? To be swept away by the flames of the last day? Shall we lay up gold and silver to be a witness against us in the Judgment—to eat our flesh as it were fire? Shall we cling to our possessions till they fall into the hands of our enemies? The time is coming when commandment keepers can neither buy nor sell. Of what use will houses and lands, bank stock and merchandise, be to us then? Now is the time to place our treasures where they will be eternally secure.” *The Review and Herald*, December 6, 1887.

Wednesday

4 PRACTICAL PREPARATION

4.a. Why hasn’t Christ returned yet? 2 Peter 3:9. How can we avoid losing all our means in the prophecy that is soon to be fulfilled? Isaiah 2:20; Ezekiel 7:19; Psalm 96:2–8.

Note: “If our brethren would learn the value of souls in the light of what their salvation has cost Jesus, they would know that souls are of greater value than houses and lands, gold and precious stones, or high positions of honor.” *The Review and Herald*, February 5, 1884.

“The work of God is to become more extensive, and if His people follow His counsel, there will not be much means in their possession to be consumed in the final conflagration. All will have laid up their treasure where moth and rust cannot corrupt; and the heart will not have a cord to bind it to earth.” *Counsels on Stewardship*, 60.

4.b. What does Christ promise to all who through faithful sacrifice are seriously preparing for His return? Isaiah 33:14–17.

Note: “It is contrary to the Bible to make any provision for our temporal wants in the time of trouble. I saw that if the saints had food laid up by them or in the field in the time of trouble, when sword, famine, and pestilence are in the land, it would be taken from them by violent hands and strangers would reap their fields. Then will be the time for us to trust wholly in God, and He will sustain us. I saw that our bread and water will be sure at that time, and that we shall not lack or suffer hunger; for God is able to spread a table for us in the wilderness. If necessary He would send ravens to feed us, as He did to feed Elijah, or rain manna from heaven, as He did for the Israelites.

“Houses and lands will be of no use to the saints in the time of trouble, for they will then have to flee before infuriated mobs, and at that time their possessions cannot be disposed of to advance the cause of present truth. I was shown that it is the will of God that the saints should cut loose from every encumbrance before the time of trouble comes, and make a covenant with God through sacrifice. If they have their property on the altar and earnestly inquire of God for duty, He will teach them when to dispose of these things. Then they will be free in the time of trouble and have no clogs to weigh them down.” *Early Writings*, 56, 57.

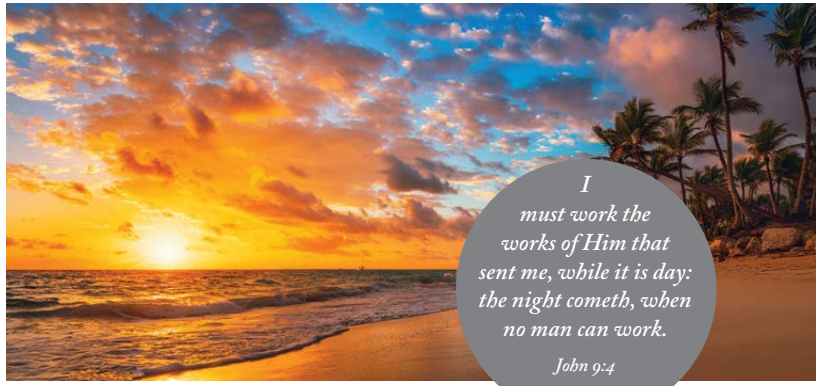
Thursday

5 A HIGH-YIELD INVESTMENT

5.a. Where is the best investment available today, and why? Luke 12:32–34.

Note: “Let us be honest with the Lord. All the blessings that we enjoy come from Him; and if He has entrusted us with the talent of means, that we may help to do His work, shall we hold back? Shall we say, No, Lord; my children would not be pleased, and therefore I shall venture to disobey God, burying His talent in the earth?

“There should be no delay. The cause of God demands your assistance. We ask you, as the Lord’s stewards, to put His means into circulation, to provide facilities by which many will have the opportunity of learning what is truth.” *Counsels on Stewardship*, 44, 45.



5.b. What declaration will the Lord make at the end of time? Psalm 50:3–5. How will all who make a covenant by sacrifice be richly rewarded? 1 Corinthians 15:57, 58.

Note: “There is reward for the wholehearted, unselfish workers who enter this field, and also for those who contribute willingly for their support. Those engaged in active service in the field, and those who give of their means to sustain these workers, will share the reward of the faithful. ...

“The self-denial they have practiced in order to support the work is remembered no more. As they look upon the souls they sought to win to Jesus, and see them saved, eternally saved—monuments of God’s mercy and of a Redeemer’s love—there ring through the arches of heaven shouts of praise and thanksgiving.” *Counsels on Stewardship*, 348, 349.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1 What superstition about making wills is detrimental to God’s cause?
- 2 Why should we not neglect to speak about making wills?
- 3 What is one reason why many will fail to receive the latter rain?
- 4 What should we realize before the approaching time of trouble?
- 5 How and when is the interest paid on treasure laid up in heaven?

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Chickpeas

Chickpeas are a type of legume, the most widely consumed legume in the world. Also known as garbanzo beans (called such in the Spanish-speaking countries), the most common type has a round shape and a beige color, but other varieties are black, green, or red.

They can be used in salads and stews, cooked and ground into paste to make a dish called hummus. Roasted and properly seasoned, chickpeas can be a crunchy addition to any meal. The green plant can be eaten as a vegetable. Dried chickpeas need a long, slow cooking time and are ready when they are soft.

Soaking chickpeas overnight first can significantly reduce the cooking time.

Research has shown that there is a direct connection between consumption of legumes and lower LDL cholesterol, lower incidences of certain cancers and improved health in diabetics, menopause relief, and weight loss. The fiber content also keeps the digestive tract healthy, and promotes regularity. Chickpeas reduce the appetite by helping you feel full longer after eating. Choline contained in chickpeas helps brain and nervous system function. It plays a role in mood, muscle control, learning, and memory, as well as the body's metabolism.

Chickpeas are a great source of protein, iron, and other nutrients for those following a vegan or vegetarian diet.

Sources: *Medical New Today* and *california.arizona.edu* 



Fruit

Vegetables

Legumes

Nuts/Seeds

Grains



HUMMUS TAHINI

Ingredients

2 cups cooked garbanzo beans
½ cup lemon juice
½ cup Sesame Tahini
3 cloves of garlic or ½ tsp. garlic powder
½ to 1 cup liquid from garbanzo beans
Salt to taste

Process

Blend all ingredients well in a blender, adding liquid until desired consistency and smoothness is achieved. Best if blended to consistency of a thick paste, and not runny.





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