



THE CHRISTIAN AND COMMUNICATION

Words are of no value unless
they are accompanied
with appropriate deeds. E.G.W.

1/73 JANUARY
FEBRUARY
MARCH

ADULT SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

THIRTEENTH SABBATH OVERFLOW OFFERING

MARCH 31, 1973, NORTHERN EUROPE-WEST AFRICA DIVISION

The Thirteenth Sabbath Offering is a living symbol of the globe-encircling unity of the advent movement. This quarter the overflow offering is going to the Northern Europe-West Africa Division—a considerable section of the world field, reaching from Greenland's icy mountains and Ireland's troubled homes and streets to Poland's golden autumns and West Africa's teeming millions.

Education is at a premium in West Africa. Its youth are on the march; tens of thousands are being trained in Adventist schools. At the top of the church's educational ladder is found the Adventist College of West Africa. Here eager young people are being channeled into lines of denominational service. We are endeavoring to build up a real senior college. The opportunities are challenging. Your support is needed to make the college a key Adventist center of learning and spiritual vivification. Your offering will help construct a badly needed assembly hall.

Stanborough School is the secondary school serving Britain. Plans have been made calling for a great forward leap. Your giving will help provide additional classrooms and dormitory facilities.

March 31 is a red-letter date in the Adventist Church calendar. God loves a cheerful giver. "The very best manner . . . to give expression to our love for our Redeemer is to make offerings to bring souls to the knowledge of the truth."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 3, p. 413.

Our liberality will help to produce spiritual and educational reality.

B. B. Beach, Sabbath School Secretary,
Northern Europe-West Africa Division

Lessons for the Second Quarter of 1973

Sabbath School members who have not received a copy of the *Adult Lessons* for the second quarter of 1973 will be helped by the following outline in studying the first two lessons. The title of the series is "A Holy Life in Hard Times"—a study of First Peter.

The title of the first lesson is "About the Author." The memory verse is John 6:68, 69. The outline is as follows: (1) The Man. Mark 1:16; Luke 5:10. (2) The Disciple, I. Luke 5:8-11. (3) The Disciple, II. *The Desire of Ages*, page 816. (4) The Missionary. Acts 2:40, 41. (5) The Prisoner. Acts 12. (6) The Writer.

The title of the second lesson is "Faith and Trouble." The memory verse is 1 Peter 1:6, 7. The outline is as follows: (1) Living Hope. 1 Peter 1:3. (2) God's Keeping Power. 1 Peter 1:4, 5. (3) The Test of Faith. 1 Peter 1:6, 7. (4) Love and Faith. 1 Peter 1:8, 9. (5) The Basis of Faith. 1 Peter 1:10. (6) Privileged Believers. 1 Peter 1:12.

The Christian and Communication

FIRST QUARTER, 1973

These lessons are about the way Christians communicate with each other, with the world, and with God. They have to do with the two-way channels of communication—how they affect Christians as they receive communications from others, and how their own communications affect other people.

Effective communication is the most difficult of all human arts. Research indicates that in some countries people spend about 75 percent of their time in one or more acts of communication. People all over the world, both civilized and primitive, spend much time either in communicating actively or in receiving communication by listening.

God has designed effective ways of restoring communication between Himself and mankind since the direct link was severed in Eden. He speaks to the human family through prayer, through the Bible, through nature, by song, and in many other ways. "Each is to have an individual experience in being taught by the Great Teacher, and individual communion with God."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, page 486.

The Scripture says that "they that feared the Lord spake often one to another." Mal. 3:16. A Christian who fails to join in communication with fellow Christians soon loses strength in his spiritual life. We find Christian communication in books and magazines, through radio and television, by telephone and letter, as well as in the church, in the school, and in family worship.

A world awaits the Christian who believes the divine command to communicate the gospel. To him are given ways both simple and complex. A simple, effective witness of Christian living may be all that is possible in a particular circumstance; or, in other circumstances, modern communications technology may be effectively employed to answer a global challenge.

At all times and by all means we must be ready to communicate the good word Heaven has given us through Jesus Christ.

The Blessing of Daily Study

“Every day some portion of time should be appropriated to the study of the lessons, not merely in learning to mechanically repeat the words, while the mind does not comprehend the meaning; but to go to the very foundation, and become familiar with what is brought out in the lesson.”—*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, page 53.

My Pledge

As one who greatly desires to improve his knowledge of the Scriptures, I pledge myself to the careful and prayerful study of some portion of my Sabbath School lesson each day of the week.

(signed)

The regular Sabbath School senior division lessons and regular Sabbath School World Mission Report are available free each month in Braille and 16 $\frac{2}{3}$ rpm records to blind and physically handicapped persons who cannot read normal inkprint. This includes individuals who because of arthritis, multiple sclerosis, paralysis, accidents, old age, and so forth, cannot hold or focus on normal inkprint publications. Contact the Christian Record Braille Foundation, Box 6097, Lincoln, Nebraska 68506.

Lesson Titles for the Quarter

1. Channels of Communication
2. Avenues to the Soul
3. The Divine Media
4. The Human Media
5. God's Good Word
6. Control Central
7. Prayer—A Two-way Channel
8. The Christian's Use of Words
9. Barriers to Effective Communication
10. The Family in Dialogue
11. The Electric Society
12. Worldwide Witness
13. Living Communication

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LESSON 1

December 31 to January 6

CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION



"The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Rom. 10:8-10.

Let us not limit the concept of communication to words. We communicate in many ways. Communication is an act of the total man. Anything to which people can attach meaning may be, and is, used in communication. The act of communication is extremely broad in its scope. "Our words, our actions, our deportment, our dress, everything, should preach. Not only with our words should we speak to the people, but everything pertaining to our person should be a sermon to them, that right impressions may be made upon them." —*Testimonies*, Vol. 2, p. 618.

The Christian has many ways in which to communicate. In fact, he and his church

are books read by others, often secretly and without his knowledge. "No man is an island, intire of it self."—John Donne.

KEY THOUGHTS

1. *The Totality of Christian Witness.* All that we do or say communicates to others,— a sobering concept in our task of warning the world about Jesus' return and the preparation necessary for it.

2. *The Power of Christian Witness.* Simple acts of love may have infinite consequence. On the other hand neglect may leave us responsible for others' loss.

3. *Reflex Action of Christian Witness.* A consciousness of the use the Holy Spirit may make of our acts and words will affect the basic nature of our lives.

An article by Ellen G. White, "Ye Are the Light of the World," appears following this lesson. It was originally printed in the *Review and Herald* and is reprinted here for reading in conjunction with this week's lesson.

Part 1
OUR LIVES—
A LETTER
2 Cor. 3:2, 3

What is the meaning of Paul's illustration of writing on the heart?

"Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart."

"Our epistle. Paul now uses the word 'epistle' figuratively. He had no need of literal introductory letters, for his converts were an all-sufficient proof of his apostleship. He needed no written documents to establish his apostolic authority. The metaphor of a written letter signifies both that the Corinthian believers had the word and law of God written on their hearts and that they were living epistles written on Paul's heart. The first constituted evidence that they were true Christians, and the second that Paul was a true apostle. They were the 'seal' of his 'apostleship' (1 Cor. 9:2). . . .

"Epistle of Christ. Each believer and each church should be a letter from Christ to the world. The author of the letter is Christ. The material on which the writing is done is the heart of each believer, and that which is written is the law of God, a transcript of His character."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on 2 Cor. 3:2, 3.

What relationship is established as God writes on our hearts? Heb. 8:10.

Such a relationship as this makes the Christian life a powerful witness. A letter must first be written, then it must be made available to the recipient. The world needs the enlightening witness of born-again Christians.

We communicate our attitudes and beliefs to others not just through our words, but through our dress, our bodies, the way we stand. "Every action is to be a consecrated action, for it occupies God's entrusted talent of time. Holiness unto the Lord is inscribed on all the actions of such a one, because his whole being is brought under subjection to God."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, p. 1087.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is written on my heart? Do you think the work would be nearer to its close if we made the writing more accessible for others to read?

"If you are Christ's follower, He sends in you a letter to the family, the village, the street, where you live. Jesus, dwelling in you, desires to speak to the hearts of those who are not acquainted with Him. Perhaps they do not read the Bible, or do not hear the voice that speaks to them in its pages; they do not see the love of God through His works. But if you are a true representative of Jesus, it may be that through you they will be led to understand something of His goodness and be won to love and serve Him."—*Steps to Christ*, page 115.

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, Bk. 2, pp. 398-404.

Part 2
OUR ACTS—
GOD-CENTERED
1 Cor. 10:31-33

How is it possible to glorify God in eating, drinking, and action? Note the verses preceding this passage.

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved."

"The Christian's first motive in living in harmony with the laws of God should be to promote the honor of God. This motive arises from his love for God and his desire to please his Maker (see John 14:15; 1 John 5:3). All the energies of the soul should be used to advance the interests of God's kingdom, and so to honor God. . . .

"Christians are not at liberty to follow the promptings of the natural, unconverted heart and the impulses of the unregenerate body. They are under obligation to bring every thought, word, and deed into harmony with God's revealed will."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on 1 Cor. 10:31.

What kind of actions by the people of Judah did God indicate would communicate light and righteousness to the world? Isa. 58:6-8. Does this passage have significance today?

Today, because of the widespread use of mass media, our acts as individuals and as a church can very rapidly be subjected to the scrutiny of the world. We live as a part of a global community. Our presence, or absence, in times of need tells the world of our concern or lack of it.

What is Christ's assessment of the deeds of His professed followers? Matt. 25:31-46.

THINK IT THROUGH

How would Jesus assess my actions of the past year in relation to the message they have communicated to others? How may this record be improved?

"The universe of heaven will look upon characters [of converted Christians] that have been transformed. The frivolous, common level will be forsaken, and their feet will be placed upon the first round of the ladder, which is Christ Jesus. They will mount step by step, one round after another, heavenward. Christ will be revealed in their spirit, in their words, in their actions."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 459.

"Everyone will be held responsible for the grace given him through Christ. Life is too solemn to be absorbed in temporal or earthly matters. The Lord desires that we shall communicate to others that which the eternal and unseen communicates to us."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 373.

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pages 201-208.

Part 3
OUR WORDS—
PERSUADING
POWER
Acts 13:42, 43

“And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath. Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.”

Nothing persuades quite so completely as words spoken with complete sincerity, love, and concern. In this text we are reading about the preaching of Paul and Barnabas, but the words of any of Christ's followers may achieve effectiveness when backed by complete belief in their truth and the witness of a converted life.

“Of all the fair graces and virtues that are important, I think *sincerity* is the queen of them all. It is the virtue the human heart instinctively craves and hopes for. And yet how common is insincerity. What a miserable old humbug of a world we are living in—full of trickery, dishonesty, and deceit of every kind. We say what we do not mean; we express emotions we do not feel; we praise when we secretly condemn; we smile when we have a frown in our heart; we strive so often to make people think we are other than we are.”—Paul C. Heubach, *This Is Life*, page 174.

What should characterize our speech? Eph. 4:15.

Words spoken in love will never hurt or destroy. They will have true persuasive power.

How does Solomon illustrate the beauty of carefully chosen words? Prov. 25:11.

The books of Proverbs and James both include counsel about words. Words are the basic materials of language communication. How careful we should be about our words!

THINK IT THROUGH

Read James 3:10-12. What happens if you mix salt water with fresh water? What does the illustration teach about speech?

“There are few who realize how far-reaching is the influence of their words and acts. How often the errors of parents produce the most disastrous effects upon their children and children's children, long after the actors themselves have been laid in the grave. Everyone is exerting an influence upon others, and will be held accountable for the result of that influence. Words and actions have a telling power, and the long hereafter will show the effect of our life here. The impression made by our words and deeds will surely react upon ourselves in blessing or in cursing. This thought gives an awful solemnity to life, and should draw us to God in humble prayer that He will guide us by His wisdom.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 556.

FURTHER STUDY : *The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 166-176.

Part 4
OUR
PRAYERS—
AIDED BY THE
SPIRIT
Rom. 8:26, 27

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

“Christ, our Mediator, and the Holy Spirit are constantly interceding in man’s behalf, but the Spirit pleads not for us as does Christ who presents His blood, shed from the foundation of the world; the Spirit works upon our hearts, drawing out prayers and penitence, praise and thanksgiving. The gratitude which flows from our lips is the result of the Spirit striking the cords of the soul in holy memories, awakening the music of the heart.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, pp. 1077, 1078.

“The Bible shows us God in His high and holy place. . . . By His Spirit He is everywhere present. Through the agency of His Spirit and His angels He ministers to the children of men.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 417.

Our whole lives are affected by prayer. It moves us in the direction of God. It opens our hearts to heaven’s communications. Through it we understand God’s will for us.

What gift comes through prayer? Luke 11:13.

We are told to knock and it shall be opened, to seek and so find. The primary gift available through prayer is the gift of the Holy Spirit, the personal representative of Jesus Christ. If we are to be channels for the flow of God’s love to others, the Spirit must enter our lives daily in response to our earnest prayer request.

What is Christ seeking to do? Rev. 3:20. How does this form a counterpart to Luke 11:9-13?

THINK IT THROUGH

How will prayer help us to communicate God’s will to others?

“The dispensation in which we are now living is to be, to those that ask, the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Ask for His blessing. It is time we were more intense in our devotion. To us is committed the arduous, but happy, glorious work of revealing Christ to those who are in darkness. We are called to proclaim the special truths for this time. For all this the outpouring of the Spirit is essential. We should pray for it. The Lord expects us to ask Him. We have not been wholehearted in this work. . . .

“Pray without ceasing, and watch by working in accordance with your prayers. As you pray, believe, trust in God. It is the time of the latter rain, when the Lord will give largely of His Spirit. Be fervent in prayer, and watch in the Spirit.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pages 511, 512.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ’s Object Lessons, pages 147-149;
Testimonies to Ministers, page 512.

Part 5
OUR MEANS—
A SOURCE OF
BLESSING
1 Tim. 6:17-19

What is Paul's suggestion as to the way money or possessions should be used?

"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."

Through our possession of worldly goods God tells us of His love and concern, of our talents and responsibilities. Thus He reminds us that all things are His.

Wealth is a way of speaking for God. We say that "money talks." We might well ask ourselves the question, What is our money saying about us? Does it speak of luxurious living or of self-sacrifice? One's talent of money may provide the facilities whereby another's talent for preaching or writing the gospel may reach a greatly increased audience.

What message about the true God did Solomon's wealth communicate to the queen of Sheba? 1 Kings 10:1-13.

"By the time of the close of her visit the queen had been so fully taught by Solomon as to the source of his wisdom and prosperity that she was constrained, not to extol the human agent, but to exclaim, 'Blessed be the Lord thy God.' . . . This is the impression that God designed should be made upon all peoples." —*Prophets and Kings*, page 67.

What later experiences of Solomon's reveal that his heart became closed to divine counsel? 1 Kings 11:1-13.

Undoubtedly Solomon's wealth led him into temptation. Money, intellectual greatness, positions of power, many and varied talents—these are all agencies that may be either channels for divine light or channels of self-serving.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why does God desire us to use our material wealth to advance His purposes?

"Some of the men of experience and piety, who led out in this work, who denied self and did not hesitate to sacrifice for its success, are now sleeping in the grave. They were God's appointed channels, His representative men, through whom the principles of spiritual life were communicated to the church. . . .

"The believers who in the early history of the cause sacrificed for the upbuilding of the work were imbued with the same spirit. They felt that God demanded of all connected with His cause an unreserved consecration of body, soul, and spirit, of all their energies and capabilities, to make the work a success." —*Testimonies*, Vol. 7, pp. 216, 217.

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pages 66-73.

Part 6
TOTAL
WITNESS
Phil. 4:9

“Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.”

Paul invites Christians to emulate his life as it was communicated to them in various ways. Years before, he spoke of the decision of God to use him, “when it pleased God. . . to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen.” Gal. 1:15, 16. He could, in humility, point selfward and invite emulation because he lived to reveal the Son of God.

“By beholding we are to become changed, and as we meditate upon the perfections of our divine Model, we shall desire to become wholly transformed and renewed in the image of His purity. There will be a hungering and thirsting of soul to be made like Him whom we adore. The more our thoughts are upon Christ, the more we shall speak of Him to others, and represent Him to the world.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 3, p. 1145.

What are the characteristics of the lives of those who accept the three angels’ messages? Rev. 14:12; compare 22:14.

The word “keep” in Rev. 14:12 implies a wholehearted commitment to obedience and the following of Christ. In a world where sin has distorted morality to the extent that evil appears right, God’s people stand as a bulwark against iniquity.

What result will come from the life that communicates Christ and Christian principles? 1 Peter 2:11, 12; Matt. 5:16.

THINK IT THROUGH

In a world which sets subjective standards, how can the Christian live by an objective standard of purity, honesty, and obedience to God’s will?

“The final response to the challenge of time’s last hour will be a life. Nothing in this world can replace a life. And nothing in the Advent Movement can replace a life fully and entirely consecrated to the Advent message and to the Advent program. No method, no talent, no plan, no means, can be considered as a substitute. My brethren, a life that flashes out in Christian purity will meet the challenge of immorality today.

“The present flagrant situation of immorality—and of dishonesty in all its aspects—is causing grave uneasiness among the thinking men and women of the world. . . .

“Can God ask anything less in His service than a life that shines out of our eyes, out of our gestures, out of our attitudes, out of our words—a living, burning life for Christ? That is the supreme argument for Christianity and for the Advent message. This is the only adequate response to time’s last challenge—a life.”—W. R. Beach, *Aflame for God*, page 25.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pages 479-484.

Ye Are the Light of the World

ELLEN G. WHITE

Once a race of slaves amid a nation of idolaters, the Israelites were delivered from bondage, and became a light in the desert. If God's people who lived in the Old Testament dispensation were to shine out brightly upon a world of idolaters, his people who live in this age, having so many more privileges and so much greater light, should shine forth still more brightly, diffusing light everywhere.

Wherever you find a Christian, you find a shining light. In word and act he reveals the Light of life. His perceptions are not crusted with selfishness. Not having followed inclination, he does not stubbornly cling to his convictions. He perceives the truth, and is blessed by its sacred influence; he sees the verity of God's Word, and its infinite superiority to everything selfish; he sees the foolishness of following plans of human devising in the place of God's plans. His ability to see these things is from God, and qualifies him to be God's representative, to bear with authority the word of truth to others. He has been converted; he loves God supremely, and his neighbor as himself.

Shedding Abroad the Light of Truth

A truly converted man is one whose pen and purse and voice and influence are consecrated to Christ,—one whose affections are rich with tenderness and unselfishness,—one who desires to see the light of truth shed abroad, enlightening the whole world.

My brethren and sisters, the precious light of Bible truth, like a lamp that burneth, is to beam forth from you in word and work. Strive to gain a knowledge of God's Word. Stand ready to improve every possible opportunity to do good in behalf of the souls still in the darkness of error. Act your part heartily as unto the Lord in

leading the sinful to see the sin-pardoning Saviour, and to lay their burden of sin at the foot of the cross. When you see them happy in the possession of a heart cleansed from sin and renewed by the Holy Spirit, your joy in the Lord will increase, and you will know that you have not lived in vain.

Try it, brethren, try it. Put your whole heart into the Lord's work. As members of Christ's church on earth, consecrate yourselves to him, planning unselfishly to help those that are nigh, and especially those that are afar off. Place yourselves in the channel of light, in order that through you light may shine to souls in darkness. Of all who do this work Christ says, "Ye are the light of the world. . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

A Broadening Work

The light of truth is to shine to the ends of the world. Greater and still greater light is beaming with celestial brightness from our Redeemer's face upon his representatives, to be diffused throughout the darkness of a benighted world. As laborers together with him, we should pray for the sanctification of his Spirit, in order that we may shine more and more unto the perfect day.

God has qualified his people to enlighten the world. He has entrusted men with faculties that adapt them to extend and accomplish a work that will encircle the whole world. Sanitariums, schools, printing offices, and kindred facilities are to be established in all parts of the earth. Our work has not been finished, neither at home nor abroad. In foreign countries many enterprises that require means must yet be begun and carried forward. The

establishment of sanitariums for the care of the sick and suffering, is just as necessary in the "regions beyond" as in America. Let all do their best, making their boast in the Lord, and blessing others by their good works.

The Result of Unselfish Service

Christ co-operates with those who engage in medical missionary work. Men and women who unselfishly do what they can to establish sanitariums and treatment rooms in many lands will be richly rewarded. Those who visit these institutions will be benefited physically, mentally, and spiritually. The weary will be refreshed, the sick will be restored to health, and the sin-burdened will be relieved. In far-off countries thanksgiving will be heard from the lips of those whose hearts have been turned from sin to righteousness. By their songs of grateful praise a testimony will be borne that will win other souls to the truth.

A Great Work

The conversion of souls to God is the greatest work, the highest work, in which human beings can take part. In this work, God's forbearance, his unbounded love, his holiness, his power, are revealed. Every true conversion glorifies him, and causes the angels to break forth into singing. Mercy and Truth have met together; Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other.

Upon every truly converted soul—every one who believes in Christ as the world's Redeemer—God has laid the obligation of co-operating with him who gave his life for a perishing world. To every one who is in ease in Zion, he says, Arise, and put your shoulder to the wheel. Bear spiritual burdens. Clear the atmosphere of your soul, in order that the Sun of Righteousness may shine forth through you to the people of other tongues, revealing to them a living, testing truth. Let your light so shine that those who are perishing in their sins may learn of God's goodness, mercy, and love.

The light of the truth for this time is now shining upon the cabinets of kings. The attention of statesmen is being called to the Bible,—the statute-book of the nations,—and they are comparing their national laws with its statutes. As representatives of Christ, we have no time to lose. Our efforts are not to be confined to a few places where the light has become so abundant that it is not appreciated. With unmistakable clearness the light of truth is to be revealed to many people and nations and tongues. The publications containing present truth are to be translated into many languages.

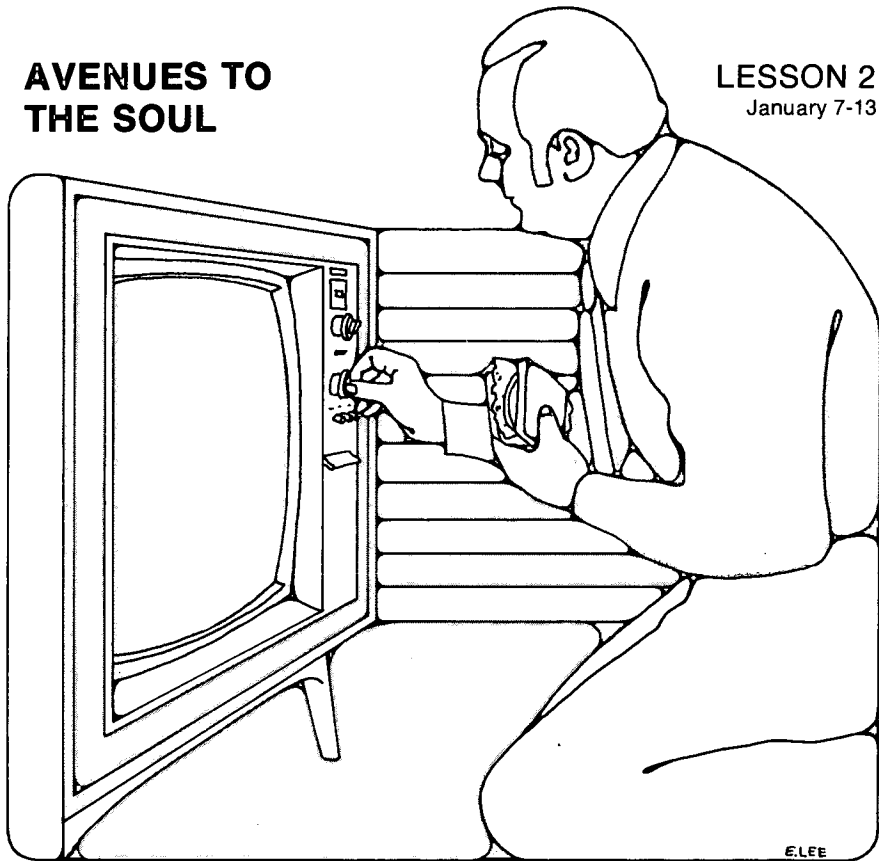
Christ's Witnesses

We are a spectacle to worlds unfallen, to angels, and to men. "Ye are my witnesses," Christ says. We should know individually and be able to tell others that every promise of God is true. It is by bearing a straightforward testimony in word and work, that we are counted as true, faithful witnesses for Christ.

My brethren and sisters, God now calls upon you to consecrate yourselves to him in willing obedience. He calls upon you to proclaim his law with fearlessness, with the intelligence with which those whose hearts are sanctified by the truth ever reveal this truth to others. The third angel's message is now to be proclaimed in every land. It is to be borne to English-speaking people, and to those of every other language. Let believers, as active recipients of God's blessing, diffuse the light of his truth to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, in obedience to the commission, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." We are not half awake to the importance of this commission. May God place the burden of the proclamation of the message upon his people now, just now, is my prayer.—*Review and Herald*, July 7, 1903.

AVENUES TO THE SOUL

LESSON 2
January 7-13



“Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.” Isa. 55:2, 3.

Effective communication includes listening, or receiving. In such communication the recipient of the message makes an intelligent use of the senses with which he is equipped. Communication fails when the listener offers neither attention nor interest.

In the Christian life the use we make of our sensors—ears, eyes, hands, et cetera—may well determine both the

depth of our spiritual experience and whether we shall be able to resist the wiles of Satan as he seeks to delude God’s children.

Our minds interpret impressions received through the senses. If these senses are flooded with sensual or selfishly oriented impressions, they will affect the course of life adversely. Patterns of thought may develop which can be changed only by persistent effort controlled by the will. On the other hand, impressions may build a basis for faith, and the habits of Christian living be firmly implanted in our life patterns.

KEY PHRASES: “Obey my voice,” “hearken to me,” these and many other similar Scripture commands remind us of the importance of deliberately opening our senses Godward.

Part 1
THE EARS
Ps. 78:1-3, 5

"Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us."

"For he [God] established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children."

God's plea is that we listen. What a difference it would make if God's people listened to His voice! The long list of God's wonderful deeds in this psalm encourage faith and confidence.

Every day we listen to many voices. Radio, television, hi-fi, and telephone blare their communications at us. Not only do we have the responsibility of censoring what we hear, but we must also make way for the words God wishes to speak to us through His Word, through prayer, and through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

How did Jesus invite His followers to make intelligent use of their ears? Matt. 11:15; 13:9. See Rev. 3:22.

Many of the amusements popular in the world today, even with those who claim to be Christians, tend to the same end as did those of the heathen. There are indeed few among them that Satan does not turn to account in destroying souls. Through the drama he has worked for ages to excite passion and glorify vice. The opera, with its fascinating display and bewildering music, the masquerade, the dance, the card table, Satan employs to break down the barriers of principle and open the door to sensual indulgence."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 459, 460.

THINK IT THROUGH

What voice should we seek to discern in the babble of impressions we cannot escape? Isa. 30:21; John 14:26.

"Yet we have a work to do to resist temptation. Those who would not fall a prey to Satan's devices must guard well the avenues of the soul; they must avoid reading, seeing, or hearing that which will suggest impure thoughts. The mind should not be left to wander at random upon every subject that the adversary of souls may suggest. 'Gird up the loins of your mind,' says the apostle Peter, 'be sober, . . . not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of living.'"—*Messages to Young People*, page 285.

"The mind does not come down at once from purity and holiness to depravity, corruption, and crime. It takes time to degrade those formed in the image of God to the brutal or the satanic. By beholding, we become changed. By the indulgence of impure thoughts, man can so educate his mind that sin which he once loathed will become pleasant to him."—*Messages to Young People*, page 282.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pages 453-461.

Part 2
THE EYES
Matt. 5:29

What do you think Jesus meant by plucking out the eye?

“And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.”

This is an alarming warning of the danger of being polluted spiritually by our senses. The figure of speech used here graphically represents how great is the evil of opening the mind to lustful impressions through the eyes. But lust is only one example of the danger which includes a mental acceptance of every type of sin that reaches the mind through the eye. These impressions come not only from direct sight of persons, the source Jesus was speaking of in Matt. 5:29, but also from print, cinema, and television.

The eye receives countless communications in one day. The mind is called upon to receive and classify these impressions.

What criteria should the Christian apply to what he permits to enter his mind? Phil. 4:8. Compare Ps. 66:18; 101:3.

The eye must be controlled by faith—a faith that, voluntarily received, has made the mind captive to Jesus Christ. Thus faith in Jesus, working through the mind, may control all human senses. Paul taught that anything which does not proceed out of faith is sin. Rom. 14:23. To avoid sinning with the eyes, then, is a matter of faith censoring sight. The Christian will choose sight objects that are in harmony with the principles exhibited by the life of Jesus.

THINK IT THROUGH

Do the circumstances of viewing alter the rightness of what is viewed? Think about this in relation to watching television, feature films, drama.

“You love to read storybooks, but do not find the word of God interesting. You should restrict your reading to the word of God and to books that are of a spiritual and useful character. In so doing you will close a door against temptation, and you will be blessed.”—*Testimonies*, Vol. 3, pp. 81, 82.

“There is no influence in our land more powerful to poison the imagination, to destroy religious impressions, and to blunt the relish for the tranquil pleasures and sober realities of life than theatrical amusements. The love for these scenes increases with every indulgence, as the desire for intoxicating drink strengthens with its use. The only safe course is to shun the theater, the circus, and every other questionable place of amusement.

“There are modes of recreation which are highly beneficial to both mind and body. An enlightened, discriminating mind will find abundant means for entertainment and diversion, from sources not only innocent, but instructive.”—*Testimonies*, Vol. 4, p. 653.

FURTHER STUDY *Messages to Young People*, pages 271-278.

Part 3
THE BODY
Rom. 12:1, 2

What is "a living sacrifice"?

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

In a world where pleasure is a prime motivation, Christians must continually guard and control their appetites. Alcohol, tobacco, drugs, and sexual immorality are appetite traps to avoid. The Christian must reject all appetite satisfaction that causes the body and mind to function at less than optimum efficiency.

"All should have an intelligent knowledge of the human frame, that they may keep their bodies in the condition necessary to do the work of the Lord. Those who form habits that weaken the nerve power and lessen the vigor of mind or body, make themselves inefficient for the work God has given them to do. On the other hand, a pure, healthy life is most favorable for the perfection of Christian character and for the development of the powers of mind and body."—*Counsels on Health*, page 41.

What reasons does Paul give for glorifying God in the human body? 1 Cor. 6:19, 20.

Note that this counsel is in the context of sexual immorality, which is a misuse of the most intimate of communication. Such conduct not only defies the Ten Commandments but also defiles the temple of the Holy Spirit and hinders His work in the life.

What two possible sources does Paul point out as the control of the body for sin or righteousness? Rom. 6:12, 13.

"In thus dedicating his members unto God, the Christian commits himself to strive, by the empowering of God's Spirit, for the greatest possible perfection of every organ of the body and quality of the mind, that he may know, love, and serve his Redeemer acceptably."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Rom. 6:13.

THINK IT THROUGH

How completely have I yielded my body and its senses to the control of righteousness?

"Never should we lower the standard of righteousness in order to accommodate inherited or cultivated tendencies to wrongdoing. We need to understand that imperfection of character is sin. All righteous attributes of character dwell in God as a perfect, harmonious whole, and every one who receives Christ as a personal Saviour is privileged to possess these attributes."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 330.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, Vol. 2, pp. 486-489.

Part 4
APPEAL TO
THE HEART
Deut. 5:26-29

"For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it. And the Lord heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the Lord said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken. O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!"

They sensed the earth shaking, they saw the lightning flash, they heard the thunder rumble. They even had a privilege long denied men—the children of Israel heard God speak the Ten Commandments.

This experience completely overawed them. They could imagine no circumstance in which they would forget such power. They were terrified then. God commended them for their response. But He saw deeper. He knew that the emotional experience of that day at Sinai had not changed their hearts.

What was the result of Christ's testimony to the disciples on the road to Emmaus? Luke 24:32.

Note that in the experience of the disciples there was a blending of emotion with the intellectual act of learning the truth.

"After His resurrection Jesus appeared to His disciples on the way to Emmaus, and, 'beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.' Luke 24:27. The hearts of the disciples were stirred. Faith was kindled. They were 'begotten again into a lively hope' even before Jesus revealed Himself to them."—*The Great Controversy*, page 349.

THINK IT THROUGH

We are warned that in the last days Satan will use displays of power to deceive. How may we safeguard our faith against wonders and signs of satanic origin?

"Their [the Israelites'] profound awe at the manifestation of divine power and glory was the very attitude of mind and heart God desired to produce in them. It is only when a man becomes humble in God's sight, when he realizes his utter sinfulness and helplessness in contrast to God's righteousness and omnipotence, that God can work in him and with him."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Deut. 5:28.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 799-801.

Part 5
THE REASON
Deut. 4:39, 40

"Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else. Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, for ever."

In Deuteronomy 4 Moses recounts the impressive wonders the people had witnessed. He talks of Baal-peor (verse 3); of the fire at Horeb (verses 10-12); of the voice of God (verses 12, 13); of what they did *not* see at Horeb (verses 15-19); of the voice, the fire, and many other wonders (verses 33, 34, 37).

All this God did in love (verse 37). Now He asks the people to apply their reason to these experiences and come up with a logical conclusion—to serve and obey God.

"In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what the Lord has wrought, I am filled with astonishment, and with confidence in Christ as leader. We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history."—*Life Sketches*, page 196.

How should we classify the experience of forgiveness and cleansing from sin—emotional or rational? Isa. 1:18-20.

The ability to draw conclusions from data is the mark of reason. The highest use of reason, the greatest display of logic, is the acceptance of the plan of salvation revealed in Jesus Christ.

THINK IT THROUGH

To what have I dedicated my intellect and reasoning power? Am I considering God's goodness in my heart?

"That blood alone is efficacious. It alone can make propitiation for our sins. It is the blood of the only-begotten Son of God that is of value for us that we may draw nigh unto God."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 971.

"Will you let Him reason with you? Will you commit to Him the keeping of your soul as unto a faithful Creator? Come then, and let us live in the light of His countenance, and pray, as did David, 'Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow' (Ps. 51:7)."—*Selected Messages*, Bk. 1, p. 330.

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pages 246-258.

Part 6
THE WHOLE
MAN
1 Thess. 5:23,
24

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.”

Every facet of man's life may be sanctified. Under no circumstances should we consider salvation as something that applies to our spiritual natures and neglects our bodies, or applies to our bodies but omits our minds. The whole man—physical, intellectual, emotional, moral, and social—can come under the control of God.

“The truth must sanctify the whole man—his mind, his thoughts, his heart, his strength. His vital powers will not be consumed upon his own lustful practices. These must be overcome, or they will overcome him. . . .

“Sanctification—how many understand its full meaning? The mind is befogged by sensual malaria. The thoughts need purifying. What might not men and women have been had they realized that the treatment of the body has everything to do with the vigor and purity of mind and heart.

“The true Christian obtains an experience which brings holiness. He is without a spot of guilt upon the conscience, or a taint of corruption upon the soul. The spirituality of the law of God, with its limiting principles, is brought into his life. The light of truth irradiates his understanding. A glow of perfect love for the Redeemer clears away the miasma which has interposed between his soul and God. The will of God has become his will, pure, elevated, refined, and sanctified. His countenance reveals the light of heaven. His body is a fit temple for the Holy Spirit. Holiness adorns his character. God can commune with him; for soul and body are in harmony with God.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 909.

What are the means and the aim of sanctification? 1 Peter 1:2.

THINK IT THROUGH

Am I part Christian or whole Christian? Is it really possible to hold back a part of self from Christ and still be one of His redeemed?

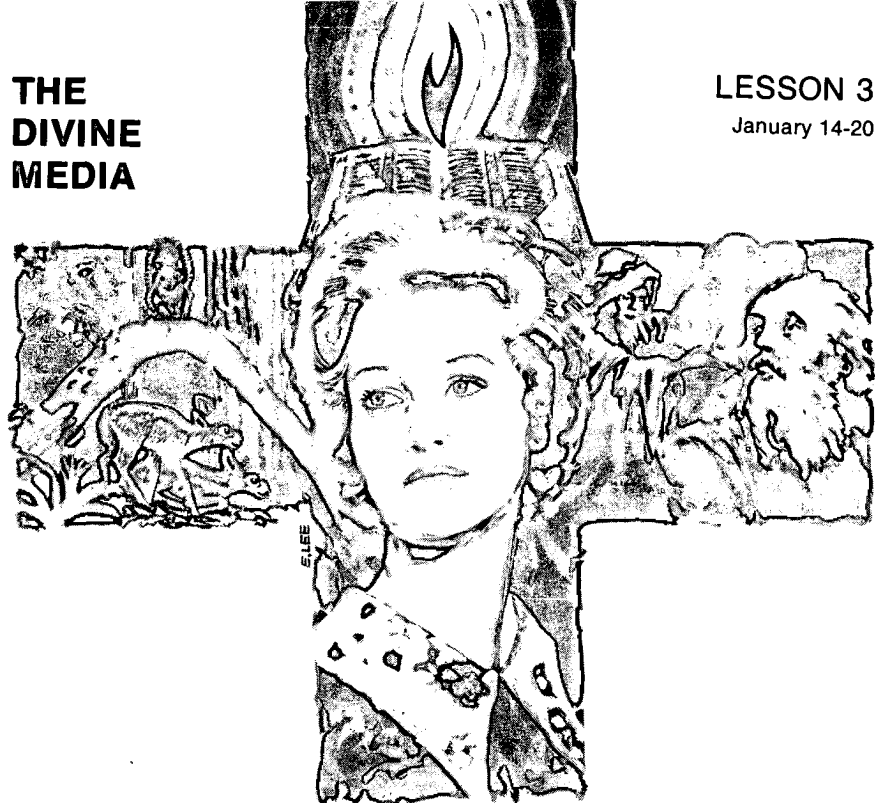
“By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. . . .

“The truth is to be planted in the heart. It is to control the mind and regulate the affections. The whole character must be stamped with the divine utterances. Every jot and tittle of the word of God is to be brought into the daily practice.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 312-314.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 469-473.

THE DIVINE MEDIA



“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.”
Heb. 1:1, 2.

Sin interposes an almost impenetrable barrier to effective communication between God and man. Just as powerful radio transmitters may be jammed by unfriendly signals, so sin jams the divine messages. Yet God has chosen to speak to certain men and relay His communications to us through them.

We are continually surprised, throughout the Bible, by the determination and patience of God in seeking to communicate His message of love. Many of

us are familiar with the methods God used to communicate His messages to Ellen G. White.

But this is only part of the picture of divine communication. God communicates with us directly through the Bible, nature, and the Holy Spirit. God will speak to us through them if we will but let Him.

Medium: “A person through whom a purpose is accomplished: go-between, agent, intermediary.”—*Webster’s Third New International Dictionary*.

Communication: “Interchange of thoughts or opinions: a process by which meanings are exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols.”—*Webster’s Third New International Dictionary*.

Part 1
A MESSAGE TO
BE CONVEYED
Eph. 1:9, 10

"Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him."

We may well wonder why God went to such pains to redeem us. What is there in us that is to be desired? Why did He not destroy sinners and start over again? Yet we read again and again of His determination to destroy sin, of His ineffable love, of His desire to restore the original communication between Himself and His created subjects.

To receive the message of this love; to know that God is seeking us through Jesus Christ; this is the greatest knowledge within our comprehension.

"Oh, the mystery of redemption! the love of God for a world that did not love Him! Who can know the depths of that love which 'passeth knowledge'? Through endless ages immortal minds, seeking to comprehend the mystery of that incomprehensible love, will wonder and adore."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 63, 64.

What are the steps in the communication of the plan of salvation? 2 Cor. 5:19.

How has the word of reconciliation been channeled to you? What methods did God use in your case?

How does God speak of the results of His saving word? Isa. 55: 10, 11.

God has chosen to let us know about Himself. More than this, our knowledge of Him is with a purpose in mind. It can lead to our reconciliation and salvation. The goal of God's communication with mankind is eternal life for the redeemed.

THINK IT THROUGH

How much may we understand of the mystery of His will?

"God cannot be understood by men. His ways and works are past finding out. In regard to the revelations that He has made of Himself in His Word, we may talk, but other than this, let us say of Him, Thou art God, and Thy ways are past finding out.

"There is a knowledge of God and of Christ which all who are saved must have. 'This is life eternal,' Christ said, 'that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.'

"The question for us to study is, What is truth—the truth for this time, which is to be cherished, loved, honored, and obeyed?"—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, p. 1079.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pages 63-70.

Part 2
WHEN MAN
AND
GOD WERE
FACE-TO-FACE
Gen. 2:15-17

“And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

“The holy pair were not only children under the fatherly care of God but students receiving instruction from the all-wise Creator. They were visited by angels, and were granted communion with their Maker, with no obscuring veil between. . . . They held converse with leaf and flower and tree, gathering from each the secrets of its life. With every living creature, from the mighty leviathan that playeth among the waters to the insect mote that floats in the sunbeam, Adam was familiar.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 50, 51.

What indicates man's estrangement from God after the fall? Gen. 3:9, 10.

God communicated to Adam directly the results that would come if he disobeyed God's instruction. Once Adam yielded to temptation he was lost; he tried to place himself out of contact with divinity.

God's concerned inquiry, “Where art thou?” marks the beginning of the long approach to man that led at last to Calvary. Out of this concern for a loved and lost creation came the Bible and the messages of the prophets. Because of this decision to seek mankind, we know what is wrong with the world, we know the way out.

What bright star of hope came with God's further message? Gen. 3:15.

THINK IT THROUGH

How would you answer God's question, “Where art thou?”

“On every leaf of the forest or stone of the mountains, in every shining star, in earth and air and sky, God's name was written. The order and harmony of creation spoke to them of infinite wisdom and power. They were ever discovering some attraction that filled their hearts with deeper love and called forth fresh expressions of gratitude.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 51.

“Adam, in his innocence, had enjoyed open communion with his Maker; but sin brought separation between God and man, and the atonement of Christ alone could span the abyss and make possible the communication of blessing or salvation from heaven to earth. Man was still cut off from direct approach to his Creator, but God would communicate with him through Christ and angels.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 67.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pages 49-51.

Part 3
GOD CHOOSES
HIS
MESSENGERS
2 Cor. 5:18-20

“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”

The messages God gives differ in scope. Some are timeless. These make up the Scriptures. To them, men of all eras may refer for objective standards and divine guidance.

The divine origin of any messages will be recognized by their agreement with the Scripture testimony. God illuminates the Scriptures for every believer, and that believer thus has a relationship to God that is unique. A saved sinner is the gospel story in miniature.

It is from our personal communication of the gospel message to another individual that the real effectiveness of our ambassadorship derives. Upon those who have received the message of saving love devolves the responsibility of communicating the word of reconciliation to others.

By what unique experience were the Scriptures given to the world? 2 Peter 1:19-21.

Which of the gifts that God gives to His church are gifts of communication? 1 Cor. 12:7-11.

Responsibilities vary in degree and purpose according to God’s choosing, opportunity, and the talent of the individual. No faithful servant of God will seek to escape his assignment as ambassador.

THINK IT THROUGH

What will a sense of the uniqueness of our knowledge of Christ do for our words and life?

“Every chapter and every verse of the Bible is a communication from God to men. We should bind its precepts as signs upon our hands and as frontlets between our eyes. If studied and obeyed, it would lead God’s people, as the Israelites were led, by the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 504.

“All men do not receive the same gifts, but to every servant of the Master some gift of the Spirit is promised. . . .

“The gifts are already ours in Christ, but their actual possession depends upon our reception of the Spirit of God.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 327.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ’s Object Lessons, pages 325-333.

Part 4
WHEN GOD
WROTE
Deut. 33:2, 3

"The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them. Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words."

The law mentioned here is the Ten Commandments. God calls these commandments a "testimony." Ex. 31:18. From this designation the following expressions derive: the "tables of testimony," the "ark of the testimony," the "veil of the testimony," and even the "tabernacle of the testimony." A testimony is a witness. The witness of the prophets is one way God speaks to mankind. But in the Ten Commandments we have the prime witness, a declaration of God's character, nature, and authority. They witness also to man's depravity.

Today philosophers and some ministers advise the Christian to look inward to discover God. All man's experiences of the divine are said to come from within. But by writing the Ten Commandments, God showed that certain objective standards must be accepted. These will be the standard of the final judgment.

What warning for all is inherent in the words written on the walls of Belshazzar's palace? Dan. 5:24-28.

What method did Christ use to show His forgiveness and love for the sinner? John 8:3-11.

God's written Ten must be satisfied either in judgment or in forgiveness.

THINK IT THROUGH

Are the Ten Commandments written for me on tables of stone only, or have they been written on my heart?

"The subject of man's personal responsibility is understood by but few; and yet it is a matter of the greatest importance. We may each obey and live, or we may transgress God's law, defy His authority, and receive the punishment that is meet. Then to every soul the question comes home with force, Shall I obey the voice from heaven, the ten words spoken from Sinai, or shall I go with the multitude who trample on that fiery law? To those who love God it will be the highest delight to keep His commandments, and to do those things that are pleasing in His sight. But the natural heart hates the law of God, and wars against its holy claims. Men shut their souls from the divine light, refusing to walk in it as it shines upon them. They sacrifice purity of heart, the favor of God, and their hope of heaven, for selfish gratification or worldly gain."—*Selected Messages*, Bk. 1, pp. 216, 217.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pages 462-468.

Part 5
WHEN MEN
WROTE FOR
GOD
2 Tim. 3:15, 16

“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction for instruction in righteousness.”

What does the term “inspiration” mean? How do we determine what is inspired and what is not? Is it a matter of personal judgment? Would Paul have expected Timothy to look within himself to discover whether what he read was inspired for him?

Maintaining confidence in the Word of God as a direct communication from Divinity to and through man is not easy in the face of many assaults on inspiration. We do not look on the prophets as stenographers receiving dictation, but we do believe that God inspired their thoughts to record what we needed to know.

How did God instruct Moses to record His covenant with Israel? Ex. 34:27.

There are several records of a reformation resulting from the reading of the book of the law. For the Israelites this written record became a sanctifying and redeeming communication from God. See 2 Kings 22; Nehemiah 8.

What did Jeremiah say was the Lord's command to him? Jer. 36:1, 2.

THINK IT THROUGH

Consider for a few moments the power and scope of the Bible—its influence on history, on lives, on you personally. What is the secret of its power?

“As the mine has rich veins of gold and silver hidden beneath the surface, so that all must dig who would discover its precious stores, so the Holy Scriptures have treasures of truth that are revealed only to the earnest, humble, prayerful seeker. God designed the Bible to be a lessonbook to all mankind, in childhood, youth, and manhood, and to be studied through all time. He gave His word to men as a revelation of Himself. Every new truth discerned is a fresh disclosure of the character of its Author. The study of the Scriptures is the means divinely ordained to bring men into closer connection with their Creator and to give them a clearer knowledge of His will. It is the medium of communication between God and man.”—*The Great Controversy*, page 69.

“An earnest, reverent study of the Scriptures, bringing the mind of the student in direct contact with the infinite mind, would give to the world men of stronger and more active intellect, as well as of nobler principle, than has ever resulted from the ablest training that human philosophy affords.”—*The Great Controversy*, page 94.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, Introduction.

Part 6
WHEN THE
WORD CAME
John 1:1,
9, 12, 14

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

"That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, . . . full of grace and truth."

Miracles, prophets, angels, natural events—all had been used to penetrate the consciousness of mankind. Now the final Word about God is given. Now there will be no doubt about the nature of the Deity. Christ will live, and say, and be all that should be communicated about God to man.

Christ is the Word because He expresses God's message. Heb. 1:1, 2. In His words we hear the call back to our true destiny. In Christ we know God. John 14:7-9.

What was John's witness concerning the communication of God received through the living Word? 1 John 1:1-5.

This communication is passed on to others. Do we, like John, understand God's Word sufficiently well to pass Him on? We are in the same stream of communication that spoke to the apostles.

How does the Godhead continue to communicate to us? John 15:26.

THINK IT THROUGH

What advantage is there in learning more about Christ through diligent study of the Word of God?

"We have entered upon uncommon times. Wolves are masquerading in sheep's clothing; new and old controversies commingle; dangerous heresies, dressed in the livery of heaven, seek admission into the church. A power from beneath is exerting a strange, bewitching power everywhere. . . . Without doubt the holy unction promised by our Lord in the upper room, is the greatest need in every church today. 'And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever.' John 14:16."—G. B. Thompson, *The Ministry of the Spirit*, pages 13, 14.

"As a witness for Christ, John entered into no controversy, no wearisome contention. He declared what he knew, what he had seen and heard. He had been intimately associated with Christ, had listened to His teachings, had witnessed His mighty miracles. . . . Out of the abundance of a heart overflowing with love for the Saviour he spoke; and no power could stay his words."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 555.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 33-38.

January 21-27



“Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets. The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?” Amos 3:7, 8.

At first glance it seems presumptuous to think of God actually choosing to speak through men. Yet in reality this is the only valid choice for a substantial, long-lasting revelation of Himself. Only through men could God provide the human view, the human language, and the example of human faith in His message.

God has a message of the utmost importance for us. This world is not right. We are not living in the natural condition for which man was created. It can and will be made better. The purposes and plans

of God have been revealed to us, and we have been given the opportunity to make our personal decisions. This is the function the prophet performs—conveying what God wants man to consider for his own benefit and salvation.

In this lesson we will look at men in their awesome role of divine mouthpieces. How did these men feel about the responsibility? In what ways did God speak through them? Why should they be believed?

KEY THOUGHT

The Prophets' Kinship With Their Fellow Humans. We are not looking at a race of mystics or ascetics. These are men, consecrated and devout, but men nonetheless, speaking for God sometimes out of the throes of personal crises, but always out of intense devotion to God.

Part 1
MEN CALLED
BY GOD
Isa. 6:7, 8

“And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.”

God has always found someone to witness for Him. Not always easily though. Noah was just about alone in his faithful witness. Jeremiah could not find a just man in Jerusalem. Jer. 5:1-5.

What kind of person does God look for? What condition was Isaiah in when he received the divine call? Do you think the purifying process put Isaiah outside the chance of sinning?

An essential element in the prophets is their humility. You may find it all the way from Moses to John. Ellen G. White continually felt her unworthiness for her responsibility.

There almost seems to be a credibility gap in the minds of the prophets. Why should anyone believe *me*? But God cleansed their impurity, gave them courage, shored up their faith, and sent them out to do His bidding.

What expression did Jeremiah use to designate the way he received God's messages? Jer. 1:4, 7, 13.

Prophets received and presented their messages in a variety of ways. Some wrote out the content of a vision. Others had no vision but, guided by the Spirit, wrote God's message. Some prophets wrote prose, others wrote poetry. Some preached sermons or presented acted parables and recorded them.

How were the messages of the prophets given permanency? Hab. 2:2; 1 John 1:4; Rev. 1:11.

Why have certain writings been preserved and others lost? What was different about the sayings of Nathan and Samuel that little is recorded of them? Does the limiting of relevance to a certain era bring doubt on the prophetic gift?

THINK IT THROUGH

How am I relating to the prophetic gift as manifest in the last-day church?

“We must cherish and cultivate the faith of which prophets and apostles have testified—the faith that lays hold on the promises of God and waits for deliverance in His appointed time and way. . . . The time of waiting may seem long, the soul may be oppressed by discouraging circumstances, many in whom confidence has been placed may fall by the way; but with the prophet who endeavored to encourage Judah in a time of unparalleled apostasy, let us confidently declare, ‘The Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him.’”—*Prophets and Kings*, pages 387, 388.

“The Infinite One by His Holy Spirit has shed light into the minds and hearts of His servants. He has given dreams and visions, symbols and figures; and those to whom the truth was thus revealed have themselves embodied the thought in human language.”—*The Great Controversy*, page v.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, Introduction.

Part 2
MAN SENT
FROM GOD
Luke 24:25-27

“Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”

“It was a vital point in the teachings of Jesus that ‘all the scriptures’ of the OT look forward to His Messianic work.”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Luke 24:27.

Why should we expect a Book from God to have a unifying concept? How does this set the Bible apart from other religious books? Is the concept of Christ vital to the inspiration of the Bible?

The Bible became completely possible only through Jesus Christ. Without the concept of the Messiah the writers of the Bible would have lacked direction and purpose. It would have been a story without an end, a hope without possibility of fulfillment, a dream with a nightmare ending. But with Christ the channels are open, directed toward the goal of redeeming humanity in Him.

For whom did Jesus tell the Jews to look in Scripture? John 5:39, 46, 47.

Does the attitude of the reader affect the validity of the message in the Scripture? What does ancient Israel’s attitude toward the gospel teach us about assenting to the Word? Rom. 10:18, 19, 21.

“But those who bring to the investigation of the word a spirit which it does not approve, will take away from the search a spirit which it has not imparted.”—*Review and Herald*, Dec. 15, 1896.

THINK IT THROUGH

Many books have central characters. In what way is the centrality of Christ different in the Bible?

“Through all the ages the great truth of justification by faith has stood as a mighty beacon to guide repentant sinners into the way of life.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 373.

“The blessed Bible gives us a knowledge of the great plan of salvation, and shows us how every individual may have eternal life. Who is the author of the book?—Jesus Christ. He is the True Witness, and He says to His own, ‘I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.’ The Bible is to show us the way to Christ, and in Christ eternal life is revealed.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 308.

“After the transgression of Adam, the Lord spoke no longer directly with man; the human race was given into the hands of Christ, and all communication came through Him to the world.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 237.

FURTHER STUDY

Fundamentals of Christian Education, pages 307-309.

Part 3
MEN RECEIVE
GOO'S GIFTS
Eph. 4:11-13

“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”

“Apostles Paul is not so much saying that certain gifts were given to men in order that they might become apostles, as that they who had received the gift were themselves being given to the church. The church was receiving to its ministry men who were properly equipped for their functions. Compare Rom. 12:6-8.

“Prophets Prophets were expounders and explainers of the will of God that had been made known to them by supernatural means The prophetic gift was indispensable to the founding of the church in NT times, and is the appointed guide of the remnant church (Rev. 19:10).

“Evangelists The *euaggelistai* [evangelists] were apparently not attached to any particular locality, but bore their testimony from place to place. They probably did not exercise the full authority of apostles (Acts 21:8; 2 Tim. 4:5). The ministry of the evangelists appears to have been directed chiefly to the heathen, whereas the pastors and teachers served the local congregations. . . .

“Pastors and teachers. The structure of this phrase, in the Greek, suggests that Paul intends to speak of two phases of one office. Any effective ministry is a teaching ministry.”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Eph. 4:11.

What was Paul's estimate of the presence of gifts in the Corinth church? 1 Cor. 1:6, 7. What gifts can you find in the church today?

To what gift did Peter ascribe the events of the Day of Pentecost? Acts 2:17, 18.

“If this prophecy of Joel met a partial fulfillment in the days of the apostles, we are living in a time when it is to be even more evidently manifest to the people of God.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 4, p. 1175.

THINK IT THROUGH

How did the reaction of the children of Israel to the prophetic gift ultimately affect their spiritual destiny?

“Look at the flowers in a carpet, and notice the different colored threads. All are not pink, all are not green, all are not blue. A variety of colors are woven together to perfect the pattern. So it is in the design of God. He has a purpose in placing us where we must learn to live as individuals. We are not all fitted to do the same kind of work, but each man's work is designed by God to help make up His plan.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, p. 1083.

FURTHER STUOY

Selected Messages, Bk. 1, pp. 15-18.

Part 4
MEN GIVE
GOD'S
MESSAGE
2 Chron. 36:15

“And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place.”

Do we detect in these words a slight air of disappointment or even chagrin at what might have been? Perhaps we might even say, “We would not have done as they”; yet the same era that looked back at this point in history was neglecting the messengers of God. Is our condition any better?

God's communications reveal the timelessness of man's need and God's love. These two stand in dynamic relation to each other in the framework of Scripture. This is the basic reason for the relevance of the Bible. “The Bible and the soul were made one for the other.”—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, Aug. 20, 1894. Here is a mirror for you and me. Yet more than a mirror. It reaches out to transform the image we see. The Bible is more, says more, than mere man could make it be or say.

Consider the answer of the Bible to your personal crises. What has it said to you when you needed help?

What was the source of faith to which the Hebrew believers were pointed? Heb. 12:2, 3.

What dangers in misconstruing the book of Revelation are applicable to all Scripture? Rev. 22:18, 19.

“Those who, by their human construction, shall make the Scripture to utter that which Christ has never placed upon it, weaken its force, making the voice of God in instruction and warnings to testify falsehood, to avoid the inconvenience incurred by obedience to God's requirements, have become signboards, pointing in the wrong direction, into false paths, which lead to transgression and death.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 387.

THINK IT THROUGH

Is the Spirit convicting me about the same problem over and over again? Is God's constancy an excuse for my compromise?

“There is necessity for every family to make the Bible the book of their study. Christ's sayings are pure gold, without one particle of dross, unless men, with their human understanding, shall try to put it there, and make falsehood appear as a portion of truth. To those who have received the false interpretation of the word, when they search the Scriptures with the determined effort to obtain the very marrow of truth contained in them, the Holy Spirit opens the eyes of their understanding, and the truths of the word are to them as a new revelation. Their hearts are quickened to a new and living faith, and they behold wondrous things out of His law. The teachings of Christ have a breadth and depth to many which they have never understood before.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 386.

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, Bk. 1, pp. 383-386.

Part 5
MEN'S
THREATS
TO GOD'S
GIFTS
Rev. 19:10

What is implied in this text as to the origin of the testimony of Jesus?

"And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Unless we follow the instruction already received, we cannot expect that new revelations will come from the Spirit.

What is the situation of the remnant when they are pointed out as possessing the prophetic gift? Rev. 12:12, 17.

Speaking of the messages the Lord had given her, Ellen G. White said, "Time and trial have not made void the instruction given, but through years of suffering and self-sacrifice have established the truth of the testimony given. The instruction that was given in the early days of the message is to be held as safe instruction to follow in these its closing days."—*Selected Messages*, Bk. 1, p. 41.

Every preacher, every teacher, every church member is to a degree a bearer of truth and light. "There are those who will misinterpret the messages that God has given, in accordance with their spiritual blindness."—*Selected Messages*, Bk. 1, p. 41.

How important then that we understand what the Bible and the spirit of prophecy are saying to God's people.

What warning did Christ have for those who live in the last days? Matt. 24:24.

"Every variety of error will be brought out in the mysterious working of Satan, which would, if it were possible, deceive the very elect, and turn them from the truth."—*Selected Messages*, Bk. 2, p. 98.

THINK IT THROUGH

What different ways are there of negating the witness of prophecy? Of making it more effective?

"When the Lord has a genuine channel of light, there are always plenty of counterfeits. Satan will surely enter any door thrown open for him. He will give messages of truth, mingling with the truth ideas of his own, prepared to mislead souls, to draw the mind to human beings and their sayings, and prevent it from holding firmly to a 'Thus saith the Lord.' In God's dealings with His people, all is quiet; with those who trust in Him, all is calm and unpretending. There will be simple, true, earnest believers in the Bible, and there will be doers of the Word as well as hearers. There will be sound, earnest, sensible waiting upon God. The believer will hang his helpless soul on Jesus Christ."—*Selected Messages*, Bk. 2, pp. 96, 97.

FURTHER STUDY

Selected Messages, Bk. 1, pp. 40-42.

Part 6
MEN'S GIFTS
TESTED
1 John 4:1-3

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."

Apparently in John's day there was a crisis in the church on the question of the humanity of Jesus Christ. According to this passage the basic identification of a prophet is not in his claim to be a prophet, but in the truth of his teachings. God is not inconsistent nor contradictory. The truthfulness of a prophet's claims can be tested by the Bible.

Anything that diminishes the authority or efficacy of Christ's ministry is antichrist. It is a denial that Christ is what God sent Him to be. Our danger today is not that we shall be led astray by a Simon or cursed by a latter-day Balaam. But we do live in mortal peril from the worldliness and materialism of society. Through advertising, social pressure, and education the aggressive evangelists of doubt are assailing the strongholds of faith.

Why did God decree the expulsion of the Canaanites from the Promised Land? Deut. 18:9-12.

These false voices are still speaking. Many forms of spiritualism and astrology confront modern man. A decision to live by the Word of God is the only safeguard against these false communications. Isa. 8:20.

What dangers threaten faith in the time of the end? 1 Tim. 4:1, 2; 2 Tim. 4:3, 4.

THINK IT THROUGH

What can arm faith against the assaults of doubt and satanic delusions?

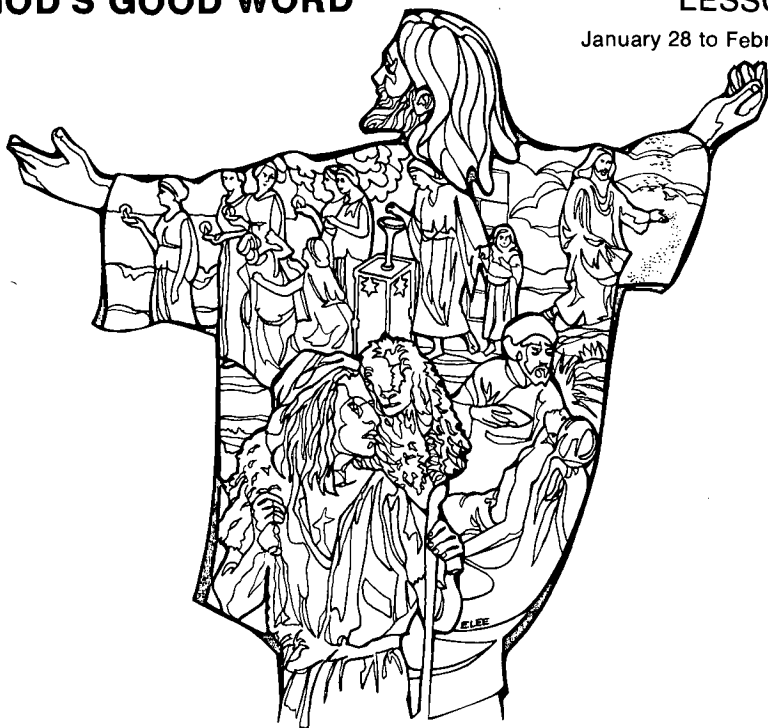
"In these days of peril we are not to accept everything that men bring to us as truth. As professed teachers from God come to us declaring that they have a message from God, it is proper to inquire carefully, How do we know that this is truth? Jesus has told us that 'false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many' (Matt. 24:11). But we need not be deceived; for the Word of God gives us a test whereby we may know what is truth. The prophet says, 'To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them' (Isa. 8:20).

"From this statement it is evident that it becomes us to be diligent Bible students, that we may know what is according to the law and the testimony. We are safe in no other course of action."
—*Selected Messages*, Bk. 2, p. 99.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pages 553-556.

January 28 to February 3



"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Luke 4:18, 19.

These verses, quoted by Jesus from Isaiah, He applied to His own work. Luke 4:21. This work was, basically, communicating to the world.

This week's lesson will be a study of Jesus as a communicator. "Since the sin of our first parents there has been no direct communication between God and man. The Father has given the world into the hands of Christ, that through His mediatorial work He may redeem man and vindicate the authority and holiness of the law of God. All the communion between heaven and the fallen race has been

through Christ."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 366.

In view of Jesus' work as a communicator it should be eminently worthwhile in a study of communication to examine the record about His communication. We will find that His communication was tremendously effective. What He said and did completely changed the history and direction of society. If He failed with some, it was because prejudice or pride raised barriers. In the intimate, closely fought battle for individual souls Christ showed the complete understanding of humanity that we would expect.

Ellen G. White states that when Jesus taught the Sermon on the Mount, "He spoke with certainty, and a convincing power attended His words. The people were silenced, and a feeling of fear crept over them. . . . Many were convicted that this remarkable Teacher was actuated by the Spirit of God, and that the sentiments He uttered were divine."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 305.

Part 1
GOOD TIDINGS
John 7:46;
6:63, 68

What is the meaning of Jesus' affirmation that life is contained in words?

"The officers answered, Never man spake like this man."

"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

"Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

Christ, with His heavenly Father, originated the plan of salvation, and this was the source of His authority. He knew that the message He was bringing would do for man exactly what He promised. His words contained and conveyed life.

What sources of authority undergirded the witness of Jesus?
John 5:32-36, 39.

Too often modern man questions the authority of God's words—his own surmisings seem more satisfying. Our danger is that we might likewise doubt.

"While His teaching was simple, He spoke as one having authority. This characteristic set His teaching in contrast with that of all others. The rabbis spoke with doubt and hesitancy, as if the Scriptures might be interpreted to mean one thing or exactly the opposite. . . . But Jesus taught the Scriptures as of unquestionable authority. Whatever His subject, it was presented with power, as if His words could not be controverted."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 253.

As we convey the teachings of Christ, we are bearing the message of God. See John 17:8.

At the birth of Jesus the angel told the watching, wonder-struck shepherds that he brought tidings of great joy. We may likewise be bearers of good news, simply by relating the messages of Christ.

THINK IT THROUGH

Read the story of Nicodemus in John 3. How can I make the Word more fresh and meaningful in my experience?

"Yet He was earnest, rather than vehement. He spoke as one who had a definite purpose to fulfill. He was bringing to view the realities of the eternal world. In every theme God was revealed. Jesus sought to break the spell of infatuation which keeps men absorbed in earthly things. He placed the things of this life in their true relation, as subordinate to those of eternal interest; but He did not ignore their importance. He taught that heaven and earth are linked together, and that a knowledge of divine truth prepares men better to perform the duties of everyday life."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 254.

FURTHER STUOY

The Desire of Ages, pages 252-255.

Part 2
CLEAR TRUTH
Matt. 13:34, 35

Why did Jesus use parables in His teaching?

"All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."

Christ used parables to capture and hold attention. By this means He was able to arouse conviction in the hearts of the hearers. "Who hath ears, let him hear." The parables were made effective when the hearers discovered truth for themselves in these illustrations from everyday life. Christ also used parables to conceal the truth from some persons.

"Jesus spoke before the Pharisees and Sadducees in parables, hiding the clearness of truth under symbols and figures because they would make a wrong use of the truths He presented before them; but to His disciples He spoke plainly. We should learn from Christ's method of teaching and be careful not to cut off the ears of the people by presenting truths which, not being fully explained, they are in no way prepared to receive."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 3, p. 426.

Why is the gospel received in different ways by different people? Matt. 13:13-16.

"From Christ's methods of labor we may learn many valuable lessons. He did not follow merely one method; in various ways He sought to gain the attention of the multitude; and then He proclaimed to them the truths of the gospel."—*Evangelism*, page 123.

THINK IT THROUGH

Am I seeking for ways of making the gospel mean more to myself, my family, my friends?

"His messages of mercy were varied to suit His audience. He knew 'how to speak a word in season to him that is weary' (Isa. 50:4); for grace was poured upon His lips, that He might convey to men in the most attractive way the treasures of truth. He had tact to meet the prejudiced minds, and surprise them with illustrations that won their attention. . . . His illustrations were taken from the things of daily life, and although they were simple, they had in them a wonderful depth of meaning. The birds of the air, the lilies of the field, the seed, the shepherd and the sheep,—with these objects Christ illustrated immortal truth; and ever afterward, when His hearers chanced to see these things of nature, they recalled His words."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 254.

"As He passed through the towns and cities He was like a vital current, diffusing life and joy."—*The Ministry of Healing*, pages 19, 20.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, pages 17-22.

Part 3
MOTIVATED
BY
COMPASSION
Luke 7:13, 14

"And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise."

"He taught the people with patient love. His deep, searching wisdom knew the wants of every soul among His listeners; and when He saw them refuse the message of peace and love that He came to give them, His heart felt anguish to the very depths."—*Gospel Workers*; page 49.

How did Jesus react on two occasions to people who desired His ministrations? Matt. 19:13, 14; Mark 10:46-52.

Note the reassuring words of Jesus. Often all that people need to give them courage is a word. Christ had empathy with man's needs. Often He spoke reassuring words, such as "thy sins be forgiven thee" or "thy faith hath made thee whole." How cherished are the words that lead men out of the pit of despair and doubt!

What combination of attitudes do you recognize in Jesus' words in Matt. 23:37-39?

How important is the motivation for words! Jesus spoke some words that appear severe in writing, but they were not said harshly. "Christ Himself did not suppress one word of truth, but He spoke it always in love. He exercised the greatest tact, and thoughtful, kind attention in His intercourse with the people. He was never rude, never needlessly spoke a severe word, never gave needless pain to a sensitive soul. He did not censure human weakness. He fearlessly denounced hypocrisy, unbelief, and iniquity, but tears were in His voice as He uttered His scathing rebukes."—*The Desire of Ages*; page 353.

THINK IT THROUGH

What motivates me in my dealings with men? Is compassion a major consideration?

"To love as Christ loved means to manifest unselfishness at all times and in all places, by kind words and pleasant looks. These cost those who give them nothing, but they leave behind a fragrance that surrounds the soul. Their effect can never be estimated. Not only are they a blessing to the receiver, but to the giver; for they react upon him. Genuine love is a precious attribute of heavenly origin, which increases in fragrance in proportion as it is dispensed to others."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5, p. 1140.

"The afflicted, suffering ones who sought Christ as their helper, were charmed with the divine perfection, the beauty of holiness, that shone forth in His character."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5, p. 1111.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 318-320.

Part 4
SINCERITY
John 8:45, 46

“And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?”

“Jesus appeals to the knowledge of the Jews concerning His sinless life. He Himself had given testimony of His entire conformity to the Father’s will (ch. 8:29). Despite all the spying of the religious leaders, not one stain of sin had been detected. Their silence upon this occasion confirmed His testimony.”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on John 8:46.

Christ practiced what He preached. This is the very basis of sincerity. He had no need to gloss over His failings, for He was sinless. This was the root of His believability.

Why did the Samaritans believe Jesus? John 4:41, 42.

“The readiness of these Samaritans to believe the evidence that Jesus was the “Prophet” of whom Moses spoke (see on v. 26) stands forth in sharp contrast to the uncertainty with which the Jews received Him (see on ch. 1:10, 11). His life and message constituted convincing evidence to the Samaritans that Moses’ prediction had met its fulfillment in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on John 4:42.

In the polyglot world of Christ’s day He rang true to the peoples of all types and races. Nothing that might be called “phony” ever tainted His ministry.

From Paul’s statement in Phil. 4:9, what would you infer about the consistency between Paul’s words and his behavior?

THINK IT THROUGH

Is there harmony between my inward sentiments, and my words and behavior?

“Encourage in your children a truthful, honest disposition. Let them never have occasion to doubt your sincerity and exact truthfulness.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. 2, p. 256.

“The religion of Christ is sincerity itself. Zeal for God’s glory is the motive implanted by the Holy Spirit; and only the effectual working of the Spirit can implant this motive. Only the power of God can banish self-seeking and hypocrisy.”—*The Desire of Ages*; page 409.

“The test of sincerity is not in words, but in deeds. Christ does not say to any man, What say ye more than others? but, ‘What do ye more than others?’ Matt. 5:47. Full of meaning are His words, ‘If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.’ John 13:17. Words are of no value unless they are accompanied with appropriate deeds.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 272.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 183-195.

Part 5
WORD OF LIFE
1 John 1:1-5

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; . . . that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”

The disciples regarded Christ as a message from God. As they read Him, they discovered much about God. They found Him to be Life, for He is the Word of Life. They found that they could rediscover fellowship with God and maintain it with the Son. They found that darkness dispersed before the presence of Christ.

Against this life, this light, this fellowship, they measured their own spiritual development. They sought to convey their personal fellowship with Christ to others, that it might transform them also.

How does God both enlarge and confine the sphere of His saving love? John 3:16.

“Christ became one flesh with us, in order that we might become one spirit with Him. It is by virtue of this union that we are to come forth from the grave,—not merely as a manifestation of the power of Christ, but because, through faith, His life has become ours. Those who see Christ in His true character, and receive Him into the heart, have everlasting life. It is through the Spirit that Christ dwells in us; and the Spirit of God, received into the heart by faith, is the beginning of the life eternal.”—*The Desire of Ages*, page 388.

THINK IT THROUGH

What kind of testimony is my life bearing? Does it show that I am receiving the light?

“Christ came in the form of humanity to live the law of God. He was the word of life. He came to be the gospel of salvation to the world, and to fulfil every specification of the law. Jesus is the word, the guidebook, which must be received and obeyed in every particular. How necessary that this mine of truth be explored, and the precious treasures of truth be discovered and secured as rich jewels. The incarnation of Christ, His divinity, His atonement, His wonderful life in heaven as our advocate, the office of the Holy Spirit,—all these living, vital themes of Christianity are revealed from Genesis to Revelation. . . .

“To those who have received the false interpretation of the word, when they search the Scriptures with the determined effort to obtain the very marrow of truth contained in them, the Holy Spirit opens the eyes of their understanding, and the truths of the word are to them as a new revelation.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pages 385, 386.

FURTHER STUDY

Fundamentals of Christian Education, pages 383-386.

**Part 6
ETERNALLY
MEANINGFUL**

The teaching of Jesus was of necessity done at a particular point in history. He taught in specific situations, and the truths He spoke were appropriate to the circumstances in which He taught. That was almost 2,000 years ago. It is reasonable to ask, "Are His teachings relevant to the twentieth-century scene?" To prepare a response to that question read the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5 to 7, in a modern translation. When you have finished reading it, go back and give special attention to the selections from the sermon listed below. Has Jesus stated temporary counsel suited to the circumstances of His day, or has He stated permanent and universal principles? Ask yourself these questions, "Do the principles that Jesus taught have any valid relation to modern life? How do they apply to life today?"

"Blessed are the poor in spirit." Matthew 5:3.

"Blessed are the pure in heart." Verse 8.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works." Verse 16.

"Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven." Verse 19.

"Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Verse 28.

"Resist not evil." Verse 39.

"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you." Verse 44.

"Give us this day our daily bread." Matt. 6:11.

"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Verse 21.

What do you think is meant by the statement, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever"? Heb. 13:8.

THINK IT THROUGH

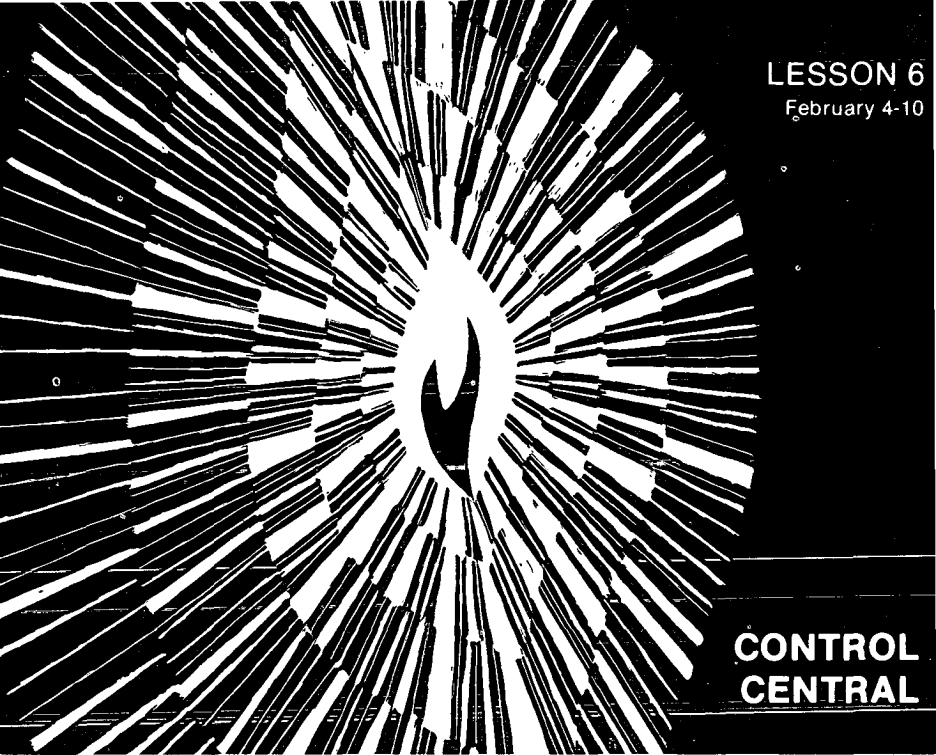
How can I detect a drift away from making Christ's teachings central in my life?

Could it be possible that a major reason for the failures of modern society is that we have not leavened it with the pure principles of heaven lived in our lives?

"Oh, that our brethren and sisters might value aright the truth! Oh, that they might become sanctified by it! Oh, that they might realize that upon them rests the responsibility of communicating this truth to others! But they do not feel the importance of living the truth, of being doers of the words of Christ. Many are self-sufficient. They are not filled with the missionary spirit that should animate the disciples of Christ. If they knew what it means to have travail of soul for others, angels of God would work through them to communicate a knowledge of the truth. They would know the truth, and the truth would make them free. . . . The elevating, purifying, ennobling principles of heaven would be introduced into society and would work like leaven."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 8, pp. 151, 152.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 298-305.



CONTROL CENTRAL

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." John 16:13, 14.

"The church has long been contented with little of the blessing of God; they have not felt the need of reaching up to the exalted privileges purchased for them at infinite cost. . . . They are not able to present the great and glorious truths of God's Holy Word that would convict and convert souls through the agency of the Holy Spirit. The power of God awaits their demand and reception."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, page 175.

For the sinner, the third Person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, is a convictor. We are first led to God by the influence of the Spirit. He chides us and guides us, He hedges us about, until we finally face the ultimate spiritual alternatives.

For the Christian, God's work of guiding does not cease. Continuously He watches our path, and the still small voice points to the Way. The Holy Spirit forms a link between man and God, convicting of sin, impressing truth on our minds, and calling us back home.

But there is more. Power for the Christian stems from the Holy Spirit. This power can become increasingly available to us by a constantly complete surrender of our lives to God. The gifts of the Spirit, the divine Energy, are ours if we will only seek them. God does not want His people to lack any good thing.

An article by Ellen G. White, "The Promise of the Spirit," is printed at the end of this lesson. It was originally printed in the *Review and Herald* and is reprinted here for use as supplementary reading with this week's lesson.

**Part 1
INBUILT
GUIDANCE
SYSTEM
John 16:7-11**

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.”

We humans are aware of the inner voice. See Isa. 30:20, 21. We sometimes call it conscience. A sanctified conscience leads toward God. Is it possible for us to have an unsanctified conscience? Titus 1:15. The Holy Spirit uses the conscience in conjunction with the Word as a direct way of developing moral values.

In what ways did Jesus say the Spirit would guide the apostles? John 15:26, 27; 14:26. Are these promises limited to the apostles?

“Christ is represented by the Holy Spirit; and when this Spirit is appreciated, when those controlled by the Spirit communicate to others the energy with which they are imbued, an invisible chord is touched which electrifies the whole. Would that we could all understand how boundless are the divine resources. . . .

“Jesus says, ‘Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me.’ It is the union of the Holy Spirit and the testimony of the living witness that is to warn the world. The worker for God is the agent through which the heavenly communication is given, and the Holy Spirit gives divine authority to the word of truth.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, p. 1053.

THINK IT THROUGH

Am I seeking the guidance of the Spirit needed for my life through reading the Word and through prayer?

“The Spirit is given as a regenerating agency, to make effectual the salvation wrought by the death of our Redeemer. The Spirit is constantly seeking to draw the attention of men to the great offering that was made on the cross of Calvary, to unfold to the world the love of God, and to open to the convicted soul the precious things of the Scriptures.

“Having brought conviction of sin, and presented before the mind the standard of righteousness, the Holy Spirit withdraws the affections from the things of this earth and fills the soul with a desire for holiness. ‘He will guide you into all truth’ (John 16:13), the Saviour declared. If men are willing to be molded, there will be brought about a sanctification of the whole being. The Spirit will take the things of God and stamp them on the soul. By His power the way of life will be made so plain that none need err therein.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 52, 53.

FURTHER STUDY

Fundamentals of Christian Education, pages 196-200.

Part 2
SPIRITUAL
SENSORS
1 Cor. 2:14-16

“The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.”

“Judgeth. . . . The word . . . conveys the idea that the spiritual man examines, sifts, and carefully judges matters that come to his attention. Guided by the Divine Spirit, he consequently draws proper conclusions. . . .

“We are, by the Spirit, united to Christ, for the Holy Spirit’s presence is the same as the presence of Jesus (see John 15:16-19); therefore we ‘have the mind of Christ’ (see Phil. 2:5).”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on 1 Cor. 2:15, 16.

What spiritual insights are the privilege of the spiritual man? 1 Cor. 2:9-11.

All too often we fail to gain the inspiration and blessing that should be ours simply because we do not open our minds to the promises of God’s Word, or we fail to think on the privileges of following Christ.

What is the only source from which spiritual knowledge comes? Verses 11, 12.

“Precious jewels of truth, that are of the highest value to the meek and lowly ones who believe in Christ, are as foolishness to him who is wise in the world’s estimation. But truth, eternal truth, is ever present with the true believer. The Spirit is the appointed instructor of such a soul, his guide, his continual strength and righteousness.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, p. 1085.

THINK IT THROUGH

How is it possible to possess deeper spiritual insight?

“As a people our faith and practice need to be energized by the Holy Spirit. No ruling power that would compel man to obey the dictates of the finite mind should be exercised. ‘Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils,’ the Lord commands. By turning the minds of men to lean on human wisdom, we place a veil between God and man, so that there is not a seeing of Him who is invisible.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, page 483.

“The experiment of the world’s wisdom had been fully tested at the advent of Christ, and the boasted human wisdom had proved wanting. Men knew not the true wisdom that comes from the Source of all good. . . .

“You need to be learning in the school of Christ to-day. The Lord has power to work with His own agents.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 361.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pages 269-274.

Part 3
INPUT-OUTPUT
Eph. 3:14-16

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.”

“Strengthened with might. That might that strengthens is the power of God. The power is conveyed through the operation of the Holy Spirit. The same power that converts men must continue in them if there is to be Christian growth. . . .

“In the inner man. The Greek suggests power entering into and remaining there. The vital spiritual powers within a man have not sprung from his own nature; he has nothing of his own to offer, nothing of his own of which to boast.”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Eph. 3:16.

“God does not ask us to do in our own strength the work before us. He has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal. He gives the Holy Spirit to help in every strait, to strengthen our hope and assurance, to illuminate our minds and purify our hearts. . . . There is no limit to the usefulness of the one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart and lives a life wholly consecrated to God. . . . Christ declared that the divine influence of the Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end.”—*My Life Today*, page 37.

Contrast the “works of the flesh” with the “fruit of the Spirit.”
Gal. 5:19-25.

From one point of view the fruit of the Spirit is love, and the other attributes mentioned in Gal. 5:22, 23 are characteristics of love. Thus, unlike the gifts, it is impossible for us to divide the fruit of the Spirit. It is one in our lives, lovely in all its different facets.

THINK IT THROUGH

Can I see evidences of the fruit of the Spirit in my life?

“The influence of the Holy Spirit is the life of Christ in the soul. We do not see Christ and speak to Him, but His Holy Spirit is just as near us in one place as in another. It works in and through every one who receives Christ. Those who know the indwelling of the Spirit reveal the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, p. 1112.

“The 12th and 13th chapters of 1st Corinthians should be committed to memory, written in the mind and heart. Through His servant Paul, the Lord has placed before us these subjects for our consideration, and those who have the privilege of being brought together in church capacity will be united, understandingly and intelligently. The figure of the members which compose the body represents the church of God and the relation its members should sustain to one another.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, pp. 1090, 1091.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pages 274-280.

Part 4
COURSE
CORRECTION
Rom. 8:1-5

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.”

With a Spirit-filled life we begin to live a righteous life. Righteousness which was impossible before becomes reality. We set out for the heavenly goal. Our thoughts, our actions, become Spirit-directed.

The contrast here is between flesh and Spirit. What condemnation is removed? How would you describe the law of the Spirit of life? What precepts does it comprise? What is the law of sin and death?

How essential is the Spirit to our walk with Christ? Rom. 8:9-11.

To be intellectually convinced is not enough. Christ must dwell within through the Spirit. Only as our lives bear the fruit of the Spirit do we belong to Him.

What is possible through the Spirit-filled life? Verses 14-17.

Through two-way communication between the Holy Spirit and our hearts we receive assurance of our new status. Despite all the difficulties of life, we know that we belong to God, that we are His children.

THINK IT THROUGH

What does it mean to “mortify the deeds of the body”?

“When we see men firm in principle, fearless in duty, zealous in the cause of God, yet humble and lowly, gentle and tender, patient toward all, ready to forgive, manifesting love for souls for whom Christ died, we do not need to inquire: Are they Christians? They give unmistakable evidence that they have been with Jesus and learned of Him. When men reveal the opposite traits, when they are proud, vain, frivolous, worldly-minded, avaricious, unkind, censorious, we need not be told with whom they are associating, who is their most intimate friend. They may not believe in witchcraft; but, notwithstanding this, they are holding communion with an evil spirit.”—*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, pp. 224, 225.

“The Spirit of God must do its work upon the heart. All who have not experienced its regenerating power are chaff among the wheat. Our Lord has His fan in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor.”—*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 227.

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pages 503-512.

Part 5
ASSURED
TRAJECTORY
Rom. 8:26, 27

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

No guesswork here! We may not know what is best for us, but the Spirit of God dwelling in our hearts holds constant communion with the Father and assures God's will for us.

Paul speaks of "the firstfruits of the Spirit." These are the evidences in our lives that God is changing us and leading us on. He says that "we are saved by hope." Rom. 8:24. Having been launched toward eternal life, there is no reason for us to lose that goal. Hope locks us in on the target, and the Spirit guides us onward.

It is because of all that goes before in Romans 8 that Paul finally proclaims, "All things work together for good to them that love God." Verse 28. This assertion comes from experiencing the power of God.

What seals our hope? Eph. 4:30. How would you relate this with the seal of the living God? Rev. 7:2.

Surely these are two ways of saying the same thing. Note however that we may grieve the Spirit. Does God ever turn away from the seeking sinner?

What weapon of the Spirit helps us preserve our faith in Jesus Christ? Eph. 6:17, 18.

THINK IT THROUGH

Who is basically in control of my life? Am I being willful, disobedient, self-seeking?

"I saw that all heaven is interested in our salvation; and shall we be indifferent? Shall we be careless, as though it were a small matter whether we are saved or lost? Shall we slight the sacrifice that has been made for us? Some have done this. They have trifled with offered mercy, and the frown of God is upon them. God's Spirit will not always be grieved. It will depart if grieved a little longer."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 1, p. 124.

"There are many who long to help others, but they feel that they have no spiritual strength or light to impart. Let them present their petitions at the throne of grace. Plead for the Holy Spirit. God stands back of every promise He has made. . . .

"We must not only pray in Christ's name, but by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This explains what is meant when it is said that the Spirit 'maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered.' Rom. 8:26. Such prayer God delights to answer."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 147.

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pages 469-478.

Part 6
THE SPIRIT'S
INVITATION
Rev. 22:17

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

The tranquillity of heaven will never be ours until the Spirit has filled us with the power to complete God's work and invite all men everywhere to come to Him.

A Christian filled with the Spirit becomes a communicator of heaven's love. He pleads, Come. Pentecost came upon a group of united, pleading Christians. Acts 2:1-4. Power awaits our need. God wants to finish the work. He wants us to avail ourselves of His power.

For what are we invited to plead? Zech. 10:1; Jer. 5:24.

“Today you are to have your vessel purified, that it may be ready for the heavenly dew, ready for the showers of the latter rain; for the latter rain will come, and the blessing of God will fill every soul that is purified from every defilement. It is our work today to yield our souls to Christ, that we may be fitted for the time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord—fitted for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.”—*Evangelism*, page 702.

What did God promise Judah would be the result of the outpouring of the Spirit? Joel 2:28, 29.

THINK IT THROUGH

What am I doing to prepare myself for the latter rain? Is there anything I could do in my church to help open the way for God to fill us with His power?

“A crisis is right upon us. We must now by the Holy Spirit's power proclaim the great truths for these last days. It will not be long before everyone will have heard the warning and made his decision. Then shall the end come. . . .

“God is the great Master Worker, and by His providence He prepares the way for His work to be accomplished. He provides opportunities, opens up lines of influence and channels of working. If His people are watching the indications of His providence, and stand ready to co-operate with Him, they will see a great work accomplished.”—*Testimonies*, Vol. 6, p. 24.

“Many . . . will be seen hurrying hither and thither, constrained by the Spirit of God to bring the light to others. The truth, the Word of God, is as a fire in their bones, filling them with a burning desire to enlighten those who sit in darkness. Many, even among the uneducated, now proclaim the words of the Lord. Children are impelled by the Spirit to go forth and declare the message from heaven. The Spirit is poured out upon all who will yield to its promptings, and, casting off all man's machinery, his binding rules and cautious methods, they will declare the truth with the might of the Spirit's power. Multitudes will receive the faith and join the armies of the Lord.”—*Evangelism*, page 700.

FURTHER STUDY *Testimonies to Ministers*, pages 506-512.

The Promise of the Spirit

ELLEN G. WHITE

Christ declared that after his ascension, he would send to his church, as his crowning gift, the Comforter, who was to take his place. This Comforter is the Holy Spirit,—the soul of his life, the efficacy of his church, the light and life of the world. With his Spirit Christ sends a reconciling influence and a power that takes away sin.

In the gift of the Spirit, Jesus gave to man the highest good that heaven could bestow. The Saviour looked on humanity, and saw that it was under the power of the prince of darkness; but he saw also that there was hope for human beings because there was power in the divine nature successfully to contend with evil agencies. With glad assurance he said, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

The Spirit was given as a regenerating agency, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of man to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the third person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fulness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given his Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress his own character upon the church.

Christ said of the Spirit, "He shall glorify me." As Christ glorified the Father by the demonstration of his love, so the Spirit was to glorify Christ by revealing to the

world the riches of his grace. The very image of God is to be reproduced in humanity. The honor of God, the honor of Christ, is involved in the perfection of the character of his people.

At the cost of infinite sacrifice and suffering, Christ has provided for us every essential to success in the Christian warfare. The Holy Spirit brings power that enables man to overcome. It is through the agency of the Spirit that the government of Satan is to be subdued. It is the Spirit that convinces of sin, and, with the consent of the human being, expels sin from the heart. The mind is then brought under a new law,—the royal law of liberty.

The Spirit works in us by bringing to mind, vividly and often, the precious truths of the plan of redemption. We should forget these truths, and for us God's rich promises would lose their efficiency, were it not for the Spirit, who takes of the things of God, and shows them to us. Our hearts are warmed by the contemplation of Jesus and his love, and we long to speak to others the comforting assurances that have been brought to our minds.

It is the privilege of every son and daughter of God to have the indwelling of the Spirit. If those who know the truth would love and fear the Lord always, if they would abide in Christ, they would have moral and spiritual power. The grace of Christ would be in them as a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life, and would flow from them as streams of living water.

The Spirit illumines our darkness, informs our ignorance, and helps us in our manifold necessities. But the mind must be constantly going out after God. If worldliness is allowed to come in, if we have no desire to pray, no desire to commune with him who is the source of strength and wisdom, the Spirit will not abide with us. Those who are unbelieving do not receive the rich endowment of

grace that would make them wise unto salvation, patient, forbearing, quick to perceive and appreciate heavenly ministrations, quick to discern Satan's devices, and strong to resist sin. God can not do his mighty work for them because of their unbelief.

Christ has promised the gift of the Spirit to his church, and the promise belongs to us as much as to the first disciples. But like every other promise, it is given on conditions. There are many who believe, and profess to claim the Lord's promise; they talk about Christ and about the Holy Spirit, yet receive no benefit. They do not surrender the soul to be guided and controlled by the divine agencies. We can not use the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is to use us. Through the Spirit God works in his people "to will and to do of his good pleasure." But many will not submit to this. They want to manage themselves. This is why they do not receive the heavenly gift. Only to those who wait humbly upon God, who watch for his guidance and grace, is the Spirit given.

Christ declared that the divine influence was to be with his followers to the end. But the promise is not accepted and believed by God's people; therefore its fulfilment is not seen. The promise of the Spirit is a matter little thought of; and the result is only what might be expected,—spiritual drought, spiritual weakness, spiritual declension and death. Minor matters occupy the attention, and the divine power that is necessary for the growth and prosperity of the church, and which would bring all other blessings in its train, is lacking, though offered in its infinite plentitude.

Just so long as the church is satisfied with small things will it fail of receiving the great things of God. Why do we not hunger and thirst after the gift of the Spirit, since this is the means by which we are to receive power? Talk of it, pray for it, preach concerning it. The Lord is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to us than parents are to give good gifts to their children.

If our workers realized the responsibility resting upon them, would they enter the work without cherishing a deep sense of its sacredness? Should we not see the deep movings of the Spirit of God upon the men who present themselves for the

ministry? For the baptism of the Holy Spirit, every worker should be offering his prayer to God. Companies should be gathered together to ask for special help, for heavenly wisdom, that they may know how to devise and execute. Especially should men pray that God will baptize his missionaries with the Holy Spirit.

There is no limit to the usefulness of one who, putting aside self, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, and lives a life wholly consecrated to God. If men will endure the necessary discipline, without complaining or fainting by the way, God will teach them hour by hour, and day by day. He longs to reveal his grace. If his people will remove the obstructions, he will pour forth the waters of salvation in abundant streams through human channels. If men in humble life were encouraged to do all the good they could do, if restraining hands were not laid upon them to repress the zeal, there would be one hundred workers for Christ where now there is one.

God takes men as they are, and educates them for his service, if they will yield themselves to him. The Spirit of God, received into the soul, will quicken all its faculties. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the mind that is devoted unreservedly to God develops harmoniously, and is strengthened to comprehend and fulfil the requirements of God. The weak, vacillating character becomes changed to one of strength and steadfastness. Continual devotion establishes so close a relation between Jesus and his disciples that the Christian becomes like him in mind and character. Through a connection with Christ he will have clearer and broader views. His discernment will be more penetrative, his judgment better balanced.

The presence of the Holy Spirit with God's workers will give the presentation of truth a power that not all the honor or glory of the world could give. The Spirit furnishes the strength that sustains striving, wrestling souls in every emergency, amid the unfriendliness of relatives, the hatred of the world, and the realization of their own imperfections and mistakes.

A union of divine and human endeavor, a close connection first, last, and ever, with God, the source of all strength,—this is absolutely necessary in our work.—*Review and Herald*, May 19, 1904.

PRAYER— A TWO-WAY CHANNEL

LESSON 7

February 11-17



“I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.” Ps. 85:8.

Some regard prayer as a way of changing God's mind, or of conveying to Him our condition as if He were ignorant of it. This is a deception. “Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him.”—*Steps to Christ*, page 93. God stands ever ready to help His children. Through prayer we unlock the storehouse of heaven's riches by acquainting ourselves with them, by bringing our lives into conformity with God's will, by understanding and applying the promises of God.

Prayer is communication and communion with God. We speak, we listen, we hear. Prayer grows more and more important

to us as we discover its true purpose. When we cease to regard prayer simply as our telling God something, and look for Him to return the conversation through the Spirit and the Word, then we shall indeed “pray without ceasing.”

KEY THOUGHTS

God's Will. “Bring your lives into harmony with your petitions, that you may receive the blessings for which you pray.”—*Testimonies*, Vol. 7, p. 274. Discovering the will of God is one great purpose of prayer.

Access to God. “Every prayer in behalf of the suffering and oppressed is reported before the eternal throne and placed on heaven's imperishable record.”—*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 133. God does *hear* and *answer*.

Communion With God. “Prayer is the opening of the heart . . . as to a friend.”—*Steps to Christ*, page 93.

Part 1
MAN IN
PRAYER
Matt 6:5-8

“And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.”

Note the nature of prayer revealed in this passage. First, it is not to impress God—repetitions mean nothing. Second, it is not to impress men. Third, God answers or “rewards” prayers. Fourth, it is not to inform God of our needs. Finally, it is to bring us into communication with God so that we may discover in secret what God’s will for us is.

Prayer is built on the fact of the omniscience of God. Because He sees and knows, He can alter circumstances to affect our destiny. We in turn may trust Him sufficiently so that our futures are molded *by us* to conform with what God sees as our best good. Can prayer change God’s mind? Should it change ours?

How would you apply the parable of Luke 18:1-5 to prayer? Does the judge represent God?

“How different is the attitude of God toward those who seek Him. The appeals of the needy and distressed are considered by Him with infinite compassion.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 165.

What lesson should we draw from the parable? See also 1 Thess. 5:17; Rom. 12:12.

What does Paul state as the requirements for one who prays publicly? 1 Tim. 2:8.

THINK IT THROUGH

What do I seek from prayer? my own way? God’s will? the good of others?

“Those who have decided to obey the commandments of God will understand by experience that they have adversaries who are controlled by a power from beneath. . . .

“In the parable of the unjust judge, Christ has shown what we should do. . . . Christ, our example, did nothing to vindicate or deliver Himself. He committed His case to God. So His followers are not to accuse or condemn, or to resort to force in order to deliver themselves.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pages 170, 171.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ’s Object Lessons, pages 171-175.

Part 2
EXAMPLES IN
PRAYER
Dan. 9:3, 4,
20-22

“And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: and I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession.”

“And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God; yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel . . . touched me. . . . And he informed me, and talked with me.”

An angel bearing God's communication brought a dramatic answer to prayer. What would you list as the requirements of prayer from this story? How do angels fit into the task of conveying and effecting God's will? Heb. 1:13, 14.

How did Christ evaluate the prayers of the Pharisee and the publican? Luke 18:9-14. Was there anything basically evil about the Pharisee's virtues as he claimed them? Then what was wrong with the prayer? How much does a sense of unworthiness play in fitting us for the inflow of divine power?

What characteristics marked David's great prayer of confession? Psalm 51.

When the armor of God is complete, what yet remains to be done? Eph. 6:17, 18.

THINK IT THROUGH

How shall we recognize the communication that God has with us as a result of prayer? What sources of communication are open to Him and to us?

“Though Daniel had long been in the service of God, and had been spoken of by heaven as ‘greatly beloved,’ yet he now appeared before God as a sinner, urging the great need of the people he loved. His prayer was eloquent in its simplicity, and intensely earnest. . . .

“Heaven was bending low to hear the earnest supplication of the prophet. Even before he had finished his plea for pardon and restoration, the mighty Gabriel again appeared to him, and called his attention to the vision he had seen prior to the fall of Babylon and the death of Belshazzar.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pages 555, 556.

“David's repentance was sincere and deep. There was no effort to palliate his crime. No desire to escape the judgments threatened, inspired his prayer. But he saw the enormity of his transgression against God; he saw the defilement of his soul; he loathed his sin. It was not for pardon only that he prayed, but for purity of heart.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 725.

FURTHER STUDY *Prophets and Kings*, pages 552-556.

**Part 3
GOD'S
ANSWERS
TO PRAYER
Acts 12:5, 7**

“Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.”
“And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.”

A crisis brought together active ingredients—a crisis composed of personal jeopardy and a leaderless church. Prayer provided the catalyst to produce the reaction.

What characteristic marked the prayers of the early church? Acts 12:5.

Note too the nature of the answer. It was specific and in line with the request of the church. It brought joy to God's people and strengthened their faith.

Among the reasons for God's very specific answer was the very nature of Herod's precautions against Peter's escape. "Herod was lifting his hand against Omnipotence, and he was to be utterly defeated."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 146. Death faced the apostle: "On the morrow he was to have been led forth to die; but, lo, an angel had delivered him from prison and from death."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 148.

What led to the deliverance of Jonah from the belly of the fish? Jonah 2:1, 7, 9, 10.

"At last Jonah had learned that 'salvation belongeth unto the Lord.' Psalm 3:8. With penitence and a recognition of the saving grace of God, came deliverance. Jonah was released from the perils of the mighty deep and was cast upon the dry land."—*Prophets and Kings*, page 269.

THINK IT THROUGH

Am I expecting God to answer my prayers without my repentance and submission to His will? Am I learning the lesson of submission to the will of God?

"To the worker for God the record of these angel visits should bring strength and courage. Today, as verily as in the days of the apostles, heavenly messengers are passing through the length and breadth of the land, seeking to comfort the sorrowing, to protect the impenitent, to win the hearts of men to Christ. We cannot see them personally; nevertheless they are with us, guiding, directing, protecting. . . .

"We need to understand better than we do the mission of the angels."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 152-154.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pages 143-149.

Part 4
BLESSINGS IN
PRAYER
Matt. 21:21, 22

“Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.”

“Never is one repulsed who comes to Him with a contrite heart. Not one sincere prayer is lost. Amid the anthems of the celestial choir, God hears the cries of the weakest human being. . . . Nothing can drown the soul’s desire. It rises above the din of the street, above the confusion of the multitude, to the heavenly courts. It is God to whom we are speaking, and our prayer is heard.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 174.

What encouragement may we gain from the experience of Judah’s wicked king, Manasseh? 2 Chron. 33:9-13.

From being the wickedest of kings, Manasseh repented and endeavored to undo his evil. His example comes to us as evidence that God desires the salvation of all men. No greater blessing comes through prayer than salvation and forgiveness. 1 John 1:9.

For what are we encouraged to pray and with what expectation? James 5:14-16. What answer did Paul receive to his prayer for health? 2 Cor. 12:7-10.

Make a list of the blessings you may expect through prayer. Note especially the spiritual gain prayer should bring.

“In the future life the mysteries that here have annoyed and disappointed us will be made plain. We shall see that our seemingly unanswered prayers and disappointed hopes have been among our greatest blessings.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 474.

THINK IT THROUGH

Enumerate some examples of answered prayer. Might a Christian’s loss of faith come because his expectations have not been tuned to God’s will?

“Every act of love, every word of kindness, every prayer in behalf of the suffering and oppressed, is reported before the eternal throne and placed on heaven’s imperishable record.”—*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 133.

“Some . . . do not see the importance of self-knowledge and self-control. They do not watch and pray, lest they enter into temptation. If they would watch, they would become acquainted with their weak points, where they are most likely to be assailed by temptation. With watchfulness and prayer their weakest points can be so guarded as to become their strongest points, and they can encounter temptation without being overcome.”—*Testimonies*, Vol. 2, p. 511.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 359-363.

Part 5
EFFECTIVE
PRAYER
James 5:16-18,
RSV

“Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects. Elijah was a man of like nature with ourselves and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth its fruit.”

To open the prayer channel we must first remove those sins of ours which separate us from our fellowmen. Repentance is essential to effective communication through prayer. See Ps. 66:18.

What attitude is necessary on the part of one who makes a request of God in prayer? James 1:5-7.

Faith is another essential. If you don't believe God will answer, why ask? See Heb. 11:6. "Faith is the gift of God, but the power to exercise it is ours. Faith is the hand by which the soul takes hold upon the divine offers of grace and mercy."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 431.

"This faith must express on our part supreme preference, perfect reliance, entire consecration. Our will must be wholly yielded to the divine will, our feelings, desires, interests, and honor identified with the prosperity of Christ's kingdom and the honor of His cause, we constantly receiving grace from Him, and Christ accepting gratitude from us."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 229.

What characteristic marked the prayers of Epaphras? What did he do in addition to his prayers? Col. 4:12, 13.

"For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis." Verse 13, RSV. We need more Epaphrases today—men who will both pray and work for their families, their friends, their neighbors. Our prayers need specifics. Generalizations blunt the power of prayer. Pray for specific needs, for individuals, for the solution to special problems.

THINK IT THROUGH

What would you add to a list of requisites for effective prayer? Why is one prayer more effective than another?

"God is too wise and good to answer our prayers always at just the time and in just the manner we desire. He will do more and better for us than to accomplish all our wishes. . . . Our desires and interests should be lost in His will. These experiences that test faith are for our benefit. By them it is made manifest whether our faith is true and sincere, resting on the word of God alone, or whether depending on circumstances, it is uncertain and changeable. Faith is strengthened by exercise."—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 231.

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pages 155-159.

Part 6
RESULTS OF
PRAYER
2 Cor. 1:10, 11

"Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us; ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf."

Prayer produces a sense of identity with God's cause and its progress. Through prayer we share in the deliverances of others, we bear the burdens of those that suffer and mourn, we identify with the triumph of good and right.

Gratitude accompanies true prayer, for the praying believer is recognizing God as the great Source of all good and that thus God is deserving of thanksgiving.

What experience of the disciples and others preceded Pentecost? Acts 1:14; 2:1, 2.

"They also met together to present their requests to the Father in the name of Jesus. They knew that they had a Representative in heaven, an Advocate at the throne of God. In solemn awe they bowed in prayer, repeating the assurance, 'Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.' John 16:23, 24. Higher and still higher they extended the hand of faith, with the mighty argument, 'It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.' Romans 8:34.

"The disciples prayed with intense earnestness for a fitness to meet men and in their daily intercourse to speak words that would lead sinners to Christ. Putting away all differences, all desire for the supremacy, they came close together in Christian fellowship."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 35-37.

Praying and ceasing criticism of others go together. With replacing the distorted reactions of the carnal man comes a longing to see others grow in grace. A praying church is moved toward those in need. The members of a praying family long for each other to experience growth in Christlikeness. This happens because the Spirit convicts them of the needs of others.

For whom and for what purpose did Paul ask the Colossian believers to pray? Col. 4:2-4.

Pray for the many avenues by which the gospel is preached. Our prayers strengthen the work of God by encouraging those responsible for its onward progress, by committing us to share in the work, and by moving others toward commitment.

THINK IT THROUGH

Do I pray about the needs of the work of God and my fellowmen, or only about myself?

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, pages 139-143.



“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.” Prov. 25:11.

A person communicates in order to change the relation between himself and his environment. Such a person is an agent of change. He affects other people, his surroundings, and himself. He seeks “a vote in how things are.” By communicating, he seeks to influence—“to affect with intent.”—David K. Berlo, *The Process of Communication*, pages 11, 12.

The prime vehicle of communication is language. The effective use of words in Christian communication should be a continuing and earnest study. To be relevant and yet Christlike, to speak words that will affect people in the direction of God—this is the highest purpose of language.

“Christ’s manner of teaching was beautiful and attractive, and it was ever characterized by simplicity. He unfolded the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven through the use of figures and symbols with which His hearers were familiar; and the common people heard Him gladly, for they could comprehend His words. There were no high-sounding words used, to understand which it was necessary to consult a dictionary.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, page 240.

Consider carefully the following:

1. The influence of words on others—our friends, our loved ones, the casual acquaintance.
2. The control of speech according to moral principles.
3. The responsibility to train ourselves in selecting appropriate words

Part 1
THE POWER
OF WORDS
Prov. 18:21

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof."

The right words lead to eternal life. What power there is in the use of words!

"Words are the ambassadors of the soul. Imagine a spring landscape without the light of the sun! So would history be without the life and color given it by words. It was said of Luther that his words were like battles.

"Religion, freedom, vengeance, what you will—

"A word's enough to raise mankind to kill.

"Likewise a word is enough to hold mankind back from killing and to inspire him to noble thinking and glorious living."—C. E. N. Macartney (ed.) *Macartney's Illustrations*, pages 412, 413.

"Closely connected with Christ's warning in regard to the sin against the Holy Spirit is a warning against idle and evil words. The words are an indication of that which is in the heart. 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' But the words are more than an indication of character; they have power to react on the character. Men are influenced by their own words. Often under a momentary impulse, prompted by Satan, they give utterance to jealousy or evil surmising, expressing that which they do not really believe; but the expression reacts on the thoughts. They are deceived by their words, and come to believe that true which was spoken at Satan's instigation."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 323.

What may we expect from the good use of words? Prov. 16:24.

Divine help is needed in order that our words may always affect in a constructive way the one with whom we speak.

What are the results of God's words? Ps. 19:7-11.

THINK IT THROUGH

If well-chosen words may affect our salvation, what of the careless use of words? How do words reflect emotion?

"The workman for God should make earnest efforts to become a representative of Christ, discarding all uncomely gestures and uncouth speech. He should endeavor to use correct language. . . . Common, cheap expressions should be replaced by sound, pure words. By constant watchfulness and earnest discipline the Christian youth may keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking guile."—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, page 238.

"Words, however good, will be powerless if contradicted by the daily life."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 160.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, Vol. 4, pp. 609, 610.

Part 2
WORDS OF
DECEPTION
Ex. 20:16

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

"False speaking in any matter, every attempt or purpose to deceive our neighbor, is here included. An intention to deceive is what constitutes falsehood. By a glance of the eye, a motion of the hand, an expression of the countenance, a falsehood may be told as effectually as by words. All intentional overstatement, every hint or insinuation calculated to convey an erroneous or exaggerated impression, even the statement of facts in such a manner as to mislead, is falsehood. This precept forbids every effort to injure our neighbor's reputation by misrepresentation or evil surmising, by slander or tale bearing. Even the intentional suppression of truth, by which injury may result to others, is a violation of the ninth commandment."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 309.

By what means did David escape, first from Saul, and then from Achish? 1 Sam. 21:1-3, 10-15.

Is it ever right to tell a lie? Do situations make for different standards of truth? "David told the priest that he had been sent by the king on a secret errand, one which required the utmost expedition. Here he manifested a want of faith in God, and his sin resulted in causing the death of the high priest. Had the facts been plainly stated, Ahimelech would have known what course to pursue to preserve his life. God requires that truthfulness shall mark His people, even in the greatest peril. . . .

"David fled to Achish, the king of Gath; for he felt that there was more safety in the midst of the enemies of his people than in the dominions of Saul. But it was reported to Achish that David was the man who had slain the Philistine champion years before; and now he who had sought refuge with the foes of Israel found himself in great peril. But, feigning madness, he deceived his enemies and thus made his escape.

"The first error of David was his distrust of God at Nob, and his second mistake was his deception before Achish."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 656.

What effect can lies have on spiritual destinies? Rev. 22:15. How important may lies become? 2 Thess. 2:9-12.

THINK IT THROUGH

Am I truthful in all of my communication?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, Vol. 4, pp. 493-495.

Part 3
WORDS OF
LIFE
Luke 4:22

"And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?"

Words may be used to ennoble and uplift. "Kind words are never lost."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, p. 1118. Christ was known for His gracious words. "Never man spake like this man." John 7:46. "If ye abide in Me," He says, "and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." It is through the word that Christ abides in His followers. This is the same vital union that is represented by eating His flesh and drinking His blood. The words of Christ are spirit and life. Receiving them, you receive the life of the Vine. You live 'by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' Matt. 4:4. The life of Christ in you produces the same fruits as in Him. Living in Christ, adhering to Christ, supported by Christ, drawing nourishment from Christ, you bear fruit after the similitude of Christ."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 677. Our tongues, our lips, the stream of communication that flows from us toward others, should always raise the receiver to higher moral and spiritual planes.

When the words of Jesus are lived out in human experience, they cease to be merely theory and have become human personality.

How should we relate to words not in harmony with the words of Christ? 1 Tim. 6:3, 5.

"If religious teaching does not produce godly lives, it stands self-condemned. The worth of all spiritual instruction is measured by the degree of spiritual health enjoyed by its adherents."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on 1 Tim. 6:3.

THINK IT THROUGH

What role do the spoken words of believers play in conveying words of life? How would you compare this role in value to the written word?

"Merely to hear or to read the word is not enough. He who desires to be profited by the Scriptures must meditate upon the truth that has been presented to him. By earnest attention and prayerful thought he must learn the meaning of the words of truth, and drink deep of the spirit of the holy oracles."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 59, 60.

"The apostle realized that the gospel had a claim upon whoever might listen to his words; that one day they would stand either among the pure and holy around the great white throne, or with those to whom Christ would say, 'Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.' Matthew 7:23. He knew that he must meet every one of his hearers before the tribunal of heaven and must there render an account, not only for all that he had said and done, but for the motive and spirit of his words and deeds."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 423.

FURTHER STUDY *Testimonies*, Vol. 6, pp. 441-444.

Part 4
SELECTING
WORDS
James 3:5, 6

“Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.”

How may we control our tongues? We say, “My tongue slipped.” Could this be an excuse for a lack of self-control? What motivates anyone to gossip? A desire to show that he or she is better than the subject of the gossiping? Do you think it possible that a person might become a gossip to try to prove his own goodness?

How does man rate in controlling his tongue? James 3:8-12. What then is the solution? Verses 17, 18.

Jesus taught His disciples to avoid the use of common oaths, and to say just Yes or No. Matt. 5:33-37. A Christian's word should be his bond. A simple Yes or No carries as much weight as a more emphatic declaration.

What effect does the wrong use of words have on a person? Matt 15:18.

Continual thought about an action opens the way for that action to be carried out when the opportunity comes. Many have conquered their habit of smoking by repeating, “I choose not to smoke.” Thus we imprint upon the mind positive and helpful actions. Unfortunately the reverse is also true.

THINK IT THROUGH

Am I ever guilty of gossip or slander? What about things that are true but hurtful of others?

The tongue “has set nation against nation, and has caused battle and bloodshed. Words have kindled fires that have been hard to quench. They have also brought joy and gladness to many souls. And when words are spoken because God says, ‘Speak unto them My words,’ they often cause sorrow unto repentance.

“The talent of speech carries with it great responsibility. It needs to be carefully guarded; for it is a mighty power for evil as well as for good.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 3, p. 1142.

“My brethren and sisters, how are you employing the gift of speech? Have you learned so to control the tongue that it shall ever obey the dictates of an enlightened conscience and holy affections? Is your conversation free from levity, pride and malice, deceit and impurity? Are you without guile before God? Words exert a telling power. Satan will, if possible, keep the tongue active in his service. Of ourselves we cannot control the unruly member. Divine grace is our only hope.”—*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 175.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, pages 335-342.

Part 5
WORDS
ABOUT
WORDS

Prov. 15:2, 23

"The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness."

"A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!"

Consider the following contrasting qualities that words may possess:

Truth—Prov. 8:7

Peace—Prov. 15:1

Deliverance—Prov. 12:6

Life—Prov. 18:21

Understanding—Prov. 1:2

Wisdom—Prov. 10:13

Righteousness—Prov. 8:8

Deceit—Prov. 12:5

Violence—Prov. 10:11

Destruction—Prov. 10:14

Death—Prov. 18:21

Perverseness—Prov. 15:4

Foolishness—Prov. 15:2

Frowardness—Prov. 10:32

Some other comments about the nature of words: Rev. 21:5—Faithfulness; 1 Tim. 4:6—Doctrine; Eccl. 12:10—Acceptability; Rom. 3:14—Bitterness; Jude 16—Complaining; 1 Cor. 2:4—Enticing.

"A soul filled with the love of Jesus lends to the words, the manners, the looks, hope, courage and serenity. It reveals the spirit of Christ. It breathes a love which will be reflected. It awakens a desire for a better life; souls ready to faint are strengthened; those struggling against temptation will be fortified and comforted. The words, the expression, the manners throw out a bright ray of sunshine, and leave behind them a clear path toward heaven, the source of all light. Every one of us has opportunities of helping others."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 3, p. 1156.

THINK IT THROUGH

Consider your own use of words in the home, to loved ones. Am I always helpful in what I say?

"The voice and tongue are gifts from God, and if rightly used, they are a power for God. Words mean very much. They may express love, devotion, praise, melody to God, or hatred and revenge. Words reveal the sentiments of the heart. They may be a savor of life unto life or of death unto death. The tongue is a world of blessing, or a world of iniquity."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 3, p. 1159.

"The infinite God alone can measure the mischief that is done by careless words. . . . As professed Christians, we should consider the influence our words have upon those with whom we come into association, whether they are believers or unbelievers. Our words are watched, and mischief is done by thoughtless utterances. No after association with believers or unbelievers will wholly counteract the unfavorable influence of thoughtless, foolish words. Our words evidence the manner of food upon which the soul feeds."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 3, pp. 1159, 1160.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, Vol. 5, pp. 132-134.

Part 6
ALTERNATIVES
IN
COMMUNICATION
1 Cor. 2:1, 2, 4

"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

"And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power."

Paul renounced the use of oratory or brilliant debate to reach the Corinthians. He knew he was going into a sophisticated city where the skillful use of words would attract an audience.

"In neither private discussions nor public preaching did Paul rely on the persuasive power found in human reasoning. He did not seek to charm and captivate his hearers with the style of subtle philosophy that so appealed to the Greeks."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on 1 Cor. 2:4.

How were Paul's words about Jesus regarded by Christians and Non-Christians? 1 Cor. 1:21-25. (See 2:5, 6.)

"In His love and pity for lost mankind, God proclaimed the glorious news of salvation through faith in Christ. This news, which to worldly-wise individuals was mere foolishness, became, for those who accept it, God's chosen agency for redemption. . . .

"The 'foolishness of preaching' is the announcement of the gospel of salvation through faith in the crucified Christ, which to the Greek and the unbelieving Jew seemed like sheer folly."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on 1 Cor. 1:21.

In persecution what promise assures God's help in our communication? Luke 21:12-15.

THINK IT THROUGH

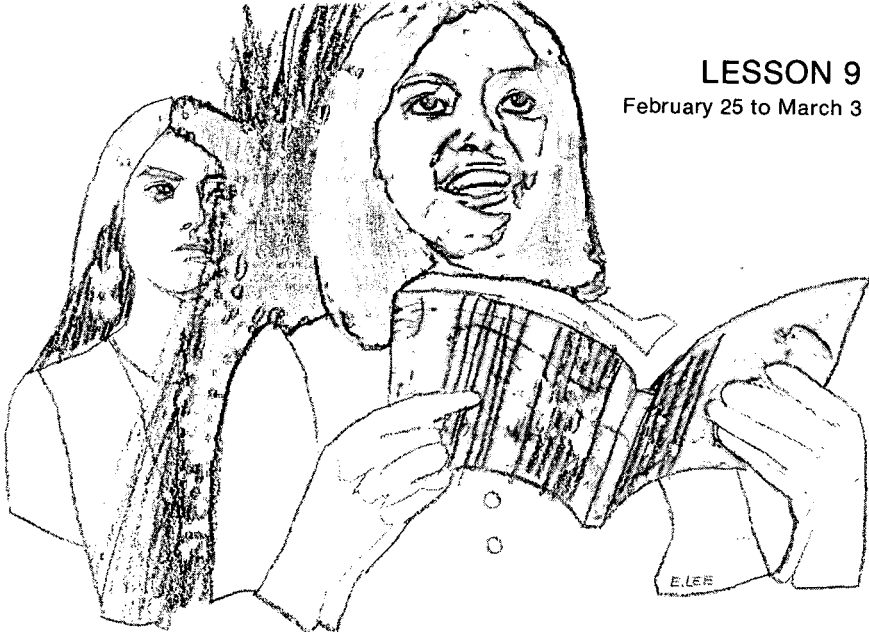
How is my church going about the business of communicating the gospel? And what about my words? Have I chosen the heavenly alternative?

"The experience of the apostle Paul in meeting the philosophers of Athens has a lesson for us. In presenting the gospel before the court of the Areopagus, Paul met logic with logic, science with science, philosophy with philosophy. The wisest of his hearers were astonished and silenced. His words could not be controverted. But the effort bore little fruit. Few were led to accept the gospel. Henceforth Paul adopted a different manner of labor. He avoided elaborate arguments and discussion of theories, and in simplicity pointed men and women to Christ as the Saviour of sinners."—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 214.

"Read the first and second chapters of 1 Corinthians with deep interest, and pray that God will give you understanding so that you may comprehend and put into practice the truths there revealed."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 352.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pages 243-247.



BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

"The Lord's arm is not so short that he cannot save nor his ear too dull to hear; it is your iniquities that raise a barrier between you and your God, because of your sins he has hidden his face so that he does not hear you." Isa. 59:1, 2, NEB.

"It is the privilege of every soul to be a living channel through which God can communicate to the world the treasures of His grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ. There is nothing that Christ desires so much as agents who will represent to the world His Spirit and character. There is nothing that the world needs so much as the manifestation through humanity of the Saviour's love. All heaven is waiting for channels through which can be poured the holy oil to be a joy and blessing to human hearts."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 419.

Problems within us sometimes prevent effective communications. The originator of the message does not give a clear

signal. Frequently the message itself is distorted. We do not state it accurately and cleanly. Then the signal may be blurred as it comes to the receiver.

What obstacles wait in the minds and hearts of those to whom we seek to communicate the gospel? The false information about God and the ideal human life which Satan has propagated is an obstacle in many minds to the communication of the truth. Satan gave the first deceptive signal, and he continues this confusing work. The story of the great controversy between Christ and Satan is the story of the establishment of truth in face of the opposition of error. What are the barriers that hold back the flow of divine communication through us to the needy world?

This is not specifically a lesson about prayer communication with God, but in considering the barriers raised between God and man and between man and man we find ourselves closely involved with the reasons for or against successful communication between God and man.

Part 1
BARRIERS TO
GOD
Isa. 14:12-14

“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.”

In this reference Isaiah presents Satan as the fallen angel. “Little by little Lucifer came to indulge the desire for self-exaltation.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 35.

Sin began with a perverted imagination. Lucifer imagined himself unfairly treated. He then arrived at wrong answers about God and himself. Sin spread to other beings when Lucifer communicated to them his wrong conclusions.

Unfortunately Lucifer succeeded in communicating to Eve thoughts of self-exaltation which she accepted. Her imagination was thus perverted also. God had not treated her right, she thought, in withholding the forbidden fruit. Thus sin entered the universe and the world through perverted imagination and communication. All barriers to communication that man faces evolve from Satan’s, and Eve’s, false picture of God and self.

What does the psalmist say would have blocked his communication with God? Ps. 66:16-19.

By what means can our minds be redirected? John 16:7-15.

THINK IT THROUGH

Am I aware of my true nature as a sinner? Do I understand my true potential as a child of God?

“Oh, how much we lose by not educating the imagination to dwell upon divine things, rather than upon the earthly! . . . Fresh wonders will be revealed to the mind the more closely we apply it to divine things. We lose much by not talking more of Jesus and of heaven, the saints’ inheritance. The more we contemplate heavenly things, the more new delights we shall see, and the more will our hearts be brimful of thanks to our beneficent Creator.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, p. 1085.

“Self-esteem and self-flattery will be sure to stir up in the heart resentment against any who venture to question one’s course of action. Everything like counsel or advice is resented with indignation as a design to bruise and wound. This spirit cherished will lead to numerous evils. None will venture to tell you when you err, because the faithful one would be regarded as an enemy. Thus the kindness that should exist between brethren in the faith is killed because of the jealous interpretation put upon the God-fearing cautions given. Undue stress is laid upon words, imagination exaggerates the matter and creates alienation.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, page 250.

FURTHER STUDY

FOR FURTHER STUDY: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 52-57.

Part 2
BARRIERS TO
MAN
1 Thess. 1:5

“For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.”

“**Ye know.** Paul appeals to the Thessalonians’ personal knowledge of the missionaries’ behavior among them. A man must have a clear conscience before making such an appeal to his own conduct, but Paul never feared to quote his own behavior among his converts. His several references to the life he lived in Thessalonica (ch. 2:1, 2, 5, 9-11) may imply that some were misrepresenting his behavior and endeavoring to weaken his influence. He met such misrepresentations by claiming that not only the sermons but the lives of the evangelists preached the gospel, and that this was done for the sake of the Thessalonians themselves.”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on 1 Thess. 1:5.

To be effective, our communication with our fellowmen must be in harmony with our behavior. Nothing raises barriers in a listener faster than the feeling that he is being fooled or tricked, or that the speaker cannot or will not do that which he admonishes others to do.

Persons who are thus inconsistent show a similar inconsistency in relation to God. “In taking upon themselves the solemn covenant of the church they have pledged themselves to receive and obey the word of God, to give themselves to God’s service, but they do not do this. In profession they claim to be sons of God, but in life and character they deny the relationship. They do not surrender the will to God. They are living a lie.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 279. What barriers we sometimes erect!

What motivation should govern the Christian’s communication of truth? Eph. 4:15.

THINK IT THROUGH

How may a Christian diminish the barriers sin has erected within his life?

“The same agencies that barred men away from Christ eighteen hundred years ago are at work today. The spirit which built up the partition wall between Jew and Gentile is still active. Pride and prejudice have built strong walls of separation between different classes of men. Christ and His mission have been misrepresented, and multitudes feel that they are virtually shut away from the ministry of the gospel. But let them not feel that they are shut away from Christ. There are no barriers which man or Satan can erect but that faith can penetrate.”—*The Desire of Ages*, page 403.

“The unstudied, unconscious influence of a holy life is the most convincing sermon that can be given in favor of Christianity. Argument, even when unanswerable, may provoke only opposition; but a godly example has a power that it is impossible wholly to resist.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 511.

FURTHER STUDY *The Desire of Ages*, pages 406-409.

Part 3
BARRIERS
TO TRUTH
2 Thess. 2:9-12,
NEB

“But the coming of that wicked man is the work of Satan. It will be attended by all the powerful signs and miracles of the Lie, and all the deception that sinfulness can impose on those doomed to destruction. Destroyed they shall be, because they did not open their minds to love of the truth, so as to find salvation. Therefore God puts them under a delusion, which works upon them to believe the lie, so that they may all be brought to judgement, all who do not believe the truth but make sinfulness their deliberate choice.”

These persons accept hope in the enemy. They look to him for salvation. He is the Lie. These people are deluded. The lie they believe prevents them from accepting the truth they are offered. What evidences can you see that the lie is being practiced today?

“God will not condemn any at the judgment because they honestly believe a lie, or conscientiously cherished error; but it will be because they neglected the opportunities of making themselves acquainted with truth. The infidel will be condemned, not because he was an infidel, but because he did not take advantage of the means God has placed within his reach to enable him to become a Christian.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, page 437.

What advice to Timothy is also appropriate for those who face the philosophies of today? 1 Tim. 1:3, 4; 4:6, 7; 6:3-5.

What should occupy the Christian's thoughts? Phil. 4:8, 9.

THINK IT THROUGH

What effect may the modern mass media have on a Christian's life? Could we be deluded almost without knowing it?

“Transgression has almost reached its limit. Confusion fills the world, and a great terror is soon to come upon human beings. The end is very near. We who know the truth should be preparing for what is soon to break upon the world as an overwhelming surprise.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 911.

“All the people of God are now to stand on the platform of truth as it has been given in the third angel's message. All the pleasant pictures, all the miracles wrought, will be presented in order that, if possible, the very elect will be deceived. The only hope for anyone is to hold fast the evidences that have confirmed the truth in righteousness.”—Ellen G. White, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 975.

“The faith of individual members of the church will be tested as though there were not another person in the world.”—Ellen G. White, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 983.

FURTHER STUDY

Early Writings, pages 42-45.

**Part 4
BARRIERS OF
LIFE AND
HEART
CONDITIONS
Matt 13:20-22**

“He that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.”

This is a parable about barriers to lasting effectiveness in communicating the gospel. Note the emphasis on environment—both external and self-created. Tribulation and persecution come from without. The desire for money and concern about the world are personal creations. Is it possible to raise a barrier to the Word in one's own life by committing too much time, talent, or money to matters of secondary importance? How should we destroy environmental barriers?

How did racial and economic disparities affect the children of Israel? Ex 6:9. What remedy does God propose for social and material inequalities? Isa. 58:6-8.

What human conditions may confuse our judgment of the importance of the individual? Eccl. 9:15, 16; James 2:1-4.

God's assessment of the worth of the individual disregards race and creed and economic, social, or educational status.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I learn to communicate effectively with persons on the other side of a social barrier?

“No mere theory of truth or profession of discipleship will save any soul. We do not belong to Christ unless we are His wholly. It is by halfheartedness in the Christian life that men become feeble in purpose and changeable in desire. The effort to serve both self and Christ makes one a stony-ground hearer, and he will not endure when the test comes upon him.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 50.

“No class is free from the temptation to worldly care. To the poor, toil and deprivation and the fear of want bring perplexities and burdens. To the rich come fear of loss and a multitude of anxious cares.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 51.

“Christ came to demolish every wall of partition, to throw open every compartment of the temple, that every soul may have free access to God. His love is so broad, so deep, so full, that it penetrates everywhere.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 386.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, pages 46-53.

Part 5
BARRIER
OF UNBELIEF
Heb. 3:12,
13, 15

“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”

“While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.”

“An evil heart of unbelief. This has ever been the root of difficulty in the matter of man's relation to God. Thus it was with Israel in the wilderness, and later in the land of Canaan. This same difficulty prevents nominal Christians today from entering into the experience of 'rest' that is possible through genuine faith in Christ Jesus. Israel's lack of faith stands in marked contrast with the faithfulness of Moses and Christ (vs. 1, 2). . . .

“Christians are here admonished to beware of apostatizing in their hearts 'from the living God,' the while they maintain the forms of religion. The experiences through which ancient Israel passed 'happened unto them for ensamples,' or, 'as lessons' (1 Cor. 10:11), and 'were written down for our instruction' (RSV). Christians who, upon reviewing the obduracy of ancient Israel, consider themselves superior, will do well to heed the admonition, 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall' (1 Cor. 10:12; cf. vs. 1-10).”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Heb. 3:12.

What was the provocation mentioned in Heb. 3:7-10? Ps. 95:7-11.

What problem may hinder spiritual growth? Heb. 5:11-14.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can one detect the signs of unbelief? What would you suggest as a cure?

“The Lord manifests His grace and His power over and over again, and this should teach us that it is always profitable under all circumstances to cherish faith, to talk faith, to act faith. We are not to have our hearts and hands weakened by allowing the suggestions of suspicious minds to plant in our hearts the seeds of doubt and distrust.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 928.

“Many have for years made no advancement in knowledge and true holiness. They are spiritual dwarfs. Instead of going forward to perfection, they are going back to the darkness and bondage of Egypt. . . .

“Great privileges belong to the people of God. Great light has been given them, that they may attain to their high calling in Christ Jesus; yet they are not what God would have them to be and what He designs they shall be.”—*Testimonies*, Vol. 2, pp. 123, 124.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pages 291-295.

Part 6
BARRIERS
REMOVED
Rev. 3:20-22

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”

Christ will not open the heart-door without our consent. “Says the true Witness, ‘Behold, I stand at the door and knock.’ Every warning, reproof, and entreaty in the Word of God, or through His delegated messengers, is a knock at the door of the heart; it is the voice of Jesus, asking for entrance. With every knock unheeded, your determination to open becomes weaker and weaker. If the voice of Jesus is not heeded at once, it becomes confused in the mind with a multitude of other voices, the world’s care and business engross the attention, and conviction dies away. The heart becomes less impressible, and lapses into a perilous unconsciousness of the shortness of time, and of the great eternity beyond.

“The heavenly Guest is standing at your door, while you are piling up obstructions to bar His entrance. Jesus is knocking through the prosperity He gives you. He loads you with blessings to test your fidelity, that they may flow out from you to others. Will you permit your selfishness to triumph? Will you squander God’s talents, and lose your soul through idolatrous love of the blessings He has given?”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, pp. 966, 967.

How does God describe the power granted to penetrate barriers with the gospel in the last days? Rev. 18:1-4.

Tremendous social and political pressures will be linked with religion to prevent the reception of the divine call. God’s reply to these satanic attempts to exclude the call to obey Him will be mighty displays of His power. Unexpected advances will come for God’s cause.

What is the basic characteristic of a Christian? 1 John 4:14-17.

A loving person seeks to break down barriers that separate him from others. He seeks ways to communicate constructively with others because of their potential worth through redemption.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why does divine love need our assistance?

“Love is a heavenly attribute. The natural heart cannot originate it. This heavenly plant only flourishes where Christ reigns supreme. Where love exists, there is power and truth in the life. Love does good and nothing but good. Those who have love bear fruit unto holiness, and in the end everlasting life.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 952.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pages 603-612.



THE FAMILY IN DIALOGUE

"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

Deut. 6:6, 7.

"The chief requisite of language is that it be pure and kind and true—the outward expression of an inward grace. . . . The best school for this language study is the home.

"Kind words are as dew and gentle showers to the soul. The Scripture says of Christ that grace was poured into His lips, that He might 'know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.' And the Lord bids us, 'Let your speech be alway with grace,' 'that it may minister grace unto the hearers.'"—*The Adventist Home*, page 435.

A home cannot exist without constant and wide-ranging communication. Through voice, eyes, touch, even through smell the family members communicate with each other. Yet all too often those who communicate so effectively in business and recreation generate in their homes a tense atmosphere of terse, harsh words, sullen silences, abrupt gestures, and intolerant glances.

"When fathers and mothers are converted, there will be a thorough conversion of their principles of management. Their thoughts will be converted; their tongues will be converted. . . .

"There will be no loud, angry talking in the home. The words will be of a character to soothe and bless the hearer. . . . Take all the ugly features out of the voice."—*The Adventist Home*, p. 436.

KEY THOUGHTS

1. True love in the home begins with God's love. It has no other source.
2. Frankness and courtesy should be practiced by the mother and the father in their own relationship.
3. Christian faith provides an enduring basis for the home.
4. Gentleness and firmness combined assure best results in parental communication with children.

"A Godly Example in the Home," an article written by Ellen G. White, is printed at the end of this lesson for supplementary reading. It was originally printed in the *Review and Herald*.

Part 1
**PARENTS IN
THE FAMILY**
Eph. 5:25,
28, 29

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."

"So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church."

How did Christ love the church? 1 Peter 2:24. Is giving an act of communication?

Marital love involves the most intimate, continuing, and comprehensive communication. This communication involves the intellect and all the senses. From being two separate channels with completely divergent output, they become one—not subordinated, but each amplified by oneness with the other so that the oneness they know is greater than the sum of the two parts they were before.

"The home that is beautified by love, sympathy, and tenderness is a place that angels love to visit, and where God is glorified."—*The Adventist Home*, page 19.

Apply the characteristics of love in 1 Cor. 13:4-7 to the family.

How will the individuals in a family relate themselves to the varying tensions and crises of the home?

Note how many of the problems love must face are linked with problems of communication within the home.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the source of love in the family? Is my dialogue first with God?

"Hearts that are filled with the love of Christ can never get very far apart. Religion is love, and a Christian home is one where love reigns and finds expression in words and acts of thoughtful kindness and gentle courtesy. . . .

"In every family where Christ abides, a tender interest and love will be manifested for one another; not a spasmodic love expressed only in fond caresses, but a love that is deep and abiding."—*The Adventist Home*, page 94.

"Love can no more exist without revealing itself in outward acts than fire can be kept alive without fuel. You, Brother C, have felt that it was beneath your dignity to manifest tenderness by kindly acts and to watch for an opportunity to evince affection for your wife by words of tenderness and kind regard. You are changeable in your feelings and are very much affected by surrounding circumstances. . . .

"You think it beneath your dignity, Brother C, to manifest love, to speak kindly and affectionately. All these tender words, you think, savor of softness and weakness, and are unnecessary. But in their place come fretful words, words of discord, strife, and censure."—*The Adventist Home*, page 111.

FURTHER STUDY *The Adventist Home*, pages 105-113.

Part 2
FAMILY
COMMUNICATION

Right example is the first precept of Christian communication within the home. Children naturally imitate. What do they have to imitate in your home?

Today children are encouraged to communicate with their elders. A frank interchange of ideas between the generations closes the so-called "generation gap." However, through wise handling of the situation, maturity of judgment, and divine help, the parent retains his proper authority. Nothing is gained by children's teasing or parents' bullying. Words used to denounce children or override their wishes without reason only provoke them, and the family harmony is threatened with contention.

"The cause of division and discord in families and in the church is separation from Christ. To come near to Christ is to come near to one another. The secret of true unity in the church and in the family is not diplomacy, not management, not a superhuman effort to overcome difficulties—though there will be much of this to do—but union with Christ."—*The Adventist Home*, page 179.

All too often there is failure to understand what other members of the family are really saying by their words and actions. This is a situation similar to Judah's alienation from God in Jeremiah's day. They had eyes and ears but didn't grasp God's message. Jer. 5:21. Eyes and ears sensitized by love and the Holy Spirit will catch the message of the words and actions of others.

What attitude recommended by Paul for the Christian life can fortify our consistent efforts in the family? Gal. 6:9.

THINK IT THROUGH

What are the symptoms of failure to listen? How may intercommunication within the family be improved in such areas as money handling, discipline, standards, family rules?

"Parents, God desires you to make your family a sample of the family in heaven. Guard your children. Be kind and tender with them. Father, mother, and children are to be joined together with the golden links of love. One well-ordered, well-disciplined family is a greater power in demonstrating the efficiency of Christianity than all the sermons in the world. When fathers and mothers realize how their children copy them, they will watch carefully every word and gesture."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, p. 1118.

"Every member of the family should realize that a responsibility rests upon him individually to do his part in adding to the comfort order, and regularity of the family. One should not work against another. All should unitedly engage in the good work of encouraging one another; they should exercise gentleness, forbearance and patience, speak in low calm tones, shunning confusion, and each doing his utmost to lighten the burdens of the mother."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 2, pp. 699, 700.

FURTHER STUDY

Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, pages 107-118.

Part 3
WORDS IN THE
FAMILY
Prov. 15:1,
2, 4

"A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger. The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness."

"A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit."

"Above all things, parents should surround their children with an atmosphere of cheerfulness, courtesy, and love. A home where love dwells and where it finds expression in looks, in words, in acts, is a place where angels delight to dwell. . . .

"A word of caution or reproof spoken at the right time will be of great value. . . .

"There should be no loud-voiced commands, no unkind, exasperating words, no harsh, severe, or gloomy expressions."—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, pages 115, 116.

What quality should characterize the Christian's spoken communication? Col. 4:6.

Parents should communicate continually with heaven in view. The salvation of unbroken families is their purpose. When this motivation grips the life, then words become supremely important.

What forms of communication do we have with God that can also be used to communicate love and respect in the family? Ps. 95:1, 2, 6, 7.

THINK IT THROUGH

Review the words you have spoken to your loved ones in the past day. Assess your communication—manner and content—against true Christian principles.

"Tell the children that you want to help them to prepare for a holy heaven, where all is peace, where not one jarring note is heard. Be patient with them in their trials, which may look small to you but which are large to them. . . .

"There will be no loud, angry talking in the home. The words will be of a character to soothe and bless the hearer. . . . Take all the ugly features out of the voice."—*The Adventist Home*, page 436.

"Let the dear children be brought to Jesus. In simple language speak the words of truth to them. Sing to them pleasant, attractive songs which reveal the love of Christ. Bring your children to Jesus, for He loves little children."—*The Adventist Home*, page 350.

"There is reason for deep solicitude on your part for your children, who have temptations to encounter at every advance step. It is impossible for them to avoid contact with evil associates. . . . They will see sights, hear sounds, and be subjected to influences which are demoralizing and which, unless they are thoroughly guarded, will imperceptibly but surely corrupt the heart and deform the character."—*The Adventist Home*, page 406.

FURTHER STUDY

The Adventist Home, pages 406-418.

Part 4
EDUCATION IN
THE FAMILY
Luke 2:40,
46, 47

"And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him."

"And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers."

"The child Jesus did not receive instruction in the synagogue schools. His mother was His first human teacher. From her lips and from the scrolls of the prophets, He learned of heavenly things."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 70.

"With deep earnestness the mother of Jesus watched the unfolding of His powers, and beheld the impress of perfection upon His character. With delight she sought to encourage that bright, receptive mind. Through the Holy Spirit she received wisdom to co-operate with the heavenly agencies in the development of this child, who could claim only God as His Father."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 69.

How did Hannah relate herself to Samuel after he was weaned? 1 Sam. 1:26-28. Similar words are used to describe Samuel's growth as are used of Jesus in Luke 2:52. See 1 Sam. 2:26.

In the few short years that Hannah and Elkanah had Samuel with them, they implanted in his mind principles of godliness and high moral character that made him one of Israel's greatest leaders.

What environment did Elisabeth and Zacharias choose for John? Luke 1:39, 40.

It was there, in the solitude of the hill country, that John heard the voice of God.

THINK IT THROUGH

Am I building a home environment where the voice of God is heard? Is the current reading and television viewing or radio listening in my home such that God can communicate to my family?

Or must I change these practices in order to let Him be heard?

"From the earliest times the faithful in Israel had given much care to the education of the youth. The Lord had directed that even from babyhood the children should be taught of His goodness and His greatness, especially as revealed in His law, and shown in the history of Israel. Song and prayer and lessons from the Scriptures were to be adapted to the opening mind. Fathers and mothers were to instruct their children that the law of God is an expression of His character, and that as they received the principles of the law into the heart, the image of God was traced on mind and soul. Much of the teaching was oral."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 69.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 68-74.

Part 5
RELIGION IN
THE FAMILY
Deut. 6:5-7

"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

This sounds like conditioning children to believe in God. How do you feel about indoctrinating children with Christian principles and belief? Do you feel this is a good way to work? Or should a child be left to mature and then decide for himself?

"If the mother fails in her duty to instruct, guide, and restrain, her children will naturally accept the evil, and turn from the good."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 572, 573.

"Family religion consists in bringing up the children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Every one in the family is to be nourished by the lessons of Christ, and the interest of each soul is to be strictly guarded, in order that Satan shall not deceive and allure away from Christ."—*The Adventist Home*, page 317.

Family worship plays a vital role in bringing the child to Christ. Communicating Christ is not a sometime thing. Day by day, at every opportunity, Christ must be revealed as the giver of life, the forgiver of sins, and the source of all personal power.

What elements does Solomon recall of his childhood training? Prov. 4:1-5.

THINK IT THROUGH

What am I doing to communicate Jesus to my family? Do I provide literature, music, time, and opportunity that create a climate in my home which is favorable to the discovery of Jesus?

"And it was not enough that the promised child should receive a good legacy from the parents. This must be followed by careful training and the formation of right habits. God directed that the future judge [Samson] and deliverer of Israel should be trained to strict temperance from infancy. He was to be a Nazarite from his birth, thus being placed under a perpetual prohibition against the use of wine or strong drink. The lessons of temperance, self-denial, and self-control are to be taught to children even from babyhood."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 561, 562.

"The more deeply to impress these truths upon all minds, the great leader [Moses] embodied them in sacred verse. This song was not only historical, but prophetic. While it recounted the wonderful dealings of God with His people in the past, it also foreshadowed the great events of the future, the final victory of the faithful when Christ shall come the second time in power and glory. The people were directed to commit to memory this poetic history, and to teach it to their children and children's children. . . . It was the duty of parents to so impress these words upon the susceptible minds of their children that they might never be forgotten."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 467, 468.

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pages 388-394.

Part 6
THE FAMILY
WITNESS
Titus 2:11-14

What Christian principles stated by Paul provide a guide for the family in relation to the world?

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

“The home in which the members are polite, courteous Christians exerts a far-reaching influence for good. Other families will mark the results attained by such a home, and will follow the example set, in their turn guarding the home against Satanic influences. The angels of God will often visit the home in which the will of God bears sway. Under the power of divine grace such a home becomes a place of refreshing to worn, weary pilgrims.”
—*The Adventist Home*, page 31.

What counsel is given regarding Christian behavior? 1 Peter 1:14, 15. What effect does holy living have? 1 Peter 2:12, 3:1, 2.

The world receives blessing through the faithful witness of Christian lives; so does the home. “But how knowest thou, O wife [or husband], but that your consistent life of faith and obedience may win back your husband [or wife] to the truth?”—*The Adventist Home*, page 350.

THINK IT THROUGH

In what ways does my home witness in the community? Should I encourage specific missionary projects involving the individual members of my home and the home as a unit?

“Parents, your children should be your helping hand, increasing your power and ability to work for the Master. Children are the younger members of the Lord’s family. They should be led to consecrate themselves to God, whose they are by creation and by redemption. They should be taught that all their powers of body, mind, and soul are His. They should be trained to help in various lines of unselfish service.”—*Testimonies*, Vol. 7, p. 63.

“In the closing scenes of this earth’s history many of these children and youth will astonish people by their witness to the truth, which will be borne in simplicity, yet with spirit and power. They have been taught the fear of the Lord, and their hearts have been softened by a careful and prayerful study of the Bible. In the near future many children will be endued with the Spirit of God, and will do a work in proclaiming the truth to the world, that at that time cannot well be done by the older members of the church.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, pages 166, 167.

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pages 349-355.

A Godly Example in the Home

ELLEN G. WHITE

The Lord has recently impressed upon me again the need of reminding Seventh-day Adventist parents of the important work to be done in the home. To all parents who profess to believe in the soon return of Christ, there is given a solemn work of preparation, that they and their children may be ready to meet the Lord at his coming. God desires to see parents take their position wholeheartedly for him, that there may be no perverting of the work he has given them to do, and that our children and youth may understand clearly the will of God concerning them. They are to learn to resist evil and choose righteousness, to turn from sin and become the faithful servants of God, prepared to give him their life's highest service.

There are few parents who realize how important it is to give to their children the influence of a godly example. Yet this is far more potent than precept. No other means is so effective in training them in right lines. The children and youth must have a true copy in right-doing if they succeed in overcoming sin and perfecting a Christian character. This copy they should find in the lives of their parents. If they enter the city of God, and rejoice in the overcomer's reward, some one must show them the way. By living before their children godly, consistent lives, parents may make the work before them clear and plain.

It is God's desire that parents should be to their children the embodiment of the principles laid down in his Word. Let them make it their aim to train their children for God. To keep the feet of their children in the narrow path will call for faithful effort and constant prayer, but it is possible to train the children and youth to love and serve God. It is possible to inculcate the principles of righteousness, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, and there a little, until the desires and inclinations of the heart are in harmony with the mind and will of God. When fathers and mothers realize the responsi-

bility resting upon them, and respond to the appeals of God's Spirit in behalf of this neglected work, there will be seen in the homes of the people transformations that will cause the angels to rejoice.

Let parents study the first chapter of the second epistle of Peter. Here is represented the exalted excellence of Bible truth. It teaches that the Christian's experience is to be one of steady growth, of constant gain in graces and virtues that will give strength to the character and fit the soul for eternal life.

"Grace and peace be multiplied unto you," the apostle writes, "through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and can not see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

It is the privilege of parents and children to grow together in the grace of Christ. Those who comply with the conditions laid down in the Word will find full provision for their spiritual needs, and for

power to overcome. Feeling the need of that grace which Heaven alone can furnish, and which Christ imparts to all who seek, they will become partakers of the heavenly gift.

Those who have accepted Bible truth are to keep the truth circumspectly. They are to follow on to know the Lord, gathering into their souls the light of heaven. But they must not stop there. They are to communicate the light and knowledge received. The Lord expects parents to make earnest, united efforts in the training of their children for him. In the home they are to cultivate the graces of the Spirit, in all their ways acknowledging him who through the sanctification of the Spirit has promised to make us perfect in every good work. When parents awaken to a true understanding of their neglected duties, they will marvel at the spiritual blindness that has characterized their past experience. And when they become learners of Christ, they will be taught how to do their work acceptably.

There has been too little definite work done in preparing our children for the tests that all must meet in their contact with the world and its influences. They have not been helped as they should to form characters strong enough to resist temptation and stand firm for the principles of right, in the terrible issues before all who remain faithful to the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Parents need to understand the temptations that the youth must daily meet, that they may teach them how to overcome them. There are influences in the school and in the world that parents need to guard against. God wants us to turn our eyes from the vanities and pleasures and ambitions of the world, and set them on the glorious and immortal reward of those who run with patience the race set before them in the gospel. He wants us to educate our children to avoid the influences that would draw them away from Christ. The Lord is soon coming, and we must prepare for this solemn event. My brethren and sisters, let your daily life in the home reveal the living principles of the Word of God. Heavenly agencies will cooperate with you as you seek to reach the standard of perfection, and as you seek to teach your children how to conform their lives to the principles of righteousness. Christ and heavenly agencies are waiting to quicken your spiritual sensibilities, to renew your

activities, and to teach you of the deep things of God.

Parents should be united in their faith, that they may be united in their efforts to bring their children up in the belief of the truth. Upon the mother in a special sense rests the work of molding the minds of the young children. But the father should feel more deeply than he usually does his responsibilities in the home. Upon him as well as upon the mother rests the duty of laboring for the spiritual welfare of his children. Business matters often keep the father much from home, and prevent him from taking an equal share in the training of the children; but whenever he can, he should unite with the mother in this work. Let parents work unitedly, instilling into their children's hearts the principles of righteousness.

The vows of David recorded in Psalm 101 should be the vows of all upon whom rest the responsibilities of guarding the influences of the home. David declared: "I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. . . . I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave unto me. A froward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked person.

"Whoso privily slandereth his neighbor, him will I cut off: him that hath a high look and a proud heart will not I suffer. Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me. He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight."

Home missionary work is a most important work. It should be our first work to give that light to those related to us by the ties of kinship and blood. There should be no neglect on our part to do our utmost to bring them to an understanding of the knowledge we have received. "If any man provide not for his own," the apostle Paul declared, "and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

Shall the people who have a solemn message to bear for the enlightenment and salvation of the world, make little or no effort for the members of their own family who are unconverted to the truth? Will parents allow their minds to be engrossed with trifling matters, to the neglect of the all-important question, "Is my family prepared to meet the Lord?" Will

they assent to the great truths that are present truth for these last days, and be interested to see this message going to other peoples and lands, while they allow their children, their most precious possession, to go on unwarned of their danger and unprepared for the future? Shall those who, from the Word of God and through the witness of his Spirit, have had clear light concerning their duty allow the years to pass without making definite efforts to save their children?

Christ is waiting for the cooperation of human agencies, that he may impress the hearts of our children and youth. With intense desire heavenly beings long to see

parents making that preparation which is essential if they and their children stand loyal to God in the coming conflict, and enter in through the gates to the city of God. Let parents arouse from their indifference, and redeem the time. Let them seek to correct the mistakes they have made in the past in the management of their children. Let those who have neglected their God-given work repent of their neglect, and in the fear of God take up their responsibilities. As they seek to magnify the law of God in the daily life, they will make that law honorable in the eyes of their children.—*Review and Herald*, Oct. 12, 1911.



THE ELECTRIC SOCIETY

"Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge." Prov. 23:12.

The aim of communication is to overcome the separation that exists between persons so that to some extent a unity is developed. This process may be constructive or destructive, Christlike or Satanlike. Each party in the process has two functions—to speak and to listen. Thus there is an interaction between the self and the other person. In this lesson we shall study the receiving side of this interaction in the light of Christian principles.

In our modern world there is a great barrage of attempted communication that seeks to compel listening. Since the Christian person has, by the nature of his commitment, chosen to reject all that is destructive and to live by all that is constructive as revealed by Jesus Christ, it is necessary for him to make a judgment in regard to all attempts to catch his ear, so that he may accept only that which is constructive and reject the destructive.

As a Christian he must constantly ask himself the question: What communications are in harmony with the principles of the self-sacrificing love of Jesus Christ to which I have committed myself?

"Everything that can be done should be done to place ourselves and our children where we shall not see the iniquity that is practiced in the world. We should carefully guard the sight of our eyes and the hearing of our ears so that these awful

things shall not enter our minds. When the daily newspaper comes into the house, I feel as if I want to hide it, that the ridiculous, sensational things in it may not be seen. It seems as if the enemy is at the foundation of the publishing of many things that appear in newspapers. Every sinful thing that can be found is uncovered and laid bare before the world.

"Those who would have that wisdom which is from God must become fools in the sinful knowledge of this age, in order to be wise. They should shut their eyes, that they may see and learn no evil. They should close their ears, lest they hear that which is evil and obtain that knowledge which would stain their purity of thoughts and acts. And they should guard their tongues, lest they utter corrupt communications and guile be found in their mouths."—*The Adventist Home*, pages 403, 404.

The special problem of the Christian in the last third of the twentieth century is that man's technological advance has widened the scope of the individual's communication to include almost anybody. We interact on the telephone, and react to television, radio, and printed media. We may find ourselves identifying with a statement made by the pope at one moment, and by a youth agitator the next.

How the Christian is affected by the information he receives, and how he should assess, accept, reject, or identify with the communications directed to him is the purpose of this lesson.

Part 1
THE WORLD'S
SOUNDS
Eph. 5:6-10

“Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.”

Much of the technological revolution that has produced the electric society has been directed at communication. Beginning with modern high-speed presses, inventive geniuses have produced telecommunications—telephone, wireless telegraphy, radio, television, satellite relay—film, tape recorders, records, and other communicative methods. Computers chatter to each other about an individual's financial standing, his marital condition, how many children he has, and so on. Never before has it been possible for so many to know so much. The potential for conveying ideas is limitless. But the Christian is concerned with the quality of the communication.

What are the results of the unconsecrated life? How is this related to the media? 2 Tim. 3:7, 13.

What circumstances resulted in the communications breakdown at the Tower of Babel? Gen. 11:4-7.

So many authorities clamor for attention, so many voices speak, that people either tune out the messages or are frequently deceived.

THINK IT THROUGH

List the number of communicative devices in your home; list both according to type and the number of each type. How much of the available information do you accept? Consider the total number of impressions made on you through various media each day.

“It was His purpose that as men should go forth to found nations in different parts of the earth they should carry with them a knowledge of His will, that the light of truth might shine undimmed to succeeding generations. . . . But they were unwilling to listen to these unpalatable truths; they had no desire to retain God in their knowledge; and by the confusion of tongues they were, in a great measure, shut out from intercourse with those who might have given them light.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 120.

“Christ is ever sending messages to those who listen for His voice. . . .

“The temptations to which we are daily exposed make prayer a necessity. Dangers beset every path.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 509.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pages 117-124.

Part 2
DEPENDENCE
John 14:16-18

"I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."

Imagine a Western society cut off from the communications media. Trucks would cease to roll; computers would give no information about needed supplies; radio would tell us nothing. We have become dependent on thousands of people who relay and receive information through the modern communications media.

Perhaps if Christians could see how vitally they depend on the communicative efforts of the Holy Spirit through prayer, the Bible, and preaching, they would recognize what a disaster it would be if these avenues were cut off.

What special agents of divine communication minister on man's behalf? Heb. 1:7, 14.

"By angel messengers, earth is connected with heaven, and all the deeds of men, whether good or evil, are open to the eye of Infinite Justice."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 495.

Long before man evolved the total communications that enable a man to step on the moon, God offered and made effective a system of total spiritual communication. We are sobered by the ability of a computer to store and retrieve information. Read what God says of His communications. Ps. 33:13-15; 34:17, 18.

THINK IT THROUGH

Am I really connected with heaven? Am I in communication with divine sources of information and power?

"Oh, that our brethren and sisters might value aright the truth! Oh, that they might become sanctified by it! Oh, that they might realize that upon them rests the responsibility of communicating this truth to others! But they do not feel the importance of living the truth, of being doers of the words of Christ. Many are self-sufficient. They are not filled with the missionary spirit that should animate the disciples of Christ. If they knew what it means to have travail of soul for others, angels of God would work through them to communicate a knowledge of the truth."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 8, pp. 151, 152.

"For all created beings there is the one great principle of life—dependence upon and co-operation with God. The relationship existing in the pure family of God in heaven was to exist in the family of God on earth. . . . This would have brought peace and happiness. But the law that none 'liveth in himself' Satan was determined to oppose. . . . He sought to make himself a center of influence. It was this that incited rebellion in heaven, and it was man's acceptance of this principle that brought sin on earth."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 6, p. 236.

FURTHER STUDY

Education, pages 185-192.

Part 3
ISOLATION
Rom. 11:2-4

“Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.”

Modern society poses a puzzling paradox. A fantastic communications net ties us together; but simultaneously the beliefs and conditions of the people in this society tend to isolate the individual and the family unit. The isolation of the Christian extends into the areas of morality and religious belief.

Mass media speak with many voices proposing the theories of many minds insinuating against Biblical morality and openly scorning Christian values. Some theologians predict a future for the Christian church in which Christianity becomes an underground, minority movement.

We may appear to be isolated, alone; yet we are not alone. We are part of the body of Christ—this lesson Elijah had to learn.

What last-day conditions may contribute to the isolation of the individual who determines to live for Christ? 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 4:3, 4.

What assurance, given when some believers apostatized, can reassure us today? 2 Tim. 2:19.

THINK IT THROUGH

Am I seeking the companionship of Christ and the communion of the Holy Spirit? Do I make the most of the fellowship of the saints that church meetings offer?

“Many are suffering from maladies of the soul far more than from diseases of the body, and they will find no relief until they shall come to Christ, the wellspring of life. Complaints of weariness, loneliness, and dissatisfaction will then cease. . . .

“If physicians and workers flatter themselves that they are to find a panacea for the varied ills of their patients by supplying them with a round of amusements similar to those which have been the curse of their lives, they will be disappointed. Let not these entertainments be placed in the position which the living Fountain should occupy. The hungry, thirsty soul will continue to hunger and thirst as long as it partakes of these unsatisfying pleasures.”—*Testimonies*, Vol. 4, p. 579.

“Not all in the world are lawless and sinful; not all have taken sides with the enemy. God has many thousands who have not bowed the knee to Baal, many who long to understand more fully in regard to Christ and the law. . . .

“These need the personal help of those who have learned to know God and the power of His word. In such a time as this, every child of God should be actively engaged in helping others.”—*Prophets and Kings*, page 171.

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pages 167-176.

Part 4
INVOLVEMENT
2 Sam. 18:22, 23

"Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok yet again to Joab, But howsoever, let me, I pray thee, also run after Cush. And Joab said, Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou hast no tidings ready? But howsoever, said he, let me run. And he said unto him, Run. Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and overran Cush."

Ahimaaz wanted to become involved. It mattered little what he had to say, or that he had nothing to tell, just so long as he was involved. His involvement lacked meaning. A quite usual situation in modern times is the reverse of the story of Ahimaaz—that is, to have the message, but not run. Meaningful involvement requires that one have the message and run with it.

Gutenberg's invention of printing greatly increased the possibility for widespread involvement with ideas, and with the movements that grew out of them. Our own message is largely due to the interest of our pioneers with the truth of Scriptures and then involvement by preaching what they learned.

What differences mark the involvement possible today through radio and television? What do on-the-spot cameras and satellite relays permit us to do? How should this immediacy affect our relationships to others?

"My brethren and sisters, visit those who live near you, and by sympathy and kindness seek to reach their hearts."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 9, p. 34.

What special communication did Paul receive? Acts 16:9, 10.

While communications media can never replace the prophetic vision, they may in some instances perform the service that God had to provide for miraculously in previous times. The media often will inform the sensitive heart of the needs of distant lands today.

What kind of involvement does Christ require? Matt. 25:31-40.

THINK IT THROUGH

Where is my involvement? With selfish needs? With pleasant tasks? Have I involved myself with real problems?

"Let there be most earnest prayer, and then let us work in harmony with our prayers. . . .

"If our people continue in the listless attitude in which they have been, God cannot pour upon them His Spirit. They are unprepared to co-operate with Him. They are not awake to the situation and do not realize the threatened danger. They should feel now, as never before, their need of vigilance and concerted action."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 714.

"Never entertain the thought that you can be Christians and yet withdraw within yourselves. Each one is a part of the great web of humanity, and the nature and quality of your experience will be largely determined by the experiences of those with whom you associate."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 7, p. 190.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pages 211-220.

Part 5
THE "NOW"
ATTITUDE
Luke 19:11

"And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear."

Jesus had to meet the problem of impatience with delay. In the face of delay in setting up His kingdom He simply taught the truth about His kingdom.

Modern technology provides fantastic techniques for accomplishing goals. Anything seems conquerable, given sufficient money and men.

Yet poverty and pollution march side by side with great achievement. Dissatisfaction mounts as the possible mocks at the real. "I want it, and I want it *now*," is the attitude that motivates many persons both in and beyond the so-called "now generation." It seems entirely possible to some that technology may usher in a temporal millennium. Yet the Christian recognizes that because of self-centeredness a golden era is possible only through divine intervention.

What conditions in Judah, pointed out by Jesus, are still responsible for keeping back the fulfillment of man's hopes? Matt. 23:37. Is the reluctance on God's part?

As television shows instant solutions through staged drama or the recounting of history, it is easy for people to become dissatisfied with their life situation. If the tube can solve it all in an hour, why can't my life be changed as quickly? Why cannot people get out in the streets and change things overnight?

What is the Christian to exchange for the works of darkness? Rom. 13:12. What does this mean?

THINK IT THROUGH

Where should I take my personal problems? What attitude would you suggest for the church toward current social problems?

"God has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal. He gives the Holy Spirit to help in every strait, to strengthen our hope and assurance, to illuminate our minds and purify our hearts. He provides opportunities and opens channels of working. If His people are watching the indications of His providence, and are ready to co-operate with Him, they will see mighty results."—*Prophets and Kings*, page 660.

"Satan plays upon the human mind wherever a chance has been left for him to do so; and he seizes upon the very time and place where he can do the most service to himself and the greatest injury to the cause of God. A neglect to do what we might do, and what God requires us to do in His cause, is a sin which cannot be palliated with excuses of circumstances or conditions, for Jesus has made provision for all in every emergency."—*Testimonies*, Vol. 3, p. 505.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, pages 405-416.

Part 6
THE
TARGET—YOU
1 Peter 5:8, 9

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.”

Neon tubes, fluorescent billboards, bumper strips, theater marquees, window displays, magazine and book covers, television commercials, radio spots, the blimp over a ball park, sky writing—every imaginable device becomes a tool to impress and condition you. You are the center of the advertising man's world to be molded and shaped by words, pictures, symbols, and smells. Then the entertainer joins forces and adds drama, comedy, and music.

What contrast in conduct, appropriate to the early Christian church, must be maintained between the Christian and the Christless world today? 1 Peter 4:1-5.

“This is an age when corruption is teeming everywhere. The lust of the eye and corrupt passions are aroused by beholding and by reading. The heart is corrupted through the imagination. The mind takes pleasure in contemplating scenes which awaken the lower and baser passions.”—*Child Guidance*, page 439.

What desire of Paul for the Thessalonian believers should be our prayer in our struggle against the assaults on our senses? 1 Thess. 5:23, 24.

THINK IT THROUGH

What steps can a Christian take to protect himself from the multiple assaults on his senses?

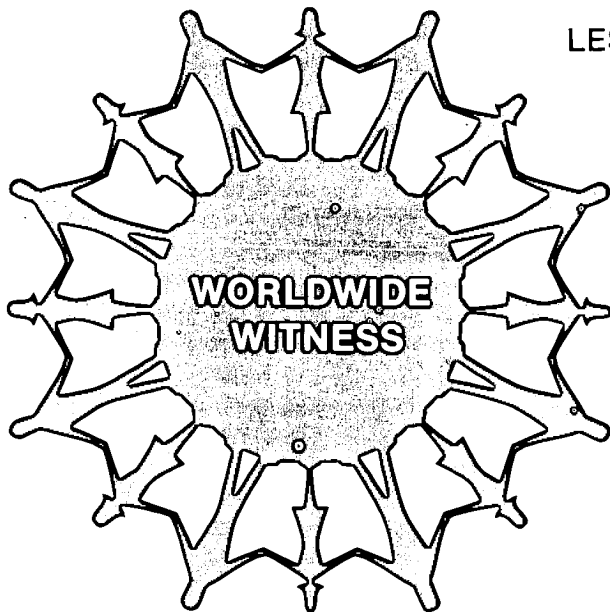
“Exciting love stories and impure pictures have a corrupting influence. Novels are eagerly perused by many; and, as the result, their imagination becomes defiled. In the cars photographs of females in a state of nudity are frequently circulated for sale. These disgusting pictures are also found in the daguerrean saloons [photo shops] and are hung upon the walls of those who deal in engravings. This is an age when corruption is teeming everywhere.”—*Child Guidance*, page 439.

“One corrupt mind can sow more evil seed in a short period of time than many can root out in a whole lifetime.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 443.

“Men and women have hardly begun to understand the true object of life. They are attracted by glitter and show. . . . Life's best things—simplicity, honesty, truthfulness, purity, integrity—cannot be bought or sold. . . . For everyone God has provided pleasure that may be enjoyed by rich and poor alike—the pleasure found in cultivating pureness of thought and unselfishness of action, the pleasure that comes from speaking sympathizing words and doing kindly deeds.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 198.

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pages 241-250.



“The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” Isa. 40:3-5.

“What is our work? The same as that given to John the Baptist, of whom we read: ‘In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.’ Matthew 3:1-3.

“All who are truly engaged in the work of the Lord for these last days will have a decided message to bear. Read the first few verses of the fortieth chapter of Isaiah. . . .

“This chapter is filled with instruction appropriate for us at this time. The word of the Lord to us is: ‘Repent ye; prepare

the way for a revival of My work.’”—*Testimonies*, Vol. 8, pp. 9, 10.

A global task continues to confront the church. All flesh must see the salvation of God. Many barriers compound the already difficult task of reaching all men with the good news about Jesus Christ. Some of these barriers are: (1) population growth, (2) political “curtains,” (3) religious and racial prejudices, (4) remoteness, (5) ignorance and illiteracy, (6) cultural patterns, and (7) indifference.

Radio and television are shrinking the world to the dimensions of a village. Vast distances may separate the abodes of its inhabitants, but as in a village, we sometimes hear the talk of distant dwellers as readily as two ladies may talk over a backyard fence. Marshal McLuhan, famed Canadian communications philosopher, coined the phrase “global village” to describe the shrinking effect the media are having on the world.

This means that we have unrivaled opportunities for reaching all men everywhere with the three angels’ messages. It also means that the church is subject as never before to the inquisitive stare of others in the “global village.”

Part 1
AN
IMPOSSIBLE
MISSION?
Mark 16:15, 20

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”

“And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.”

“Service to God includes personal ministry. By personal effort we are to co-operate with Him for the saving of the world. Christ’s commission, ‘Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,’ is spoken to every one of His followers. (Mark 16:15.) All who are ordained unto the life of Christ are ordained to work for the salvation of their fellow men. Their hearts will throb in unison with the heart of Christ. The same longing for souls that He has felt will be manifest in them. Not all can fill the same place in the work, but there is a place and a work for all.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pages 300, 301.

“Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. . . . Thus the inhabitants of the earth will be brought to take their stand.”—*The Great Controversy*, page 612.

Through whom will all the saved receive eternal life? John 14:6.

What assurance do we have in facing the task God has committed to the remnant church? Matt. 28:20; Acts 1:8.

THINK IT THROUGH

What am I doing to make the worldwide witness a reality?

“But not one is made to suffer the wrath of God until the truth has been brought home to his mind and conscience, and has been rejected. There are many who have never had an opportunity to hear the special truths for this time. The obligation of the fourth commandment has never been set before them in its true light. He who reads every heart and tries every motive will leave none who desire a knowledge of the truth, to be deceived as to the issues of the controversy. The decree is not to be urged upon the people blindly. Everyone is to have sufficient light to make his decision intelligently.”—*The Great Controversy*, page 605.

What part do we have in bringing light to those who do not understand?

“God was in the work, and every saint, fearless of consequences, followed the convictions of his own conscience and united with those who were keeping all the commandments of God; and with power they sounded abroad the third message. I saw that this message will close with power and strength far exceeding the midnight cry.”—*Early Writings*, page 278.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 818-828.

Part 2
THE MESSAGE
Rev. 14:6, 7

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."

Remind yourself again of the relevancy of this message. It is borne by an angel with power to circle the globe—"in the midst of heaven." He carries a timeless message of good news to all people. His voice is amplified to reach all men.

A call comes to return to worship of God in an age when men give glory to science, knowledge, material possessions, sport, entertainment, and anything but God. A warning comes of the ultimate results of neglecting relationships with God. Judgment is upon us.

In an age when many want to do their "own thing," the message reflects the objective standards of the Creator. Mankind's pride stands rebuked.

What spiritual climate affects the worldwide message? Rev. 14:8-11.

What will be the three characteristics of the saints of the last days? Rev. 14:12.

"This is where the fortitude of God's people has its place—in keeping God's commands and remaining loyal to Jesus." Rev. 14:12, NEB.

THINK IT THROUGH

Does my conduct carry the message of the importance of obeying God?

"The prophecies of Daniel and of John are to be understood. They interpret each other. They give to the world truths which every one should understand. These prophecies are to be witnesses in the world. By their fulfillment in these last days they will explain themselves.

"The Lord is about to punish the world for its iniquity. He is about to punish religious bodies for their rejection of the light and truth which has been given them. The great message, combining the first, second, and third angels' messages, is to be given to the world. This is to be the burden of our work. Those who truly believe in Christ will openly conform to the law of Jehovah. The Sabbath is the sign between God and His people; and we are to make visible our conformity to the law of God by observing the Sabbath. It is to be the mark of distinction between God's chosen people and the world."—Ellen G. White *Comments, SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 949.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, Vol. 6, pp. 14-22.

Part 3
THE GIFT OF
TECHNOLOGY

Men like Marconi and Baird, who transmitted the first radio and television signals respectively, shine with fame. Gutenberg's invention of movable type marks him for timeless honor. But back of men's inventive genius is God enlightening their minds. Where is His honor?

What mission of the church does the invention of methods of mass communication meet? Matt. 24:14. Why is it significant that the communications explosion has occurred in the past fifty years?

The fact that Satan degrades an instrument of communication does not mean that it came of the devil. "God intrusts men with talents and inventive genius, in order that His great work in our world may be accomplished."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 409.

How did the prophets and apostles make use of the limited technology of their day? Hab. 2:2; Heb. 13:22; 1 John 5:13.

THINK IT THROUGH

Am I supporting, in every way I can, the work of God which is carried on through literature, radio, telephone, and television?

"The knowledge current in the world may be acquired; for all men are God's property, and are worked by God to fulfill His will in certain lines, even when they refuse the man Christ Jesus as their Saviour. The way in which God uses men is not always discerned, but He does use them. . . . The inventions of human minds are supposed to spring from humanity, but God is behind all. He has caused that the means of rapid traveling shall have been invented, for the great day of His preparation."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 409.

"When men do not make God first and last and best in everything, when they do not give themselves to Him for the carrying out of His purposes, Satan comes in, and uses in his service the minds that, given to God, could achieve great good. Under his direction, they do an evil work with great and masterly power. God designed them to work on a high plane of action, to enter into His mind, and thus to acquire an education that would enable them to work the works of righteousness."—Ellen G. White *Comments, SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 4, p. 1174.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, pages 328-335.

March 21

Part 4
THE
BEAUTIFUL
FEET
Rom. 10:14, 15

“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”

In Romans 10 Paul considers the question of why Israel failed to arrive at righteousness by faith. Who or what was to blame? He concludes that it was not because they did not hear or understand the gospel. It was because they were rebellious. Verse 21. In the process of his argument he states some principles that are applicable to the work of the gospel in any age. No one calls on God unless he believes. No one believes unless he hears. No one hears without a preacher. No one preaches without a commission. This week's lesson began with a study of the commission Jesus has given to believers to teach the gospel worldwide. The modern believer has a number of means to send out the Word—printed materials, radio, telephone, television, films, and tapes. While these inventions are helpful, the consecrated believer under the Spirit's power will always be the prime means of witness. All electronic and mechanical communications devices are merely extensions of the living believer.

What symbols were presented to John to represent the intensity with which the last message would be given to the world? Rev. 18:1, 2.

What indicates the divine origin of the message? Rev. 18:1.

THINK IT THROUGH

Have I committed myself through time, talent, and means to the global task of the church?

“Thus the message of the third angel will be proclaimed. As the time comes for it to be given with greatest power, the Lord will work through humble instruments, leading the minds of those who consecrate themselves to His service.”—*The Great Controversy*, page 606.

“The prophecies in the eighteenth of Revelation will soon be fulfilled. During the proclamation of the third angel's message, ‘another angel’ is to ‘come down from heaven, having great power,’ and the earth is to be ‘lightened with his glory.’ The Spirit of the Lord will so graciously bless consecrated human instrumentalities that men, women, and children will open their lips in praise and thanksgiving, filling the earth with the knowledge of God, and with His unsurpassed glory, as the waters cover the sea.

“Those who have held the beginning of their confidence firm unto the end will be wide awake during the time that the third angel's message is proclaimed with great power.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 984.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, Vol. 8, pp. 14-23.

Part 5
THE CHURCH
A SPECTACLE
1 Cor. 4:1,
2, 9

“Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”

“For we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.”

It was the apostles that Paul considered to be a “spectacle to the world,” but it is also true of every person who believes in Jesus Christ.

The media have power to create images favorable and unfavorable. An event or a person can achieve prominence or notoriety in a matter of hours. We may feel that what happens in our homes, our churches, our schools, our constituencies is our business. But it may rapidly become more than just the business of the community; it may concern a whole nation or even the world.

We cannot avoid the penetrating eye of the news or television camera, or escape the skilled pen of the news writer, or the authoritative voice of the newscaster. The potential of exposure always exists.

What will be exposed? The good deeds of the church? Or some misdemeanor? No longer is it possible for us to show one face to the public, another to our communion. Only in Christian consistency and the highest possible principle can we be secure under the scrutiny of the world.

As with Judah, what reputation should the church of God have? Isa. 62:12.

What influence did one good man, Barnabas, have on a community? Acts 11:22-24.

THINK IT THROUGH

Is there anything in my life that would bring disgrace on the church or my family? Whose example have I taken for my life?

“Multitudes in the world are witnessing this game of life, the Christian warfare. And this is not all. The Monarch of the universe and the myriads of heavenly angels are spectators of this race; they are anxiously watching to see who will be successful overcomers and win the crown of glory that fadeth not away.”—*Testimonies*, Vol. 4, p. 34.

“Where is the self-denial, where is the cross-bearing that Christ has said should characterize His followers? The reason we have had so little influence upon unbelieving relatives and associates is that we have manifested little decided difference in our practices from those of the world. . . . When we reach the standard that the Lord would have us reach, worldlings will regard Seventh-day Adventists as odd, singular, strait-laced extremists. ‘We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angles, and to men.’ ”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 289.

FURTHER STUDY

Messages to Young People, pages 200-212.

**Part 6
TO EVERY
MAN'S
DOOR
Acts 5:42**

"And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."

Can we actually carry the truth to every man's door through personal witness, today? What of the remote villages of India? How shall we reach into the towers of apartments locked against callers?

Yet the challenge still remains. Mark 16:20; Matt. 24:14.

"Let every worker in the Master's vineyard, study, plan, devise methods, to reach the people where they are. We must do something out of the common course of things. We must arrest the attention. We must be deadly in earnest. We are on the very verge of times of trouble and perplexities that are scarcely dreamed of."—*Evangelism*, pages 122, 123.

During the time of God's grace we must never forsake door-to-door evangelism. Those who join our communion will do so largely through a final personal witness. But, "the seed has been sown, and now it will spring up and bear fruit. The publications distributed by missionary workers have exerted their influence, yet many whose minds were impressed have been prevented from fully comprehending the truth or from yielding obedience."—*The Great Controversy*, page 612.

What will be the result of the preaching of the gospel throughout history? Rev. 7:9.

THINK IT THROUGH

Am I neglecting personal witness in favor of witness by proxy through literature, evangelistic efforts, radio, television? How important is an active personal witness?

"The commission given to the disciples is given also to us. To-day, as then, a crucified and risen Saviour is to be uplifted before those who are without God and without hope in the world. The Lord calls for pastors, teachers, and evangelists. From door to door His servants are to proclaim the message of salvation. To every nation, kindred, tongue, and people the tidings of pardon through Christ are to be carried. Not with tame, lifeless utterances is the message to be given, but with clear, decided, stirring utterances. Hundreds are waiting for the warning to escape for their lives. The world needs to see in Christians an evidence of the power of Christianity. Not merely in a few places, but throughout the world, messages of mercy are needed."—*Gospel Workers*, page 29.

"The time of God's destructive judgments is the time of mercy for those who have no opportunity to learn what is truth. Tenderly will the Lord look upon them. His heart of mercy is touched; His hand is still stretched out to save, while the door is closed to those who would not enter. Large numbers will be admitted who in these last days hear the truth for the first time."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 979.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pages 593-602.



LESSON 13

March 25-31

LIVING COMMUNICATION

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."
Gal. 2:20.

"We can say that all human communication has some *source*, some person or group of persons with a purpose, a reason for engaging in communication. Given a source, with ideas, needs, intentions, information, and a purpose for communicating, a second ingredient is necessary. The purpose of the source has to be expressed in the form of a *message*."
—David K. Berlo, *The Process of Communication*, page 30.

Experts in the theory of communication add to the source and the message, the *encoding* of the message. For example, a message is put into words and is accompanied by gestures and body movements. Then there is the *channel*, the means by which the message is carried from the source to the *receiver*, which completes the communication process.

We may readily see how the Christian

message fits into this structure. A limitless number of receivers wait to hear our message. They are the billions without saving truth. Multiple channels are available in the form of literature, radio, television, and the live witness.

We have no question about the source of our message. Nor do we doubt the message itself. In this lesson we will look at transferring the message from paper and print, as found in the Bible, into our lives where it will become human personality. We must come so close to Christ that His life and message will be accurately transferred to us, that we in turn may translate it in a way that will be true to the Source, and yet adapted to the receivers.

An article entitled "Our Duty to Communicate Truth" by Ellen G. White, follows this lesson. It is to be read as supplementary reading in connection with this week's lesson. It was originally printed in the *Review and Herald*.

Part 1
CONTACT
WITH
THE SOURCE
John 15:4, 5

What are the conditions for “bearing fruit”? What is the meaning of “fruit” in John 15?

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”

To be effective in communicating Jesus to others, the Christian must be completely identified with the source of his faith.

“Not all the beauty of art can bear comparison with the beauty of temper and character to be revealed in those who are Christ’s representatives. It is the atmosphere of grace which surrounds the soul of the believer, the Holy Spirit working upon mind and heart, that makes him a savor of life unto life, and enables God to bless his work.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 298.

Examples of this close mutual union of Jesus and the believer may be seen in the lives of Paul, Peter, Daniel, and many others. We know from their experiences that what God promises can become a reality. No endeavor is more valuable than seeking identity with the Source of life and power.

Study Christ’s prayer in John 17. Why is oneness with Christ and, through Him, with the Father vital? Verses 21, 23.

THINK IT THROUGH

Is Christ so closely identified with my life that others see Him in me?

“Christian unity consists in the branches being in the same parent stock, the vitalizing power of the center supporting the grafts that have united to the Vine. In thoughts and desires, in words and actions, there must be an identity with Christ, a constant partaking of His spiritual life. . . . As communion with God is making its impress upon the soul, and shining out in the countenance as an illuminating light, the steadfast principles of Christ’s holy character will be reflected in humanity. . . .

“Believers become one in Christ; but one branch cannot be sustained by another. The nourishment must be obtained through vital connection with the Vine. We must feel our utter dependence on Christ. We must live by faith in the Son of God. That is the meaning of the injunction, ‘Abide in me.’ The life we live in the flesh is not to the will of men, not to please our Lord’s enemies, but to serve and honor Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us. A mere assent to this union, while the affections are not detached from the world, its pleasures and its dissipation, only emboldens the heart in disobedience.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5, pp. 1143, 1144.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 674-677.

Part 2
GOD'S
MESSAGE
MY MESSAGE
Acts 3:6, 16

"Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk."

"And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all."

The greatest miracle of that day was not the healed feet and ankles but the redirection of the beggar's life from selfish concern with money to faith in God. How was this accomplished? By what Peter and John had to give.

What attributes of Peter's message to the cripple assured effective communication? How does personal experience strengthen communication of that experience?

Take time to look at several personal expressions of God's message to man as spoken by some New Testament witnesses.

John 3:16—Christ to Nicodemus

Acts 2:39, 40—Peter to the polyglot crowd at Pentecost

Acts 7:56—Stephen to his enemies

Acts 16:31—Paul to the jailer

Acts 17:27-31—Paul on Mars' Hill

Note Paul's use of his personal experience to appeal to his listeners: Felix, Acts 24; Agrippa, Acts 26.

To whom did Paul and the Judean believers attribute his changed life? Gal. 1:15, 16, 23, 24.

What three things do we know through our faith in Jesus? 1 John 5:18-20.

John speaks repeatedly of knowledge through belief in God's Son. This epistle is a book about true knowledge.

THINK IT THROUGH

Is the "message" an external to be wondered at and listened to, or has it become identified with my way of living?

"The people of God have accustomed themselves to think that they must rely upon their own efforts, that little help is to be received from heaven; and the result is that they have little light to communicate to other souls who are dying in error and darkness. . . . They are not able to present the great and glorious truths of God's Holy Word that would convict and convert souls through the agency of the Holy Spirit. The power of God awaits their demand and reception."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, page 175.

"In the presence of this great incident every Christian must ask himself, What have I to give? One cannot give what he has not received, nor can he truly give from an ungenerous heart. He cannot give of Christ when he does not possess Christ. But when he has Christ, he knows it, and cannot too quickly share his precious gift with others."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, on Acts 3:6.

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pages 493-496.

Part 3
TRANSFERRING
THE MESSAGE
Titus 2:1, 7, 8

**"But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine."
"In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you."**

We give the divine message by (1) the soundness of the truth we teach, (2) our deeds and attitudes, (3) living the message we believe, (4) well-chosen words and thoughts. Truth is built upon God's Word. John 17:17. Our deeds must be judged by the standard of God's will. Sincerity springs from true repentance and complete denial of double standards. 2 Cor. 7:9-11. Our words need divine seasoning. Col. 4:6.

When Hezekiah gave the wrong message to a heathen prince, what tragedy resulted? 2 Kings 20:12-18.

"What have your friends and acquaintances seen in your house? Are you, instead of revealing the treasures of the grace of Christ, displaying those things that will perish with the using? Or do you, to those with whom you are brought in contact, communicate some new thought of Christ's character and work? Have you always some fresh revelation of His pitying love to impart to those who know Him not?"—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 2, p. 1038.

What response did a faithful witness bring? 2 Kings 5:1-5, 14.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I improve the signals I give to the world so that I will display the love of God more accurately?

"The conduct of the captive maid, the way that she bore herself in that heathen home, is a strong witness to the power of early home training. . . .

"We know not in what line our children may be called to serve. They may spend their lives within the circle of the home; they may engage in life's common vocations, or go as teachers of the gospel to heathen lands; but all are alike called to be missionaries for God, ministers of mercy to the world."—*Prophets and Kings*, page 245.

"When mind and heart are filled with the love of God, it will not be difficult to impart that which enters into the spiritual life. Great thoughts, noble aspirations, clear perceptions of truth, unselfish purposes, yearnings for piety and holiness, will find expression in words that reveal the character of the heart treasure.

"The true follower of Christ strengthens the good purposes of all with whom he comes in contact. Before an unbelieving, sin-loving world he reveals the power of God's grace and the perfection of His character."—*Prophets and Kings*, pages 347, 348.

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pages 485-492.

Part 4
CLEAR
CHANNEL
POWER
Acts 2:46, 47

“And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

Channels for the gospel may be living or inanimate. God blesses the spoken and the written word. We are to let the message of God's love flow through us—directly to others, or indirectly through the technology God has placed in our hands. But as the message passes through our hearts and minds it takes on the special characteristics that our personality and training give it. When we become channels for the love of God, it is our duty to direct its flow toward needy individuals and a needy world. What if the channel is clogged with sin and hypocrisy?”—*Testimonies*, Vol. 6, p. 382.

What is the source of power in the gospel message? Rom. 1:16, 17.

“The greatest men of the earth are not beyond the power of a wonder-working God. If those who are workers together with Him will do their duty bravely and faithfully, God will convert men who occupy responsible places, men of intellect and influence. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, many will be led to accept the divine principles.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 216.

What group does not recognize the power of the gospel story? Who does recognize it? 1 Cor. 1:18, 23, 24.

THINK IT THROUGH

What special characteristic does my experience, my training, give to the gospel? Am I developing my potential ability by study and practice?

“Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's ideal for His children. Godliness—godlikeness—is the goal to be reached. Before the student there is opened a path of continual progress. He has an object to achieve, a standard to attain, that includes everything good, and pure, and noble. He will advance as fast and as far as possible in every branch of true knowledge. But his efforts will be directed to objects as much higher than mere selfish and temporal interests as the heavens are higher than the earth.”—*Education*, pages 18, 19.

“After the disciples had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the priests and rulers marveled at the words which they spake, for they knew them as unlearned and ignorant men. But they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.

“Their teaching was a second edition of the teachings of Christ, the utterance of simple, grand truths that flashed light into darkened minds, and converted thousands in a day.”—Ellen G. White *Comments*, *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, pp. 1055, 1056.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pages 42-46.

Part 5
TROUBLE
WITH THE
RECEIVER?
Matt. 10:13, 14

“And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.”

Why is it that our preaching and teaching do not convert every person whom we approach? Is the fault in the message? Is the fault always in those to whom we witness by word and deed? Sometimes we have seen one preacher fail in a particular soul-winning responsibility and another succeed under seemingly similar circumstances.

Yet not everyone will receive the word gladly. Some are deluded. 2 Thess. 2:11, 12. Some scoff. 2 Peter 3:3, 4. Some prefer evil. 2 Tim. 4:3, 4. When faced with problems like these, God's workers may well need to seek more receptive ears. The communication of truth has not been effective. The channel is blocked.

What was the result of Jesus' work among people unresponsive to His message? Matt. 13:58.

THINK IT THROUGH

Dare I dismiss anyone as beyond salvation?

“As the preaching of Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so Christ's preaching was a sign to His generation. But what a contrast in the reception of the word! Yet in the face of indifference and scorn the Saviour labored on and on, until He had accomplished His mission.”—*Prophets and Kings*, page 274.

“God's messengers in the great cities are not to become discouraged over the wickedness, the injustice, the depravity, which they are called upon to face while endeavoring to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation. The Lord would cheer every such worker with the same message that He gave to the apostle Paul in wicked Corinth: ‘Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.’ Acts 18:9, 10. Let those engaged in soul-saving ministry remember that while there are many who will not heed the counsel of God in His word, the whole world will not turn from light and truth, from the invitations of a patient, forbearing Saviour.”—*Prophets and Kings*, page 277.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pages 349-358.

Part 6
ROUND-THE-CLOCK
COMMUNICATION
Acts 5:42:
20:31

"And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."

"Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

Unfortunately many of Christ's followers turn on the transmitter only on Sabbath. Then they exude sanctity and piety. But through the week they forget their Christian calling. They may live good lives, but their witness is blunted by pressures of business or by fear.

"Go to the homes of those even who manifest no interest. While mercy's sweet voice invites the sinner, work with every energy of heart and brain, as did Paul. . . .

"Carry the Word of God to every man's door, urge its plain statements upon every man's conscience, repeat to all the Saviour's command, 'Search the Scriptures.' "—*Evangelism*, page 434.

What counsel does Solomon give regarding his proverbs that is pertinent to all of God's messages? Prov. 22:17-20. For what purpose are these words given? Vs. 20, 21.

In what condition are we to live? 1 Peter 3:15.

We may not look on ourselves as very powerful transmitters of the divine message. We may be all too aware of our lack of ability and training, or of character defects and weaknesses in our makeup. But God will bless the humblest Christian that seeks to be a living communication of His truth.

THINK IT THROUGH

Consider the familiar story of the talents. Do we have the right to cease our witness?

"A soul filled with the love of Jesus lends to the words, the manners, the looks, hope, courage and serenity. It reveals the spirit of Christ. It breathes a love which will be reflected. It awakens a desire for a better life; souls ready to faint are strengthened; those struggling against temptation will be fortified and comforted. The words, the expression, the manners throw out a bright ray of sunshine, and leave behind them a clear path toward heaven, the source of all light. Every one of us has opportunities of helping others. We are constantly making impressions upon the youth about us. The expression of the countenance is itself a mirror of the life within."—Ellen G. White *Comments, SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 3, p. 1156.

"The strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian."—*The Ministry of Healing*, page 470.

"The secret of success is the union of divine power with human effort. Those who achieve the greatest results are those who rely most implicitly upon the Almighty Arm."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 509.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pages 481-484.

Our Duty to Communicate Truth

ELLEN G. WHITE

Again and again I am instructed to charge our people with their individual responsibility to work, and believe, and pray. The reception of Bible truth will lead to continual self-denial; for self-indulgence can never be found in a Christlike experience. Truly converted men and women will reveal the cross of Calvary in their daily actions. There are many Seventh-day Adventists who do not understand that to accept the cause of Christ means to accept his cross. The only evidence they give in their lives of their discipleship is in the name they bear. But the true Christian regards his stewardship as a sacred thing. He perseveringly studies the Word, and yields up his life to the service of Christ.

The word of encouragement is given, "Be not weary in well-doing," "always abounding in the work of the Lord." There is a world to be saved, a work to be done that can be accomplished only by the proclamation of the gospel message. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Should we not thank the Lord with heart and soul for his unspeakable gift? Should we not be willing to devote every capability and talent to the work of representing Christ before the world?

There is great need of the Holy Spirit's influence in our midst. There must be an individual work done in the breaking of stubborn hearts. There needs to be deep heart-searching, that will lead to confession of sin. Believers should at this time stand with softened, sanctified, broken hearts, every sin confessed in repentance that needeth not to be repented of. The Holy Spirit is waiting to kindle in the heart the love of God, that his praise may be spoken from lips that are true, unselfish, clean, and honest. When holy principles

guide the life, the soul will be beautiful in its simplicity.

The influence of the prayer of faith is as far-reaching as eternity. The Lord will bless all who will seek him with the whole heart, and who with humble souls and earnest purpose strive to follow the example of Christ. To those who thus seek to become partakers of the divine nature, the words are spoken, "Be not weary in well-doing," "always abounding in the work of the Lord." He who labors in faith and humility, holding fast to the promises of God, will prevail. The greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven will be given to the faithful, believing children of God.

"Ye are the salt of the earth," said Christ; "but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill can not be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works," the Saviour declared. These "good works" will begin to appear when the experience of repentance and conversion is brought into the life. Not until then can words and works "glorify your Father which is in heaven." Unless we reveal the converting power of God in our lives, we can not work in safe paths. It is not in saying that we believe the truth, but by showing that we are changed in character, through a belief of the truth, that we make known to others the transforming power of the grace of God.

What is expected of the subjects of Christ's kingdom? The answer is given by Christ himself, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." No soul can enter into the heavenly courts who does not have an understanding of God's requirements, and does not strive to be perfect, even as God is perfect.

I am instructed to urge the necessity of personal consecration and sanctification of the whole being to God. Let each soul inquire, Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do, that the vigilance of Christ may be seen in my life, and that his example may be copied by me, and that I may speak sincere words that will help souls who are in darkness and sin? O, how I long to see our church-members clothed with their beautiful garments, and prepared to go forth to meet the Bridegroom. I am in fear and trembling for those who have not yet put on the wedding garment. Many are expecting to sit down to the marriage supper of the Lamb who are unprepared for the coming of the King. They are like the blind; they do not discern their danger. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way," the Saviour declared, "which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Every individual believer is under obligation to give to others the truth he possesses. Nothing should be allowed to keep the servant of Christ from letting his light shine forth to his fellow men. We are ever to be learners, ever to be increasing in a knowledge of how to lead others to the light of truth. All around us there are sinners to be labored for. If we will arouse ourselves to co-operate with the divine Worker, we shall see a great work accomplished. And we ourselves will grow in grace as we seek to communicate the will of God to others.

As professed Christians our lives must be Christlike, and this can only be when we receive this grace to impart it to others. Many among us who profess to believe are daily losing opportunities of receiving the grace of Christ and of imparting this grace to others. We should be daily increasing in ability to do the precious work of winning souls to Christ. This is such a precious work, such a satisfying work! And all heaven is waiting for channels through which can be poured the

heavenly oil to refresh and strengthen needy souls. The Lord will protect and guide those who will let his divine fulness flow from their lips in grateful praise, and who labor, through deeds of charity and love, to bless mankind. Such workers will become consecrated agents for God.

I would say to every believer, Bring the spirit of heavenly grace into your soul, into your experience: this is the impress of the character of Christ. Angels are watching you, and they sing songs of thanksgiving and praise to the Lamb when his people engage in faithful, unselfish labor for others. And your reward for service will be found in the reflection of the tender spirit of Christ in your own life.

By communicating to others the grace we receive, we shall be made partakers of the rich blessings of God. Obedience to his will will keep the soul in the love of Christ. Bind yourselves up with Christ and with God, and reflect his glory to the souls ready to perish. Let there be a reversion of soul on the part of those who have allowed themselves to grow careless and indifferent. If we would look upon suffering humanity with eyes that see their need, and would heed the command of Christ, "Go work to-day in my vineyard;" if we would speak to souls words of comfort and wisdom, and work out before them the principles of the gospel, the message of mercy would soon reach to every part of the world.

We become overcomers by helping others to overcome. We overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of our testimony. The keeping of the commandments of God will yield in us an obedient spirit, and the service that is the offspring of such a spirit, God can accept. O that we all in the day of final award might hear the words spoken to us individually, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant"! How many in our churches will seek to set such an example as will reflect to mankind the Light of the world? The Saviour calls for workers who will give themselves to be worked by the Holy Spirit,—workers who will yield to the refining, elevating influences of truth, and thus be fitted to wear the crown of life in the kingdom of God.—*Review and Herald*, Feb. 25, 1909.

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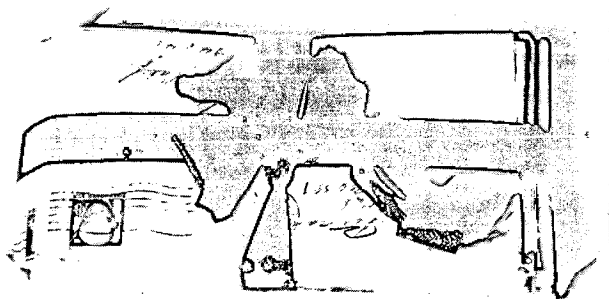
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Testimonies, Vol. 4, page 148.

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British	57,301,080	138	12,225	12,330
Finland	4,770,000	50	5,356	5,318
Netherlands	13,000,000	43	3,380	2,418
Polish	32,000,000	119	4,156	4,929
Swedish	8,350,000	60	3,808	4,284
West Africa	85,123,582	351	48,370	129,537
West Nordic	8,385,609	130	9,393	8,702
Iceland Conference	203,442	7	493	576
Division Totals	209,133,713	898	87,181	168,094

[Figures as of 3rd Qtr. 1971]
*Figures as of 4th Qtr. 1971.

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