

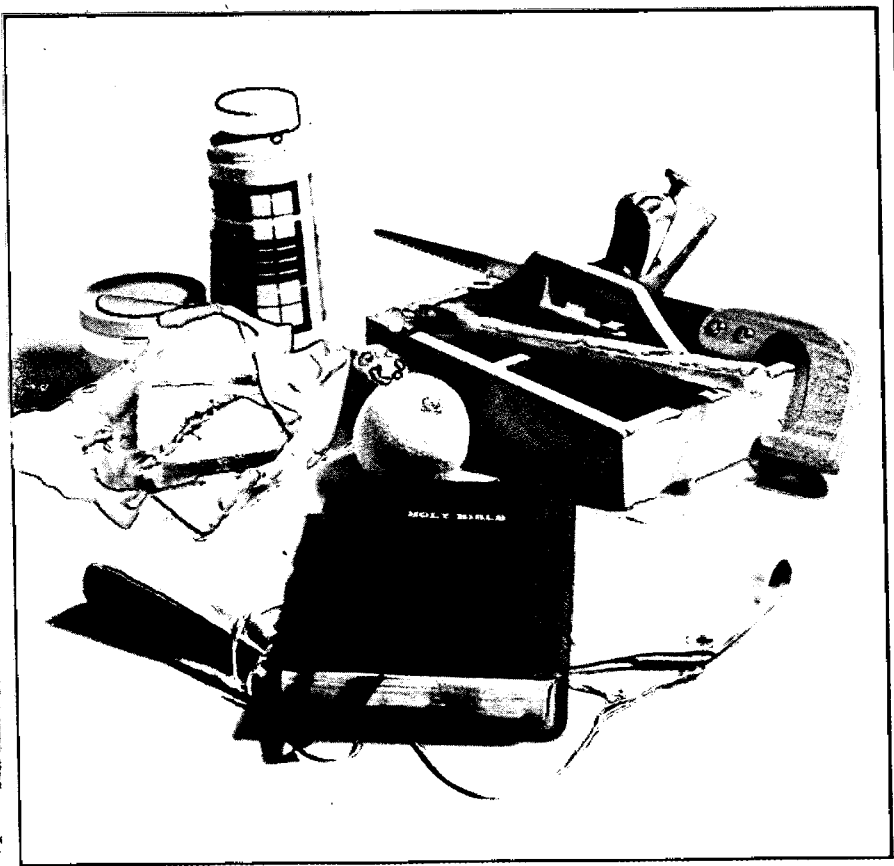
WINTER BREAK SERIES



JAN. — MAR./1979

Adult Sabbath School Lessons

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORK



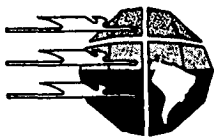
WE
HAVE IT;
LET'S
SHARE IT



Share an understanding Saviour with friends or loved ones on the next "Community Guest Day."

Invite them to Sabbath School and church, and you might gain a friend for eternity.

Community Guest Day, March 17 and October 13.



General Conference Corporation of Seventh-Day Adventists
South American Division

Caixa Postal 07-1042

70000 Brasilia, DF, Brasil

To the
Sabbath School Members Around the World

Dear Brethren:

It is my privilege to once again address the members of this wonderful international institution--the Sabbath School.

Although separated by geographical boundaries, national flags, ethnic and language differences, we are united through the ideals of the Blessed Hope and the surety of our faith.

This unity of ideals leads us to a plan of mutual action. Consequently, the church around the world will join together in the carrying out of the following projects with the Thirteenth Sabbath Special Projects Offering for this quarter:

Hospital in Santa Cruz, Bolivia

The 24,000 Adventists in Bolivia unanimously request the establishment of the medical-missionary work in their country. Although they are aware of the challenges they face, they are convinced of the importance of the "right arm of the message" in the finishing of God's work in their territory.

Belgrano Clinic in Buenos Aires, Argentina

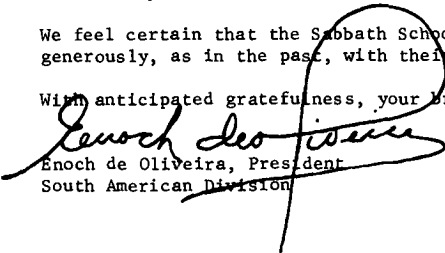
The contribution of the Belgrano Clinic to the Argentine missionary strategy has been notably outstanding. As the clinic enlarges its installations and modernizes its equipment, it will enhance the effectiveness of the Adventist program of penetration in the aristocratic sections of this great capital city. A portion of the Special Projects Offering for this quarter will assist in the modernization of the clinic's equipment.

Academy in the South Argentine Conference

For our Argentine brethren, Christian education is more than a simple option; it is imperative. Thanks to its educational institutions, the work of God in the Austral Union has cast deep roots, experienced an increase in membership, and reached admirable denominational strength. Keeping this in mind, the members would like to add another school to their chain of institutions in the southern part of the country.

We feel certain that the Sabbath School members around the world will contribute generously, as in the past, with their offerings, advancing the projects mentioned.

With anticipated gratefulness, your brother in the Blessed Hope,


Enoch de Oliveira, President
South American Division

ARE YOU INFINITELY HAPPY?

"Christ would never have left the royal courts . . . had He not seen that man might, with His help, become infinitely happy"
(Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 3, p. 540).



The Southern Publishing Association presents another Sabbath School supplementary book to help you get more from your Sabbath School lessons this quarter.

Infinitely Happy takes seriously Jesus' promise to provide His disciples with the more abundant life and explores the ways and means that your life can measure up to what Jesus' fondest dreams expect it to be for you.

Infinitely Happy, one of the most practical books you'll ever read, reveals

- * how you can realize God's desire that you be happy in all you do
- * how you can enjoy the abundant life despite the surrounding chaos that may usher in the twenty-first century
- * how you can find meaning in life once you understand the

true nature of Christian obligation and responsibility

- * how you can respond to—not react against—a wicked world
- * how you can surmount the ever-changing challenges of life
- * how you can select a vocation worthy of Christ's high ideal for you
- * how you can get along successfully with your daily associates
- * how you can witness honestly and effectively—without sounding artificial
- * how you can achieve God's expectations for you even at home—when you are most yourself
- * how you can help speed the Second Advent
- * how you can be infinitely happy now—not some time only after the millennium



G. Arthur Keough, author of both this quarter's lessons and *Infinitely Happy*, is associate director of the external degree department of Columbia Union College, where he has served for the past thirteen years. Graduating with an MA from Andrews University, he also holds a diploma in Education from London University. Founder of Middle East College and its president for four years, Keough served as a missionary for nearly three decades.

You can purchase this Sabbath School lesson help from your Adventist Book Center or order from the ABC Mailing Service, P.O. Box 37485, Omaha, NE 68137. Send U.S. \$3.50 plus 50¢ for postage on the first book and 20¢ for each additional book. Add local sales tax.

**PRODUCED FOR YOUR ENRICHMENT BY
SOUTHERN PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION**

In Canada: P.O. Box 398, Oshawa, Ontario L1H 7L5





Contents

1. Our Heavenly Father
2. Man's Response to God
3. Motives
4. The Privilege of Work
5. The Call to Service
6. Concern for Others
7. The Grace of Giving
8. Obligations in the Home
9. Responsibilities of Training
10. Facilities for Worship
11. Speeding the Second Advent
12. Rich in Good Works
13. Rejoicing in the Lord

The Adult Sabbath School Lessons are prepared by the Sabbath School Department of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The preparation of the lessons is directed by a worldwide Sabbath School Lesson Committee, the members of which serve as consulting editors.

Editorial Office: 6840 Eastern Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20012

Lesson Author: G. Arthur Keough
Editor: W. Richard Lesh
Editorial Secretary: Florence L. Wetmore
Circulation Manager: Arthur R. Mazat
Art and Design: Pacific Press

Scripture references other than from the King James Version used in this quarterly are as follows:
 Jerusalem. From *The Jerusalem Bible*, copyright © 1966 by Darton, Longman & Todd, Ltd., and Doubleday & Co., inc. Used by permission of the publishers.

NEB. From *The New English Bible*, copyright © by the Delegates of the Oxford University Press, and the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press 1961 and 1970. Used by permission of Cambridge University Press, New York City.

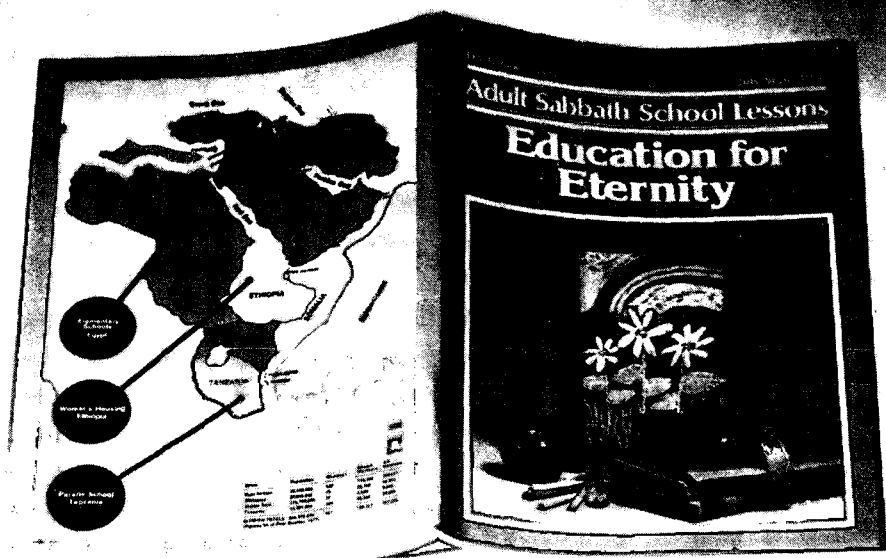
Phillips. From *The New Testament in Modern English*, Revised Edition, copyright © 1958, 1959, 1960, 1972, by J. B. Phillips. Used by permission of The Macmillan Company and Collins Publishers.

RSV. From the *Revised Standard Version Bible*, copyright © 1946 (renewed © 1973), 1952 and © 1971, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., and used by permission.

Braille lessons available. See page 112.

Adult Sabbath School Lessons (standard edition). Published quarterly by Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1350 Villa Street, Mountain View, California 94042, U.S.A. One year subscription in U.S.A., \$2.00; single copy, 50 cents. One year subscription to countries outside U.S.A., \$2.60; single copy, 65 cents. All prices at U.S.A. exchange. Second-class postage paid at Mountain View, California 94042, U.S.A. When a change of address is desired, please send both old and new addresses.

Open Seven Days a Week



We need a daily contact with God's Word to stay spiritually strong. The Adult Sabbath School Lessons present a systematic daily study program on significant Bible topics.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND WORK

Introduction

Down through the centuries God has had a people dedicated to Him. While many in the world have followed selfish pleasure, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage without regard to God and His principles of righteousness, others have recognized that life has no meaning if it is not related to God who created the world, and activity is empty and futile if it is not imbued with a spirit of love and gratitude.

The basic concept of these lessons is stewardship and responsibility. We are not our own, free to do whatever we please. We are not ourselves the source of what we are and have. All is of grace. We are born into a community where there are duties and obligations to God and to one another. The center of our thinking is to be for others, as God's concern has been for us. We live in a world of interrelationships, with ties that cannot be lightly severed. Thus we need to learn how we can relate to God and other persons and on what basis we should do so. In this way we can experience a fullness of life.

We begin our lessons by noting some characteristics of our heavenly Father. It is because of what God is and does for man that man finds himself willingly acknowledging his obligations to Him. It is not a matter of blind obedience, legal and cold, but a response of love because of God's love for man.

This response may take many forms, and it is these various forms that we will study after the first lesson. We will notice first that there will be a consent to pay a tithe of all increase so that there will always be money in the treasury to do the work of the Lord. Additional offerings will flow from a heart of love and gratitude.

Work, which was assigned to man from the beginning, is looked upon as a privilege and a blessing, especially that work which furthers God's plans and purposes. To witness to the truth, to follow in the footsteps of the Master, and to live on earth as Jesus lived, these are activities that are basic to the person wholly dedicated to God.

There is always a concern for others, for others are not always as privileged as some. One must not close one's eyes to the needy all around. There is therefore a constant giving, which is the corollary of a constant receiving from the heavenly Father.

The ties of the family are especially important. The parents are as God to their children, and they have the responsibility of seeing that their children receive a Christian heritage. As the children grow older, they need to be trained for the service of God and man. The Christian school has a definite role to play that may be costly, but that must not be neglected.

A suitable place for worship is also the responsibility of God's dedicated people to provide. Just as God asked for the building of the tabernacle that He might dwell among His people in the days of old, so God expects His people to gather together for worship today. At the same time God's people preach the gospel to hasten the second coming.

None of these responses is of merit toward salvation. Jesus' righteousness alone gains admission to the kingdom for His people. But those whom He has saved will cooperate with the Lord in His work for this lost world.



Our Heavenly Father

“The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods” (Ps. 24:1, 2).

We have chosen to recognize that there is a God. Some have dared to deny His existence, but the Scripture calls them fools. (See Ps. 53:1.) Philosophers argue that there is no proof to establish beyond all doubt that there is a God. The Bible does not attempt to prove His existence; it just affirms that “in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen. 1:1).

The psalmist wrote that “the heavens declare the glory of God” (Ps. 19:1). And Paul was convinced that all nature points clearly to God’s eternal power and deity. (See Rom. 1:20.) Thus Scripture and nature provide a very reasonable basis for belief in a sovereign God.

It is the objective of this lesson to see what God has done. First we note that He is the Creator, the Source of all being. He has done all things well, and the crowning act of His creation was man, created in His image. By this act alone God is worthy of allegiance and honor. But after man sinned, God provided redemption for him. For this He paid an inestimable price. This debt we can never repay. We can only bow in deep gratitude for all that God has done. But God does more than pay a price; He provides the means of sustenance, a power that enables us to overcome sin. How can we refuse such infinite love and favor? But we also need protection from the evil

one, and this too is provided by God. God builds a protective hedge around us. Further, God invites us to reflect His character of goodness and love, and then to witness to what He has done for us. He calls us friends rather than servants—partners in vindicating God’s true character. Can we reject such overtures? The lesson seeks to lay a sound foundation for recognizing that we owe so much to God that we cannot even begin to pay back what God has done for us. We can only dedicate our lives to God and become His children.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Creator**
(Ps. 33:8, 9)
2. **Redeemer**
(Isa. 43:1)
3. **Sustainer**
(Acts 14:17)
4. **Protector**
(Ps. 91:2, 3, 11)
5. **Sanctifier**
(1 Thess. 5:23)
6. **Lord**
(Matt. 28:18-20)

Part 1 **What reason does the psalmist give for the command for**
CREATOR **people to stand in awe of God?**

“Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast” (Ps. 33:8, 9).

According to the Scriptures, everything we see around us in nature, including man, has come into being by God's plan and power. Mere chance cannot account for life on earth.

Ellen White states: “The theories and speculations of philosophy would make us believe that man has come by slow degrees, not merely from a savage state, but from the very lowest form of the brute creation. They destroy man's dignity because they will not admit God's miraculous power.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 906.

The Scripture does not teach that the world we live in has evolved from a chance conjunction of necessary elements and appropriate circumstances over a long period of time; it tells us that we owe our existence to a God who spoke the word and it was done, He gave commands and His commands were obeyed.

What was the quality of God's Creation? Gen. 1:31.

Everything that God makes is good because God is good. For this we must be eternally grateful.

Theoretically, it could be possible for the world to be in the hands of an inferior god or a tyrant. Some have thought so and based their religion on it. If this were the case, we would have no option but to serve such a god out of fear; and to try to defend ourselves against his tyranny as best we could. How grateful we can be that this is not the situation in which we find ourselves!

THINK IT THROUGH **What are some of the evidences to you that God is a good God and has done all things well?**

“The real evidence of a living God is not merely in theory; it is in the conviction that God has written in our hearts, illuminated and explained by His word. It is in the living power in His created works, seen by the eye which the Holy Spirit has enlightened.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 325.

“The Creator of all things, He is the original proprietor. We are His stewards. All that we have is a trust from Him, to be used according to His direction.”—*Education*, p. 137.

FURTHER STUDY *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 44-51.

**Part 2
REDEEMER**

“Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine” (Isa. 43:1).

That God is the Creator calls for reverence and awe from man. That God is good makes our response to Him a pleasure. But God has done more than create man; He has also redeemed him.

What has God done with our iniquity? Isa. 53:6.

When man sinned, he sold himself in slavery to Satan. As a sinner under condemnation of death, there was no hope for him except as God had made provision for his salvation.

“In all the universe there was but one who could, in behalf of man, satisfy its [the broken law’s] claims. Since the divine law is as sacred as God Himself, only one equal with God could make atonement for its transgression. None but Christ could redeem fallen man from the curse of the law and bring him again into harmony with Heaven. Christ would take upon Himself the guilt and shame of sin—sin so offensive to a holy God that it must separate the Father and His Son. Christ would reach to the depths of misery to rescue the ruined race.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 63.

What reason does Paul give for our bodies being temples of the Holy Ghost? 1 Cor. 6:19, 20.

“The price paid for our redemption should give us exalted views of what we may become through Christ.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 563. John tells us that through God’s marvelous love we become sons of God. (See 1 John 3:1.)

“Through the infinite sacrifice of Christ, and faith in His name, the sons of Adam become the sons of God. By assuming human nature, Christ elevates humanity. Fallen men are granted another trial and are placed where, through connection with Christ, they may educate, improve, and elevate themselves, that they may indeed become worthy of the name ‘sons of God.’ ”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 563.

THINK IT THROUGH

In view of the fact that God has done so much for man through Jesus Christ, is it reasonable for man to do as he pleases? What do you think are some of his obligations?

“Whether we recognize it or not, we are stewards, supplied from God with talents and facilities, and placed in the world to do a work appointed by Him.”—*Education*, p. 137.

“To the infinite love of the Redeemer every human being is indebted for the gifts of life. . . . And by the obligation of gratitude and service thus imposed, Christ has bound us to our fellow men.”—*Education*, p. 139.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 19-26.

**Part 3
SUSTAINER**

What is the ultimate source of our food?

"Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:17).

The extent to which man is indebted to God is not always realized. Most will acknowledge the sovereignty of God. Many will admit that He is Creator and Redeemer. But do we recognize the constant sustaining power of our heavenly Father in daily life?

What did Jesus teach about the heavenly Father's sustaining care? Matt. 6:26-30.

"He who has given you life knows your need of food to sustain it. He who created the body is not unmindful of your need of raiment. Will not He who has bestowed the greater gift bestow also what is needed to make it complete?

"Jesus pointed His hearers to the birds as they warbled their carols of praise, unencumbered with thoughts of care, for 'they sow not, neither do they reap;' and yet the great Father provides for their needs. And He asks, 'Are not ye of much more value than they?' R.V."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 95.

Paul prayed for God to sustain the Ephesian believers in what way? Eph. 3:14-16.

The same heavenly Father who supplies food for our tables and strength for our work sustains the "inner man." The power to change our sinful selves is not within us by birth. God supplies the power to conquer sin and to live a godly life. It comes by the Spirit who is Christ's gift to those who believe on Him. We have nothing in ourselves to boast of or to trust in. Man has only to surrender his heart to God, to yield his will to Him, and God supplies the power. (See Heb. 12:2.) Jesus is the "author and finisher of our faith."

THINK IT THROUGH

When God says that He will care for us, why are so many worried and afraid? Am I as trusting as I ought to be?

"A living faith means an increase of vigor, a confiding trust, by which, through the grace of Christ, the soul becomes a conquering power."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 62.

"In all your work remember that you are bound up with Christ, a part of the great plan of redemption. The love of Christ, in a healing, life-giving current, is to flow through your life."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 156.

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pp. 416, 417.

Part 4
PROTECTOR

What promises of protection does God give?

“I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.”

“For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways” (Ps. 91:2, 3, 11).

Read the entire psalm.

The Christian is often in physical danger. Satan would like to bring disease and calamity, just as he did to Job. But God is in control. No harm can come to any follower of Christ except as God, in His providence, shall permit.

“The righteous understand God’s government, and will triumph with holy gladness in the everlasting protection and salvation that Christ through His merits has secured for them. Let all remember this, and forget not that the wicked, who do not receive Christ as their personal Saviour, understand not His providence. The way of righteousness they have not chosen, and they know not God. Notwithstanding all the benefits He has so graciously bestowed upon them, they have abused His mercy by neglecting to acknowledge His goodness and mercy in showing them these favors. At any moment God can withdraw from the impenitent the tokens of His wonderful mercy and love.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1150.

What insight is given in Job 1:8-12 on why Christians sometimes suffer calamities?

Suffering is one of the consequences of evil. When we experience it or watch others pass through agonies, we respond by hating the sin that has caused all our woes. Suffering may come because of our own delinquencies, and in that case it is usually understandable. But calamities may come to test our faith or to reveal God’s glory, or to reveal the full consequences of evil in the world. See Job’s response (Job 13:15), and the experience of the man born blind (John 9:3).

THINK IT THROUGH

Can you think of a personal experience when God protected you from imminent danger? Prepare to tell the experience to the class.

“God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 479.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 4, pp. 286-290.

Part 5
SANCTIFIER

What activity of God does Paul pray that the Thessalonian believers will experience?

“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” (1 Thess. 5:23).

“Our sanctification is the work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is the fulfillment of the covenant God has made with those who bind themselves up with Him, to stand with Him, His Son, and His Spirit in holy fellowship. Have you been born again? Have you become a new being in Christ Jesus? Then cooperate with the three great powers of heaven who are working in your behalf.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 908.

What does Paul say the Roman believers were called to be? Rom. 1:7.

The words “sanctify” in First Thessalonians 5:23 and “saints” in Romans 1:7 are two forms of the same Greek word. To sanctify is to make holy. A saint is a holy one.

What truth about man's response to God's call may be learned from the parable of the great supper? Luke 14:16-24.

God's call is an invitation which may be rejected. Unfortunately there are many who prefer to go their own way rather than to fit in with God's plans. But those who reject God's call will suffer the consequences. (See Matt. 22:13.) But man is absolutely free to make his own decision.

The one who accepts God's invitation is accepting life at its best. The hardships that the Christian sometimes has to suffer are not to be compared with the satisfactions that come from a life wholly dedicated to God. Man has joy when he is able to do good for his neighbors. By contrast, there is a misery and sense of guilt that comes to one who has failed to rise up to expectations, or who has deliberately chosen a life of sin.

THINK IT THROUGH

What are some of the joys of the Christian life of service? How do you think the Christian ought to express his gratitude to God?

“The spirit of unselfish labor for others gives depth, stability, and Christlike loveliness to the character, and brings peace and happiness to its possessor. The aspirations are elevated. There is no room for sloth or selfishness. Those who thus exercise the Christian graces will grow and will become strong to work for God.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 80.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 565-567.

**Part 6
LORD**

What is the basis of the gospel commission?

"Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age' " (Matt. 28:18-20, RSV).

The commission is given in the words of Jesus, but the authority for His words came from His heavenly Father. The Bible term to give the meaning of "one who has authority" is the word "Lord." A commission can be given only by someone who has the authority (power, KJV) to do so. Jesus claimed that all authority had been given to Him. What was this authority? Jesus described it as authority to give eternal life to as many as were given to Him. (See John 17:2.) Paul described this authority as exceeding great, "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Eph. 1:21).

Furthermore, Jesus promised that He would be with His disciples "even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20, KJV). Thus the commission to witness is not only a command, it is a promise that Jesus will make the execution of the commission dynamic and effective.

How do we know that when Jesus sends anyone to preach He also gives the necessary authority? Matt. 10:1.

When Jesus outlined to His disciples what they should do on their missionary journey, He said: "Freely ye have received, freely give." From this we gather that the privilege to witness and to exercise authority over evil of all kinds was due to their acceptance of the gospel. As we have had the gospel given to us freely, so we should be willing to give it to others freely so that they may enjoy the full benefits of eternal life also.

What would you think of someone who knew the cure for cancer and kept it to himself? Would he not be responsible for deaths by cancer when the cure was there to be passed on?

No one will go to heaven alone. He will be accompanied by all those who learned the way from him.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why are some people afraid to witness? What is the basic qualification for effective witnessing?

"Christ's work below is His work above, and our reward for working with Him in this world will be the greater power and wider privilege of working with Him in the world to come."—*Education*, p. 308.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 465-468.

Man's Response to God

“Despise thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?” (Rom. 2:4).

In view of the sovereignty of God, His goodness and love, how should we respond? There are two ways in which we could do so:

1. *Ignore God altogether.* This may sound like an impossible thing to do, but the fact is that men in the past have done exactly this. Paul describes them in his letter to the Romans (Rom. 1:21-32). Not that such people are wholly ignorant of God. There is in nature too much evidence of God's power and deity. They deliberately turn away from the evidence and decide to worship the creature rather than the Creator (verse 25). Although they enjoy many of the blessings of life, they refuse to give God the glory for all that He has provided, and do not even give thanks (verse 21). Note how this decision and attitude leads to utter foolishness and all kinds of unmentionable evils.

2. *Acknowledge the sovereignty of God and give Him His due in worship and praise.* This way leads man to live a life of blessing to himself and to all around.

The lesson this week looks at the way men have responded to God's sovereignty in the past as an example to us who live in the present. First of all, we look at the offering of faith made by Abel. Abel, in contrast to Cain, accepted the provisions that God had made for man's salvation, and sacrificed the offering that could typify the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world. Then we see Abraham honoring God by returning the tithe to Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God. Abraham knew that all he owned was only by the grace of God, and the tithe that he paid was a symbol of stewardship. There is, thirdly, the interesting story of Jacob and his promise to give a tenth of all he received to God. The fourth part of the lesson notes how Joseph considered sin an injustice to God, and therefore he would not have anything to do with it. Fifth, we learn from Paul that he was in a fight of faith, a struggle against all unrighteousness. He was on God's side in the controversy against evil. Finally, we notice the privilege of being faithful unto death. The essence of being loyal to God is to prefer death rather than to do anything wrong. Do you agree with this?

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Offering of Faith**
(Heb. 11:4)
2. **The Basic Tenth**
(Gen. 14:20)
3. **A Mutual Agreement**
(Gen. 28:20-22)
4. **The Refusal to Sin**
(Gen. 39:9)
5. **The Fight of Faith**
(2 Tim. 4:7)
6. **Faithful Unto Death**
(Rev. 2:10)



**Part 1
OFFERING
OF FAITH**

"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh" (Heb. 11:4).

Many who read the story of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4 wonder whether God was altogether fair in accepting Abel's offering and rejecting Cain's. Was not Cain doing a good thing, they ask, in bringing the results of his labor in the field? Was not God a little partial, and Cain somewhat justified in his anger?

What is the basic difference between the sacrifices of the two brothers? Heb. 11:4.

"Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam, differed widely in character. Abel had a spirit of loyalty to God; he saw justice and mercy in the Creator's dealing with the fallen race, and gratefully accepted the hope of redemption. But Cain cherished feelings of rebellion, and murmured against God because of the curse pronounced upon the earth and upon the human race for Adam's sin. He permitted his mind to run in the same channel that led to Satan's fall—indulging in the desire for self-exaltation and questioning the divine justice and authority."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 71.

Obviously Abel had faith and trust in God. This was shown in the sacrifice and made it acceptable. Cain was out of harmony with God, and his sacrifice was offered as a favor done to God, and therefore could not be accepted.

It is a mistake to think that we can worship God as we please. There is a right way and a wrong way of worshiping. Worship without a recognition of the need of a Redeemer is presumption. Furthermore, worship in a way other than that prescribed by God is rebellion.

An adequate response to God means doing what God wants us to do, recognizing that He is the One who took the initiative. He is the One who knows best. Obedience to God arises out of a loving trust. Without such a relationship worship becomes an empty form, a meaningless ritual.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is a basic characteristic of most false religions? Can even a true faith be improperly practiced? How?

"The class of worshipers who follow the example of Cain includes by far the greater portion of the world; for nearly every false religion has been based on the same principle—that man can depend upon his own efforts for salvation."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 73.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 71-79.

Part 2
THE BASIC
TENTH

What did Melchizedek say to Abram about his victory?

"Blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand" (Gen. 14:20, first part).

Abram was a man of peace rather than of war, but when he heard how Lot had been taken captive in the invasion of the valley of Sodom and Gomorrah, he decided to rescue him. He counseled with God first and then set out after the invading kings who had escaped with great booty. Catching up with them, he inflicted a surprise attack and gained a speedy victory.

"To Abraham, under God, the triumph was due. The worshiper of Jehovah had not only rendered a great service to the country, but had proved himself a man of valor. It was seen that righteousness is not cowardice, and that Abraham's religion made him courageous in maintaining the right and defending the oppressed."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 135.

After Melchizedek's blessing, how did Abram respond? Gen. 14:20, last part.

By paying tithes of all the spoils, Abraham was letting all the people know that he recognized God's ownership and God's blessing. He refused to accept any personal gain in a campaign which he had undertaken for God without any thought of profit. What a powerful testimony this must have been to all who knew Abraham! Abraham was not only a symbol of unselfishness, but also an example of a worshiper of the true God who returned a tenth to his Maker.

"When Abraham rescued the captives from the Elamites, the attention of the people was called to the true faith. Abraham was not a stranger to the people of Sodom, and his worship of the unseen God had been a matter of ridicule among them; but his victory over greatly superior forces, and his magnanimous disposition of the prisoners and spoil, excited wonder and admiration. While his skill and valor were extolled, none could avoid the conviction that a divine power had made him conqueror. And his noble and unselfish spirit, so foreign to the self-seeking inhabitants of Sodom, was another evidence of the superiority of the religion which he had honored by his courage and fidelity."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 157.

THINK IT THROUGH

Do you think it was easy for Abram to pay tithe? What makes tithe paying easy, and what makes it hard?

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 3, pp. 387-391.

**Part 3
A MUTUAL
AGREEMENT**

"If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the lord be my God: and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee" (Gen. 28:20-22).

To get the full meaning of this vow we must note the circumstances. Jacob had secured the blessing of the birthright from his father by a ruse, and had angered his brother Esau. Now he was fleeing for his life. "He felt that he was an outcast, and he knew that all this trouble had been brought upon him by his own wrong course. . . . With weeping and deep humiliation he confessed his sin."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 183.

How did God assure Jacob that He had not forsaken him? Gen. 28:15.

Jacob responded to God's promise by agreeing that he would pay a tithe of all that God gave to him. "Jacob was not here seeking to make terms with God. The Lord had already promised him prosperity, and this vow was the outflow of a heart filled with gratitude for the assurance of God's love and mercy. Jacob felt that God had claims upon him which he must acknowledge, and that the special tokens of divine favor granted him demanded a return."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 187.

In view of the goodness and generosity of God, what question asked by the psalmist ought we to ask also? Ps. 116:12.

"The Christian should often review his past life and recall with gratitude the precious deliverances that God has wrought for him, supporting him in trial, opening ways before him when all seemed dark and forbidding, refreshing him when ready to faint. . . .

" . . . We should acknowledge God's goodness, not only by expressing our gratitude in words, but, like Jacob, by gifts and offerings to His cause."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 187, 188.

THINK IT THROUGH

In your reading of the Bible who is the one who initiates agreements, God or man? Give examples.

"Shall we who enjoy the full light and privileges of the gospel be content to give less to God than was given by those who lived in the former, less favored dispensation? Nay, as the blessings we enjoy are greater, are not our obligations correspondingly increased? . . . From the cross of Calvary, Christ calls for an unreserved consecration. All that we have, all that we are, should be devoted to God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 188.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 3, pp. 392-398.

Part 4
THE REFUSAL
TO SIN

In Joseph's answer to Potiphar's wife, what do we learn about the nature of sin?

"There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen. 39:9).

Sin is not merely transgression of the law with consequences to ourselves; sinning is an affront to God! When God is so good to us, how can we possibly continue in sin? How can we even consider performing one act of sin?

Joseph in Egypt lived in the midst of idolatry. He was surrounded by temptation on every side. Yet he determined to be faithful to his God. And the Lord blessed him. (See Gen. 39:2, 5.) He never concealed the fact that he was a worshiper of Jehovah. Thus everyone knew that his success and prosperity were due to the favor of God. Living as he did in the sight of God, he found it unthinkable to consent to a wrong act. To sin would be to let God down!

Against whom did David say that he sinned? Ps. 51:4; 2 Sam. 12:13.

Some people think that because their sins are hidden from their fellowmen they are not so serious as open sin. They try to hide their sins, hoping thereby to maintain a certain amount of dignity. It is a mockery to God to suppose that sins can be hidden from His all-seeing eye.

"If we were to cherish an habitual impression that God sees and hears all that we do and say and keeps a faithful record of our words and actions, and that we must meet it all, we would fear to sin. Let the young ever remember that wherever they are, and whatever they do, they are in the presence of God. No part of our conduct escapes observation."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 217.

The key to Joseph's integrity was his recognition that he owed everything to God. He therefore chose to do nothing that would hurt that relationship or show ingratitude.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is it that keeps you from sinning? Why is sinning an injustice to God?

"He [God] desires us to have the mastery over ourselves, our own will and ways. But He cannot work in us without our consent and co-operation. The divine Spirit works through the faculties and powers given to man. Our energies are required to co-operate with God."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 142.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 213-218.

**Part 5
THE FIGHT
OF FAITH**

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:7).

Paul encouraged Timothy to "fight the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. 6:12). He said he had done so himself and thus had set the proper example. He looked upon life as a struggle. The Christian is to be like a soldier wearing full armor (Eph. 6:13), or like an athlete running a race (1 Cor. 9:24).

What was the motivating force behind Paul's dedication to God and the ministry? 2 Cor. 5:14.

"The love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised" (2 Cor. 5:14, 15, RSV).

Many factors have motivated men. Some have been ambitious and wanted honor for themselves. Others have been driven to some kind of action by fear. Paul makes it clear that he was motivated by love, a love for God that was so strong that nothing could separate him from God. (See Rom. 8:38, 39.)

What was Paul's attitude to his call to minister? Eph 3.8.

Paul also called himself the "least of the apostles" (1 Cor. 15:9). He also referred to himself as the chief of sinners. (See 1 Tim. 1:15.) It is obvious that Paul considered himself greatly favored. It is no wonder, then, that he gave his life in complete dedication to God. He allowed nothing to hinder him from giving his whole life to the gospel ministry. He was a man of unusual talent and attainment. At one time he had prided himself on his heritage and achievement. But when he met Christ on the way to Damascus, his whole life pattern was changed. What he formerly considered important he now considered to be of no consequence. (See Phil. 3:7, 8.) He had only one object of glory, and that was Christ. (See Gal. 6:14.) Few people have experienced the difficulties he passed through. (See 2 Cor. 11:23-28.) But he kept pressing on.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why do you think it is appropriate to refer to life as a battle or a race? What was the aspect of God's love that so gripped Paul that He yielded his life in service to Him? Did God do more for Paul than He has done for you and me?

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 465-468.

**Part 6
FAITHFUL
UNTO DEATH**

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you in prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).

Life is very precious, and instinctively we hold on to it. It takes more than ordinary courage and dedication to be willing to give it up for the sake of a person or a principle.

Not everyone is called upon to die for his faith, but everyone must be prepared to do so if necessary. Note the apostle James's execution (Acts 12:1, 2); the three who refused to bow down to Nebuchadnezzar's image (Dan. 3:16-18). Daniel was put into the lion's den for praying to his God, but the lions were not permitted to molest him. Some experiences of the people of God in the Old Testament as they faced opposition are described in Hebrews 11:33-38.

What was it that made Jesus willing to give up His life for us sinners? Rom. 5:7, 8; John 15:13, 14.

The love of Christ for the human family was so great that He did not withhold anything. When we consider all that He has done for our salvation, can we legitimately hold back anything from Him? (See Heb. 12:3, 4.)

What warning and promise did Jesus give to His disciples? Mark 13:13.

The first death is not the greatest tragedy that can happen to one. After death comes the resurrection; so that death can be looked upon as a sleep and a rest. The Christian may die for the Master now, but he will live with Him throughout eternity. That is why martyrs have faced death with composure. Christians are not so much concerned with what happens to them in this life, but are eager to have a part in the life to come.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the difference between being willing to suffer and die for the Master and having a persecution complex? Do you think that Christians should pray for tribulation?

Jesus taught His disciples not to expose themselves unnecessarily to persecution. "He Himself often left one field of labor for another, in order to escape from those who were seeking His life. . . .

" . . . Those who are true to God need not fear the power of men nor the enmity of Satan. In Christ their eternal life is secure. Their only fear should be lest they surrender the truth, and thus betray the trust with which God has honored them."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 355, 356.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 588-592.



Motives

“As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?” (Ps. 42:1, 2).

What a striking image! The thirsty hart, a deer, longs to reach a running stream of cool, refreshing water. Do we long for God in the same way?

The things we do are first decided within us. Why do we do this and not that? The answer to this question would reveal our motives. We may not always know our true motives.

Sometimes an action may look right, but our inner motive for doing it may be wrong. But God, through the Bible and the Holy Spirit, wants to give us right motives for doing right actions.

We can live a life of Christlike actions from heaven-implanted motives. What are these motives? What are the motives that we should shun as being unworthy of a Christian?

First, we look at that motive which is the highest of all motives, love. God is the Source of love, and we see how this was manifested to us and how we ought to react in consequence. Then we look at life's priority, the supreme goal, the establishment of God's kingdom of grace and glory. We must never lose sight of His goal, nor permit ourselves to be sidetracked into activities that detract from the achievement of this goal. Third, we note a very common goal—materialism—and how foolish this can be. Life is too short for us to be

engaged in selfish aggrandizement. We move on next to note the example that Jesus has set for us. He did this deliberately because we need to know in specific terms how we ought to behave. In the fifth part of the lesson we see how Jesus evaluated the offering of a poor widow who put in all that she had. We learn that it is not the size of the gift that counts, but the degree of sacrifice and dedication that it represents. Finally, we see that the whole law is summed up in love. Legalism easily intrudes into the lives of many of us. We are anxious to keep every commandment to the letter. But in doing this do we turn out to be like the Pharisees who forgot the weightier matters of the law? Shall we make the same mistake?

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

- 1. Supreme Love**
(Rom. 8:32)
- 2. Seeking God's Kingdom**
(Matt. 6:33)
- 3. The Desire to Have Things**
(Luke 12:15)
- 4. The Example of Jesus**
(John 13:15)
- 5. Sacrifice**
(Mark 12:42)
- 6. Legalism**
(Matt. 23:23)

**Part 1
SUPREME
LOVE**

"He who did not grudge his own Son but gave him up for us all—can we not trust such a God to give us, with him, everything else that we can need?" (Rom. 8:32, Phillips).

All heaven was given with the gift of God's Son for the fallen race. But that was not the end of God's giving. He still gives. Paul asserts that if God was willing to give His Son He is willing to give everything that a man needs.

What promises did Jesus give that assured His disciples that they need not lack anything? John 14:14; 16:24.

"The Saviour's promise to His disciples is a promise to His church to the end of time. God did not design that His wonderful plan to redeem men should achieve only insignificant results. All who will go to work, trusting not in what they themselves can do, but in what God can do for and through them, will certainly realize the fulfillment of His promise."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 667.

What did Jesus say was the basic motive in His lifework? Luke 19:10. What is ours? (See John 20:21.)

"Our mission to the world is not to serve or please ourselves; we are to glorify God by co-operating with Him to save sinners. We are to ask blessings from God that we may communicate to others. The capacity for receiving is preserved only by imparting. We cannot continue to receive heavenly treasure without communicating to those around us."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 142, 143.

God provides us with the necessary qualities so that we can be successful in our pleading. Note the following statement: "It was Christ Himself who put into that mother's [the Syrophenician woman's] heart the persistence which would not be repulsed. It was Christ who gave the pleading widow courage and determination before the judge. It was Christ who, centuries before, in the mysterious conflict by the Jabbok, had inspired Jacob with the same persevering faith. And the confidence which He Himself had implanted, He did not fail to reward."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 175.

THINK IT THROUGH

In view of the provisions that God has supplied to meet every Christian's need, why are so many weak and helpless in their testimony to the world?

"Many do not have a sense of the sinfulness of their own natures nor of the grace of forgiveness. They are in nature's darkness, subject to temptations and to great deception."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 361.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "Asking to Give," pp. 139-143.

Part 2
SEEKING GOD'S
KINGDOM

What did Jesus say is the one supreme goal of the Christian?

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33).

Philosophers have suggested many goals for life. Some have suggested pleasure; others, virtue; still others, the greatest good for the greatest number. Some philosophers today suggest that a person should “do his own thing,” throwing off the trammels of his culture and tradition, refusing to be bound by the rules and regulations of family, trying everything, and arriving at his own conclusions regardless of society’s approval or disapproval.

The Christian longs above all else to see the kingdom of God established. There is a danger that he may be diverted to other aspects of life—for example, to earning a good living, acquiring property, building up a bank account, or having as many gadgets as his neighbor. These are aspects of life that the Christian sees all around him. Jesus assured His disciples that if they set their mind on the higher goal of seeking the kingdom of God by their life and witness, they would have all the necessities of life provided.

What assurance about life’s needs does the psalmist give to the believer? Ps. 34:10; 37:3-5.

All those who have trusted God have never found Him to fail them. In fact it is one of the pleasurable experiences in life to see how God answers prayer and provides all our needs in ways that are most unexpected. What is needed is a basic commitment to God, a decision to do only what God wants us to do. God takes the committed life and uses it to His glory, so that His purposes are accomplished.

Seeking God’s kingdom requires a dedication of the whole life including a dedicated purse. Not all can preach or engage in paid activity by the church; but all can give so that the work of God is advanced.

THINK IT THROUGH

What are my life goals?

The child of God may not be rich in this world’s goods. In fact, in the eyes of the world he may be very poor. But the richness of his faith means that he is content, and in many cases he lives a happier and fuller life than the man who lives in a palace.

FURTHER STUDY

Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, “True Motive in Service” (Matt. 6:33, 34), pp. 98-101.

**Part 3
THE DESIRE
TO HAVE
THINGS**

What reason did Jesus give for His warning against covetousness?

"Then he said to them, 'Watch, and be on your guard against avarice of any kind, for a man's life is not made secure by what he owns, even when he has more than he needs' " (Luke 12:15, Jerusalem).

The tenth commandment forbids covetousness of any kind, yet the sin of covetousness is "one of the most common and the most lightly regarded."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 496.

Note two biblical examples of those who coveted. Achan, Joshua 7; Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5. What can we learn from these experiences?

Covetousness is insidious and therefore all the more dangerous. Very often those who have it are not aware of it. It grows upon them imperceptibly, and unless it is rooted out it will bring about destruction, as in the examples above or in the experience of Judas.

It is easy to trust in a bank balance. It is very easy to feel that we ought not to give so much away as we do. The rich young ruler went away sorrowfully because he could not bring himself to change his source of security. (See Matt. 19:16-26.)

Read Luke 12:15-21. What lessons about possessions are taught in this parable?

"Constant, self-denying benevolence is God's remedy for the cankering sins of selfishness and covetousness. God has arranged systematic benevolence [later called tithes and offerings] to sustain His cause and relieve the necessities of the suffering and needy. He has ordained that giving should become a habit, that it may counteract the dangerous and deceitful sin of covetousness. Continual giving starves covetousness to death."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 548.

Riches are from the Lord and belong to Him. The rich must not be tied to their riches. But let not the poor be covetous!

THINK IT THROUGH

Can you see some advantages in being poor? Do we give to the church because the Lord needs our money or because we need to give it?

"The oft-repeated and striking warnings of our Redeemer are in marked contrast with the actions of His professed followers who evidence in their lives so great eagerness to be rich and who show that the words of Christ are lost upon them."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 547.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "Gain That Is Loss," pp. 252-259.

**Part 4
THE EXAMPLE
OF JESUS**

What was one of the purposes to be served by Christ's washing the disciples' feet?

"I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15).

God requires nothing of us that is out of harmony with what He Himself does. In everything that He has done He has gone to a limit beyond what man could ever reach alone. Whatever God asks us to do is reasonable, possible, and for our good.

In the Decalogue we have been given a standard of godly living. But people often become legalistic in living by the law. They become more concerned with the letter than the spirit, with regulations rather than principles. When a life is lived in accordance with the law, the spirit of the law is plainer. Jesus proved that the law could be kept, and He showed how it should be kept.

What invitation did Jesus extend to His disciples? Matt. 4:19; 16:24.

"For three years and a half the disciples were under the instruction of the greatest Teacher the world has ever known. By personal contact and association, Christ trained them for His service. Day by day they walked and talked with Him, hearing His words of cheer to the weary and heavy-laden, and seeing the manifestation of His power in behalf of the sick and the afflicted. Sometimes He taught them, sitting among them on the mountainside; sometimes beside the sea or walking by the way, He revealed the mysteries of the kingdom of God. . . . He did not command the disciples to do this or that, but said, 'Follow Me.'"—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 17, 18.

What sentence sums up Christ's way of life? Acts 10:38.

To do as Jesus did, this is the most beautiful life. It does not require great talent, advanced degrees, high attainments. It means that we accept the way of Jesus as the best way for us, and that in everything we do we follow the pattern that is set.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can I follow in the footsteps of the Master?

"You are not to look to yourself, not to let the mind dwell upon self, but look to Christ. Let the mind dwell upon His love, upon the beauty, the perfection, of His character. Christ in His self-denial, Christ in His humiliation, Christ in His purity and holiness, Christ in His matchless love—this is the subject for the soul's contemplation. It is by loving Him, copying Him, depending wholly upon Him, that you are to be transformed into His likeness."—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 70, 71.

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, "The Work and the Life," pp. 77-79.

**Part 5
SACRIFICE**

“A poor widow came and put in two small coins, the equivalent of a penny” (Mark 12:42, Jerusalem).

We often appreciate gifts according to their cost or their worth. Thus a gift of one thousand dollars is better appreciated than a gift of one dollar. But in the story of the widow's mite Jesus pointed out another aspect of giving.

What made the gift of the widow to the treasury more valuable in the sight of God than the much larger sums put in by others? Mark 12:43, 44.

One wonders what the treasurers did with the two mites when they emptied the box! Did they put the coins into petty cash, not even troubling themselves to count them among the offerings? What could they do with two mites anyway? Did the widow realize that her deed would go down in history as an example of giving to all succeeding generations? The story points up the truth that God is aware of everything that is going on; that He is more concerned with motive than with value.

“The act of the widow who cast two mites—all that she had—into the treasury, is placed on record for the encouragement of those who, struggling with poverty, still desire by their gifts to aid the cause of God. . . . The value of the gift is estimated not by the amount, but by the proportion that is given and the motive that actuates the giver.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 342.

Even we are sometimes more concerned with motives than with amounts. What mother does not thrill when her child brings some buttercups or other wild flowers to her in the kitchen? It is the deed of love, not the value of the flowers, that strikes to the heart. On the other hand, the gift that is presented with a fanfare may be accepted as an honor and highly valued, but lacking the heartfelt simplicity of the child's gift. The giver of such gifts gets his reward in notice but that is all he gets.

What assurance do we have that the Christian is always in a position to make an offering when needed? 2 Cor. 9:8.

“A continual imparting of God's gifts wherever the cause of God or the needs of humanity demand our aid, does not tend to poverty.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 345.

THINK IT THROUGH

How much would I give were I to give the equivalent, for me, of the widow's two mites?

“Spiritual prosperity is closely bound up with Christian liberality. The followers of Christ should rejoice in the privilege of revealing in their lives the beneficence of their Redeemer.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 344, 345.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 614-616.

Part 6
LEGALISM

There is obvious need for law; without the law there is no knowledge of sin. The law is holy, just, and good. (See Rom. 7:12.) The trouble comes when we try to gain salvation by law keeping, when we look at the letter and forget the spirit.

What did Jesus say some of the Jews neglected in their concern for the letter of the law?

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone” (Matt. 23:23).

Jesus did not say that mint, dill, and cummin should not be tithed, but He did say that justice, mercy, and faith are important aspects of commandment keeping. When the law is kept in an attempt to rid ourselves of guilt, then that is legalism. Pure legalism is cold, harsh, unsympathetic, arrogant, and domineering—characteristics that are far from the nature of God Himself. Jesus kept the whole law. Yet He was humble, understanding, kind, merciful, and considerate.

According to Jesus’ instructions to the Twelve for their missionary journey, what is the spirit that should motivate the Christian in his relationship to his fellowmen? Matt. 10:8.

When a person receives mercies and blessings, the least that he can do is to respond with a life of concern for others and their needs. The Good Samaritan manifested true neighborly conduct, and his actions typify what Jesus came to do. Do we as Christians manifest the same spirit? Note the following statement: “Although the customs of the world are no criterion for us, yet I have been shown that the pitying sympathy and the benevolence of the world for the unfortunate in many cases shame the professed followers of Christ.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 524. A Christian’s love should always exceed the world’s!

THINK IT THROUGH

What leads one (as Matthew 18:23-35) who has had favors shown to him be inconsiderate of others?

“Selfishness and cold formality have well-nigh extinguished the fire of love, and dispelled the graces that should make fragrant the character. Many who profess His name have lost sight of the fact that Christians are to represent Christ. Unless there is practical self-sacrifice for the good of others, in the family circle, in the neighborhood, in the church, and wherever we may be, then whatever our profession, we are not Christians.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 504.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 497-505.

The Privilege of Work

“Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me. I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded” (Isa. 45:11, 12).

The Bible reveals that God is ever active and His activity is called work. Thus the universe He has brought into being is called His handiwork. God is active in sustaining the universe and every part of it. The planets in their courses are dependent on Him for continuing motion, and all living creatures are dependent on Him for sustenance and life. God is also active in the affairs of men, for example, in the rise and fall of governments. He calls out individuals to serve Him and works out His plans and purposes through a variety of agencies. He is the judge of all, and the time will come when His order will be vindicated and evil will be wiped out forever. God never rests. His ear is open to every cry. His devotion to His creatures and His work on their behalf is a fundamental characteristic of His being.

Since this is so, work has sacramental value. It is part of the natural order and cannot be ignored. It is a way of life and cannot be set aside. To envisage existence without work is to consider a totally different

order of creation from that which has been brought into existence by God and which we see all around us.

What is this activity called “work”? What form does it take, and how important is it in the life? These are the questions that we take up for study this week. First of all, we see God as the Master Worker. We note perfection and beauty, a basic pattern for all work which should be profitable and good. Then we note that work is to be an important phase of man’s life, since he was created in the image of God and granted dominion over all the earth. Material changes have taken place because of sin, but man still has his work to do in caring for and keeping in order the elements in his environment. Then we look at Jesus and see how He worked on earth, setting us an example. The fourth part of the lesson looks at man in his work relationships and explores the Christian attitude to work. Fifth, we look at the kinds of work that the Christian can legitimately engage in. And finally, we see how work is not the be-all or end-all of life, but is intended to be a means of enjoying life to the full. Work is a privilege and a blessing.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **God, the Master Worker**
(Gen. 2:2)
2. **Man—His Work Responsibilities**
(Gen. 1:28; 2:15)
3. **Jesus, the Model Workman**
(Luke 2:52)
4. **Relationships at Work**
(Eph. 6:5, 6)
5. **Work and Vocation**
(2 Tim. 1:9)
6. **Work, a Blessing**
(1 Cor. 3:9)



Part 1
GOD, THE
MASTER WORKER

"On the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made" (Gen. 2:2).

The Bible makes it clear that when God was creating, He was working. He "divided" light from darkness, waters from waters (Gen. 1:4-6). He "set" sun, moon, and stars in the heavens (verse 17). He "formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (Gen. 2:7). He "planted" a garden in Eden, and "took" and "put" man in it (verses 8, 15). Here is activity in human terms that indicates a plan, a purpose, and the execution of plan and purpose. This is work. Then God "ended" His work, and "rested" and "blessed" (verses 2, 3). Here is order and benevolence—work at its best.

How did the psalmist feel about God's work? Ps. 104:24.

Jesus pointed out God's concern for His creation. (See Matt. 6:26.) The psalmist speaks of God's care for His people. (See Ps. 33:13-19.) God's care is very personal. (See Isa. 41:10.) The whole of creation is sustained by Him. (See Heb. 1:3.) God's work is to provide for the whole of His creation, but at the same time it reflects His perfection and beauty of character.

What important work has God done that affects every human being? How should we react in consequence? Isa. 44:22, 23.

We ought to spend more time considering what God has done for us. Do we recognize how dependent we are on God for everything? It is not because of our own strength and skill that we are able to earn a living and enjoy many comforts. It is God who has given us the health and strength, without which we could do nothing. It is God who protects us from danger and has enabled us to keep what we have. Because God is not seen, He is often forgotten. Only when we fully recognize all that God has done and continues to do for us, can we be truly grateful and express our appreciation.

THINK IT THROUGH

Looking at God as the Master Worker, what would you say are the basic characteristics of work?

"God would have His children appreciate His works and delight in the simple, quiet beauty with which He has adorned our earthly home. He is a lover of the beautiful, and above all that is outwardly attractive He loves beauty of character; He would have us cultivate purity and simplicity, the quiet graces of the flowers."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 85.

FURTHER STUDY

Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, "True Motive in Service" (Matt. 6:25), pp. 95-98.

Part 2
**MAN, HIS WORK
RESPONSIBILITIES**

What was the work given to Adam and Eve in the garden?

"God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

"And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it" (Gen. 1:28; 2:15).

In the Genesis story man was given definite assignments of work. This is understandable, because man was created in the image of God. Therefore, even as God Himself has responsibilities toward His creation, so man was to exercise dominion over the territory that was placed under his charge.

"Adam was not to be idle. Our Creator, who understands what is for man's happiness, appointed Adam his work. The true joy of life is found only by the working men and women. The angels are diligent workers; they are the ministers of God to the children of men. The Creator has prepared no place for the stagnating practice of indolence."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 50.

What changes took place in man's work as a result of sin? Gen. 3:17-19.

"When man became Satan's captive, the dominion which he held, passed to his conqueror."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 67.

The ground was cursed and would bring forth thorns and thistles. Man's work would be doubly hard, involving toil and pain. Yet nature is still dependent on man. Unless man works with the soil, plants deteriorate into an unprofitable state.

What assurances has God given of reliability in nature? Gen. 8:22.

Man cannot claim that the world owes him a living and do nothing. Work is basically a recognition that man has the responsibility for his own needs.

THINK IT THROUGH

What attitude should the Christian take to his work? What can he do to make life more worthwhile for himself and for others?

"From their earliest years children should be led to feel that they are part of the home firm. Even the little ones should be trained to share in the daily work and should be made to feel that their help is needed and is appreciated. The older ones should be their parents' assistants, entering into their plans and sharing their responsibilities and burdens."—*Education*, p. 285.

FURTHER STUDY

Education, pp. 214-218.

**Part 3
JESUS, THE
MODEL
WORKMAN**

"Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52).

The ideal development is that development that is Godward and manward. Jesus was the kind of person who received the approbation of God in His life and was appreciated by all right thinking people for His service to man. These are marks of true greatness.

What trade did Jesus learn and use as a young man in Nazareth? Mark 6:3.

"The life of Christ from His earliest years was a life of earnest activity. He lived not to please Himself. He was the Son of the infinite God, yet He worked at the carpenter's trade with His father Joseph. His trade was significant. He had come into the world as the character builder, and as such all His work was perfect. Into all His secular labor He brought the same perfection as into the characters He was transforming by His divine power. He is our pattern."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 345.

The years that Jesus spent in Nazareth have been called "the hidden years." From the time He returned from Jerusalem at the age of 12, to the time He came to be baptized of John around the age of 30, He lived a quiet life, being subject to His parents, and doubtless supporting His mother after the death of Joseph. All we are told is that He "grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him" (Luke 2:40). One thing is certain; Jesus was a hard worker, and in His work He manifested the spirit and character of His heavenly Father.

What did Jesus say about His work? John 9:4; Matt. 20:28.

There was an urgency in the attitude of Jesus to His work. Time was moving along, and there were things that had to be done in the immediate present. We cannot postpone to the future what needs to be done today. Because of who He was and what He was, Jesus applied Himself to the tasks that were His to perform. He was true to His Father and faithful to the people whom He had come to serve.

THINK IT THROUGH

What work of Jesus was more important, His work as a carpenter, or His work of preaching and healing?

"He was doing God's service just as much when laboring at the carpenter's bench as when working miracles for the multitude."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 74.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 72-74.

Part 4
RELATIONSHIPS
AT WORK

How does Paul say the Christian ought to relate himself to his master or employer?

“Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart” (Eph. 6:5, 6).

Although slavery as an institution is not practiced in the world today as it was in the days of Paul, nevertheless, many are caught in the clutches of an economic system that may be as harsh and demanding as slavery. Slavery may be gone, but the problem of relationships, about which Ephesians 6:5, 6 speaks, still remains for most of us.

The Christian is honest, faithful, respectful, diligent, wholehearted in his service for his employer. Not because his employer is worthy of all these characteristics—in many instances, his employer may not be worthy of any of them—but because that is the way he should work as a Christian employee. All the time he is working he is really serving his Lord Jesus Christ. His work is a testimony of his relationship with his God. The employee may not be able to preach a sermon or give a Bible study, but his faithful service speaks louder than words and in many instances is even more effective.

What counsel does Paul give to employers in the matter of relationships? Eph. 6:9.

Employers, no less than employees, should show that their relationship to God is right. They are not to lord it over their employees, nor are they to treat some better than others. James warns against those who take financial advantage of their employees. (See James 5:4.) God holds everyone responsible for the way he uses his authority and position of rank, and He will not let the one who misuses his power go unpunished.

Whether a person is an employee or an employer, or acts in both capacities, he is one to whom God has entrusted talents and opportunities. It is for him to use them faithfully, being ready to give an account to his Lord for all that he has done.

THINK IT THROUGH

When there are abuses in work relationships between employer and employee, what should the Christian do?

God never condones evil, but He is the one to judge, and He is the best one to take appropriate action. We must be careful not to try to do God's work for Him!

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, “Shall Not God Avenge His Own?” pp. 177-180.

Part 5
WORK AND
VOCATION

To what has God called us?

"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim. 1:9).

Most of us have to take part in secular activity in order to earn a living. But we also have a spiritual calling. In all our work, whatever it may be, we must glorify God, showing that all we do is done for Him.

It is God who gives the skills necessary to perform the various types of service. God instructs the farmer. (See Isa. 28:25, 26.) God called special persons for particular manual skills and granted them a measure of His spirit for constructing the tabernacle. (See Ex. 31:2-6.) One of our responsibilities is to discover what talent God has given us and then to use it in His service.

What did Paul urge Timothy to make use of? 2 Tim. 1:6.

Some people are governed by personal ambition in their selection of what they would do in life. The result is often tragic. "Many a man whose talents are adapted for some other calling, is ambitious to enter a profession; and he who might have been successful as a farmer, an artisan, or a nurse, fills inadequately the position of a minister, a lawyer, or a physician."—*Education*, p. 267.

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

It is interesting to note that in the New Testament men were called to be saints, or apostles, or fishers of men. This suggests that there is a higher calling that applies to everyone regardless of his mode of earning a living. The matter of first importance is not what type of work we do every day for a living, but that we act as children of God and accomplish God's purposes.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can the Christian be guided in choosing that type of work that is best suited to him?

"Christ in His life on earth made no plans for Himself. He accepted God's plans for Him, and day by day the Father unfolded His plans. So should we depend upon God, that our lives may be the simple outworking of His will. As we commit our ways to Him, He will direct our steps."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 479.

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pp. 469-482.

Part 6
WORK,
A BLESSING

"We are labourers together with God" (1 Cor. 3:9).

Those who work as God intends they should be described as God's fellow workers, workers together with God. They live in harmony with the laws of the universe, and will live forever.

What advice does the wise man have for the person who does not like to work? Prov. 6:6-11.

The sluggard is the person who exercises no self-discipline. He acts according to the impulse of the moment. He soon finds that by indulging in the pleasures of the moment he misses out on the real satisfactions of life.

What drastic rule did Paul lay down when he was with the Thessalonians? 2 Thess. 3:10.

"The Lord does not require the hardworking man to support others in idleness. With many there is a waste of time, a lack of effort, which brings to poverty and want. If these faults are not corrected by those who indulge them, all that might be done in their behalf would be like putting treasure into a bag with holes. Yet there is an unavoidable poverty, and we are to manifest tenderness and compassion toward those who are unfortunate. We should treat others just as we ourselves, in like circumstances would wish to be treated."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 247, 248.

What exhortation did Paul give to the Thessalonians? 1 Thess. 4:11.

Hard work means that we help ourselves and we gain the respect of the community. But work is not enjoined as an end in itself; it is a means to an end, and that end is the service of God. It is not to be limited to labor for life's necessities, but to include labor "for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life" (John 6:27). There are some types of activity that the Christian can never engage in because they involve the breaking of the law. (See Eph. 4:28.) But the work of the Lord is that kind of labor that will always bring joy and satisfaction.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why does work often have therapeutic value?

"Inactivity is the greatest curse that could come upon most invalids. Light employment in useful labor, while it does not tax mind or body, has a happy influence upon both. It strengthens the muscles, improves the circulation, and gives the invalid the satisfaction of knowing that he is not wholly useless in this busy world."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 240.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "Talents," pp. 358-365.



The Call to Service

“Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture” (Ps. 100:1-3).

We all must serve someone. We cannot be so neutral that we serve no one. A common human problem is that we want to serve more than one: We want to serve God, but we also want to serve ourselves; we want to give our hearts to God, but we want to hold on selfishly to our possessions. Jesus said that this attempt to serve two masters is impossible. (See Matt. 6:24.)

Christian service is not a drudgery. Someone has said that it is “perfect freedom.” There is a paradox in Christian living, that if we would gain life we must be prepared to give it up. As the hymn writer puts it: “Make me a captive, Lord, And then I shall be free; Force me to render up my sword, And I shall conqueror be.”—*The Church Hymnal*, no. 284. We can find supreme joy in serving the Lord, because in His service we truly find ourselves and achieve all that the heart can desire.

Furthermore, it does not require special talent to serve the Lord. It is obvious, of course, that the man with five talents can contribute more than the man with less. But everyone has at least one talent, and if he uses this to God’s honor and glory, he will get the same reward as the one more gifted than he, because the reward is of grace and not of work.

God calls for wholehearted service to Him. In the controversy with sin God sees that man’s salvation is

dependent on man’s taking an active part on God’s side. He must serve the Creator against the wishes of the usurper; he must struggle against the wiles of the enemy and overcome.

In our lesson this week we see how man can serve his Creator. First of all he is called to be a watchman. He must warn of danger that is coming. Then we see how the Christian is to give a testimony to the experiences and knowledge that he has gained. In the struggle against evil he must endure to the end if he is to be saved. There must be no turning back on promises made. In the fourth part of the lesson we learn that a man must do as Jesus did—take up his cross. Then he must follow in the footsteps of the Master. Finally, we note that the Christian is called to a high and holy calling, one in which he must be sanctified. The one who lives this way is serving his Lord in the most acceptable manner.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **The Call to Watch and Warn**
(Eze. 3:17)
2. **The Call to Witness**
(Acts 1:8)
3. **The Call to Endure**
(2 Tim. 2:3)
4. **The Call to Take Up the Cross**
(Matt. 16:24)
5. **The Call to Follow**
(John 10:27)
6. **The Call to Be Perfect**
(Matt. 5:48)

**Part 1
THE CALL
TO WATCH
AND WARN**

“Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me” (Eze. 3:17).

Jesus told His disciples that they were to watch because they did not know when their Lord would come. (See Matt. 14:42.) A watching servant is one who is not caught unawares but is busy doing his duty, in spite of distractions of the surroundings.

What is Jesus' description of the watchful servant? Matt. 24:45-47.

Another dimension of watching is added in the experience of Ezekiel—he is to watch and to warn. He is to be concerned, not only with his own welfare, but with the welfare of others.

The figure of speech used by Ezekiel is that of a man stationed on the wall of a city commissioned to keep his eyes open for the enemy that might be creeping up stealthily with the purpose of taking the city unawares. Most of the inhabitants are asleep. They are dependent on the watchman to stay awake and perform his duty. As soon as he sees danger, he blows the trumpet of warning, and the people arouse to resist the enemy.

Ezekiel says that we are as responsible for giving the warning to others as we are for knowing it ourselves.

What solemn responsibility is placed on the watchman? Eze. 33:7-9.

Since God has given us a truth that involves the whole world, we cannot, with impunity keep this truth to ourselves. It does not follow that when we tell someone of the truth that he will accept it and be saved. But when we have passed on to him the message we have received from God, then he alone is responsible for his reaction to the message. On the other hand, if we have had a chance to witness and have not seized the opportunity, the loss of a soul that results is placed at our charge. This emphasizes how important it is for us to share our faith.

THINK IT THROUGH

Instead of coming like a thief in the night and requiring that His disciples watch, why does not our Lord tell us the time when He will come?

If the early church had been told that two thousand years would pass before the second advent, they would have been discouraged. At the same time, for every one of us the moment of death is the end of probation, and the next significant event is the coming of Jesus. Since death can come at any time, it is necessary to watch at all times and seize every opportunity to witness to the truths of the gospel.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 360-362.

Part 2
THE CALL
TO WITNESS

“Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

From the experience of the centurion at Caivary, what can we learn about the basic qualifications for a witness? Luke 23:47, 48.

One must first of all see with his own eyes, feel with his own body and mind, and experience in his heart and life, before he can really give an effective testimony. That which is grasped only by the mind, or is learned at second hand, cannot be vitally communicated to another. That is why it is so important to have a living experience of the truth.

From the last words of Jesus to His disciples, what do we learn is essential to witnessing besides the firsthand experience of knowing? Acts 1:8.

It is the Holy Spirit that gives power and effectiveness to the witness, for it is the Spirit of God that works on the heart of the listener, to convict and to convince. (See John 16:7-11.) The Holy Spirit also indites the words that are spoken so that they are the right words for the occasion. (See Matt. 10:19, 20.)

In an investigation to learn the truth about an event, witnesses are essential. Their word provides evidence as well as confirms other evidence. Without witnesses the truth is hidden, and a lie cannot be discovered. The same principle of testifying to the truth applies to God and His universe.

God finds His special witnesses in men and women who have heard His call and testified to what God has been able to do in and through them. On one occasion the Jews wanted Jesus to silence the people when they were crying Hosanna to Him. He said that if the people did not bear their testimony the stones would cry out. (See Luke 19:39, 40.) In other words, the truth of what God has done and is doing for man cannot be kept quiet. The heavens declare the glory of God; every flower and tree speaks of the love of God; but it is man who has the duty and responsibility, being the highest order in the earthly sphere, to raise his voice in testimony to the God who has done so much for him.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why do some people find it difficult to witness to their faith?

It does not require education or advanced learning to tell what one has seen and heard. It only requires a heart of love and a tongue, and most people are blessed with this. How do we use our tongues? Is it to bless or to curse?

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 465-468.

Part 3
THE CALL
TO ENDURE

"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 2:3).

In this second letter to Timothy, Paul refers to three types of occupations: the soldier, the athlete, and the farmer. (See verses 3-7.) All of them have to discipline themselves in order to accomplish their tasks.

What characteristics of the Christian does Paul draw from the experience of the soldier, the athlete, and the farmer? 2 Tim. 2:3-7.

"In the army, no soldier gets himself mixed up in civilian life," the Jerusalem Bible translates verse 4. So the Christian must not get mixed up with the world.

The athlete knows that he must keep all the rules of the contest if he is to win a crown. Likewise, the Christian knows that he must order his life according to the principles of living laid down in the Bible.

The farmer works hard at preparing the soil and sowing the seed and keeping away anything that would prevent his crop from coming to full fruition. So also must the Christian be faithful in applying himself wholly to his task so that he can eat of the fruit of his endeavors.

What kind of man does James picture as being blessed or happy? James 1:12.

What type of person did Jesus say would be saved? Matt. 10:22.

It is comparatively easy to begin the Christian life, or even to begin anything. It takes stamina to continue in the Christian pathway in spite of difficulties and hardships. To grit one's teeth, to determine by God's grace not to give up when the going is hard, this is what is necessary at times, although the Christian life has many moments of joy and happiness.

THINK IT THROUGH

How would you show that the average Christian does not begin to go through the hardships that Jesus had to endure? Heb. 12:3, 4.

"Men are wanted in this work who will not murmur or complain at hardships or trials, knowing that this is a part of the legacy that Jesus has left them. They should be willing to go without the camp and suffer reproach and bear burdens as good soldiers of Christ. They will bear the cross of Christ without complaint, without murmuring or fretfulness, and will be patient in tribulation."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 423.

FURTHER STUDY

Education, pp. 295-297.

Part 4
THE CALL TO
TAKE UP
THE CROSS

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matt. 16:24).

Jesus knew what was ahead of Him. He told His disciples details which they did not understand, but which they would see fulfilled in every respect. (See Luke 18:31-34.)

What did Jesus say every disciple would have to take up if he were to be a true follower? Matt. 16:24.

The disciples knew very well what a cross was. They had seen many in their travels north and south. The Romans used these instruments of execution to make examples of Jews who had fallen afoul of Roman law or authority. It was a symbol of the power of the oppressor, of the bitterness of subjugation. The language of Jesus must have come as a shock to men and women who were hoping that the Messiah would free them from the yoke of the Gentile. But the language is unmistakable. The words of Jesus are recorded in all three synoptic Gospels.

One of the cruel aspects of a crucifixion was that the victim had to carry his own cross. Can you imagine how reluctantly a person would take it up? Yet Jesus says that the Christian is to "take up his cross." How is this to be understood? It means he is to deny himself, to die to self.

Let us look at the cross of Jesus and see what happened there. Note the following aspects: (1) Jesus was being unjustly treated by other people; (2) the other people should have known better; (3) the treatment was public and shameful.

It would seem, then, that taking up a cross means being willing to submit to unjust and shameful treatment at the hands of people who ought to know better.

Human nature revolts against the idea of submission to unjust treatment. But that was exactly the experience of Jesus, who said that the servant is not above his Lord and he must not be surprised if he is treated as his Lord was. (See John 15:20.)

Can you think of examples of Christians who accepted ignominy and torture in the spirit of Christ? (See Acts 16:22-25.)

"The apostles [Paul and Silas] suffered extreme torture because of the painful position in which they were left, but they did not murmur. Instead, in the utter darkness and desolation of the dungeon, they encouraged each other by words of prayer and sang praises to God because they were found worthy to suffer shame for His sake."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 213, 214.

THINK IT THROUGH

Are there times when the Christian should stand up for his rights? Who is the one who can do this best for him?

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 416-418.

**Part 5
THE CALL
TO FOLLOW**

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me” (John 10:27).

A few people are called to lead, but most of us follow. Even leaders need to follow a pattern or an ideal. In relation to Jesus, Christian followers and leaders alike are followers. The Christian hears the voice of Jesus and follows Him.

What example in the Old Testament do we have of someone who learned a true way and decided to follow it to the end? Ruth 1:16, 17.

The story of Ruth tells of one who had learned about the true God and decided she could not go back to her people and their gods. God blessed her richly. She was an ancestress of Christ even though she was not an Israelite. No one who follows the true God loses as a consequence of this choice.

What contrast is given in Jude 16-21 between what many people in the world follow and what the Christian follows? What is the result to each?

There are only two roads to take; one leads to eternal life and the other leads to death. One results in being a blessing to one's self and to others; the other results in being a problem to one's self and to others. Why do so many take the wrong one?

What conditions did Jesus give for those who would follow (“come after”) Him? Matt. 16:24.

Jesus lived a life of self-denying service and taught others to do the same. Following Jesus means going about doing good even as He did. (See Acts 10:38.) We need eyes to see where we can do good to another and a willing spirit to do it. The kind word spoken, the unpretentious help given glorifies the One whom we follow.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is it that many do not offer their services to help those in need? Is the average Christian too busy caring for his own interests? How would you try to bring about a change?

“Many have excused themselves from rendering their gifts to the service of Christ because others were possessed of superior endowments and advantages. The opinion has prevailed that only those who are especially talented are required to consecrate their abilities to the service of God. . . . But it is not so represented in the parable. When the master of the house called his servants, he gave to every man *his* work.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 82.

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, “The Work and the Life,” pp. 80-83.

Part 6
THE CALL TO
BE PERFECT

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48).

This text has caused many heartaches! How can anyone be perfect, let alone be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect? In Christ the Christian may be perfect. (See *Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 32.)

The Greek word translated "perfect" in Matthew 5:48 also has the meaning "mature." It is used in this sense in Hebrews 10:14. The context in Matthew 5 is the impartial love of the heavenly Father (verse 45) for human beings. Jesus calls on us to be mature by loving people impartially as the Father does.

What standard of living is set for the child of God in Leviticus 19:2?

God Himself is the standard that is set for the Christian; whatever He is, the Christian is expected to be. Since God is holy, the Christian must be holy in all the phases of his life. Just as God is perfect in His attitude to all, so the Christian is called to have a right relationship to everyone.

What does Jeremiah 31:31-34 say about how man can attain the standards God has set?

When God commands, He also gives the power to obey. To do otherwise would be unreasonable. The good news of the gospel is that through Jesus our failure to reach the standard is forgiven. The shortfall of our best efforts is made up by Christ's merit. We are given power so that in Christ the Christian can do all things. (See Phil. 4:13.)

How important is holiness and the sanctified life for the Christian? Heb. 12:14.

"Holiness will lead its possessor to be fruitful and abound in all good works. He will never become weary in well-doing, neither will he look for promotion in this world. . . . Holiness of heart will produce right actions. It is the absence of spirituality, of holiness, which leads to unrighteous acts, to envy, hatred, jealousy, evil surmisings, and every hateful and abominable sin."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 445.

THINK IT THROUGH

Does God set different standards for different people, or does He set one standard for all to attain? What do you think that standard is?

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "Talents," pp. 328-333.



Sign

RADON
STATION

No Christ



© C. WHITE

Concern for Others

“Simon, Simon, take heed: Satan has been given leave to sift all of you like wheat; but for you I have prayed that your faith may not fail” (Luke 22:31, 32, NEB).

Jesus often had insights into the character and experience of those he met, such as Nathanael (John 1:48), Peter (Luke 22:31, 32), and the woman of Samaria (John 4:17, 18). In each case He showed great concern. There was something very personal about His relationships with everyone.

In this regard Jesus has set an important example for His followers; the Christian is to be alive to the needs of those around him, and, whatever the cost, he is to spend and be spent in meeting their material and spiritual needs.

Perhaps one of the basic weaknesses of our modern society is that it tends to be impersonal. There is much good that is being done in the world, but it is being done on a computer basis, at second hand. Much money is being distributed, much food. But people are numbers, and distributors are companies. What we so much need is the personal concern and touch.

In our lesson this week we look at the areas of concern to every Christian. We see that he cannot live for himself, closing his eyes and ears to the appeals all around him. As a faithful steward, blessed with an abundant supply of all his needs, he willingly reaches out to help those less fortunate than himself.

The Christian's first responsibility is to his kith and kin. He ought not to allow them to be a public charge, or to be a burden to the church. Then there are the orphans and widows, those

who are without relatives and cannot always support themselves. Third, there are those who have fallen upon hard times. Their plight has come to our attention in a personal way, and there is obviously something we can and ought to do for them. Like the man who had fallen among thieves, they are in need of a Good Samaritan. Then there are organizations that prepare for emergencies. They stock up with food and clothing to be ready when disaster strikes. These organizations need leadership and sacrifice. But there are spiritual needs to be supplied; books and tracts to be distributed; Bibles to be given out; the truth to be shared in meetings and Bible studies. Both near and far, the Christian has a ready ear for needs and a willing heart and hand to give as the Lord has blessed him.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **The Needs of Parents and Relatives**
(Mark 7:11-13)
2. **Orphans and Widows**
(James 1:27)
3. **Neighbors Near and Far**
(Luke 10:36, 37)
4. **Welfare Organizations**
(Acts 9:36)
5. **Reaching the Unlovable**
(Prov. 25:21, 22)
6. **Sowing the Seed**
(Eccl. 11:6)

**Part 1
NEEDS OF
PARENTS AND
RELATIVES**

What practice in regard to parents did Jesus condemn?

“Ye say, if a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye” (Mark 7:11-13).

The fifth commandment states: “Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee” (Ex. 20:12).

This commandment obviously means more than giving nominal respect to father and mother; it means caring for them materially according to their need. Jesus made this clear when He objected to the tradition whereby a son could dedicate his possessions for religious purposes, and thus escape his obligations to support his needy parents.

It is only proper that children should care for the needs of parents in their old age as necessary. Even during the agony of the cross Jesus remembered His mother. (See John 19:25-27.)

It is the privilege of the Christian family to be tied by bonds of love and affection. It is sin that causes members of the family to harm one another, as in the case of Cain. (See Gen. 4:8, 9.) Families may be broken up because of the truth. (See Matt. 10:21, 22.) But the ideal is that unbroken families can enter the kingdom of heaven. Furthermore, the truth can enlarge the boundary of family connections. Note in Mark 10:29, 30 the promise that is made to the disciple who has had to give up physical family ties because of opposition to the truth.

What answer is implied by the question in 1 John 3:17?

Love is a gift from God, and the heart that is imbued with love cannot remain unconcerned when there is a crying need. John goes on to say (verse 18) that love is not true love that expresses itself only in words; love finds its true expression in acts of kindness and deep concern. (See 1 John 3:18.)

**What was Paul's view of one who did not support his family?
1 Tim. 5:8.**

THINK IT THROUGH

Does one's obligation to the family depend on whether the members of the family are in the church or not? Is it proper sometimes to cut off the financial resources of a member of the family because he refuses to comply with church regulations?

FURTHER STUDY

First Corinthians 13.

Part 2
ORPHANS
AND WIDOWS

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

These words of James must come as a shock to those who think of religion in terms of church services, where one listens to sacred music, offers prayers, and hears the word of God presented in a sermon. All this has its place in religious life, but the point that James makes means that attendance at religious services without active, loving service in everyday life for others in need is not "pure religion."

What elements of religion does Micah point to as constituting the most important features of worship? Micah 6:6-8.

Death snatches away the breadwinner and parent with drastic consequences to the rest of the family. Shall people be left to suffer alone in their bereavement? The Bible says, No! Members of the church, in loving sympathy, are to relieve the burdens as far as possible. Orphans need to be cared for, and women who have no means of support are to have their wants supplied.

What rules for the Ephesus church regarding church support of needy widows does Paul give in 1 Timothy 5:9-16?

Paul recognizes that not all widows are helpless in their situation. Mere widowhood is not a claim on church finances. But where there is need and piety on the part of the widow, then the church members have a responsibility to do what they can to relieve hardship. After citing James 1:27, Ellen White says: "I saw that this is not merely to sympathize with them by comforting words in their affliction, but to aid them, if needy, with our substance."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 190.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can the church meet its obligations by caring for the needy without being hindered from accomplishing its task of preaching the gospel?

"With every gift and offering there should be a suitable object before the giver, not to uphold any in idleness, not to be seen of men or to get a great name, but to glorify God by advancing His cause. Some make large donations to the cause of God while their brother who is poor, may be suffering close by them, and they do nothing to relieve him. Little acts of kindness performed for their brother in a secret manner would bind their hearts together, and would be noticed in heaven. I saw that in their prices and wages the rich should make a difference in favor of the afflicted and widows and the worthy poor among them."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 194.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 2, pp. 27, 28, 33.

Part 3
NEIGHBORS
NEAR AND FAR

"Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise" (Luke 10:36, 37).

The Jewish lawyer did not expect to have to confess that a hated Samaritan could act in a neighborly fashion. Yet the story Jesus told could not be understood in any other way. Rather than lisp the word "Samaritan," he used a circumlocution: "He that shewed mercy on him."

What instruction was given the Jews regarding their neighbors? Lev. 19:18, 33, 34; Prov. 3:28, 29.

Love is the fulfilling of the law, because God is love. And there are to be no limits to love just as there are no limits to God's love. The person who loves only his relatives is doing only what is part of his natural inclinations; the heathen do likewise. When a Christian is a partaker of the divine nature, then he finds himself reaching out in love and mercy to those around him.

Whom, in addition to the neighbor, did Jesus say we are to love? Matt. 5:43-45.

The Christian is never to return evil for evil. There must always flow from his heart and lips words and deeds of kindness. This is not easy to do to those who are ungrateful, unsympathetic, and openly hostile. But God Himself faces a like situation with the world, yet He always provides people with their needs. The Christian is to be generous and helpful, not because of any reward he receives, but just because he is a child of God and reflects his Father's image.

Loving one's neighbor will mean sharing one's understanding of the gospel and extending the invitation to accept Jesus as a personal Saviour. However, it must not be limited to religious goals and objectives. Man's needs are often physical as in the case of the one who had fallen among thieves, and the multitude who had been with Jesus all day and were hungry. The Christian must be prepared to meet needs, both temporal and spiritual.

THINK IT THROUGH

What may happen to the Christian who refuses to share his blessings with his neighbors?

"We need to guard against the first deviation from righteousness; for one transgression, one neglect to manifest the spirit of Christ, opens the way for another and still another, until the mind is overmastered by the principles of the enemy."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 265.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "Who Is My Neighbour?" pp. 376-382.

**Part 4
WELFARE
ORGANIZATIONS**

"Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did" (Acts 9:36).

The name, "Dorcas Society" has been in many cases changed for another title, but the same type of work is still performed and appreciated. Tabitha, or Dorcas, was a woman who was active in sewing for the poor. When she died, Peter was called, and he was shown "the coats and garments which Dorcas made" (verse 39). Somehow Peter was impressed that he should pray that she be restored to a life of continued service, and a miracle occurred. Not everyone who has lived a life of service is raised to life to continue the service, but the experience of Dorcas was doubtless given to show God's approval of this type of activity.

What was the result of the experience of Dorcas? Acts 9:42.

Some may think that it was the miracle alone that brought many to a knowledge of the truth. But Jesus pointed out that the performance of a miracle does not necessarily produce faith. (See Luke 16:31.) It is more likely that the background of the life of Dorcas, together with her resurrection, called the attention of people to God who could do such a marvelous act. Dorcas's life certainly was the kind of life which God approved of and endorsed by raising her to life.

What kind of service does God say He prefers from His people? Isa. 58:7.

"I cannot too strongly urge all our church members, all who are true missionaries, all who believe the third angel's message, all who turn away their feet from the Sabbath, to consider the message of the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah. The work of beneficence enjoined in this chapter is the work that God requires His people to do at this time. It is a work of His own appointment."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 265.

How did Jesus say men come to glorify God? Matt. 5:14, 16.

Too often we belittle the humble deeds of everyday life. But the fact is that what we do counts for much more than what we say. People will be more impressed with the life of the minister than by his sermons, by the kindly deeds of the members of the church rather than the doctrines.

THINK IT THROUGH

Is your church doing all that it might do for its community? Are you sharing in preparations for emergency situations? If not, why not?

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pp. 104-107.

**Part 5
REACHING THE
UNLOVABLE**

“If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: for thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee” (Prov. 25:21, 22).

There are certain people we would rather stay away from, some that we feel like fighting. The Scripture says that the way to defeat an enemy is to be kind to him! In other words there is no one who is outside the pale of our beneficence!

How did God set the pattern of being concerned for sinners and enemies? Rom. 5:6-10.

If we wait for people to be loving to us before we are loving to them, we shall probably wait a long time. The Christian goes about doing good to all because that was exactly what Jesus did. (See Acts 10:38.)

How may the Christian be saved from being weary of doing good to those who are not appreciative or thankful? Heb. 12:3.

No one was more rejected than Jesus. He came to the world which He had created, and the people whom He had chosen rejected Him. (See John 1:11.) The Christian, too, may be rejected on many occasions. He may even have to forfeit his life.

There are times when the Christian may feel that he has a right to be indignant, that he should teach someone a lesson. But the fact is that God is the only righteous judge in every situation, and the Christian must leave it to Him to do what is necessary. He never pays back evil for evil, but he overcomes evil with good. (See Rom. 12:17-21.)

Some question the efficacy of such a policy of kindness to all. They ask the question: May not kindness be interpreted by the enemy as weakness? Does not the wicked man take advantage of the kindness of the Christian and never reform? Doubtless this is often true. But surely the one who continues to do evil in the face of kindness is going to have to face a righteous judge who will take all things into account. And the fact is that kindness and love win in the end, even though there may be an apparent defeat in the present. The Christian is to do the right thing at all times and leave the consequences to God.

THINK IT THROUGH

Can you think of examples of times when love has won out in a conflict between truth and error?

“Love will gain the victory when argument and authority are powerless. Love works not for profit nor reward; yet God has ordained that great gain shall be the certain result of every labor of love.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 135.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 2, pp. 133-136.

**Part 6
SOWING
THE SEED**

“In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good” (Eccl. 11:6).

There is no time when the Christian cannot or should not do good. Morning, noon, and night are all suitable occasions. In this regard he is like a sower who sows his seed. It is God who gives the increase; but the sower must sow the seed.

What parable did Jesus give to show how the kingdom of heaven is like sowing seeds? Mark 4:26-29.

In this parable Jesus makes it clear that it is God who causes the seed to grow and develop. “The work of the sower is a work of faith. The mystery of the germination and growth of the seed he cannot understand. But he has confidence in the agencies by which God causes vegetation to flourish. In casting his seed into the ground, he is apparently throwing away the precious grain that might furnish bread for his family. But he is only giving up a present good for a larger return. He casts the seed away, expecting to gather it manifold in an abundant harvest. So Christ’s servants are to labor, expecting a harvest from the seed they sow.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 64, 65.

What assurance is given that when a person sows a good deed, he will rejoice in the consequences? Ps. 126:6; Eccl. 11:1.

It is human to want to see results. We should remember that the controversy between good and evil is a long, drawn-out battle, and that we may have to wait until we get into the kingdom before we can see all the good that has been done.

According to what does God reward those who trust in Him? Rev. 22:12.

“Not the amount of labor performed or its visible results but the spirit in which the work is done makes it of value with God.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 397.

THINK IT THROUGH

Am I using my talent in the Master’s service? Am I as concerned about others as I am for myself?

The Christian should not devote himself to only one phase of activity. Just as he needs to eat, work, and sleep in order to meet his physical requirements, so he must care for his own spiritual needs and not neglect his obligations to others.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ’s Object Lessons, “First the Blade, Then the Ear,” pp. 62-69.

The Grace of Giving

“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again” (Luke 6:38).

It takes grace to give. Even though giving is recognized as a good thing, it is hard for a person in his natural condition to give up what he has acquired. The commandment, “Thou shalt not covet,” points up one of man’s greatest weaknesses, the desire to get without giving.

By contrast we see God in Jesus Christ giving all that He had. “Ye know,” said Paul, “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2 Cor. 8:9).

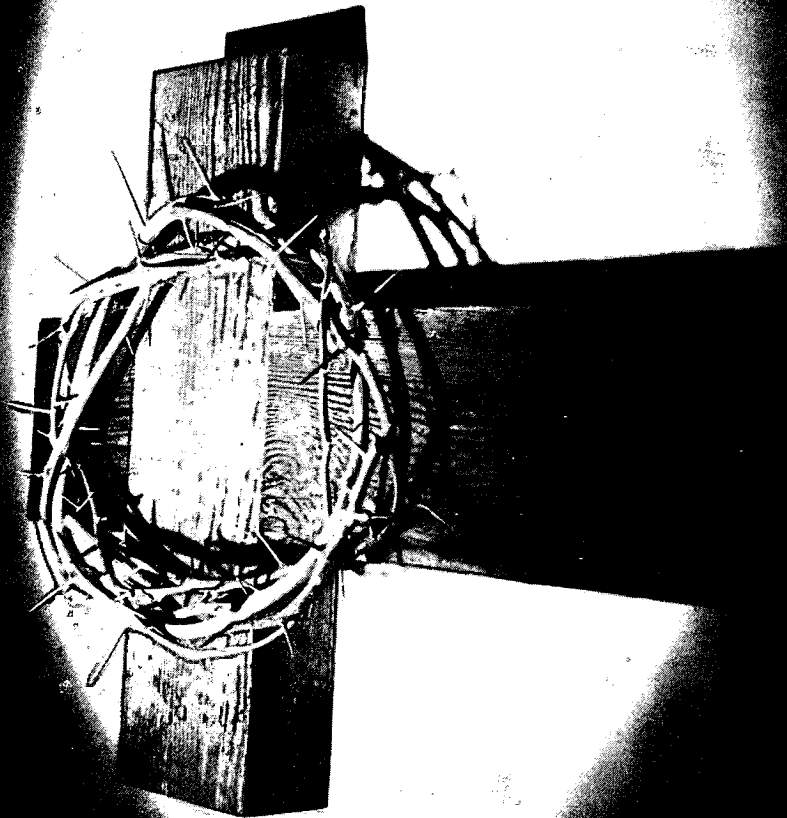
Here is the pattern that the Christian is to follow. He has been the recipient of a gift, and so he is under obligation to share his privileges with others. (See Matt. 10:8.) Not the least part of the new gift he has received is a new nature (see 2 Cor. 5:17), so that giving is natural for him, a way of life in which he finds joy in giving.

In our lesson this week we notice first of all that God is the greatest Giver. He gave His Son and through Him freely gives us all things. (See Rom. 8:32.) He is the Source of life and

all that makes life worth living. Consequently man’s response is that of giving himself to the One who did so much for him. (See 2 Cor. 5:15.) People who have accepted God’s great gift cannot live to themselves, but must be concerned about those around them. (See Phil. 2:4.) There is an interesting paradox in giving. The more one gives the more one receives. The opposite is also true. The more one withholds of what ought to be distributed, the more one becomes poor. (See Prov. 11:24.) How foolish, then, to hold on to that which makes one poor! Giving has its own reward in that the giver never loses. With the same measure he uses to give to others, it will be measured to him in return. (See Luke 6:38.) There is therefore a joy in giving, and it is the cheerful giver that God loves. How fortunate for all of us that the measure of giving is determined by what we have, and not by what we do not have! Rich and poor can alike share in this grace of giving. In fact two mites given by a poor widow may be worth more than the silver and gold of those who are affluent and give of their surplus.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **The Great Giver**
(Rom. 8:32)
2. **Man’s Response to God’s Giving**
(2 Cor. 5:14, 15)
3. **The Paradox of Giving**
(Prov. 11:24, 25)
4. **The Rewards of Giving**
(Isa. 58:10, 11)
5. **The Measure of a Gift**
(2 Cor. 8:12)
6. **The Cheerful Giver**
(2 Cor. 9:7)



Part 1
THE GREAT
GIVER

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things" (Rom. 8:32).

No one can read the gospel without being impressed with the great sacrifice that God made in giving His Son to die for man. No wonder the songwriter exclaims, "Amazing grace!"

What is Paul's reaction to God's gift to man? 2 Cor. 9:15.

"Unspeakable. Literally, 'that which cannot be described in full.' There can be no full and complete exposition of the gift of divine love. This ascription of praise to God provides a fitting climax to the section dealing with the collection of a gift for the saints at Jerusalem. . . . The divine gift, by which men are saved, sanctified, and motivated to Christian service for others, is beyond human ability to comprehend in its fullness. Christ is often described in the Scriptures as God's supreme gift to man."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 898.

Having given us His Son, what other provisions has God made for us? Rom. 8:32.

Paul makes clear that there is no limit to what God is willing to give to His children. He has not only redeemed man by the death of His Son, but has also provided everything necessary for a full and abundant life. (See John 10:10.) These gifts are all given freely. Man has only to reach out and accept them.

What kind of gifts come from God to man? James 1:17.

God is the Author of only that which is good. His gifts are perfect. His plans and purposes for man are for his highest good, so that there is no legitimate ambition that man could dream up for himself that could be any more desirable than the goal that God Himself has already set. Just as God is supremely great, so He is the greatest Giver. At the same time, God never changes; therefore, the plans He has for man are established forever. It is only man who causes changes, either by not accepting the plan outlined for him, or not living up to the requirements that are set for complete fulfillment.

THINK IT THROUGH

Since by definition God is perfect, is it possible for God to have other than a perfect plan for man? Why is it that more people are not seeking to fulfill God's plan in their lives?

"Every man has his place in the eternal plan of heaven. Whether we fill that place depends upon our own faithfulness in co-operating with God."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 476.

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, "God's Love for Man," pp. 9-15.

Part 2
MAN'S
RESPONSE TO
GOD'S GIVING

How should the believer react to the love of Christ?

"The love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised" (2 Cor. 5:14, 15).

As a person faces the plan of redemption, the reasonable choice is for him to choose to dedicate his life to the One who gave everything for him. In fact, the price he pays in dedication cannot come anywhere near the price that has been paid for his ransom. No wonder Isaac Watts exclaimed:

"When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride."

—*The Church Hymnal*, no. 118.

How is the believer to relate to things that are his own and those that belong to others? Phil. 2:4.

Unfortunately man is naturally selfish. He thinks of his own affairs rather than the affairs of others. Paul noted this rather sadly when he said: "For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's" (Phil. 2:21).

It is of the nature of love not to seek her own (1 Cor. 13:5), and when man is filled with the love of Christ, then his thoughts go out to the needs of others. "Those who feel the constraining love of God do not ask how little may be given in order to obtain the heavenly reward; they ask not for the lowest standard, but aim at a perfect conformity to the will of their Redeemer."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 160.

What is the example that Jesus set for a life of ministry? Matt. 20:28.

The Christian no longer serves himself; he serves his Lord. He can put his whole heart into his work because he is not working for men, but for God. (See Col. 3:23, 24.)

What is the result of such service? Life has more meaning. Work is done better. Supervisors are more pleased and note the source of faithfulness. There is greater joy, healthier relationships, and opportunity for wider witness and service. .

THINK IT THROUGH

Is a Christian a better worker for being a Christian? How does religion help a person in accomplishing tasks?

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "Talents," pp. 325, 326.

**Part 3
PARADOX
OF GIVING**

According to the wise man, what is one cause of poverty?

**"One man gives freely, yet grows all the richer;
another withholds what he should give, and only suffers
want.**

**A liberal man will be enriched,
and one who waters will himself be watered."**

Prov. 11:24, 25, RSV.

It seems strange that a man may have more at the end by giving away, and that he may find himself with less than he had at the beginning if he hangs on to what he has.

"Scattereth. Not every kind of scattering brings an increase. Careless giving often does harm both to the giver and to the receiver; but the loving, thoughtful endeavor to use one's means to alleviate the sufferings and aid the struggles of those in need, brings wealth to both. The more the giver's means are used to help others, the more he receives. The same is true of contributions made for the work of God (see v. 25). Withholding more than is right tends to poverty, both spiritual and material."
—*S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 986.

What is the secret of successful accomplishment of Christ's work by the believer? Matt. 25:14-30.

What lesson on giving is taught in 2 Corinthians 9:6?

"As we distribute God's temporal blessings, the evidence of our love and sympathy awakens in the receiver gratitude and thanksgiving to God. The soil of the heart is prepared to receive the seeds of spiritual truth. And He who ministers seed to the sower will cause the seed to germinate and bear fruit unto eternal life."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 86.

Are records kept of the offerings given by God's people?

"I was shown that the recording angel makes a faithful record of every offering dedicated to God and put into the treasury, and also of the final result of the means thus bestowed."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 518.

THINK IT THROUGH

When a person has made his offering to the Lord, is he also responsible for the way it is used in the church?

"Even though the means thus consecrated be misapplied, so that it does not accomplish the object which the donor had in view,—the glory of God and the salvation of souls,—those who made the sacrifice in sincerity of soul, with an eye single to the glory of God, will not lose their reward."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 519.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 335-340.

Part 4
THE REWARDS
OF GIVING

“And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day: and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not” (Isa. 58:10, 11).

Peter asked: “Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?” (Matt. 19:27).

What was Jesus’ response to Peter’s question regarding a reward for having made sacrifices? Matt. 19:28-30.

There were times when Jesus did not answer the questions of His disciples. For instance, when they asked about the time of the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, Jesus said that it was not for them to know. (See Acts 1:6, 7.) But when they asked about the results of doing right, Jesus did not hesitate to tell them that sacrifice will be rewarded.

From what Jesus said in Matthew 6:31, 32, what did He regard as an important cause of human anxiety?

There is a sense of security in a large bank balance. But the parable of the rich fool shows that this is a false security. (See Luke 12:16-20.) There is only one place where treasure is secure, and that is in heaven. (See verse 33.)

What was a rich young ruler asked to do with his personal property? Matt. 19:21.

Without knowing it, the rich young ruler had an idol in his heart. He wanted the privileges of heaven, but he also wanted to cling to his earthly treasures. He thought he was good because he kept the commandments. But the fact was that in his selfishness he was a transgressor of the law. It is impossible to serve God and mammon. (See Luke 16:13.)

THINK IT THROUGH

If it is difficult for a rich man to enter the kingdom, why does God bless some people with wealth?

“The ruler’s possessions were entrusted to him that he might prove himself a faithful steward; he was to dispense these goods for the blessing of those in need. So God now entrusts men with means, with talents and opportunities, that they may be His agents in helping the poor and the suffering. He who uses his entrusted gifts as God designs becomes a co-worker with the Saviour. He wins souls to Christ, because he is a representative of His character.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 523.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ’s Object Lessons, “The Reward of Grace,” pp. 390-396.

Part 5
THE MEASURE
OF A GIFT

“If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not” (2 Cor. 8:12).

God does not measure a gift by monetary value. If He did, the poor would feel left out. If you had it in your power to give, would you give? That is the question.

On what basis was the offering of two mites considered of great value? Mark 12:44.

Giving can show a dependence upon God, or it can glorify self. When people give what is left over, they are indicating that God is last in their priorities. When we place God first in our lives, then everything else that we need will be supplied.

What promise do we have that God can and will supply all our needs? Phil. 4:19.

Giving is always an act of faith. It is saying, “O Lord, I could make use of this money, but I can see that there is a great need, and I am willing to help. Thank You for giving me the grace to give. I know You will always abundantly supply my needs. You are really good to me. Once again, Thank You.”

What is the measure by which we decide the extent of our giving? 1 Cor. 16:2.

“As God hath prospered.” If we get nothing, we give nothing! Is this a fair enough arrangement? God does not expect the unreasonable, nor does He intend that we should lack any good thing. When we recognize that God has been good to us, then we find it a privilege, not only to turn in our tithes, but also to turn in a generous offering for all the needy causes around us. In fact God has promised that He will always give us enough so that we can be generous in our giving. Here is the pertinent text: “Now he who provides seed for sowing and bread for food will provide the seed for you to sow; he will multiply it and swell the harvest of your benevolence, and you will always be rich enough to be generous” (2 Cor. 9:10, 11, NEB).

THINK IT THROUGH

If God does not really need our gifts, why does He ask us to give?

“When Christ’s followers give back to the Lord His own, they are accumulating treasure which will be given to them when they shall hear the words, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 523.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 341-345.

Part 6
THE CHEERFUL
GIVER

“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7).

The way a gift is made determines the way it can be received. God does not accept a gift made reluctantly. To give cheerfully is to enjoy giving. This takes the grace of God in the heart.

What did Jesus say was the basis of giving freely? Matt. 10:8.

“Easy come; easy go” is one way that people handle money. But that is not the meaning of this verse, nor the way the Christian recognizes his stewardship. The Christian is very much concerned that his money be given to worthy causes. He is not extravagant with his money. But once he recognizes a need, and he knows that God has blessed him with all that he has, he gladly opens up his purse and places in the offering plate that which represents a desire that good may come, in a spirit of gratitude that God has been good to him.

What does Matthew 5:23, 24 teach us about giving and our relationship with other people?

We do not buy our way into the kingdom by our gifts. Our giving is part of a religious experience in which we perform our duty only after we know that we hold no grudge against anyone and no one has a grudge against us. To be right with God means that we are right also with our fellowmen.

What statement of Jesus, not referred to in the Gospels, was quoted by Paul? Acts 20:35.

Luke tells us that Jesus suggested that those who invite people to dinner ought to invite the poor, rather than relatives or the rich. In this way hospitality can be given without thought of returned favor. To give with the thought of return is not to give in the true sense of the term.

THINK IT THROUGH

In what sense is it true that “happiness lies more in giving than in receiving”? Does receiving make one feel inferior? obligated? Does giving make one feel superior? condescending?

“In the days of Israel the tithe and freewill offerings were needed to maintain the ordinances of divine service. Should the people of God give less in this age? The principle laid down by Christ is that our offerings to God should be in proportion to the light and privileges enjoyed.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 528.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 525-529.



Obligations in the Home

“I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named” (Eph. 3:14, 15).

The Greek text translated “whole family” in the KJV is literally “every family.” There seems to be a play on the Greek words for “father” and “family” (*pater, patria*). “*Patria* is used for any social group descended from a common ancestor and the one ancestor common to human beings and angels is God, the supreme Father.”—Eph. 3:15 note, Jerusalem Bible. This text tells us that every family unit is related to that larger family of which God is the Father.

In our lesson this week we look at the family as a very important unit in society. It is composed of individuals who interrelate, and upon the proper interrelation of the parts of the family the health of the family depends. Furthermore, as each unit is successful, so society at large is benefited, and eventually the whole family of God in heaven and on earth is united in blessedness.

God laid the basis for the family when He created male and female, and told Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply. It is important to note that our first parents were created in the image of God, so that their relationship is to reflect the being of God. Husband and wife and children are to work harmoniously together in love to God’s honor and glory.

Sin has marred the image of God in man, but the purpose of redemption is to restore that image. Even in our

sinful condition, we are to strive to accomplish God’s plans and purposes.

In what ways are partners in a marriage one? Is marriage for keeps? These are questions that we must study this week. What about the children? Should one have large families or small? How does God look upon the children? These are questions that require biblical answers so that we may be sure how the various persons in the family can value, and interrelate to, one another. One of life’s greatest blessings is a family in which parents and children cooperate to fulfill their obligations to one another and to God.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Male and Female**
(Gen. 1:27)
2. **Choosing a Partner**
(Gen. 2:22)
3. **Marriage for Keeps**
(Mark 10:9)
4. **When Children Come**
(Ps. 127:3)
5. **The Worth of a Child**
(Matt. 18:6)
6. **Unity in the Family**
(Prov. 31:10, 11, 28).

Part 1
MALE AND
FEMALE

What characteristics of God and man do we find in the creation of Adam and Eve?

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Gen. 1:27).

The creation of Adam and Eve has much to tell us regarding God on the one hand and man on the other.

Why did God create people? Isa. 43:7.

When God created man it was to be his privilege to reflect God's image in all his relationships of life. We have seen the tragedy that takes place when man rejects God and decides to go his own way. But the lesson of Scripture is that man has the opportunity of accepting a full and free salvation whereby he can live to the honor and glory of God.

What is the significance of male and female in the creation of man? Gen. 1:27, 28; 2:20; 3:20.

It is significant that generic man is basically two persons; a man and a woman. They can anticipate each other's needs, cooperate in pursuing certain objectives, and share the joys of achievement and communion. Man and woman together complement each other, and in the ideal always work together to achieve common goals. Neither one dominates the other or makes claims from the other that are unreasonable.

This relationship of two persons, each having an individual personality and experience, coming together to share their lives in unity and harmony and love, is a part of the image of God that needs to be reflected in a Christian home.

How did Adam express the closeness of the relationship between himself and Eve? Gen. 2:23.

The Bible emphasizes a close relationship between husband and wife which transcends sex.

THINK IT THROUGH

How does the relationship between the members of the family reflect the image of God? Does the concept of the Trinity give us any clue?

“As the coin bears the image and superscription of the reigning power, so man at his creation bore the image and superscription of God; and though now marred and dim through the influence of sin, the traces of this inscription remain upon every soul. God desires to recover that soul and to retrace upon it His own image in righteousness and holiness.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 194.

**Part 2
CHOOSING
A PARTNER**

How did God proceed to provide Adam with a suitable partner in life?

“And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man” (Gen. 2:22).

Read verses 20-24.

The following aspects of the Bible story should be noted:

1. Adam had a need for a partner. He had just concluded giving names to the creatures that God had created. But not one of them could stand by Adam's side as an equal.

2. Eve was a special creation from Adam, so that Adam could say: “bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.”

3. God provided the one who was to be Adam's partner, one who was to be suitable in every respect.

4. Adam and Eve became one flesh in marriage. They set up a family unit that in future generations was to be separate from that of father and mother.

5. The biological relationship is only one aspect of the family unit. In the family of man we have two independent people coming together to live a life of one complementing the other, neither losing his personality in the other, neither dominating the other, but both working together in harmony and love to achieve the purpose of bringing glory to God in their fellowship.

How does one find a partner in life? What example is given by Abraham in the choice of a wife for Isaac? Genesis 24.

Customs vary from country to country, but certain principles are clear:

1. God's counsel and guidance should be sought before a decision is made.

2. A marriage always involves the other members of the family so that they should be consulted.

3. The couple must be united on religious principles.

4. The couple should be mature enough, and responsible enough, so that the decision to marry is not based on sentiment alone, but on a recognition of all that marriage involves and a willingness to meet all of life's responsibilities.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is marriage not purely a personal matter? How can one who is not married find fulfillment in life? (See 1 Cor. 7:8.)

“The grace of Christ, and this alone, can make this institution [marriage] what God designed it should be—an agent for the blessing and uplifting of humanity. And thus the families of earth, in their unity and peace and love, may represent the family of heaven.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 65.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 171-176.

**Part 3
MARRIAGE
FOR KEEPS**

What did Jesus teach about the sanctity of marriage?

“What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Mark 10:9).

Jesus Himself instituted marriage in Eden. When He was on earth He attended a marriage feast at Cana, thus placing His approval on marriage, although He Himself did not marry.

But human nature being what it is, marriages have often broken up. In the time of Moses, provision was made for divorce. (See Deut. 24:1.) But Jesus pointed out that it is not God’s plan that men and women should marry and divorce. (See Mark 10:5.) Marriage is for keeps!

What was the experience of Hosea that shows that serious difficulties can arise in a marriage? Hosea 1:2, 3; 3:1-3.

Hosea in his relationship with his wife was experiencing the heartaches and longings of God Himself toward His people. God loves His people and wants to be married to them. Yet when they turn to false gods and accept false doctrines, they are committing adultery. God desires a relationship of constancy, and if that relationship is broken, He desires that His people return to Him in repentance, and He promises that He will not turn anyone away. (See Hosea 2:19, 20.)

The wise man says, “Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord” (Prov. 18:22). Marriage is an experience that brings joy and fulfillment, and when it is pursued with the blessing of God, it results in a broader concept of the meaning of life. This is not to say that there are no problems, adjustments, or sacrifices. On the contrary, one has to work hard at a marriage to make it successful. There must be give and take on both sides if the relationship is to persist. The devil doubtless seeks to ruin a marriage, but we must not give him the opportunity. (See Eph. 4:27.) The secret of success in this is found in James 4:7. “Be submissive then to God. Stand up to the devil and he will turn and run. Come close to God, and he will come close to you” (NEB).

THINK IT THROUGH

Why did Jesus insist on the indissolubility of marriage?

“Among the Jews a man was permitted to put away his wife for the most trivial offenses, and the woman was then at liberty to marry again. This practice led to great wretchedness and sin. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus declared plainly that there could be no dissolution of the marriage tie, except for unfaithfulness to the marriage vow.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 63.

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pp. 356-362.

**Part 4
WHEN
CHILDREN
COME**

“Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward” (Ps. 127:3).

“Children derive life and being from their parents, and yet it is through the creative power of God that your children have life, for God is the Life-giver. Let it be remembered that children are not to be treated as though they were our own personal property. Children are the heritage of the Lord, and the plan of redemption includes their salvation as well as ours. They have been entrusted to parents in order that they might be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, that they might be qualified to do their work in time and eternity.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 280.

What did Jacob recognize in the matter of procreation? Gen. 30:1, 2.

Jacob thought he had some understanding of genetics. (See Gen. 30:37-42.) But the true explanation is given in Genesis 31:10, 12. He recognized that God was in control, and we cannot live meaningfully without taking this factor into consideration.

This is not to say that God often interferes with genetic or biological processes. Man is a free moral agent, and doubtless God has often permitted him to do things so that he can see the results. We need only to point up the fact that not everything in this life is the result of earthly cause and effect. God in His mercy can withhold the effects of sin, and in His love He can abundantly bless. To have children is a blessing, but not to have them may also be a blessing in disguise. And parents need to look to God at all times in supplication and thanksgiving.

Children are a joy and a sacred responsibility, objects of love and attention. They are individuals who will one day stand on their own.

THINK IT THROUGH

To what extent are parents responsible for the number of children they have?

“Those professing to be Christians should not enter the marriage relation until the matter has been carefully and prayerfully considered from an elevated standpoint to see if God can be glorified by the union. Then they should duly consider the result of every privilege of the marriage relation, and sanctified principle should be the basis of every action. Before increasing their family, they should take into consideration whether God would be glorified or dishonored by bringing children into the world. . . . They have no right to bring children into the world to be a burden to others.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 380.

FURTHER STUDY

The Adventist Home, pp. 159-161.

Part 5
THE WORTH
OF A CHILD

“Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matt. 18:6).

Jesus had a high regard for children, higher than the disciples had.

When mothers brought their children to Jesus to be blessed of Him, what did the disciples try to do? Matt. 19:13-15.

Sometimes adults think their work is so important that they have no time for the children. And it is true that their work is very important. But so are the children. Children need to learn of Jesus, and parents must never be so busy that they cannot devote adequate time to teach their children about Him.

What reason did Jesus give why we should not despise children? Matt. 18:10.

God has a special care for those who are weak; His angels are ready to serve in every need. Seeing this is the case, we should be careful lest we despise anyone who has not reached our standards. It is not for us to despise anyone, but to cooperate with the heavenly angels for the salvation of everyone.

What necessary characteristic did Jesus say His followers must possess in order to enter the kingdom of heaven? Matt. 18:3-5.

It is amazing sometimes how much we can learn from little children. They have insights that are well worth considering. Furthermore, they rarely put on airs. They have a faith and trust in God and in their parents that is exemplary to older people who soon become sophisticated, hypocritical, and proud. Jesus would have us emulate children in humility and implicit confidence in God's love and care. Only in this way can we hope to enter into the kingdom.

THINK IT THROUGH

What lessons have you learned from children that are of value to you? In what ways do we fail to give children the care and attention they need?

“The children and youth are Christ's purchased possession; He has bought them with an infinite price. Jesus loves the little ones. . . . And Jesus bids the angels to take special charge of these inexperienced souls, in their homes, in their school life, and in the Sabbath school.”—*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, pp. 158, 159.

FURTHER STUDY

The Ministry of Healing, pp. 388-394.

Part 6
UNITY IN
THE FAMILY

“Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her.”
“Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her” (Prov. 31:10, 11, 28).

Proverbs 31 praises the wife. Is it not true that most things in the home revolve around the mother?

What duties of the wife mentioned in Proverbs 31 do you think are most important?

If the family is to be united it must be organized. It must be known who is responsible for what. Each member of the family must do his or her duty. No one should usurp the place of the other. There must be a recognition that there is a head of the house. Each must realize that no one is perfect, and so everyone must be forgiving and understanding and willing to do whatever is necessary for the smooth running of the home. Furthermore, God must be recognized as the real head of the household. He must be worshiped and His commandments obeyed. A children's song says: "With Jesus in the family, happy, happy home!" How true this is!

Unity, order, and discipline in the home are essential to general well-being. There needs to be respect for one another. All should know what is right and by God's grace seek to do it. When someone fails, he must be prepared to acknowledge his fault and seek to do better. Everyone should use tact and learn to be gracious in approaching another. The parents should set the example. They should gather the family when matters of importance to the home need to be discussed. Thus all may participate in establishing rules and methods of procedure. All must work in harmony.

Such a family is not produced in a day! It takes diligent effort and much prayer. It takes patience and self-control. But such a family can be a light in the neighborhood. In fact, their witness may be the strongest argument for Christianity, a more powerful force for good than all the sermons preached and literature distributed.

THINK IT THROUGH

What do you think are some important factors for producing unity in the family? What principles apply to every family? Give examples of practices that may not be suitable to some families?

"The restoration and uplifting of humanity begins in the home. The work of parents underlies every other. . . . The well-being of society, the success of the church, the prosperity of the nation, depend upon home influences."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 349.

FURTHER STUDY

The Adventist Home, pp. 177-180.



Responsibilities of Training

“The Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him” (Gen. 18:17-19).

It is significant to note that when God was dealing with Abraham, He had at the back of His mind—to speak in a human way—the concept that Abraham would pass on to his children the heritage of doing what is right and just. Communion with God, and understanding of God’s revelation, is not something that we keep to ourselves; it is something that we must pass on to our children.

We have already learned that children are a heritage from the Lord; they are a blessing and a responsibility to us as parents. We stand in the place of God to them. When we teach them to love, trust, and obey us, we are teaching them to love, trust, and obey God. We help to mold their characters by precept and example. Our desire is that they may grow up to know, love, and serve God. We want them to be with us in God’s eternal kingdom.

In our lesson this week we look at our responsibility to train the young people and prepare them for the opportunities and challenges of life. We note that God gave strict commandment to His people that they were to be diligent in teaching their children His laws. (See Deut. 6:6, 7.) We are to recognize that in the world we are surrounded by temptations, and the law of God is to be a hedge to keep us from danger. The word of the Lord hidden in the heart will keep a person from sinning. (See Ps. 119:11.)

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

- 1. The Command to Teach (Deut. 6:7)**
- 2. Content of Teaching (John 17:3)**
- 3. Need of Discipline (Prov. 22:6)**
- 4. Goals of Education (Col. 2:8)**
- 5. Knowledge and Action (John 13:17)**
- 6. Purpose of Schools (2 Cor. 6:14-16)**

Part 1
THE COMMAND
TO TEACH

"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. 6:7).

God through Moses gave implicit directions to the children of Israel that they were to teach their children the laws that had been handed down to them. They were to do that at all times, in all places, in every way possible. If the children of Israel were to fail in anything, they were not to fail in passing on to every generation the religious precepts that they had received.

Why was God so particular about having parents teach their children? Deut 6:3.

God's promises of health and prosperity were dependent on the people keeping and obeying the commandments. The commandments had been given in the first instance with the welfare of the people in mind. In order that they would never forget the laws, they were told to bind them on the hand, place them on the forehead, and write them on the doorposts of their houses (verses 8, 9). But more importantly, they were to have them in their hearts (verse 6).

What instruction was given to Peter regarding the lambs of the flock? John 21:15-17.

The Bible writers often used the figure of speech of a shepherd caring for his sheep. Jesus Himself is the Good Shepherd. (See Psalm 23; John 10:11.) Jesus used this figure when He commissioned Peter to do the work of an under-shepherd. He told him to care for the lambs and the sheep. This charge to Peter points out to the church today their responsibility to provide the necessary teachers and facilities for the children to learn about Jesus and the plan of salvation.

It is to be expected that children will ask their parents why they do this and that and the other. Parents need to have a ready answer, telling of their experiences and pointing the children to the Word of God. (Read Deut. 6:20-25.)

"God had commanded the Hebrews to teach their children His requirements and to make them acquainted with all His dealings with their fathers. This was one of the special duties of every parent—one that was not to be delegated to another. . . .

"Further provision was made for the instruction of the young, by the establishment of the schools of the prophets."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 592, 593.

FURTHER STUDY *Education*, pp. 185-188.

Part 2
CONTENT OF
TEACHING

“This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3).

There is no higher education than that which teaches about God. We need to know who He is, what He has done, and what He requires of man.

How may all the law and the prophets be summarized? Matt. 22:37-40.

The controversy of the ages has been about the character of God. People often hate God when they do not know Him. To know God as He really is, to know what He has done for us and does for us every day, is to love Him. The most important teaching that any parent can give his child is a knowledge of God and His great love.

What are the main sources of knowledge about God? Ps. 19:1; 46:10; 2 Tim. 3:15.

Although nature suffers the blight of sin, there is still much that reveals the greatness and the glory of God. (See Rom. 1:20.) Just to be still and meditate upon life and its many implications can reveal to one that there is a God. Experience is another teacher; a man can have an inner conviction that God loves him and provides for him. But of course the outstanding source of a knowledge of God is in His Word, where we learn about His character and His dealings with men through the centuries. The Word of God is a light that illuminates the pathway of life and enables us to understand many things that would otherwise be incomprehensible. (See Ps. 119:105.)

Where do we find the supreme revelation of God? John 14:9.

When Jesus is lifted up, all men are drawn to Him. (See John 12:32.) We need to learn about Him every day. We need to reveal Him to others. To the young people He must be presented as their Saviour and Friend.

“The science of redemption is the science of all sciences; the science that is the study of the angels and of all the intelligences of the unfallen worlds. . . . This is the highest study in which it is possible for man to engage. As no other study can, it will quicken the mind and uplift the soul.”—*Education*, p. 126.

THINK IT THROUGH

Parents try to give their children the best gifts. What do you think is the best gift that parents can give to their children?

“The Bible should be made the foundation of study and of teaching.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 401.

FURTHER STUDY

Counsels to Teachers, pp. 19-24.

**Part 3
NEED OF
DISCIPLINE**

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6).

There are some who believe that children should grow up naturally; that to direct and restrain is to frustrate and cause problems for the future. The Bible does not teach this philosophy. On the contrary, the Bible teaches that children are like plants (Ps. 128:3). Plants need protection and pruning if they are to grow up satisfactorily and produce fruit.

What lesson can we learn from the story of Eli and his family? 1 Sam. 3:12, 13.

As the twig is bent, so is the tree inclined. Human nature being what it is, there is always need of correction. Children inherit from their parents characteristics that need to be restrained in some instances and encouraged in others. But a child without guidance is like a garden without care, a disgrace to itself and an eyesore to the community.

What points does the wise man make about the occasional use of physical punishment? Prov. 13:24; 23:13; 29:15.

Children soon know whether punishment is due to loving care or the anger of the parent. Children respond to justice, but they grow resentful when parents are unfair. “Be so calm, so free from anger, that they will be convinced that you love them, even though you punish them.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 249.

What are fathers counseled not to do to their children? Col. 3:21.

Training needs to be tempered with understanding. The needs of each child demand special consideration. What suits one may not suit another. Discipline may not be easy or pleasant to administer, but properly done it results in happy consequences. (See Heb. 12:11.)

Note that Jesus was subject to His parents as He grew in wisdom and stature. (See Luke 2:51, 52.) He also learned obedience by the things that He suffered. (See Heb. 5:8.)

THINK IT THROUGH

To what extent, if at all, can the discipline of a child be delegated to someone else? Is there a time when parents cease to train and the teacher takes over?

“It is the work of parents and teachers, in the education of the youth, to co-operate with the divine purpose; and in so doing they are ‘laborers together with God.’ 1 Corinthians 3:9.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 595.

FURTHER STUDY.

Child Guidance, pp. 244-250.

Part 4
GOALS OF
EDUCATION

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col. 2:8).

The highest goal in education is perfection in Christ Jesus. As a result of sin man has many weaknesses and shortcomings. He may overcome these by God’s grace and attain the destiny for which God originally created him.

What high ideal does Paul set before us in Ephesians 4:13?

Christ set the pattern of true manhood. In word and deed and dedication to ministry He set us a perfect example. He has provided the power by which man can reach that ideal.

What did Jesus encourage His disciples to do? Matt. 4:19.

Everyone needs a type of work to do, a means of earning a livelihood. But there is more to life than earning a living; there is a goal to reach which far transcends anything this world can offer. In every type of occupation a man must ask himself whether he is also meeting the demands that God has upon him. Here is where he must be sure that his education prepares him not only for the present life but also for the life to come.

What does Paul call the wisdom that is of this world? 1 Cor. 3:19.

The Christian must be careful that he is not deceived by the so-called wisdom of this world. For him “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Ps. 111:10). He studies the Word of God because he knows he needs to be “wise unto salvation” (2 Tim. 3:15). He knows he has to avoid the mistake the Jews made of placing the tradition of men above the Word of God. (See Matt. 15:9.) He remembers that the Israelites failed again and again because they associated so closely with their heathen neighbors. The Israelites adopted heathen modes of dress and worship. Thus they failed to accomplish the purpose that God had for them to be a distinct people who portray God’s loving care and blessing. God’s remnant people must not repeat those mistakes. They must be true to the principles that God has outlined for their lives.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is it necessary for Seventh-day Adventists to have their own system of education? Is Christian education an option, or is it a necessity?

“Teaching your students to be Christians is the greatest work before you.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 590.

FURTHER STUDY

Education, pp. 13-16.

**Part 5
KNOWLEDGE
AND ACTION**

“If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them” (John 13:17).

There is a close correlation between truth and action. The one who knows the truth lives differently from the one who does not know it. More important than intellectual assent is a practical application of the truth to the life.

What did Jesus teach about action in Matthew 21:28-31?

What shows that a claim to know God is a true claim? 1 John 2:4, 5.

When we really know God we respond to Him in love and keep His commandments. Can you imagine anyone saying to a friend, “I love you,” and then not doing anything for the friend? True knowledge of a person will lead us to come close to him or to keep him at a distance, depending on what kind of person he is. When we know the laws of health and welfare, we should keep them in order to enjoy the blessings that they bring. It is utter foolishness not to do what we know to be right, and to do those things that will result in injury.

From where did Daniel and his friends receive their knowledge? Dan. 1:17.

God is the Source of all knowledge, and He will impart this to those who diligently seek Him. Paul says that knowledge makes a man proud. (See 1 Cor. 8:1.) But then again people can be destroyed by lack of knowledge. (See Hosea 4:6.) Paul was a learned man, but he counted all things as garbage compared to the knowledge of Christ he wished to have. (See Phil. 3:8, NEB, TEV, Phillips.)

There are aspects of knowledge that we do not need. Adam and Eve fell through seeking a knowledge of sin. We do not need to experience some things in life in order to know them. We may know what they cause in the lives of others and thus know to keep away from them. The Christian will want to learn the knowledge that upbuilds.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why does forbidden knowledge often seem more attractive than the truth?

“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.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 460.

FURTHER STUDY

Education, pp. 17-19.

**Part 6
PURPOSE
OF SCHOOLS**

“Do not harness yourselves in an uneven team with unbelievers. Virtue is no companion for crime. Light and darkness have nothing in common. Christ is not the ally of Beliar, nor has a believer anything to share with an unbeliever. The temple of God has no common ground with idols, and that is what we are—the temple of the living God” (2 Cor. 6:14-16, Jerusalem).

“The followers of Christ are to separate themselves from sinners, choosing their society only when there is opportunity to do them good. We cannot be too decided in shunning the company of those who exert an influence to draw us away from God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 459.

The first school on earth had the very best location, the finest teacher, the most relevant course of study, and two diligent students. Ellen White says: “The system of education instituted at the beginning of the world was to be a model for man throughout all aftertime. As an illustration of its principles a model school was established in Eden, the home of our first parents. The Garden of Eden was the schoolroom, nature was the lesson book, the Creator Himself was the instructor, and the parents of the human family were the students.”—*Education*, p. 20.

What elements of 2 Kings 2:3-5 and 6:1-7 suggest a school?

The schools of the prophets were to “serve as a barrier against the widespread corruption, to provide for the moral and spiritual welfare of the youth, and to promote the future prosperity of the nation by furnishing it with men qualified to act in the fear of God as leaders and counselors.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 593.

The students are described as “pious, intelligent, and studious.” The subjects taught were the law of God, sacred history, sacred music, and poetry. The students met their expenses by learning and practicing a trade. This plan is still a valid one to follow in our schools today. There is need for Christian schools today to serve as a refuge where young people can learn how best they can serve God and their fellowmen.

THINK IT THROUGH

How does a Christian school differ from other schools? Do our schools provide that kind of an education?

“True education does not ignore the value of scientific knowledge or literary acquirements; but above information it values power; above power, goodness; above intellectual acquirements, character. The world does not so much need men of great intellect as of noble character. It needs men in whom ability is controlled by steadfast principle.”—*Education*, p. 225.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 592-602.

Facilities for Worship

“The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord’s throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men” (Ps. 11:4).

It is astonishing that the Lord of the universe consents to meet with His people in a place that they prepare for Him. God never forces Himself upon man. He reveals Himself; He communicates; He reaches out through various ways to touch man. But if man refuses to be reached or to communicate, if man refuses to accept the revelation of God made available to him, then God can only leave him to his own devices, and he will have only himself to blame if he reaps the consequences.

In our lesson this week we see how God is worthy of worship, but this worship needs to be worthy of God. God is the Creator. A worship that is formal and external is not worthy of the God of the universe. Only sincerity and truth will do.

This God of the universe is everywhere, and therefore He can be worshiped everywhere. The attempt to limit Him to any one location is to misunderstand His nature and to make His worship difficult.

This is not to say that God has not chosen places where He can be approached. He wants to be among His people. Therefore the sanctuary must be accessible to believers. It is remarkable, however, that when God

asked for a sanctuary to be built He provided the pattern and the skills; man was only to give a freewill offering, a sign that he wants the presence of God.

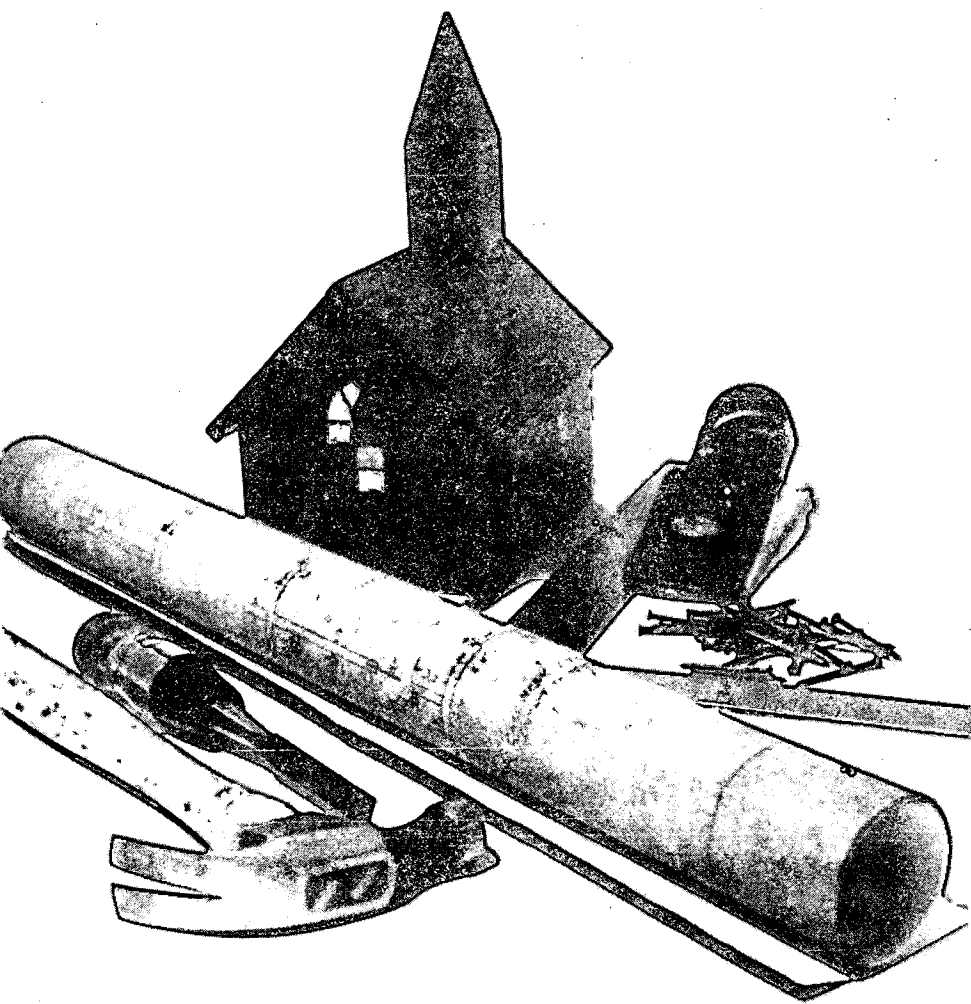
Sometimes men do not recognize their need to place God first in their lives. They build houses for themselves but do not erect a house for the worship of God. When this happens, they suffer the consequences; for prosperity comes only with the blessing of God, and blessings are related to man’s fulfillment of his obligations to God.

The house of God is basically a house of prayer. There may be meaningful ritual and ceremony, but never is the service to degenerate into a business transaction. The temple is the place where all may come, rich or poor, Jew or Gentile, saint or sinner, and each one finds the fulfillment of his needs. There is to be reverence and great joy in the presence of the Lord.

Finally, we note that the temple of God is as close as our hearts. Just as we dedicate a structure to God, so we are to dedicate our hearts and our lives. Then one day the dream of the ages will be fulfilled when “the tabernacle of God is with men” (Rev. 21:3).

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **True Worship**
(Ps. 95:1-3)
2. **Places of Worship**
(Ps. 139:7, 8)
3. **Building a Sanctuary**
(Ex. 25:8)
4. **The House of God**
(Haggai 1:4)
5. **A House of Prayer**
(Isa. 56:7)
6. **The Heart Temple**
(1 Cor. 3:16, 17)



**Part 1
TRUE
WORSHIP**

“O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods” (Ps. 95:1-3).

There is only one who is worthy of worship and praise, and that is our God. Jesus made that clear to Satan when the latter asked for worship. (See Matt. 4:10.)

Furthermore, the place of worship is not of paramount importance. Some people try to pinpoint a particular spot as holy, but Jesus said to the woman of Samaria that the main thing is to worship in spirit and in truth. (See John 4:20-24.)

Why is it essential that people should worship in spirit and in truth? John 4:24.

God is not limited to any one place since He is everywhere. Wherever His children are, there He can be. If it were true that the worshiper could meet God only in one place, then a hardship would be imposed on those who could not go there for one reason or another. Since God is readily accessible in every place, there is no excuse for anyone not to worship.

What do you understand by the expression “in spirit and in truth”?

The result of merely formal worship is that the needs of the worshipers are not met and they go elsewhere to satisfy them. True worship comes from the heart, and the worshiper has a sense of reality and meaningfulness.

True worship involves communion, in which there is a recognition of the presence of God, and a desire on the part of the worshiper to render homage to God.

Whom does the angel flying in the midst of heaven say we ought to worship? Rev. 14:7.

Only the One who is the Creator of the universe is worthy of worship.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can the Seventh-day Adventist worshiper avoid making worship a mere round of ceremonies?

“The religion that comes from God is the only religion that will lead to God. In order to serve Him aright, we must be born of the divine Spirit. This will purify the heart and renew the mind, giving us a new capacity for knowing and loving God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 189.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 188, 189.

**Part 2
PLACES OF
WORSHIP**

“Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there” (Ps. 139:7, 8).

The psalmist strikingly indicates that God is everywhere; he pictures himself trying to flee from Him, and he mentions a number of places which may be considered out of reach; but, lo, God is there!

What did Jesus teach the woman of Samaria about the location of worship? John 4:20, 21.

There is a human tendency to think that one place is more sacred than another. It is not the place that is sacred, but the presence of God that makes the place sacred. Thus Sinai was a holy mount so long as God was there, and the children of Israel were to approach it with reverence and fear. (See Ex. 19:10-13.) Today Mount Sinai is like any other mountain.

Where did Jacob recognize the presence of God? Gen. 28:11-17.

Jacob was running away for his life. He knew he had done wrong in deceiving his father, and he knew he could expect nothing but death from his brother. Would God forgive him? Would God even consider him? He lay down in discouragement; but the next morning he awoke with the assurance that God had not forsaken him; He was by his side, still ready to communicate with him and bless him. He set up an altar and made a vow that he would always serve God. In some places we can say that people are only a telephone call away! With God we can say that He is only a prayer away.

In the history of the early church, where did the believers meet for worship? Acts 2:46, 47; Rom. 16:5.

There were no church buildings for the early believers. They met wherever it was most convenient—usually in a home. This was a personal fellowship. It tied the members together in bonds of love.

THINK IT THROUGH

How can one make the services in a large church personal? How far does a building help or hinder the spirit of worship?

“In all that pertains to the success of God's work, the very first victories are to be won in the home life. Here the preparation for the Sabbath must begin. . . . Train for Him the little church in your home, that on the Sabbath all may be prepared to worship in the Lord's sanctuary.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 354.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 268-270.

**Part 3
BUILDING A
SANCTUARY**

“Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them” (Ex. 25:8).

Although God meets with His people anywhere, a particular place for worship is what He desires and expects. At first the altar was the center of worship. (See Gen. 12:8.) Then in the wilderness God asked the children of Israel to build a special tent which would be the symbol of His presence.

Why did God ask for a sanctuary to be built? Ex. 25:8.

God wants to dwell with His people. How remarkable that God desires to be in the midst of those whom He has chosen! In this way He can guide them, protect them, and meet their every need. There is a two-way process here; men are constantly reminded of their obligations to God, and God in His turn makes them a blessing to themselves and to others.

What was the source of the money and the plans for building the sanctuary? Ex. 25:2, 9.

This was a joint venture. By giving of their means the people showed that their hearts and minds were with the project. By following the pattern that was presented they were ensuring that the worship would be meaningful and acceptable. Man is not to worship in his own way, but in God's.

God also provided the skills necessary for the making of every part of the sanctuary. (See Ex. 31:2-6.) He was concerned about detail, that everything be perfect. A house for worship needs every care in the planning stage and careful attention in every phase. Why is this the case? Is it not to indicate that the house of God must be a true reflection of His perfection? No cheap or shoddy work can be accepted. Only the best of materials can be used so that God is honored and exalted.

It is also interesting to note that not everyone could build a sanctuary. When David wanted to build a temple in Jerusalem, he was told that he was not qualified to do so. (See 2 Chron. 6:7-9.) He could gather the materials, and he did; but another had to build. What does this tell us about the one who leads out in building a new church? He is to be a dedicated man, working in harmony with God's plans and purposes.

THINK IT THROUGH

How does one choose between quality and extravagance? What are to be the qualities of a church building that will make it acceptable to God?

“Wherever a company of believers is raised up, a house of worship should be built. Let not the workers leave the place without accomplishing this.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 100.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 6, pp. 100-104.

**Part 4
THE HOUSE
OF GOD**

"Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins?" (Haggai 1:4, RSV).

Sometimes an unfavorable comparison can be made between the house of God and the houses we live in. We should always do better for the house of worship than for our own houses. This means that the style and furnishing of the house of God will vary from community to community, but always avoiding ostentation. People should respond to God in direct proportion to the way they have been blessed.

Why was it that the returned exiles worked hard but never made any economic progress? Haggai 1:5-11.

People live under God, and the way they live determines whether God can bless them. When the children of Israel returned from exile they had built houses for themselves but had neglected to rebuild the temple. They had excused themselves by saying that it was not time to rebuild the temple (verse 2). Their enemies had destroyed the temple once; they might destroy it again. Yet they had built houses for themselves. Through the prophet God pointed out their inconsistency, and told them that they must put God first in their lives. They must consider the place of worship before their own comfort.

The book of Haggai tells what happened when the people repented and began building the Lord's house. Immediately the Lord was with them. They were not to fear, but to press on, and God would make His house glorious (1:4-9; 2:18, 19).

What experience lets us know that God desires His people as well as the place of worship to be glorious? Zech. 3:1-10.

God loves His people and wants the very best for them. He reclothes His believing people with the righteousness of Jesus and turns aside the accusations of Satan. Then God says He will give them a place close to Himself. (See Haggai 2:23.)

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is it so essential to build a representative house of God?

"A striking illustration of the results of selfishly withholding even freewill offerings from the cause of God was given in the days of the prophet Haggai. . . .

"God intended that His people Israel should be light bearers to all the inhabitants of the earth. In maintaining His public worship they were bearing a testimony to the existence and sovereignty of the living God. And this worship it was their privilege to sustain, as an expression of their loyalty and their love to Him."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 527, 528.

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pp. 573-578.

**Part 5
A HOUSE
OF PRAYER**

“Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people” (Isa. 56:7).

There is a danger that familiarity with the house of God will breed contempt. One must ever be conscious of the presence of God and remember that just as we act with dignity and propriety before persons we respect, so before God we must act with reverence and awe.

How did the people in the time of Jesus show lack of respect for the temple? Matt. 21:12, 13.

The services at the temple had become a business for many people. Worshipers who needed temple currency could exchange their own for that which alone was acceptable in the treasury. There were “authorized dealers” in the temple precincts from whom worshipers could buy animals for sacrifices. Worship in the temple could involve much sharp bargaining. It was an expensive process. Could the poor afford to purchase the necessary sacrifices to fulfill their obligations? Small wonder that Jesus decided to “cleanse” the temple!

No one should be prevented from enjoying the full privileges of worship in the house of God because of poverty. Nor should any activity savor of worldly business and interfere with the sanctity of the location or the spirit of the Sabbath day. The house of God is where He meets with His people, and all activities in it should harmonize with that purpose. It is here that one may receive a call from God, as did Isaiah. (See Isa. 6:1-8.) Or may plead for the answer to one’s prayer, as did Hannah. (See 1 Sam. 1:10-15.) Or serve as a doorkeeper as the psalmist was willing to do. (See Ps. 84:10.)

How is the Lord to be worshiped in the temple? Ps. 29:2.

There is no beauty like the beauty of holiness. And there is no place like the sanctuary where such beauty can be found. Man cannot find rest or satisfaction except as he finds it in God.

THINK IT THROUGH

What rules would you set up for maintaining reverence in the house of God?

“Humility and reverence should characterize the deportment of all who come into the presence of God. In the name of Jesus we may come before Him with confidence, but we must not approach Him with the boldness of presumption, as though He were on a level with ourselves.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 252.

FURTHER STUDY

Prophets and Kings, pp. 45-50.

**Part 6
THE HEART
TEMPLE**

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1 Cor. 3:16, 17).

When God dwells among His people, He not only meets them in the place of worship; He meets with them in the heart.

More than anything else the Lord desires the heart, because out of it are the issues of life. (See Prov. 23:26; 4:23.) He can take the heart of stone and make it a heart of flesh. (See Eze. 36:26.) He writes His laws in the heart so that by continual surrender to Jesus the believer keeps the commandments. (See Jer. 31:33.) By dwelling in the heart He is in control of the life.

in view of God’s offer to do so much for man, what is the least thing a man can do? Rom. 6:13.

Man has one of two ways to choose: Either he becomes a slave of sin and reaps the reward of sin, which is death, or he surrenders his heart to Christ and receives the gift of eternal life. (See verses 16, 23.)

What prayer did Paul offer for the Ephesians, and through them, for the church as a whole? Eph. 3:17.

Because the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, we need to give it extra care. We should not defile it with such things as the eating of unclean meats, sexual perversion, or abuse by disobeying other laws of health. It is our privilege to maintain our bodies at the peak of their powers for use in God’s service.

When John the revelator pictures the New Jerusalem coming down to earth from heaven, what does the “great voice” say? Rev. 21:3.

Sin has caused separation between man and God. It has been the source of all our woes. All heaven is striving for God’s reunion with His people. This union and joy can begin on earth by faith in Christ Jesus.

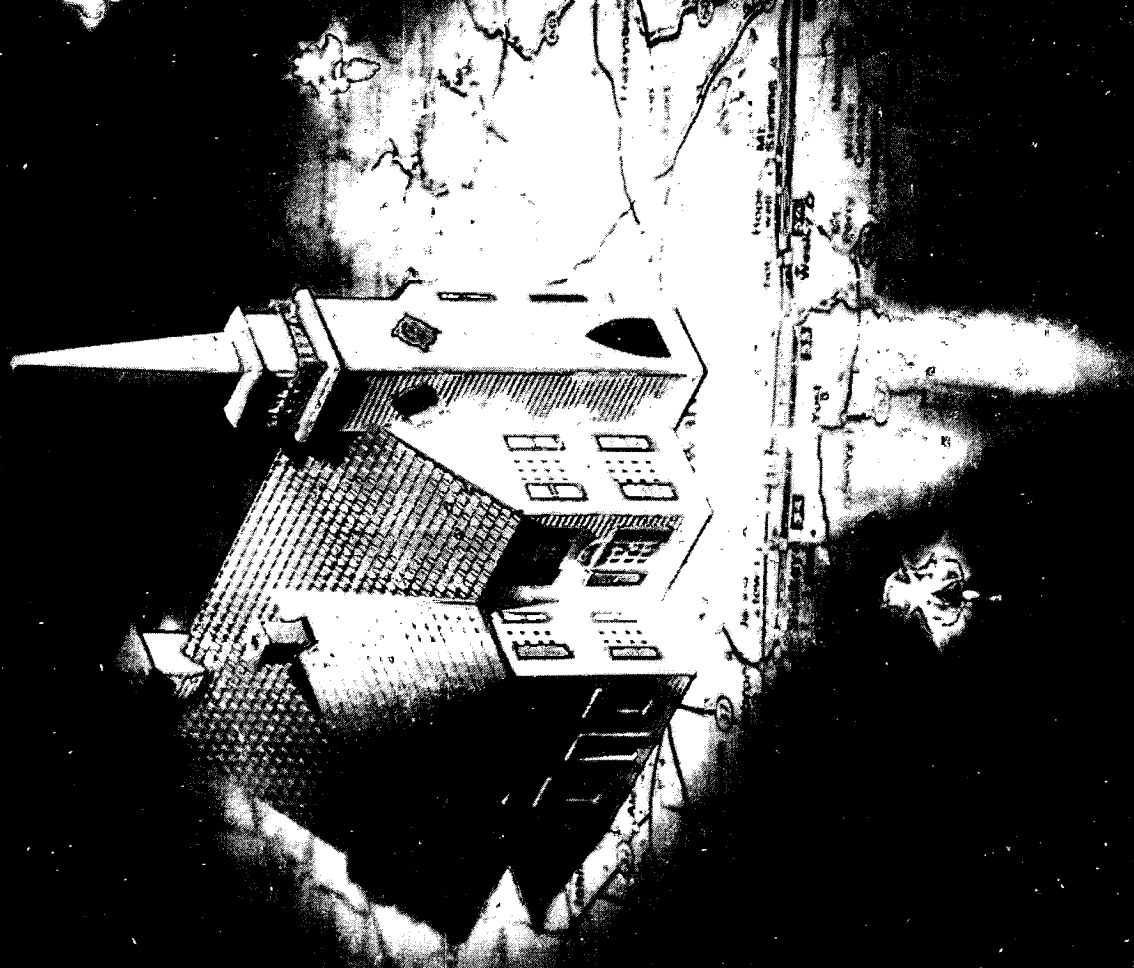
THINK IT THROUGH

What did Stephen mean when he said that “the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands” (Acts 7:48)?

“Although God dwells not in temples made with hands, yet He honors with His presence the assemblies of His people. He has promised that when they come together to seek Him, to acknowledge their sins, and to pray for one another, He will meet with them by His Spirit. But those who assemble to worship Him should put away every evil thing.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 50.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 161, 162.



Speeding the Second Advent

“After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb” (Rev. 7:9, 10).

John had a thrilling vision of God’s people in great numbers and coming from all parts of the world standing before the throne of God and the Lamb. In the vision the second advent of Jesus has already taken place. The struggle with sin is over. And now they all cry aloud ascribing salvation to the God who has done everything for them. There is great joy and rejoicing.

Can we hasten that great day? Is there anything we can do to prevent delay? These are questions we do well to ask, because we need to know our responsibilities as we live in the last days and watch the closing scenes that take place around us.

In our lesson this week we note the promise that Jesus gave of His return. The disciples did not appreciate its full meaning at the time, but after the ascension they knew what their task was, and they looked forward to His early return.

“In the days of the apostles the Christian believers were filled with earnestness and enthusiasm. So untiringly did they labor for their Master that in a comparatively short time, notwithstanding fierce opposition, the gospel of the kingdom was sounded to all the inhabited parts of the earth.”—*The Acts of the*

Apostles, p. 578. Are we as efficient today, with all of our advanced techniques for mass communication? If not, why not?

The third angel’s message is a message that is to go to the ends of the earth. Who should do this work, and how should it be done?

The signs of the end are all around us, but the church is accused of being lukewarm. Is there any way in which the church can be aroused from lethargy before it is too late?

The struggles of the last days will be fierce ones. The devil knows his time is short, and he does not make it easy for the saints or anyone else. But he must be overcome. How can this be accomplished?

Meanwhile there is a message to be given. Every member of the church must give his testimony where he is. Further, when he cannot go to the mission field himself, he must be prepared to help others get there. There is no business more important than the business of preaching the gospel.

It is our responsibility with every means at our disposal to hasten the second coming of Jesus. He is waiting for us!

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **The Promise to Return**
(John 14:3)
2. **A Task Presented**
(Mark 16:15, 16)
3. **The Final Message**
(Rev. 14:6, 7)
4. **The Church and the World**
(John 17:15)
5. **The Final Struggle**
(1 Peter 5:8)

Part 1
THE PROMISE
TO RETURN

"If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3).

Before the crucifixion Jesus told the disciples that He would be leaving them, but that He would return. They were not to be concerned about His absence. He had a work to do, one of preparation for them so that they could eventually be with Him.

Why were the disciples so dull of understanding, when Jesus was so plain in His statements?

The disciples, like the rest of the Jewish nation, had their preconceived ideas regarding the Messiah. They thought of freedom from Roman oppression.

What words does Paul use to refer to the second coming of Jesus? Titus 2:13.

For Paul the second coming of Jesus was an event he looked forward to with joy. And Hebrews 10:37 shows full confidence in the fulfillment of the promise. God's people need patience in view of delays (see James 5:8), but their hearts should never waver.

In view of the second coming, what should every Christian be doing? 1 John 3:3.

Of course no one can cleanse himself of sin. But the will must be on Christ's side of the controversy, and the believer must cooperate with the Lord. The Christian who is establishing his faith ever more strongly has no time for doubt or questioning. Delay for him is a form of grace in which he has another opportunity to do what is right and fulfill God's purposes.

What does Peter say is the reason for apparent delay in Christ's coming? 2 Peter 3:8, 9.

This truth is a mercy and a challenge. It is a mercy for many of us that Jesus has not come yet. But it is also a challenge to hurry up and repent of our lukewarmness. Why should we detain the Saviour we are anxious to see?

THINK IT THROUGH

What are some things you would like to do before Christ comes?

"God designs that His people shall fix their eyes heavenward, looking for the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 194.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 32-34.

**Part 2
A TASK
PRESENTED**

“He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15, 16).

While Jesus is in heaven preparing a place for His people, His disciples on earth are to be preparing to meet God.

What did Jesus say would happen before the end of the world came? Matt. 24:14.

There is a task to be done. We speed the day of the second advent as we accomplish the task that has been entrusted to the church.

It is to be noted that Jesus said the gospel of the kingdom would be preached “as a witness.” There is no suggestion here that everyone will accept the testimony given. People are free to accept or reject. The objective is that everyone will have the opportunity to know what issues are at stake and will be able to make a responsible decision one way or the other.

What is the gospel commission? Matt. 28:19, 20.

The New English Bible translates the Greek: “Go forth therefore and make all nations my disciples.” The gospel is to be preached with an urgency and a desire that all men should accept the invitation. There must be no halfhearted measures, no mere proclamation without attempt to persuade. Christian witness with a full realization of the issues at stake, eternal life or eternal loss. When there is love and concern for fellow human beings, there can only be a pleading that the right decision be made.

What authority did Jesus say He had, and what promise did He make? Matt. 28:18, 20.

With all the authority of heaven behind us and the presence of Jesus with us, we can go forth with confidence and do the necessary work and that the work will be finished. Problems of language, culture, politics, and an ever increasing population will not stand in our way. As we cooperate with God, the task will be accomplished.

“Christ desires by the fullness of His power so to strengthen His people that through them the whole world shall be encircled with an atmosphere of grace. When His people shall make a wholehearted surrender of themselves to God, this purpose will be accomplished.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 148.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 825-828.

**Part 3
THE FINAL
MESSAGE**

“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” (Rev. 14:6, 7).

God's final messengers to the world proclaim the everlasting gospel. The good news of salvation was first announced to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and repeated century after century till the time of Christ when there was a visible representation of it. It was then preached by the apostles and the church ever since. The only message of vital concern to man is the one that tells him of a Saviour who has made ample provision for his freedom from sin and the joy of life everlasting.

What makes the message of the first angel so relevant to man today? Rev. 14:7.

We are living in the hour of judgment. We are living in a day when people doubt the Creation story as told in Genesis. God's last message calls men to recognize God as the One who originated the world and who brings its civilization to an end.

What religious practice affirms the truth of God's creatorship? Ex. 20:10, 11.

The issue of the last days includes the matter of the day of worship: will it be the day which God blessed and Christ claimed as His own? (See Mark 2:27, 28.) Or will it be the day chosen by men as the one most convenient for their purposes and supported by human legislation? When the issue is clear, people will be called upon to take a stand for the truth, thus receiving the seal of God, while others will receive a mark in their hands or in their foreheads, indicating that they choose to serve an earthly power rather than the plain command of God.

THINK IT THROUGH

Am I making the necessary preparations to be able to stand when the final crisis comes upon the world? What should I be doing now?

“The great, grand work of bringing out a people who will have Christlike characters, and who will be able to stand in the day of the Lord, is to be accomplished. As long as we sail with the current of the world we need neither canvas nor oar. It is when we turn squarely about to stem the current that our labors begin.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 129.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 603-606.

**Part 4
THE CHURCH
AND THE WORLD**

“I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil” (John 17:15).

Christians have had a tendency to run away from the world. But Jesus makes it clear that, although the Christian should rightly fear certain elements in the world, he can serve a purpose in the world which he cannot accomplish by being out of it.

What should the Christian seek to do while he is in the world? Matt. 5:13-16.

The Christian is to be in the world in the sense that he makes a contribution to righteousness and proper behavior; but he is not of it, because he cannot associate with evildoers in their sinful practices.

What is one way in which the Christian can avoid being associated with the world? 2 Cor. 6:14.

The Christian must seek that kind of occupation in which he is not involved in partnerships that could be embarrassing to his Christian principles. In the world there are shady practices, unjust dealings, unfair representation, even outright lying. Since the Christian can have nothing to do with these things, he has no option but to separate himself from any activity that involves such a policy. How can he, with a clear conscience, profit from a business that deals with products that are unhealthful? His objectives in life are not merely to gain a living, or amass wealth, but to represent his Master.

What example did Jesus set of being in the world but not of it? Acts 10:38.

When Jesus was condemned for eating with sinners He pointed out that His mission was to bring sinners to repentance. (See Matt. 9:10-13.)

THINK IT THROUGH

Why is it that the Christian is disliked even though he is engaged in good works and stands for principles of right conduct?

“The world loves sin, and hates righteousness, and this was the cause of its hostility to Jesus. All who refuse His infinite love will find Christianity a disturbing element. The light of Christ sweeps away the darkness that covers their sins, and the need of reform is made manifest. . . .

“Thus strife is created, and Christ’s followers are accused as troublers of the people.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 306.

FURTHER STUDY

Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, “The Beatitudes” (Matt. 5:13, 14), pp. 35-44.

**Part 5
THE FINAL
STRUGGLE**

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

The closing scenes of earth's history will involve a bitter struggle between the followers of Jesus on one hand and the followers of the devil on the other. The devil knows that his time is short, and he makes a supreme effort to deceive the elect so that they will be destroyed. (See Matt. 24:24.)

In view of the bitterness of the final struggle, what are Christians admonished to do? Matt. 24:42; 25:13.

There is one area in which we must be especially watchful: “Satan will constantly present allurements to induce us to break this tie [Christ's love]—to choose to separate ourselves from Christ. Here is where we need to watch, to strive, to pray, that nothing may entice us to *choose* another master; for we are always free to do this.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 72.

What assurance for the final struggle can we gain from Paul's remarks in Romans 8:35-39?

The truth of the gospel should be so firmly established in the heart and mind that nothing can separate the Christian from his Lord. Yet the devil will present himself as an angel of light, and his teaching will be so specious that only those who have immersed themselves in the truth will be able to distinguish between truth and error. As the day of Christ's coming approaches let us study our Bibles to avoid being deceived by the devil.

There is a danger that we shall underestimate the power of the evil one and become self-sufficient, relying on our own powers to gain the victory. It is only as we recognize our weakness and rely wholly on Christ that we can overcome.

Although the devil is a wily foe, he is a defeated one. “Through divine strength the weakest saint is more than a match for him and all his angels.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 293.

THINK IT THROUGH

What are some of the devil's tricks that we should be wary of?

“The watchful Christian is a working Christian, seeking zealously to do all in his power for the advancement of the gospel. As love for his Redeemer increases, so also does love for his fellow men. He has severe trials, as had his Master; but he does not allow affliction to sour his temper or destroy his peace of mind. He knows that trial, if well borne, will refine and purify him, and bring him into closer fellowship with Christ.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 261.

FURTHER STUDY

The Great Controversy, pp. 607-610.

**Part 6
EVERYONE
INVOLVED**

“I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father” (1 John 2:13).

John in his letter writes to everyone, because he knows that everyone is involved in the struggle against evil. The old, the young, and the very young—all have characteristics that are important in the controversy.

Whom does the prophet Joel include in the preparation for a time of emergency? Joel 1:14; 2:15-17, 28.

Sometimes the leaders are saddled with the responsibility of doing everything for themselves and the people. But this situation is not biblical. All God's people have specific tasks, and only as each one does what he can according to his talent can every emergency be met and overcome.

There is no greater urgency than that of being ready for and speeding the second advent. If Jesus' coming has been delayed, this is no reason why believers should be lax. On the contrary, it means that a Laodicean church needs to awake out of slumber, and all see to it that the delay is not on their account.

What central theme do you find in the parable recorded in Matthew 18:11-14?

It is very human to think that some people are more important than others. And it is true that some people have more talents than others. But everyone has at least one talent. The work is of such a nature that every talent is needed, every person has a part to play in the area where he finds himself. He cannot put his duty on someone else.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why does God often choose the weak things of this world to accomplish His purposes?

“Christ has given to the church a sacred charge. Every member should be a channel through which God can communicate to the world the treasures of His grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ. There is nothing that the Saviour desires so much as agents who will represent to the world His Spirit and His character. There is nothing the world needs so much as the manifestation through humanity of the Saviour's love. All heaven is waiting for men and women through whom God can reveal the power of Christianity.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 600.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 9, pp. 125-130.

Rich in Good Works

“Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?” (James 2:21, 22).

In the mind of many there is confusion between faith and works. Such an emphasis has been made on faith, that some think works are unnecessary, or even detrimental. They think that all they need is a mental faith in order to enter into the kingdom.

Faith is basic and important, but faith without works is dead. (See James 2:20, 26). Genuine faith leads to works which are the evidence of faith. The Christian is a person of faith, but the life is one of active service in which he lives out his faith.

In our lesson this week we study the life of the Christian as he expresses his faith in works. Being rich in good works is a kind of investment safer than any financial provision that can be made for the future. (See 1 Tim. 6:17-19.) In this regard he is very different from those in the world who think that their wealth is a source of pride and security. The Christian recognizes that his only trust is in God, and that true greatness is expressed in service. (See Mark 9:35.) It is his

privilege to share his blessings with others, even to give a cup of cold water to the thirsty and a loaf of bread to the hungry. It is interesting to note that every service has its reward. (See Mark 9:41.) It is not that the Christian works for a reward; if he did, his motives might be impugned. He serves his fellowmen in need out of love to God, without thought of reward. Yet a reward will come to him, for God never accepts a service for nothing. Furthermore, every good deed performed for someone is considered to be done for God. In the judgment some will be rejected because they did not feed the hungry, visit the sick, or show concern for those in prison. It will be clearly stated that in neglecting these duties they were neglecting to do anything for their Lord. On the other hand, those who fed the hungry, visited the sick, and prisoners will be regarded as having done these things to Jesus. There will always be emergencies, times when human suffering calls for sacrificial help. The Christian considers these occasions as opportunities to show love for God and concern for the kingdom.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Works of Faith**
(James 2:21)
2. **Greatness in Service**
(Mark 9:35)
3. **Standard of Judgment**
(Eccl. 12:14)
4. **Organized for Needs**
(Acts 6:3)
5. **Meeting Emergencies**
(Isa. 58:6, 7)
6. **Works Rewarded**
(Matt. 10:42)



JOAN WALTER

**Part 1
WORKS
OF FAITH**

“Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?” (James 2:21)

James seems to contradict Paul's emphasis on justification by faith. In fact, Paul seems to depreciate the value of works. (See Rom. 4:2.) As a result some scholars—even Luther himself—have questioned the teaching of James. But a careful study of both James and Paul will show that there is no contradiction between the two.

What does James say about the place of faith in the life of the Christian? James 2:22.

Faith is a basic attitude to God. (See Heb. 11:6.) All those in the past and the present (and the future) who enter the kingdom of heaven will do so because they were men of faith. But works are a mirror that reflect faith, the evidence that faith exists. Abraham had that kind of faith, and was justified.

What is taught by James's illustration about the belief of devils? James 2:19.

Many know the truth but do not live up to it. Some make promises but never fulfill them. James points out that there must be a close relationship between faith and works if faith is to be meaningful and works valuable. He is not contrasting faith and works, but rather two kinds of faith, one with works and the other without. The first is living, the second dead.

If a man's works are divorced from his faith, the faith is spurious. Or it is possible that he will try, without faith, to keep the law in order to earn salvation. But this is legalistic and futile. (See Gal. 3:11.) Only when a man's life of good works springs from faith in God, a daily trusting and seeking to know His will, can that life be a beautiful and glorious and working expression of what it means to be saved. It is to be hoped that every Christian, even as was his Master, is rich in such good works.

THINK IT THROUGH

What are the motives behind my actions? Am I kind and loving because I want to project an image of being good? Do I do some things because I do not want to show a lack of Christian commitment?

“It is not the great results we attain, but the motives from which we act, that weigh with God. He prizes goodness and faithfulness more than the greatness of the work accomplished.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 510, 511.

“Every follower of Christ should daily examine himself, that he may become perfectly acquainted with his own conduct.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 511.

FURTHER STUDY

Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 278, 279.

**Part 2
GREATNESS
IN SERVICE**

“He sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all” (Mark 9:35).

The principles of Christ's kingdom are the exact opposite of those in the world. People on the whole want to be served rather than to serve. They would rather give orders than receive them.

What contrast did Jesus make between leaders in the church and leaders in the world? Matt. 20:25-28.

The Christian must reject the idea of grasping authority. He seeks to follow in the footsteps of his Master. He finds greatest joy and fulfillment in service. In everything that he does, whether he is choosing an occupation and training for it, or actually following a vocation in life, he has in mind that he will be helpful to others.

It takes the grace of God to have such an objective. All around us are those who have selfish motives. Some have these selfish motives even in spiritual matters. Some are busy with church affairs because they seek self-gratification. This kind of activity is no whit different from the life of the Pharisees. It causes people to misinterpret Scriptures and fail to understand the teachings of the gospel, even as people did in the time of Jesus. Just as Jesus rejected Pharisaism, so today the Christian must turn away from all self-seeking and hypocrisy. But this is possible only through the power of God.

To what extent did Jesus serve humanity? Matt. 20:28.

Jesus set out to do the Father's will. (See John 4:34.) In doing this he was best meeting the needs of men. Here is a clue to our finding true greatness in service. It is not when we go out with a conscious effort to serve that we render the best service; but it is when we ask God to lead and to guide, and when we ask for grace to follow in His leading, that our lives can be truly great because they are found in the furrow of the world's greatest needs.

THINK IT THROUGH

How would you show that the life of service is a life of joy and satisfaction? Why is the life of service linked to true greatness?

“Those who are the partakers of the grace of Christ will be ready to make any sacrifice, that others for whom He died may share the heavenly gift. They will do all they can to make the world better for their stay in it.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 78.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 4, pp. 223-227.

**Part 3
STANDARD
OF JUDGMENT**

“For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Eccl. 12:14).

It can be frightening to know that everything we do will come up in the judgment and that we shall be held accountable for our actions, whether they be open or secret, good or bad.

How did Jesus describe the process of judgment? Matt. 25:31-46.

The Christian does service for Christ when he aids human need. Christ's words to “sheep” and “goats” show that Christ so identifies Himself with people that He considers deeds done to them as done to Himself. Do we make that equation?

One of the lessons of this passage is that no true Christian would ever dream of not meeting a need of Christ if He should present Himself. The Christian should see in every person Christ Himself asking for help. Is this the way we see appeals that are made to us, or are we only conscious of the human element? Do we tire of appeals because we think they have human origin?

It is remarkable that the “sheep” were not aware that they were doing anything for the Master when they were meeting the needs of “one of the least” of their fellowmen. What does this tell you? Does it mean that the Christian meets a need on the basis of need, without regard to the “quality” of the person being helped? Does the expression, “one of the least,” suggest someone who does not deserve our help? Can it be that the Christian is so full of good deeds that he cannot and does not keep count of them, let alone remember them, or even think of them as good deeds since they are so natural a part of his life?

The Bible makes it plain that everything is recorded in the books of heaven, and people are held accountable for their conduct. This should cause us to pause in all solemnity and ask ourselves whether we shall be able to face the charges that can be brought against us. Then we should confess our sins and ask for grace so to live that we may more perfectly reflect the image of Jesus who always went about doing good. We must not do nothing; we must do something, constrained by the love of Christ.

THINK IT THROUGH

Is God fair to bring every “work” into judgment? How can one make sure that he will not be ashamed in the day that God separates the “sheep” from the “goats”?

“God's love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy. Justice is the foundation of His throne, and the fruit of His love. . . .

“God will vindicate His law and deliver His people.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 762, 763.

FURTHER STUDY

The Desire of Ages, pp. 637-641.

**Part 4
ORGANIZED
FOR NEEDS**

What kind of men were chosen to care for various aspects of business in the early church?

“Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business” (Acts 6:3).

The early church soon found it necessary to organize itself for the care of the needy in its midst. There can be no question about the importance of welfare activity.

The church exists to provide for people's physical and spiritual needs. Too often the emphasis is on the spiritual without regard for the physical. But the two must go together; the one without the other is unsatisfying and unbalanced.

What was one way that Jesus showed that He was interested in the physical needs of the people with whom He was associated? Matt. 14:16.

Unfortunately some people are interested only in what they can put in their stomachs. Jesus met such people on the day after the miracle of the loaves and the fishes and rebuked them for their shortsighted interests. (See John 6:25-29.) The prime objective of all missionary endeavor is that people come to know God and believe on Him. (See verse 29.) But in this life people have their very real physical needs, and it is idle to think that the church and its leadership can neglect these needs.

It is noteworthy that the first deacons were men of spiritual stature. We do not know much about some of them, but we do know about Stephen and Philip, the one a martyr and the other an evangelist with four daughters who prophesied. (See Acts 6:5, 8; 7:58; 8:5, 27; 21:8.) Any and all who take part in the service of the church, whether it be preaching or caring for the details of church management, must be men and women of God. Only in this way can they provide for the whole needs of man.

THINK IT THROUGH

How would you establish a balance between welfare work for the community and evangelistic outreach? How could a church fail by being engaged only in one phase or the other?

“The appointment of the seven to take the oversight of special lines of work, proved a great blessing to the church. These officers gave careful consideration to individual needs as well as to the general financial interests of the church, and by their prudent management and their godly example they were an important aid to their fellow officers in binding together the various interests of the church into a united whole.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 89.

FURTHER STUDY

The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 87-91.

**Part 5
MEETING
EMERGENCIES**

What persons does Isaiah mention as objects of aid in the true fast?

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?" (Isa. 58:6, 7)

Ellen White urges that we ought to read Isaiah 58, and after quoting a number of verses she says: "This is the special work now before us."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 33, 34.

Life has many emergency situations. They are often tragic but they are also golden opportunities for someone to do good.

It is not always easy to ask for help. Some people would rather suffer. But the Christian will make it his business to know the needs of people in the area he lives in.

What lessons are there for us in the experience of Elijah and the widow of Zarephath? 1 Kings 17:10-16.

"Angels are waiting to see if we embrace opportunities within our reach of doing good—waiting to see if we will bless others, that they in their turn may bless us. The Lord Himself has made us to differ,—some poor, some rich, some afflicted,—that all may have an opportunity to develop character. The poor are purposely permitted to be thus of God, that we may be tested and proved, and develop what is in our hearts."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 28.

What does the story of Joseph teach about how to relate to emergencies? Gen. 41:33-37.

Adequate preparation needs to be made for future needs and for emergency situations. The individual and the church must be ready to meet needs when they arise.

THINK IT THROUGH

Why are some people not ready to help in time of an emergency? What blessing do they lose?

"From what has been shown me, Sabbath keepers are growing more selfish as they increase in riches. Their love for Christ and His people is decreasing. They do not see the wants of the needy, nor feel their sufferings and sorrows. They do not realize that in neglecting the poor and the suffering they neglect Christ, and that in relieving the wants and sufferings of the poor as far as possible, they minister to Jesus."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 24.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 2, pp. 24-31.

**Part 6
WORKS
REWARDED**

“Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward” (Matt. 10:42).

Life may be hard, events may involve sacrifice, but the Christian has a future joy to which he can look. This will make the past seem negligible as far as pain or suffering is concerned.

What did Jesus say was a Christian’s cause for rejoicing? Matt. 5:12.

No one suffers in the long run when he is faithful to God and acts as a good steward. God pays good wages. The wages far outweigh the services rendered. This is made clear by the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. (See Matt. 20:1-16.)

Some people accuse the Christian of being one who is looking forward to “pie in the sky.” But the fact is that Christians receive a reward right in this life for many of the things that they do. Luke gives an interesting example of this in Luke 5:1-11. The disciples had toiled all night fishing and gained nothing. Jesus got into one of the boats in the morning and asked that He be rowed a little distance from the shore so that He could use it to speak to the people without having the people pressing around Him. When Jesus completed His discourse, He told the fishermen to go out for a catch, which they did, and they received a draught of fishes which more than compensated for Jesus’ use of the boat for a short period of time. It is no wonder that the disciples decided that they would follow Jesus.

What did Jesus assure His disciples about a reward? Luke 18:30.

The Christian does not work for a reward, so that the reward is in the nature of a bonus. But a reward is always pleasant to receive! The Christian can rest assured that he is not wasting his time, nor are his efforts unnoticed. He is working for a Lord and Master who recognizes everyone’s need and gives generously out of His limitless bounties.

THINK IT THROUGH

Contrast the wages of sin with the gift of God. Why is God so good a Master? What experiences have you had that show that God is exceedingly generous with you?

“When Christ abides in the soul, the thought of reward is not uppermost. This is not the motive that actuates our service. . . . God desires us to appreciate His promised blessings. But He would not have us eager for rewards nor feel that for every duty we must receive compensation.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 398.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ’s Object Lessons, “The Reward of Grace,” pp. 395-404.

Rejoicing in the Lord

“Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe” (Phil. 3:1).

Paul wants the members of the church at Philippi to be happy. As he brings his letter to a close, he says, “I wish you all joy in the Lord” (4:4, NEB). He repeats his wish in 4:4, “I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord; I repeat, what I want is your happiness” (Jerusalem).

Why this emphasis on joy and happiness? Can the Christian truly be happy in a world of sin? Can he experience joy in the midst of pain and suffering?

In our lesson this week we explore the Christian’s joy and happiness. We discover, beneath the surface of conflict and disappointment, satisfaction that the struggle will not be long. Christ has already gained the victory over sin and made His victory available to all who will grasp it. The evil surrounding us only convinces us that we do not wish to have anything to do with it, and one day soon it will be destroyed. In fact the evil is already being overcome with good, and so we rejoice.

One source of joy and happiness is our heavenly Father who is revealed in His Word. Prophets in days of old said

that they found light and direction in the word of God, and Jeremiah said: “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart” (Jer. 15:16). Can you witness to the same experience with your Bible?

The born-again Christian finds all things new. He is happy that he can follow in the Master’s footsteps. The world has no more attraction for him, and with the blessings of God he cannot help but be happy. Even when he is persecuted or thrown into prison, he is still happy because he has been found worthy to suffer as Jesus suffered.

This experience of joy in the midst of hardship is very hard for people of the world to understand or appreciate, but that is because they do not know that the Christian has entered into a fellowship of believers, a family of men and women in Christ who all share in the joy of victory and success. And in particular they all join in the hope of the second coming, the blessed hope. Their spirits are buoyed up, because they know that soon the controversy will be over and Jesus will come to take them home.

DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

1. **The Joy of Salvation**
(1 Peter 1:8, 9)
2. **The Joy of God’s Word**
(Jer. 15:16)
3. **The Joy of the Abundant Life**
(John 10:10)
4. **The Joy of Sharing Christ’s Suffering** (Acts 5:41)
5. **The Joy of Fellowship**
(1 Thess. 3:9)
6. **The Joy of Christ’s Return**
(Titus 2:13)



Part 1
THE JOY OF
SALVATION

"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" (1 Peter 1:8, 9).

Peter writes to "God's scattered people" (1 Peter 1:1, NEB) that they have been born to an inheritance "that nothing can destroy or spoil or wither. It is kept for you in heaven, and you, because you put your faith in God, are under the protection of his power until salvation comes" (verses 4, 5, NEB).

What does Peter say is the result of such an inheritance? 1 Peter 1:6.

What greater inheritance can one fall heir to than salvation? We have a Saviour who can save "to the uttermost" (Heb. 7:25; "save absolutely," NEB). We have a God who can and will keep His promise. No wonder there is a superabounding joy in the heart of the Christian even when he is passing through difficult circumstances and may have a few trials to bear.

What strengthened Jesus so that He could endure the cross? Heb. 12:2.

Jesus could see the future results of the present conflict. For Him that future was everything. So it should be with the Christian.

But there should be joy in the present too. Have you met those who are always complaining about their inadequacies and mistreatment?

"Many, walking along the path of life, dwell upon their mistakes and failures and disappointments, and their hearts are filled with grief and discouragement. . . .

"It is not wise to gather together all the unpleasant recollections of a past life,—its iniquities and disappointments,—to talk over them and mourn over them until we are overwhelmed with discouragement. A discouraged soul is filled with darkness, shutting out the light of God from his own soul and casting a shadow upon the pathway of others."—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 116, 117.

THINK IT THROUGH

Although Jesus was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," how did His life affect others?

"Though His life was self-denying and shadowed with pain and care, His spirit was not crushed. His countenance did not wear an expression of grief and repining, but ever one of peaceful serenity. His heart was a wellspring of life, and wherever He went He carried rest and peace, joy and gladness."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 120.

FURTHER STUDY

Steps to Christ, "Rejoicing in the Lord," pp. 115-126.

Part 2
THE JOY OF
GOD'S WORD

“Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts” (Jer. 15:16).

Jeremiah had a very hard time as a prophet. He saw the flower of Judean youth taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar in 605 B.C. He saw Jerusalem besieged in 597 B.C. and then the temple destroyed in 586 B.C. His own countrymen refused to accept his messages and looked upon him as a traitor. Yet he says he found joy in the word that came to him from God.

What does the psalmist extol in Psalm 19:7, 8?

Do we recognize the value of the Bible? Do we find the truths of God fascinating, enlightening, reviving? Do we find God's words sweeter than honey and more precious than gold?

The Word of God is the word of life. It tells us where we came from and where we are going. It explains life and the conflict that we see between good and evil. The light shining from the Word of God gives deep meaning to life.

Because of the revelation of God in His Word the Christian can go on his way rejoicing. He can be an optimist because he knows that truth will triumph in the end. Being on the side of truth he has nothing to fear and everything to be happy about.

In John 15:11, what reason did Jesus give for the teachings He had just imparted?

Jesus told His disciples that He treated them as friends, not as servants, because He let them into all the secrets that the Father had revealed to Him. (See John 15:15.) This grace whereby God takes us into His council and treats us, not as we deserve, but as He would have us to be, His sons and daughters, is a reason for great rejoicing. We find ourselves lifted up to a position of honor, and the least that we can do is to be appreciative and live up to our privileges.

THINK IT THROUGH

How does one discover the sweetness of the Word of God?

“When a real love for the Bible is awakened, and the student begins to realize how vast is the field and how precious its treasure, he will desire to seize upon every opportunity for acquainting himself with God's word. Its study will be restricted to no special time or place. And this continuous study is one of the best means of cultivating a love for the Scriptures.

“... Let the youth of today, the youth who are growing up with the Bible in their hands, become the recipients and the channels of its life-giving energy, and what streams of blessing would flow forth to the world!”—*Education*, pp. 191, 192.

FURTHER STUDY

Education, pp. 189-192.

Part 3
THE JOY OF
THE ABUNDANT
LIFE

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

Fullness of life is another blessing the Christian can enjoy. Being born again, he is free from the bondage of sin, from the shackles of a lower nature that drags him down to despair.

What does Paul say is the result of being in Christ? 2 Cor. 5:17.

We all know the experience of having something new. We delight in its newness, its beauty, its efficiency, its charm. Life is lifted to a new level of enjoyment when we have new things around us. God will make all things new. That is a time we can all anticipate with joy. But the joys are not all future; even in this life we can enter into the joy of being a new creation.

Ellen White wrote: "The Lord desires us to appreciate the great plan of redemption, to realize our high privilege as the children of God, and to walk before Him in obedience, with grateful thanksgiving. He desires us to serve Him in newness of life, with gladness every day. He longs to see gratitude welling up in our hearts because our names are written in the Lamb's book of life, because we may cast all our care upon Him who cares for us. He bids us rejoice because we are the heritage of the Lord."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 299.

How did the Ethiopian eunuch respond after he had been told the meaning of the Bible and had been baptized? Acts 8:39.

There is great pleasure in following in the Master's footsteps. When we can see the truth plainly and we do what we know is right, then there is peace and joy.

What picture do we get of the city of Samaria after Philip had been there and preached Christ? Acts 8:8.

"Joy in the Holy Spirit is health-giving, life-giving joy. In giving us His Spirit, God gives us Himself, making Himself a fountain of divine influences, to give health and life to the world."—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 273.

THINK IT THROUGH

"Have there not been some bright spots in your experience? Have you not had some precious seasons when your heart throbbed with joy in response to the Spirit of God? When you look back into the chapters of your life experience, do you not find some pleasant pages? Are not God's promises, like the fragrant flowers, growing beside your path on every hand? Will you not let their beauty and sweetness fill your heart with joy?"—*Steps to Christ*, p. 117.

FURTHER STUDY

Christ's Object Lessons, "The Lord's Vineyard," pp. 296-301.

Part 4
THE JOY OF
SHARING
CHRIST'S
SUFFERING

“They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name” (Acts 5:41).

Can you imagine apostles going home rejoicing after a beating? Incredible! Not a very human reaction! The tendency today would be to call in a lawyer and institute legal proceedings. After all, it was unjust to beat them for teaching and preaching the truth. Does not a person have to stand up for his rights? But the apostles went home rejoicing.

How did Jesus say His disciples would be treated? Matt. 10:17.

Jesus warned His disciples that they would suffer persecution when they witnessed to the truth, but the fact is that not everyone suffers persecution. Some Christians wonder whether there is anything the matter with them when they are not being persecuted. Some have a persecution complex and like to invite trouble for themselves. Should the Christian be concerned about persecution?

If persecution does not come, then we can rejoice that we are free from trials and hardship, unless it is that we are being left alone because we are doing no good!

If persecution comes, then we can rejoice as did the apostles that we have been counted worthy to suffer indignity for our Master's name. In either case we rejoice. “God in His great love is seeking to develop in us the precious graces of His Spirit. He permits us to encounter obstacles, persecution, and hardships, not as a curse, but as the greatest blessing of our lives.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 117.

Persecution in the past gave the early church an impetus to carry the gospel to the world. Persecution in the future will help distinguish the real Christian from the false. The true Christian rejoices that he can have a part in the controversy between good and evil, and he prays that he may be a good soldier of Jesus Christ who knows how to take battle wounds and rejoices in the battles gained.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is the secret of rejoicing even in the most trying circumstances?

“So long as we do not consent to sin, there is no power, whether human or satanic, that can bring a stain upon the soul. A man whose heart is stayed upon God is just the same in the hour of his most afflicting trials and most discouraging surroundings as when he was in prosperity, when the light and favor of God seemed to be upon him.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 32.

FURTHER STUDY

Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, “The Beatitudes” (Matt. 5:10), pp. 29-31.

Part 5
THE JOY OF
FELLOWSHIP

"How can we thank God enough for you, for all the joy we feel before our God on your account?" (1 Thess. 3:9, Jerusalem)

There can be no communion between light and darkness. (See 2 Cor. 6:14.) But the fellowship of believers has common objectives and interests, and this association with others brings the Christian great joy.

In the parables of Luke 15 what can we learn about joy? (See verses 6, 9, 32.)

"Never think that you can be Christians and yet withdraw yourselves within yourselves. Each one is a part of the great web of humanity, and the experience of each will be largely determined by the experience of his associates. . . .

" . . . Fellowship with one another should make us glad."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 362.

(See Acts 2:42.)

No one denies the importance of right teaching in the church or of prayer and "breaking of bread." But apparently there is something else that is equally important—fellowship.

"After the descent of the Holy Spirit the disciples went forth to proclaim a risen Saviour—their one desire, the salvation of souls. They rejoiced in the sweetness of the communion with saints. They were tender, thoughtful, self-denying, willing to make any sacrifice for the truth's sake. In their daily association with one another they revealed the love that Christ had commanded them to reveal. By unselfish words and deeds they strove to kindle this love in other hearts."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 241.

What was Paul's attitude when he prayed for the Philippians? Phil. 1:3-5.

Fellowship basically means partnership. Paul was delighted that the members of the Philippian church had responded in sharing with him the work of the gospel. Christians are drawn closer to Christ and to one another when they are engaged in gospel service.

THINK IT THROUGH

What is a solution to the feeling of loneliness? How can the church meet the needs of the lonely and withdrawn?

"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. . . . Satisfying joys will give vigor to the mind and health and vital energy to the body."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 579.

FURTHER STUDY

First John, chapter one.

Part 6
THE JOY OF
CHRIST'S
RETURN

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

The Christian has many reasons for rejoicing, but perhaps the most exciting is what Paul calls the "blessed hope."

Two men dressed in white stood by the disciples who were gazing into heaven. Jesus slowly ascended from their sight. The two, who were angels, announced that Jesus would come again "in like manner." Ever since that moment the church has looked forward to the second advent. His coming continues to be the living hope of many Christians today.

What does Paul say Christians do as they hold hope? Rom. 12:12.

The second coming of Jesus puts an end to all separation. Disciples are united with their Master. The righteous dead are brought to life and meet their loved ones. This mortal puts on incorruption. (See 1 Cor. 15:53.) There is no more sighing, no more pain. There can only be joy forevermore. This is the hope of all hopes, the glorious climax of over six thousand years of struggle. It is no wonder that Christians look forward to this event as the solution to all the problems of the world.

What advice does James give in relation to the second advent? James 5:7, 8.

There may be the danger that some will lose patience because of apparent delay. But everything, even delays, can be a part of God's providence. We should not question God's timing. (See Acts 1:7.) We must rest assured in God's promises, and by faith rejoice in His future coming as though it were a part of today's happening. Just as the child jumps with glee when the parent promises a gift to be given on a birthday or at Christmastime, so the Christian looks forward to a future event with present joy, knowing that God's promises are sure. (Read Heb. 10:35-39.)

THINK IT THROUGH

How can so-called delays in the second coming turn out to be blessings?

"Every step in life may bring us closer to Jesus, may give us a deeper experience of His love, and may bring us one step nearer to the blessed home of peace. Then let us not cast away our confidence, but have firm assurance, firmer than ever before."
—*Steps to Christ*, p. 125.

"God wants you to work, not with self-disparagement nor in discouragement, but with the strongest faith and hope, with cheerfulness and joy, representing Christ to the world. The religion of Jesus is joy, peace, and happiness."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 579.

FURTHER STUDY

Testimonies, vol. 2, pp. 192-199.

Lessons for 2nd Quarter / 1979

Sabbath School members who have not received a copy of the Adult Lessons for the second quarter of 1979 will be helped by the following outline in studying the first two lessons. The title of the series is "The Last Hour."

First Lesson

FUTURE EVENTS. Memory verse, Rom. 13:11-14.

1. *Events During Probation-I (Amos 9:9).*
2. *Events During Probation-II (Rev. 7:3).*
3. *Events During Probation-III (Rev. 13:15-17).*
4. *The Time of Trouble (Dan. 12:1).*
5. *Events During the Time of Trouble (Rev. 16:1-21).*
6. *Events From the Liberation of the Saints to the Advent (Rev. 12:11).*

Second Lesson

CHRIST WITH HIS CHURCH. Memory verse, (1 Tim. 3:14, 15).

1. *Definition and Function (1 Tim. 3:15).*
2. *God's Ideal for the Church (Eph. 5:25-28).*
3. *Love and Tender Consideration (Isa. 49:16).*
4. *Christ With the Church Militant (Matt. 28:18-20).*
5. *The Church Triumphant (Rev. 6:2).*
6. *Christ, the Head and the Foundation (Col. 1:18).*

Lessons in Braille

The regular Adult Sabbath School Lessons are available free each month in Braille and 16²/₃ 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.



LARGE-PRINT

Adult Sabbath School Lessons Available

Large-print Adult Sabbath School Lessons are available. Compare the two copies held by Elder A. R. Mazat and see what a help the large print is!

Please send _____ subscriptions for large-print quarterlies at \$5.40 per year to U.S. addresses, \$6.60 per year to addresses outside U.S.

Name _____

Street _____

City _____

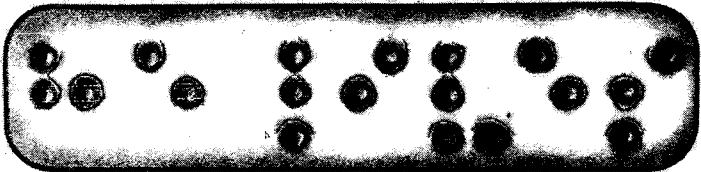
State (Province) _____ Zip _____

Order through your local church lay activities secretary or your Adventist Book Center.

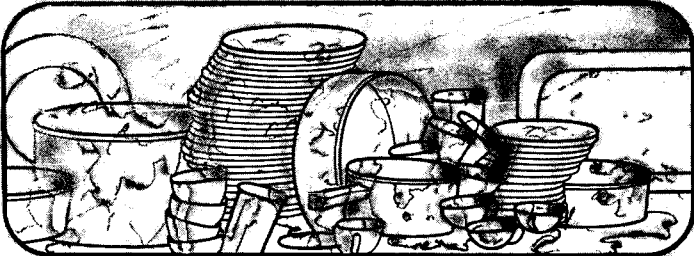
This offer expires December 31, 1979.



Caught up in a commuter crunch every morning? Appointments pressing in on all sides?
Too tired to bother with Sabbath school lessons?



Is reading difficult or impossible because of poor eyesight? Can a drooping interest in Sabbath school and things spiritual be the result of impaired vision?



Do kids and errands and laundry and weeds and dishes take up all your time? Is going to Sabbath school not what you want it to be - especially when you didn't read the lesson?

Enjoy the wonderment of studying God's word - His messages of hope and peace and encouragement. His lessons of love. Sabbath school lessons are now available on cassettes. Veteran theologian Paul C. Heubach will guide you through the day-by-day study as you drive to work or do the ironing or sit and just listen.

Three cassettes are available each quarter. With a standing order through your local Adventist Book Center the tapes will automatically come to your home and you'll be billed by the ABC. Or order direct by using the convenient order blank.

Start my subscription today. Send me the Sabbath school lessons beginning with _____

(Indicate which quarter) _____ I am enclosing \$7.20 (per quarter).

Name _____ (please print)

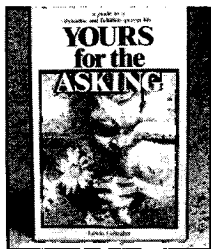
Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Payment must accompany this order - make check or money order payable to
INTERNATIONAL AUDIO VISUAL MINISTRY, 1100 Rancho Conejo Blvd.,
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360

3 Striking Presentations You'll Want To Look Into!

Now you can acquire the detailed knowledge these authors have prepared for years to share with you — knowledge that will fill your own spiritual needs or help you fill the needs of others.



Yours for the Asking

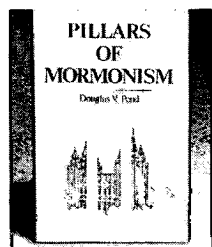
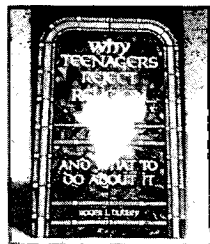
Edwin Gallagher

The product of a pastor's own search for an enjoyable and satisfying prayer life, **Yours for the Asking** is one book that might be offered with a money-back guarantee. This "how-to" book about prayer presents principles that, if applied to your own prayer habits, assure you of a richer prayer — and thus Christian — experience. Price \$3.50.

Why Teenagers Reject Religion and What to Do About It

Roger L. Dudley

This in-depth and scientific study into the thinking and attitudes of academy-aged youth, written by a teacher who has spent twenty years in youth ministry and holds a doctorate in educational psychology, explores the causes of youth alienation and outlines plans to reduce the problem and establish young people on a firm religious foundation. \$4.50.



Pillars of Mormonism

Douglas V. Pond

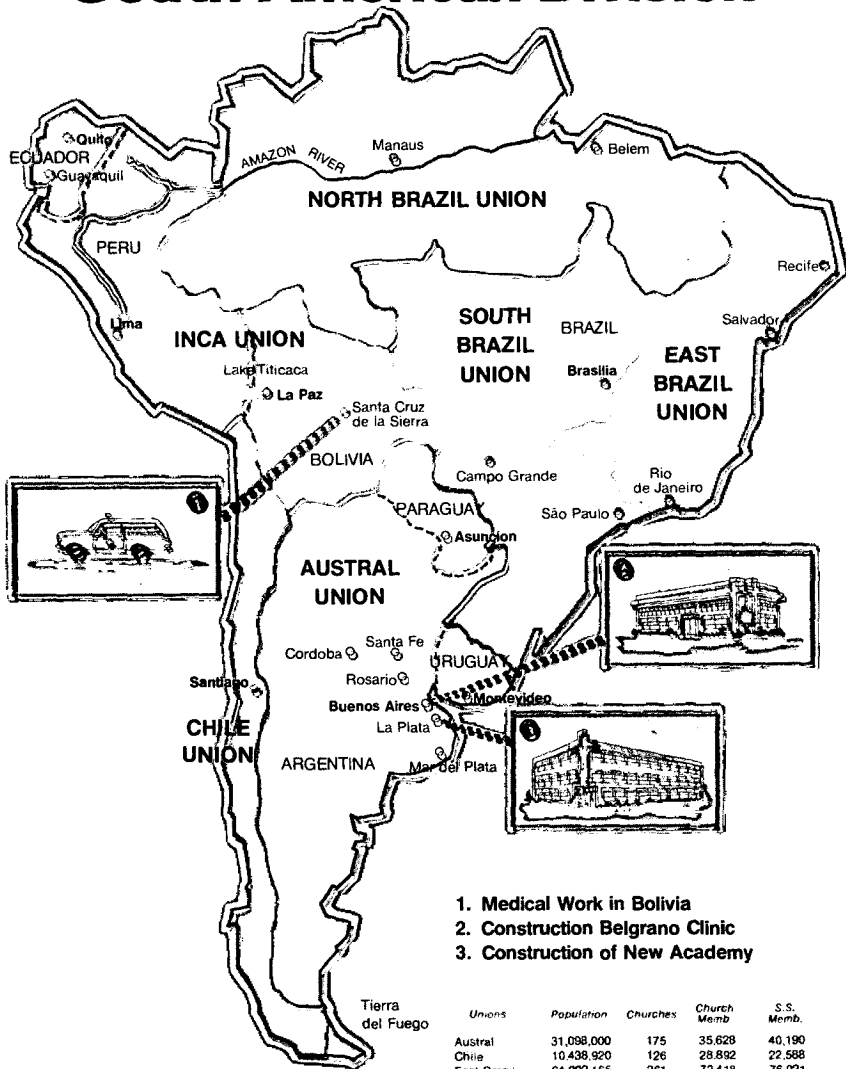
Elder Pond, a great-grandson of two of the original twelve apostles of the Mormon Church, examines the doctrines of his parent church, then explains frankly, but kindly, why he could not continue subscribing to them. The result is a volume of benefit to all who seek to understand the teachings of Mormonism as compared to the Bible. Price \$7.95.

Order from your local Adventist Book Center or ABC Mailing Service, P.O. Box 37485, Omaha, Nebraska 68137. In Canada, Box 398, Oshawa, Ontario, L1H 7L5. Please include State sales tax where necessary, and add 7 percent or a minimum charge of 50 cents for mailing. Prices slightly higher in Canada.



New REVIEW Publications

South American Division



1. Medical Work in Bolivia
2. Construction Belgrano Clinic
3. Construction of New Academy

| Unions | Population | Churches | Church Memb. | S.S. Memb. |
|-----------------|-------------|----------|--------------|------------|
| Austral | 31,098,000 | 175 | 35,628 | 40,190 |
| Chile | 10,438,920 | 126 | 28,892 | 22,588 |
| East Brazil | 64,002,165 | 261 | 72,418 | 76,021 |
| Inca | 29,288,491 | 274 | 90,025 | 107,089 |
| North Brazil | 15,393,009 | 77 | 35,020 | 44,999 |
| South Brazil | 49,207,000 | 398 | 129,379 | 148,674 |
| Division Totals | 199,427,585 | 1,311 | 391,362 | 439,561 |