

West Rift Valley Field

of The Seventh-day Adventist Church

Camp Meetings

M A T E R I A L

Theme:



Fulfilling His Mission

Text: Matthew 28:18-20

Song: NZK 107

3rd July-30th July 2022

KAIGAT STATION



CHEPTERIT STATION



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Message from the **President**

Pr. Eliazar Kogey
President, WRVF

WELCOME to this year's West Rift Valley Field Camp Meeting Season, indeed the first and of its own kind. We will intentionally seek to experience the transforming power of God in our lives, that will seek to make us ready to GO in fulfilment of His Mission. Matthew 28:19-20 encourages us to GO and make of ALL the Nations Disciples.

The world is filled with stress and strife, and pressures us to conform to its values, which tend to lead us away from God. The centerpiece of our Camp is the Tabernacling with God, where, through our morning Bible studies, afternoon and evening worship services, we will encounter God's Word and allow it to renew our minds and transform the way we think about God, ourselves, our relationships, our finances, our careers – about everything! Thinking differently leads to living differently. At West Rift Valley Field Camp Meetings, we want to think – and to live – God's way.

“I WILL GO” – Fulfilling His Mission
Wishing you the blessings of Holiness, Health, and Happiness.

Message from the **Camp Coordinator**

Pr. Cheluget Sammy
Camp Coordinator



Greetings to you all pastors, Camp centers and Camp facilitators,
Its camp meeting season and the lord have been good to us all along since last year when we had challenges.

This 2022, Camp meeting scheduled for July 3rd to 30th is the first one and of its own kind as an entity here at west Rift Valley Field.

Let us all rally together in preparation and in action to see to it that Success comes our way for God is ready to bless us.

Let us also join in prayers for all our Camp meeting centers
May God bless you all as you serve and praise him.



- 1. Sermon**
- 2. Bible study**
- 3. Sabbath school**
- 4. Bible & Culture**
- 5. Spirit of Prophecy**
- 6. Stewardship**
- 7. Young Adults**
- 8. Family Life Resilience**
- 9. Single Parents**

1. SERMON

I WILL GO FULLFIL HIS MISSION! Text: Matthew 28:18-20

18 And Jesus came and spoke to them saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. **19** Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen (NKJV).

Hymns:

SDAH 359 “Hark! The Voice of Jesus Calling”

SDAH 361 “Hark! ‘Tis The Shepherd’s Voice I Hear”

Sermons Topics:

It is camp meetings’ season 2022 and our individual response is, ***“I Will Go: Fulfilling His Mission!”*** Indeed, Christ’s great commission is quite explicit, but the most critical question is, “how should we proceed in this mission?” This, God’s anointed messengers have wrestled with in the following daily topics:

- i. Sunday- I Will Go Fulfilling His Mission: An Introduction
- ii. Monday- Mission through Christ-like living
- iii. Tuesday- Mission through Christ-like communicating
- iv. Wednesday- Mission through Christ-like serving
- v. Thursday- Mission through Chris-like teaching
- vi. Friday- Fulfilling His Mission through Christ-like healing vii. Sabbath- Fulfilling His Mission through Christ-like discipling

Let God use you for His glory. “Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching” (2Tim 4:2 NKJV).

Tuesday: *Fulfilling His Mission through CHRIST-LIKE COMMUNICATING*

Topic: No Man Ever Spoke Like This Man!

John 7:46. The officers answered, “No man ever spoke like this Man!” (NKJV).

A. Introduction

The subject of communication remains one very important subjects in this day and age for many reasons. Communication can either make or break. Families quarrel, fight and even separate due to poor communication or communication breakdown.

Governments come tumbling down for failure to communicate appropriately. Many a times we have heard politicians make dangerous and inflammatory remarks and then they later on come back to say that they were quoted out of context. This is usually due

to failure in communication. Big organizations have collapsed economically as a result of communication failures. No wonder, many companies are now investing large amounts of money to employ public relations experts to enhance proper communication in their companies and avert liabilities. Religious organizations have also had their fair share of communication challenges. Many churches have had to battle with splinter groups or internal wrangles mainly due to communication failures.

There is no doubt that good communication is extremely essential at all levels, be it in families, governments, companies, as well as churches. It is even more crucial to us as a church because of who we are and who we represent. We cannot ignore good communication in this day and age.

B. Background

In the book of John, we find Jesus performing two extraordinary miracles in chapter 6. The first one was the feeding of five thousand men, probably over ten thousand people with just five small barley loaves and two small fish. After the incident, He withdrew to the mountain and later on walked on water across Lake Galilee on the eastern side to the seaside of Capernaum. When the crowds followed Jesus to the other side, He rebuked them and told them that they were not genuine in following Him, but they were following Him because of the food they had eaten the previous day.

This event took place during the Feast of Tabernacle or the Passover feast. Among the four Passover feasts that are recorded in the Bible that Jesus attended, this is the only one that did not take place in Jerusalem. Throughout this journey, Jesus spoke in such a manner that His teaching was both confounding and compelling at the same time. He was gaining popularity among the crowds and at the same time His words were stirring deep hatred from certain quarters. They could not really understand Him.

In John 6:42 they asked, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph whose father and mother we know?” When he said, I am the bread of life, they asked, “How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?” (John 6:52). Some of His disciples simply said concerning his teachings that, “This is a hard teaching, who can accept it?” (John 6:66). At that point, “Many of His disciples turned back and no longer followed Him” (John 6:66). There was great confusion as to the real identity of Jesus.

At this point, the Bible says that “Even His own brothers did not believe Him” (John 7:5). But some people said He is a good man (John 7:12). Some people said, “Surely this man was a prophet.” Others said, “He is the Christ” John 7:40-41.

His teaching was both compelling and confounding at the same time. His teaching was spurring deep love and deep hatred simultaneously. Because of that, Jesus’ enemies tried to seize Him, but they could not succeed (John 7: 30). Now the chief priests and the Pharisees sent a squad of temple guards to arrest Him (John 7:32).

When the temple guards arrived at the scene where Jesus was teaching, they paused for a moment. They listened to His words, their hearts were cut. The message was so deep and penetrating. They could not believe the sweet words that came forth from the mouth of Jesus. They went back empty handed.

“
The Bible records that, Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and the Pharisees, who asked them, “Why didn’t you bring Him in?” “No one ever spoke the way this man does,” the guards replied” (John 7:45-46).

For sure no one ever spoke the way Jesus spoke. His communication was marked with significant difference. That is why we need to ask ourselves these questions today; “How did Jesus speak? What was the content of His communication? What made His communication to be different? What was the result of His communication style? And most importantly, how can we communicate like Christ?”

C. What did Jesus communicate?

In John 7:16-17, the Bible states, “Jesus answered, “My teaching is not my own. It comes from the one who sent me. ¹⁷ Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.”

The content of what Jesus came to communicate was so crucial. In communication the content or subject to be communicated is very key. For Jesus, this was very clear. It was purely about God.

In John 6: 38 He said, “I came down from heaven not to do My will but to do the will of Him that sent Me.” In John 4:34 He says, “My food is to do the will Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.”

He came to the world as the radiance of God’s glory. The exact representation of His being (Heb. 1:3). And when He had finished His work, Jesus said, “I have revealed you to those you gave Me out of the world” (John 17:6).

No wonder Christ’s communication was different. The content of His communication was purely about God and revealing the glory of God. That is why the soldiers said, No one ever spoke like this man.

D. What was the source of Jesus’s communication?

In the past, pupils learnt under a recognized Rabbi. There were great Rabbi’s like Gamaliel in the days of Paul, who taught the apostle Paul. But for Jesus, His case was different. “The Jews were amazed and asked, “How did this man get such learning without having studied?” (John 7: 15). They noticed that Jesus had never been a student of one of the great Rabbis of His day, and yet His teaching outmatched that which came from any of the Rabbis or students of the Rabbis.

Jesus was taught directly of God. From the Book Desire of Ages chapter 7, we learn a lot about Jesus’ education. The childhood and youth of Jesus were spent in a little mountain village. There was no place on earth that would not have been honored by His presence. Jesus "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52). His mind was active and penetrating, with a thoughtfulness and wisdom beyond His years. Yet His character was beautiful in its symmetry. The powers of mind and body developed gradually, in keeping with the laws of childhood.

The child Jesus did not receive instruction in the synagogue schools. His mother was His first human teacher. From her lips and from the scrolls of the prophets, He learned of heavenly things. The very words which He Himself had spoken to Moses for Israel He was now taught at His mother's knee. As He advanced from childhood to youth, He did not seek the schools of the rabbis. He needed not the education to be obtained from such sources; for God was His instructor.

Christ spent many hours alone with God. After His baptism, Jesus spent forty days in solitude. He was alone with God. In Luke 5:16, “Jesus often withdrew to lonely places

and prayed.” Spending time alone with God in prayer and meditation automatically affected His communication. Learning from God made Jesus speak in such a way that no other person spoke.

E. How did Jesus communicate?

The “How?” of communication has always been just as important as the “what?” We cannot just say that since we have good content, we could just package it anyhow. Our message must be packaged in a manner that will enable it to produce the desired results.

In Matthew 7:28-29, the Bible states that, “When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at His teaching, because He taught as one who had authority, and not as teachers of the law.” The fact that Jesus spoke as one who had authority was a very important component of His communication. He could command the waves to be still (Matt. 8:27). He had authority over evil spirits, disease and sickness. He even had authority to forgive sins and to raise the dead.

The ability of Jesus to speak with authority made His communication to be very different.

In John 8:31, the Bible says, “To the Jews who believed Him, Jesus said, If you hold My teaching, you are My disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.”

To those who rejected Him, Jesus said, “You belong to your father the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding the truth, for there is not truth in him” (John 8:44).

Jesus’ message was generally loving and kind, but He did not hesitate to rebuke sin strongly and firmly. In Matthew 23, He sharply rebuked the Pharisees. He said to them, “Woe to you blind guides,” (Matt. 23:16). “You blind fools,” (Verse 17). “You blind men,” (Verse 19). “You snakes! You brood of vipers!” (Verse 33). This was very strong and authoritative, yet still full of genuine love. No wonder the soldiers were convicted and they said, No man ever spoke like this man.

F. How can we speak like Jesus?

- i. The first thing we should ensure is that the content of our communication is about God. Eph. 4:29 says, “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.” Christ spoke about the Love of God. He spoke forgiveness and healing. He also spoke about salvation from above.
- ii. We should be willing to learn of God. Let us spend quality time at the feet of Jesus and learn from Him. The disciples spent so much time with Christ such that at the end of the day, they spoke like Christ. “After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, “Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away” (Matt. 26:73).
- iii. The manner of our communication must reflect Christlike communication. Let us never condone sin but in a loving but firm manner speak like this representing Christ. Col. 4:6. “Let your conversation be always full of

grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.”
1Tim. 5:1-2 says, “Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if
he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as
mothers,
and younger women as sisters, with absolute

purity.” **G. Conclusion**

Today, God is looking for a people. A people who will represent Him aright. He is looking for you and me. He is looking for us so that we can communicate like Christ. He is looking for us so that we can communicate that which has come from God. He is looking for us so that we can communicate in Christlike manner.

The big question is, “Are you willing? Are you willing to allow Christ to break you and mold you and fashion you into the likeness of His image? If you accept Him in your heart, your life will be filled with hope. You will communicate hope in such a manner that your communication will draw others closer to God. May God Almighty bless you as you take this bold step of faith?

Wednesday: *Fulfilling His Mission through CHRIST-LIKE SERVING*

KEY TEXT: Matthew 9:36

Introduction

One theologian has said that the church exists for mission as fire exists for burning. The church exists for mission. The church was mandated to “GO.” She must GO to the world. Churches that seek to do mission begin by asking three fundamental questions: “What should we be doing?” “Who are we trying to reach?” and “What does it take to reach them?” The answer to these questions is, “Mission through Christ-like serving.” Jesus is our example (1Peter 2:21). If Jesus appeared on earth today as He did 2000 years ago, what would He do? He would do the way He did those days. The church is called to follow His example. The church is more than a set of long-standing programs, but a company of believers who reach out to the world.

Christ’s Method

It is important to learn from the method of Jesus, how He was successful in His witnessing activities. Jesus went to the people. In order to fulfil our prophetic calling as God’s last-day remnant church, we need to ‘Go’ share the good news where the people are, as Jesus did.

Follow Christ’s example and reach out to those in need where the masses live. Join God’s people around the world in special emphasis of mission “I Will Go.” The book of Matt.9:36 says, “When He saw the crowds He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” Jesus had compassion.

Jesus’ mission statement was, “I came to search for the lost” (Luke 19:10).

Today Jesus invites His followers to identify themselves with His mission statement. He is looking for partners, those who are willing to make His mission statement their own.

The spirit of prophecy makes it clear what Jesus method was, “Christ method alone will give true success in reaching the people” (M.H. p.143). The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, “Follow Me” (Ministry of Healing p. 143.3).

There are five steps Jesus took in His witnessing activities:

1. He **mingled** with men as one who desired their good. That means doing things together, visiting, and working, playing or just talking and sitting together. By mingling we will discover others’ needs.
2. He **showed sympathy**. That is an attitude of personal concern. Sympathy does not wait until the person asks for help, but it is always expressed by some kind of action that communicates an honest, unselfish concern for someone who has a need.
3. He **ministered** to their needs. That means meeting the needs of people whether they be physical, mental, or spiritual. This is done by serving, waiting on, or attending to another. Real needs are not easily recognized.
4. Won their confidence. This will be the result of meeting people’s needs.
5. “**Follow Me**”- was the appeal to follow Christ in His future. The appeal came after He met their needs and won their confidence.

Jesus discovered a felt need and met it:

- ✓ Wedding feast--- Social embarrassment
- ✓ Woman at the well— Emotional security
- ✓ Nicodemus --- Genuine spirituality
- ✓ Man at the pool – Divine healing
- ✓ Hungry multitude – Physical food

“In order to lead souls to Jesus, there must be a knowledge of human nature” (6T. p.67).

Jesus used Different Methods

From Christ’s method of labour we may learn valuable lessons. He did not follow only one method; in various ways He sought to gain the attention of the multitude, that He might proclaim to them the truths of the gospel.”(Welfare Ministry p.59)

Appeal

We need to rethink our method of evangelism in this period of time. The world is changing but Christ method still appeals to masses and needs of the people. Let us use Jesus’ method to preach the three angels’ message to the world. I hope you will listen to this appeal by the servant of God Ellen G. White,

There is need of coming close to the people by personal effort. If less time were given to sermonizing, and more time were spent in personal ministry, greater results would be seen. The poor are to be relieved, the sick cared for, the sorrowing and bereaved comforted the ignorant instructed, the inexperienced counselled. We are to weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice. Accompanied by the power of persuasion, the power of prayer, the power of God, this work will not, cannot, be without fruit (M.H. 139-160).

Conclusion

As Seventh-day Adventist Church we believe in the whole person concept, in ministering to those around us in a comprehensive way. As Christ ministered to the people in the cities, He was active in, "Teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every sickness and every disease among the people" (Matt. 9:35).

Thursday:

Fulfilling His Mission through CHRIS-LIKE TEACHING

Luke 2:46-47 "*Many people who heard Jesus teach were said to be, "astonished," at His teaching.*"

1. Jesus was recognized as an astonishing teacher.

He was called teacher more than 60x in the NT.

It was what most people called Him and for what they most recognized Him.

Even atheists who fight against the very idea of God, call Him a great teacher. Atheists pick the Bible apart but rarely do they pick Jesus apart, because of respect they were having for Him, even though they won't acknowledge Him (see Luke 2:46-47).

I always thought this had to do with the unusual insight He had for a twelve year old, but I don't think the astonishment was simply age related, He was an astonishing teacher (see Mt 7:28, Mt 13:54, Mt 22:33).

What was it about Jesus' teachings that was astonishing?

2. Jesus was an astonishing teacher first of all because of His presence.

We miss a lot of the dynamics of Jesus' teaching because we weren't there. We miss not just His presence but the dynamics of the situations in which He taught we also miss: The tension with Him and His enemies. It was real, it was tangible, it was pervasive, yet He never lost dominance in the room. Should we pay taxes? Whose coin is it?

The excitement of being around the miracle worker.

Think of someone you really like. Now if you were to describe them to someone else and say, that they are really fun to be around, do you think those words will ever fully convey the truth of what that special friend is like? Jesus is that person who is really awesome to be around, and that is one of the reasons people were astonished at His teaching.

3. Jesus was an astonishing teacher because He taught with authority and power

Luke 4:32 And they were astonished at His doctrine: for his word was with power.

He said things only God could say. He said things that changed people's understanding of the Scriptures. 15x's in the gospels Jesus says, "But I say unto you..."

The Jews were sick of religious teachers who always argued with each other, and rejoiced that Jesus spoke with authority, without hesitation, without equivocation. He never said once, "I'm not sure about that." Another take on the idea that He taught with authority is found in the way one Bible version translates this text: the Persic version renders it, "he penetrated them with it"; His word got into them. His word spoke to them, His word changed them. If I have stolen anything I will repay it 4x's! That is a man that got changed by words that penetrated him.

4. Jesus was an astonishing teacher because His word was confirmed by signs.

John 3:1- 2

That you may know the son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, I say unto you... No man eat of you ever again. The fig tree withered and dried up overnight that is authority!

Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up. He claimed to be able to raise Himself from the dead, no one else ever did. Houdini told people if possible I will come back, he never has.

5. Jesus was an astonishing teacher because of the way He used stories to teach.

Mt 7:3 "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?"

The idea that someone would walk around with a huge beam stuck in his eye, and yet be oblivious to it, while at the same time being perfectly able to see the small speck in his brother's eye is both outrageously funny and immensely powerful.

The story of the Good Samaritan (summary and modernized)

He used this story to teach the man that he was not as good as he thought he was. He only wanted to be a good neighbor to people who were just like him. But sinners and outcasts he had no intention of loving as he loved himself. Prodigal Son from Georgia (summary and modernized)

The son found out that his father had spent more time thinking about how to welcome his son back home than his son had spent thinking about how to confess.

He also found out that God doesn't have any second tier kids. Caste systems exist all around the world. God doesn't have second class Christians.

Jesus is a teacher who astonishes us today.

Possible study group questions:

What do you think it might have felt like to personally hear and see Jesus teach?

Which of the parables have spoken the most to you?

What do you think of the way the father treated the prodigal son, and what you think pastor meant when he said, "God doesn't have any second tier kids?"

Friday: *Fulfilling His Mission through* CHRIST-LIKE HEALING

Christ-like Healing

Christ feels the woes of every sufferer. When evil spirits rend a human frame, Christ feels the curse. When fever is burning up the life current, He feels the agony. And He is just as willing to heal the sick now as when He was personally on earth. Christ's servants are His representatives, the channels for His working. He desires through them to exercise His healing power (The Desire of Ages p.823, 824).

That this was His plan for the church throughout the ages is made plain in the Great Commission, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature... And these signs shall follow them that believe... they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16: 15-18).

In the Savior's manner of healing there were lessons for His disciples. On one occasion He anointed the eyes of a blind man with clay, and bade him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam...He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing" (John 9:7). The

cure could be wrought only by the power of the Great Healer, yet Christ made use of the simple agencies of nature. While He did not give countenance to drug medication, He sanctioned the use of simple and natural remedies.

To many of the afflicted ones who received healing, Christ said, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee" (John 5:14). Thus He taught that disease is the result of violating God's laws, both natural and spiritual. The great misery in the world would not exist did men but live in harmony with the Creator's plan.

Christ the Ultimate Healer

Christ had been the guide and teacher of ancient Israel, and He taught them that health is the reward of obedience to the laws of God. The Great Physician who healed the sick in Palestine had spoken to His people from the pillar of cloud, telling them what they must do, and what God would do for them... He said, "I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee"

(Ex. 15:26).

Christ gave to Israel definite instruction in regard to their habits of life, and He assured them, "The Lord will take away from thee all sickness" (Deut. 7:15). When they fulfilled the conditions, the promise was verified to them. "There was not one feeble person among their tribes" (Ps. 105:37).

Christ is the same compassionate physician now that He was during His earthly ministry. In Him there is a healing balm for every disease, restoring power for every infirmity. His disciples in this time are to pray for the sick as verily as the disciples of old prayed. And recoveries *will follow*; for "the prayer of faith shall save the sick." We have the Holy Spirit's power, the calm assurance of faith that can claim God's promises. The Lord's promise, "They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:18), is just as trustworthy now as in the days of the apostles. It presents the privilege of God's children, and our faith should lay hold of all that it embraces. Christ's servants are the channel of His working, and through them He desires to exercise His healing power. It is our work to present the sick and suffering to God in the arms of our faith. We should teach them to believe in the Great Healer. -- *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 226.

Christ disciples have the responsibility that includes you and me

When Christ ordained the twelve disciples and sent them out to minister "He gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease" (Matt. 10:1).

Luke adds that "they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere" (Luke 9:6). When a little later He sent out the seventy, Jesus demonstrated that the work of teaching and healing was not to be limited to ordained ministers when He commissioned them, "Into whatsoever city ye enter, . . . heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you" (Luke 10:8, 9).

The church has a responsibility

That the church as a whole has a responsibility is evidenced in the following words:

In order to be purified and to remain pure, Seventh-day Adventists must have the Holy Spirit in their hearts and in their homes. The Lord has given me light that when the Israel of today humble themselves before Him, and cleanse the soul- temple from all defilement, He will hear their prayers in behalf of the sick and will bless in the use of His remedies for disease. -*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 164.

These lessons are for us. There are conditions to be observed by all who would preserve health. All should learn what these conditions are. The Lord is not pleased with ignorance in regard to His laws, either natural or spiritual. We are to be workers together with God for the restoration of health to the body as well as to the soul.

It is labor lost to teach people to look to God as a healer of their infirmities, unless they are taught also to lay aside unhealthful practices. --*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 227.

Pray for the sick.

In the Word of God we have instruction relative to special prayer for the recovery of the sick. But the offering of such prayer is a most solemn act, and should not be entered upon without careful consideration. In many cases of prayer for the healing of the sick, that which is called faith is nothing less than presumption. The scriptural plan for praying for the sick is found in the familiar words of James 5:14, 15.

"The case should be committed to the Lord in calm faith, not with a storm of excitement." "Our petitions must not take the form of a command, but of intercession." (Testimonies vol.2 p.147, 149)

- 1) We must realize that it is not always God's will that the sick be healed.--

The Ministry of Healing, pp. 230, and 231.

- 2) We are to take advantage of rational remedies. --Selected Messages, book 2, p. 356.
- 3) We are to persevere in prayer. --Counsels on Health, pp. 380, 381.
- 4) We are to be educated in healthful living. --Ibid., pp. 469, 470.
- 5) Health is gained through service for others. --The Ministry of Healing, p. 256
- 6) We must realize that it is not always God's will that the sick be healed.—

We should teach others how to preserve and to recover health. For the sick we should use the remedies which God has provided in nature. We should also refer them to health professionals for professional treatment, and above all we should point them to Him who alone can restore. It is our work to present the sick and suffering to Christ in the arms of our faith. We should teach them to believe in the Great Healer. We should lay hold on His promise, and pray for the manifestation of His power. The very essence of the gospel is restoration, and the Savior would have us bid the sick, the hopeless, and the afflicted take hold upon His strength. Amen

2. BIBLE STUDY

MONDAY

EVANGELISM

Introduction

Definition

The Latin *evangelizare*, "to spread or preach the Gospel," with the Greek root *euangelizesthai*, or "bring good news."

In Christianity, evangelism (or witnessing) is the act of preaching the gospel with the intention of sharing the message and teachings of Jesus Christ.

Christians who specialize in evangelism are often known as evangelists, whether they are in their home communities or living as missionaries in the field, although some Christian traditions refer to such people as *missionaries* in either case. Some Christian traditions consider evangelists to be in a leadership position; they may be found preaching to large meetings or in governance roles. In addition, Christian groups who encourage evangelism are sometimes known as evangelistic or *evangelist*. **Methods**

To *evangelize* is to share religious beliefs, especially Christian ones, with other people. Preachers and ministers *evangelize* from the pulpit in their churches every Sabbath. To evangelize is to spreading of the Christian gospel by public preaching or personal witness. In Christianity, evangelism is the act of preaching the gospel with the intention of sharing the message and teachings of Jesus Christ.

Certain Christians believe that it's important to evangelize or to preach the gospel and convey what they believe to others. In some cases, Christian missionaries travel to foreign countries to evangelize. The ultimate goal for those who evangelize tends to be converting non-Christians to Christianity or present truth. The word *evangelize* comes from the Church.

Jesus says I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." (John 8:12) "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen." (Matthew 28:19, 20) "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8.) If they are to be effective soul winners, need to be connected to the source of strength and power. What they need is power: the power of the Holy Spirit. It is impossible to be a successful witness for God if the Holy Spirit's power does not flow into our lives. God has uniquely called the Seventh-day Adventist Church both to live and to proclaim His last day message of love and truth to the world (Revelation 14:6-12). The challenge of reaching the more than six billion people on planet Earth with His end-time message seems impossible. The task is overwhelming from a human perspective, the rapid fulfilment of Christ's Great Commission anytime soon appears unlikely, but Jesus will do the work through us (Matthew 28:19, 20).

TUESDAY

ISAIAH 6:1- 8

1. The Calling. This verse describes how the prophet Isaiah, through a vision from the

Lord, begins his ministry for God. In the vision, the Lord asks, ““Whom shall I send?

And who will go for us?” (Isaiah 6:8). Isaiah’s response was to volunteer for service:

“Here am I; send me” (verse 8, KJV).

After a 52-year reign of relative peace, King Uzziah of Judah died of leprosy in 739 BC (2 Chronicles 26:16–23), the same year Isaiah began his prophetic ministry. In a vision Isaiah saw the Lord, “high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple” (Isaiah 6:1). The Lord had a message to deliver to the nation of Judah, and He expresses His desire for a messenger in verse 8. Isaiah’s exclamation “Here am I; send me” marked the very beginning of his ministry; the priest was now a prophet, and the Lord’s message for Judah eventually became the book of Isaiah.

2. Unworthiness

Before Isaiah could say, “Here am I; send me,” he had a problem that had to be addressed. Isaiah 6:5 describes how Isaiah was made aware of his own unworthiness: “Woe to me! . . . I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.” Standing in the Lord’s presence, Isaiah is made painfully aware of his sin, and he is broken about it in the same way as were Job (Job 42:6) and Peter (Luke 5:8) when they were confronted with the presence of the Lord. God was preparing Isaiah for his cleansing and commission.

3. Cleansing

After Isaiah acknowledges his sin, a seraph takes a burning piece of coal from the altar, touches Isaiah’s lips with it, and says, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for” (Isaiah 6:7). Some details are important here: Isaiah could not remove his own guilt, the atonement is made possible by the altar the place of sacrifice and the purification is specifically applied to the point of Isaiah’s sin his lips making Isaiah acceptable as a minister of God’s word.

Eph.5:26-27, 1Joh.1:7-9, Exo.19:10, Math.8:2-4, Joh.15:3, Psm 51;2,7,10,12.

4. Accepting the Call

It is only after Isaiah is cleansed of his sin that he says, “Here am I; send me.” Prior to that point, he saw himself as an unworthy messenger; once he was forgiven, he immediately desired to serve the Lord in whatever way possible. The Lord asks, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” He wants willing volunteers in His service and a grateful and enthusiastic Isaiah doesn’t hesitate in taking the opportunity: “Here am I; send me.” And for the rest of his life, Isaiah serves the God who had forgiven and saved him. 1 Cor.7;17, Eph.4:1-6.

WEDNESDAY.

The Great Commission Mathew 28:18-20.

1. Outline:

- A. Jesus was given complete authority in heaven and on earth V18.
- B. The disciples were to go in this authority V19.
- C. The disciples were to make disciples V19 D. They were to make disciples of all nations V19.
- E. This making disciples required baptizing V19.
- F. This making disciples required teaching obedience V20.
- G. This obedience was to the same commandments Jesus gave to the disciples V20.
- H. Jesus would be with them (and us) until the end of the age V20.

What authority has been given to Jesus? Who was it given by? Explain the phrase “in heaven and on earth”. How does the knowledge of Christ’s Sovereignty connect to the great commission in the following verses? What does this tell us about how we should go about this task and exactly what we should teach and who we should rely on? Who was Jesus speaking to in these verses? If Jesus was speaking to the disciples, then does this command apply to us today? If a believer told you Jesus was only talking to the disciples here and we need not fulfil this how would you answer? If then this does apply to you, why have you not gone? And if it does apply to you as an individual, why do you not baptize? What does it mean to “go”? If it only means “as you are going”, then how can new people be reached in non-Christian areas?

What is the essence of this command? What is a disciple? Were they to be a disciple of the disciples or a disciple of Christ? Where was this task to be carried out? To who? What is the importance of baptizing? What is important of teaching doctrines? What are we to teach to these new disciples? We are to teach Jesus’ commands.

1. ALL authority has been given to Jesus in heaven and on earth. Jesus has complete authority over everything, everywhere. In heaven and on earth tells us of His divinity and is another direct claim to that regard. This statement of authority has direct correlation to His command to the disciples in the next verses. He has authority over Satan and his demons who oppose the work. He has authority over the governments who may persecute those who carry out the work. He has authority over the unbelievers who may scoff at the work or deride those who carry out the work. He has authority over us, meaning we will held accountable for the work. This authority was given to Jesus by the Father (Eph 1:22).

2. First we are going to discuss the “therefore”. What is the therefore there for? It means that Jesus’ statement in verse 18 is directly connected to this command in verses 19-20. The disciples might think this task was too big and impossible. The answer, Jesus has authority over everything. Jesus would be with them. Jesus would help them accomplish it. They might think that the Jews or Romans were too powerful and that the consequences would be too severe. This reminds them to take heart, because Jesus is over this as well. It would remind them that with God all things are possible and what can mere man do to me. Maybe the disciples wondered how they would support themselves if they gave up fishing to trek around the world preaching. Jesus is sovereign over this as well. The one with all authority in heaven and on earth could surely provide for their physical needs.

Verse 18 (and then 20) is much like a father who helps his kid learn how to ride a bike. The kid is scared of falling. But the father reminds the kid gently that he will be holding the seat and keep it from falling. To the child, the task of first riding a bike is monumental and dangerous. But if he knows his father is in control and will protect him, it suddenly becomes much easier and more doable.

But the statement is even more than that. It is a reminder that the authority is Jesus' and not theirs. The disciples might be tempted to go in their own power, but this would be sin. They must go in Christ's power (1 Thess 1:5, Acts 1:8). They might be tempted to teach their own traditions or opinions, but this would be sin. They must teach under the authority of Christ. They might be tempted to become prideful and take credit for the work that was being accomplished, but this would be sin. The glory goes to the one in charge and Jesus was in charge.

3. **Go.** The word in Greek is *poreuomai* and it has a lot of slightly different meanings: to traverse, travel, depart, go (away, forth, one's way, up), take a journey or walk. There is some debate as to if this can mean only "as you are going". This definition is often given to people in churches to remind them to share the gospel with others wherever they are and that it is not necessary for everyone to go to foreign peoples. However, by looking at the context I think this is not the meaning which Christ had in mind. He tells them to go and make disciples of all nations (*ethne*). That would be impossible to do as they were going since their normal goings about was limited to an extremely small geographical area. Today the same is true, if all

Christians share merely as they go about then the places they don't go about will not hear the gospel. That still leaves the question, is everyone to go?

I think the answer is in taking this command as a command to a group, not individuals. In fact the disciples did not all go to foreign peoples and nations. Some of them ministered primarily in Jerusalem to the Jews for most of their ministries. So were they disobeying the call? Not at all (Acts 1:8). It was necessary to share in Jerusalem, but also the area beyond that and beyond that. This was their job as a group. Most of the people in the world would never be won unless some went to them (Romans 10:13-15). But neither could everyone go (everyone's gifting in the body is not the same, everyone is not physically able to, there must be people to lead and teach those left behind, there must also be people to support through finances and prayer the ones who are going).

I. The disciples were to make disciples. A disciple is basically a follower. This is a chain where the disciples model Christ's commands to the next group, who then follow the disciples by modelling Christ's commands to the next group. If the first group of disciples was to go and make disciples, the next group should too unless this a clear "one time" situation.

II. The disciples themselves did not finish this task. When they died, most of the world was unreached. Therefore it is implied that the church should take up this task to complete it.

III. The disciples were to teach the next group to obey everything Jesus commanded them. Jesus commanded them here and in many other places to share the gospel with the lost, here being the Great Commission, the most clear time when Jesus labelled the extent to which they were to reach the lost. While there might be a few situations where Jesus' commands to the disciples do not apply today, the burden of proof is to prove beyond a doubt why those wouldn't apply today, not the other way around.

IV. Finally, Jesus said He would be with them, even to the end of the age. The end of the age hasn't come yet, He was talking to only the disciples (meaning He would still be with them when they died. He was with the disciples and now He is with us. The implication is that Jesus is with the church to the end of the age and therefore we can be confident as we accomplish this task given to us.

4. And make disciples *mathéteuó* this is the key command in the Greek. The other commands (in English) in the verse are contingent upon this one. The teaching and the baptizing is part of this command. The verse question is what is a disciple? A disciple is basically a follower or a student. The disciples were to make Christ followers. These were not to be followers of the disciples just like Paul told the Corinthians that he and Apollos weren't important. They were to be followers of Christ. Luke 14:25-33 tells us more about the costs of discipleship.

A. We need to be models of this. Paul told his disciples to follow him as he followed Christ. We need to set examples of how to live just as Jesus lived among His disciples for three years.

B. A disciple definitely conveys a deeper meaning than just believe. It shows you have to be willing to give up everything in order to follow the cause, Christ. It is not enough to just tell people to pray a prayer and then they are done. We can't force them to follow Christ, but we can make it clear what Christ expects of them and us, and that is total commitment. These are the kinds of people who will stand firm in the face of trials, who will carry on even after we leave to move on to other areas or people. Because they are a follower of Christ, and not us, they are not dependent on us and can carry on after we leave.

5. To all nations (ethnos). This literally means to all people groups. One nation might have many different people groups inside. And many times in today's world many people groups in one nation may be almost ignored while the dominant people group is focused on. Is this great commission finished today? The answer is no, this work was to be done until the end.

6. Baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is part of making disciples. Baptism is a very important step of obedience and sign of identification as a disciple of Christ. This verse should stress on us the importance of baptism. It shows that "just pray this prayer" is not what being a disciple is about. Being a disciple requires identifying with Christ (I will be ashamed of the one who is ashamed of me and my words.) Luke 9:26. A commitment to Christ characterized by obedience, the first step of which should be baptism. This verse is one of the few in the New Testament which clearly shows the doctrine of the Trinity.

7. Teaching them to observe/obey all that I commanded you. This is another aspect of discipleship. A disciple must know what he or she should do. It is very easy for us as teachers to get into the mind-set of teaching truths, teaching doctrines, teaching knowledge, teaching facts, etc. But this is not what it says to do here. What does it say? Teaching to obey. All the facts, truths, and doctrines in the world are no good if there is no obedience. This tells us that the job of being a discipler is also simple. You don't need to know all the facts, truths, and doctrines. You don't need to have a Bible degree. You don't need to understand everything. You should be a modeler. And you should teach the people to obey. Anyone can come to the Word of God, Christ's commands, and see basically what they are to do. The Christian life is not complicated. If you are a disciple, you know enough to being discipling others. You may not know all the answers, but you can open up the Word together and decide to do it. The next thing we learn from this phrase is that they were to teach to obey everything Jesus commanded them. This tells us several things:

B. They were to obey all of Jesus' commands. This means they weren't required to obey all of the disciple's personal ideas, opinions and preferences. This reminds us that Christ is in charge and we are only tools building His kingdom, not our own little fiefdom.

8. The last part of the final verse is a final reminder of Christ's presence. This presence is comforting, emboldening, and empowering. If Christ was not with us, we could not hope to complete or even begin this great task. But with Christ's presence everything is indeed possible.

Since we are teaching to obey, we should all consider how to obey this command. If we just know the great commission, this whole time has been wasted. As part of the church, we should all be involved in fulfil the great commission. We cannot do it individually, but we can contribute with our gifts as part of the church. 1Cor.12:4-11.

THURSDAY

TYPES OF EVANGELISM

1. Open-air preaching

Open-air preaching is an approach to evangelism characterized by speaking in public places out in the open, generally to crowds of people at a time, using a message, sermon, or speech which spreads the gospel. Supporters of this approach note that both Jesus and many of the Old Testament prophets often preached about God in public places. It is one of the oldest approaches to evangelism. **2. Trickle-down Evangelism**

Trickle-down evangelism is an approach to evangelism primarily concerned with converting high-ranking members of a society, so that their influence can serve to help spread Christianity throughout the society in question. It was practiced especially often during the middle Ages.

3. Door-to-door Evangelism

The Bible records that Jesus sent out his disciples to evangelize by visiting people's homes in pairs of two believers (cf. Luke 10:1–12). In the same text, Jesus mentioned that few people were willing to evangelize, despite there being many people who would be receptive to his Gospel message.^[16] As such, door-to-door preaching is an approach to evangelism where a Christian will go from household to household in a certain area to evangelize to residents, often in conjunction with passing out gospel tracts. Jesus often went into other people's homes during his own ministry. House to house is the most effective to evangelism. Acts 20:20.

4. Evangelizing through a sermon

Many churches regularly have a gospel message preached in a sermon. Often, this will include an altar call where people are invited to come forward to the accept Christ; the tradition of altar calls is practiced by many evangelical denominations such as the Methodist and Baptist Churches.

5. Lifestyle Evangelism

Lifestyle evangelism is an approach to evangelism characterized by someone demonstrating their faith by their actions in the hope that people around them will be impressed with how God affects that person's life, and become a Christian. Supporters of this approach to evangelism often cite 2 Cor. 3:1-3 Math. 5:13-16. as a proof verses. They also often point

out that Jesus drew people to God by showing them kindness and performing good deeds, while detractors sometimes note that people may not realize one's good behaviour is due to Christianity. Supporters claim this is more effective than direct evangelism because of the perception that it is harder to live "righteously" than to preach a sermon.

6. Friendship evangelism

Similar to lifestyle evangelism, friendship evangelism is an approach to evangelism characterized by Christians developing relationships with people in order to show them kindness and talk to them about God eventually. Supporters sometimes say that Jesus related to those who took an interest in him as friends, or that it is more effective than other methods of evangelism which are seen as less personal. This approach is also known as "loving someone into the kingdom". Paul and the apostles towards preaching the gospel by making friendship and demonstrating Christ love. 1 Cor.13:1-Prov.17:9, 17, Col.3:12-13, Ecc.4:9, 10, Job 6:14, Prov.18:24, Rom. 12:10, 1Pet.4; 8-10.

7. Child Evangelism

The child evangelism movement is a Christian evangelism movement that was begun in the 20th century. It focuses on the 4/14 Window which centres on evangelizing children between the ages of 4 and 14 years old. The mission of the Children's Ministries Department is to nurture children into a loving, serving relationship with Jesus. Psm 127:3-5, Isa:54:13, Jer.1:45, Math 18;1-3, 3Joh.1:4, Luke 18:16.

8. Creative Evangelism

This approach to evangelism is where the creative arts such as music evangelism, visual art, drama, film are used to present a gospel message. However, some ministries refer to this kind of evangelism as simply the practice of finding creative ways to evangelize. 2 Chr 20:21-25.

9. Literature Evangelism

A gospel tract in the Christian sense is a leaflet with a gospel message. It is typically a short presentation of the Gospel through literature. Our literature evangelists are doing door to door preaching of selling books as an approach to evangelism.

10. Televangelism

This view would make the angel with the everlasting gospel to every nation, kindred and tongue, Galatians 1:8. For the apostolic commission extended only to the harvest, which is the end of the world. A gospel preached in such technological way is a symbol represented by the flying angel of Revelation 14:6, 7.

Televangelism is an approach to evangelism characterized by an evangelistic message presented through the medium of television often through a charismatic sermon. Large Christian television networks such as Adventist media such as Hope channel, 3ABN etc.

11. Radio Evangelism

Radio evangelism is an approach to evangelism which began around 1921, and has reached more people per hour than any other kind of evangelism, Adventist broadcast ministries have engaged in worldwide outreach via numerous crusades and rallies. Worldwide outreach is also conducted by Adventist World Radio mostly via shortwave radio transmissions, but also via AM, FM, satellite, Internet, including social media platforms,

and direct-to-home satellite radio transmissions. Broadcasting is currently done from 10 transmitter sites in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas. **12. Internet Evangelism**

Internet evangelism is a form of evangelism where the Christian gospel is presented on the Internet. This may include a website presenting apologetics about biblical inerrancy, social media church services, someone discussing their faith in a chat room, evangelical messages or advertisements on the home pages of Christian organizations, or other methods of using the Internet to spread Christianity.

Internet Evangelism Coalition, set up by the Billy Graham Centre in Nearly two-thirds of online Americans use the Internet for faith-related reasons. The sixty-four percent of Internet users who perform spiritual and religious activities online.

13. Phone Evangelism

This approach to evangelism involves using phones to contact people in order to spread the gospel to them. This sometimes takes the form of random phone calls, or is done after someone contacts the evangelist to recommend people to whom a person may want the evangelist to evangelize. The huge growth in cell phones and other mobile devices is opening up the way for new and creative methods of evangelism.

14. Personal Evangelism

Sometimes referred to as "one to one" or "personal work", this approach to evangelism is when one Christian evangelizes to, typically, one non-Christian, or only a few non-Christians, in a private manner. At list 51 percent of Adventist members had tried to convince someone to become a Christian during their life. The mission of Personal Ministries is to provide resources and train church members to unite their efforts with the ministry and church officers in the final proclamation of the gospel of salvation in Christ. The aim of the department is to enlist every member in active soul-winning service for God. Door-to-door evangelism Distribution of literature Giving personal Bible studies lay preaching Organizing and running the Community Service program of the church, including the Dorcas Society Organizing and running annual Ingathering program Managing local church, Bible Correspondence Schools Cooperating with the Sabbath School Department in organizing and running Sabbath School Action Units. Cooperating with the local church pastor in the organization and management of small group ministries.

15. Creation Evangelism

Not to be confused with creative evangelism, creation evangelism uses the truths of modern science to demonstrate the scientific accuracy of events described in the Bible, usually those found in Genesis. In demonstrating that the Biblical account is indeed supported by modern science, one may influence an unsaved individual to realize the existence of God and His certain judgment described in the Bible; eventually leading the person to become saved through Jesus Christ.

16. Archaeology Evangelism

Used with considerable success by groups such as Seventh-day Adventists and Christadelphians, practitioners use archaeological discoveries to demonstrate the historical and prophetic reliability of the Bible. The ready availability of archaeological programs on radio and television has made this approach less popular and effective than in earlier years.

This approach will draw large of the educated class and motivate them to belief in the bible truth.

17. Prophetic Evangelism

A method employed mainly by charismatic Christians. This is where (as its practitioners believe) God speaks through a Christian to a non-believer to say something that will prompt that person to seek God. On most occasions it is something that the speaker could not have known naturally; for example, someone who is having a secret affair may be told that God knows they are doing wrong and wants them to change their ways.

However, some critics of this approach note that other religions appear to use a similar method to spread their faith, Adventist are not using that this type of method. Adventist approach is Apocalyptic (Symbolic) method such as the prophecies of the books of Daniel and Revelation.

Summary

Great Commission refers to several passages in the Gospel of Matthew, where Jesus Christ urges his apostles to make “disciples of all the nations” and “baptize” them. The word “disciple,” which is “*mathetes*” in Greek, literally means “pupil” but also “follower,” as in “follower of Jesus. Before ascending to heaven, Christ gave His disciples their commission. He told them that they were to be the executors of the will in which He bequeathed to the world the treasures of eternal life. You have been witnesses of my life of sacrifice in behalf of the world, He said to them. You have seen my labours for Israel. And although My people would not come to Me that they might have life, although priests and rulers have done unto Me as they listed, although they have rejected Me, they shall have still another opportunity of accepting the Son of God. You have seen that all who come to me confessing their sins, I freely receive. Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. To you, my disciples, I commit this message of mercy. It is to be given to both Jews and Gentiles to Israel, first, and then to all nations, tongues, and peoples. All who believe are to be gathered into one church?

FRIDAY

Most the material is drawn from the book Evangelism by Ellen G. White

The Challenge to Evangelism Proclaiming the Message

Christ’s Teaching Commission Christ’s last words to His disciples were: “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations.” Go to the farthest bounds of the habitable globe, and know that wherever you go my presence will attend you to us also the commission is given. We are bidden to go forth as Christ’s messengers, to teach, instruct, and persuade men and women, to urge upon their attention the word of life. And to us also the assurance of Christ’s abiding presence is given. Whatever the difficulties with which we may have to contend, whatever the trials we may have to endure, the gracious promise is always ours, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” *Manuscript 24, 1903.*

The Message a Living Force—In the commission to His disciples, Christ not only outlined their work but gave them their message. Teach the people, He said, “to observe all things

whatsoever I have commanded you.” The disciples were to teach what Christ had taught. That which He had spoken, not only in person, but through all the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament, is here included. Human teachings is shut out. There is no place for tradition, for man’s theories and conclusions, or for church legislation. No laws ordained by ecclesiastical authority are included in the commission. None of these are Christ’s servants to teach. “The law and the prophets,” with the record of His own words and deeds, are the treasure committed to the disciples to be given to the world. The gospel is to be presented, not as a lifeless theory, but as a living force to change the life. God desires that the receivers of His grace shall be witnesses to its power. *The Desire of Ages*, 826. (1898) The Church Entrusted With the Message We are now living in the closing scenes of this world’s history. Let men tremble with the sense of the responsibility of knowing the truth. The ends of the world are come. Proper consideration of these things will lead all to make an entire consecration of all that they have and are to their God. The weighty obligation of warning a world of its coming doom is upon us. From every direction, far and near, calls are coming to us for help. The church, devotedly consecrated to the work, is to carry the message to the world: Come to the gospel feast; the supper is prepared, come. Crowns, immortal crowns, are to be won. The kingdom of heaven is to be gained. A world, perishing in sin, is to be enlightened. The lost pearl is to be found. The lost sheep is to be brought back in safety to the fold. Who will join in the search? Who will bear the light to those who are wandering in the darkness of error? *The Review and Herald*, July 23, 1895.

The Present Crisis we should now feel the responsibility of labouring with intense earnestness to impart to others the truths that God has given for this time. We cannot be too much in earnest now is the time for the last warning to be given. There is a special power in the presentation of the Truth at the present time; but how long will it continue? Only a little while. If there was ever a crisis, it is now. All are now deciding their eternal destiny. Men need to be aroused to realize the solemnity of the time, the nearness of the day when human probation shall be ended. Decided efforts should be made to bring the message for this time prominently before the people. The third angel is to go forth with great power.—

Testimonies for the Church 6:16. (1900).

Evangelism Our Real Work Evangelistic work, opening the Scriptures to others, warning men and women of what is coming upon the world, is to occupy more and still more of the time of God’s servants. *The Review and Herald*, August 2, 1906.

Speeding the Message as a people we greatly need to humble our hearts before God, pleading His forgiveness for our neglect to fulfil the gospel commission. We have made large centres in a few places, leaving unworked many important cities. Let us now take up the work appointed us, and proclaim the message that is to arouse men and women to a sense of their danger. If every Seventh-day Adventist had done the work laid upon him, the number of believers would now be much larger than it is. *Testimonies for the Church* 9:25. (1909)

The Call for Earnest Work If our ministers realized how soon the inhabitants of the world are to be arraigned before the judgment seat of God, to answer for the deeds done in the body, how earnestly they would work together with God to present the truth! How earnestly they would strive to lead men to accept the truth. How untiringly they would labour to advance God’s cause in the world, proclaiming in word and deed, “The end of all things is at hand. “*Letter* 43, 1902.

Amid Confusion of Last Days the words of Jesus Christ are spoken to us living down here in the close of this earth’s history. “When these things begin to come to pass, then look up,

and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.” The nations are in unrest. Times of perplexity are upon us. The waves of the sea are roaring; men’s hearts are failing them for fear and for expectation of those things that are coming upon the earth; but those who believe on the Son of God will hear His voice amid the storm, saying, “It is I; be not afraid.” We see the world lying in wickedness and apostasy. Rebellion to the commandments of God seems almost universal. Amid the tumult of excitement with confusion in every place, there is a work to be done in the world. *Manuscript 44, 1900.*

Planting the Standard in Dark Places—Satan’s armies are many, and God’s people must spread over all the world, planting the standard of truth in the dark places of the earth and doing their utmost to destroy Satan’s kingdom. *Letter 91, 1900.*

The Highest, Greatest Work—The Lord designs that the presentation of this message shall be the highest, greatest work carried on in the world at this time. *Testimonies for the Church 6:11. (1900)*

More Rapid Advancement In this country and in foreign countries the cause of present truth is to make more rapid advancement than it has yet made. If our people will go forth in faith, doing whatever they can to make a beginning, and labouring in Christ’s lines, the way will be opened before them. If they will show the energy that is necessary in order to gain success, and the faith that goes forward unquestioningly in obedience to God’s command, rich returns will be theirs. They must go as far and as fast as possible, with a determination to do the very things that the Lord has said should be done. They must have push and earnest, unwavering faith. The world must hear the warning message. *Manuscript 162, 1905.*

The Need of Evangelistic Workers.

The Harvest Is Great The solemn, sacred message of warning must be proclaimed in the most difficult fields and in the most sinful cities, in every place where the light of the great threefold gospel message has not yet dawned. Everyone is to hear the last call to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Countries hitherto closed to the gospel are opening their doors, and are pleading for the Word of God to be explained to them. Kings and princes are opening their long-closed gates, inviting the heralds of the cross to enter. The harvest truly is great. Eternity alone will reveal the results of well-directed efforts put forth now. *Gospel Workers, 27. (1915)*

Ambassadors for Christ Ministers of God, with hearts aglow with love for Christ and your fellow men, seek to arouse those who are dead in trespasses and sins. Let your earnest entreaties and warnings pierce their consciences. Let your fervent prayers melt their hearts, and lead them in penitence to the Saviour. You are ambassadors for Christ, to proclaim His message of salvation. *Gospel Workers, 35 (1915)*

A Hundred Workers Where Now Is One Time is short. Workers for Christ are needed everywhere. There should be one hundred earnest, faithful labourers in home and foreign mission fields where now there is one. The highways and the byways are yet unworked. Urgent inducements should be held out to those who ought now to be engaged in missionary work for the Master. *Fundamentals Christian Education, 488. (1903).*

A Wise Distribution of Men For the accomplishment of all that God calls for in warning the cities, His servants must plan for a wise distribution of the working forces. Often the labourers who might be a power for good in public meetings, are engaged in other work that allows them no time for active ministry among the people. For the conduct of affairs at the various centres of our work, those in responsibility must endeavour, as far as possible, to find consecrated men who have been trained in business lines. There is constant necessity of guarding against the tendency to tie up at these centres of influence men who could do a larger

and more important work on the public platform, in presenting before unbelievers the truths of God's Word. *The Review and Herald*, April 7, 1910.

The Highest Calling there must be no belittling of the gospel ministry. No enterprise should be so conducted as to cause the ministry of the Word to be looked upon as an inferior matter. It is not so. Those who belittle the ministry are belittling Christ. The highest of all work is ministry in its various lines, and it should be kept before the youth that there is no work more blessed of God than that of the gospel minister. Let not our young men be deterred from entering the ministry. There is danger that through glowing representations some will be drawn away from the path where God bids them walk. Some have been encouraged to take a course of study in medical lines who ought to be preparing themselves to enter the ministry. *Testimonies for the Church* 6:411. (1900)

3. SABBATH SCHOOL

MONDAY

The Mission of the Sabbath School.

The mission of the Sabbath School is to be a system of local church religious education that builds faith and practice. The Sabbath School is based at the local church. It builds faith through the study of the Scriptures and the doctrines and teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It builds practice through the application of biblical principles and the teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to the individual lives of the Sabbath School members. Objectives of the Sabbath School the Sabbath School has four specific objectives:

1. Study of the Word
2. Fellowship
3. Community Outreach
4. World Mission Emphasis

These four objectives are the basis for every activity of the Sabbath School in all divisions.

1. **Study of the Word.** The Sabbath School will help the students understand the gospel and make a personal commitment to it. It will help them grow spiritually through study of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. It will help students develop a prayer program and teach them how to interpret and apply the principles of the Scriptures to their lives.
2. **Fellowship.** The Sabbath School will foster fellowship among members in the weekly Sabbath School program, develop projects for recruiting new members and integrating them into church life, and find ways of restoring inactive members.
3. **Community Outreach.** The Sabbath School will help its students catch a vision of the church's mission in the community, train them for service, and inspire them to witness. It will develop programs to involve them in soul-winning activities.
4. **World Mission Emphasis.** The Sabbath School will present a clear vision of the global mission of the church. It will promote a personal, systematic, and self-denying commitment to the support of world missions, and foster in all a desire to help fulfill the gospel commission. Sabbath School Hand

Sabbath School Offering

Sabbath School Offerings and Mission Promotion

Regular Weekly Mission Offering. Mission offerings given through the Sabbath School, other than those for the thirteenth Sabbath of each quarter, Investment, and the Birthday Thank Offering, constitute the regular weekly Mission offering.

Thirteenth Sabbath Offering. The offering received on, or designated for the thirteenth Sabbath of each quarter, a portion of which is devoted to designated projects in world divisions according to a schedule voted by the Annual Council of GC

Birthday-Thank Offerings. Members are asked to bring a token of thanks for another year of life or for a specific personal blessing received. As early as 1890 Ellen White wrote: On birthday occasions the children should be taught that they have reason for gratitude to God

for His loving-kindness in preserving their lives for another year. Again she wrote in 1894: Not only on birthdays but Christmas and New Year is should also be seasons when every household should remember their Creator and Redeemer do not let the day pass without bringing thanksgiving and thank-offerings to Jesus. *Adventist Review & Sabbath Herald*, November 13, 1994.

Investment Fund. Members are invited to make an investment for missions in some earning project, and give the proceeds as a special offering. The investment idea was followed as early as the 1880s when certain church members dedicated such projects as an acre or more of a crop, some cattle, or some cash to provide camp-meeting equipment. At the Spring Meeting of the General Conference Committee of 1925 the plan was named Investment Fund and made part of the Sabbath School system with the understanding that the money received would go into the regular mission budget.

All these offering have been combing into combine offering.

Organizing the Sabbath School in the Local Church

The Sabbath School in the local church is a unit of the worldwide Sabbath School system. It is responsible for appointing and training teachers, developing Sabbath School programing, managing the finances allocated by the church, and organizing itself in such a way that its four purposes are fulfilled: Study of the Word, Fellowship, Community Outreach, and World Mission Emphasis. Approval of plans, programs, projects, and the implementation of policies are the responsibility of the Sabbath School Council. The officers of the Sabbath School are responsible to the Sabbath School Council, which in turn is responsible to the church board. Sabbath School Membership Sabbath School membership includes the members of every class in all divisions. Sabbath School officers, division leaders, teachers, and other personnel should be included on the Sabbath School records. Anyone indicating a desire to join may be a member of the Sabbath School. Neither baptism nor a formal transfer of church membership is necessary. No waiting period or formal application is required. The teacher simply adds the name to the class record

Dropping names from the membership list, or transferring names from one class to another, is done by the Sabbath School secretary as authorized by the Sabbath School Council.

TUESDAY

Selection of Sabbath School Personnel

Sabbath School personnel must be members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in regular standing. There are three ways Sabbath School personnel are chosen. Elections by the Church Sabbath School officers who serve as members of the Sabbath School Council are elected by the church along with other church officers. They may be elected for a one or two-year period to ensure strength and continuity. They may also be elected for shorter periods as the needs of the local church may require. The officers are: 1. General superintendent

2. Assistant superintendents (as needed)
3. Sabbath School secretary
4. Assistant secretaries

5. Division leaders

6. Assistant treasurer

Appointment by the Church Board Between the annual elections any vacancies that occur in the above list shall be filled by the church board in consultation with the Sabbath School officers.

Appointment by the Sabbath School Council Positions filled by appointment of the Sabbath School Council are the following:

1. Assistant division leaders

2. Division secretaries

3. Music directors

4. Pianists/organists

5. Teachers

6. Greeters

7. Ushers

The above lists should be understood as guidelines for the nominating committee and the Sabbath School Council. Small churches may choose fewer people and large churches may require more. Selection of Teachers, Teachers for all divisions is selected by the Sabbath School Council. Division leaders should be present during the selection process. The list of teachers must be approved by the church board (See Church Manual, p. 92).

Sabbath School Council

The members of the Sabbath School Council are:

1. General Superintendent (Chair) person)

2. Assistant superintendents

3. Sabbath School secretary

4. Assistant secretaries

5. Division leaders

6. Investment secretary

7. Personal Ministries director

8. An elder appointed by the church board or board of elders

The Sabbath school Council Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Sabbath School Council to keep the Sabbath School running smoothly. Everything that concerns the Sabbath School is appropriate to consider in this council. As soon as possible after the annual election, the Sabbath School Council should meet to plan for the coming year. It is recommended that during the year regular meetings be called.

Agenda Items: Some agenda items for the council may be: Appointment of officers not elected by the church; appointment of teachers; adjustments in class membership; development or scheduling of training programs; materials, equipment, and facilities for the various divisions; approval of promotions from one division to another; scheduling of Promotion Days, Decision Days, Community Guest Days, and other special days; setting goals for offerings, membership, and attendance; authorizing expenditure of Sabbath School expense funds; evaluation of the Sabbath School; development of new classes; planning for community outreach, and any other Sabbath School items that may come to its attention.

Divisions and Classes Bible Study Guides and auxiliary materials: are provided for eight Sabbath School divisions. The ages indicated on the chart are approximate and correspond to generally accepted principles of childhood educational and spiritual development. The age groups for some departments may change, depending on how they are determined in a particular part of the world, often based on the local school system, the size of the church, or the number of children in the church.

Extension Division: The extension division cares for the needs of shut-ins and those who live in isolated places and cannot regularly attend church. The Sabbath School should make provision for attending to their needs and supplying them with Sabbath School Bible Study Guides.

WEDNESDAY

Sabbath School Divisions Suggested age groups

Division	Ages	Curriculum Material
Beginner	0-2	Beginner Bible Study Guide
Kindergarten	3-5	Kindergarten Bible Study Guide
Primary	6-9	Primary Bible Study Guide
Junior	10-12	Power Points
Teens	13-14	Real-Time Faith
Youth	15-18	Cornerstone Connections
Young Adult	18-35	Collegiate Quarterly
Adult		Adult Bible Study Guide

Responsibilities of Sabbath School Personnel: This section outlines the general duties and responsibilities of Sabbath School personnel in the local church. Local situations may mandate fewer or additional personnel. Their duties and responsibilities will be defined by the local church.

General Superintendent

The Role: The general superintendent is the general coordinator of the Sabbath School. It is his or her job to see that the goals and objectives of the Sabbath School are implemented in all divisions. In some cases, the general superintendent may also hold the office of adult division leader. The role of the general superintendent may be shared with assistant superintendents.

Duties and Responsibilities: It is the duty of the general superintendent to administer the entire Sabbath School by developing leadership, chairing the Sabbath School Council, building a soul-winning Sabbath School, and recruiting volunteers. If there are no

assistants, the general superintendent will also care for the duties of the assistant superintendents of the adult Sabbath School.

Developing Leadership

1. Supervise all the leaders of the Sabbath School and encourage them to perform their duties cheerfully and effectively.
2. Arrange for the training, support, and resources needed for effective leadership in all areas of the Sabbath School. a. Help leaders prepare budgets to present to the Sabbath School Council. b. Determine needs for equipment and supplies in each division and help them get the necessities. c. Encourage leaders and teachers to attend appropriate training events.
3. Check with the Sabbath School secretary on the adequacy of records and the accuracy and promptness of quarterly reports to the conference Sabbath School director.
4. Foster the development of an adequate collection of Sabbath School books, cassettes, and videos in the church library.
5. Be on hand early Sabbath morning to coordinate activities and answer questions.
6. Work closely with the pastor, particularly in the planning of training events, community outreach, and special programs.

Chairing the Sabbath School Council

1. Call monthly meetings of the Sabbath School Council.
2. Call quarterly planning sessions where future plans for all divisions will be coordinated.
3. Call a yearly planning session soon after the election of officers and before the New Year begins. Outline events for the entire year.
4. Prepare the agenda for all council meetings.
5. Represent Sabbath School interests on the Church Board.
6. Publicize Sabbath School Council plans and activities.

Building a Soul-Winning Sabbath School

1. Implement the four Sabbath School objectives: ü Promote Bible study and effective class teaching. ü Foster Christian fellowship. Encourage community outreach activities. Cultivate support for world missions.
2. Plan with the assistant superintendent for evangelism in promoting Branch Sabbath Schools, Community. Guest Days, Friendship Evangelism, and class outreach.
3. Plan with the assistant superintendent for the reclaiming of inactive members and in keeping the Sabbath School membership list up to date.
4. Plan with the world missions coordinator for a strong program of mission education in all divisions.
5. Plan with the hospitality coordinator for an effective program of caring for visitors.

6. Plan with the adult division leader for growth. If a Sabbath School wants to grow, it should add one new class per year for every 100 members. These might be for special interest groups such as young adults, singles, women, cradle roll parents, new members, prospective members, or other special interests.
7. Encourage activities outside of Sabbath school time, such as potlucks, picnics, nature walks, and other social activities.
8. Make sure the extension division is functioning properly.

Recruiting Volunteers

1. Identify potential Sabbath School personnel, invite them to get involved, and assist them in getting started.
2. Be on hand early Sabbath morning to help find substitutes or assistants in order for the program to run smoothly.
3. Plan training events and encourage new people to attend and prepare themselves for service.
4. Arrange for frequent appreciation and affirmation to be given to Sabbath School volunteers.

THURSDAY

Assistant Superintendents: There are two main ways for a group of Sabbath School superintendents to organize themselves.

1. Each superintendent may be assigned a certain number of programs during the year and plans all the activities for the assigned Sabbaths.
2. Each superintendent takes charge of a different aspect of Sabbath School and plans activities within that area of responsibility for the entire year. Assistant Superintendent for Evangelism The assistant superintendent for evangelism must work closely with the pastor and the Personal Ministries leader of the church so that the outreach plans of the church are coordinated.

It is the responsibility of the assistant superintendent for evangelism to:

1. Direct Sabbath School outreach in the community.
2. Plan with division leaders and teachers for class outreach activities.
3. Plan for Community Guest Days.
4. Sponsor Friendship Evangelism.
5. Plan with division leaders for Decision Days.
6. Work with Vacation Bible School director for Vacation Bible School follow-up programs.
7. Plan for Branch Sabbath Schools.
8. Develop a follow-up system for guests and other prospective members.

9. Fill in for the general superintendent for Sabbath morning duties as needed.
10. Attend the Sabbath School Council and report on activities and plans for community outreach.

Assistant Superintendent for Membership

It is the responsibility of the assistant superintendent for membership to:

1. Analyze the local membership situation by checking the Sabbath School rolls with the church membership roll.
2. Maintain an up-to-date list of addresses and phone numbers of members and prospective members.
3. Arrange for the implementation of a plan of assignment of inactive members to classes for visitation and follow up.
4. Foster the visitation of members who occasionally are absent from Sabbath School.
5. Help with the integrating of newly baptized members and newly transferred members into the Sabbath School program.
6. Fill in for the general superintendent for Sabbath morning duties as needed.
7. Attend the Sabbath School Council and report on activities and plans for membership promotion.

Assistant Superintendent for World Mission

1. Work with division leaders to make sure an interesting mission emphasis is provided in each week in Sabbath School program.
2. See that every division has Mission for their age level and that they are using it.
3. Work with division leaders to help increase mission giving by helping with such things as: setting and visualizing goals, finding visual aids such as maps and pictures, locating interesting stories, tapes, books, videos on target area, or setting up displays and bulletin boards
4. Providing regular information about projects, needs, goals, and special offerings through the program, bulletin boards, church bulletins, and newsletters.
5. Plan special events to promote missions such as: mission conferences, mission theme days, mission study groups, mission prayer circles, mission trips, and mission potlucks.
6. Coordinate the Thirteenth Sabbath Program.
7. Fill in for the general superintendent for Sabbath morning duties as needed.
8. Attend the Sabbath School Council and report on activities and plans for world mission promotion.

Assistant Superintendent for Hospitality: It is the responsibility of the assistant superintendent for hospitality to:

1. Recruit, train, and supervise the crew of greeters that meet people on Sabbath morning.
2. Arrive early on Sabbath morning to make sure there are enough greeters on duty and observe how to improve the work of the greeters.
3. Work with division leaders to make sure a plan for welcoming visitors and recording their names, addresses, and phone numbers is put in place.
4. Work with the teachers to make sure all are helping newcomers feel welcome.
5. Organize a program of providing meals for visitors and make sure someone is always prepared to invite visitors home or to a fellowship meal at the church.
6. Develop a plan of follow-up for all visitors who attend Sabbath School including, cards, letters, phone calls, and/or a visit.
7. Work with division leaders and teachers in planning fellowship activities outside of Sabbath School hours
8. Fill in for the general superintendent for Sabbath morning as needed.
9. Attend the Sabbath School Council and report on activities and plans for hospitality.

FRIDAY

Sabbath School Secretary

The Role: The Sabbath School secretary cares for the records, supplies, offerings, and clerical details of the Sabbath School and all its divisions. In larger schools these duties may be shared with one or more assistants.

Duties and Responsibilities: It is the duty of the secretary to attend to the clerical work of the Sabbath School keep records and statistics, oversee supplies, provide communication and care for the Sabbath School offerings.

Keeping Records and Statistics

1. Distribute and collect the class record cards, offering envelopes, and personal ministries report blanks.
2. Check record cards, fill in omissions, count and record the offerings.
3. Promptly enter all weekly statistics into the Sabbath School Record and Registry.
4. Secure and preserve a receipt from the church treasurer for all Sabbath School offerings.
5. Transfer the names of all class members to the new Sabbath School class records each quarter and at the beginning of the year.
6. Maintain a Sabbath School membership file including baptized, unbaptized, inactive and prospective members.
7. Maintain the weekly, monthly, quarterly, and yearly records required.
8. Keep minutes of meetings of the Sabbath School Council on permanent file.
9. Preserve all records and pass them on to a successor.

Providing Communication

1. Send or telephone announcements of the Sabbath School Council.

2. Pass on information from the conference/mission Sabbath School department about workshops, training seminars, new policies, and new materials to those who need the information. 3. Keep the Sabbath School in all its divisions informed of progress, trends, plans, and achievements through occasional reports during the regular program.
4. Compile a complete and accurate quarterly Sabbath School report on Sabbath School Report Form A, and send it promptly to the local conference/ mission Sabbath School department.
5. Prepare monthly and quarterly statistical reports for the Sabbath School Council. Use the report forms provided by your Conference/Mission Sabbath School department.
6. Prepare a list of inactive or missing members to be given to class or division leaders.
7. Send a list of names and addresses of Sabbath School officers and division leaders to the conference/mission Sabbath School department as soon as elections are held, or subsequent changes are made. The church clerk sends in only the names of the superintendent and secretary. The Sabbath School department needs the names of all officers in order to send out specific information and supplies.
8. Keep the Sabbath School membership apprised of the progress of the Sabbath School through the use of reports.
9. Make sure that all Sabbath School meetings are publicized in the church bulletin. These include Sabbath School Council meetings, teachers meetings, and Sabbath School workshops.

Attending Meetings

1. Participate in Sabbath School Council meetings, take notes, write up the minutes, and provide copies to all members.
2. The secretary or an assistant may be asked to attend teachers meetings to keep a record of any recommendations for the Sabbath School Council.
3. The assistant treasurer

Should work with the Assistant Superintendent for membership to put together an accurate set of membership and attendance records.

Caring for Offerings

1. Collect the offering envelopes from each class
2. Count the money, record the amount, and turn the funds over to the church treasurer as soon as possible and get a receipt.
3. Keep a permanent file of the receipts.
4. Approve bills for Sabbath School materials and supplies before the treasurer pays them.
5. Ask the treasurer for regular monthly financial statements.

Sabbath School Action Units: A Sabbath School Action Unit is a small-group Sabbath School class organized in a way that provides time for sharing, Bible study, and systematic planning for outreach. Many Sabbath Schools have discovered that the small-group Sabbath School Action Unit can, if properly conducted, provide the supporting fellowship and

relevant nurture needed. It can also provide the caring atmosphere, inspiration, and training needed to bring our missing members back, so they will stay and assist us in reaching the world with the Three Angels Messages. The small group Sabbath School classes can provide an excellent organized, continuous training school, since Sabbath School meets every week. By involving outreach leaders, the care coordinators, Sabbath Schools can provide weekly promotion and training in soul-winning, both theoretical and practical, on-the-job skills.

The Plan in Action: The plan is very simple. Here are 10 necessary elements of successful Sabbath School Action Units:

Classes of Six to Eight: Classes are formed into groups of six to eight for optimum participation. Participation is vital to understanding, spiritual growth, and outreach. In a small group of six to eight, members feel free to share the experiences of their lives, their joys, and their burdens. The more they know of the circumstances that formed the lives of fellow members, the more they understand and love them and are encouraged to support one another.

Outreach Leaders: Each class has an outreach leader called a **care coordinator**, who is an assistant to the Church Personal Ministries leader. Assisted by a secretary, the care coordinator promotes outreach in accordance with the class plan. The care coordinator should be a loving, concerned, active member with a burden for souls who develops a band of enthusiastic and eventually well-trained soul winners. This person should be a tactful, enthusiastic, and persevering member who can cooperate with the Personal Ministries leader and other care coordinators in encouraging and giving simple, practical on-the-job training to fellow class members.

Outreach Plans: Specific outreach plans of the class are developed immediately after class organization at a special planning session. Little or nothing will be accomplished by the class without a plan. With a plan unlimited results are possible. The care coordinator leads the class in planning.

One Hour Class Time: To accomplish the purpose for which the Sabbath School was actually established, it is vital to provide an hour for the class. Twenty-five minutes are devoted to outreach at the beginning of the class, followed by thirty-five minutes for lesson discussion.

This adjustment can be made with careful planning. It will mean shortening the opening exercises to allow the one hour time for classes

Time for Missing: Class Members. Weekly caring for missing Sabbath School class members is vital to the plan. The class leader takes up to five minutes at the beginning of the 25-minute outreach time to welcome all, take the record, and arrange for sending cards to, telephoning, and visiting any missing Sabbath School class members. Loving, caring concern for missing class members is essential. Many have backslidden because they were not cared for immediately when they first began to miss Sabbath School. They need to be cared for according to their circumstances and needs.

Time for Outreach: The care coordinator uses the remainder of the 25-minute outreach time to:

- Call for experiences related to the class plan.

- Give simple, timely training based on experiences shared and appropriate to guests present.
- Promote class plans and goals.
- Give visitation assignments and arrange for on-the-job training where needed.
- Have special prayer for interests, plans, and goals.

Lesson Discussion Application: The teacher endeavors to get everyone to participate in the discussion of the lesson and in making personal applications. He or she reviews the high points of the lesson and asks three or four questions that help each one apply the lesson to life and to witnessing that week.

Weekly/Monthly Leader Consultations: To evaluate and sharpen plans, care coordinators should meet briefly after church with the Personal Ministries leader, Sabbath School superintendent, and the pastor for prayer, encouragement, and to strengthen their coordinated efforts. A regular monthly planning session is vital to the success of the plan.

Monthly Corporate Sharing: Once a month the care coordinators take the superintendent is program time, or their normal 20 minutes from the class time, and work together in presenting their successes before the entire Sabbath School. This encourages everyone.

Monthly Home Fellowship/ Evaluation: To sharpen progress and build mutual trust and fellowship, casual, relaxed, and pleasant fellowship/ evaluation meetings are held in the homes of class members. Dates and locations are set during the class planning session.

Typical Sabbath School Action Unit Program

9:00-9:05 Song Service

9:05-9:15 Welcome, Prayer

9:15-9:20 Music/Special Feature

9:20-9:30 World Missions Report

9:30-9:35 Action Units Begin Outreach Time - 25 minutes Lesson Study - 35 minutes.

10:35 Benediction in Classes.

This material was produced using the Sabbath School Manual

4. THE BIBLE AND CULTURE

DAY ONE

WORLDVIEW AND BIBLICAL VIEW OF CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

What is Culture?

Culture is customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group. Culture is the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, encompassing language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts.

Culture is the secondary environment that man builds upon the creation, comprising language, habits, ideas, beliefs, customs, social organization, inherited artifacts, technical processes, and values

What is a Tradition?

As a tradition, **Christianity is more than a system of religious belief.** It also has generated a culture, a set of ideas and ways of life, practices, and artifacts that have been handed down from generation to generation since Jesus first became the object of faith

How do we learn Culture and Traditions?

People learn culture through a process called acculturation, enculturation and cultural adaptation

Children learn primarily from their forebears (parents, elders, ancestors), cultural traditions are transmitted unilaterally-and with recognized authority-from elders to the younger members of the society.

Children and adults learn from their respective peers. This is characterized by the influence of a clique or a predominant group on learner's behavior. This type of culture transmission is usually associated with fraternity/sorority initiation rituals and other symbolic activities which neophytes are made to undertake for group membership.

The adults learn from their children whom they now consider the symbol of future life. This pertains particularly to technologically advanced societies where the adults, if they are to keep abreast of the "culture of the times", rely on the young to teach them the new knowledge. What does the Bible Say about Culture and Traditions?

We all belong to and are part of a particular culture or cultures. We are all influenced and shaped by culture, too. None of us escapes it. Indeed, think about how much of the Old Testament is the story of ancient Israel's being corrupted by the cultures around it. What makes us think that we today are any different, or better?

The Word of God also is given in a specific culture, even though it is not limited to this one culture. While cultural factors unavoidably influence our understanding of the Bible, we should not lose sight of the fact that the Bible also transcends established cultural categories of ethnicity, empire, and social status. This is one reason why the Bible surpasses any human culture and is even capable of transforming and correcting the sinful elements that we find in every culture.

Read 1 John 2:15–17. What does John mean when he states that we should not love the things of the world? How can we live in the world and yet not have a worldly mind-set?

Culture, like any other facet of God’s creation, is affected by sin. Consequently, it also stands under the judgment of God. Yes, some aspects of our culture might align very nicely with our faith, but we must always be careful to distinguish between the two. Ideally, biblical faith should challenge, if need be, the existing culture and create a counterculture that is faithful to God’s Word. Unless we have something anchored in us that comes from above us, we will soon give in to that which is around us.

Ellen G. White provides the following insight: “The followers of Christ are to be separate from the world in principles and interests, but they are not to isolate themselves from the world. The Savior mingled constantly with men, not to encourage them in anything that was not in accordance with God’s will, but to uplift and ennoble them.”—Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 323.

What aspects of your culture are in complete opposition to biblical faith? More important, how do we stand firm against those aspects attempting to corrupt our faith?

As Christians, we are Christ’s ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20)—we represent another world, while we live in the midst of this one

As ambassadors, we are fully immersed in the culture, but everything about us points back to the one we serve. This doesn’t mean we agree with everything culture does, but we learn to understand it and speak its language, identify its true desires—all with the intention of showing how Christ is the only one who can correctly fulfill those well-meaning (though often misplaced) desires.

Ashford says, “Every aspect of human life and culture is ripe for Christian witness. Every dimension of culture, whether it is art, science, or politics, is an arena in which we can speak about Christ with our lips and reflect him with our lives. We thank God for the existence of culture and recognize whatever is good in it, while at the same time seeking to redirect whatever is not good toward Christ

DAY TWO

THE DARK FORCES OF CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

(Witchcraft, Wizardry, Sorcery, Magic, Night Running, Idolatry, Devil Worship, Illuminati, Soothsayers, Spiritism)

Ephesians 6: 12 – ‘For we are not wrestling against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places’

Mark 7: 8-9 – ‘For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men – the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do -- All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition’

Witchcraft in the Bible: Scriptures on Witchcraft and Magic

The worship and seeking of supernatural powers other than God have been around since the beginning. Satan has used witchcraft to prevent people from finding holy spirituality in God alone. He uses witchcraft such as mediums, horoscopes, and games to entice people away from God and toward a power that gives self-enlightenment. The Bible speaks often on the consequences of following false idols and falsehood. Read the Scripture verses below to better understand the importance of seeking God alone.

1 Chronicles 10:13

Saul died because he was unfaithful to the LORD; he did not keep the word of the LORD and even consulted a medium for guidance, 1 Samuel 15:23. 1 Chronicles 10:13.

For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has rejected you as king.”

For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king. 1 Samuel 15:23.

“Do not turn to mediums or necromancers; do not seek them out, and so make yourselves unclean by them: I am the LORD your God. Leviticus 19:31

“You shall not permit a sorceress to live. Exodus 22:18

“A man or a woman who is a medium or a necromancer shall surely be put to death. They shall be stoned with stones; their blood shall be upon them. ”Leviticus 20:27

But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death. ”Revelation 21:8

For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also rejected you from being king.” 1 Samuel 15:23

Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. Galatians 5:19-21

And he burned his sons as an offering in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, and used fortune- telling and omens and sorcery, and dealt with mediums and with necromancers. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger. 2 Chronicles 33:6
Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. Revelation 22:15.

And when they say to you, “Inquire of the mediums and the necromancers who chirp and mutter,” should not a people inquire of their God? Should they inquire of the dead on behalf of the living? Isaiah 8:19

“When you come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominable practices of those nations. There shall not be found among you

anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer or a charmer or a medium or a necromancer or one who inquires of the dead, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD. And because of these abominations the LORD your God is driving them out before you. Deuteronomy 18:9-12. And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver. Acts 19:19.

There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer. Deuteronomy 18:10. And I will cut off sorceries from your hand, and you shall have no more tellers of fortunes. Micah 5:12.

So Saul died for his breach of faith. He broke faith with the LORD in that he did not keep the command of the LORD, and also consulted a medium, seeking guidance. He did not seek guidance from the LORD. Therefore the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse. 1 Chronicles 10:13-14.

And he burned his son as an offering and used fortune-telling and omens and dealt with mediums and with necromancers. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger. 2 Kings 21:6.

Idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions. Galatians 5:20. "You shall not eat any flesh with the blood in it. You shall not interpret omens or tell fortunes. Leviticus 19:26.

Idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. Galatians 5:20-21.

"When you come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominable practices of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer or a charmer or a medium or a necromancer or one who inquires of the dead, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD. And because of these abominations the LORD your God is driving them out before you. You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. Deuteronomy 18:9-14

DAY THREE

MARRIAGES AND WEDDING CEREMONIES

Marriage and weddings have a cultural/traditional dimensions, the world/modern vies and the Biblical/Christian perspective. The marriage institution has been severely attacked by the devil

1. Cultural/Traditional Views of Marriages and Wedding Ceremonies

Customary marriage: is a marriage that is conducted in accordance with the customs of the community of either one or both of the parties to the marriage in question. *A*

monogamous marriage is a marriage between one man and one woman. Polygamous marriage is the practice of multiple marriages like polygyny whereby a man married to several women at a time and polyandry where one woman is married to several men at a time. Leviratic marriages arise where the husband predeceases the wife and a relative or brother of the deceased husband assumes the role of the deceased. Any children born out of this union are regarded as children of the deceased. This is common among the Meru Kamba Kikuyu Kuria Kisii and Nandi tribes. Sororate Unions is a marriage where the wife dies before the husband and her family may offer her younger sister as a replacement and the younger sister assumes the role of the deceased wife. This may also arise where the family is unable to return the bride price and offer their daughter as a substitute. Sororate unions also take place where a wife is not able to have children and she may invite her sister to come and get married by the husband for the purpose of getting children. This is common among the Luo. Widow inheritance is a marriage where the husband predeceases the wife and the wife is inherited by one of the husband's brothers and for all purposes becomes his wife. It is different from the Leviratic in the sense that any children born out of that union are regarded as children of the brother and not children of the deceased. This is common in Luo, Luhya Kalenjin tribes and the Maasai. Woman to Woman marriages arise where a woman is barren and she then marries another woman for the sole purpose of having children and those children become the children of the barren woman who is the husband in the relation. This marriage can take place whether the husband of the barren woman is alive or dead. If the husband is alive the other woman is allowed to have sexual relations with the husband for the purpose of having children. Any children out of this relationship will be regarded as the children of the barren woman. Where the husband is dead she must select a man from the husband's family or leave the decision to the woman to select whom she wants to have children with. This is common among the Kisii, Kalenjin, Taita, and Kuria tribes. Forcible Marriages These arise in a family where there are only daughters and the last daughter is not entitled to get married. She remains at home to beget children especially male children with a man of her choice and these children belong to her father's family. This common with Nandi and Kipsigis tribe. Arranged Marriages occur when two families agree to engage their sons and daughters in marriage because of their social status or because of the family lineage. The sons and daughters are directed to specific families where they can get married either by persuasions or even by coercion. This has been prevalent in the Kalenjin community and the Western Culture like India

Civil marriages: are conducted in the Registrar of Marriages, Deputy County Commissioners or Assistant County Commissioners offices. A marriage certificate is obtained if you and your spouse have agreed to marry and there is no objection to the marriage.

2. Modern views of Marriage and Weddings

Modern marriage is defined as a legal commitment based on consent, monogamy, fidelity, and, most basically, love. Modern marriage has become a game for the rich people to display status symbol through elaborate wedding ceremonies, banquets, dining and wining, secular dancing and heavy celebrations. In modern marriages the husband and wife share responsibilities. Some wives might even earn a larger income than their spouses. Most modern husbands participate in the care of the children, including changing diapers as well as possibly taking a paternity care leave from work to stay home full time with the

kids. The spouses are considered equal partners and the women have their share of power and control in decisionmaking for the family. **Luke 17: 26-29**

In modern marriages most women no longer marry for economic reasons; they are better educated, pursue well-paying careers and are financially independent. Modern marriages allow for individual preferences. The spouses are considered equal partners and the women have their share of power and control in decision-making for the family. There are no more role specification but responsibility sharing, no head of the family and often no respect and submissiveness in any of the family members. More couples today live together without the formality of nuptials, modern marriage is no longer needed as an institution for permitted sex. Couples might choose to live together informally or tend to marry later in life. **1 Peter 3: 1, 7; 5:5 Titus 2: 4-5**

Modern marriage recognizes cohabiting where a man and a woman decide to stay together as husband and wife without formalizing their marriage. This form of union is neither recognized by the Church nor by the State. Though the Bible talks about concubines it is neither sanctioning it nor recognizing it as a proper marriage. ‘Come we Stay’ is prevalent with young people in the so called ‘Modern Society’ or ‘Modern Approach’ or ‘Modern Generation’ **Read 1 Cor 7: 2-4**

Modern Views recognize Same-Sex marriages like homosexuals, gays and lesbians. Most of the world religions have opposed same-sex marriage for reasons that homosexual acts violate **Natural Law** or divine intentions and are therefore immoral, that passages in sacred texts condemn homosexual acts, and that religious tradition recognizes only the marriage of one man and one woman as valid. **Read 1 Corinthians 6: 9-11**

3. Biblical/Christian View of Marriage and Wedding

Origin of Marriage -Marriage is a divine institution established by God Himself before the fall, when everything, including marriage, was “very good” (Gen. 1:31). “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Gen. 2:24). “God celebrated the first marriage. Thus the institution has for its originator the Creator of the universe. ‘Marriage is honourable’; it was one of the first gifts of God to man, and it is one of the two institutions that, after the fall, Adam brought with him beyond the gates of Paradise.”- *The Adventist Home*, pp. 25, 26.

Church Marriage: is where couples get married in church under Cap 150, Notice is given both in church and in the Office of the Registrar of Marriages. After the Notice period of 21 days, a Registrar's Certificate is issued by the Office of the Registrar of Marriages and taken to the Church Minister who shall officiate the ceremony.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church believes that marriage, “instituted by God, is a monogamous, heterosexual relationship between one male and one female. As such, marriage is a public, lawfully binding lifelong commitment of a man and a woman to each other and between the couple and God. **Mark 10:2-9; Romans 7:2.**

DAY FOUR.

MALE CIRCUMCISION AND FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)

Definition.

The action or practice of circumcising a young boy or man. The action or practice of 'circumcising' a girl or young woman which is called Female Genital Mutilation.

The Worldview of Culture and Traditions

Traditional/ Rituals: The procedure herein referred to as traditional male circumcision is usually performed in a non-clinical setting by a traditional provider with no formal medical training. When carried out as a rite of passage into manhood, traditional male circumcision is mainly performed on adolescents or young men. The majority of male circumcisions worldwide are performed for religious or traditional reasons. Such procedures generally take place outside of formal medical settings and are performed by providers who may have special training but who are normally not health professionals.

Traditional male circumcision is usually associated with a religious or cultural ceremony. The primary global determinant is religion, and almost all Muslim and Jewish males are circumcised. Muslim boys may be circumcised at any age between birth and puberty. A Jewish male infant is traditionally circumcised on his eighth day.

FGM (Female Genital Mutilation): In the highly structured social framework of the ancient Egyptian empires, FGM was implemented as a means of perpetuating inequality between the classes, with families cutting young girls and women, signifying their commitment to the wealthy, polygamous men of their society. ⁴ However, female circumcision is practiced today in areas where female premarital sexual intercourse is permitted, such as the Rendille in Kenya. In such areas, the practice is thought to serve its second proposed purpose: a means of solidifying one's "cultural identity" and transition to being an "adult member of society." For example, the "Kipsigis" circumcised girls as signs or rituals of passage from childish to womanhood. After - circumcision, one is thought to be "reborn" and be accepted in the society. The Abagusii and the Maasai initially believed that uncircumcised girls will not be married. In most of the areas where FGM is a tradition, parents fear that their daughters will be banned from their society.

The Biblical/Christian View of Circumcision

Biblical/ Old Testament: According to the Hebrew Bible, circumcision was enjoined upon the biblical patriarch Abraham, his descendants and their slaves as "a token of the covenant" concluded with him by God for all generations, as an "everlasting covenant."

The Council of Jerusalem during the Apostolic Age of the history of Christianity did not include religious male circumcision as a requirement for new gentile converts. This became known as the "Apostolic Decree": "But to still the clamors of the converts from Pharisaism who demanded that the Gentile converts "must be circumcised and be commanded to observe the Law of Moses", the matter was discussed in a public meeting. By the decree of the Apostles the cause of Christian liberty was won against the narrow Judaizers, and the way smoothed for the conversion of the nations. The victory was emphasized by St. Paul's refusal to allow Titus to be circumcised even as a pure concession to the extremists (Galatians 2:2-5)." It may be one of the first acts differentiating early Christianity from Judaism.

New Testament: Circumcision is not laid down as a requirement in the New Testament. Instead, Christians are urged to be "circumcised of the heart" by trusting in

Jesus and his sacrifice on the cross. As a Jew, Jesus was himself circumcised (Luke 2:21; Colossians 2:11-12).

“Moreover the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live.

Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it. Yet on your fathers did the Lord set His affection to love them, and He chose their descendants after them, even you above all peoples, as it is this day. So circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer. Deuteronomy 10:14-16.

“Circumcise yourselves to the Lord and remove the foreskins of your heart, Jeremiah 4:4.

And burn with none to quench it, Because of the evil of your deeds. “Romans 2:28-29.

For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God. Romans 2:25-27.

For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter of the Law and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law? 1 Corinthians 7:19

Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God. Galatians 5:6.

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love. Romans 3:30

Since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one. Galatians 3:6

Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. Genesis 15:6. Then he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

Romans 4:9-12.

Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, “Faith was credited to Abraham as righteousness.” How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised; and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them, Romans 3:1-2. The saints in also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, Ephesians 1:13

Christian Teachings about Traditions of Men

Tradition itself is not bad. It gives recurring acts in our daily life a certain routine and structure. It can help us to stay connected with our roots. Hence, it is no surprise that tradition also plays an important part in religion. But there are some dangers connected with tradition.

What does Mark 7:1–13 teach us about how Jesus reacted to some human traditions in His day?

The tradition Jesus confronted was carefully handed down in the Jewish community from teacher to pupil. In Jesus' day, it had assumed a place alongside Scripture. Tradition, however, has a tendency to grow over long periods of time, thus accumulating more and more details and aspects that were not originally part of God's Word and plan. These human traditions—even though they are promoted by respected "elders" (see Mark 7:3, 5), for example by the religious leaders of the Jewish community—are not equal to God's commandments (see Mark 7:8, 9).

They were human traditions, and ultimately they led to a point where they made "the word of God of no effect" (Mark 7:13, NKJV) Read 1 Corinthians 11:2 and 2 Thessalonians 3:6. How do we distinguish between the Word of God and human tradition? Why is it so important that we make this distinction?

The living Word of God initiates in us a reverent and faithful attitude toward it. This faithfulness generates a certain tradition. Our faithfulness, however, always needs to be loyal to the living God, who has revealed His will in the Written Word of God. Thus, the Bible holds a unique role that supersedes all human traditions. The Bible stands higher and above all traditions, even good ones. Traditions that grow out of our experience with God and His Word constantly need to be tested against the measuring rod of Holy Scripture.

DAY FIVE

DEATH AND FUNERAL SERVICES

Every family is different, and not everyone wants the same type of funeral. Funeral practices are influenced by religious and cultural traditions, costs, and personal preferences. These factors help determine whether the funeral will be elaborate or simple, public or private, religious or secular, and where it will be held. They also influence whether the body will be present at the funeral, if there will be a viewing or visitation, and if so, whether the casket will be open or closed, and whether the remains will be buried or cremated.

The Cultural/Worldview of Death and Funeral Services

The worldview of funeral, often referred to by funeral providers as a "traditional" funeral, usually includes a viewing or visitation and formal funeral service, use of a hearse to transport the body to the funeral site and cemetery, and burial, entombment, or cremation of the remains.

Modern traditional funerals are generally the most expensive type of funerals. In addition to the funeral home's basic services fee, costs often include embalming and dressing the body; rental of the funeral home for the viewing or service; and use of vehicles to transport the family if they don't use their own. The costs of a casket, cemetery plot or crypt and other funeral goods and services also must be factored in.

Direct Burial: The body is buried shortly after death, usually in a simple container. No viewing or visitation is involved, so no embalming is necessary. A memorial service may be held at the graveside or later. Direct burial usually costs less than the "traditional" full-service funeral. Costs include the funeral home's basic services fee, as well as transportation and care of the body, the purchase of a casket or burial container and a cemetery plot or crypt. If the family chooses to be at the cemetery for the burial, the funeral home often charges an additional fee for a graveside service.

Tributes and Eulogy. If you are holding a funeral, memorial service, or wake, it is appropriate and expected that a eulogy will be delivered. This speech can take the form of a remembrance of things that the deceased did while alive on earth. This is often given by a clergy member, family member, friend, or colleague. A eulogy also can be accompanied by a slide show or can be told through a video clip

The tributes are not for the dead person but for living relatives, therefore needs to be in harmony with the word of God. The people who usually prepare a tribute the deceased's religious leader, the spouse of the deceased, an adult child or grandchild of the deceased, a friend of the deceased, a business associate of the deceased or the funeral home director

Memorial Services (Ukumbusho).

When a loved one passes, it's traditional in Africa to have a funeral or memorial service of some sort. But, all over the world, people have many traditions of memorializing and honoring those that they love. Speaking to the dead is not biblical for they do not hear anything nor do they any longer have any part to play under the sun. Many mourners like speaking to the dead with such words like 'you will be always in our hearts' 'Always in my mind, forever in my heart' 'You will be with me forever' 'You are gone but you are not forgotten' 'May the winds of heaven blow softly and whisper in your ear' 'You may be gone from my sight but you are never gone from my heart' 'Why did you leave us this early' 'We know you are now resting and enjoying in heaven' 'May your soul rest in eternal peace'. All these words may be soothing to the mind and human psychology but have no biblical foundation

The Biblical/Christian View of Death and Funeral Services

Ecclesiastes 9:5-6. For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no further reward, and even their name is forgotten. Their love, their hate and their jealousy have long since vanished; never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun. Job 26:5

The stand of SDA Church on the State of the Dead and Funeral Services

Seventh-day Adventist beliefs about death are different from those of other Christian churches. Adventists do not believe that people go to Heaven or Hell when they die.

They believe that the dead remain unconscious until the return of Christ in judgment.

Adventists sometimes use the term "conditional immortality"

When a death has occurred in a minister's congregation, it becomes his immediate duty to call on the bereaved family and offer sympathy and consolation. If he is asked to take charge of the funeral (never should he offer his services), he needs to obtain information concerning the deceased, regarding his character, church relationship (if any), Christian experience, cause of death, etc., so that the prayer and the remarks may be in harmony with the occasion. Minister manual page 195.

THE STAND OF THE CHURCH ON CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

It Is Written!

The baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist marked the beginning of the Savior's ministry, following which Jesus was led by the Spirit into the Judean wilderness, where—in His weakest human condition—He was tempted by Satan.

Read Matthew 4:1–11. How does Jesus defend Himself against Satan's temptations in the wilderness? What should we learn about the Bible from this account?

When tempted by appetite, Jesus responds: “**It is written**, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God’ (Matt. 4:4, NKJV)”. Jesus points back to the living Word and its ultimate, divine source. In this way, He affirms the authority of Scripture. When tempted with the world's kingdoms and glory, Jesus responds, “**It is written**, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only you shall serve’ ” (Matt. 4:10, Luke 4:8, NKJV).

Christ reminds us that true worship is focused on God alone and not on anyone or anything else, and that submission to His Word is true worship. Finally, with the temptation on the love of display and on presumption, Jesus responds, “ ‘**It is written again**, ‘You shall not tempt the Lord your God’ ” ” (Matt. 4:7, NKJV; also [Luke 4:12](#)).

In all three temptations, Jesus responds with the words “**It is written.**” That is, Jesus goes right to the Word of God and nothing else to deal with the attacks and deceptions of Satan. This should be a powerful lesson to all of us: the Bible, and the Bible alone, is the ultimate standard and foundation of our belief.

Yes, the Bible and the Bible alone was Jesus' method of defense against the attacks of the adversary. Jesus is God, but in His defense against Satan He submits Himself solely to the Word of God. It is not opinion; it is not an elaborate, convoluted argument; it is not with words of personal animosity; it is instead by the simple yet profound words of Scripture. For Christ, Scripture has the greatest authority and the greatest power. In this way, His ministry begins with a certain foundation and continues to build upon the trustworthiness of the Bible.

Mathew 21: 13 Reads; “It is Written‘ My house shall be called a house of prayer’ but you have made it a ‘a den of thieves”

‘IT IS WRITTEN! IT IS WRITTEN! IT IS WRITTEN! OUR SURE DEFENCE IN CHRIST

5. SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

INTRODUCTION

Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen G. White, one of the church's co-founders, was a prophetess, understood today as an expression of the New Testament spiritual gift of prophecy.

Seventh-day Adventists believe that White had the spiritual gift of prophecy, but that her writings are a lesser light to the Bible, which has ultimate authority. According to the 28 Fundamentals the core set of theological beliefs held by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, states that Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed. The 18th of the 28 Fundamentals states the Adventists viewpoint on the Gift of Prophecy:

"One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen. G. White. As the Lord's messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. (Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:14-21; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 12:17; 19:10.).

MONDAY

We are looking at the last day's event in relation to Theme of this year "I will go" as follows the introduction part about the Spirit of prophesy, How to test a prophet, the Former and Later rain and loud cry.

The New Testament writers as well as several other individuals mentioned in the New Testament had the gift of prophecy (Luke 1:67; Matt. 11:14; Acts 13:1; 15:32; 21:8-10). Paul wrote to the Ephesians that the gift of prophecy would remain in the church "till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God" (Eph. 4:13). In the book of

Revelation, therefore, the remnant church in the time of the end is said to have “the testimony of Jesus” (12:17), which according to Revelation 19:10 is “the spirit of prophecy.” **What Is the “Spirit of Prophecy”?**

The term “spirit of prophecy” occurs only once in the Bible, namely in Revelation 19:10; but the readers in John’s days knew exactly what John meant by this phrase. They were familiar with this expression, which was frequently used in the Aramaic translation of the Old Testament. For example, Genesis 41:38 in the Aramaic paraphrase of the Old Testament text says: “Pharaoh said to his servants, ‘Can we find a man like this in whom there is the spirit of prophecy from before the Lord?’” And in Numbers 27:18 the Lord said to Moses, “Take Joshua, son of Nun, a man who has within himself the spirit of prophecy, and lay your hand on him.”

For the early Christians the “spirit of prophecy” was a reference to the Holy Spirit, who imparts the prophetic gift to God’s messengers. This also becomes evident when we compare Revelation 19:10 with Revelation 22:8, 9

In summary, we can say that one of the identifying signs of the remnant church, which according to prophecy exists after the 1,260-day period, i.e., after 1798, is the testimony of Jesus, which is the spirit of prophecy, or the prophetic gift. The Seventh-day Adventist Church, from its very beginning, has believed that in fulfilment of Revelation 12:17 the spirit of prophecy was manifested in the life and work of Ellen G. White

(This material is drawn from *The Gift of Prophecy* October 14, 2014 an article from *Adventist World magazine*).

TUESDAY

1. The former and later rain

The outpouring of the former and latter rain is of utmost importance to every believer. Preparation to receive the Holy Spirit in His fullness is vital to our soul’s salvation and the finishing of the Gospel work in the world. **James 5:7-8**

In the East the former rain falls at the sowing-time. It is necessary in order that the seed may germinate. Under the influence of the fertilizing showers, the tender shoot springs up. The latter rain, falling near the close of the season, ripens the grain, and prepares it for the sickle.

The Lord employs these operations of nature to represent the work of the Holy Spirit. As the dew and the rain are given first to cause the seed to germinate, and then to ripen the harvest, so the Holy Spirit is given to carry forward, from one stage to another, the process of spiritual growth. The ripening of the grain represents the completion of the work of God’s grace in the soul. By the power of the Holy Spirit the moral image of God is to be perfected in the character. We are to be wholly transformed into the likeness of Christ”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 506. Zachariah 10:1; Hosea 6:3

The disciples in obedience to command of Christ, they waited in the upper room at Jerusalem for the promise of the Father, the outpouring of the Spirit (Acts 2:12-14). The record says that they were “continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.” (Luke 24:53) As they were waiting for the fulfilment of the promise, they humbled their hearts in true repentance and confessed their unbelief. The disciples prayed with intense earnestness for a fitness to meet men and in their daily intercourse to speak words that would lead sinners to Christ. Putting away all differences, all desire for the supremacy, they came close together in Christian fellowship. AA, 35-37.

The latter rain, ripening earth’s harvest, represents the spiritual grace that prepares the church for the coming of the Son of man. But unless the former rain has fallen, there will be

no life; the green blade will not spring up. Unless the early showers have done their work, the latter rain can bring no seed to perfection.—Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, 506.

It was after the disciples had come into perfect unity, when they were no longer striving for the highest place, that the Spirit was poured out.—TT. 8:20. The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was the beginning of the early, or former, rain, and glorious was the result.

To the end of time the presence of the Spirit is to abide with the true church.—AA, 54, 55.

The results of outpouring of early rain at Pentecost

1. The disciples praise God in songs words of penitence and confession for sins forgiven and love for one another. **Acts 2:46; 10:43**
2. The Holy Spirit enabled them to speak with fluency languages with which they had formerly been unacquainted. Thus also enabled them to achieve what they could have not accomplished for themselves in a lifetime so far-reaching, that it impelled them to go to the ends of the earth, testifying to the power of Christ and Thousands were converted in a day. **Acts 2:47;4:4; 17:6**
3. They were full of generosity in giving. **Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37.**

The Promise of the Latter Rain

The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was “the former rain,” and glorious was the result. But the latter rain will be more abundant. (TT 8:21).Near the close of earth’s harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man. This outpouring of the Spirit is likened to the falling of the latter rain. (AA 55) **Joel 2:23; 28**

Before the final visitation of God’s judgments upon the earth there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children. **2 Chr. 7:14**

The work will be similar to that of the Day of Pentecost. As the “former rain” was given, in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the opening of the gospel, to cause the up springing of the precious seed, so the “latter rain” will be given at its close for the ripening of the harvest. GC, 611. **Deuteronomy 11:13-14;**

In order for one to receive the later rain we should:

We should seek with intensity of desire, that we may adorn the doctrine of Christ our Saviour. Many have in a great measure failed to receive the former rain. They have not obtained all the benefits that God has thus provided for them. They expect that the lack will be supplied by the latter rain. When the richest abundance of grace shall be bestowed, they intend to open their hearts to receive it. They are making a terrible mistake. The work that God has begun in the human heart in giving his light and knowledge, must be continually going forward. Every individual must realize his own necessity. The heart must be emptied of every defilement, and cleansed for the indwelling of the Spirit. It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

The same work, only in greater degree, must be done now. Then the human agent had only to ask for the blessing, and wait for the Lord to perfect the work concerning him. It is God who began the work, and he will finish his work, making man complete in Jesus Christ. But there must be no neglect of the grace represented by the former rain. Only those who are

living up to the light they have, will receive greater light. Unless we are daily advancing in the exemplification of the active Christian virtues, we shall not recognize the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it. At no point in our experience can we dispense with the assistance of that which enables us to make the first start.

The blessings received under the former rain are needful to us to the end. Yet these alone will not suffice. While we cherish the blessing of the early rain, we must not, on the other hand, lose sight of the fact that without the latter rain, to fill out the ears and ripen the grain, the harvest will not be ready for the sickle, and the labour of the sower will have been in vain. Divine grace is needed at the beginning, divine grace at every step of advance, and divine grace alone can complete the work. There is no place for us to rest in a careless attitude. We must never forget the warnings of Christ, "Watch unto prayer," "Watch and pray always." A connection with the divine agency every moment is essential to our progress. We may have had a measure of the Spirit of God, but by prayer and faith we are continually to seek more of the Spirit. It will never do to cease our efforts. If we do not progress, if we do not place ourselves in an attitude to receive both the former and the latter rain, we shall lose our souls, and the responsibility will lie at our own door. "Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain." Do not rest satisfied that in the ordinary course of the season, rain will fall. Ask for it. The growth and perfection of the seed rests not with husbandman. God alone can ripen the harvest. But man's co-operation is required. God's work for us demands the action of our mind, the exercise of our faith. We must seek his favours with the whole heart if the showers of grace are to come to us.

We should improve every opportunity of placing ourselves in the channel of blessing. Christ has said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst." The convocations of the church, as in camp-meetings, the assemblies of the home church, and all occasions where there is personal labour for souls, are God's appointed opportunities for giving the early and the latter rain. But let none think that in attending these gatherings, their duty is done.

A mere attendance upon all the meetings that are held will not in itself bring a blessing to the soul. It is not an immutable law that all who attend general gatherings or local meetings shall receive large supplies from heaven. The circumstances may seem to be favourable for a rich outpouring of the showers of grace. But God himself must command the rain to fall. Therefore we should not be remiss in supplication. We are not to trust to the ordinary working of providence.

We must pray that God will unseal the fountain of the water of life. And we must ourselves receive of the living water. Let us, with contrite hearts, pray most earnestly that now, in the time of the latter rain, the showers of grace may fall upon us. At every meeting we attend, our prayers should ascend that at this very time, God will impart warmth and moisture to our souls. As we seek God for the Holy Spirit, it will work in us meekness, humbleness of mind, a conscious dependence upon God for the perfecting latter rain. If we pray for the blessing in faith, we shall receive it as God has promised.

The continual communication of the Holy Spirit to the church is represented by the prophet Zechariah under another figure, which contains a wonderful lesson of encouragement for us. The prophet says: "The angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, and said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof: and two olivetrees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. So I answered and spoke to the angel that talked with me, saying, what are these, my Lord?

... Then he answered and spoke unto me, saying, this is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.... And I answered again, and said unto him, what be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves? ...

Then said he, these are the two anointed ones, which stand by the Lord of the whole earth." From the two olive-trees, the golden oil was emptied through golden pipes into the bowl of the candlestick, and thence into the golden lamps that gave light to the sanctuary. So from the holy ones that stand in God's presence, his Spirit is imparted to human instrumentalities that are consecrated to his service. The mission of the two anointed ones is to communicate light and power to God's people. It is to receive blessing for us that they stand in God's presence. As the olive-trees empty themselves into the golden pipes, so the heavenly messengers seek to communicate all that they receive from God. The whole heavenly treasure awaits our demand and reception; and as we receive the blessing, we in our turn are to impart it. Thus it is that the holy lamps are fed, and the church becomes a light-bearer in the world. This is the work that the Lord would have every soul prepared to do at this time, when the four angels are holding the four winds, which they shall not blow until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. There is no time now for self-pleasing. The lamps of the soul must be trimmed. They must be supplied with the oil of grace. Every precaution must be taken to prevent spiritual declension, lest the great day of the Lord overtake us as a thief in the night. Every witness for God is now to work intelligently in the lines which God has appointed. We should daily obtain a deep and living experience in the work of perfecting Christian character. We should daily receive the holy oil that we may impart to others. All may be light-bearers to the world if they will. We are to sink self out of sight in Jesus. We are to receive the word of the Lord in counsel and instruction, and gladly communicate it.

There is now need of much prayer. Christ commands, "Pray without ceasing;" that is, keep the mind uplifted to God, the source of all power and efficiency. We may have long followed the narrow path, but it is not safe to take this as proof that we shall follow it to the end. If we have walked with God in fellowship of the Spirit, it is because we have sought him daily by faith. From the two olive-trees, the golden oil flowing through the golden pipes has been communicated to us. But those who do not cultivate the spirit and habit of prayer cannot expect to receive the golden oil of goodness, patience, long-suffering, gentleness, love. Everyone is to keep himself separate from the world, which is full of iniquity.

We are not to walk with God for a time, and then part from his company, and walk in the sparks of our own kindling. There must be a firm continuance, a perseverance in acts of faith. We are to praise God, to show forth his glory in a righteous character. No one of us will gain the victory without persevering, untiring effort, proportionate to the value of the object which we seek, even eternal life.

The dispensation in which we are now living is to be, to those that ask, the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Ask for his blessing. It is time we were more intense in our devotion. To us is committed the arduous, but happy, glorious work of revealing Christ to those who are in darkness. We are called to proclaim the special truths for this time. For all this the outpouring of the Spirit is essential. We should pray for it. The Lord expects us to ask him. We have not been whole hearted in this work. What can I say to my brethren in the name of the Lord? What proportion of our efforts has been made in accordance with the light the Lord has been pleased to give?

We cannot depend upon form or external machinery. What we need is the quickening influence of the Holy Spirit of God. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." Pray without ceasing, and watch by working in accordance with your prayers. As you pray, believe, trust in God. It is the time of the latter rain, when the Lord will give

largely of his Spirit. Be fervent in prayer, and watch in the Spirit. The Review and Herald March 2, 1897

WESNESDAY

1. Study the word of God

The later rain will work in us meekness, humbleness of mind, a conscious dependence upon God and also the good work begun will be finished, the holy thoughts, heavenly affections, and Christlike actions will be developed. **Philippians 1:6**. If we do not progress, if we do not place ourselves in an attitude to receive both the former and the latter rain, we shall lose our souls, and the responsibility will lie at our own door.

In order to receive the Holy Spirit during the later rain we should study the word of God. The word of God are overcoming power, growth into Christ's likeness, a reception of the very life of Christ.

In Revelation 3:21 Jesus says that we are to overcome, as He did. "By what means did He overcome in the conflict with Satan? By the Word of God. Only by the Word could He resist temptation. When assailed by temptation, look not to circumstances or to the weakness of self, but to the power of the Word. All its strength is yours." (DA, 123.) **1Corr 10:11-13**

The secret of victory is to hide the Word in the heart as a defence against sin (Psa. 119:11). Perfection comes by receiving Christ into the life, and Christ is revealed in the Word (2 Tim. 3:15-17). When the Word of God abides in the heart one will be an overcomer. (1 John 2:14.) Through the "exceeding great- and precious promises [Of the Word):" we "become partakers of the divine nature." 2 Peter 1:4. God will make the most precious revelations to His hungering, thirsting people. They will find that Christ is a personal Saviour. As they feed upon His Word, they find that it is spirit and life. The Word destroys the natural, earthly nature, and imparts a new life in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit comes to the soul as a Comforter. By the transforming agency of His grace, the image of God is reproduced in the disciple; he becomes a new creature."

2. **Sanctification** and cleansing from sin are also accomplished "by the Word." Eph. 5:25-27. Many people study the Bible diligently when they first embrace the Advent message, but after a time study little. This accounts for the laxness, lukewarmness, and lack of growth in the Christian experience Rev 3:14-19. If one wants to grow, he must eat. Too many are existing spiritually on a starvation diet when they might be well nourished.

At no time in the Christian life can the believer dispense with Bible study. Jesus said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you". John 6:53, 54, 56.

"**Alfred, Lord Tennyson**, said 'More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.' It is also true of the church. 'A revival of true Godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work' (Selected Messages 1:121). 'God will do things for us when we pray that He will not do if we do not pray' (The Great Controversy, 525). We acknowledge that we need the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. But this can be accomplished only as we pray individually and collectively. When God's people pray earnestly, sincerely, individually, and collectively, God will answer. Great things will happen in and among God's people. And the world will feel the impact as the Holy Spirit comes to equip and empower His people."

The latter rain will lead to loud cry.

The Loud Cry

I saw angels hurrying to and fro in heaven, descending to the earth, and again ascending to heaven, preparing for the fulfilment of some important event.

God has given the messages of Revelation 14 their place in the line of prophecy and their work is not to cease till the close of this earth's history. Revelation 18 points to the time when, as the result of rejecting the threefold warning of Revelation 14:6-12, the church will have fully reached the condition foretold by the second angel, and the people of God still in Babylon will be called upon to separate from her communion. This message is the last that will ever be given to the world. Revelation 18:1, 2, 4. This scripture points forward to a time when the announcement of the fall of Babylon, as made by the second angel of Revelation 14 (verse 8), is to be repeated, with the additional mention of the corruptions which have been entering the various organizations that constitute Babylon, since that message was first given, in the summer of 1844. These announcements, uniting with the third angel's message, constitute the final warning to be given to the inhabitants of the earth.

The sins of Babylon will be laid open. The fearful results of enforcing the observances of the church by civil authority, the inroads of spiritualism, and the stealthy but rapid progress of the papal power all will be unmasked. By these solemn warnings the people will be stirred. Thousands upon thousands will listen who have never heard words like these. GC 603, 604, 606.

The work of this angel comes in at the right time to join in the last great work of the third angel's message as it swells to a loud cry. And the people of God are thus prepared to stand in the hour of temptation, which they are soon to meet. I saw a great light resting upon them, and

they united to fearlessly proclaim the third angel's message. {EW 277.1}

The message will be carried, as was the midnight cry of

1844, not so much by argument as by the deep conviction of the Spirit of God. The arguments have been presented. The seed has been sown, and now it will spring up and bear fruit. The publications distributed by missionary workers have exerted their influence; yet many whose minds have been impressed have been prevented from fully comprehending the truth or from yielding obedience. Now the rays of light penetrate everywhere, the truth is seen in its clearness, and the honest, children of God sever the bands which have held them. Family connections, church relations, are powerless to stay them now. Truth is more precious than all besides. Notwithstanding the agencies combined against the truth, a large number take their stand upon the Lord's side {4SP 430.1}

I was pointed down to the time when the third angel's message was closing. The power of God had rested upon His people; they had accomplished their work and were prepared for the trying hour before them. They had received the latter rain, or refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and the living testimony had been revived. The last great warning had sounded everywhere, and it had stirred up and enraged the inhabitants of the earth who would not receive the message. I saw angels hurrying to and fro in heaven. An angel with a writer's inkhorn by his side returned from the earth and reported to Jesus that his work was done, and the saints were numbered and sealed.

Then I saw Jesus, who had been ministering before the ark containing the Ten Commandments, throw down the censer. He raised His hands, and with a loud voice said, "It is done." And all the angelic host laid off their crowns as Jesus made the solemn declaration, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." (Rev. 22:11) Every case had been decided for life or death. While Jesus had been ministering in the sanctuary, the judgment had been going on for the righteous dead, and

then for the righteous living. Christ had received His kingdom, having made the atonement for His people and blotted out their sins. The subjects of the kingdom were made up. The marriage of the Lamb was consummated. And the kingdom, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, was given to Jesus and the heirs of salvation, and Jesus was to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. As Jesus moved out of the most holy place, I heard the tinkling of the bells upon His garment; and as He left, a cloud of darkness covered the inhabitants of the earth. There was then no mediator between guilty man and an offended God. While Jesus had been standing between God and guilty man, a restraint was upon the people; but when He stepped out from between man and the Father, the restraint was removed and Satan had entire control of the finally impenitent. It was impossible for the plagues to be poured out while Jesus officiated in the sanctuary; but as His work there is finished, and His intercession closes, there is nothing to stay the wrath of God, and it breaks with fury upon the shelterless head of the guilty sinner, who has slighted salvation and hated reproof. In that fearful time, after the close of Jesus', the saints were living in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. Every case was decided, every jewel numbered. Jesus tarried a moment in the outer apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, and the sins which had been confessed while He was in the most holy place were placed upon Satan, the originator of sin, who must suffer their punishment. (EW 279-280)

THURSDAY.

1. The true prophet

How to identify a true prophet

Peter 1:21 prophecy comes from God Himself.

- A. Prophet should honour God and the Ten Commandments not themselves or any other human being. Isaiah 8:20
- B. Prophecies should *always* be in line with what has already been written as Scripture.
- C. Prophecies should never add anything to Scripture, but only refer back to it for the purpose of reminding or expounding upon it. Rev 22:18-19
- D. If they do make predictions, they must come to pass as spoken (Jeremiah 28:9; Deuteronomy 18:20-22).
- E. God raises a prophet and put His word in Him. Deutr. 18:18; Numbers 12:6
- F. Prophecies often point out the sins of the people and tell them how to change
- G. What they prophesy must never contradict that Jesus is the Son of God
- H. Test the spirit not every spirit is from God. 1John4-3
- I. You will know them by their "fruits". When working for God, prophets should generally demonstrate a Christ-like character. Matthew 7:16-20

How do we know that the prophetic gift in Ellen White's case was genuine and not a counterfeit? The Bible provides several guidelines for testing the prophetic gift.

1. Dreams and Visions—Numbers 12:6. In Scripture, genuine prophets received prophetic dreams and visions. During her 70-year ministry from 1844 to 1915, Ellen G. White received approximately 2,000 visions and prophetic dreams.
2. Agreement with the Bible Isaiah 8:20. What a prophet claims to have received from God must be in harmony with the rest of God's Word, because God does not contradict Himself (Ps. 15:4; Mal. 3:6). Although Ellen G. White was not a trained theologian, her messages are in harmony with Scripture.

3. The Witness to Jesus 1 John 4:1, 2. Anyone familiar with the writings of Ellen White, such as the books *The Desire of Ages* or *Steps to Christ*, will have to admit that she not only accepted all that the Bible teaches about Jesus, but continually pointed people to Him as their Lord and Saviour.

4. Fulfilled Prophecy Jeremiah 28:9. The proof of a true prophet lies, in part, in the fulfilment of his/her predictions. Although Ellen White's work did not primarily consist of predicting the future, she did make a number of predictions that have been fulfilled in a remarkable way. The Orchard Test—Matthew 7:20. The orchard test takes time. Ellen White lived and worked for 70 years under the critical eyes of millions of people, largely sceptical, doubtful, suspicious, and in some cases openly hostile. Any fault or inconsistency was and still is exposed with great satisfaction by her opponents. Nevertheless, the fruit of her life and labour attests to her sincerity, zeal, and Christian piety.

While counterfeit prophets may pass one or two of these tests, a true prophet will pass them all. Ellen White certainly did. God's gracious guidance through the prophetic gift of Ellen White should make us more aware of the responsibility that we, as the remnant church, have, and it should spur us on to finish the work God has given us to do.

This article originally appeared on *Adventist World* magazine.

Share the Saviour of the earth (1 John 4:1-3).

2. False Prophets Bible Verses

The Bible is not silent on false prophets both in the Old and New Testaments.

Matthew 7:15, 1 John 4:1. Matthew 24:24

2 Peter 2:1. 1 John 4:1-6. 2 Corinthians 11:13-15, Matthew 24:11. 2 Timothy 4:3.

Deuteronomy 18:20-22.

Jeremiah 23:16. Deuteronomy 18:20. Revelation 19:20. Romans 16:18. Jeremiah 14:14.

Mark 7:6-9. Romans 16:17-18, Matthew 7:21. 2 Peter 2:1-3. Ezekiel 22:28 Jeremiah 5:30-31, Ezekiel 13:9, Matthew 7:15-20 “.

1 Corinthians 14:33. Matthew 24:4-5. Jude 1:4.

Deuteronomy 13:1-5. Colossians 2:8. Jeremiah 23:1-40.

Acts 13:6. Matthew 7:15-16, 2 Corinthians 11:13,

Jeremiah 5:31, 1 Thessalonians 5:21, Ezekiel 13:6,

Jeremiah 23:14, Revelation 16:13. Jeremiah 23:21

Acts 20:29. 2 Timothy 3:13. Isaiah 56:10-11.

2 Peter 2:1-22, 2 Timothy 3:5. Jeremiah 6:14,

Matthew 7:22, Jeremiah 28:8-9, Revelation 13:11-15,

1 Timothy 4:1-3, Titus 3:10-11, 2 Thessalonians 2:9

2 Peter 2:18, Revelation 17:6. Galatians 1:6-9.

3. FANATICS AND EXTREMES BY ELLEN G. WHITE WRITINGS.

An Impending Danger As the end draws near, the enemy will work with all his power to bring in fanaticism among us. He would rejoice to see Seventh-day Adventists going to such extremes that they would be branded by the world as a body of fanatics. Against this danger I am bidden to warn ministers and lay members. Our work is to teach men and women to build on a true foundation, to plant their feet on a plain “Thus saith the Lord.” *Gospel Workers, 316 (1915).*

1. **How to Meet the Fanatic**—God calls upon His servants to study His mind and will. Then when men come with their curiously invented theories, enter not into controversy with them, but affirm what you know. “It is written” is to be your weapon. There are men who will try to spin out their fine threads of false theories. Thank God that there are those also who have been taught of Him and who know what is truth.—Letter 191, 1905.
2. **Following a Self-established Standard**, Many, many are trusting to their own righteousness. They set up a standard for themselves and do not submit to the will of Christ and allow Him to clothe them with the robe of His righteousness. They form characters according to their own will and pleasure. Satan is well pleased with their religion. They misrepresent the perfect character the righteousness of Christ. They deceived, they deceive others. They are not accepted of God. They are liable to lead other souls into false paths. They will at last receive their reward with the great deceiver, Satan.—Manuscript 138, 1902.
3. **Result of Cherishing Defective Tendencies** there are some who will not hear. So long have they chosen to follow their own way and their own wisdom, so long have they cherished defective hereditary and cultivated tendencies of character that they are blind and cannot see afar off. By them, principles are perverted, false standards are raised, and tests are made that bear not the signature of Heaven.... Some of these very ones make their boasts in the Lord as a people who do righteousness and forsake not the ordinances of their God. Manuscript 138, 1902.
4. **How Satan Does It** We have found in our experience that if Satan cannot keep souls bound in the ice of indifference, he will try to push them into the fire of fanaticism. When the Spirit of the Lord comes among His people, the enemy seizes his opportunity to work also upon different minds and lead them to mingle their own peculiar traits of character with the work of God. Thus there is always danger that they may allow their own spirit to mingle with the work and that unwise moves may be made. Many carry on a work of their own devising that is not prompted by God. Letter 34, 1889 (Similar to Testimonies for the Church 5:644.)
5. **How to Meet the Fanatic**—God calls upon His servants to study His mind and will. Then when men come with their curiously invented theories, enter not into controversy with them, but affirm what you know. “It is written” is to be your weapon. There are men who will try to spin out their fine threads of false theories. Thank God that there are those also who have been taught of Him and who know what truth is. Letter 191, 1905.
6. **Guard Expressions and Attitudes**, This is a time when we need to be very watchful and to guard carefully the character of the work done. Some will seek to bring in false theories and will come with false messages. Satan will stir human minds to create fanaticism in our ranks. We have seen something of this in the year 1908. The Lord desires His people to move carefully, guarding the expressions and even the attitude. Satan will use peculiarities of attitude and voice to cause excitement and to work on human minds to deceive.
7. **Beware of “New,” “Wonderful,” So-called Advanced Light** My soul is much burdened, for I know what is before us. Every conceivable deception will be brought to bear upon those who have not a daily, living connection with God. Satan's angels are wise to do evil, and they will create that which some will claim to be advanced light and will proclaim it as new and wonderful; yet while in some respects the message may be truth, it will be mingled with human inventions and will teach for

doctrine the commandments of men. If there was ever a time when we should watch and pray in real earnest, it is now.

8. **Fanaticism Hard to Quench**—Fanaticism, once started and left unchecked, is as hard to quench as a fire which has obtained hold of a building. Those who have entered into and sustained this fanaticism [holy flesh] might far better be engaged in secular labor, for by their inconsistent course of action they are dishonouring the Lord and imperilling His people. Many such movements will arise at this time when the Lord's work should stand elevated, pure, unadulterated with superstition and fables. We need to be on our guard, to maintain a close connection with Christ, that we be not deceived by Satan's devices. *The General Conference Bulletin, April 23, 1901. (Selected Messages 2:35.)*

9. **Fine-drawn Theories That Fill the Mind** Satan is working in many ways that the very men who ought to preach the message may be occupied with fine-drawn theories which
he will cause to appear of such magnitude and importance as to fill the whole mind; and while they think they are making wonderful strides in experience, they are idolizing a few ideas, and their influence is injured and tells but little on the Lord's side.

6. STEWARDSHIP LESSONS

Text: 1 Kings 3:9

“Therefore give to your servant an understanding heart to judge your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of yours?” (NKJV).

Introduction

“I Will Go” is the overarching theme of this Quinquennium. Each of these five years, 2021-2025, fronts a particular focus issue, for this year 2022, fulfilling God’s mission is the point of emphasis, and this cannot be accomplished without stewardship. The aim of this study is to urge every church member to take their stand and identify with stewardship. Stewardship is the lifestyle of one who accepts the Lordship of Jesus Christ and walks in partnership with God in managing His affairs on earth.

Solomon is one of the biblical characters from whom we can glean some character traits that define a faithful steward.

“Solomon's name comes from the Hebrew word *shalom* which means “peace,” and during his reign, the kingdom was at peace with its neighbors.”¹ This is significant because stewardship thrives in an atmosphere of peace- it thrives when individuals purpose to be at peace with God, it thrives when church members and leaders intentionally create an enabling conducive environment of peace. However, this does not mean that Solomon was a perfect man! Just as he must have learnt lessons from the mistakes of his father, we are also better placed to learn from his mistakes. God had promised to give him rest from all his enemies and that in his days the people of Israel would enjoy peace and quietness (1 Chronicles 22:9). Instead of remaining faithful to the Lord as he awaited the fulfilment of this promise, he conceived his own ways of seeking peace, “He made treaties with other rulers by marrying their daughters, which helps to explain why he had seven hundred wives who were princesses, as well as three hundred concubines (11:3).”² Indeed, it is only by God’s grace that from him can be gleaned principles of faithfulness.

It is from this man, Solomon, especially in 1 Kings 3, that this study gleans some seven important character traits of a faithful steward. Feel free to choose how to divide these points to cover the periods slotted to Stewardship in the camp meeting program, for example Day 1- Introduction and Lesson 1, Day 2- Lessons 2 and 3, Day 3- Lessons 4 and 5, and Day 4 Lessons 6 and 7.

1. STEWARDS ARE BUSY WITH PERSONAL PROJECTS, BUT ALONGSIDE GOD’S AGENDA

¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary: Old Testament*, 2001-2004, 1Kings 3:1

² Ibid.

“Now Solomon made a treaty with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and married Pharaoh's daughter; then he brought her to the City of David until he had finished building his own house, and the house of the Lord, and the wall all around Jerusalem” (1 Kings 3:1).

Stewards do not postpone God's work just because they are involved in some major personal projects. They are aware that God has endowed them with the gift of time, talents, treasures, and body temples where dwells the Holy Spirit. They are aware that they have to make use of these endowments to multiply them for the blessings of fellow humans. But they are also aware that they have a divine responsibility to use these gracious bestowments to expand the kingdom of God here on earth.

- ✚ They are careful enough to avoid using God's blessing only to expand their personal projects. If men and women concentrate their efforts only to those things that are of material gain to them at the expense of God's mission, they will soon lose track of their gracious invitation to cooperate with Christ in fulfilling His mission and eventually miss out of the soon coming heavenly banquet of the faithful.

- ✚ Christ's parable in Luke 14:15-20 illustrates how people often postpone God's work for personal projects. The Lord spoke about three groups of invitees to a great supper who gave excuses based on personal commitments;

- ✚ For the first, his piece of ground was the hindrance- just going to see it
- ✚ For the second, his oxen was the hindrance- just going to test them
- ✚ For the third, his marriage became the hindrance

But it was not so with Solomon-he was always occupied with God's work as much as he pushed his personal projects! It might have appeared an urgent thing for him to quickly concentrate in building a house for himself and his queen but decided to wait *“... until he had finished building his own house, and the house of the Lord, and the wall all around Jerusalem”* (1 Kings 3:1). His bride had to learn from the very onset that he purposed to put God first in his life. After all, how could enjoy the warmth of kingly abode with his bride while God and His bride persevered cold nights on the dewy mountains of Palestine.

What is hindering you today from embracing the work of God with the same seriousness, concentration and determination as you always do to your personal projects? Is it personal investments, building projects, school fees, or spouse? Please pray about your situation and ask God to forgive and give you a new beginning of faithful commitment to His mission just as much as you are pushing personal aspirations, businesses, and careers.

2. STEWARDS ARE SACRIFICERS!

Meanwhile the people sacrificed at the high places, because there was no house built for the name of the Lord until those days. ³ And Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of his father David, except that he sacrificed and burnt incense at the high place. ⁴

Now the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place: Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar (1 Kings 3:2-4).

Sacrifice is defined by Merriam-Webster dictionary as:

1: an act of offering to a deity something precious *especially*: the killing of a victim on an altar 2: something offered in sacrifice 3a: destruction or surrender of something for the sake of something else. b: something given up or lost...³

Its meaning denotes the idea of offering or giving in general but also that it is something of a value, a treasure, but when given out it is as good as lost. This is another Stewardship characteristic that can be drawn from Solomon:

- ✚ Sacrificing or giving is a key characteristic of a child of God- it has always been a common practice among the people of God to sacrifice and to teach their children to do so. The Messenger of the Lord affirms, “The sacrificial offerings were ordained by God to be to man a perpetual reminder and a penitential acknowledgment of his sin and a confession of his faith in the promised Redeemer.”⁴ Adam and Eve learnt the lesson from God the Father, and taught their children Cain and Abel, and the lesson has been passed down from one generation to another. So in the time of Solomon, it is recorded that, “*people sacrificed*” (1 Kings 3:2) and that he walked “*in the statutes of his father David*” (1 Kings 3:3).
- ✚ Sacrificing or giving must be motivated by one’s love for God. “*Solomon loved the Lord*” (1 Kings 3:3) so he sacrificed. He did not just do it because people were doing it, he did not give to please anyone, he did not give for a show but because he loved the Lord. Ellen White further says,

To Adam, the offering of the first sacrifice was a most painful ceremony. His hand must be raised to take life, which only God could give. It was the first time he had ever witnessed death, and he knew that had he been obedient to God, there would have been no death of man or beast.⁵

- ✚ Sacrificing or giving is always under God’s vigilant watch. Friends, although sacrificing was/is a common thing among His people, the eyes of God are Always upon the sacrifice and the individual offering that sacrifice with a view to either accepting or rejecting it!
- ✚ God watched the first children on earth sacrificing and dealt with them appropriately. He “*respected Abel and his offering but he did not respect Cain and his offering*” (Gen 4:4-5).
- ✚ God watched Abraham and Isaac sacrificing on Mt. Moriah and accepted the gesture saying, “*Now I know*” (Gen 22:12).
- ✚ God watched Solomon with approval when he went to sacrifice. The Bible reckons, “*At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, ‘Ask! What shall I give you?’*” (1 Kings 3:5).

³ Merriam-Webster Dictionary, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sacrifice> (Accessed May 12, 2022)

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, (Ellen G. White Estate, Inc., 1890), 68.1

⁵ Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, (Ellen G. White Estate, Inc., 1890), 68.1

✚ Sacrificing or giving is always directly proportionate to one's blessings. It was not by chance that king Solomon decided to go to Gibeon, it is written, "*for that was the great high place:*" (1 Kings 3:4). But that alone was not enough, the Bible speaks of the quantity of his sacrifice,

"*Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar*" (1 Kings 3:4). He must have considered his status and position in life in the light of how God had blessed him, that he expressed his offering.

✚ One cannot purport to love God but fail to recognize the sacrifice of His son on the cross of Calvary. It is at the cross where ultimate lessons of sacrificing/giving are learnt. The Messenger of the Lord reflects on the experience of Adam as he made the first sacrifice thus, As he slew the innocent victim, he trembled at the thought that his sin must shed the blood of the spotless Lamb of God. This scene gave him a deeper and more vivid sense of the greatness of his transgression, which nothing but the death of God's dear Son could expiate.¹⁹

✚ She further elaborates as follows, "Christ's self-sacrificing love is revealed upon the cross. That man might be saved, He gave all that he had, and then gave Himself" (CS 14.2).

✚ "The light of the gospel shining from the cross of Christ rebukes selfishness, and encourages liberality and benevolence" (CS 14.3).

✚ "It should not be a lamented fact that there are increasing calls to give" (CS 14.3).

¹⁹ Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, (Ellen G. White Estate, Inc., 1890), 68.1

3. STEWARDS REFLECT AND REMEMBER GOD'S MERCY!

And Solomon said: "You have shown great mercy to Your servant David my father, ... You have continued this great kindness for him, and You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day" (1 Kings 3:6).

Solomon reflected on God's mercy towards his family from the period prior to his conception and subsequent birth. At a tender age, even when he became king, the memories of God's marvelous grace did not escape his mind! After God's marvelous acts of redemption from Egyptian bondage, protection and provisions in the wilderness He cautioned His people to remember, not to forget.

✚ "*And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not*" (Deuteronomy 8:2).

✚ "*And you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day*" (Deuteronomy 8:18).

There are chances in the human nature that whenever we are full we begin to fool around with God! But it was not so with Solomon! He perhaps reflected on;

- ✚ God's mercy towards his father when he took Uriah's wife, conceived with her, killed Uriah, and took his wife, Bathsheba! (See 2Sam.11).
- ✚ God's mercifully rebuke to his father through the mouth of the prophet Nathan prompting him to repent (See 2Sam. 12:1-13).
- ✚ How David, his father, remorsefully cried and prayed for mercy (see Psalm 51).
- ✚ God's mercy in his life, that God struck the first son of David and Bathsheba and paved way for him! (See 2Sam.11:27; 12:14-15, 18, 24).

One undoing of a Christian is to imagine that his/her possessions and position in life are a right! There are many who perhaps are more legitimate/qualified for these positions but God denied them that chance! Perhaps many were struck to death by God so as to pave ways for us! Please let us remember, it is all by His grace

- ✚ *Therefore understand that the Lord your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stiff-necked people. ⁷ Remember! Do not forget how you provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day that you departed from the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the LORD (Deut 9:6- 7).*

- ✚ *"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich" (2 Cor 8:9).*

4. STEWARDS ARE KEEN TO DISCERN BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL

"Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?" (1 Kings 3:9).

When challenged with an open choice as to what he wanted God to give him, Solomon did not only contemplate and brood on past experiences of God's mercy but went ahead to ask for the most critical thing, discernment between good and evil. He wanted to be clear, exact, and leave no grey areas between right and wrong, good and evil. This can only be possible if we ask for a heart of discernment.

Many tend to be exact with bills i.e. fare/transport, rent, school fees, shopping, etc. yet they seem to get confused when it comes to tithes and offerings. It could be a matter of failure to discern the difference! Do not let it happen to you.

- ✚ *"You must distinguish between the holy and the common, between the unclean and the clean," (Lev 10:10).*
- ✚ For failure to discern the difference between the unclean and the clean, Belshazzar ruined his life. The king did not learn from the pride of his father Nebuchadnezzar. Read Daniel 5:22-28, 30-31.
- ✚ Ellen G. White wrote, "Every man's work passes in review before God and is registered for faithfulness or unfaithfulness. Opposite each name in the books of heaven is entered with terrible exactness every wrong word, every selfish act, every unfulfilled duty..." (GC, 482.1).
- ✚ She writes,

The greatest want of the world is the want of men- men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall (Ed 57.3).

Let us teach our people to discern the difference between God's holy money and common money for school fees, medical bills, family gifts and treats, our workers' wages etc. Ellen White further states,
But such a character is not the result of accident; it is not due to special favors or endowments of Providence. A noble character is the result of self-discipline, of the subjection of the lower to the higher nature- the surrender of self for the service of love to God and man (Ed 57.4).

Friends, do not think you know enough to take you through this life, seek wisdom to discern between good and evil!

5 STEWARDS SEEK GOD'S KINGDOM & HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS FIRST, THEN ALL OTHER THINGS FOLLOW!

Then God said to him: "Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice, behold, I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you. And I have also given you what you have not asked: both riches and honor; so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days" (1 Kings 3:11-13).

When God challenged him with an open choice, Solomon proved that what occupied the front page of his agenda list was how to preside over the affairs of God on earth just as heaven would have it done. Solomon's priority of seeking that which propagated the Kingdom of God pleased the Lord (1 Kings 3:10), and indeed many other things followed. ✚ Many fail not because they are foolish or not hardworking *per se* but for lack of setting the right priorities in life.

✚ *"Commit your works to the LORD, and your thoughts will be established"*
(Proverbs 16:3).

✚ What are you worried about today? Is it your life, or food- what you will eat and drink, or what you shall put on? Jesus discourages us from such worries over these earthly basic needs at the expense of putting God first. He says,
"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33).

✚ Whenever things don't seem to add up in your life, please check your priorities.

5. STEWARDS KNOW THAT LONGEVITY IS A BLESSING THAT COMES FROM A FAITHFUL WALK WITH GOD!

"So if you walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days." (1 Kings 3:14).

Beloved, when you are on top of the mountain of conquest! Do not think you have already made it! The things of earth are transient- they vanish quickly like vapor, set your love upon a faithful walk with God.

✚ *“I have seen the wicked in great power, And spreading himself like a native green tree. Yet he passed away, and behold, he was no more; Indeed I sought him, but he could not be found” (Psalm 37:35-36).*

✚ *“Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him, And show him My salvation” (Psalm 91:14-16).*

✚ *“Cast your bread upon the waters, For you will find it after many days” (Ecclesiastes 11:1).*

6. STEWARDS REMAIN FAITHFUL EVEN AFTER RECEIVING A NOD OF ANSWERED PRAYER

“... And he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, offered up burnt offerings, offered peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants” (1 Kings 3:15).

✚ Some appear faithful but only during pursuit of God’s gracious bestowment, but they are quick to show Him their backs as soon as their requests are granted. It was not so with Solomon,

✚ Stewardship was a lifestyle of Solomon. It was his custom to go to the high places and to offer sacrifices. At Gibeon, after sacrificing *“a thousand burnt offerings on that altar”* (1 Kings 3:4). God answered him marvelously. But that did not become the end of his habit of giving.

✚ Dear child of God, let us prove and remain faithful to God even after He has granted our many requests. With these many blessings of life and health, family, something to do for a living, positions and possessions, it is our turn to prove faithful on the altar of sacrifice. Avoid the temptation of recoiling to selfishness with the blessings God has graciously bestowed to you. His challenge to us is, *“Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life”* (Rev 2:10).

7. YOUNG ADULTS

WHO IS A DISCIPLE?

A disciple is a devoted follower. Also, a disciple is one who has dedicated his life to follow the teachings or the way of life of a leader according as he saw or heard first-hand or according as was handed down to him in the form of information, whether orally or in writing.

The word *disciples* occurred once in the Old Testament, translated from the Hebrew word *limmuwd* (Isaiah 8:16).

In the New Testament, both words, disciple and disciples, occurred many times, translated from the Greek word *mathetes*.

In the New Testament, the terms *disciple* and *disciples* were translated from the Greek word *mathetes* – a word that generally refers to any learner, pupil, or apprentice. Even in antiquity, *mathetes* were most often associated with people who were devoted followers of a religious leader or a teacher. Therefore, in translation, the word *disciple* was preferred as a suitable equivalence of *mathetes* in the English version of the New Testament.

A disciple is the one who adheres to the teachings or doctrine of another, making them his rule of life and conduct. Even today, the word disciple is understood differently from a student or a learner; the word is scarcely used to refer to learners pursuing formal education in primary, second cycle, and tertiary institutions; rather, it is set apart to be used in the religious circles to refer to a certain caliber of people who are active adherents and devotees of the teachings of a teacher.

Three things define a disciple.

- He follows; imitates.
- He lives not for himself but follows the course set by someone, the teacher. ➤ He is an adherent or a devotee, living discipleship for life.

1. Young Adults as Disciples of Christ understand the call from God.

Young Adults as disciples of God have to know core plan for salvation. They have internalized that fellow young people are slaves, held captive by terrible enemies: sin and death, and they see that in this fallen, corrupt, and shattered world, they need a rescuer—Jesus, our savior, and redeemer.

Isaiah 1; 18-19. God calls every young person to come and reason with Him

Matthew 11: 28-30. He calls all young disciples to go to Him.

Luke 18:38. The young disciple need God's mercy on them.

Young adults acknowledge that Jesus gave his followers freedom from sin and its effects when he took them on at the cross.

John 8:36. Jesus makes the disciple free indeed.

Romans 6:18, 22. Free from sin and become slaves of righteousness

Romans 8:2. Set free from the law of sin and death to everlasting life.

Christ is calling for volunteers to enlist under His standard, and bear the banner of the cross before the world. The church is languishing for the help of young men who will bear a courageous testimony, who will with their ardent zeal stir up the sluggish energies of God's people, and so increase the power of the church in the world. Young men are wanted who will resist the tide of worldliness, and lift a voice of warning against taking the first steps in immorality and vice. MYP 24.3

But first, the young men who would serve God, and give themselves to His work, must cleanse the soul temple of all impurity, and enthrone Christ in the heart; then they will be enabled to put energy into their Christian effort, and will manifest enthusiastic zeal in persuading men to be reconciled to Christ. Will not our young men respond to the invitation of Christ, and answer, "Here am I; send me"? Young men, press to the front, and identify yourselves as laborers together with Christ, taking up the work where He left it, to carry it on to its completion.—The Review and Herald, June 16, 1891. MYP 25.1

2. Young Adults As Disciples Know the God of the Bible.

Young adults as disciples know the God that they serve. They recognize that he is too awesome and mighty to wrap their minds around, but they see that God wants a relationship with them.

Taking note of the ways God has revealed himself, disciples are continuing to learn what God is like. They view the Bible as the story of God's relationship with his people over the centuries, and they see his fingerprints throughout the world around them.

Psalms 119:105, 98- 104. The word of God is the lamp to our feet

Proverbs 6: 23-28. The lamp is a light, reproof of instruction

2Timothy 3: 15-17. The scriptures, are able to make you wise for salvation.

*When young disciples lack depth in the word of God, they tend to **acknowledge more than one God or lack a value for God's Word.***

3. Young Adults as Disciples recognize that they are made in God's image.

Disciples choose their God-given identity over what culture says they should be. Before they determine *who* they are, they focus on *whose* they are.

They affirm that God created human beings in his own image, and they rejoice that Christ came and died on the cross to offer them a new and redeemed identity. Disciples also find

in their God-given identity a God-given mission. As image-bearers of the one true God, they seek to be His representatives here on earth.

Genesis 1: 26- 28. Made in the image of God, powerful

Psalms 139: 13-18. Wonderfully and fearfully made.

Acts 17: 24-31. Unknown God is known through human beings made in His likeness and image.

*When mature young disciples don't live out this characteristic of a disciple, they oftentimes **try to be someone they aren't or determine their identity based on their environment.***

4. Young Adults as Disciples serve out of Love

Scripture paints a clear picture of how we should treat our fellow human beings. In Zechariah

7, the prophet chastised God's people for going through the religious motions—fasting, sacrificing, and celebrating—one minute, then treating others poorly the next. Their worship was selfish. God wanted them to “Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor. Do not plot evil against each other.”

This gets to the heart of service in a young disciple's life. Immature disciples may serve others when it's convenient or when it makes them look and feel good. But young disciples follow

Jesus' example by transforming into continuous servanthood. They serve others by taking God's love for people and making it their own.

Romans 13; 8-10. Service generated from love for one another

2Timothy 4: 1-2 preach in time and out of time

Ephesians 4: 11-16. Gifts of the spirit for service to build the body of Christ the church **1 Timothy 4: 12-16.** Let no one despise your youth but be an example to all.

*When young disciples lack depth in this area, they can be **driven by materialism** or show signs of **selfishness.***

5. Young Adults as Disciples Share Their Faith Story

The Good News of Jesus Christ is the greatest gift we can receive. Through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, we are adopted as God's children. We are made holy, receive the Spirit, and enter into an eternal loving relationship with our Lord.

Spiritually mature young disciples recognize these truths in their own lives. They follow Jesus' instruction to share his Good News with others: "Go into the world and preach the gospel to all creation" (Mark 16:15). As young disciples reflect on the transformation in their own lives and Jesus' influence on their journey, they yearn for those same things in others' lives. So they share the gospel and its influence on their story of faith with those who need to hear it most.

Philippians 3: 4-6, 7-14. Testimony of the apostle Paul tell the mighty work of God in his life. Christ is calling for volunteers to enlist under His standard, and bear the banner of the cross before the world. The church is languishing for the help of young men who will bear a courageous testimony, who will with their ardent zeal stir up the sluggish energies of God's people, and so increase the power of the church in the world. Young men are wanted who will resist the tide of worldliness, and lift a voice of warning against taking the first steps in immorality and vice. MYP 24.3

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*When young disciples lack this character trait, they may be **afraid to talk about salvation through Christ's death and resurrection. Spiritual things** or **make excuses for not reaching out.***

6. Young People as Disciples Worship regardless of Circumstance

We sing and pray because we worship. By themselves, these things are not all that special and can even be self-serving. But when they are done in response to God, they become worship played out in our lives.

Young disciples see worship and witnessing as a lifestyle. Their hearts are aware of God's constant presence, and they can't help but marvel at his glory. Nor is their worship dependent on circumstance. Disciples worship God even during tough times because they know that God is always present everywhere, worthy of praise and worship. The religious work which the Lord gives to young men, and to men of all ages, shows His respect for them as His children.

He gives them the work of self-government. He calls them to be sharers with Him in the great work of redemption and uplifting. As a father takes his son into partnership in his

business, so the Lord takes His children into partnership with Himself. We are made laborers together with God. Jesus says, “As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.” Would you not rather choose to be a child of God than a servant of Satan and sin, having your name registered as an enemy of Christ? MYP 47.2 **Daniel 6: 10- 12.** Worship in tough times.

Acts 4: 18-21. Worship in tough times.

Acts 5: 22-28, 29-32. Worship in tough times.

*When young disciples lack courage in this area, they may experience **feelings-based worship** or have a **shallow prayer life**.*

7. Young Adults as Disciples Defend their Faith

The Bible encourages us to defend our faith: “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,” (1 Peter 3:15). That’s the point of apologetics—to explain our hope in Christ to others. Young people as disciples are equipped to communicate God’s truth in a world that is hostile towards him. They don’t share God’s truth in an overbearing way, but they display confidence and a willingness to unashamedly and respectfully.

Psalm 119: 46-48. Speaking the testimonies of God before the kings

Psalm 138:1-3. Praising, and worshiping God before gods

Daniel 3; 14-18. Standing before the King to defend their

Faith.

2Timothy 1; 7. God has given us a Spirit of power, not fear.

Romans 8; 15. Given the spirit of adoption, not slavery

1 John 4; 18. No fear in love, perfect love casts away fear

Acts 1; 8. Receive power from on high the Holy Spirit.

Young men and women need more of the grace of Christ, that they may bring the principles of Christianity into the daily life. The preparation for Christ’s coming is a preparation made through Christ for the exercise of our highest qualities. It is the privilege of every youth to make of his character a beautiful structure. But there is a positive need of keeping close to Jesus. He is our strength and efficiency and power. We cannot depend on self for one moment.... MYP 47.3

*When young disciple doesn’t live out this characteristic of a disciple, they might **disregard the Bible** or be **easily swayed in their beliefs**.*

8. Young people as Disciples join in the Community of Believers

Young disciples don't take the journey of discipleship alone. When we're adopted as children of God, we gain millions of spiritual siblings who are on the same journey.

Immature disciples might think they can walk the path of discipleship alone. They say things like, "My faith is between God and me. I don't need to join a church because I get more out alone than time with God."

Yet whenever Scripture describes the life of a disciple, it's in the context of a community of faith. Paul addresses the members of the church in Corinth as "mere infants in Christ" (1 Cor. 3:1) because there is jealousy, quarreling, and disunity among them. Mature young disciples seek unity and community with other growing disciples.

Hebrews 10; 24-25. We don't neglect to assemble together for the day is near.

Acts 2: 40- 47. They continued in one accord sharing all things in common

*When mature young disciples lack depth in this area, they tend to **isolate themselves** or be **divisive and exclusive in relationships**.*

With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world! How soon might the end come—the end of suffering and sorrow and sin! How soon, in place of possession here, with its blight of sin and pain, our children might receive their inheritance where "the righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever;" where "the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick," and "the voice of weeping shall be no more heard." Psalm 37:29; Isaiah 33:24; 65:19. Ed 271.2

Youthful talent, well organized and well trained, is needed in our churches. The youth will do something with their overflowing energies. Unless these energies are directed into right channels, they will be used by the youth in a way that will hurt their own spirituality, and prove an injury to those with whom they associate.—Gospel Workers, 211. ChS 30.4

As His representatives among men, God does not choose angels who have never fallen, but human beings, men of like passions with those they seek to save. Christ took humanity that He might reach humanity. A divine-human Saviour was needed to bring salvation to the world. And to men and women has been committed the sacred trust of making known "the unsearchable riches of Christ."—The Acts of the Apostles, 134. ChS 7.1

You have within your reach more than finite possibilities. A man, as God applies the term, is a son of God. "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." It is your privilege to turn away from that which is cheap and inferior, and rise to a high standard,—to be respected by men and beloved by God. MYP 47.1

AMEN

8 FAMILY LIFE RESILIENCE

Introduction

Elephants are known for being resilient. While the leading threat to African elephants is wildlife crime – mainly poaching for the illegal ivory trade – the greatest threat to Asian elephants is the loss of habitat, giving rise to human-elephant conflict for land space. Despite these distressing realities, elephants continue to be resilient, with the help of conservationist. When people endure difficult situations and bounce back despite the hardships they have experienced, that reality is also identified as resilience. The dictionary defines resilience as: “the ability of a person to adjust to or recover readily from illness, adversity, major life changes, etc.” Essentially, resilience is by definition buoyancy; which is as defined as “lightness or resilience of spirit.”

Day 1:

The Resilient Marriage: How to Stay Married For Better or For Worse

- ✚ This lesson explores key factors in building a strong marriage that will survive the inevitable transitions and traumas in marriage. The target is premarital couples, newlyweds, and couples at any stage of their marriage.
- ✚ Marriage and family life are full of challenges. However, when unexpected events occur, additional layers are piled on top of regular stressors. Here’s veritable truism: couples can survive and thrive in their marriage despite the challenges that come their way. It is possible to build a resilient marriage and stay married for better, for worse.
- ✚ So, what is resilient marriage? First, let’s define resilience. Resilience can be defined as having the emotional and social capacity to adjust and bounce back after exposure to traumatic events or exposure to considerable risk. Walsh (2015) defines it as more than just surviving or getting through a distressing ordeal, but rather the capacity to endure and recover from serious life challenges. It must go beyond survival because some people survive an ordeal, but remain interpersonally, psychologically, and spiritually impaired. They continue through life after adverse or traumatic experiences with debilitating post-traumatic stress, depression or anxiety and inability to thrive. Hence resilient marriage has flexibility, commitment, and a positive outlook.
- ✚ In this lesson we will first explore how couples can adapt to changing seasons in marriage and identify principles that will help couples build a strong and resilient marriage.

Adapting to the Changing Seasons

Marriage relationships will constantly change across the lifespan of a couple. Couples fluctuate between being loving and not so loving for various reasons: children, illness, employment transitions, financial struggles, depression, anxiety, infidelity, differing hobbies, and aging brings its own set of problems. Just like seasons change in nature, couples go through various seasons in their marriage. How you respond to change is expressed through your attitudes, emotions, and actions. Couples must learn to regulate these three factors if they are going to weather the seasons of life successfully and maintain a high quality of marital satisfaction and stability in their marriage.

✚ Change is inevitable. D.H. Lawrence writes: “I should say the relation between any two decently married people changes profoundly every few years, often without their knowing anything about it; though every change causes pain, even if it brings a certain joy. The long course of marriage is a long event of perpetual change...It is like rivers flowing on, through new country, always unknown.”

✚ **Couple Exercise:** Reflect on the quote above by Lawrence. In what ways were you prepared or not for the changes you have experienced in your marriage? Consider personal changes, relational changes and unpredictable circumstances.

✚ **Attitude** – What you think about your relationship and how you view your spouse will directly impact your relationship. Thoughts and attitudes trigger emotions; emotions produce behaviours or actions. So, if you think about your relationship and spouse in positive terms, your brain will trigger kind and warm emotions.

✚ Likewise, if you are going through a tough season, if you believe you can overcome it together as a couple, rather than blaming each other, you will have a greater chance of saving your marriage through the difficult season.

✚ **Emotions**— our emotions were designed by God for a purpose. They prompt us to take action; this is especially helpful when you are in danger. It is important, however, to regulate your emotions as they can prompt you to act before you are able to think rationally. Often, when a couple has a fight, it is usually because one or both became flooded by emotions. Their emotions hijacked the center of judgment in the brain. The wires get crossed and a simple misunderstanding becomes a huge fight. Everyone can learn to regulate emotions by becoming more aware when they are triggered and how they are triggered. Here is an easy skill to learn PPC model: ○ **Pause** - (breathe slowly for 10 seconds) ○ **Pray** - (ask God to help you calm down and think rationally), ○ **Choose** - (a response that will strengthen the relationship and not tear it down).

✚ **Actions**—attitude and emotions drive actions. However, actions can drive also drive attitude and emotions. (Proverbs 15:1) If something hurting it's very difficult to respond with a soft answer. But if we are willing to go for a win-win for the relationship, one person can change the course of a conversation about to go awry. Actions can change attitudes and emotions. Think about the last disagreement you had with your spouse. Can you identify what emotions were triggered (anger, fear, surprise, disgust)? Remember self-control is the fruit of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22).

Principles for Strengthening Resilience in Marriage

1. **Pray Without Ceasing** – Prayer is power. It changes things, but mostly prayer changes us. Prayer takes us outside of ourselves and reminds us that our reliance is on God, not ourselves (Phil. 4:6, 7). When couples (or even one spouse) commit to praying for their marriage, miracles happen, hearts and minds are transformed, and marriages are fortified. Ellen White says: “When we come to ask mercy and blessing from God we should have a spirit of love and forgiveness in our own hearts.”
2. **Communicate, Connect and Commune**- Communication is to marriage as petrol is to an automobile. Neither your marriage nor your car will be able to function without these. The key to effective communication is emotional

awareness, learning how to express feelings effectively is the goal. The more you communicate with your spouse and share your feelings, hopes dreams and desires, the more connected you will become as couple. Take time out every day to communicate, connect and commune that will help your marriage stand strong when you are faced with strong challenging times.

3. **Solve Your Solvable Problems** – John Gottman (2015), in his book, “The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work” posits that 69% of the time couples argue about perpetual problems. He states that 31% of the problems that couples discuss are solvable problems. The truth is much of the time, couples are arguing about things that are not really problems and that is why they are not solvable. He calls them gridlocked issues, where usually there are personality traits in their spouse that they are usually trying to change or there is a deep and meaningful need that has not been expressed.
4. **Turn towards Each Other Instead of Away-** The natural human tendency when conflict occurs or when crisis comes is to run away. Always remember that you and spouse are a team, and when problems arise, it's best to confront them as a team. As difficult as it may feel, push past the discomfort, the anger, the hurt and turn towards your spouse. Together the two of you can turn towards God and allow Him to calm your fears and get you back on course (Oliver & Oliver, 2015).

Conclusion

After God created Adam and Eve, he gave them instruction for building and sustaining a life-long marriage (Gen.2:24). If husband and wife “hold fast” to each other, and the implement these simple principles into your marriage, you will be **resilient** and be well prepared to endure the storms of life together.

Day 2:

Raising Resilient Children Philippians 4:13NKJV; 2 Corinthians 12: 9a

Introduction

This lesson will explore key factors fostering resilience in children of all ages. Target audience is parents of young children, adolescents, and children of any age, also anyone who wants to strengthen resilience in their own lives. Resilience has become the motto of COVID-19 pandemic. While this has long been associated with families, it has become ever-present during this pandemic era. Every child in the world has now experienced.

The truth is as we begin the parenting journey, it should begin with an understanding that we have the responsibility to prepare our children not just for sunny days but for the storms that will inevitably arise in life.

✚ Definition: So, what is resilience? Resilience can be defined as having the emotional and social capacity to adjust and bounce back after exposure to traumatic events or exposure to considerable risk. It is more than just surviving or getting through a distressing ordeal, but rather the capacity to endure and recover from serious life challenges.

✚ The good news is that God promises that we can learn to be resilient. (John 16:33). As believers and followers of Christ, we will have struggles in life, but we're constantly reminded that God is in control. Resilience isn't the absence of fear or

challenges but the ability to persevere based on the truth that God is our ultimate source of strength. We will explore key factors in fostering resilience in children and provide some tips for parents in raising resilient children. **Misunderstanding Resilience**

The concept of resilience originated in the field of physical sciences and referred to the capacity of an object to return to its original form after being stretched – such as an elastic band. Subsequently, the word started being used to describe individuals, families, and other items.

Definition infers that it's easy to bounce right back after facing difficult challenges. The truth is that it is unrealistic to believe that one can just recover after experiencing serious trials. Resilience is not just speeding through a crisis and appearing untouched by a difficult or painful experience. It involves learning how to struggle well, experiencing, suffering, courage, and hope simultaneously. (1Corinthians 4:8-9). Resilience can be seen as an outcome – emotional wellbeing despite the odds. Resilience is also a process – adaptability amid adversity.

Relationships Nurtures Resilience

Many studies focused on resilience in children have pointed to the importance of strong family bonds. When children face adversity, if they have at least one caring relationship with an important adult who believes in them, they are to gain strength to overcome hardship. In the book *Adventist Home*, E.G. White says, “Parents, let your children see that you love them and will do all in your power to make them happy...Rule them with tenderness and compassion... The spirit that prevails in the will mold their character; they will form habits and principles that will be a strong defense against temptation... (AH 193.3, 4).

Principles and Guidelines for Strengthening Family Resilience Guidelines for Strengthening Family Resilience:

1. Begin with the end in mind. (Jer. 29:11) -Parents must have a clear vision of what their family is about and how they are going to operate.
2. Be intentional in family bonding (Zeph. 3:17) -Make your child feel connected and bonded to the parents, to others and to God
3. Model resilience – Phil.4:13, 1Cor. 12:9 -Resilient doesn't mean you pretend or ignore the hardships or challenges of life. It means you remain positive and hopeful during difficult times.

Ways Parents Can Model Resilience

1. Foster a positive attitude. This not fake positivity that doesn't allow for the processing of emotions, but one can look for the good despite the hardship.
2. Learn to regulate your emotions. That simply means you can learn to express your emotions in a healthy and proactive way.
3. Remain hope. Be optimistic about the future. As God's people, we have this hope that one day He will return and take us home with Him. Let your children hear you praying and reciting God's promises show them you trust in God.

Conclusion

Parents can help foster resilience in their children and remind them of the relief that comes with knowing that God has promised them hope and a future.

Day 3:

Nurturing Characters for Eternity Introduction

Together we will take a journey through character development. We will explore why it is important. We will identify 24 of the main character strengths... and learn how we can nurture them in our children, in simple ways, every day.

Character Strengths Are:

- ✚ Positive ways of thinking, talking and doing that energize us and help us to enjoy better health, life and relationship.
- ✚ Personal qualities that help us and our children to flourish.
- ✚ We can chose to develop and grow our characters all through our lives.
- ✚ We can nurture these traits in our children from a young age.

“Character strengths are durable, fundamental qualities that describe us at our best.”
(Jenifer Fox Eades) 2 Peter 1:5- 8 NIV

Character Strengths Enrich Our Lives by helping us to:

1. Make positive and caring contributions to our communities.
2. Be respected and respectful
3. Learn and work well
4. Enjoy healthy relationships
5. Live happier lives
6. Share God’s love

God’s Character: God is ...patient, trustworthy, kind, and creative

What Character Strengths Do People Value Around the World?

The following are some key character strengths that are valued in most world’s cultures

Wisdom -Creativity- Eph.2:10 -Curiosity-Pro.25:2 -Love of learning-Pr.1:5 - Perspective- Phil.2:5-(Being able to see the bigger picture)	Courage -Bravery-Joshua 1:9 -Perseverance- James1:2-4 -Honest-Eph.4:15 -Enthusiasm- Col.3:23	Humanity -Kindness- Eph.4:32 -Social Intelligence- Eph.4:32 -Love –John 13:34
Justice -Social Responsibility-Gal.6:2 -Teamwork- Ps. 133:1 -Fairness –Ps.133:1 -Leadership- Luke 22:26	Temperance -Forgiveness-Eph.4:32 -Humility-Matt.23:12 -Prudence- James 1:5,Eph.5:15-7 -Self-control-Gal. 5:22-23	Transcendence -Appreciation- Ps.19:1 -Gratitude-1Thes.5:18 -Optimism-Isa.40:31 -Humour-Pr.17:22 -Spirituality- Micah 6:8

Why Character Strengths are So Important

Many character strengths also helps us to cope with life’s difficulties. They helps us to be resilient and bounce back emotionally after a crisis, setback, distress, or challenge. They enable us to live more fulfilling, loving, happy and serving lives. “Every act of life, however unimportant, has its influence in forming the character. A good character is more precious than worldly possessions, and the work of forming it is the noblest in which men can engage.” E.G. White 4T.657. (1881).

Day 4:

Being Refined By Fire

Key Texts: 1 Peter 1:6-7; Philippians 4:13

Purpose

The purpose of this seminar is to explore key processes in family resilience and how they can be applied to improve a family's functioning.

Introduction

These days we are more aware than ever how the result of sin impacts us on individual, community, and world levels. You can live an exemplary life, following everything the Bible teaches, but still struggle with the results of sin, such as illness, natural and manmade, disasters, unemployment, death, divorce, crime, war, and violence within your family or community. Though following God's commandments does decrease some of the world's pain, the devil loves nothing more than to cause harm to God's children. But God has the power to make something beautiful that can arise out of the tragedy.

What is Resilience?

You may have observed that some individuals and families seem to not only survive but even thrive when faced with adversity. This phenomenon has been called resilience, defined as "the ability to withstand and rebound from disruptive life challenges." (Walsh, 2003, p.399). Research has also identified limits to resilience. Not every can bounce back and thrive. The more tragedies, seriousness of trauma, and younger age makes resilience challenges (Mastern 2013). Improvement can happen, but may be limited.

Resilience in the Context of Relationship

Those with good self-confidence are more likely to be resilient. Resilient begins in the context of relationships. After a traumatic experience, healing begins in the stability of a caring relationship. Knowing there is someone in your life who is supportive and reliable is a big part of resilience. Research found that supportive relationships and religious involvement that was found to have the most significant impact on the resilience of these individuals. It is within the relationship where resilience begins.

Family Stress, Adaptation, and Resilience

Stressful crises and chronic challenges do not just happen to an individual but also within the context of the family. What happens to one person impacts the whole family! By building on family strengths, families can emerge stronger and more resourceful in meeting future challenges.

Family Belief Systems

A family's belief systems can have a powerful impact on how a family perceives a crisis.

- 1. Making Meaning of Adversity:** American society has a cultural tendency towards "rugged individualism" due to their pioneering past, most cultures around the world have a more communal approach. There are many benefits to this. They approach adversity as a shared challenge that can be faced as a family.
- 2. Positive Outward:** One can't underestimate the importance of hope. It is the lack of hope that often leads to people committing suicide.
- 3. Spirituality:** Having transcendent beliefs helps us to see beyond ourselves and our current struggles. Our communities of faith can also be an excellent resource for comfort and practical assistance.

Family Organizational Patterns

Families come in all shapes and sizes, especially these days. Research has found that family flexibility and stability, connectedness, and various resources are beneficial to resilience, improving outcomes for all family forms.

- i. Flexibility and stability- Family flexibility and stability, connectedness, and various resources are beneficial too resiliency, improving outcomes for all family forums.
- ii. Connectedness- During crisis turn to one another for mutual support.
- iii. Social and economic resources- Extended family and other social networks of churches and community organizations can help.

Communication/Problem Solving

Think about a time you were in a crisis and how important communication was! a) Clarify

- b) Collaborative problem solving -Instead of attacking one another, resilient families work together to resolve problems. The more people involved in brainstorming the better and easy finding a solution.
- c) Open emotional expression- Open communication supported by a climate of mutual trust, empathy, and tolerance for differences, enables members to share the range of feelings that may come as a response to a crisis or chronic stress.

Conclusion

With widespread concern for the breakdown of the family. It is helpful to think of resilience to help strengthen families in all their forms and address their unique struggles. Instead of focusing on problem, build on strengths. In this lesson we covered the topic of resilience, limits to resilience, what helps families be resilient, and your family's resilience levels.

Remember: **PHILIPPIANS 4:1**

Day 5:

Growing Confident Girls

Key Texts: Psalms 139: 13-16; 1Peter 5:8; James 1:5






Statement of Purpose

To equip parents, grandparents and church leaders to encourage, equip, and challenge girls to live confidently as the beautiful and unique young women God created them to be- boldly living out His plan and purpose for their lives.

Transitioning from Princesses to Teens

The transition from little girl to teen is hard. And it impacts girls physically (think hormones, body-changing), emotionally, socially (friendships, peer pressure), and mentally. Their bodies are changing, and hormones are wreaking havoc on their emotions and thoughts. Suddenly our little princess are no longer sure that anyone- let alone everyone- loves her, delights in her, and wants to celebrate her. She's not even sure she likes herself.

Girls Feel the Need to Be Perfect and Do Everything- And Do It All Well

-  Fit in and while stand out
-  Take advanced placement classes
-  Take college credit while in high school Participate in sports, music, and
-  activities Be thin, pretty, stylish
-  Have lots of friends

Their schedules are packed, but they're afraid that they're not doing enough. Social media adds a new level to the pressure – even when girls know that many “perfect” pictures have filters on them. A 17 year shared as talked about the battles and pressures that she and her friends face daily. “There’s pressure to grow up and perfect, look perfect, and do everything not only well but excel.” It’s no wonder that anxiety and depression are at an all-time high and growing, especially among teen girls.

A survey done showed that:

- ✚ Many girls do not believe they good enough
- ✚ This lack of confidence causes girls to avoid taking risks or trying new things and keeps them from believing that God has a plan for their lives. They often try to please everyone around them (parents, teachers, friends, boys) expecting perfection from themselves.
- ✚ Feeling like they’re not good enough often causes girls to focus on negative feelings and thought. As a result, their brains become hardwired to negatively. Each thought create a path in the brain.

This is the foundation teen girls are building on as they transition from girl-teen-to-adult. They battle with confidence and self-esteem and do not see their God-given uniqueness as a good thing, nor appreciate their specific gifts or abilities. Girls (and adults) tend to down play their strengths and successes and focus on their perceived weaknesses and failures.

More Just Hormones

Hormones and body changes are just one part of what’s happening in the hearts and minds of girls. We have an enemy. The Bible is clear. John 10:10; 1Peter 5:8.

Each of us, including our teen girls, has an enemy out to steal, kill, destroy, and devour. He does not want girls living confidently in the value and unique abilities God gave them. The enemy will use messages girls hear through words spoken to them, messages from social media, their interpretation of words, and situations.

What Can We Do?

- ✚ Pray like crazy
- ✚ Pray that God will reveal Himself and his love in undeniable ways to her
- ✚ Pray for the wisdom of James 1:5 for yourself as you love and disciple her. Pray for outpouring of the Holy Spirit
- ✚ Ask God to give you confidence – not just to encourage and mentor her, but confidence that you can live out in your own life as example. ✚ Pray with her.

Model

You complement her. How you talk good about yourself ✚ Model the courage to trying new things
Depend on God



Do What You Love

- ✚ Encourage her to get involved in the things she enjoys doing
- ✚ Support in her ‘trying on new things to see what fits’

- ✚ Ask, if you had more confidence, what is one thing you'd try? Ask, "What would be the first step you'd need to take to try that" Ask, "When will you take that first step?"

Encourage Her & Build Her Up

1. Compliment and affirm more than just her appearance.
2. Affirm her on when you see her doing
3. Acknowledge her feelings and speak confidence in her ability

Teach Her to Care and Connect, Not Compare and Compete

1. When we compare, we see our negatives and others' positive.
2. See past someone's surface to their heart, struggles, challenges and doubts.
3. Good friendships are important than tons of friends.
4. Provide opportunities to grow great friendships.

Media

- ✚ Equip her to view social media critically – asking what's real and what's filtered.

- ✚ Talk about cyberbullying and role play how she can respond whether she is the target or someone else is.

- ✚ Talk about sexting – not only the dangers but let her know that it's wrong.

Equip Her

1. To live confidently
2. To handle failure
3. To care for others
4. To care for her heart
5. To fight the battle

Conclusion

The enemy doesn't want girls to live confidently. He wants to discourage them and cause them to doubt themselves and God.

9. SINGLE PARENTS LESSON

INTRODUCTION

Being single is the “new normal” today for many adults. The number of single is increasing in the world and church. Regardless of the trends encouraging singleness, the church as a body is being offered unprecedented opportunities to actively embrace singles and celebrate their gifts. Whether singleness is a short or long term experience for individuals, they can contribute toward building up the body of Christ in unique and powerful ways.

This year we are dealing with RESILIENCE in the family. When people endure difficult situations and bounce back despite the hardship they have experienced, that reality also is identified as resilience.

The dictionary define resilience as: “the ability of a person to adjust to or recover readily from illness, adversity, major life changes, etc. “Essentially, resilience is by definition buoyancy; which is as defined as a “lightness or resilience of spirit.”

SINGLE PARENTS- BUILDING RESILIENCE

DAY 1

TEXT: Phil. 3: 13, 14

INTRODUCTION

When you hear the term “single parent,” what image comes to mind? Describe exactly what you see in your mind’s eye. Perhaps our attempts towards judging present a picture that is far from accurate. Did you imagine a person of courage and resourcefulness? What about a person who exhibited resilience?

What is resilience, and how is it built?

Resilience is defined “as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress---such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors. As much as resilience involves bouncing back from these difficult experiences, it can also involve profound personal growth.” (APA, 2021)

Philippians 3:13-14 reminds us of the importance of forgetting what is behind and pressing on. The ability to press on regardless of the past is resilience in action. There is little doubt that most single parents may be in a situation that has demanded forgetting the past and pressing on. As leaders, how may we be a part of assisting single parents in the process of building **resilience**?

Perhaps you have heard rude or judgmental comments from others, even church members, towards or about single parents. This may seem unfair, and it is. But we cannot allow someone else’s uninformed opinion and misguided judgement to **define who you** are or how you feel. The leaders of the church, and Singles, should educate others and be part of revealing the true picture of the love of God along with the strength, resilience, and resourcefulness of single parents.

CAUSES OF SINGLE PARENTHOOD

There are a multitude of different routes that take one into single parenthood. For some, single parenting is a path they purposefully chose. Others may have had difficult journeys strewn with heartbreak, abuse, loss, or grief. Some are parenting alone because their spouses has died suddenly, some were cheated on, and others abandoned. Still, others are parenting alone because they have fled a domestic violent situation or a partner with addiction. The point is that every situation is unique, and the reasons that led to becoming a single parent vary from person to person.

Let’s repeat what we said earlier... God does not give one’s neighbours, friends, family, or even their church family the role of judge! Neither do you need to judge yourself also.

SETTING BOUNDARIES

Single parents deal with so much, internal and external, and the last thing on their to-do list should be dealing with the misplaced judgment of others. Learning to set appropriate boundaries can help deal with negative emotions. Here are seven tips to share with single parents to put those boundaries in place:

1. Stop the negative self-talk

Do not let the criticism of others affect how you talk to yourself. Stick some positive affirmations on your bathroom mirror, read them at the start of each day, memorise them, and repeat them to yourself if those negative thoughts begin to creep in.

2. Focus on good friends.

Think about those true friends you have and surround yourself with them. Do not surround yourself with so-called “friends” who continue to fill your ears with native talk.

3. Focus on what you got right for today.

It is easy to make a list of all the things you wish you could change about the day; however, why not focus on what you got right? Think about the successes in your day, recount them each night before you go to bed, and thank God for each victory.

4. Honest express your thoughts.

Do yourself a favour and clear out all your frustrations in your heart and mind. Talk to one of those good friend’s, writ in your journal, blog about them, or go to a

counsellor. Let go of all the negative thoughts and feelings, clean them out, and try to replace them with positive practices that refuse to let them back in.

5. Be self-aware.

If you are experiencing negativity, stop and think about what is causing that feeling. Is it bad friends? If so, you need to stop hanging around them. Are you watching too much media that continues to portray negative images? If so, turn off that television. Are you spending too much time sitting around and engaging in negative self-talk? If so, it may be time to get up and use that energy for more positive things. In other words, try to identify the things that are leading to your negative feelings and emotions and replace them with more positive activities.

6. Go outside.

Negative talk from others or yourself will eventually bring you down. Hit the reset button by going into nature. Go out into the fresh air, breathe deeply, walk, talk with the creator, and you will feel the anxiety begin to melt away. Exercising in the fresh air is one of the best things you can do to begin to look at things in new ways. **7. Develop boundaries, walk away, and speak up.**

You can choose who to spend time with, who you are going to listen to, and what subjects you will allow conversations to cover. You can say, “NO” and you can walk away. If someone says something out of line about your family or your circumstances, tell the person to stop. Sometimes a person needs to be confronted in order to stop their rude comments.

Conclusion

GOD CHOSE YOU

All parents have felt inadequate at times, regardless of their situation. All parents have yelled, have said wrong things, wished for a do-over or lost patience. And every time the guilt comes crashing down, we are tempted to think that, because of our deficiencies, we will ruin our child forever. Having these feelings is not unique to single parents. No one is perfect parent except God. God has chosen you for a divine task of parenting. **BE RESILIENT.**

#END#

DAY 2.

ADMIT WHEN YOU NEED HELP AND GET IT

Welcome to our lesson today. Single like many people enter into problems but stay in denial that no problems or believe that it's normal. No problem is attached to anybody, let no problem define you.

Healing years of emotional pain does not happen overnight. We all want immediate results, but please understand that this process is a journey. There may also be barriers that prevent someone from getting professional help, such as time, lack of insurance coverage that means out-of-pocket expenses, or childcare.

There are times when talking to a trusted friend, or a minister may be exactly what is needed. However, there are other times when talking to a family member may not be in one's best interest and they may need more intensive, objective, and professional help.

Here are some signs single parents need to know that may indicate a need for outside professional help:

1. You cannot remember the last time you had a good night's sleep.

The constant cycle of lack of sleep is a clear sign that things are not working, and you need outside intervention. Your health will soon deteriorate, and this will only make matters worse.

2. Your networking is not working.

Every attempt at talking to a friend or family member leaves you feeling more discouraged. Perhaps they are too close to the situation and unable to be objective. It may be time to bring in a neutral party.

3. There was/is physical and /or emotional abuse.

There is no way you should allow this behaviour to continue without getting help and finding safety immediately. Physical, emotional, and verbal abuse should never be tolerated. It is how God would want His daughter to be treated. Even if it is not occurring in the present, you may need professional help to overcome the effects of past abuse. Also, one's child may benefit from counselling if this has been the family's experience.

4. You are afraid to say certain things in your family.

When you do not feel comfortable sharing your feelings and thoughts without being demeaned, criticized, judged, or bullied, something is terribly wrong. You need a safe place to talk.

5. You deny, excuse, or choose to ignore the signs of problems such as drug or alcohol abuse.

Substance abuse is an indication of greater problems than simple emotional distress or fatigue. Perhaps you excuse your behaviour by saying things like, "I can stop anytime; I am not addicted; I will stop as soon as my parenting situation stabilizes." This is the height of denial and a key indicator that outside help is needed. Once again, the child may benefit from counselling if this has been the family's experience.

6. You have a recurring thought that your child would be better off without you.

These kinds of negative thoughts are a result of much deeper problems that need professional help. All of us have occasional thoughts that perhaps we are not the best parent; however, when it becomes a daily obsession, this is a key indicator that one needs professional intervention.

Would one perform a root canal on their own molar with a new power drill? Would you take out your own appendix? Of course not. So, why is it that we are reluctant to seek professional help when we need it? Ahh, there we have that word again... STIGMA! We need to break down these barriers and stigma.

Conclusion

The truth is that, sooner or later, all families may face trauma, adversity, or other stressors. The good news is that God offers a roadmap for adapting to life-changing situations, pressing on, and emerging even stronger than before. That is resilience defined! What amazing grace and what amazing love Jesus has for each of us, regardless of our backgrounds. In God's sight, single parents are precious, honoured, and loved beyond measure. He treasures and loves each with a love that has no limit.

#END#

Day 3

RESILIENT WHEN ALONE

INTRODUCTION

Paul makes it clear that if you are single/widow, God can make your situation a blessing rather than bitter if you look to Him to do it. If you are single, take courage and pride in your position because God himself is your purpose. You have been made for Him.

As He says in Isaiah 54:5-6

SINGLE AND PLAN OF GOD

When God said “It is not good for man to be alone” I don’t think He meant everyone needed to get married. If He did then Jesus failed at being the perfect example. I think what God meant was that man needs community.

Culture dictates a great deal how we look at our lives. I think most of us belong to a culture where unmarried is similar to having untied shoelaces. These are both dangerous and unsightly.

In a sense, every Christian is married to the Bridegroom, therefore there are no singles’. Etc. The individual life however, can be lived in so many ways to glorify God... married to a human or not.

The most important thing in life is not being paired up with a person, but with Jesus.

Singleness, either chosen, or through circumstances in the church environment has its own issues, and real effort needs to be made to be inclusive without being patronizing. There is no

“one solution” to the problem, each person has to be treated as an individual.

As we have seen from comments, singles/widow often feels disenfranchised from the church and we need to make some effort to ensure that does not happen.

EXAMPLES OF PEOPLE NOT MARRIED BUT HAPPY:

1. Paul – 1Cor. 7:25,34
2. Jeremiah 16:1-3, It is clear that Jeremiah was a great prophet while he was single.
3. Ezekiel – Ez. 24:15-18 – He was not even allowed to mourn but to continue on with the ministry the Lord had assigned Him.
4. Hosea – Hosea 1:1- 3:3- The prophet Hosea also experienced a broken marriage, but was able to continue in ministry. God was trying to illustrate one-sided love that He has for Israel and for us, but it must have been extremely hard and painful for Hosea to be the object lesson.

Day 4: NEED RESILIENCE.

In each of these examples, marital status was not an issue. God was interested in the person’s integrity, obedience and ability to say what God wanted him to say. We need to be sure that our life is not defined by our marital condition. Many voices today will tell us that unless we are married we are not complete. Paul would respond “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind... (Romans 12:1-2). A story is told of a young woman who was had been found dead in her apartment. Though the death was tragic itself, what made the story worse was that the woman had been dead for more than 10 years before being found. Ten years! Thus, the question that people had asked and rightly so, was: How in a big city like this, with so many people, and with so many means of communication, could a woman who was not a street person, have been dead for so long and no one know?

Though extreme, this story is example of a reality: many people are suffering from loneliness.

The New York Times ran an article entitled “Researchers Confront an Epidemic of Loneliness” The problem is real.

From the start, we as human beings were not meant to be alone. From Eden onward, we were to live in fellowship with other human being to some degree or another. Of course, sin came in, and nothing has been right since then.

COMPANIONSHIP

Companionship and loneliness at various times of life that, perhaps, all of us have at some time faced. Singles/widows need some strong organization in the church to remove loneliness

and create fellowship. Every church need good organized “Adventist Single Adult Ministries”. Let us organize the groups and you will save yourself from loneliness.

WHEN A MARRIAGE ENDS

Some marriages ends through divorce, and separation. Some experience fear, fear of the unknown, financial anxieties, and fear of being unable to cope. Some may go through a period of depression, anger, and, yes- loneliness. (Mal.2:16; Matt.5:31, 32, 19:8; 1Cor. 7:11-13) As single, single mothers, widows, and widowers, let’s have programs of support for broken families, divorced, and widowed.

DEATH AND LONELINESS

Death and how people struggle with it. (Isaiah 57:1; Rev.21:4, 1Thess. 4:17-18; Matt. 5:4, 2Sam 18:33, Gen.37:34)

SPIRITUALLY SINGLE

Isaiah 54:4; Hosea 2:19, 20, Psalm 72:12.