



The Reformation
Messenger

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WE BELIEVE: The all-wise loving God created all things in the universe by His Son, Jesus Christ. He is the Owner and Sustainer. He met the challenge to His loving leadership and authority by reconciling the world to Himself through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, the Word made flesh. The Holy Spirit, Jesus' representative on earth convicts of sin, guides into truth, and gives strength to overcome all unrighteousness. The Bible is the record of God's dealings with mankind and the standard of all doctrine, the Ten Commandments are the transcript of His character and the foundation of all enduring reform. His people, in harmony with God's word and under the direction of the Holy Spirit call all men everywhere to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus. Bible prophecy reveals that earth's history will soon close with the visible return of Jesus Christ as King to claim all who have accepted Him as the world's only Redeemer and their Lord.

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Ice of Indifference

“There are some professed Christians who are like icebergs; they seem to freeze up the cheerfulness of all who are connected with them. Their influence upon the cause of Christ is always deleterious.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 382.
“Nothing is so offensive to God as the atmosphere of those who profess holiness of heart, but whose lives have a bad flavor. Unsavory actions make the Christian repulsive.” —*The Review and Herald*, September 8, 1885

“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 the opportunity to work also, seeking to mold the work of God through the peculiar, unsanctified traits of different ones who are connected with that work. Thus there is always danger that unwise moves will be made. Many carry on a work of their own devising, a work which God has not prompted.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 644

“That man who manifests an infidel hardihood or a stolid indifference to divine truth is but reaping the harvest which he has himself sown. Such has been the experience of many. They listen with stoical indifference to the truths which once stirred their very souls. They sowed neglect, indifference, and resistance to the truth; and such is the harvest which they reap. The coldness of ice, the hardness of iron, the impenetrable, unimpressible nature of rock—all these find a counterpart in the character of many a professed Christian.” —*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 1, p. 35

“To everyone who is walking in the light, one who is not walking in the light will be an object of solicitude and most earnest prayer. But the Lord does not sanction anyone in presenting the attitude of a moral iceberg. It is not

the spirit of Christ that leads men to wrap about themselves the garments of self-righteousness, and to say in spirit, ‘I am holier than thou.’ Those who are free to denounce, to find fault, to judge and condemn others are not working upon Christlike principles. They should rather have travail of soul for those who need their help, to go forth and seek the wandering lost sheep.” —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 2, p. 276

“Much depends upon the manner in which you meet those whom you visit. We should manifest cheerfulness in our work. You can take hold of the hand in such a way as at once to gain the confidence, or in a cold, unimpressive manner, as though you were an iceberg, and had no interest in the per-

son. Such a manner will repulse, and you will find no warmth of feeling. We should not act as though it were a condescension to come in contact with the poor. They are as good by nature as we, and we must talk to them as though we thought them so. . . . What we need is the tender sympathy of Jesus; then we can win our way to the hardest heart.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 395

“Men cannot love God supremely and their neighbor as themselves and be as cold as icebergs. Not only do they rob God of the love due Him, but they rob their neighbor as well. Love is a plant of heavenly growth and it must be fostered and nourished. Affectionate hearts, truthful, loving words, will make happy families and exert an elevating influence upon all who come within the sphere of their influence.” —*Counsels on Health*, p. 259

“This is no time for dissension; press together; seek to be a unit. There should be a breaking down of icy reserve and a mutual confidence and freedom exercised.” —*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 1037

“Will you not from this very day try to represent Christ to the world? You will have a refuge. You will be sunny Christians. We have been gloomy long enough. Had we not better come out of the cave and stand with God? Then we will have Christ with us so that we can talk of redemption as did the disciples when they had been with Jesus and learned of Him. Carry the light of Jesus. Carry it to your neighbors.” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 62

“Earnest Christians seek to imitate Jesus, for to be Christians is to be Christlike. . . . A hearty, willing service to Jesus produces a sunny religion. . . . In Christ is light and peace and joy forevermore.” —*My Life Today*, p. 195

Ellen G. White



All To Jesus I Surrender

We have a beautiful gospel song in our hymnal, “All to Jesus I surrender, All to Him I freely give; I will ever love and trust Him, In His presence daily live; All to Jesus I surrender, Humbly at His feet I bow, worldly pleasures all forsaken, Take me, Jesus, take me now; I surrender all, I surrender all; All to Thee, my blessed Saviour, I surrender all.”

The promise that we make to God when singing this song makes Him very happy. He accepts our promise and comes to claim what we promised. How many change their minds and offer God only ten percent, or maybe only half of what they have promised?

Ananias and Sapphira did this. They gave to God less than the amount they had promised, and God was not pleased with their offer.

Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea were rich, but when they were sentenced by Nero to a martyr’s death, they had nothing left. They had little by little given it all as donations.

When we promise to give all to God, it is like music in His ears, and that “all” includes our time, our money, our talents, our strength, our heart, our love. . . that means everything.

Without a full surrender we cannot be His disciples. “If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple.” Luke 14:26–27, 33

The rich young man came to Jesus and went away sor-

rowful—disappointed—a full surrender was too high a price to pay. Did the Apostle Paul surrender all that he had? Yes, he did.

“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.” Philippians 3:7–8

In the early days of the Adventist church people sold their properties to help the cause of God. Others took out mortgages on their homes in order to raise money for missionary work. There was a spirit of sacrifice similar to the time of the Apostles when the people sold their houses and brought the money to the church.

“Unselfish devotion and a spirit of sacrifice have always been and always will be the first requisite of acceptable service.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 65

“The mighty shaking has commenced and will go on, and all will be shaken out who are not willing to take a bold and unyielding stand for the truth and to sacrifice for God and His cause. The Angel said, ‘Think ye that any will be compelled to sacrifice? No, no. it must be a freewilling offering. It will take all to buy the field.’” —*Early Writings*, p. 50–51

The disciples of Jesus—Peter, John, and James—left their fishing boats and nets; Matthew left the customs booth; Paul left all behind. What did Jesus promise to them? “And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.” Matthew 19:29

In order to receive a hundredfold, we must give up all that we have. Do we believe this? It is joy to have relatives, family, father, mother, children, brothers, sisters, wife, husband, but if we lose this joy for Christ, His company will give us hundred times greater joy.

Maybe now we understand what Paul meant in 2 Corinthians 6:10, "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." Paul had no earthly goods, but he was happy and rejoicing as one who possessed all things.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field: the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field." Matthew 13:44

If he had sold 90% of his goods, could he have bought the field with the treasure? No, no. The price was all that he had. Does this now mean that we will sell our homes, and furniture, and give all to the poor, and go on Welfare? No, but it does mean that our house is given to Jesus as a place for the homeless, and our table is a place for the hungry, and our car is for a person needing a ride.

"For I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: Naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me." Matthew 25:35–36. This is what it means to surrender all to Jesus.

Full surrender also means our time. For twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, we are ready to work for Jesus, to witness for Him, by our example and our words.

In Jamaica, we had no members, and the church was looking for someone to go and start the work there. As nobody was willing to go, finally I said, "I will go." I said to God, "I will go if You come with me."

I was in Jamaica for one week, and when I came back to Canada, I left in Jamaica a group of members, a church leader, Bible workers and a rented house for meetings.

You will never need to go to a Bible study alone; no, Jesus promised to go with you. You never need to go canvassing alone; no, angels will be your companions.

"Of no talent He has given will He require a more strict account than of our time." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 342. Our time is running out at a terrible speed. The wasted hours and days will never come back.

Last year you could have done one hundred hours of missionary work or perhaps more, and saved someone. Last year you could have read the Bible through. Calculate the value in the light of eternity, one soul saved, or one hundred hours of television watching. Which has more value? What is then lacking? Is it not a full surrender?

The Lord cannot work through us until we place all on the altar. A half-hearted service is a wasted effort. Is it a full surrender to God to neglect meetings, to stay home instead? Is it a full surrender to spend our money in luxury items, instead of supporting the work of God with it? It is a great privilege to do service for God's church, to sacrifice our time, money and service for it.

We are on the way, away from the perishing world, the same as Lot when he and his family escaped from Sodom. What can happen to us if we look back to the old life, like Lot's wife did? We have started on the way of God, and there is no turning back. Behind us is the world, sin, destruction, and death. Let us go forward to complete victory, and make a full surrender to God. Let us say always, "not my will, but Thy will be done." Let us remember our promise that we made in singing, "All to Jesus I surrender, all to Him I freely give." Amen.

Timo Martin

LOOKING FOR YOU . . .

If you are interested in submitting an item for publication in *The Reformation Messenger*, please submit by email or mail.

**Submit:
Drawings, Announcements,
Reports, Articles, Poems, Photos,
Personal Testimonies and Experiences.**



Serving God at the Right Time

We are living in the last days of probation and we do not know how soon our probation shall close. Are we serving God at the right time? Are we walking in the light that God has given us while probation lingers? We must seek the Lord while He may be found so that His coming will not come to us as a surprise.

Isaiah tells us, “Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” Isaiah 55:6–7

THE ACCEPTED TIME

There is a time given for us to work. “To every thing there is a season.” Ecclesiastes 3:1. Everything has its limits, including time.

“By denying the evidence which God has been pleased to give them, they shut out the light which had been shining in their hearts, and as the result are left in darkness. Thus the words of Christ are verified: ‘If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!’ (Matthew 6:23). For a time, persons who have committed this sin may appear to be children of God; but when circumstances arise to develop character and show what manner of spirit they are of, it will be found that they are on the enemy’s ground, standing under his black banner.” —*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 37

Dear reader, “the Spirit invites you today. Come with your whole heart to Jesus. Repent of your sins, make confession to God, forsake all iniquity, and you may appropriate to yourself all His promises. ‘Look unto me,

and be ye saved’ (Isaiah 45:22) is His gracious invitation.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 634

“‘Many are called, but few are chosen.’ Many hear the invitation of mercy, are tested and proved; but few are sealed with the seal of the living God. Few will humble themselves as a little child, that they may enter the kingdom of heaven.” —*Ibid.*, p. 50

Today the calls are being made that we may know and understand the time in which we are living; we have not a single minute to waste, brethren and sisters.

“Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear His voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness.” Hebrews 3:7–8

Paul warns us, “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame.” Hebrews 6:4–6

“Many will say, I am saved, I am saved, I am saved. Well, have they been cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit? and can they cleanse themselves by the righteousness of the law? Jesus Christ came to this world, and there is His righteousness to impart to the children of men who are obeying the law of God. The whole world can say, I am saved, as well as any transgressor today. They can say, I believe on Christ that He is my Saviour, but why do they disregard His law which is the transcript of His character? When they disregard

the law of Jehovah they disregard the Lord Jesus Christ.” –*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 128

DO NOT WASTE TIME

“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” Ephesians 5:15–16

“The value of time is beyond computation. Christ regarded every moment as precious, and it is thus that we should regard it. Life is too short to be trifled away. We have but a few days of probation in which to prepare for eternity. We have no time to waste, no time to devote to selfish pleasure, no time for the indulgence of sin. It is now that we are to form characters for the future, immortal life. It is now that we are to prepare for the searching judgment. . . .

“We are admonished to redeem the time. But time squandered can never be recovered. We cannot call back even one moment. The only way in which we can redeem our time is by making the most of that which remains, by being coworkers with God in His great plan of redemption. In those who do this, a transformation of character takes place. They become sons and daughters of God, members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King. They are fitted to be companions of the angels.” –*To Be Like Jesus*, p. 78

“The opportunity that is now ours to speak to some needy soul the word of life may never offer again. God may say to that one, ‘This night thy soul shall be required of thee,’ and through our neglect he or she may not be ready. (Luke 12:20.) In the great judgment day, how shall we render our account to God?” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 342–343

When one dies there is no more time for repentance. “We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that you receive not the grace of God in vain. (For He said, I have heard you in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored you: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.) 2 Corinthians 6:1–2

“‘Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over His household?’ Can we answer? Am I the steward, faithful to the sacred trust which is committed to me? To every man is given an individual responsibility. The watchmen have their specific work to discern the approach of danger and sound the note of warning. The soldiers of the cross of Christ are to have ears keen to hear. In their position of responsibility they are to give the trumpet a certain

sound, that everyone may gird on the armor for action.” –*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 236

TOO LATE

When Christ leaves His ministration in the most holy place it will be too late for many. The Spirit of Prophecy declares through a vision given to Ellen G White, “Then I saw Jesus lay off His priestly attire and clothe Himself with His most kingly robes. Upon His head were many crowns, a crown within a crown. Surrounded by the angelic host, He left heaven. The plagues were falling upon the inhabitants of the earth. Some were denouncing God and cursing Him. Others rushed to the people of God and begged to be taught how they might escape His judgments. But the saints had nothing for them. . . . The sweet voice of mercy was no more to invite them. When the saints, and all heaven, were interested for their salvation, they had not interest for themselves. Life and death had been set before them. Many desired life, but made no effort to obtain it. They did not choose life. . . . And as mercy’s sweet voice died away, fear and horror seized the wicked. With terrible distinctness they heard the words, ‘Too late! too late!’

“Those who had not prized God’s Word were hurrying to and fro, wandering from sea to sea, and from the north to the east, to seek the Word of the Lord. Said the angel, ‘They shall not find it. There is a famine in the land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but for hearing the words of the Lord. What would they not give for one word of approval from God! but no, they must hunger and thirst on. Day after day have they slighted salvation, prizing earthly riches and earthly pleasure higher than any heavenly treasure or inducement. They have rejected Jesus and despised His saints. The filthy must remain filthy forever.’ Many of the wicked were greatly enraged as they suffered the effects of the plagues. It was a scene of fearful agony.” –*The Story of Redemption*, p. 404

Today Christ warns us, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.” Revelation 3:20

“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.” Revelation 22:11

“When the third angel’s message closes, mercy no longer pleads for the guilty inhabitants of the earth. The people of God have accomplished their work. They have received ‘the latter rain,’ ‘the refreshing from the presence of the Lord,’ and they are prepared for the trying hour before them.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 613

“But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.” Matthew 24:43–44

Remember that the thief is death, our enemy. It can also symbolize the coming of Christ for those who are not ready for His sudden appearing. The thief can break into the house and destroy it at any moment of the night. Death, like a thief in the night, can strike at any moment and usually knocks at the door when one least expects it. Do not be deceived into thinking that only the elderly die. Adults, youth, and children are sometimes called to rest in God’s providence. Perhaps you have lost a dear loved one recently. You know how it hurts and how that person’s memory seems to haunt you with remorse. If only I had spent a little more time with. . . If only I had visited a little more often. . . If only. . .

Jesus also related the word “watch” with His return. “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.” Matthew 24:42. Take advantage of this day. Today is the day of salvation. Today I need to spend more time with Jesus. Today I need to decide to visit His house, His church, His people, more often, not just on Sabbath, but on the other days of worship. Today we need to spend more time in His word, in prayer, in testifying for Jesus. Today we need to live life to its fullest potential in Christ. Today you can decide to avoid that “If only I. . .”

“The Bible declares that in the last days men will be



absorbed in worldly pursuits, in pleasure and money-getting. They will be blind to eternal realities. . . .

“So it is today. Men are rushing on in the chase for gain and selfish indulgence as if there were no God, no heaven, and no hereafter. In Noah’s day the warning of the flood was sent to startle men in their wickedness and call them to repentance. So the message of Christ’s soon coming is designed to arouse men from their absorption in worldly things. It is intended to awaken them to a sense of eternal realities, that they may give heed to the invitation to the Lord’s table.” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 228

“Until Christ shall appear in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory,” the messenger of the Lord writes, “men will become perverse in spirit and turn from the truth to fables. The church will yet see troublous times. She will prophesy in sackcloth.

“But although she must meet heresies and persecutions, although she must battle with the infidel and the apostate, yet by the help of God she is bruising the head of Satan. The Lord will have a people as true as steel, and with faith as firm as the granite rock. They are to be His witnesses in the world, His instrumentalities to do a special, a glorious work in the day of His preparation.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 594

The wise Solomon said: “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.” Ecclesiastes 9:10. It is only when we realize that time is short and uncertain that we learn to measure our thoughts, words, and actions in the context of eternity. “Every soul has a heaven to win, and a hell to shun.” –*Selected Messages* bk. 1, p. 96. It is only possible to gain heaven by God’s grace and by Jesus’ blood.

Finally, brethren, we have no time to waste, for we are living on borrowed time. “Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD come on you, before the day of the LORD’S anger come upon you. Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought His judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD’S anger.” Zephaniah 2:2–3. Amen.

May God bless you, peace be unto you.

Jenifer Akello, Uganda

Victor Shumbusho, DR Congo

He is My Rock



“He only is my rock and my salvation: He is my defence; I shall not be moved.” Psalm 62:6

One of my destinations during my tour through Colombia in August 2017 was the Rock of Guatapé (El Peñón de Guatapé). It is the world’s second largest rock. When I got on the bus in the city of Medellín I made sure to get a window seat, so I could admire the scenic mountainous landscape of the Western Andean highlands. After almost two hours I spotted a giant rock on the horizon and was excited when I was able to see it close up. When I was standing in front of the rock, which is 220 m high, I felt in awe and kept looking up to the top. It is a remnant of a granite rock that has resisted weathering and erosion. History tells us that it was worshipped by the indigenous people who lived there in the pre-Hispanic era. After going up the 740 steps to the summit I was rewarded with breathtaking views over the stunning surroundings full of green mountains and blue lakes. It reminded me of God who is described as a Rock in the Old and New Testament.

Rocks are strong, solid, and hard to move. Likewise, God never changes and you can always rely on Him.

Circumstances may change, opinions may change, but God does not. He remains faithful through it all. “He never changes or casts a shifting shadow.” James 1:17 (New Living Translation, NLT). Rocks are a safe and strong foundation to build on. You can build your life on God and His principles to keep you strong and grounded. When God is your Rock, you can outlast any storm in your life. “Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won’t collapse because it is built on bedrock.” Matthew 7:24–25 (NLT)

Rocks have the best lookouts. They offer spectacular views—the best sunrise and sunset vistas. You can see the landscape from a different perspective. Sometimes it can be hard to make sense of things when you are looking at them really close. If you are dealing with anything that is just too hard to handle or does not seem to make much sense, God can help you to get a new perspective.

Manuela Di Franca





I am sure to most of you readers, this title, Sisu, (pronounced See'-soo) is a strange word that you have never heard before. What does this word mean? And what is its origin?

Being of Finnish heritage myself, I am quite familiar with this word, as it is a Finnish word. *Sisu* is a term described as being integral to understanding Finnish culture. It is the word that explains Finland; the Finns' "favorite word." This word does not have an exact English translation, but from Google we will make an attempt to describe it.

From Wikipedia you can read an entire page about this word. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sisu>)

It is:

- a psychological key competence which enables extraordinary action to overcome a mentally or physically challenging situation enabling the individual to tap into mental strength beyond their pre-conceived resources
- a courageous approach toward challenges which at first seem to exceed our capacities
- going beyond one's mental and physical capacity
- an inner reserve of diligence, capacity, the ability to face head-on and always overcome
- having courage to take action where success is against the odds
- displaying courage and resoluteness in the face of extreme adversity
- deciding on a course of action and then sticking to that decision despite repeated failures
- the ability to keep fighting after most people would have quit
- to fight with the will to win.

The closest English equivalent would be a combination of: stoic, determination, grit, bravery, resilience, and hardiness. In other words, "Just do it." Finish what you start, and do

not quit in the middle of a job no matter what challenges you face.

For example: "Last week the Finns gave the world a good example of *sisu* by carrying the war into Russian territory on one front while on another they withstood merciless attacks by a reinforced **Russian Army**. In the wilderness that forms most of the Russo-Finnish frontier between **Lake Laatokka** and the **Arctic Ocean**, the Finns definitely gained the upper hand." —*Time Magazine, January 8, 1940*

"It doesn't take *sisu* to go to the North Pole; it takes *sisu* to stand at the door when the bear is on the other side." (<https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=sisu>)

Now that we have defined the term, we will apply this to our spiritual lives. We all need this *sisu* in order to reach heaven. The ability to carry on when we feel like giving up; deciding to continue regardless of failures we may have made. Facing seemingly insurmountable obstacles with confidence, knowing that we *will* surmount them with the help of Christ. All throughout the Bible you find examples when the followers of the Lord faced extremely difficult situations with the courage of *sisu*, such as Daniel's three friends when faced with the fiery furnace (Daniel 3) and Daniel himself when faced with the lion's den (Daniel 5). Also, I am sure that John the Revelator was calm when he was lowered into a boiling pot of oil. This same power is available to you today to remain calm and trustful of the Lord in extremely difficult circumstances.

Is the Christian life mainly to be one of difficulty, pain, suffering and misery? David wrote, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all." Psalm 34:19. How many afflictions will the righteous have to endure? A few? No, it says many. How many will the Lord deliver them from? All!! Being a Christian never exempts a person from affliction, but it gives them strength to endure because the Lord delivers them out of *all* the afflictions. They just need to have faith. Do the wicked live happy lives while the Christians an unhappy life of toil and suffering? Nothing could be further from the truth. Alt-

though Jesus was a “Man of sorrows and, acquainted with grief” (Isaiah 53:3) He was the happiest man who ever lived.

There are many non-Christians who do suffer and many of their sufferings stem from the effects of intemperance, of crime, and evil habits. There is no true peace to the unbeliever.

Many times the sufferings of the Christian are often less than those of the unbelievers who also suffer. This was clearly seen when the 10 plagues were poured out on the Egyptians. The Israelites were spared. “I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth.” Exodus 8:22. Some of the rewards of right living are enjoyed in this life. And the Christian has peace, comfort, and the abiding presence of Jesus during all their trials. They have strength (*sisu*) to go on when all around seems to be falling apart.

I read a story in a religious magazine about the Finnish people and *Sisu*. It has a bit of humour, but it clearly defines the spiritual strength and attitude that we need to have:

During World War II, their enemy the Russians, who live in a country 66 times their size, were unaccustomed to fighting in the wilderness in winter. The Finnish soldiers managed to stave off the Russians quite effectively to maintain their independence. “It began as a distant, foreboding hum, then grew into an ominous, earth-rattling din. Soon hundreds of tanks and thousands of enemy infantrymen swarmed into view of the badly outnumbered soldiers in Finland. Assessing the murderous wave, an anonymous Finn lent some perspective. Courageously, he wondered aloud about the enemy: “Where will we find room to bury them all?” —<https://odb.org/2015/11/14/the-mighty-finns/>

Although it may seem humorous, yet they had no fear of the enemy whose army was much larger than theirs. They had confidence in their ability to win the battle, regardless of the size of the enemy. Comparatively speaking, the host of the evil angels, and the host of evil men on this earth, greatly outnumber the children of God. “The LORD did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people.” Deuteronomy 7:7. The true people of God have always been small in number—a remnant. “Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.” Romans 9:27. We need the confidence (*sisu*) of the Finnish soldiers. Our enemy has been defeated at Calvary. We have a Friend who will help us to win the battle. Our Friend is mightier than our enemy. “At the sound of fervent prayer, Satan’s whole host trembles.” —*Messages to Young People*, p. 53. It is not numbers that bring success. It is faith. One day our enemy will be burned and buried in ashes. We have no reason to fear him even though he is stronger than we are because “greater is He

that is in you, than he that is in the world.” 1 John 4:4. “Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.” Zechariah 4:6

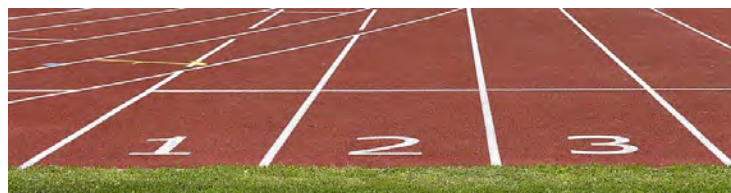
There is a famous speech that Winston Churchill gave in Britain, recounting Great Britain's progress during the first 10 months of World War II. In the middle of the speech was this sentence. “*Never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never-in nothing, great or small, large or petty—never give in except to convictions of honour and good sense.*” —https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/winston_churchill_709611

Since all Christians face trials and afflictions in this life, we should heed the counsel that Winston Churchill gave in his speech. Never, never, never, never give up. Pray for extraordinary strength when yours is all spent; the will to carry on when the way seems dark and discouraging. Jesus gave the similar message when He said, “And ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.” Matthew 10:22. To endure until the end means, to never give up. No matter what you may face—do not give up. Ask for the *sisu* to carry on.

The Lord can give us this stamina to endure all persecutions, even if they come from loved ones, family members, friends, or church members. How many have not come to the faith, being held back by their loved ones. A spouse, or a parent, would disapprove and ill treat them if they accepted the faith. Fear of being estranged from family keeps many away. However, Jesus mentions, “all men” so the hatred comes not only from loved ones but from everywhere. We have yet to feel the full fury of the world’s hatred as was seen in Europe during the time of the Papal Supremacy in the Dark Ages. It will come in even greater fury in the future. Yet, Christ will see us through. After all the sufferings that the Apostle Paul endured, he could say, “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” 2 Corinthians 4:17. He went on to encourage the believers, “That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.” 1 Thessalonians 3:3. The trials will come. We need to be prepared so we are not caught unawares. All trials that our loving Father permits are the necessary means for our salvation. Character is perfected by trials, and Christians must not rebel against the refining process.

THE MARATHON—NO RELEASE IN THIS LIFE

It takes stamina—*sisu*—to endure to the end. This is a marathon we are running and we cannot stop. We cannot simply just *start* the race; we need to remain *in* the race until



Jesus comes. We cannot take a rest or “time-out” from the race.

“When souls are converted their salvation is not yet accomplished. They then have the race to run; the arduous struggle is before them to do, what? ‘To fight the good fight of faith,’ to press forward to the mark for the prize of the high calling which is in Christ Jesus. There is no release in this warfare; the battle is lifelong, and must be carried forward with determined energy proportionate to the value of the object you are in pursuit of, which is eternal life. Immense interests are here involved. We are made partakers of Christ’s self-sacrifice here in this life, and then we are assured that we shall be partakers of all its benefits in the future immortal life, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end. Think of this.” –*My Life Today*, p. 313

Once the race is begun, all the runner does is think of the finish line, and expends every ounce of strength to reach it. There is no time for side issues. Often a runner will endure pain and discomfort in order to reach the goal. He will never stop half way and congratulate himself as to how well he is doing. He will run to the end. Victory is the end result of hard rigorous training and self-control.

“From the days of Adam to our own time our great enemy has been exercising his power to oppress and destroy. He is now preparing for his last campaign against the church. All who seek to follow Jesus will be brought into conflict with this relentless foe. The more nearly the Christian imitates the divine Pattern, the more surely will he make himself a mark for the attacks of Satan.” –*My Life Today*, p. 309. The only way to endure the hatred of evil men is to, “Overcome evil with good. And ye shall be hated of all men for My name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.” Romans 12:21

The battle will be over only when Jesus comes the second time. We cannot give up the race until then. Satan will not give up. He is getting more angry and furious as time nears the end. We cannot sleep for a moment.

“The struggle for conquest over self, for holiness and heaven, is a lifelong struggle. Without continual effort and constant activity there can be no advancement in the divine life, no attainment of the victor’s crown.

“The strongest evidence of man’s fall from a higher state is the fact that it costs so much to return. The way of return can be gained only by hard fighting, inch by inch, every hour. By a momentary act of will, one may place himself in the power of evil; but it requires more than a momentary act of will to break these fetters and attain to a higher, holier life. The purpose may be formed, the work begun; but its accomplishment will require toil, time, and perseverance,

patience and sacrifice. . . .

“God leads His people on step by step. The Christian life is a battle and a march. In this warfare there is no release; the effort must be continuous and persevering. It is by unceasing endeavor that we maintain the victory over the temptations of Satan. Christian integrity must be sought with resistless energy and maintained with a resolute fixedness of purpose.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 312–314

ARMOUR OF GOD

The only way we can win is to have a will to fight and have on the entire armour of God. Although many will give up the struggle and join the enemy’s side of ease and pleasure, there will be a few who will use the *sisu* that the Lord offers to fight until the end. When we reach our extremity, God will be there and will see us through.

“Soldiers engaged in battle have to meet difficulties and hardships. Coarse food is given them, and that often in limited quantities. They have long marches, day by day, over rough roads and under burning suns, camping out at night, sleeping on the bare ground, with only the canopy of heaven for a covering, exposed to drenching rains and chilling frosts, hungry, faint, exhausted, now standing as a target for the foe, now in deadly encounter. Thus they learn what hardship means. Those who enlist in Christ’s army are also expected to do difficult work, and to bear painful trials patiently for Christ’s sake. But those who suffer with Him shall also reign with Him.” –*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 345



“It is not safe for us, when going into battle, to cast away our weapons. It is then that we need to be equipped with the whole armor of God. Every piece is essential.” –*My Life Today*, p. 309

Loins girt about with Truth: It is when we walk in the light that shines upon us, obeying the truth that is open to our understanding, that we receive greater light. . . . If the truth of God be not deep rooted in the heart, you cannot stand the test of temptation.” –*Ibid*, p. 310

Breastplate of Righteousness: “By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God’s commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ . . . we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.” –*Ibid*, p. 311

Feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace: “The Lord is soon coming. Talk it, pray it, believe it. Make it a part of the life. . . . Everywhere there are hearts crying out for something which they have not. . . . Will you be the one whose feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel, and go and preach to those who are in darkness, but longing for light?” –*Ibid*, p. 312

Shield of Faith: “Faith in God’s Word, prayerfully studied and practically applied, will be our shield from Satan’s power and will bring us off conquerors through the blood of Christ.” –*Ibid*, p. 313

Helmet of Salvation: “God bids us fill the mind with great thoughts, pure thoughts. He desires us to meditate upon His love and mercy, to study His wonderful work in the great plan of redemption. . . . The soul dwelling in the pure atmosphere of holy thought will be transformed by communion with God through the study of the Scriptures.” –*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 34

Sword of the Spirit: “Let them take the Word of truth as the man of their counsel, and become skillful in the use of ‘the sword of the Spirit.’ Satan is a wise general; but the humble, devoted soldier of Jesus Christ may overcome him. . . . The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, we are to cut our way through the obstructions and entanglements of sin.” –*Ibid*, p. 35

Today, “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.” 1 Timothy 6:12. We are fighting the fight of faith—truth—a revelation of how a Christian is to live in this world of sin. Not a secret life unto ourselves. No one trains for the Olympics just to run in secret.

“Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” 2 Timothy 2:3. All the physical training, loyalty and discipline of a soldier in any army today are necessary requirements for a soldier of Christ.

“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” Philippians 4:13. Through Christ alone, we have power to do *all* things; *nothing* will be impossible. There is no room for any boasting. When the Lord gives His commands and the Christian makes a firm decision to obey, Christ makes Himself responsible for the success of the work to be undertaken. In Christ there is power to fulfill every duty, to overcome every sin and resist every temptation; power to endure all afflictions, and patiently suffer without any complaints. In Christ also there is grace for daily growth, courage for the battles of life, and energy for devoted service no matter how tired or exhausted you may be—*sisu*.

“Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” Isaiah 40:28–31

The Lord provides the *sisu* when you have a will to carry on

but are growing faint. Just hold on by faith and trust.

Sisu is endurance; there is no room for ease loving Christians in the Lord’s army.

“Satan uses the listless, sleepy indolence of professed Christians to strengthen his forces and win souls to his side. Many, who think that though they are doing no actual work for Christ, they are yet on His side, are enabling the enemy to pre-occupy ground and gain advantages. By their failure to be diligent workers for the Master, by leaving duties undone and words unspoken, they have allowed Satan to gain control of souls who might have been won for Christ

“We can never be saved in indolence and inactivity. There is no such thing as a truly converted person living a helpless, useless life. It is not possible for us to drift into heaven. No sluggard can enter there. If we do not strive to gain an entrance into the kingdom, if we do not seek earnestly to learn what constitutes its laws, we are not fitted for a part in it.” –*Christ’s Object lessons*, p. 280

“Then who of us have entered the service to expect the conveniences of life, to be off duty when we please, laying aside the soldier’s armor and putting on the civilian’s dress, sleeping at the post of duty, and so exposing the cause of God to reproach? . . . Hard and trying work has to be done, but blessed are those who are ready to do it when their names are called. God will not reward men and women in the next world for seeking to be comfortable in this.” –*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 345

“We are now on the battlefield. There is no time for resting, no time for ease, no time for selfish indulgence. After gaining one advantage, you must do battle again; you must go on conquering and to conquer, gathering fresh strength for fresh struggles. Every victory gained gives an increase of courage, faith, and determination. Through divine strength you will prove more than a match for your enemies.” –*The Signs of the Times*, Sept. 7, 1891

“The only thing we have to fear on our part is that we shall not keep our eyes continually fixed upon Jesus, that we shall not have an eye single to the glory of God, so that if we were called to lay down our armor and sleep in death we might not be ready to give an account of our trust. Forget not for a moment that you are Christ’s property, bought with an infinite price, and that you are to glorify Him in your spirit, and in your body, which are His.” –*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 273

Soon, very soon, the whole world will be arraigned against God’s commandment keeping people Do you have the *sisu* in Christ to endure until the end? It is my prayer that we all may be ready to meet Jesus in that glorious earth made new when He comes again. Amen.

Wendy Eaton

It is Sooner Than You Expect!!



“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” 2 Peter 3:9

“Suppose that today Christ should appear in the clouds of heaven, who . . . would be ready to meet Him? Suppose we should be translated into the kingdom of heaven just as we are. Would we be prepared to unite with the saints of God, to live in harmony with the royal family, the children of the heavenly King? What preparation have you made for the judgment? Have you made your peace with God? Are you laboring together with God? Are you seeking to help those around you, those in your home, those in your neighborhood, those with whom you come in contact that are not keeping the commandments of God? . . . Are we getting ready to meet the King?” – *Maranatha*, p. 98

“If it were possible for us to be admitted into heaven as we are, how many of us would be able to look upon God? How many of us have on the wedding garment? How many of us are without spot or wrinkle or any such thing?” – *Ibid.*, p. 298

“How many will mourn for lost opportunities when it is eternally too late! Today we have talent and opportunity, but we know not how long these may be ours. Then let us work while it is day; for the night cometh, in which no man can work. ‘Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing.’” – *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 167

“‘If I knew that Christ were coming in a few years,’ one says, ‘I should live very differently.’ But if we believe that He is coming at all, we should live just as faithfully as if we knew that He would appear in a few years. We cannot see the end from the beginning, but Christ has provided sufficient help for every day in the year.” – *In*

Heavenly Places, p. 355

Says the psalmist, “The LORD knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever.” Psalm 37:18

“Are you individually daily preparing that you can unite with the family of heaven? Are you quarrelsome here? Are you finding fault with your household here? If you are, you will find fault with them in heaven. Your character is being tested and proved in this life, whether you will make a peaceable subject of God’s kingdom in heaven.” – *Ibid.*, p. 227

WHY PROBATION LINGERS?

“Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.” Matthew 24:44

“I was pointed to the remnant on the earth. The angel said to them, ‘Will ye shun the seven last plagues? . . . If so, ye must die that ye may live. Get ready, get ready, get ready. Ye must have a greater preparation than ye now have. . . . Sacrifice all to God. Lay all upon His altar—self, property, and all, a living sacrifice. It will take all to enter glory.’” – *Maranatha*, p. 98

“The angel said, ‘Destruction is coming like a mighty whirlwind.’ I begged of the angel to pity and to save those who loved this world, who were attached to their possessions and were not willing to cut loose from them and sacrifice to speed the messengers on their way to feed the hungry sheep who were perishing for want of spiritual food.” – *Early Writings*, p. 48

The apostle Peter warned us, “But, beloved, be not ig-

norant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." 2 Peter 3:8

"We are now on the battlefield. There is no time for resting, no time for ease, no time for selfish indulgence. After gaining one advantage, you must do battle again; you must go on conquering and to conquer, gathering fresh strength for fresh struggles. Every victory gained gives an increase of courage, faith, and determination. Through divine strength you will prove more than a match for your enemies." —*The Signs of the Times*, September 7, 1891

"That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Ephesians 5:27

"Christ is soon coming in the clouds of heaven, and we must be prepared to meet Him, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. . . . The converting power of God must be upon our hearts. We must study the life of Christ, and imitate the divine Pattern. We must dwell upon the perfection of His character, and be changed into His image. No one will enter the kingdom of God unless his will is brought into captivity to the will of Christ." —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 285

PREACH WITH POWER

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matthew 3:1–2

"In this age, just prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, such a work as that of John is to be done. God calls for men who will prepare a people to stand in the great day of the Lord. . . . As a people who believe in Christ's soon appearing, we have a message to bear—'Prepare to meet thy God.' Amos 4:12. Our message must be as direct as was the message of John. He rebuked kings for their iniquity. Notwithstanding that his life was imperiled, he did not hesitate to declare God's word. And our work in this age must be done as faithfully." —*Maranatha*, p. 116

"The people are asleep in their sins and need to be alarmed before they can shake off this lethargy. Their ministers have preached smooth things; but God's servants, who bear sacred, vital truths, should cry aloud and spare not, that the truth may tear off the garment of security and find its way to the heart." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 249

"This is our washing and ironing time—the time when we are to cleanse our robes of character in the blood of

the Lamb. John says, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world' (John 1:29). . . . Shall we not let our sins go?" —*Maranatha*, p. 298

"The eye of Jesus, looking down the ages, was fixed upon our time when He said, 'If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!' It is still thy day, O church of God, whom He has made the depository of His law. This day of trust and probation is drawing to a close. The sun is fast westering. Can it be that it will set and thou wilt not know 'the things which belong unto thy peace!?' Must the irrevocable sentence be passed, 'But now they are hid from thine eyes' (Luke 19:42)?" —*Ibid.*, p. 264

"These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." Revelation 14:4–5

"If you would be a saint in heaven you must first be a saint on earth. The traits of character you cherish in life will not be changed by death or by the resurrection. You will come up from the grave with the same disposition you manifested in your home and in society. Jesus does not change the character at His coming. The work of transformation must be done now. Our daily lives are determining our destiny. Defects of character must be repented of and overcome through the grace of Christ, and a symmetrical character must be formed while in this probationary state, that we may be fitted for the mansions above." —*Last Day Events*, p. 295

Dear reader, "I entreat you, brethren and sisters, to labor earnestly to secure the crown of everlasting life. The reward will be worth the conflict, worth the effort. . . . In the race in which we are running, everyone may receive the reward offered—a crown of everlasting life. I want this crown; I mean by God's help to have it. I mean to hold fast to the truth, that I may see the King in His beauty." —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 356

Finally brethren, Luke beseeches us, "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Luke 21:36

May God help us to make preparation as if Christ is coming right now. Peace be unto you all. Amen.

Jenifer Akello, Uganda

Is it yours? –

part 3

Your wealth is the Lord's! Don't misuse it



“Is it yours?” This question has been asked and discussed in previous articles. Now the third time I ask it again! In the last two articles of the series we discussed the need of being vigilant when handling something that does not belong to us; something which is not our property. We saw that our body and our time are two talents entrusted to us by God to manage; they do not belong to us, but they are Lord’s. But, what about the money which we worked so hard to earn? This month we will not discuss about *the* money, but *your* money! Is it yours?

What is money? Although you may not have a lot, you still have some. Money can be also expressed by the things you possess. In short, it is your wealth. “Money has great value, because it can do great good. In the hands of God’s children it is food for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, and clothing for the naked. It is a defense for the oppressed, and a means of help to the sick. But money is of no more value than sand, only as it is put to use in providing for the necessities of life, in blessing others, and advancing the cause of Christ.” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 351

To whom does your money really belong? You may believe that “it is mine”, or my family’s. Is this true? Jeremiah wrote “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” Jeremiah 17:9. Therefore, be careful how you answer! Let us examine this subject from the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy. The Lord always has the correct answers.

THE CREATOR AND OWNER

He (the Lord) owns the earth. “For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I

know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are Mine.” Psalm 50:10–11. “The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine, saith the LORD of hosts.” Haggai 2:8. He also owns us, as we studied in the first article of this series. “So we Thy people and sheep of Thy pasture will give Thee thanks for ever.” Psalm 79:13. By what authority does He own us? Firstly, He created all things, both heaven and earth (Genesis 1:1; Exodus 20:11). He also made man. “Know ye that the LORD He is God: it is He that hath made us.” Psalm 100:3. Secondly, He maintains all things. “Who being

the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power.” Hebrews 1:3. “For in Him we live, and move, and have our being.” Acts 17:28. Thirdly, He paid the price to redeem us. “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of

Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” 1 Peter 1:18–19. And finally, it is He that gives us power to obtain wealth. “But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth.” Deuteronomy 8:18

“God claims the whole earth as His vineyard. Though now in the hands of the usurper, it belongs to God. By redemption no less than by creation it is His. For the world Christ’s sacrifice was made. ‘God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.’ John 3:16. Daily the whole world receives blessing from God. Every drop of rain, every ray of light shed on our unthankful race, every leaf and flower and fruit, testifies to God’s long forbearance and His great love.” –*Christ’s*

God is to have the first, best, and foremost place in our thoughts, words, and actions. We are to pay our tithe first and make time for God first—every morning and every Sabbath. Did you know that the tithe of the Decalogue is the Sabbath?

Object Lessons, p. 301

In Eden, the Lord used a tree as a lesson to teach His ownership of all. "The Lord created every tree in Eden pleasant to the eyes and good for food, and He bade Adam and Eve freely enjoy His bounties. But He made one exception. Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil they were not to eat. This tree God reserved as a constant reminder of His ownership of all." — *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 386

"The Lord sought to teach Israel that in everything He must be first. . . Everything that they possessed was His." — *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 337. "God lays His hand upon all man's possessions, saying: I am the owner of the universe, and these goods are Mine." — *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 387

TITHE AND OFFERING

"Money is a trust from God. It is not ours to expend for the gratification of pride or ambition." — *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 287. Once we have earned some money, the next logical situation we face is how to spend God's money.

The tithe is 10 percent of one's total income and is a principle of systematic benevolence established in the Holy Scriptures. "In the Hebrew economy one tenth of the income of the people was set apart to support the public worship of God. . . . The tithing system did not originate with the Hebrews. From the earliest times the Lord claimed a tithe as His, and this claim was recognized and honored. . . . As the Israelites were about to be established as a nation, the law of tithing was reaffirmed as one of the divinely ordained statutes upon obedience to which their prosperity depended. . . . 'The tithe . . . is the Lord's' (Leviticus 27:30). Here the same form of expression is employed as in the law of the Sabbath. 'The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.' (Exodus 20:10). God reserved to Himself a specified portion of man's time and of his means, and no man could, without guilt, appropriate either for his own interests." — *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 525–526

"The New Testament does not re-enact the law of the tithe, as it does not that of the Sabbath; for the validity of both is assumed, and their deep spiritual import explained. God has made an absolute reservation of a

specified portion of our time and our means. To ignore these claims is to rob God." — *The Review and Herald*, May 16, 1882

"The tithe should be consecrated to God. His requirements come first. We are not doing His will if we consecrate to Him what is left after all our wants have been supplied. Before any part of our income is consumed, we should take out and present to Him that portion which He claims as His. When this is done, the remainder will be sanctified and blessed to our own use." — *Pacific Union Recorder*, October 10, 1901

"The tithe is sacred, reserved by God for Himself. It is to be brought into His treasury to be used to sustain the gospel laborers in their work." — *Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 93. "It is not to be regarded as a poor fund. It is to be especially devoted to the support of those who

are bearing God's message to the world; and it should not be diverted from this purpose." — *Ibid*, p. 103

"The payment of the tithe was but a part of God's plan for the support of His service. Numerous gifts and offerings were divinely specified. Under the Jewish system the people were taught to cherish a spirit of liberality both in sustaining the cause of God and in supplying the wants of the needy. For

special occasions there were freewill offerings. At the harvest and the vintage, the first fruits of the field—corn, wine, and oil—were consecrated as an offering to the Lord. The gleanings and the corners of the field were reserved for the poor. The first fruits of the wool when the sheep were shorn, of the grain when the wheat was threshed, were set apart for God. So also were the first-born of all animals, and a redemption price was paid for the first-born son. The first fruits were to be presented before the Lord at the sanctuary and were then devoted to the use of the priests." — *The Acts of Apostles*, p. 336–337

There is a spiritual issue involved in this principle of the paying of tithes and offerings. "In the great work of warning the world, those who have the truth in the heart, and are sanctified through the truth, will act their assigned part. They will be faithful in the payment of tithes and offerings. Every church member is bound by covenant relation with God to deny himself of every

"And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S: it is holy unto the LORD. And if a man will at all redeem ought of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth part thereof. And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the LORD." Leviticus 27:30–32

extravagant outlay of means. Let not the want of economy in the home life render us unable to act our part in strengthening the work already established, and in entering new territory.” —*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 74

“The Lord has made the proclamation of the gospel dependent on the consecrated ability and the voluntary gifts and offerings of His people. While He has called men to preach the Word, He has made it the privilege of the whole church to share in the work by contributing of their means to its support.” —*In Heavenly Places*, p. 303. It is God who blesses men with property, and He does this that they may be able to give toward the advancement of His cause.

“Then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause His name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, . . . Thou mayest not eat within thy gates the tithe of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thy oil, or the firstlings of thy herds or of thy flock.” Deuteronomy 12:11, 17.

The Lord made it clear that the people were to bring their tithes and offerings to a place that He chose. They were not to use the tithes or offerings to their own discretion within their gates. “As soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance the firstfruits . . . and the tithe of all things brought they in abundantly.” 2 Chronicles 31:5

STEWARDSHIP

“We should regard ourselves as stewards of the Lord’s property and God as the supreme proprietor, to whom we are to render His own when He shall require it.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 480–481. “Our money has not been given us that we might honor and glorify ourselves. As faithful stewards we are to use it for the honor and glory of God.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 351

“God is testing every soul that claims to believe in Him. All are entrusted with talents. The Lord has given men His goods upon which to trade. He has made them His stewards, and has placed in their possession money, houses, and lands. All these are to be regarded as the Lord’s goods and used to advance His work, to build up His kingdom in the world. In trading with the Lord’s goods, we are to seek Him for wisdom, that we may not

use His sacred trust to glorify ourselves or to indulge selfish impulses. The amount entrusted varies, but those who have the smallest gifts must not feel that because their talent of means is small, they can do nothing with it.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 245–246

Jesus said, “freely ye have received, freely give.” Matthew 10:18. The Bible says: “He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will He pay him again.” Proverbs 19:17

Paul reminds us that “We are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.” 1 Corinthians 3:9. “If all professed Christians would faithfully bring their tithes to God, His treasury would be full.” —*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 67

WHAT IF I DO NOT GIVE?

The eighth commandment reads, “Thou shalt not steal.” Exodus 20:15. Is it possible to rob God whom we do not see? “Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation.” Malachi 3:8

“For a long time the Lord has been robbed because there are those who do not realize that the tithe is God’s reserved

portion.” —*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 93. “When we withhold that which He says is His, the curse rests upon the whole, and we are recorded in the books of heaven as guilty of robbery. God gives man nine-tenths, but the one-tenth He claims for sacred purposes,—as He has given man six days for his own work, and has reserved the seventh day to Himself.” —*Pacific Union Recorder*, October 10, 1901

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

“Those who are selfishly withholding their means need not be surprised if God’s hand scatters. That which should have been devoted to the advancement of the work and cause of God, but which has been withheld, may be entrusted to a reckless son, and he may squander it. A fine horse, the pride of a vain heart, may be

How would you answer?

“Is not God demanding too much of us?” Should we try to bargain with God to try to give Him less while He ever seeks to give us more? Should we merely give Him a meager amount of our thoughts, funds, and talents? Or should we offer our all as an elevated gift to Him who is worthy and priceless?

found dead in the stable. Occasionally a cow may die. Losses of fruit or other crops may come. God can scatter the means He has lent to His stewards, if they refuse to use it to His glory. Some, I saw, may have none of these losses to remind them of their remissness in duty, but their cases may be the more hopeless.” – *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 661–662

“Let none feel at liberty to retain their tithe, to use according to their own judgment. They are not to use it for themselves in an emergency, nor to apply it as they see fit, even in what they may regard as the Lord’s work.” – *Gospel Workers*, p. 224

“He who realizes that his money is a talent from God will use it economically, and will feel it a duty to save that he may give. . . . Every penny used unnecessarily deprives the spender of a precious opportunity of doing good. It is robbing God of the honor and glory which should flow back to Him through the improvement of His entrusted talents.” – *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 351–352

“The tithe you have withheld I reserve for the support of My servants in their work of opening the Scriptures to those who are in the regions of darkness, who do not understand My law. In using My reserve fund to gratify your own desires you have robbed souls of the light which I made provision for them to receive. You have had opportunity to show loyalty to Me, but you have not done this. You have robbed Me; you have stolen My reserve fund. ‘Ye are cursed with a curse.’ Malachi 3:9.” – *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 387

“Some close their ears to the calls made for money to be used in sending missionaries to foreign countries and in publishing the truth and scattering it like autumn leaves all over the world. Such excuse their covetousness by informing you that they have made arrangements to be charitable at death. They have considered the cause of God in their wills. Therefore they live a life of avarice, robbing God in tithes and in offerings, and in their wills return to God but a small portion of that which He has lent them, while a very large proportion is appropriated to relatives who have no interest in the truth.” – *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 479–480

“To lose a little of this world seems to you a terrible calamity which would cost your life. But the thought of losing heaven does not cause half the fears to be manifested. Through your careful efforts to save this life, you are in danger of losing eternal life. . . .

“Your heart is on your earthly treasures, therefore you have no heart for the heavenly. These poor things which are seen—the earthly—eclipse the glory of the heavenly. Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. . . . You need a fresh conversion every day. Die daily to self. . . . If this requires a great effort, make it; you will be repaid in so doing.” – *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 698

“Some think that only a portion of their means is the Lord’s. When they have set apart a portion for religious and charitable purposes, they regard the remainder as their own, to be used as they see fit. But in this they mistake. All we possess is the Lord’s, and we are accountable to Him for the use we make of it. In the use of every penny, it will be seen whether we love God supremely and our neighbor as ourselves. . . .

“Hoarded wealth is not merely useless, it is a curse. In this life it is a snare to the soul, drawing the affections away from the heavenly treasure. In the great day of God its witness to unused talents and neglected opportunities will condemn its possessor. James 5:1–4.” – *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 351–352

“Hasten, my brethren and sisters, to bring to God a faithful tithe, and to bring Him also a willing thank offering. There are many who will not be blessed till they make restitution of the tithe which they have withheld.

God is waiting for you to redeem the past.” – *Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 87

BLESSINGS MULTIPLIED

“The tithing system was founded upon a principle which is as enduring as the law of God. It will be a blessing to those who will carry it out to the end of time. Our heavenly Father did not originate the system to enrich Himself, but to be a great blessing to man.” – *Pacific Union Recorder*, October 10, 1901

“And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the



The tithe is not God's way of getting something from you, it's God's way of giving something to you.

LORD thy God.” Deuteronomy 28:2. “No man can lay up treasure in heaven without finding his life on earth thereby enriched and ennobled.” —*Education*, p. 145

We have a great responsibility in keeping a faithful account with our Creator. It is as a covenant relationship with Him. Each person needs to search their own heart diligently to see how they have done. Let us repent without delay if we have not been faithful. He gave His only Son to die for us; we need to give our all to Him for His glory. We receive as we give and it is more blessed to give than to receive. If we will impart to Him faithfully as He asks, He will open ways whereby we will be able to continually bestow because we will be continually receiving.

“He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.” Proverbs 22:9. The divine blessing is showered upon the generous giver who shares his possessions with those who have little. “He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.” Proverbs 28:27. The Biblical principle of giving is based on multiplication. If something is donated, it is preserved and multiplied; and the blessings are then multiplied as well. “God is abundantly able to fulfill His promises. . . . Faithful stewards, who wisely use the goods which God has intrusted to them to advance the truth and bless suffering humanity, will be rewarded for so doing. God will pour into their hands while they dispense to others. He is advancing His cause in the earth through stewards intrusted with His capital. Some there are who, notwithstanding they greatly desire wealth, would be ruined by its possession. God has tested individuals by lending them talents of means. It was in their power to abuse the gift or use it to the glory of God.” —*The Review and Herald*, October 31, 1878

“Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.” Proverbs 3:9–10

God owns everything, including our time and money. He has given us His law, by which we will be judged. We also have the commission to carry the gospel into all the world. We can help this work by returning faithfully a

tithe of our increase to support the ministry, and offerings for the different branches of His work. We should not be weary in giving to Him; He gives all to us. If we honor God, He will honor us. He blesses us that we may bless others. If we are faithful in giving unselfishly, He will pour out a blessing for us.

“Would you make your property secure? Place it in the hand that bears the nail prints of the crucifixion. Retain all in your possession, and it will be to your eternal loss. Give it to God, and from that moment it bears His inscription. It is sealed with His immutability. Would you enjoy your substance? Then use it to bless the suffering. Would you increase your possessions? ‘Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine. — *Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 49. “We are to make investments in heavenly interests, and always work with heaven in view, laying our treasure up in the bank of heaven.” —*The Signs of the Times*, April 4, 1895

The Lord says, “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive

it.” Malachi 3:10

“For what shall we hoard up treasures? To be swept away by the flames of the last day? Shall we lay up gold and silver, to be a witness against us in the Judgment,—to eat our flesh as it were fire? Shall we cling to our possessions till they fall into the hands of our enemies? The time is coming when commandment keepers can neither buy nor sell. Of what use will houses and lands, bank stock and merchandise, be to us then? Now is the time to place our treasures where they will be eternally secure. . . . That which we give to the cause of God becomes our own forever. Says Christ, ‘Lay up for *your-selves* treasures in heaven’ (Matthew 6:20). These alone, of all that we possess, are really ours. All that we lay up on earth, we must leave at last. It is only what we give for Christ that we can take with us into the eternal world.” —*The Review and Herald*, December 6, 1887

**Victor Shumbusho,
D.R.Congo**



Health Effects of Obesity

Part 2



And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite.”
Proverbs 23:2

According to worldwide statistics collected in 2015, a total of 107.7 million children and 603.7 million adults were obese. Among the 20 most populous countries, the highest level of adult obesity was observed in Egypt (35.3%) and the highest level of childhood obesity was observed in the United States (12.7%). Although the prevalence of obesity is less in children than adults, the rate of increase in childhood obesity is greater than the increase in adult obesity over the last 25 years. An elevated BMI contributed to 4.0 million deaths which represented 7.1% of deaths from any cause. It also contributed to 120 million disability-adjusted life-years (a figure calculated as the sum of years lived with disability and years of life lost due to high BMI), which represented 4.9% disability-adjusted life-years from any cause among adults globally.

A total of 39% of the deaths and 37% of the disability-adjusted life-years that were related to high BMI occurred in persons with a BMI of less than 30, which is below the level of obesity. Because of this fact, the definition of overweight and obesity remains controversial in relation to risk of disability and disease; research shows that the traditional calculation of Body Mass Index (BMI) is not enough to determine overall risk. Research is now showing that increased rates of sickness, disability and death with increased weight can occur in people whose BMI's are not yet in the obese range; however, as BMI numbers increase, the risk of death and disability also increases.

The reason that BMI numbers do not always indicate one's risk or protection from disease is due to the fact that BMI numbers do not reflect the distribution of fat in the body. It is proven that increased waist circumference, or waist to hip ratio is the greatest predictor of disability and death from obesity. For example, in women a BMI <21 (considered underweight) is associated with the greatest protection from death from heart disease. Yet for many women, a BMI near 30 may still not be of concern if the weight is distributed in the pelvis and not the abdomen. Therefore, when assessing an individual's overall

risk, not only should BMI be considered, but how fat is distributed in the body.

We began last month by looking at specific diseases and illnesses that were linked to obesity. These diseases may also occur in individuals who are of normal weight; however, the risk increases with increased weight. This month we will continue to look at another group of diseases that occur in higher numbers in individuals who are obese.

OSTEOARTHRITIS

There are approximately 100 different types of arthritis. The most common is osteoarthritis (OA). Aging is the greatest risk factor for OA; however, OA is not an inevitable consequence of growing old. Changes in the musculoskeletal system when we age increases the risk of OA, but the joints affected and the severity of the disease are more closely related to other OA risk factors, including obesity, genetics, and joint injury. Other risk factors for OA include gout and diabetes, two conditions also related to obesity as a causal factor. Often OA is referred to as the "wear and tear" arthritis.

In normal joints, a firm, rubbery material called cartilage covers the end of each bone. Cartilage provides a smooth, gliding surface for joint motion and acts as a cushion between the bones. It also absorbs energy from the shock of physical movement. Over the years "wear and tear" causes damage to the cartilage and it breaks down, leading to symptoms such as joint pain and stiffness, particularly first thing in the morning or after resting. Affected joints also become swollen. As OA worsens, bones may break down and develop new bone outgrowths, called spurs, to form around the joints. Bone spurs can be associated with pain, numbness, tenderness, and weakness if they are irritating adjacent tissues. Bits of bone and cartilage can also break off and float around the joint.

In advanced cases, there is a total loss of the cartilage cushion between the bones of the joints, causing changes in the shape of the bones. Loss of cartilage cushion causes bone to rub against bone, leading to even more damage, with an

increase in pain and limitation of joint mobility. Over time, the joint loses its normal shape. By the time a person has symptoms from osteoarthritis, it is no longer just a disease of cartilage. Bone has changed, muscles across the joint have often weakened and there is occasionally inflammation in the lining of the joint. Despite the decrease in mobility caused by OA, there is no evidence that the development of OA leads to the onset of obesity. Some doctors also believe your chances of osteoarthritis increase when you are obese because your body's ability to circulate blood and oxygen decreases.

For every kilogram of weight, the risk of developing osteoarthritis increases by 9–13 per cent. An increase in weight is also associated with pain in all weight-bearing joints. When OA is caused by obesity, the weight-bearing joints are most affected because of the extra pressure from added weight on the joint and the cartilage. Typically the joint that is affected most by obesity is the knee joint, especially with excess upper body weight. Next to aging, obesity is the most significant risk factor for OA of the knees. People with OA experience 30 per cent more falls and have a 20 percent greater risk of fractures than people without OA. These risks are higher because of decreased mobility, muscle weakness and impaired balance. Weight loss will decrease the stress on the knees, but sometimes the damage cannot be reversed, and a total knee replacement is needed. There are new therapies available that have the ability to slow the progression of OA in older adults. This will have enormous health implications, given the aging population and in the increase in risk factors such as obesity.

GOUT

Gout is a form of inflammatory arthritis that develops in some people who have high levels of uric acid in the blood. Because of these high uric acid levels, painful gout attacks are caused because uric acid crystals build up around joints. Uric acid can form needle-like crystals in a joint and cause sudden, severe episodes of pain, tenderness, redness, warmth and swelling. There is a very strong connection between excess weight and the risk of developing gout and gout attacks. The more you weigh, the higher your risk, and the more likely you are to have recurrent attacks. This is because the more you weigh the less efficient your body is at removing uric acid. Carrying extra weight slows down the removal of uric acid by the kidneys. Insulin resistance, a state



in which insulin levels remain abnormally high because the body has reduced sensitivity to the hormone, is the major player in the increased risk of gout linked to body fat. When people are overweight or obese, their bodies produce more insulin. Higher levels of insulin circulating throughout

the body inhibit uric acid elimination by the kidneys. One study found that just gaining 10 pounds over four months was associated with an increased incidence of gout.

The area in which someone carries fat also contributes to gout. Too much visceral (belly) fat is linked to insulin resistance and development of gout. People who were not obese as measured by BMI, but who had high levels of visceral fat, were more likely to have gout than their smaller-bellied counterparts (47.4% versus 27.3%). Gout is not just an arthritis, but also a metabolic disease (metabolism refers to the body's processes involved in converting food to energy), in which the primary metabolic problem is high uric acid. Like obesity and diabetes, high uric acid is a direct risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Another common misunderstanding about gout is that while attacks may make the condition seem like something that comes and goes, it is a chronic disease. Gout attacks are usually a sign that the body is in an imbalanced metabolic state, which can lead to more serious diseases.

SPINAL CONDITIONS

Your spine is made up of 33 vertebrae, a series of small irregular-shaped bones, having several projections for movement and muscle attachment, and a hole, creating the spinal canal through which the spinal cord passes; the spinal cord is the connection between the brain and the nerves that travel throughout the body. The vertebrae are structured so that they protect the spinal cord and the nerve roots which originate from the spinal cord. These vertebrae are cushioned and separated by rubbery, gel-filled discs that absorb the shock of weight and everyday movement. They prevent the vertebrae from rubbing against each other. A spinal disc has a tough outer wall that protects the disc; the centre of the disc, called the nucleus, has high water content that stores oxygen and nutrients. In order for your spine to function properly, these discs must be well hydrated. As a result of the natural aging process, as well as through overuse or serious injury, the discs begin to lose elasticity over time, making them less able to absorb the stress being placed on them and vulnerable to damage.

The spine or backbone supports much of the body's weight, and overloading the spinal column can contribute to its degeneration through the years. Obesity is a major factor in the development of neck and back pain for millions of people around the world. Excessive weight can cause stress on all of the spine's parts, such as the joints, vertebrae and spinal discs, contributing to conditions like degenerative disc disease (DDD), bulging discs, herniated discs and compression fractures in the back. While primarily age-related conditions, being overweight or obese adds to the stress being placed on the spinal discs, which can accelerate their breakdown.

DDD is the weakening of one or more discs between the vertebrae. This condition causes the disc to lose water content and flatten. When this happens, the discs start to lose cushioning and do not absorb the shocks as well, when you are walking, running, or jumping. This deterioration is partic-

ularly common in the lumbar (lower) and the neck region of the spine because of the flexibility of these areas, combined with the amount of weight they support. DDD is more common in obese people, speeding up the aging process by adding to the stress placed on the discs. Typically DDD affects people over the age of 60, but it can also be commonly seen in people between the ages of 30–50. In addition to pain in the spinal area, symptoms of DDD include pain in the legs or arms, muscle spasms, numbness or tingling, stiffness or weakness in muscles, difficulty walking or sitting comfortably.

In a bulging disc, a small portion of the disc protrudes into the spinal canal. No portion of the nucleus has leaked out of the disc. A bulging disc is considered “contained”. This means no tear or rupture is present within the outer layer of the disc. A bulging disc only becomes serious when it bulges enough to cause narrowing of the spinal canal. This may cause the disc to press on a nerve; symptoms will occur in whatever part of the body the affected nerve serves.

A herniated disc is “non-contained”, which means a tear or rupture is present. A portion of the gel-like center of the disc has leaked into the spinal canal. A herniated disc might have begun as a bulging disc, but has created so much pressure on the outer wall of the disc that a rupture occurs. This is more likely to happen in people who have significantly more weight in their upper body that is transferred to the weakened disc. While it is more common to have a bulging disc than a herniated disc, a herniated disc is more likely to be painful. The material that has ruptured into the spinal canal from the nucleus can cause pressure on the nerves in your spinal canal. There is also some evidence that the nucleus material causes a chemical irritation of the nerve roots. Both the pressure on the nerve root and the chemical irritation can lead to problems with how the nerve root functions. The combination of the two can cause pain, weakness, and numbness in the area of your body to which the affected nerve supplies sensation. If the herniation occurs in the thoracic (upper to mid-back) spine, the pressure can also affect the spinal cord. This is due to the fact that there is little extra space within the spinal canal of the thoracic spine. Too much pressure on the spinal cord can lead to paralysis from the waist down.

Compression is a term which means to press down upon forcefully. In this type of injury, it is the actual weight of the body pressing down forcibly upon a joint or bone, enacting enough pressure to actually cause bones to crack under the stress. A compression fracture of the back happens when your vertebrae, or bones of the spine, break. Compression

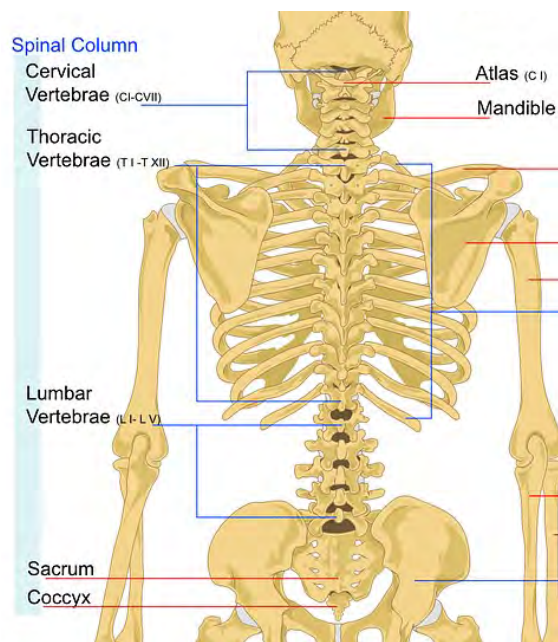
fractures can occur anywhere in the spine, but most commonly in the lower thoracic spine and upper lumbar spine (lower back area). Because the excess weight in this area is more prone to cause pressure to the vertebrae in obese people, compression fractures can become very common. Osteoporosis, which is low bone density, combined with obesity creates an optimal environment for compression breaks to occur.

Stenosis refers to a “narrowing or constricting space.” Spinal stenosis is the narrowing of the spinal canal. Generally, it occurs in two sections of the spine, in the neck (cervical) and lower spine (lumbar). These two sections tend to bend, move and provide flexibility more than the other areas of the spine. When the spinal canal is narrowed, the nerves in the spinal cord are more likely to be compressed if there is continual bending and moving of the vertebrae. There is usually an underlying reason that causes the spinal canal to narrow. Some of these are related to the aging process. Some of

these are conditions that we talked about already, including bulging and herniated discs that can be triggered by obesity. Another cause of spinal stenosis is tissue inflammation in one’s back. Because of this inflammation, the canals grow smaller, and the nerve becomes compressed by the inflammation. One of the leading causes of tissue inflammation in the back is obesity. Symptoms of nerve compression caused by spinal stenosis can include pain that travels along a nerve, unexpected muscle weakness, numbness or tingling in fingers or toes, sciatica. In extreme cases, loss of bladder control can occur.

The health of the spine is vital to the proper functioning of the rest of the body. If the connection between the brain and the nerves are affected, loss of function can occur in multiple areas of the body. This often leads to years of disability due to pain, muscle weakness of the arms and legs, and decreased mobility.

As seen in the last two articles, the prevalence and disease burden related to years of disability and years of life lost due to elevated BMI, and especially obesity is significant worldwide. There is increased evidence to suggest that lifestyle choices are impacting not only the developed countries of the world, but the developing countries as well. Changes need to be made at a global level to improve the health of people everywhere. We have not yet covered all the diseases associated with obesity—another reflection of the far-reaching impact that obesity has on one’s health. We will continue to discuss the health risks associated with obesity in part 3 next month.





The Importunate Friend



"Maxi, would you like to lead us in the closing prayer?" asked Mother as she closed the family Bible. They were just finishing evening worship. However, Mother noticed discomfort on her son's face. He was silent for a while.

"Mother, is it possible for me not to pray this time?" he answered as politely as he could. This surprised Mother greatly. Maxi loved to

pray, and for the past months, he had been praying especially for an acoustic guitar. He really wanted to play in the church band. Mother accepted his request this time. She usually tried her best to encourage her children to pray, but she could see something was really bothering Maxi, so she asked Annie to pray.

The children went to get ready for bed. Mother took this time to pray to God, asking for wisdom that she may counsel her son appropriately, on whatever was the issue. She then went upstairs and before she entered the room, she stood at the door, hoping to hear Maxi praying as usual, but this time he was silent. She opened the halfway-closed door, and saw Maxi just lying in bed, looking at the picture of the guitar he wanted so badly. Mother's heart broke. She had been saving up for months hoping soon to have enough money to buy Maxi his guitar and have enough to pay for his guitar lessons; yet, she never seemed to get the

amount that was necessary. She, too, had been praying for this.

"Son, tell me now, what is the matter? I have noticed some discomfort in your face today when I asked you to pray; come now, sit up and speak to me." Mother sat on Maxi's bed. Maxi sat up, and sadly sighed.

"I'm tired of praying about the guitar, Mother. I think God may be mad at me; He's not listening to me. I've asked Him for months and still no answer. I think maybe I should just leave God alone. Maybe He doesn't want to respond. Why should I continue praying and praying if He is not willing to answer?"

Mother was silent. She too had felt at times like God didn't hear her prayers, but she knew better. She then remembered a parable of Jesus that had allowed her to not give up in times like these. She took Maxi's Bible from the lamp table beside his bed, opened it up to Luke 11:5-8, and read:

"And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth."

"Son, what we can understand from this parable is that if we persist, if we do not give up, we will receive what we are asking for. God sometimes puts us through test of faith, and perhaps this is yours. Do not hold back from praying and asking God; you must learn to persist. God hears you, and He will answer, just continue being like this importune man."



“Okay Mother, I certainly don’t want to give up, and I realize I need more faith. I will continue praying for my guitar. As a matter a fact, I will pray right now.” Mother smiled. She kissed him good night, and as she slightly closed the door, she could hear Maxi praying already. A week later, a friend from church bought a guitar as a gift for Maxi. It was perfect! Better than the one in the picture. Maxi excitedly thanked God for answering his prayer, finally.

Challenge Twelve

Do the cryptogram. Key: To reveal the hidden message, use the story of the parable to guide you.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
6				26				10						3						18					

<u>E</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>U</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>U</u>	<u>I</u>													
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6	16	12	6	2	14	6	16	25	26	2	26	26	1	26	5	25

Complete all 15 Challenges

Don't miss Grandpa's next visit to Annie and Max's home!!

Email your challenges here:
veronicanoeemigarcia@gmail.com



Philippine Union Conference – December 27-30, 2017



Baptism in Congo

Left to Right: Brother Daniel Masumbuko, the local church deaconess, 7 new souls and Brother Samuel Kisigay, North East Congo Field President



Australian Field Conference – December 7-10, 2017



Jamaican Field Conference – December 2017



"I think our enjoyment of the summertime is heightened by the memory of the long, cold months of winter; and on the other hand, the hope of summer helps us to endure more cheerfully the winter's reign. If we were to permit our minds to dwell upon the barrenness and desolation with which the ice king surrounds us, we might be very unhappy; but, being wiser than this, we look forward in anticipation to the coming spring-time, which is to bring back the birds, awaken the sleeping flowers, clothe the earth in her robes of green, and fill the air with light and fragrance and song.

"The Christian's sojourn in this world may be fitly compared to the long, cold winter. Here we experience trials, sorrows and disappointments, but we should not permit our minds to dwell upon these. Let us rather

look forward with hope and faith to the coming summer when we shall be welcomed to our Eden home, where all is light and joy, where all is peace and love.

"Had the Christian never experienced the storms of affliction in this world, had his heart never been chilled by disappointment or oppressed by fear, he would scarcely know how to appreciate heaven. We will not be despondent, though often weary, sad, and heartsick; the winter will not always last. The summer of peace, joy, and eternal gladness soon will come. Then Christ will dwell with us and will lead us to fountains of living waters, and will wipe all tears from our eyes.

"Let nothing . . . hinder you from making thorough work for eternity. . . . There will be no chilling winds, no wintry colds, but an eternal summer. There is light for the intellect, love that is abiding, sincere. There will be health and immortality, vigor for every faculty. There will be shut out forever every sorrow and every grief." –*Our High Calling*, p. 158

