



The Reformation
Messenger
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We Deserve This

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Endure Unto the End

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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Fountain of Joy



“Jesus took human nature, passing through infancy, childhood, and youth, that He might know how to sympathize with all, and leave an example for all children and youth. He is acquainted with the temptations and weaknesses of children. He has, in His love, opened the fountain of pleasure and joy for the soul that trusts in Him. By seeking to honor Christ and to follow His example, children and youth can be truly happy. They may feel their accountability to labor with Jesus Christ in the great plan of saving souls.” —*Lift Him Up*, p. 91

“Religion tends directly to promote health, to lengthen life, and to heighten our enjoyment of all its blessings. It opens to the soul a never-failing fountain of happiness.” —*Christian Education*, p. 68

“When man dies to sin and is quickened to new life in Christ, divine love fills his heart; his understanding is sanctified; he drinks from an inexhaustible fountain of joy and knowledge, and the light of an eternal day shines upon his path, for with him continually is the Light of life.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 273

“Here is the true knowledge which should be desired, and possessed by every Christian. This knowledge will not lead to ungodliness. It will not break down the constitution, or bring a gloomy cloud over the mind; but will impart substantial joys, and true happiness. This wisdom is divine, and flows ceaselessly from a pure fountain which gives peace, joy and health.” —*An Appeal to Mothers*, p. 32–33

“Christ has opened a fountain for the sinful, suffering world, and the voice of divine mercy is heard: ‘Come, all ye thirsting souls; come and drink.’ You may take of the water of life freely. Let him that heareth say, Come;

and whosoever will, let him come. Let every soul, women as well as men, sound this message. Then the work will be carried to the waste places of the earth. The scripture will be fulfilled: In that day the Lord shall open fountains in the valleys, and ‘rivers in the desert,’ and ‘with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation’ (Isaiah 41:18; 43:19; Isaiah 12:3).” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 337

“Christ has said: ‘If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.’ John 7:37. Have you exhausted the fountain? —No; for it is inexhaustible. Just as soon as you feel your need, you may drink, and drink again. The fountain is always full. And when you have once drunk of that fountain, you will not be seeking to quench your thirst from the broken cisterns of this world; you will not be studying how you can find the most pleasure, amusement, fun, and frolic. No; because you have been drinking from the stream which makes glad the city of God. Then your joy will be full.” —*Our High Calling*, p. 65

“God is the eternal, uncreated fountain of all good. All who look to Him and trust in Him find Him to be this. To those who serve Him, cleaving to Him as their heavenly Father, He gives the assurance that He will fulfil His promises. His joy will be in their hearts, and their joy will be full.” —*This Day With God*, p. 266

Ellen G. White

“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.” Revelation 21:6



We Deserve This

There was a criminal in terrible pain, rejected, hated by others, and sentenced to death. But he did not complain; he was satisfied with his suffering. “And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on Him, saying, If thou be Christ, save Thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this Man hath done nothing amiss.” Luke 23:39–41

When sickness, misfortune, suffering, and death come upon us, how many will say, “I deserve this,” without one word of complaining. When Job lost all that he had, he said, “The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.” Job 1:21

Paul said, “Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.” Philippians 4:11–12. This was not natural to Paul, but he said that he had learned it; he had learned a lesson that very few know. You cannot make this kind of person unhappy or sad.

When the people of Israel traveled in the wilderness for forty years, the hot desert sand burned their feet, they had no permanent home. At times they lacked

water, and often were in danger from their enemies. They were tempted to sin under these circumstances, and what was their sin?

“And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against Me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against Me. Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in Mine ears, so will I do to you: Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against Me.” Numbers 14:26–29

Paul refers to this murmuring and complaining of Israel as a warning to us, “Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.” 1 Corinthians 10:10

Are there many people like Job and like Paul, who are always satisfied and happy, and who never complain about anything? No; and the reason for it is that they have not opened their heart’s doors to Jesus; they do not have the Holy Spirit. What is religion without Christ, and without the Holy Spirit? It is nothing; only an empty form.

When World War I started, the Seventh-day Adventist Church was divided. When the governments demanded

that all the young men must join the army, and fight against their enemies, then the majority were afraid of the punishment, which was a prison sentence, and in some countries, the death penalty.

But two percent of the members remained faithful to God and refused military service, and therefore they were disfellowshipped from the church; these faithful ones were the beginning of the Adventist Reform Church. In the war, in both opposing armies there were professing Christians, pointing their guns at each other. This was not God's will. Jesus said, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." Matthew 5:44

When Jesus was nailed to the cross, He prayed for His murderers. He said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Luke 23:34

The work of our reformation is to bring Christ into the hearts of men and women, to bring joy and happiness into the lives of people. Paul writes, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Philippians 4:13

When the Holy Spirit enters our heart, we will have love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. The work of the Holy Spirit is to lead and guide us. With the Holy Spirit, we are never confused, we know what we are doing, we know where we are going, and we are filled with happiness and joy, and singing praises to God.

When Jesus enters your heart, you will not say anymore, "I want this, I want that, I am dissatisfied." No, now you say, "I have received more than I deserve, my cup runneth over."

Sometimes fiery trials come upon us, and we need to thank God for them, for we know that they are for our benefit. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

When we realize what it is that we really deserve, which is death, then we are thankful that we live, and not only this life now, but God is offering eternal life to us, first in heaven, and then on this earth, which will be restored to its original beauty.

When we realize what we deserve, then we are thankful to God who has promised to give us more than we deserve. He leads us in the green pastures, and beside still waters. What God gives to sinners is their wages

according to their actions, but what the saved ones receive is more than they deserve; it is a gift given to them. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:23

A true Christian who is humble cannot be offended. He realizes, the same as Paul did, that nothing good dwells in him. "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." Romans 7:18. He realized that he deserved insults and abuse, and even death.

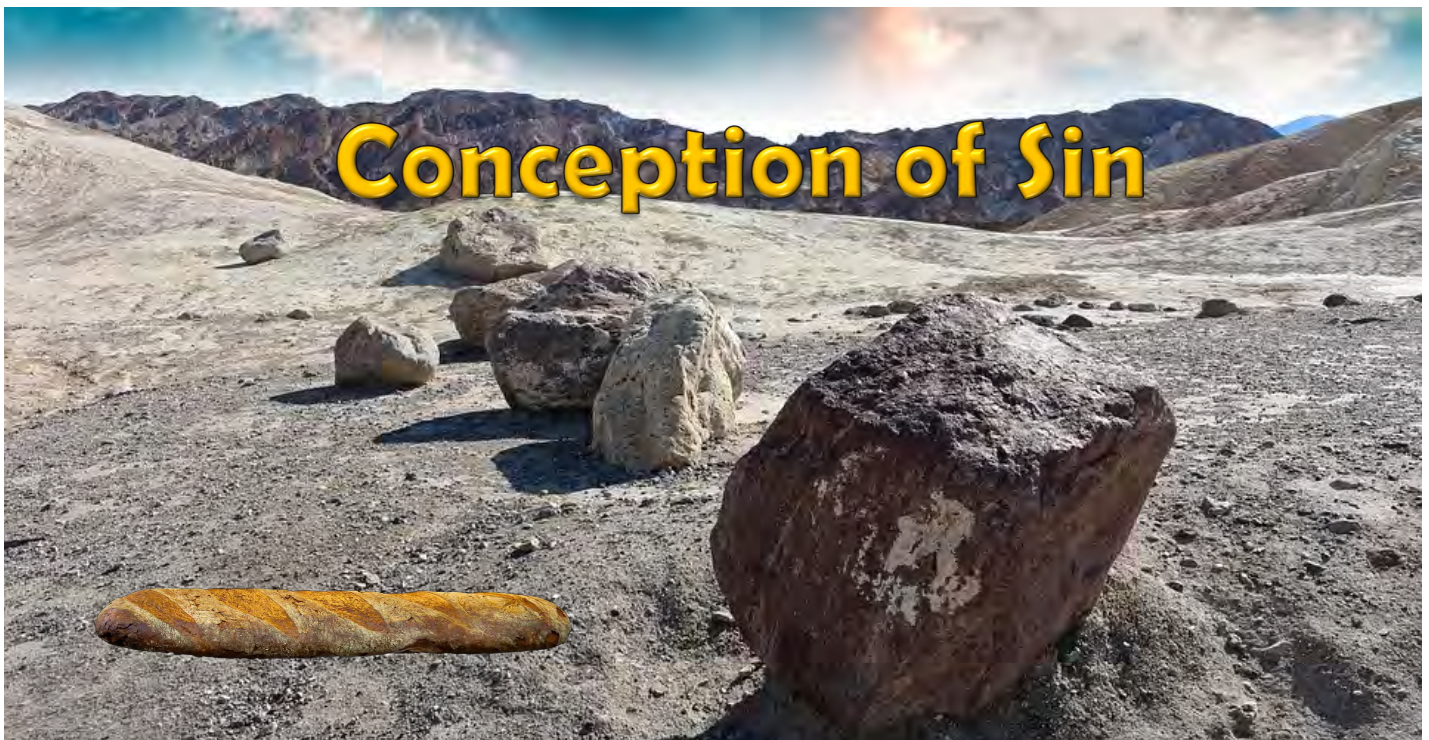
"God is Himself the source of all mercy. His name is 'merciful and gracious.' Exodus 34:6. He does not treat us according to our desert. He does not ask if we are worthy of His love, but He pours upon us the riches of His love, to make us worthy. He is not vindictive. He seeks not to punish, but to redeem. Even the severity which He manifests through His providences is manifested for the salvation of the wayward. He yearns with intense desire to relieve the woes of men and to apply His balsam to their wounds." *—Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 22*

"Christ gave Himself, an atoning sacrifice, for the saving of a lost world. He was treated as we deserve, in order that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share." *—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 8, p. 208*

God loves us, and He wants to save us. Often He has to let the fiery trials come upon us. Then we must say, "I deserve this." God will never place needless suffering upon us. The way to salvation is narrow. Millions of martyrs gave up their lives unto death, realizing that it was in the plan of God for their salvation. If it comes upon us to suffer prison or the death sentence, let us then say like the criminal on the cross, "I deserve this," and remember that nothing will happen to us that is not for our benefit, for our salvation, and from the love of God.

God said to David, "I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But My mercy shall not depart away from him." 2 Samuel 7:14–15. This is how God will deal with us also today. Let us never complain nor murmur at His leading, but only thank Him. Amen.

Timo Martin



"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man." James 1:13

Temptation takes place in the life of a believer by the activation of mechanisms that awake appetites and desires that may lead to an action opposed to the will of God. Temptation is the way by which man is induced to commit sin. This does not come from God; He does not tempt anyone. God does not place a banana peel at the feet of the unwary believer to make him fall.

"Temptation is not sin; the sin lies in yielding [to temptation]. To the soul that trusts in Jesus, temptation means victory and greater strength." –The Signs of the Times, December 10, 1902

"Satan is the god of this world. . . . In his hands, temptation has become a science. Under his control men sin by rule." –The Review and Herald, February 11, 1902

Satan has perfected the science of temptation because this is the means that allows him to attract his victim to make him fall. Satan does use the banana peel to make the unwary fall. Temptation is the bait that entices the unwary to the trap of sin. Although born with a sinful human nature (Psalms 51:5), no man is born a sinner. Man has to be seduced, dragged into sin. The development of the science of temptation is because Satan cannot force anyone to sin.

"No man can be forced to transgress. His own consent must be first gained; the soul must purpose the sinful act, before passion can dominate over reason, or iniquity triumph over conscience. Temptation, however

strong, is never an excuse for sin." –Messages to Young People, p. 67

"But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." James 1:14

"A man is tempted to sin when some attractive object or indulgence is presented to him, and he is drawn to overstep principle, and to violate his conscience in doing that which he knows to be wrong." –The Signs of the Times, December 18, 1893

Temptation usually follows two steps: *attraction and seduction*. The attraction takes place when we stop by to consider the bait, that is, the object or thought that awakens our interest. Through the senses or thoughts, the mind perceives the bait as appetizing, desirable or pleasant. The carnal appetite is then activated. This is what is called concupiscence or lust by the Bible.

Seduction is the course of approaching to the trap. As we stop by to consider the bait, the interest in it increases, and we begin to crave for it with a growing desire proportional to the nearness to the object. The reason becomes cloudy, and the passion gets more intense, however, during the course of temptation, the will of God stands out above the trap as a fence of danger — a warning.

If there is no possibility of giving in, temptation is not temptation. Temptation is resisted when man is powerfully persuaded to commit the wrong action; and, knowing that he can commit it, resists by faith, clinging firmly to divine power. This was the test through which Christ passed (*Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 132).

Temptation is not real except when there is a concrete possibility of doing what it invites us to do. For Jesus, the invitation to demonstrate His divinity by turning a stone into bread was a real temptation because it was perfectly possible for Him to do so. For any of us, such a proposal does not go beyond an absurd request because we know very well that we do not have the power to do so. In our case, the request to transform a stone into bread is not a temptation.

Temptation necessarily includes the reaction or emotional response to the stimulus of the bait. This is what it means to feel “powerfully persuaded to commit the wrong action.” If there is no emotional response, it is because we are indifferent to the object, or the idea. The indifference or insensitivity to the bait inhibits the process of attraction and seduction. In that case there is no temptation.

During the course of temptation a mental conflict is suffered by confronting the attraction with the will of God. The appetites or impulses that have been activated in response to the stimulus demand satisfaction, but at the same time the knowledge of the will of God takes us to the terrain of decision; it is the critical point where we determine to subject ourselves to the will of God or to do our own will.

Temptation can be resisted by faith, that is, depending on God we can overcome and resist any temptation. The victory of Christ guarantees our triumph, if we truly desire it. When we decide, like Joseph in Egypt, to do God's will above any personal interest, heaven has the victory and we score a triumph.

Temptation, as has already been said, brings us to a point of decision. We can choose to yield to our impulses and place our will above God's. In that case the prin-

ciple of selfishness has the victory. We fall into sin.

Christ went through that test. He knows by His own experience the anguish, and the magnitude of the conflict that the soul suffers when it is assaulted by temptation.

“Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” James 1:15

The crucial moment in temptation is the **decision**. When we choose to do our will instead of God's will, at that moment sin is conceived. Before the physical act, sin is conceived in the mind and heart. It is simply the decision of yielding to temptation. From that moment on sin already exists in our mind as an embryo. Once the decision is made the person becomes a culprit, and is as guilty as if he had already done the action of sin.

The materialization of the act of sin is subject to the circumstances, and they may prevent its consummation, but this does not exempt from guilt. The decision taken, even when it cannot be carried out brings guilt, as much as if the action had been carried out. This is exactly what Jesus meant when He said: *“But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” Matthew 5:28*

Jesus speaks of the idea that arises after stopping by to consider with voluptuous eyes the woman. The enticing view drags us to the point where we are at the critical moment of decision. The image of the sensual body clings to the thought, and the scene of carnal pleasure becomes a controlling obsession. When the will surrenders to this idea, when we embrace it, and give it free course in our minds, then sin has been conceived. A decision was made, the step of acceptance to the erotic impulse was taken. By disrespecting the divine commandment sin has been admitted in the heart. Sin is then conceived as the embryo of the evil action.

The birth of sin can be immediate or may take some time. In any case, the birth of sin consists on the materialization of the physical act of sin. Once the action of sin is consummated, the sentence of death is passed.

“It is Satan's act to tempt you, but your own act to yield. It is not in the power of all the host of Satan to force the tempted to transgress. There is no excuse for sin.” –Maranatha, p. 82

Neptali Acevedo



A Witness From One Of God's Humble Servants



Before I became an Adventist, I used to work on an army base, in the south of Finland, where I served the officers of war. While working there, I visited some religious meetings to which I was invited. There they spoke about the second advent of Jesus Christ, and it touched me deeply, and I began to search for the truth. The Lord led me to this wonderful Advent message, for which I have been rejoicing with all my heart. This is the reason why I love the song, "He leadeth me, He leadeth me, by His own hand, He leadeth me."

The Lord continued to lead me, and I left the army to become a literature evangelist. I can assure you that the canvassing work is a noble work, as the Spirit of Prophecy states, but one must remember never to be discouraged in this work, because the angels will always protect us.

I remember one time, I prepared myself well in the morning, and I worked hard all day, but didn't sell anything. I tried to be happy, even though I felt quite depressed. In the evening I was sad that the Lord didn't bless my work that day at all. The next day, when I went to work I sold a book in almost every house. Praise the Lord! The Lord tries us, but He will not forsake us.

One time I was canvassing in the east side of Finland, near the Russian border. I canvassed all day, and I thought I had covered every house in the village, but on the way back I got lost, and found some houses which I hadn't seen before. I thanked the Lord for leading me to them.

On Friday night, after I had started Sabbath, I decided to go for a walk on that beautiful winter night. The peace of Sabbath rested over nature as I walked down a road through the woods. Later on a gentleman in a sleigh, drawn by a horse, stopped and asked if I would like a ride. I thought it would be impolite to say no, so I accepted and climbed into the sleigh. I felt a strong de-

sire to witness the truth to this man, and I was praying in my heart for an opportunity. First we spoke about the weather, and then he asked me where I was from, and what I was doing here. This gave me my opportunity, and I told him all about the Advent truth. He then told me that he was a pastor in the local church, and we wished each other God's blessings and parted our ways. I praise the Lord for this chance to witness to this man.

I have often had the opportunity to witness to people in buses and trains, and as well have sold many books on the trains. One time I forgot to look at my watch, and the train left the station. It was an express train and didn't stop for quite a distance. I went out into the hall and prayed to God, praying that all things are possible to God, and that He could stop the train for me to get out. Shortly after travelling about 1 km, the train stopped and I got out. Again I thanked my heavenly Father, remembering Jesus' words that say, "Whatsoever ye shall pray in faith, believe it, and you shall receive it."

Once I was working in a town and I could not find a place to spend the night. I was told of an old widow who lived by the train station. When I went to her house she accepted me in, and gave me lodging while I stayed in that area, and to my great joy she also accepted the Advent faith. This is why we must sow the seeds, morning or night, for we never know which seed will bring forth fruit.

For many years, I was canvassing in Lapland, the northernmost province of Finland. The distances between villages was great, and there I used to travel on my bicycle. Often I would meet great reindeer herds with

hundreds of reindeer in them. People were friendly there.

I remember one Friday I had done my work and wanted to go back to my lodging in time for Sabbath. I had to bicycle about 50 km to get home. It started to rain. I had my raingear on, but it did not help much. In a few minutes I was soaked. I prayed that the Lord would send His angel to help me. Shortly after a car came and the driver stopped, and offered me a lift, bicycle and all, and took me all the way home, where I arrived in good time before Sabbath. The Lord helped me again.

One Friday in south Finland, I was canvassing happily and did not notice the time. Suddenly I realized the time. I had to get to the train immediately to get home in time for Sabbath beginning, and it was time for the train to leave. Again I prayed, "Lord, Thou can do anything. Let the train wait for me, for I did not do it on purpose that I would be late for the train and for Sabbath beginning." With heavy heart I came to the station, and asked the station keeper, "has the train gone already?" He answered me, "No, it is late for you." He said it as a joke, but I said to him, "I have prayed that it would wait for me." So the Lord hears the prayers even of his weakest child.

Not long ago I was working in Tampere, a city in south Finland. There I met a young man, and I noticed that he had many worries. I tried to speak to him words of comfort. He had had much trouble in his life. His both parents were dead. He bought a paper from me and another for his brother. Then I gave him a correspondence card, and wrote down in my notebook to remember to pray for him. On one Sabbath morning I was praying that the Lord would send some interested souls to our Sabbath school. Just that Sabbath, this young man came to our Sabbath school. That Sabbath we had a testimony meeting, and that boy testified about the day when I went to canvass in his home; he had planned to take poison and finish his life. But the Lord sent me that day to his home. We don't always know what kind of people we meet, and we should always have some words of comfort for them.

The Lord uses us as humble tools in His service, if we let Him lead us. So, I would like to leave you with the words of Paul, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Corinthians 15:58

Eila Suominen

Translated from Finnish by Elise Luoranen

WHEN I SAY I AM A CHRISTIAN

When I say I am a Christian
I'm not shouting I've been saved
I'm whispering I get lost at times
That's why I chose this way

When I say I am a Christian
I don't speak with human pride
I'm confessing that I stumble
Needing God to be my guide

When I say I am a Christian
I'm not trying to be strong
I'm professing that I'm weak
And pray for strength to carry on

When I say I am a Christian
I'm not bragging of success
I'm admitting that I've failed
And cannot ever pay the debt

When I say I am a Christian
I don't think I know it all
I submit to my confusion
Asking humbly to be taught

When I say I am a Christian
I'm not claiming to be perfect
My flaws are all too visible
But God believes I'm worth it

When I say I am a Christian
I still feel the sting of pain
I have my share of heartache
That's why I seek God's name

When I say I am a Christian
I do not wish to judge
I have no authority...
I only know I'm loved

Submitted by Lucy Flores



The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the Gospel of God; Jesus is God

Greetings to all believers around the world. I, Robert Magampa, salute you from South Africa—the land of my temporal nativity. We Christians have a greater hope in eternal things than on temporal things, which will soon pass away. I would like to encourage you by saying, trust and know that God sees every hardship you are encountering and He will bless you if you do not let go of His hand. Wait patiently for the advent of Christ, His only dear Son, who will welcome you home. Oh, I wish that all who call upon the name of Christ in sincerity may be found worthy of His reward.

I greet you with: “Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for Me?” Jeremiah 32:27

I appreciate the Lord for what He has done for the lost race. After man’s fall, God did not turn away from him; instead Christ took on human nature, stepped into our shoes to mediate in our behalf before God. He did this in behalf of men who were destitute and without hope in the world, feeling that God will never forgive sinners. In His great love, He gave us His only Begotten Son that we may not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

I thank my God for what He has done for me personally. He gave me hope and a new life in Christ. I will be His forever, and He alone shall be my God, my Shield and my Rock. I am expressing my feelings in the form of words, for if I were to leap for joy I would have publicly done so, but understanding how God works, I chose to sing in my heart; singing songs of love, care, and thanks to Him.

In God our Maker we are free from every detestable thing that will pollute our good habits. In Christ we delight and we love, for love is one of God’s best attributes. He will love freely without cost to human beings. Come while Christ is still within your reach, I invite you all to come and purchase for yourselves a fertile land in God’s vineyard; whosoever will, come. Come as I did. God is love and in

Him dwells all good things; nothing impure comes from Christ. Purity and holiness are His, love and compassion are His fruits; in Him alone do I trust.

One Sunday night, an idea came into my mind. I felt compelled to pursue the idea. It was all about writing—writing about the true God who created the heavens and the earth and who controls seasons, rivers, kingdoms and powers—the whole creation All nature obeys Him when He says, peace be still.

I was inspired to write for those who live in the present day and for those in the future if time would last. The subject I have chosen to write about is what you need to know about God the Potentate. He is God and there is none beside Him. All good things are His.

On the 25th of March 2018, at 23:55 in Heidelberg Gauteng South Africa, I began to write. The Bible is the only book filled with God’s messages of hope, grace, love, joy, peace, gentleness and forgiveness for you. It was designed to free you and to set you on a higher ground, but only if you believe what is written therein. Your hope and life are hid in Christ; Christ alone is the Head and the foundation of human life, without Him there is no life.

Prayerfully explore your Bible, kneeling in prayer as you study and present your requests to God through Christ, our Mediator. God will answer you clearly to satisfy your longing, and will show you greater things than your eyes have ever seen.

GIVING THANKS TO GOD

We give thanks to our God for His wonderful works toward all men.

God is love, and His love was shown in John 3:16. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” We receive everlasting life only

if we believe in Him. If we do not, there is no assurance of everlasting life, and we do not even deserve to participate in the blessings God has left within our reach here on earth.

We all have a large part to play in preparation for entrance into God's kingdom. It is like a purchase. We buy things we love and look after them. In the same manner God bought us with a costly price because He loves us and has promised to look after us. This price He paid needs to be deeply understood, which was the death of His only Son, Jesus Christ, the Lamb that was killed because of our wrongdoings. Our iniquities were placed on Him. He bore the terrible sins of the whole world—mine as well as yours. Every sin of every sinner who has sinned from the beginning was placed upon Christ. He was smitten of God for our transgressions; we owe Him everything.

What a friend we have in Jesus! With great appreciation, we need to understand the love God bestowed upon us. We owe Him much thanks for paying our debt at Golgotha. The price He paid was without parallel. We all need to realize the terrible sinfulness of sin.

After the fall in Eden, Adam and Eve were destitute. God took a deep interest in man's situation and decided to redeem them with the blood of His dear Son. In Eden, through the subtlety of the mighty foe, man was led to disobey God's law, which had been instituted to govern all creation. As a result, the pair were expelled from Eden. When they turned their backs on Eden, it was not easy to bid farewell to their home. Thus, they determined to seek God's face daily. God then provided them with coats of sheepskin as opposed to the fig leaves they were wearing.

Today, God's grace is still sufficient for all, yet people choose to follow and gratify their own passions and desires.

Let us continue reading: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6. These names are characteristics of God's divine nature. Isaiah saw them in Christ the Lamb as well.

God revealed His character to Isaiah the prophet. His plan of salvation was to be spoken to all human beings. It was through mankind that sin could have been prevented from entering the world. Their sin affected the whole creation, as death entered on all creation because of it.

God chose Isaiah to be His mouth-piece on earth to expound His mysteries—mysteries that were not made known to men previously. It was God's purpose to make the plan of salvation known to all people; to let them

know that the Messiah is coming. If we accept Him as ordained by God, we will not live without hope.

When Jesus Christ came to this world, He came with the glad news of the kingdom of God. No one has seen God at any time, but He who was with God the Father from the beginning of all creation has seen Him. He was with Him throughout eternity, and He also is called God.

Let us look at the verse in Isaiah that we read earlier, "For unto us a Child is born." This Child was Jesus Christ. "Unto us a Son is given." God gave us His Son to be our substitute, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." John 3:16. Reading further: "And the government shall be upon His shoulder." This government is God's government and Christ's government as He is also called God. As a Prince, He came to claim that which belongs to Him because, what His Father owned rightfully belonged to Him also. God's government is upon Christ; whatever we need, we ask in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ. Since we have been bought by His blood, let us give Christ what rightfully is His, our lives. They are loaned to us, and soon we will be called to account.

"And His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father and The Prince of Peace." This man is God. His nature and titles are all outlined here. He was both God and man in the human form of Christ. Christ's occupation is that He is a governor, to govern His Father's enterprise. His business is that He has created man and redeemed fallen man.

"Wonderful", remarkable things. "Counsellor", Isaiah saw in vision Him also doing counselling work; giving hope to His own people and edifying them. "The mighty God." He saw Christ's divine nature clothed in human form! "The everlasting Father." In His Kingdom He rules gently like a Father. "The Prince of Peace." In Him dwelleth all the peace which our souls desire.

Let us give thanks to our God for the gift of life in Christ Jesus our Saviour who came to this earth, combining humanity with His divinity, to redeem the fallen human race.

God was grieved, but His never-ending love toward men was to reach His people, no matter how deep they had fallen into sin. God felt compassion upon all mankind. He had created Adam and Eve because He loved them. He gave them dominion over the earth to govern affairs here. They were also to be the



custodians of God's law. Man was created in God's image, but this image was marred after sin. Adam and Even went from Eden to the world. Today, we are called to go from the world to Eden. To be restored in the image of God.

Cain and Abel were born without the gates of Paradise. God saw the descendants of Adam and Eve as sheep without a shepherd, moving from one place to another and as birds flying from tree to tree, so He provided a remedy for them. That remedy was the giving of His Son to redeem fallen man.

A MYSTERIOUS SCENE

When Moses was in the mountains of Midian, feeding his father-in-law, Reuel's sheep (Exodus 2:18), "he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb." Exodus 3:1. Here he beheld a mysterious scene. He carefully looked, and behold, a bush



was burning, but it was not being consumed. This scene impressed him but he did not understand what was happening at first. Moses then heard the voice of God saying: "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God." Exodus 3:6

"I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows." Exodus 3:7. Moses was born and raised in Egypt. He was educated and brought up with the Egyptian practices in Pharaoh's kingdom. He heard from his mother about the true God of Israel, but he himself had never met Him. Now, in the desert he had an experience with the mighty power of the God of his fathers. He now understood more fully of the Omniscient nature of God. He can do far greater things than any human mind could comprehend.

Our God is an awesome God. Moses was keen to know more of the true God of his fathers. The Lord saw Moses' desire and granted him his wish, educating him in the wilderness, giving him a special training. He had a special

work to accomplish through Moses, and from here on out nothing was to come between Moses and the Lord.

God saw that Moses was ready for the task; therefore, He called him aside and told him everything He planned for His peculiar people, Israel, since the first day of their departure from Canaan to Egypt.

"And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows." Exodus 3:7. Moses now had a very meek character. He had learned many lessons while tending his father-in-law's flock, which the Lord saw as necessary training before he was to be trusted with a nation. The Lord needs caring people who know the value of leadership and who are upholding Christ as their primary leader. As in sports activities where we find coaches, captains and participants, Christ is the coach, Moses or ministers are the captains, and the believers are the participants.

The Lord said, "Now therefore behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto Me. . . Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh that thou mayest bring forth My people the children of Israel out of Egypt." Exodus 3:9-10. For us to be useful, we need to be meek; we must pray to God that He may grant us this meekness. We need to be free from earthly lusts. Pastors are to feed the flock in a similar fashion as Peter was ordered by Christ to feed His sheep (John 21:17). Christians are the sheep of Jesus' pasture (Psalm 100:3, last part).

After introducing Himself to Moses, the Lord said, "Now go and tell Pharaoh all that I have told you."

"I AM THAT I AM"

Moses then asked of the Lord, "Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, what is His name? what shall I say unto them?" Exodus 3:13. "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." Exodus 13:14

The Lord revealed Himself to Moses with this name—I AM. The Title "I AM", appears in both the Old and the New Testament. In the Old Testament Christ, the Word, told Moses His true name. In the New Testament Christ made Himself known to the Pharisees in like manner just as He did to Moses. The Pharisees were the custodians of the Mosaic Law, but they could not comprehend Christ, the great I AM. Even when He tried to reveal His true identity and character to them, still they were unable to understand.

One day Christ began a discussion which was intended to arouse the curiosity of the Pharisees about Him. He was

trying to lead their minds to find the truth about Him. As the discussion continued, Christ said to them: “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad.” John 8:56. That simple statement that was to lead their minds was looked upon as an insult by the Jews. “Then said the Jews unto Him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham?” John 8:57. Christ immediately answered them by saying, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM.” John 8:58. God was with them, but they denied Him with their actions. He tried to simplify it all for them but the bigotry and prejudice which they cherished prevented them from being freed from their cloak of maliciousness.

Here is the centre of this study. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and Word was God.” John 1:1. Verse 2 tells us: “The same was in the beginning with God.” God used the Word to create the heavens and the earth.

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.” Genesis 1:1–3. God performed great and marvelous things with only the Word. His Word is more powerful than anything on this earth.

Reading again from John: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.” John 1:1–5. The Word here mentioned is Jesus Christ, and Christ is God. Man is both a spiritual and physical being. God does not exist only in the spiritual realm but also a physical being. As we are also both spiritual and physical, so was Christ; He also had to be both Word (spiritual) and flesh (physical).

The Apostle Paul wrote: “And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.” Ephesians 3:9.

The book of Matthew tells us of the coming of Christ in the image of man and after God’s likeness. “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: when as His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.” Matthew 1:18–19. Here the words of Isaiah the prophet were fulfilled. “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a

sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” Isaiah 7:14

JESUS CHRIST IS GOD

Isaiah’s prophecy was fulfilled as written by Matthew. “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” Matthew 1:23. Emmanuel means *God with us*. The significance of Emmanuel’s name should be studied carefully and with understanding, for spiritual things are spiritually discerned. Emmanuel is not just a name without identity, but a name with authority. If we mishandle this name, we will be accountable, especially if we know how and why Christ came. He came to live with mortal beings, sinners—us—that we may freely obtain grace without price from Him. He redeemed us with His own life that we may realize how good and caring He is towards men.

“In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.” John 1:4. Although in Him was life, men chose death rather than life. He had all the necessary light to illuminate the earth, to expose their errors and brighten their paths, but still the people forsook the light and ran after their own natural desires. David wrote, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” Psalm 119:105

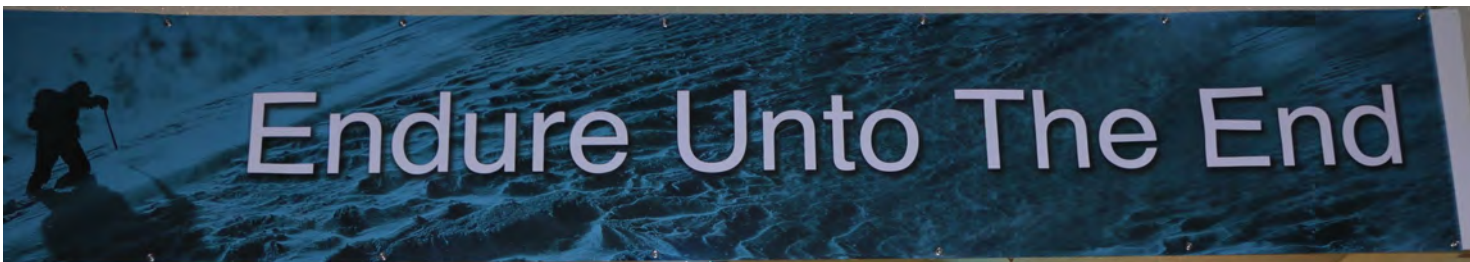


“He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not.” John 1:10. There is one thing that obscures Christ from us, and it is sin. Our sinful nature created a great gulf between God and us; but, thankfully, through Jesus Christ, this gulf has been bridged. Let us now hold steadfastly onto Christ with a hand that will not let go. Soon we will see Him coming in the clouds of heaven. It was this that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints.” Jude 1:14. The Lord Jesus who was taken up shall soon descend. Let us work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

May the Lord God help us that we may understand Him, and embrace His words with care and watchfulness.

Maranatha.

Robert Magampa, South Africa



**Canadian Field Conference
August 3-5, 2018**

“But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” Matthew 24:13

On the evening of August 3, members and visitors gathered together for a spiritual feast over the weekend. Believers came from all over North America to partake of the feast.

Knowing the time in which we live, the theme of the 2018 Canadian Field Conference was, “Enduring unto the end.” We know that Jesus is coming soon—the end is in sight; however, the devil is relentless in his attacks, and the attacks will not weaken. We are therefore encouraged to endure until the end; to fight the good fight of faith. This is not possible in our own strength, but in the strength of the Lord all things are possible.

The new Canadian Field President, John Bescec opened the conference by asking what thoughts go through your mind when you think of the word, “endure”. Endurance means to keep going when every part of your being is tired and wanting to give up, but you continue to push forward. The verses prior to

Matthew 24:13 give a description of the types of people that will not endure. “Many [shall] be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.” Matthew 24:10–12. Many of these people in this description are people who once



were in the church, but became tired and discouraged, and for one reason or another left the church. Although the way may seem impossible, we know that Jesus went before us and opened up the way. We need to focus on the goal and not on the trials along the way. Jesus showed us that enduring unto the end is possible.

In the final warfare on this earth, we will find ourselves wrestling against principalities and powers (Ephesians 6:12–13). Brother Elder Hernandez shared some thought regarding this battle. When the Apostle Paul wrote this, it was a time when there was a lot of injustice, cruelty, and unjust bloodshed on the part of the evil ruler, Nero. However, the final battle will be more deceptive. “I have been shown that evil angels in the form of believers will work in our ranks to bring in a strong spirit of unbelief. Let not even this discourage you, but bring a true heart to the help of the Lord against the powers of satanic agencies.” —*Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 410. It is a time when we need to pray more than ever for wisdom and discernment, pray for the guidance of the Lord. “The darkness of the evil one encloses those who neglect to pray.” —*Steps to Christ*, p. 94. Darkness may be all around us, but with the Lord, we can have light.

We have been promised victory through Christ. We can be more than conquerors through Christ (Romans 8:37). Brother Neptali Acevedo spoke of the most dangerous enemy. He quoted Dan Brown as saying, “The most dangerous enemy is that which no one fears.” This enemy may be dangerous, but we feel safe. This enemy is an infiltrated enemy within us. Almost no one fears this enemy because this enemy is “self”. Although Satan has masterminded hostile forces against God’s people in the past, the infiltrated enemy is the most dangerous because we do not fear it, but actually trust it. Although some have left the ranks of the world, they still face an internal struggle, because they are still attracted to the things of the world. Ask yourself, “Where is your heart? Your dreams and desires?” Satan has access to your life, only through your self. He cannot have any success with you, unless your self allows it. Satan cannot read your mind. We are counselled to, “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” Colossians 3:5. We need to destroy the spy within. The infiltrated enemy must be put to death. “When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart. A change is wrought which



man can never accomplish for himself. It is a supernatural work, bringing a supernatural element into human nature. The soul that is yielded to Christ becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own. A soul thus kept in possession by the heavenly agencies is impregnable to the assaults of Satan.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 324. Jesus condemned sin in the flesh. He has defeated the enemy. Our efforts to overcome should not focus on sin and Satan, but on “If God be for us, who can be against us?” Romans 8:31. The enemy is destroyed when you let Jesus in. Jesus’ victory can be yours.

This theme was further developed by Brother Pablo Hunger on Sabbath morning. He gave examples from history of people who endured, for example, Thomas Edison. When inventing the lightbulb, he tried 1000s of times to get it right, and did not give up. Many things may tire us out and discourage us, but we cannot give up. We are all on a journey—not a short journey of a few years, but a lifetime journey. We face challenges but must move forward. When Lot and his family departed from Sodom, Lot’s wife still had her heart in Sodom so she looked back and perished with Sodom. We are counselled to never look back. “No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” Luke 9:62. We all have a goal we are reaching for and we must endure, and not get distracted along the way, in order to reach this goal. We will have problems, but are never to give up. The two things we are to keep in mind are, “Never give up” and “Do not look back.” Renew your covenant with the Lord, and go forward.

Sabbath afternoon was for the children and youth. After their musical presentation, Sister Margi Seely, the General Conference Education Department Leader, gave a presentation on educating our children, comparing public education with Christian education. In order for your children and young people to be able to endure until the end, they need to be properly educated. Unfortunately, the public education system has left God completely out of the picture, whereas in Christian education, He is included in every subject studied. “The Holy Scriptures were the essential study in the schools of the prophets, and they should hold the first place in every educational system, for the foundation of all right education is a knowledge of God. Used as a textbook in our schools, the Bible will do for mind and morals what cannot be done by books of science and philosophy. As a book to discipline and strengthen the intellect, to en-

noble, purify, and refine the character, it is without a rival.” —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 422

Brother Victor Handiya, visiting from Zambia, encouraged the believers to read their Bibles, look to Jesus and share the light they have given. We are to push the work forward. Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith. It is He that will give us the victory.

A solemn ceremony also was witnessed with the ordination of Brother Nicholas Anca, to be an elder in his local church of Calgary. Brother Anca attended three years of missionary training in Hungary, under the direction of Brother S. Gutnekcht and has worked as a missionary for 22 years. The Lord has now called him to greater responsibilities. We pray that the Lord will continue to use him as His messenger in the Canadian Field.

Brother Nicholas drew our attention to the dangers of the cares of this life (Luke 21:34; 8:14). Satan distracts some from the race by slowing them down with the cares of this life. We are not to isolate ourselves, and be busy with the things of this world. We to submit our ways and our service to the Lord similarly as our Lord and Master submitted to the Heavenly Father when He was on this earth. As we submit ourselves to the Lord, He has promised to be with us and help us in this fight. The world is our field and we must live the standard we teach if we are to be effective witnesses. The salvation of souls should take precedence over the cares of this life. We are to reach forward to the future life, which is more important than any of the cares in this world, which will soon pass away. And we must run the race with no distractions from the world if we wish to reach our goal when Jesus comes.

On Sunday morning, we witnessed six dear souls turn their backs on the things of this world and begin a new life in Christ. They buried their old lives in the watery grave of Lake Ontario, and set their feet on the heavenly pathway that leads to eternal life. They have just begun their journey; pray that they will continue to run the race to the finish line.

We are not expected to run alone. We are encouraged to help one another along the way. Brother Edwim Torres spoke of the necessity of helping each other. Firstly, there are certain things we should not help our brethren with. We are not to encourage their unbelief (Romans 11:23), or their sin (Romans 6:1–2). Secondly, there are specific ways in which we are to encourage our brothers and sisters in the endurance race. We are



love Me, keep My Commandments.” John 14:15

In conclusion, Brother Pablo Hunger brought our minds back to the theme of endurance. He encouraged us to remain faithful, quoting from 2 Thessalonians 3:13, “But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.” We had a blessed time at the conference and now it is time to go back to our home churches and face the challenges ahead. We will not be surrounded by 100’s of members, but there are millions of people around our homes who need to hear the gospel message. We need to share the good news with

to help each other to endure in: love, in prayer, in correct doctrine, in the keeping of the Ten Commandments, in fellowship at church, and in witnessing. Thirdly, we encourage our fellow believers in their private lives by comforting one another, by forgiving one another, admonishing one another, and helping to restore those out of the way. Although the race is an individual race, we are to help and encourage each other to keep on running—enduring. Jesus has promised victory in the end.

Brother Renso Suarez gave the concluding thoughts on the theme, by giving a very important message on love. It is love that endureth all things. We may do many great works for the Lord and have great knowledge but without love, we will not endure. We have two choices in life. We can either exist or we can simply live. Some simply exist; they work, eat, sleep, and continue on that cycle. Others find joy in life, and live for more than simply the cycle of existence on this earth. Those who find joy in life have a love for helping others. True love does not abuse the one they claim to love. If we say we

love Jesus, can we abuse Him by sinning? True love will desire to seek and save the perishing souls around them. Jesus loves you. Nothing you do makes Him love you more or less. The most happy people on earth are those who have learned of the love of Christ. Jesus said, “If ye

them. The four men who carried the man who was sick with Palsy to Jesus showed their faith by their actions. When the house was crowded, they simply went to the roof top and cut a hole in the roof so that they could let their friend meet Jesus. “When Jesus saw their faith” (Mark 2:5), He healed the sick man. The faith of all five men was honoured. They were not deterred by any obstacle. We must also not let obstacles slow us down. The Lord will always provide a way. We will all meet challenges, but “let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” Galatians 6:9

With the conference coming to a close, we all left with renewed strength and vigor to run the race and endure until the end. It is our prayer that all believers continue in this endurance race and not give up before they reach the finish line.

Amen



How Do Divine Principles Promote Happiness? Part 2



“The true principles of Christianity open before all a source of happiness, the height and depth, the length and breadth of which are immeasurable.” —*The Adventist Home*, p. 493

We are continuing our series of health articles on the topic of happiness. Last month we learned that higher levels of happiness can be achieved if we have resilience. We learned that certain habits improve resilience, including developing close relationships with others. We learned that our connection with God allows us to endure and even find happiness in trials and difficulties. This month we will continue to examine Bible principles, and how they improve our happiness.

PHYSICAL HEALTH HABITS

In the first happiness article, we learned that happiness improves our physical health. But, the reverse is also true. When we take care of our physical health by engaging in healthy habits, this will also promote happiness. A number of studies looked at the connection between certain habits designed to improve our physical health, and their relationship to happiness. Let us look at some of these habits.

The happiest people sleep eight hours a night. In the United States, 42% of adults get less than the recommended seven hours of sleep a night. Exercise boosts endorphins, chemicals in the brain that are natural mood enhancers. New research also shows that working the body’s muscles makes the brain more resilient. Brain cells can be damaged by stress, leading to a decreased ability of the brain to respond appropriately to stress. Physical exercise builds new brain cells, and improves our ability to manage stress. People with low levels of a brain chemical called serotonin can suffer

with depression. Exposure to sunlight boosts serotonin which improves our mood.

Just the simple act of maintaining a good posture can boost our positive emotions. Those who stood up straight felt more enthusiastic, excited and strong. Those with poor posture were more fearful, passive and tired. Smiling lowers one’s heart rate during recovery from stress; smiling also is associated with a smaller drop in positive emotions during stress. In our diet, Omega-3 fatty acids are proven to decrease risk of mental illness. Overall, taking care of our physical health will improve our happiness.

The Spirit of Prophecy provides us with the guidelines that we need to adhere to for our physical health and happiness. Let us review some of the quotes from Ellen White:

“Excessive indulgence in eating, drinking, sleeping, or seeing is sin. The harmonious healthy action of all the powers of body and mind results in happiness; and the more elevated and refined the powers, the more pure and unalloyed the happiness.” —*Child Guidance* p. 394

“A healthful sleeping room, a thoroughly clean kitchen, and a tastefully arranged, wholesomely supplied table will go farther in securing the happiness of the family. . . than any amount of expensive furnishing in the drawing room.” —*Ibid.*, p. 365

“So closely is health related to our happiness that we cannot have the latter without the former.” —*A Call to Medical Evangelism and Health Education*, p. 33

Children need to learn these healthy habits from a young age. The habits formed in childhood will follow a person throughout their lives. Bad habits can doom a

person to ill health and misery. However, forming good habits will ensure health and happiness. “The future happiness of your families and the welfare of society depend largely upon the physical and moral education which your children receive in the first years of their life.” —*Child Guidance*, p. 103

LABOUR

What was one of the first things that God gave to man after He created him? “And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.” Genesis 2:15. Every study on happiness indicates that those who work are happier than those who do not. Idleness also brings many temptations. “And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.” 1 Timothy 5:13. If God knew that man would be happy living a life of leisure, He would have given it to him. Every need would have been supplied, without man having to strive to provide for himself. But, God knew that man would not be happy in this state. “Had happiness consisted in doing nothing, man, in his state of holy innocence, would have been left unemployed. But He who created man knew what would be for his happiness; and no sooner had He created him than He gave him his appointed work.” —*The Adventist Home*, p. 27

“Those who regard work as a curse, attended though it be with weariness and pain, are cherishing an error. The rich often look down upon the working classes, but this is at variance with God’s purpose in creating man. Adam was not to be idle. Our Creator, who understands what is for man’s happiness, appointed Adam his work. The true joy of life is found only by working men and women. The Creator has prepared no place for stagnating indolence.” —*From Eternity Past*, p. 20

We are given strong warnings against laziness and slothfulness in the Bible. “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” 1 Timothy 5:8. “Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.” Proverbs 19:15. “If any would not work, neither should he eat.” 2 Thessalonians 3:10. We are



not to expect to eat if we do not work. We must not be a burden on others by living an idle life. We must provide for ourselves, and also those of our household. The Bible uses strong words against those who do not provide for their families—they are worse than infidels.

“I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; And, lo, it was all grown over by thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw it, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep. So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.” Proverbs 24:30–34

As Christians, we learned earlier that we are to strive for the kingdom of God and His righteousness. But, along the way, as we move towards our heavenly goal, we have duties and responsibilities to fulfil. We have to take care of our families, we have to help those who are lonely, who are hungry and in want. But, does this create a life of drudgery? No; Sister White tells us that “Life’s happiness is bound up with faithfulness in common duties.” —*The Adventist Home*, p. 89

“The sentence that man must toil for his daily bread, and the promise of future happiness and glory, both came from the throne, and both are blessings. Poverty, in many cases, is a blessing.” —*Child Guidance*, p. 342

“God ordained that the beings He created should work. Upon this their happiness depends. . . Our happiness increases and our powers develop as we engage in useful employment.” —*Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White*, p. 75

We should not begrudge the hard work we must perform to provide for ourselves and our families. God has given labour to us as a blessing; we ought to be thankful to God every morning as we rise and we have useful employment to occupy our day, and thank Him again every night when we go to rest, weary yet fulfilled from the day’s labours.

FINDING PURPOSE

Few people know what they really want out of life. However, human beings need more than to just survive for them to feel any degree of self-worth, happiness or enthusiasm. Without a goal to aim for, people are not likely to find their life fulfilling, or even tolerable. We need a destination, a purpose, no matter what age we are. The feeling of there being a purpose to one’s existence provides that person with better strategies to deal

with difficult, sometime tragic experiences, which is a factor that protects from depression symptoms. People with no sense of purpose have feelings of hopelessness, which can lead to taking one's life. Purposeful living is linked to many aspects of physical wellbeing, including a longer life, lower risk of disease, better sleep and focus on healthier behaviours.

One who does not believe in God struggles with finding purpose in a life that is fragile, transient, and whose final end is death. However, the Christian does not have this same struggle. Inherent in the Christian life is a purpose that is defined by God's will for us, and it transcends this mortal life.

Jesus' life is our example. He had a purpose in coming down to this earth from heaven, to save man from his sins. He also showed us in His daily life, how we ought to live, as His followers. "From His earliest years He was possessed of one purpose. He lived to bless others." – *Child Guidance*, p. 51

"Christ came to the world to reveal the love of God. His followers are to continue the work which He began. Let us strive to help and strengthen one another. Seeking the good of others is the way in which true happiness can be found. Man does not work against his own interest by loving God and his fellow men. The more unselfish his spirit, the happier he is, because he is fulfilling God's purpose for him." – *Christian Service*, p. 24. "It is God's purpose that each shall feel himself necessary to others' welfare, and to seek to promote their happiness." – *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 339

Not only does the Bible give us direction on how to live

our life on earth, but we are also striving for a home that is better than anything we can find on this earth. This purpose brings about a happiness that many seek for in worldly attainments, yet are unable to find. And, as we look for a better life in heaven, we are also

told that we will find joy on this earth. "Thou wilt shew me the path of life; in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there is pleasures for evermore." Psalm 16:11

"A knowledge of the truth depends not so much upon strength of intellect as upon pureness of purpose, the simplicity of an earnest, dependent faith. . . The good-ground hearer, in receiving the word, accepts all its con-

ditions and requirements. His habits, customs, and practices are brought into submission to God's word. . . . With the whole heart, with undivided purpose, he is seeking the life eternal, and at the cost of loss, persecution, or death itself, he will obey the truth." – *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 60

How do we prepare for this future home? "The heart in which the love of Christ abides will constantly manifest more and more refinement; for the spring of life is love to God and man. Christ is Christianity. This is glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. This is the carrying out of God's purpose." – *Gospel Workers*, p. 282. We are to develop the character of Christ; this is the work of a lifetime. We cannot for one minute, turn our focus away from this goal. But the end result is eternal happiness.

We also can be free of worry when we do God's will. He tells us that our needs shall be supplied, when our purpose is focused on attaining characters fit for heaven. We may not have the luxuries that the world identifies with happiness; however, nothing that we need in order to survive will be lacking. "Therefore take no thought, saying, what shall we eat, or, what shall we drink? Or, wherewithal shall we be clothed? . . . For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things... but seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Matthew 6:31–33

Often when people retire, they die quickly when they lose purpose and meaning in their lives. Many think that the elderly should have less responsibilities as they do not have the energy they once did. However, having a purpose in life helps people maintain their function and independence as they age. People who reported having goals and a life with a sense of meaning were less likely to have weak grip strength and slow walking speeds—two signs of declining physical ability and risk factors for disability, including the development of Alzheimer's.

Sister White spoke about this regarding Elder Smith. "I feel very tender towards Elder Smith. My life interest in the publishing work is bound up with his. He came to us as a young man, possessing talents that qualified him to stand in his lot and place as an editor... When, some years ago, his name was placed second, I felt hurt. When it was again placed first, I wept and said, 'Thank God.' May it always be there, as God designs it shall be, while Elder Smith's right hand can hold a pen. And when the power of his hand fails, let his sons write at his dictation." – *Publishing Ministry*, p. 29

GRATITUDE

Many people focus on the negative aspects of their lives.



They complain about their jobs, their spouses, their children, they complain about how little time they have to do things they enjoy, they complain about the weather, and the list goes on. Are these people who continually complain worse off than those others who do not complain? No; they tend to have similar problems that others have who are less complaintive. Yet, those who complain are always unhappy. They look at the things in their life that are not as they would like, and they ignore the positive aspects of their lives. They may complain about their job, forgetting that there are those who do not even have a job, they complain about their spouses and children, yet forgetting that there are those who are completely alone, they complain about the amount of duties they have to perform, forgetting that idle hands are often used in pursuing the wrong types of pleasures.

Gratitude is simple. Look to the positive aspects of your life, count your blessings. And even if you are going through a difficult, stressful time, gratitude will turn your focus from your problems to the good things that God has given you. Appreciating life buffers a lot of the stress we endure. Start a gratitude journal. Every day, write down three things you are grateful for. Gratitude is the most changeable character strength with the most positive impact on a person. People who are regularly grateful are generally happier and healthier.

Expressions of gratitude towards others strengthen relationships. Start with your family. Even though you feel that your family members are “expected” to perform certain duties, still praise them for what they have done. And be specific about what you are grateful for; this has more meaning than general comments about being grateful for someone’s presence in your life.

Paul was grateful to his fellow believers and he often thanked them in the letters he wrote to them. In Philippians 1:3–5 he writes, “I thank God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.” In 1 Thessalonians 1:3, he also thanks his brethren, and goes into detail as to why he is thankful for them, “Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.” These expressions of gratitude would have lifted the spirits of those who were also labouring in the cause of the gospel, during a time of persecution and hardship. Paul went through many trials during his missionary journeys, but his letters did not complain about his circumstances. They were always full of hope, seeing beyond this world’s hardships, to a better life through Christ, and encouraging his brethren, letting them know that they are constantly in his prayers.

Who do we owe the most gratitude towards? Is it not the One who gave us life, who sustains us, who comforts us, who strengthens us, who gave His own life for us? Gratitude to our Saviour, who loves us unconditionally, who only wishes good things for us, will strengthen our relationship with Him, and will bring us joy in knowing that He will care for us, no matter what life brings us. David tells us, “Delight thyself also in the LORD; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.” Psalm 37:4

Our happiness is a choice. The Spirit of Prophecy has a warning for those who refuse to show gratitude to God. “You do not cherish love to God and gratitude of heart for all the blessings which your kind heavenly Father has bestowed upon you. You see only the discomforts of life. A worldly insanity shuts you in like heavy clouds of thick darkness. Satan exults over you because you will have misery when peace and happiness are at your command.” –*The Adventist Home*, p. 112

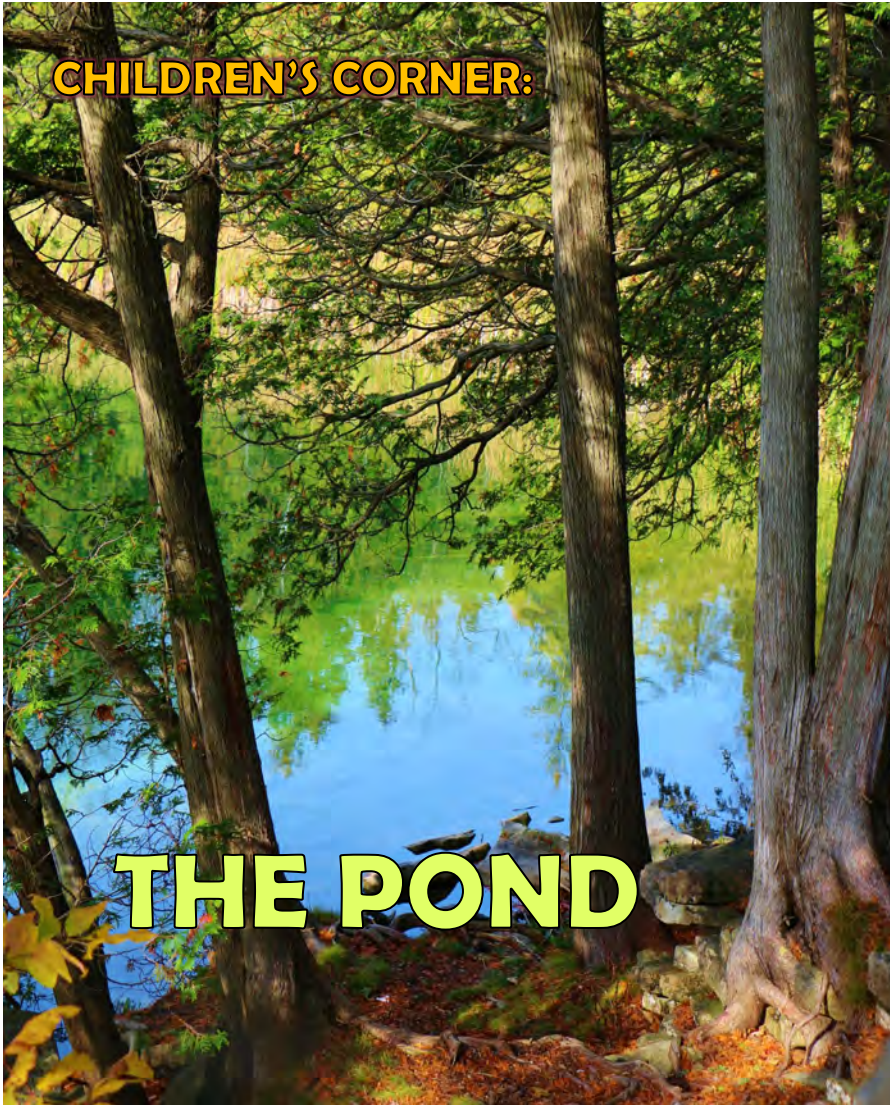
As you are reading this article, think of something that you are grateful for. Write it down. And then refer back to it during times of stress and hardship. It will lift your spirit, knowing that despite challenges in life, you also have many blessings that God has provided for you. And it is those blessings that we need to focus on. We are not seeking for a life on this earth that is filled with comfort and ease. “But now [we] desire a better country, that is, an heavenly.” Hebrews 11:16. And when we seek for the eternal home where “God shall wipe away all tears from [our] eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying” (Revelation 21:4), we will find that life here can also be filled with happiness.

“Religion tends directly to promote health, to lengthen life, and to heighten our enjoyment of all its blessings. It opens to the soul a never-failing fountain of happiness. . . . No real joy can be found in the path forbidden by Him who knows what is best, and who plans for the good of His creatures.” –*Christian Education*, p. 68

NEXT MONTH: HOW DO DIVINE PRINCIPLES PROMOTE HAPPINESS? PART 3



CHILDREN'S CORNER:



THE POND

"Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord." Colossians 3:20

"I'm sooooo bored," Jeremy said sighing. "I don't think I can stand another day like this."

"Hey, I know, let's go swimming in Taylor's pond!" said Stella.

"I don't know; we better not. Your grandma said to stay away from that pond, and there's a big 'NO SWIMMING' sign right there by the water," said Jeremy. "And besides, that would be disobeying your grandma."

"Oh, come on, be adventurous. She won't know; she's upstairs taking a nap. We'll be there and back before she wakes up, and who cares about some old sign? Just pretend you can't read. We'll be really quiet; no one will ever know," said Stella.

"I don't think we should," said Jeremy. "That sign was put there for a reason."

"Look, that sign isn't for us. It's for people who don't

live around here, that's all. I'm going whether you go or not," Stella said huffing as she ran out the door.

Taylor's Pond was just down the road from Stella's house. She had been dying to go swimming all summer. The pond was lined with beautiful pink flowering bushes, purple wild flowers and gigantic evergreen trees and there were woods right next to it. Sometimes, you could see deer wander out of the woods for a cool drink of water. If you didn't live nearby you would never know it was there.

"Wow, it's a really big pond," said Jeremy hesitantly as they climbed through the bushes.

"Isn't it wonderful?" cried Stella. "Come on, let's jump in."

"You go ahead. I'll just sit here by the tree and watch you," said Jeremy.

"Boy, you are such an old fuddy-duddy," said Stella as she jumped into the pond and started splashing around. After a few minutes, she cried, "Hey, Jeremy, the water's great, come on in."

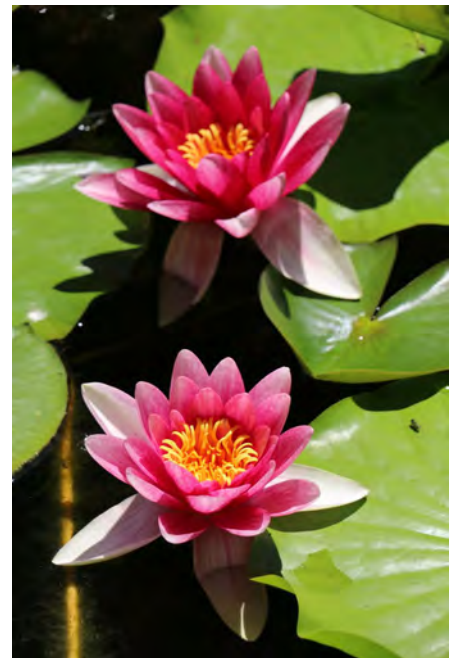
But Jeremy was nowhere to be found. Stella climbed out of the water and began looking around.

"Come on, Jeremy, this isn't funny. Where are you?"

After searching for a few minutes, and still not finding him, Stella was getting really worried. She finally decided she needed to get some help.

"Grandma, Grandma," cried Stella as she ran into the house. "Jeremy's missing, I can't find him!"

"What?" said Grandma. "Where did you



see him last?”

“Taylor’s Pond. When I jumped in the water Jeremy was sitting under a tree. I was just swimming around and when I looked back on the bank, he was gone!”

“Oh, my, let’s call for help and then go see if we can find him. I hope he hasn’t drowned,” exclaimed Grandma.

“What?” cried Stella.

“Don’t you know? Jeremy can’t swim,” said Grandma.

“He never told me that,” exclaimed Stella. “Hurry, we’ve got to find him!”

Stella and her grandma ran back to the pond just as the police and fire department were arriving. Everyone was calling Jeremy’s name and looking for him.

“I found him!” cried a police officer as he and Jeremy walked out of the woods.

“Oh, Jeremy, where were you?” said Stella as she raced toward her best friend. “I thought something horrible happened when I couldn’t find you.”

“Naaaaw, I’m okay. I just went into the woods to explore,” he said.

“Well, why didn’t you tell me you were going into the woods?” Stella said.

“I was embarrassed because I can’t swim. That’s why I didn’t want to go swimming with you,” he said.

“Well, I know that now. My grandma told me.....” Her voice trailed off as she looked at her grandma.

“Stella, I think we need to have a talk,” stated Grandma. “There’s a reason I told you to stay away from Taylor’s Pond. Even if Jeremy could swim, something terrible could have happened to either one of you.”

“I know,” said Stella, “but it was so hot and we were bored.”

“I understand that, but you deliberately disobeyed me, Stella. There are certain rules for children and grandchildren, for their own safety. How would you have felt if something had happened to Jeremy, or to you for that matter?”

“I know. I’m so sorry.” Stella sighed. “I won’t ever disobey you again, Grandma.”

“Okay, let’s go home and eat some of those cookies I baked this morning,” said Grandma.

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.” Ephesians 6:1

Sometimes you may not understand why your parents and grandparents make certain rules for you, but you are instructed that you must obey without question. You need to trust that they have your best interest in mind. As you obey your parents, you are obeying God.

Just because your parents may not see what you are doing, God can see everything you do and that is more important. He does not miss anything and He has His angels write everything down.

Achan thought he was doing something in secret. He took some gold and clothing from Jericho and hid them in his tent. Joshua and the leaders in Israel did not see or notice, but God saw. In the end God revealed the actions of Achan to Joshua and Achan lost his life.

Joseph’s brothers were not doing things that were right and tried to keep it a secret from their father. However, their younger brother Joseph saw and told his father. Joseph faithfully followed the Lord and was obedient and in the end God blessed him and he was made prime minister in Egypt, while his brothers never received such honours.

In Ancient Israel, anyone who lacked respect for their parents was punished severely. “For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death.” Leviticus 20:9. God is not happy when you do not respect your parents. He looks at it as a terrible sin.

“Children who dishonor and disobey their parents, and disregard their advice and instructions, can have no part in the earth made new. The purified new earth will be no place for the rebellious, the disobedient, the ungrateful son or daughter. Unless such learn obedience and submission here, they will never learn it; the peace of the ransomed will not be marred by disobedient, unruly, unsubmitive children. No commandment breaker can inherit the kingdom of heaven.” –*The Adventist Home*, p. 294

Even though nothing bad ended up happening to Jeremy in our story, something bad could have happened. When we disobey, sometimes God, in His mercy, keeps us safe from bad things happening, but still God is not happy. He is very sad when we disobey, because He cannot take disobedient children to heaven. He wants each and every one of you in heaven with Him.

Make a decision today, that you will obey and respect your parents at all times.

Gifts



ELIEZER'S GIFTS

We are all familiar with the story of Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, and his mission to find a suitable God-fearing wife for Abraham's "son of promise", Isaac.

Eliezer prayed and asked God for a sign that would reveal/inform him that he had found the woman that would be a suitable mate for Isaac. He did not leave this important task to his own wisdom and understanding. She was to be the mother of a great nation. He prayed to God that if he was to ask for a drink of water, the woman whom he approached would also offer to provide his camels with water. Let us remember, providing water for ten camels would not have been an easy task. The camels had traveled far through the desert, and would require a lot of water to quench their thirst. At the well He saw a woman named Rebekah. He approached her with the request to draw water for him. After she gave him water, she offered to take on the arduous task of providing water for all his camels.

"And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher. And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hastened, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink. And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking. And she hastened, and emptied her pitcher into the



trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels. And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit

whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not." Genesis 24:17-21

What do we notice in verses 20 and 21? The servant of Abraham allowed Rebekah to complete the whole job of drawing water for the camels. Why would Eliezer allow Rebekah to complete the entire job in the heat of the desert? Was it not enough that she had passed the test by offering to draw water for his camels? Quite simply, Eliezer wanted to see if she was the kind of person who would make a promise, or offer help, but then not follow through. This was very important, as Rebekah was soon to engage in a very solemn promise of a lifelong marriage and commitment to Isaac. It was not enough to make the promise to marry Isaac, but it would have to be followed by a lifetime of action in following through on the promise.

"And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold; And said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in?" Genesis 24:22-23

We read that Eliezer offered Rebekah gifts of a golden earring and two bracelets. What was the purpose for Eliezer to provide these gifts to Rebekah? Firstly, he gave them because he was showing gratitude for the great help Rebekah had been in watering his camels. And, secondly, this gift was an attempt to show Rebekah that Eliezer came with peaceful intentions, representing an overture of friendship. This was important as it helped to open the way for Eliezer's request to stay with Rebekah and her family, and increased the chance of them granting this request. It also prepared the way for him to share with the family the exact nature of his important mission.

“And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well. And it came to pass, when he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man; and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well. And he said, Come in, thou blessed of the LORD; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels.” Genesis 24:29–31

It is clear that seeing these earrings and bracelets was a factor in Rebekah's family welcoming Eliezer with open arms. Also, as mentioned before, it was an indicator to Rebekah's family that he was serious about his mission and there was an importance to it.

“And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things.” Genesis 24:53

Why were gifts given here? It is quite clear that it was in thankfulness to Rebekah's parents and family members for trusting in the Lord, in allowing her to go with Eliezer to a foreign land. This would definitely have taken quite a degree of trust. Also, it would have been an assurance that Rebekah would be well taken care of, and that Abraham, Isaac and their household had the necessary resources to ensure a good life for Rebekah.

Gift giving can be important in certain situations, and being that he was on an important God-given mission, these gifts helped Eliezer complete that mission.

Richard Eaton

THE THREE WISE MEN

Gifts are an important part of every child's life, during holidays, celebrations, and most of all, on birthdays. Do we remember what Jesus received as birthday gifts? Three wise men from the East saw a bright and luminous star. They followed it to see where it led. It



brought them to Bethlehem, where they found Jesus. “And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped Him: and when they had opened their

treasures, they presented unto Him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.” Matthew 2:11. What were these gifts for and why were they necessary? According to historians, these items were gifts you would regularly offer to a king or an idol. Frankincense was used as a perfume or an incense. Myrrh was an anointing oil. Gold was considered a very precious metal. In the book of Isaiah, when describing Jerusalem's restoration, it depicts multiple kings and nations who brought gifts to praise the Lord. “The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the LORD.” Isaiah 60:6 These gifts were of the type that were suited for a king, and Jesus was a king. Yes, a king. A small baby in a manger given extravagant gifts normally given to kings. Giving gifts is an act of unselfishness. Searching for a gift for someone can provide an emotional lift. Do you not feel happy when you give someone a gift? I know I do. It is my wish and prayer that throughout our lives, we continue to think about others, by being generous.

Stephen Newby

DORCAS

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

Dorcas lived in the city of Joppa where there were many people in need. Her kindness had made her very much loved and well known in her city. She was always willing to help someone. Her life was full of acts of kindness towards others. Oftentimes she would sew dresses and clothing for the poor and needy. If it was food they needed, she would bring fruits and bread. She knew exactly what each person needed. Her gifts not only included clothing and food, but also kind words to the sorrowful.



Following the example of Dorcas, many churches have a Dorcas group or ministry. In the time of Sister White, she was part of a Dorcas society in her home. “Last evening we had a Dorcas society in our home, and my

workers who help in the preparation of my articles for the papers and do the cooking and sewing, five of them, sat up until midnight, cutting out clothing. They made three pairs of pants for the children of one family. Two sewing machines were running until midnight. I think there was never a happier set of workers than were these girls last evening.” —*Welfare Ministry*, p. 334

Sister White saw the happiness that helping others brings to us. There are many ways we can be helpful to others. God expects this of us. When we do our best for others, God will increase our blessings and do His best for us.

“For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.” Isaiah 54:10

It is my wish and prayer that we may learn of Dorcas and be a blessing to all people. Jesus said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Acts 20:36

Sarah Newby

ESTHER AND MORDECAI

Let us refresh our memories on who Esther and Mordecai were. Esther was appointed Queen of Persia. Both of her parents had died and Mordecai, who was Esther’s cousin, took care of her as if she was his own daughter. Both Esther and Mordecai were Jews. He instructed her to never reveal who her family was when she became queen.

Then we read of Haman, who was a man of high position. The King commanded everyone to honor Haman. They were to show reverence. However, Mordecai refused to do so. People questioned him, asking why he would not obey the King’s command. Mordecai still refused. He was a Jew and only worshipped the God of heaven. The people informed Haman about it, so Haman thought of a plan as to how to destroy Mordecai. “And he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone; for they had shewed him the people of Mordecai: wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai.” Esther 3:6

Haman went and spoke to the King, informing him that not everyone was obeying his law, and that it was not good that the King was putting up with them. He got the King to make a law to destroy the Jews on a certain day. “And the letters were sent by posts into all the

king’s provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey.” Esther 3:13. When Mordecai found out what had been done, he tore his clothes and wore sackcloth with ashes. He cried out loud in the city, meaning he made it very public for everyone to see. The Bible mentions that other Jews also sobbed with him and wore sackcloth with ashes. We read in Esther 4:4–5, “So Esther’s maids and her chamberlains came and told it her. Then was the queen exceedingly grieved; and she sent raiment to clothe Mor-



decai, and to take away his sackcloth from him: but he received it not. Then called Esther for Hatach, one of the king’s chamberlains, whom he had appointed to attend upon her, and gave him a commandment to Mordecai, that he tell her what the problem. Esther, instead of asking what was wrong with him first, she

sent him clothes as a gift. Once he refused them, she then wanted to know what was wrong with him.

I do not know if Esther’s gift was good or bad, but I personally think that because of the situation that Mordecai was going through, the gift was not useful or necessary. I think Esther perhaps had good intentions with her gift, but there was no thought put into it. It is as if she just wanted Mordecai’s pain and sorrow to end quickly. Her gift, in reality, had no meaning to it.

What we can learn from this gift-giving is to always observe a situation first, not just jump to conclusions. In this story, we see that a gift was not even useful. The best gift that Mordecai could have received was to have the problem fixed, but first he had to be heard.

Gifts can come in many ways such as a kind word, a listening ear, or through a material item. We need to be observant, kind, and thoughtful in our gift-giving. To conclude, I would like to read a passage from Sister White that says: “We are to give in sincerity not to make a show of our good deeds. . . . Sincerity of purpose, real kindness of heart, is the motive that Heaven values.” Amen.

Mabel Urizar

Uganda




India



Canada



A large fountain with multiple water jets in a park setting, with a brick building and mountains in the background. The fountain is the central focus, with water spraying upwards in several streams. The background features a brick building with a central archway, surrounded by lush green trees and a clear blue sky with some clouds. The overall scene is bright and vibrant, suggesting a sunny day in a well-maintained park.

“We need to drink deeper and deeper of the fountain of life. I hope that not a soul will be satisfied without making thorough work for eternity, and from this time on may it be seen, both by precept and example, that you are representatives of Christ.” -*Faith and Works*, p. 61