



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

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Ladder to Heaven

“And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.”

Genesis 28:12

“Jacob thought to gain a right to the birthright through deception, but he found himself disappointed. He thought he had lost everything, his connection with God, his home, and all, and there he was a disappointed fugitive. But what did God do? He looked upon him in his hopeless condition, He saw his disappointment, and He saw there was material there that would render back glory to God. No sooner does He see his condition than He presents the mystic ladder, which represents Jesus Christ. Here is man, who had lost all connection with God, and the God of heaven looks upon him and consents that Christ shall bridge the gulf which sin has made. We might have looked and said, I long for heaven but how can I reach it? I see no way. That is what Jacob thought, and so God shows him the vision of the ladder, and that ladder connects earth with heaven, with Jesus Christ. A man can climb it, for the base rests upon the earth and the top-most round reaches into heaven.” *—The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 1095*

“Jesus is the ladder to heaven. Angels ascend and descend this ladder of shining brightness; and God calls upon us to mount this ladder. But we can not do this while we load ourselves down with earthly treasures. We wrong ourselves when we place our convenience and personal advantages before the things of God.

There is no salvation in earthly possessions or surroundings. A man is not exalted in God's sight, or accredited by Him as possessing goodness, because He has earthly riches. If we gain a genuine experience in climbing, we shall learn that as we ascend we must leave every hindrance behind. Those who mount must place their feet firmly on every round of the ladder.” *—The Signs of the Times, February 1, 1899*

“We are saved by climbing round after round of the ladder, looking to Christ, clinging to Christ, mounting step by step to the height of Christ, so that He is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. Faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity are the rounds of this ladder.” *—The Faith I Live By, p. 120*

“The ladder which Jacob saw in the night vision, the base of it resting upon the earth and the topmost round reaching unto the highest heavens; God Himself above the ladder, and His glory shining upon every round; angels ascending and descending upon this ladder of shining brightness, is a symbol of constant communication kept up between this world and heavenly places. God accomplishes His will through the instrumentality of heavenly angels in continual intercourse with humanity. This ladder reveals a direct and important channel of communication with the inhabitants of this earth. The ladder represented to Jacob the world's Redeemer, who links earth and heaven together. Every one who has seen the evidence and light of truth and accepts the truth, professing his faith in Jesus Christ, is a missionary in the highest sense of the word. He is the receiver of heavenly treasures, and it is his duty to impart them, to diffuse that which he has received.” *—Christian Education, p. 155–156*

“Ye inhabitants of the earth, praise Him! And why? Because through Jesus Christ--whose long human arm encircles the race, while with His divine arm He grasps the throne of the Infinite--the gulf is bridged with His own body, and this atom of a world which was separated from the continent of heaven by sin and became an island is again reinstated, because Christ bridged the gulf.” *—The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 1095*

Ellen G. White

Gain that is Loss



Have you ever sinned, hoping to gain something in your life but you regretted it later? I think most of us have done so. Although there are many times people hope to gain something by sin, whether small or great, sin can cause the loss of property and money, but more importantly, it can cause a loss of happiness, peace, health, and even cause one's death. The greatest loss is the loss of eternal life. Millions of Christians continue committing sin, hoping to get ahead in this life, or to bring them a few brief moments of happiness, but in the end it can result in the loss of their salvation if they do not repent.

In the Bible, we read many times of people sinned, hoping to gain something, but they lost much.

Adam and Eve sinned when they disobeyed God's commandment by eating of the forbidden tree. We all still suffer from this original sin. For this, what may appear to have been a small sin, they lost much. They had to move out of paradise, they had to die, and Jesus chose to then die for them. How many times perhaps did Adam and Eve say, "why did we eat of this tree? It would have been better that we had never even gone near this tree."

Cain committed a terrible sin by killing his brother Abel. God said to Cain, "And He said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground, And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in

the earth." Genesis 4:10-12

Jacob listened to his mother and sinned by lying to his father, and as a result he had to leave his home and spend 20 years in a far country. Although the Lord forgave him for this sin when he repented shortly after fleeing home, he had to bear the consequences for many years afterwards. He was deceived by his father-in-law and also, his children lied to him about their brother, Joseph.

Moses sinned by hitting the rock to provide water for the people when God had asked him to speak to the rock. For this sin Moses could not bring the people into the Promised Land.

"Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believe Me not, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." Numbers 20:8, 11-12

David sinned by taking the wife of Uriah to himself. To cover his sin, he ended up killing her husband who was one of his most faithful soldiers. It was not his original intention to kill him; however, due to his first sin, it led to the second more grievous sin. "And

it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. And David sent and enquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house. And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am with child." 2 Samuel 11:2-5

For this sin David suffered much; he lost four children prematurely.

Judas' sin resulted in the loss of his temporal life and also his eternal life. Ananias and his wife, Saphira sinned by lying to the church. They also lost their lives and their eternal lives.

All these sins were very harmful and had terrible results. Some may have appeared small to human eyes, but to God they were grievous. Many of these people thought that they gained by these sins, that the sins would benefit them in the end.

Adam and Eve thought that they would gain new knowledge and would be like God. Jacob thought that he needed to help God so he could receive the firstborn blessing that had been promised him. What about Moses? What did he seek to gain? He was frustrated at the murmuring of the people and sought to bring honour back to the name of God and respect back to himself as the leader. He sought to vindicate his name and character as often the people were blaming him for all their troubles.

David thought of the pleasure he would receive when he took another man's wife in secret. Even when the Prophet Nathan spoke to him, he did not recognise his sin. Judas was very intelligent, yet initially saw no sin in betraying Jesus; he saw only a great gain, until it was too late. Ananias and Saphira saw nothing wrong in deceiving the church; they only saw a financial gain. Where did all these people go wrong? They all thought that they gained by their sins.

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah 53:6

Our own way may seem best for us, according to our

knowledge and our wisdom, even if it includes a very small sin or "white" lie. People can reason that these small sins are ok because they are for the greater good and God will understand. However, opposite to our own way is the way of God, which goes against our natural tendencies, and our normal desires. God's way is a way of self denial, the way of the cross and suffering. It is a narrow way. It is not a way of earthly honour, wealth and glory. God's way we do not know naturally; we learn it from the Bible. Then comes the battle, do we choose God's way or our own way? Only few of the people who profess to be Christians choose God's way; their own way seems better for them. They see greater gain in their own way.

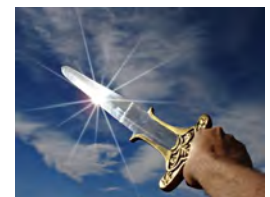
It is a great sin to go against the Bible's teaching. God established His laws for us, but sometimes man does not trust God's wisdom. God says, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Exodus 20:8. Man says, "No, keep Sunday as a day of rest." God says, "the dead know not anything." Ecclesiastes 9:5. Man says, "the dead know everything." God says, "for the wages of sin is death." Romans 6:23. Man says, "the wages of sin is eternal life in a hellfire." Millions of professing Christians sin by disobeying God and following their own ways.



"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:8-9

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!" Isaiah 5:20-21

Let us compare the way of God to the way of man. The way of God is: "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully." 2 Timothy 2:3-5



The way of man (including unconverted Christians) is to seek an easy life, a comfortable life, with much fun and pleasure. Which one of these two ways appeals to you? Which one would you choose for yourself?

“Many are ruined by their decision for a life of ease and pleasure. Self denial is disagreeable to them. They are constantly seeking to escape trials that are inseparable from a course of fidelity to God. They set their hearts upon having the good things of this life. This is human success, but is it not one at the expense of future eternal interests? The great business of life is to show ourselves to be true servants of God, loving righteousness and hating iniquity.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 70

The greatest loss to us is the loss of earnestness and persevering zeal to do right; also the loss of strength to resist the temptations of Satan and the loss of faith in the principles of truth. Satan deceives people into thinking they can have the pleasures of this life and heaven also. But this is a lie. The ways of this world may seem to provide happiness, but it is gain that is lost.

“Let no man flatter himself that he is a successful man until he preserves the integrity of his conscience, giving himself wholly to the truth and to God. We should move steadily forward, never losing heart or hope in the good work, whatever trials beset our path, whatever moral darkness may encompass us. Patience, faith, and love for duty are the lessons we much learn. Subduing self and looking to Jesus is an everyday work. The Lord will never forsake the soul that trusts in Him and seeks His aid.” –*Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 70

To seek an easy, comfortable life is to seek death and separation from God. Man rejoices when he has a feast, much food, drinks, being with friends, joking, and laughing. God’s way to rejoice is: “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified.” 1 Peter 4:12–14

“Blessed are you, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.” Matthew 5:11–12

Jesus said, “And the brother shall deliver up the brother

to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.” Matthew 10:21

All this we must endure, and then we will be overcomers, and ready for heaven. This happened already in 1914 when the Seventh-day Adventist leaders disfellowshipped members who refused to join the army. They also wrote letters to the police and to the government, giving the names and addresses of the members whom they disfellowshipped, so that they would be punished by the government. What happened to the love towards our neighbours and towards erring brethren?

A satanic spirit has overtaken our world, and many Christians. When love dies towards brother or sister, then the love to God dies also. Unless we are connected to Christ we can easily sin and step into our own way and be lost. Self confidence is very dangerous. Pride and selfishness are poisons that kill us spiritually. Let us learn humility from Paul, “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given.” Ephesians 3:8

No sin, however small, will be of any gain to us. We may receive a little temporal advantage, as Satan may deceive us and bless us, but in the end we lose eternal life. That loss is worse than any gain we may get in this world from sin.

When we realize that we are less than the least of all the other church members, then we are better able to tolerate others who also are faulty; we do not put ourselves above them. Then we learn to appreciate the way of God, and our own way becomes foolishness and sinful to us. We also learn to love our enemies. Then there will be unity in the church. This is true gain that is not lost. Amen.

Timo Martin





If you asked someone what they wanted, telling them they could have anything they want, you would get a variety of answers. People in the world (and unconverted Christians) ask for fame, fortune, a good spouse, a big house, enough money to not have to work any longer to earn a living, a good education . . . and so on. Some people will ask for peace and happiness.

All these wants are selfish wants. Even the request for peace and happiness can be made from selfish motives. They want their own lives to be free from conflict. They do not care what happens to others. They want themselves to be happy, and hope to have a life where others treat them well, so that they are happy.

The Lord is well-able to provide all these things for a person, if He chooses.

At one time the Lord came and offered King Solomon anything he wanted: "In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee." 1 Kings 3:5. The Lord knew very well what Solomon needed, but He still told him to ask. He did this to test the king.

"And Thy servant is in the midst of Thy people which Thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore Thy servant an understanding heart to judge Thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this Thy so great a people? And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing." 1 Kings 3:8-10. Solomon asked for a wise and understanding heart so that he could be a wise leader, not to bring fame and honour to himself, but to understand the problems of others and be able to help them.

When Elijah was about to be translated he asked Elisha a similar question. He told Elisha to ask for whatever was in his heart. "And it came to pass, when they were gone

over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee." 2 Kings 2:9 (first half). He could have asked for temporal or material favour, riches, fame, wisdom, worldly honour and glory, a place among the great leaders of earth, or a life of ease and pleasure. But no, he did not ask for these. What he wanted to do was to carry on the same work that Elijah had carried on. In the same spirit and power. He asks for no worldly advantage, position or gain, but for the spiritual power necessary to carry on the work. "And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." 2 Kings 2:9 (second

half)

His request was answered and the Lord blessed Elisha with a double portion of Elijah's spirit and he was a blessing to the nation of Israel. The answer Elisha gave was pleasing to the Lord.

Both of these responses were not self-centred. Both were for the purpose of helping and blessing others. The Lord is pleased when someone asks something wise and good, to be a blessing for others. It brings joy to His heart.

Jesus makes you the same offer that was given to Solomon and to Elisha. Many, many sermons have been spoken, and articles written about His offer. He says: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Matthew 7:7-8. Luke also records this offer (Luke 11:9-10).

Ask yourself honestly, what would you answer to Jesus? Now, why does Jesus make this offer? He realizes that it is impossible for sinners of themselves to live their lives in harmony with heavenly principles. To live a life for Christ, we must receive the strength that Jesus is offering. All that is needed for salvation is offered, all we have to do is ask, seek, and knock. You will not be disappointed. The Lord is not sparing with His gifts. He is gracious and merciful. Children often are not hesitant to ask their parents for things they want, and nor should we be hesitant to ask our heavenly Father for our needs.

Matthew repeats this opportunity. "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." Matthew 21:22. The only condition added by Matthew here is "believing." You have to ask—and believe that it will be answered.

John, in his gospel also repeats this promise several times. He says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever

er ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." John 16:23–24. "That whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you." John 15:16. "And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in My name, I will do it." John 14:13–14

Notice that none of these verses say to ask and it will be sold unto you; loaned to you; rented to you. No; it is a gift. Ask and it shall be given. Free!

The offer was also valid in Old Testament times to all believers. "Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." Jeremiah 33:3. The Lord does not say He *might* answer. He says He *will* answer.

We can read of many great men in the Bible who had the faith to believe that the Lord would answer when they asked. I will mention a few.

Abraham spoke personally with Jesus and asked regarding Sodom. The Lord promised Abraham He would not destroy the city if He found ten faithful souls (Genesis 18:18–33).

Joshua asked for the sun to stand still. "Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and



thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon." Joshua 10:12. And, what did the Lord do? "And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of

Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day." Joshua 10:13

Elijah prayed once for fire to come down from heaven—and it came. "No sooner is the prayer of Elijah ended than flames of fire, like brilliant flashes of lightning, descend from heaven upon the upreared altar, consuming the sacrifice, licking up the water in the trench, and consuming even the stones of the altar." *—Prophets and Kings*, p. 152–153

Later the same day, he had to pray seven times for rain before his request was granted. "But the prophet did not give up in discouragement. He kept reviewing his life, to see where he had failed to honor God, he confessed his sins, and thus continued to afflict his soul before God, while watching for a token that his prayer was answered. As he searched his heart, he seemed to be less and less,

both in his own estimation and in the sight of God. It seemed to him that he was nothing, and that God was everything; and when he reached the point of renouncing self, while he clung to the Saviour as his only strength and righteousness, the answer came." *—The Review and Herald*, May 26, 1891

"If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." Matthew 17:20. This is the kind of faith we need. We must not hesitate to ask in times of need. Do you have this kind of faith? "Is any thing too hard for the LORD?" Genesis 18:14

The answer may not come as we expect. We have to be prepared for the unexpected. Jacob went to pray at night for the safety of his family from the anger of his brother and he found himself wrestling with an angel (Genesis 32:24–30), whom he initially thought was the enemy.

The Lord also hears every small request that is fretting us. How many have prayed for small things such as where they had misplaced their keys? No request is unimportant to the Lord, if it is made from a genuine motive. The Lord is real and He is very near. Although these small matters may not seem important as far as our salvation goes, they are distressing to us, and the Lord does not like to see us distressed. He loves us and these answers to our small requests build our faith to believe that He will also answer larger requests.

Any request regarding our salvation and the salvation of those around us, the Lord is more than happy to answer. He is waiting for you to ask; whether you ask for a small or a great matter, His ear can hear.

"Through faith God's children have 'subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.' Hebrews 11:33, 34. And through faith we today are to reach the heights of God's purpose for us. 'If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.' Mark 9:23." *—Prophets and Kings*, p. 157

Isaiah wrote: "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." Isaiah 65:24. And Matthew wrote: "Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him." Matthew 6:8

Then why do we need to ask if the Lord has already answered, or knows what we need? Even before you ask, the Lord anticipates your requests and provides His an-

swer. As with everything else, it starts with God's love. God wants to hear our voice. He desires that we pour out our hearts to Him, not because He does not already know our hearts and our needs, but because each time we come to Him we are offering ourselves freely to God. We like it when we communicate with our children and they ask. We would not be happy just simply providing them all their needs, which we know of, without any communication of wants and needs with them.

Prayers is not actually an information session, informing the Lord of what He does not know. Nor is it a means of trying to persuade Him to do something that He was perhaps unwilling to do. Prayer links us with heaven—with omnipotence and conditions our wills to cooperate with His will. That is what Jesus wants—a connection with your heart. "Ye have not, because ye ask not." James 4:2

The Lord may grant our requests even if they are not the best:

Sometimes we ask for something and we keep begging God, but it is not for our good. The Lord at first says, "no," but we do not accept the "no" and keep asking. This happened to Balaam. The Lord said, no, you cannot go curse Israel. But Balaam's greed got the better of him and he asked again and again. Finally the Lord relented. It all backfired on Balaam and in the end he lost his life and likely his eternal life (Numbers 22–24).

The children of Israel were crying to the Lord for a king so they could be like the other nations. The Lord finally gave in to their requests. This was not what God's original plan had been for the nation. The people later recognised their mistake, but it was too late. "And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the LORD thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king. 1 Samuel 12:19. Although they went through their trials, the Lord, in His mercy, did not forsake the nation when they were faithful. "And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the LORD: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD." 2 Chronicles 20:3–4. The Lord answered their prayer and helped them.

Some are afraid to ask. "But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask Him." Mark 9:32. Jesus had just informed the disciples that He would suffer and die. They did not understand, but were afraid to ask be-

cause they did not really want to believe it would happen. So they remained silent. They were afraid to ask, in case it was really true. People fear to ask because they anticipate an answer they do not want to hear. They are not willing to have a relationship with the Lord and commit their lives to Him.

Some feel they are too sinful to ask. When you have done something amiss, something you know you should not have done you often feel very guilty and fear to come before God because you think He will not listen. You say, "I do not deserve God's help!" "I am just not good enough!" The question we need to ask is not, are *we* good enough, but is *the Blood of Jesus* good enough? We know the answer to that question. The Blood of Jesus can cleanse from any sin. If God is interested in each blade of grass and each little bird, how much more is He interested in you (Matthew 6:26–34)?

"Satan will seek to discourage you, he will tell you that it is of no use for you to go to Christ, that you are too sinful; but take the promise of God, and declare in his face: 'It is written,' 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' The blood of Jesus is able to cleanse you from all unrighteousness, and He can save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him. He has esteemed you of so great value that He has given His life for you, and will you allow anything to separate you from Him? Let nothing come between you and your Lord. Come unto Him in full assurance of faith, lay your every care upon Him, for He careth for you." *—The Signs of the Times*, January 26, 1891

Some have too much pride to ask. They constantly tell themselves, "I'll do it myself!" They feel too wise in their own knowledge to ask the Lord. Whether it is their health, their work, their study or any task that they undertake, they feel they have enough knowledge themselves to manage. The truth is that relying on God is not weakness. There is nothing that we can do that God cannot do better. He is Wonderful, Counselor, the Almighty God. We are weak if we refuse His help.

King Ahaz was too proud to ask anything when he was prompted by Isaiah to ask. "Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD. And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?" Isaiah 7:11–13

The Lord made this offer to strengthen the faith of Ahaz. Signs such as these are often given to establish the faith of weak minds. Gideon asked for a sign (Judges 6:37–40)



and his faith was strengthened. However, Ahaz did not want to ask. He did not want to believe, and wanted nothing that might help him believe. He did not want a sign to influence his mind. In the end he sought the help of the Assyrians instead of the help of the Lord. God offered help, but he refused. He determined to have nothing to do with God

Some have too much doubt to ask: They do not believe that God will answer. They doubt because the answer is perhaps delayed. Or the answer is not given.

Pray and search your heart. The reality is that: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Psalm 66:18. "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." James 4:3. Answers to our requests depend both on the nature of the request, and also on the spirit of the prayer. When you ask amiss (Greek word *Kakos*, "wrongly") it is with improper motives.

If the person who is asking (praying), does not have a desire to submit himself to the will of God in his personal life he will be praying amiss. Their prayers and requests are often for personal gratification. Even if it is for things good in themselves, they may be made to glorify self instead of God. The Lord may not answer, and so they doubt He will answer in the future so they stop asking.

We can never weary the Lord in asking for genuine needs. He delights to help us with our needs and encourage our faith through signs and wonders. We have to believe.

Prayer requests not to be forgotten:

In our daily prayers we often thank the Lord for His many benefits and blessings, and we also make our requests known to Him. Common requests are for guidance, for protection, for our daily needs to be met (not tomorrow's needs) and we intercede for others, praying for their needs also (the poor, the sick, the backslidden).

"Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ." *Steps to Christ*, p. 70

Unity: On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the believers. "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." Acts 1:14. We must put away all differences we may have with our brethren and pray for perfect unity in the church so that the Latter Rain can be poured out soon.

Rain in time of Latter Rain: "Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain; so the LORD shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field." Zechariah 10:1. Here is a very important request. Many take this to mean we should be praying daily for the Latter Rain. While this is well and good to add to our prayer list, what is the verse really stating? What are we to ask for? We are to ask for "rain." If the Latter Rain will be poured out and we have no rain, of what value is it to us? It will be a benefit to many others, but we need to search our hearts so that we *will* receive the rain in the time of the Latter Rain. "But unless the members of God's church today have a living connection with the Source of all spiritual growth, they will not be ready for the time of reaping." *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 55

Pray for the Holy Spirit and also an increase of faith: "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" Luke 11:13. "Let every church member kneel before God, and pray earnestly for the impartation of the Spirit. Cry, 'Lord, increase my faith. Make me to understand Thy word; for the entrance of Thy word giveth light. Refresh me by Thy presence. Fill my heart with Thy Spirit.'" *God's Amazing Grace*, p. 191

Ask for greater burden for souls: "Let us awake from sleep, and pray as we have never prayed before, that the burden of souls may rest upon us. The burden of my message to you is, Get ready, get ready to meet the Lord. Trim your lamps, and let the light of truth shine forth into the byways and hedges. There is a world to be warned of the near approach of the end of all things." *The General Conference Bulletin*, June 6, 1909, p. 345-346

"There are some who feel no burden for souls. While they claim to believe that the end is at hand, covetousness has blinded their eyes to the wants of the cause of God. The means which He has placed in their hands to be used to His glory, they are binding up in houses and lands, while the saving truth, which God has intrusted to us to be given to the world, is hedged about and shut in by poverty. God calls upon every individual believer to do to the utmost of his ability, and then to pray in faith for God to do what man cannot." *The Review and Herald*, October 5, 1886

Ask when it is time to sell our properties and lands: "Houses and lands will be of no use to the saints in the time of trouble, for they will then have to flee before infuriated mobs, and at that time their possessions cannot be disposed of to advance the cause of present truth. I was shown that it is the will of God that the saints should

cut loose from every encumbrance before the time of trouble comes, and make a covenant with God through sacrifice. If they have their property on the altar and earnestly inquire of God for duty, He will teach them when to dispose of these things. Then they will be free in the time of trouble and have no clogs to weigh them down.

"I saw that if any held on to their property and did not inquire of the Lord as to their duty, He would not make duty known, and they would be permitted to keep their property, and in the time of trouble it would come up before them like a mountain to crush them, and they would try to dispose of it, but would not be able. I heard some mourn like this: 'The cause was languishing, God's people were starving for the truth, and we made no effort to supply the lack; now our property is useless. Oh, that we had let it go, and laid up treasure in heaven!' I saw that a sacrifice did not increase, but it decreased and was consumed. I also saw that God had not required all of His people to dispose of their property at the same time; but if they desired to be taught, He would teach them, in a time of need, when to sell and how much to sell. Some have been required to dispose of their property in times past to sustain the Advent cause, while others have been permitted to keep theirs until a time of need. Then, as the cause needs it, their duty is to sell." *-Early Writings*, p. 56
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"Ask for humility, wisdom, courage, increase of faith, that you may see light in God's light and rejoice in His love." *-Help in Daily Living*, p. 61

Do not pray for the Lord to take the situation away, but to give you strength to endure the trying position you find yourself in: When in difficult situations we are tempted cry to God asking Him to remove us from the situation. Instead of asking "God, please take this situation from me," we should pray, "Lord, show me the lesson you want me to learn; why did you bring me into this?" This specific situation you find yourself in may be what God ordained for your salvation

"What a wonder it is that we pray so little! God is ready and willing to hear the sincere prayer of the humblest of His children, and yet there is much manifest reluctance on our part to make known our wants to God. What can the angels of heaven think of poor helpless human beings, who are subject to temptation, when God's heart of infinite love yearns toward them, ready to give them more than they can ask or think, and yet they pray so little and have so little faith? The angels love to bow before God; they love to be near Him. They regard communion with God as their highest joy; and yet the children of earth, who need so much the help that God only

can give, seem satisfied to walk without the light of His Spirit, the companionship of His presence." *-Steps to Christ*, p. 94

"Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." Ephesians 3:20-21. Give Him praise and glory.

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed." James 1:5-6. Ask and believe.

"God does not say, Ask once, and you shall receive. He bids us ask. Unwearingly persist in prayer. The persistent asking brings the petitioner into a more earnest attitude, and gives him an increased desire to receive the things for which he asks." *-Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 145

Charles Spurgeon, a Baptist preacher who lived in the 1800's said, "I'd rather teach one man to pray than ten men to preach." <https://prayer-coach.com/prayer-quotes-charles-spurgeon/>

Andrew Murray, a Dutch Reform missionary to South Africa stated, "Jesus never taught His disciples how to preach, only how to pray. He did not speak much of what was needed to preach well, but much of praying well. To know how to speak to God is more than knowing how to speak to man. Not power with men, but power with God is the first thing. Jesus loves to teach us to pray." <https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/7351171-lord-teach-us-to-pray>

The purpose of prayer is to change us; to bring our wills and our lives into harmony with the will of God. It will not work any change in God. Requests made for the purpose of purifying our characters, increasing our faith, for being a blessing to our fellow man and for the furtherance of the cause of God, are the requests the Lord is hoping we will ask for—and He delights to answer.

So, whether your requests are large or small, do not waver, but, "Ask, and ye shall receive . . ."

Wendy Eaton





Beyond Eden

East of Eden there they were Adam, Eve, the banished pair,
Exiled from the blissful Eden—home, there were nevermore with joy to roam.

O, how Eve bemoaned that dreadful day, she ignorantly walked away

From Adam's side—Eden's beauty to enjoy.

At the thought, what happened in that fateful hour she fell victim to the serpent's power,

O, what sorrow filled her heart, in breaking God's commandment she took part,

The forbidden fruit to eat and gave to Adam—then alas, they reaped irrevocable defeat!

Bitter tears bewailing this event, could not prevent the waves of evil

Creeping over fallen man, one sin had unleashed there and then. . .

They were forgiven and a Saviour promised (Genesis 3:15) to atone the broken law

This filled their heart with joy and awe, but never knew Who this would be

To take their place to set them free. That He with Whom were spent sweet times

Their Creator—Christ—Himself would then—one time take their guilt and pay the price

To give Himself as Sacrifice. . .

.....

Though they loved each other deep and true, their souls knit together bathed in love,
Betimes strange feelings were to move to quarrels to beset the mind, and then in horror

Were to find how the seed of sin had marred, defiled their heart.

Then they wept with sore regret, were frightened what came over them

In tight embrace clung to each other, like to shield themselves from further

Self-inflicted hurt befalling them.

Time went by, they learned providing for the daily need,

Abiding close together they laboured joyfully indeed.

Much was to explore and nature's wonders cheered their hearts for evermore. . .

Then leaves were falling from the trees, wilted, brittle, crumbled to decay—

Another day they found a lifeless bird lying on their way,

Terror-stricken on their knees, Adam, Eve cried out in grief,
as death revealed his ugly face to them.

It overwhelmed their mind with pain, because—for all of this—

They themselves were here to blame. . .

But what wonder, bliss and joy, a son was born, they called him Cain,
The company this little boy, cheered the parents as he grew, looking in his face to see him
Smile, warmed their heart while all the while to God were filled with gratefulness,
for this so precious gift to bless.

Then was Abel born and daughters too, now the family increased and grew

Causing Adam to expand the home for the siblings happily to roam. . .

And on Sabbath morning all to come to Eden's glorious gate to worship

At the altar Adam did erect, to bring a lamb as offering from his herd the best select.

They lifted up their hands in praise, exalt the name of God the LORD,

And raised their voice with grateful words for all His mercy, blessings, keeping,
And with heartfelt prayer pleading for protection, guidance through the week
Till next Sabbath Him again to meet.



But between the two brothers tension rose, as Cain watched Abel one day close,
For his offering to God had not been favoured, he brought just fruits and not a lamb
to honor the Creator.

His heart was void to need a Saviour, forgiveness for his sins, he felt no guilt, and yet
With anger he was filled, when Abel's sacrifice had been accepted and his own rejected.

So came the day while in the field, Cain did till the ground, Abel tending sheep,
That rage came over Cain, his love was over for the other, thus arose and slew
His brother. . .

God spoke to Cain (Genesis 4:9-14), felt no remorse, he left and fled, became the source
Of generations warring against God, who trusted self, made their own gods. . .

The grief of Adam, Eve—who is able to perceive? . . .

Beholding Abel dead now at their feet, their heartbeat almost stopped in disbelief!
And Cain now gone—off to the land of Nod, bereaved of both, the parent's tears and sorrow
Even grew, because it dawned on them what sin does do, waves of evil, horror, death,
And as time goes on what pain of heart must yet be met?



Then Seth was born (Genesis 4:25) of stature noble* meek and pious nature.

He and his descendants called on God (Genesis 4:26), kept His commandments, loved and
Worshiped the Creator, looking forward for the Promised One to come.

This gave Adam, Eve, great solace to their heart, a balm amidst some vexing times,
Disturbing news of evil deeds, as man on earth increased.

They longed for peace, tranquility, the joy they had in Eden, but now this had been hidden,
Because transgression caused this lot of being separate from God.

When at long last they closed their eyes to rest, until the day when Christ returns,
To call them forth and hear His voice, the ultimate of bliss is theirs,
And all of them who kept His word, His faith, shall come up from dusty graves,
With the translated living saints be lifted in eternal youth to meet Jesus in the air.
Then Christ embraces Adam once again, with what longing He does wait for this—what
Suffering and grief and pain lay in between these days—eons of separation!
With His own sacrifice to reconcile the fallen race to bring salvation,
Christ with His blood bought back His own creation Adam—man—
To be with all redeemed the King of glory in a new created earth,
Where love will reign in every heart, eternal peace their part,
and Eden lost will be restored. . . .

Edda Tedford, Canada

*Note for Genesis 4:25 from E.G. White: "Seth was of more noble stature than Cain or Abel, and resembled Adam more than any of his other sons. The descendants of Seth had separated themselves from the wicked descendants of Cain. They cherished the knowledge of God's will, while the ungodly race of Cain had no respect for God and His sacred commandments." -*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 60





Overcome! – A Victorious Life

Everyone has a desire to win and to succeed. There is a parallel between Ancient Israel and God’s people today which we can learn from. Before the children of Israel could succeed and inherit the Promised Land, they first had to fight against all the evil nations that were living in the Canaan at that time. How many wicked nations did they have to defeat? The answer is seven

“When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them.” Deuteronomy 7:1–2

Israel’s history is a warning to us—“in these last days God’s people will be exposed to the very same dangers as were ancient Israel. Those who will not receive the warnings that God gives will fall into the same perils as did ancient Israel and come short of entering into rest through unbelief.” –*Last Day Events*, p. 60

Let us see a brief comparison:

1. Israel was called out of Egypt	1. The Advent people were called out of spiritual Egypt (Revelation 1:8) or Babylon (Revelation 14:8)
2. Mighty miracles were performed by God (plagues, Passover) during the deliverance of Israel as signs to His people	2. Mighty signs in nature ushered in the prophetic time of the end: earthquake of Lisbon (1755), sun and moon darkened (1780), falling of the stars (1833)
3. Israel left Egypt	3. Adventists left fallen churches in 1844

4. Marah: experience of bitter water tested the people	4. Bitter disappointment in 1844 tested Advent believers
5. Moses was chosen as a prophet	5. Ellen (Harmon) White was chosen as God’s messenger
6. The Commandments were given at Sinai	6. Adventists received light on the law of God in 1848
7. Jethro proposed organization	7. Seventh-day Adventist Church was organized in 1863
8. Health laws were given to Israel	8. Health reform was introduced in 1864
9. Two faithful spies who believed God’s word that the Israelites could take the country were rejected by the people	9. Elders Waggoner and Jones presented the message of Christ our Righteousness in 1888; it was not accepted
10. Revolt of Korah, Dathan and Abiram caused anguish in the camp	10. The Kellogg crisis of 1895–1905 caused great anguish
11. Moses died before reaching the Promised Land	11. Sister White was laid to rest in 1915
12. Book of Moses’ law remained valid for the people (Joshua 1:8)	12. The <i>Testimonies</i> are still valid after the death of God’s messenger

(Chart taken from Reformation Study Course, Lesson 2. International Missionary Society)

In *The Great Controversy*, we read of the fierce controversy between Christ and Satan. Although, we are the battle field, we also are involved in that battle. Therefore, as Ancient Israel had to physically fight seven mighty nations, stronger than they, we also have to fight courageously against an enemy greater than ourselves. Chapter 26 is entitled “A Work of Reform”. In this chap-

ter we read that “The history of ancient Israel is a striking illustration of the past experience of the Adventist body. God led His people in the advent movement, even as He led the children of Israel from Egypt” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 457

The Bible clearly states that these nations were “greater and mightier than thou.” These seven nations were greater and mightier than all of Israel, but yet the Lord instructed them that before they could inherit the Promised Land as their own heritage, they first had to fight against all seven of these wicked nations. They also were told that they could not show pity or mercy to any of the nations, neither to make any agreements with them. They were to smite them until they had been completely destroyed out of the land. What did God do? “And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, He divided their land to them by lot.” Acts 13:19

Let us think for a moment. How could they win the battle against seven nations that were stronger and mightier than they were? They were only one nation, few in number. Was it possible for the Israelites to feel afraid and doubt the Lord’s command to conquer these nations? The two adjectives “stronger” and “mightier” can easily create doubt in one’s mind. Were they expected to fight against all seven of them at the same time? Surely, no. They would have to trust that God would be with them and be courageous in their warfare. The Lord told them: “If thou shalt say in thine heart, These nations are more than I; how can I dispossess them? Thou shalt not be afraid of them: but shalt well remember what the LORD thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt. . . Thou shalt not be affrighted at them: for the LORD thy God is among you, a mighty God and terrible. And the LORD thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little.” See Deuteronomy 7:17–24

The seven mighty nations did not make them afraid or doubt their ability to conquer them because they knew that God was in their midst. He reminded them of their journey, from Egypt until then. He also promised them that He would help them to overcome and conquer each nation little by little until they would be completely consumed off the face of the earth.

A Lesson Today

Today we all agree that, “The work is great and large,” but “our God shall fight for us.” Nehemiah 4:19–20

“Success does not depend upon numbers. God can deliver by few as well as by many. He is honored not so much by the great numbers as by the character of those who serve Him.” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 550

“It is a great mistake to trust in human wisdom or numbers in the work of God.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 370

“Trust in God and obedience to His will are . . . essential to the Christian in the spiritual warfare. . .” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 554

“‘Our God shall fight for us;’ for God is in the work, and no man can prevent its ultimate success. . . . But, like Nehemiah, God’s people are neither to fear nor to despise their enemies. Putting their trust in God, they are to go steadily forward, doing His work with unselfishness, and committing to His providence the cause for which they stand.” –*Prophets and Kings*, p. 645

“In every age the true church of God has engaged in decided warfare against satanic agencies. Until the controversy is ended, the struggle will go on between wicked angels and wicked people on the one side, and holy angels and true believers on the other.” –*Christ Triumphant*, p. 28

“Now the church is militant. Now we are confronted with a world in midnight darkness, almost wholly given over to idolatry.

But the day is coming in which the battle will have been fought, the victory won.” –*Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White*, p. 229. **Our seven nations today.**

“We have before us warfare—a lifelong conflict with Satan and his seductive temptations. The enemy will use every argument, every deception, to entangle the soul; and in order to win the crown of life, we must put forth earnest, persevering effort. We must not lay off the armor or leave the battlefield until we have gained the victory, and can triumph in our Redeemer.” –*My Life Today*, p. 105

The history of Ancient Israel provides an inspiring lesson to us today. We also have a battle to win. Seven nations are before us in this year 2020. We read in Proverbs 6:16–19. “These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto Him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.”

Seven sins are listed as hated by God and abominations

to Him. They can be considered as the seven mighty and great wicked nations that Ancient Israel had to battle against. It will be impossible for you to be able to inherit the Promised Land—the heavenly Canaan, and live on the New Earth, if you do not overcome, conquer, and consume each one of these seven sins from your daily life and character. God hates each one of these sins, and considers them to be an abomination, and nothing that is abominable will be allowed to enter heaven!

“He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.” Revelation 21:7–8

Seven Solutions

As we compare our journey to the heavenly Canaan with the journey of Ancient Israel, just as there were seven mighty nations that had to be fully conquered before they could possess the Promised Land, so also there are seven wicked and abominable sins that we must fully conquer before we can enter the heavenly Canaan. Since this is true, how are to overcome these seven abominable sins?

“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.” 2 Peter 1:5–12

Here the Apostle Peter is listing seven righteous charac-

teristics which we must add to our faith. They are seven solutions to our seven problems. These characteristics have something to do with overcoming those abominable sins recorded in Proverbs 6. In order to gain the Promised Land, and be allowed entrance into the everlasting kingdom we must overcome the seven deadly sins.

Let us compare and contrast them:

If you became *virtuous*, then you would never *lie*. Thus you would have fully overcome a lying tongue—which was one of the seven abominable sins. If you became *knowledgeable* in the ways of God, then you would never bear *false witness*. Thus you would have fully overcome that abominable sin as well. If you became *temperate* in all things lawful, then you would never *be sowing discord or strife among brethren*. If you became *patient*, then you would never have *feet that were swift in running to mischief*. If you became *godly*, then you would never give a proud look to anyone. If you show *brotherly kindness* to

others, then you would never have hands that can shed innocent blood. And finally, if you developed *charity* or divine love, agape love, then you would never allow your heart or mind to devise wicked imaginations towards, or against, others.

So you can clearly see that if you would only follow this guideline of adding to your faith the above virtues you will surely be an overcomer. God helps you to conquer little by little, little by little, until finally all of these

abominable sins will be fully consumed out of you. And just like with the seven mighty nations, once these seemingly undefeatable obstacles have been conquered, then you will obtain the Promised Land! Remember: “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.” 1 John 4:4

Secret of victory—a determined effort

“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.” James 4:7–8

“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.” “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.” Matthew 11:12; 5:48

“Not in our learning, not in our position, not in our numbers or entrusted talents, not in the will of man, is to be found the secret of success. Feeling our inefficiency we are to contemplate Christ, and through him who is the strength of all strength, the thought of all thought, the willing and obedient will gain victory after victory.” – Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 404

“Those who would overcome must put to the tax every power of their being. They must agonize on their knees before God for divine power. Christ came to be our example, and to make known to us that we may be partakers of the Divine Nature. How?—By having escaped the corruptions that are in the world through lust. Satan did not gain the victory over Christ. He did not put his foot upon the soul of the Redeemer. He did not touch the head though he bruised the heel. Christ, by His own example, made it evident that man may stand in integrity. Men may have a power to resist evil—a power that neither earth, nor death, nor hell can master; a power that will place them where they may overcome as Christ overcame. Divinity and humanity may be combined in them.” —*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 409

“Are you ready to make the surrender now? You are to put away your sin right now when you see it.... Do not make leeway [that] you are going to overcome by degrees; you are going to try little by little to give up sin. Now, while it is called today, heed the invitation and harden not your hearts.

“Oh, my soul, why not leave the cursed thing today? Sin crucified my Lord. Why not turn from it with loathing? Why not love the things that Christ loved, and hate the things that Christ hated? He has made provision ample enough for you that you can, through Him, be more, yea, more than overcomers.” —*The Upward Look*, p. 283

Victory is Personal

“But character is not transferable. No man can believe for another. No man can receive the Spirit for another. No man can impart to another the character which is the fruit of the Spirit’s working.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 412

“Character is personal. We each have a work to do for time and for eternity. God abhors indifference in regard to the formation of character.” —*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 429

“Let no one say, I cannot remedy my defects of character. If you come to this decision, you will certainly fail of obtaining everlasting life. The impossibility lies in your own will. If you will not, then you cannot overcome. The real difficulty arises from the corruption of an unsanctified heart, and an unwillingness to submit to the control of God.” —*Messages to Young People*, p. 99

“We should learn wherein we fail, and then guard ourselves upon that point. We must have perfect control over our own spirit.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 307

“Christ has made it possible for every member of the human family to resist temptation. All who would live godly lives may overcome as Christ overcame, by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony.” —*Medical Ministry*, p. 264

Our Promised Land Ahead Has Requirements

“A character formed according to the divine likeness is the only treasure that we can take from this world to the next. Those who are under the instruction of Christ in this world will take every divine attainment with them to the heavenly mansions. And in heaven we are continually to improve.

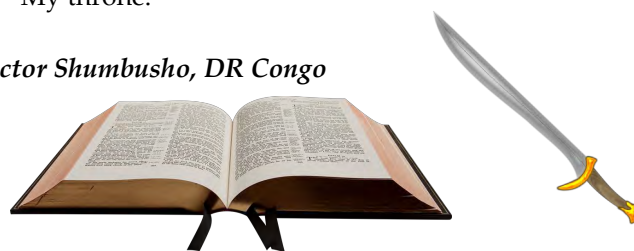
“A good character is a capital of more value than gold or silver. It is unaffected by panics or failures, and in that day when earthly possessions shall be swept away, it will bring rich returns. Integrity, firmness, and perseverance are qualities that all should seek earnestly to cultivate; for they clothe the possessor with a power which is irresistible—a power which makes him strong to do good, strong to resist evil, strong to bear adversity.” —*My Life Today*, p. 267

“The precious hours of probation are granted that you may remove every defect from your character, and this you should seek to do, not only that you may obtain the future life, but that you may be useful in this life. A good character is a capital of more value than gold or silver.” —*Messages to Young People*, p. 415

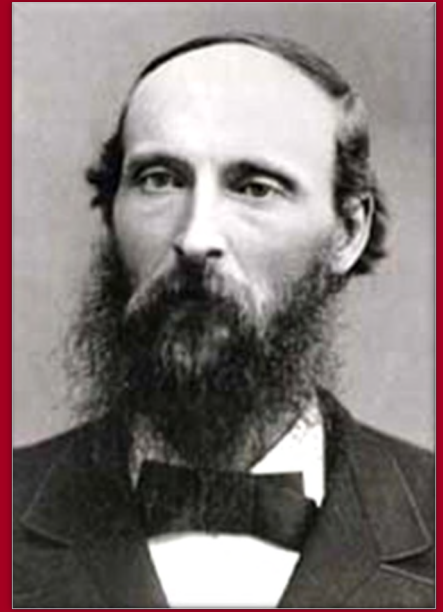
Seven wonderful promises to seven victors:

1. Revelation 2:7. To eat of the tree of life.
2. Revelation 2:11. Shall not be hurt by the second death.
3. Revelation 2:17. Shall be given to eat the hidden manna and be given a white stone and a new name written thereon.
4. Revelation 2:26. Be given power over the nations.
5. Revelation 3:5. Shall be clothed in white garments and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life.
6. Revelation 3:12. “I will make [him] a pillar in the temple of my God and he shall go no more out.”
7. Revelation 3:21. I will grant him to sit with Me in My throne.

Victor Shumbusho, DR Congo



Daniel Bourdeau



Elder Daniel T. Bourdeau was born in Bourdeauville, Vermont on December 28th, 1835. He had a brother, Augustin, who was one year older.

Daniel's parents joined the Baptist church when he was five years old. At the age of 11 he, himself, was also baptized. At the age of 16 Daniel was sent to study at a Baptist seminary that was founded by Madame Feller at Grand Line, Canada which was a French language institution.

When Daniel was 19 years of age, he began preaching, and one year later was ordained to the Gospel ministry and labored as a Baptist pastor in Canada.

In 1855, at the age of 20, Daniel received some very disturbing news. His parents and brother had left the Baptist church, accepting the teachings and joining the membership of a small strange group of ex-Millerite believers, which he believed to be a cult. This group would take on the name of Seventh-day Adventist five years later in 1863. Daniel was very distressed believing that his family down in Vermont had been badly misled and deceived.

He decided to set them straight. He began to study more earnestly, determined to fortify himself with all the arguments he could think up against the cult to rescue his deluded loved ones. While he was studying he happened to meet a Roman Catholic priest. During their conversation the priest startled Daniel by agreeing with his family. He said that the church of Rome had indeed changed the observance of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday, and that he would find no Biblical evidence for that. The priest then stated that the pope had both the authority and the power to make this change.

Daniel was very shocked at this admission.

He realized he would have to do some more in-depth study about it. During this time, he received letters from his family giving reasons why they believed as they did. They presented all the arguments in favour of the Sabbath and the prophetic teachings of the group of believers. Daniel, being an honest man, shortly after accepted the truth and the Three Angel's Messages.

Although he joined the group of Sabbath-keeping believers, Daniel still did not believe that Ellen G. White's visions were of divine origin. When he was 22 years old, on Sunday June 21, 1857, he was able to witness one of her visions at Bucks Bridge Adventist Church in New York.

While Ellen White was in vision her husband invited Daniel to examine his wife. He accepted the offer, wanting to satisfy his mind as to whether she was breathing or not. He first put his hand on her chest, "long enough to know that there was no more heaving of her lungs than there would have been had she been a corpse." He took one hand and placed it over her mouth and with the other hand, pinched her nostrils between his thumb and forefinger so it was impossible for her to breathe even if she wanted to. He held her like this for ten minutes. This would have been long enough for her to suffocate under ordinary circumstances. Ellen White was not in the least affected by the ordeal. When he wrote about this experience later at the age of 55 he said he had never doubted the divine origin of her visions again.

Daniel was ordained into the ministry of the Advent-

ist believers in 1858. He, with his brother, spent many years in evangelism in New England and Canada among the French-speaking people.

In 1861, at the age of 26, he married Marion E. Saxby. They got married in a private home in Vermont. James White performed the ceremony and Ellen White offered the prayer at the end of the service. The wedding took place late at night. The hosts of the home persuaded Daniel and Marion to postpone their honeymoon until the next day because it was not convenient to travel in the dark. They persuaded the Whites also to spend the night.



By the time Ellen White made her way upstairs to her room to go to sleep, around 9:00 PM, she found Daniel nervously pacing up and down the hallway in front of his bedroom, which was the room next to her's and her husband's.

Ellen White quickly read the situation and, pointing toward the closed bedroom door, she fixed Daniel with a steady gaze and earnestly yet kindly and gently spoke to him, saying, "Daniel, inside that room is a frightened young woman in bed petrified with fear. Now you go in to her right now, and you love her, and you comfort her. And, Daniel, you treat her gently, and you treat her tenderly, and you treat her lovingly. It will do her good..."

Then with a slight grin on her face she said: "Daniel, it will do you good, too."

Marion proved to be a faithful companion, a helpmeet to him in his gospel ministry.

Daniel travelled to California with J. N. Loughborough from 1868-1870. When he returned to the East in 1870 he resumed work among the French-speaking people and also organized churches in Wisconsin and Illinois.

He also spent time in Europe. He spent a year working with J.N. Andrews in 1876. They worked in the publishing department and in evangelism.

In 1882 Daniel returned to Europe. This time he went

with his brother. They worked in France, Switzerland, Romania, Corsica and Italy. The Lord blessed their work and sometimes an entire congregation of Sunday-keepers, together with their pastor, would become converted to the Adventist faith.

Daniel returned to America in 1888 and continued as a minister and writer. He had a great burden for working for the French-speaking people, and then later for the English as well.

Daniel and Marion had two children and they went to live in Battle Creek in order to educate them. Their daughter, Patience, became a medical doctor and was the medical director of the Adventist Seminary in Grand Rapids.

He wrote many tracts and other papers of a religious character, and was engaged in the preparation of several manuscripts at the time of his death.

In May of 1905, Daniel attended the General Conference at Washington and returned with renewed spiritual strength, but weakened physically, and failed rapidly until he fell asleep on June 30th. He died at the home of his daughter, Doctor Patience S. Bourdeau, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, at the age of 69.

His son worked for the Review and Herald Publishing department until the age of 40 when met with a fatal accident that was quite tragic on the day of Ellen White's second funeral. A tree he was standing beside was struck by lightning, killing him also.

We do not know why some die young and some old; however, we do look forward to meeting these faithful pioneers of our faith when Jesus returns once again to take us all home to heaven.

After a talk given to the ministers by Ellen. G. White at the General Conference on April 15, 1901, Elder Bourdeau is quoted as saying, "I am of good courage because the Lord is in our midst. I have not said much; I do not claim perfection, but I know that God does love us, and I love Him. I love His cause. I love this people, and I purpose to wake up to this precious instruction given to us. I have no other object in life. May God bless us and give us victory through Jesus Christ." —*General Conference Bulletin*, vol. 4, April 16, 1901, p. 269



HEALTH MATTERS:

Physical Exercise:

Is it *Really* that Important?

“Inactivity is a fruitful cause of disease. Exercise quickens and equalizes the circulation of the blood, but in idleness the blood does not circulate freely, and the changes in it, so necessary to life and health, do not take place. The skin, too, becomes inactive. Impurities are not expelled as they would be if the circulation had been quickened by vigorous exercise, the skin kept in a healthy condition, and the lungs fed with plenty of pure, fresh air. This state of the system throws a double burden on the excretory organs, and disease is the result.” –*Ministry of Healing*, p. 238

There are many health benefits of maintaining a good level of physical fitness. Let us review the many health benefits of exercise.

Increases Stamina

When we exercise, in order for our muscles to work, they need oxygen. Once oxygen reaches any cell in the body, including our muscle cells, it goes through a complex process in which oxygen helps to convert nutrients into usable energy.

Stamina is the ability to sustain prolonged physical effort, the ability to do something difficult for long periods of time that requires strength and endurance. For one’s body to have stamina, cardiovascular fitness is required. As was mentioned, the body needs oxygen to create energy. Cardiovascular fitness is the ability of the heart and lungs to supply oxygen-rich blood to the mus-

cles, and the ability of the muscles to then use that oxygen to produce energy for movement. This means that both the heart and lungs must have the capacity to exert themselves to supply enough oxygen to the body so that it can sustain prolonged physical activity. Stamina is the ability of the body to continue to supply enough oxygen from the lungs and heart to the rest of the body, so that sustained strength and endurance can occur.

Regular physical exercise improves stamina in several ways. Like any muscle that increases in size as it is worked, the heart muscle also increases in size when it is worked. When the heart muscle is larger, it has the capacity to send a greater volume of blood into the system with each beat. Thus, the resting heart rate decreases because the amount of blood that you pump in a single beat is increased. A stronger heart does not need to beat at fast. It also pumps blood more efficiently, which improves blood flow to all parts of your body.

New blood vessels are developed in the heart and other muscles with exercise. The arteries that supply blood to the heart become larger. Although lung capacity does not change with regular physical exercise, the person is better able to extract oxygen from the air into the lungs, and the muscles are better able to extract oxygen from the blood to be used to create energy.

There is an increase in the concentration of hemoglobin in the blood; hemoglobin is the part of the red blood cell

that carries oxygen from the lungs to the rest of the body, including the muscles. Overall, the heart and lungs become more efficient and the circulation of blood through the body carries more oxygen and nutrients to the muscles and other parts of the body that are needed when we are physically active. When your heart and lungs work more efficiently, you have more energy to do the things that you enjoy, and physical activity becomes easier. As an added benefit, a more efficient heart increases the amount of blood that flows to the skin, making it look healthier.

Regular exercise does not change the size of our lungs; this is something we are born with. However, when we exercise we increase the total amount of blood in our body, so we are better able to extract oxygen from the air in our lungs. When we exercise we breathe faster and more deeply. This maximises the amount of oxygen that travels into the bloodstream, and ultimately into the muscles and joints. Carbon dioxide is the byproduct of energy creation, and the elimination of carbon dioxide from the body is more efficient in someone who exercises. Physical exercise can improve lung function in those people who have conditions that limit their ability to breathe. Studies have shown that people with asthma who exercise regularly have less asthma attacks and need less medication.

In general, the amount of blood that the heart can pump to the body is the factor that determines the capacity one has for prolonged exercise. This includes having the stamina to complete all the tasks necessary for our jobs and have extra energy left at the end of the day for household and recreational activities.

Exercise and Mood

Physical activity stimulates various brain chemicals, including the release of both serotonin and endorphins. Serotonin helps your brain regulate your mood, sleep and appetite. Endorphins act as natural antidepressants in the brain, which help to promote an increased sense of well-being. Exercise will leave you feeling happier and more relaxed than you were before you worked out. These endorphins are known to stay elevated even several days after exercise, contributing to an improvement in mood and increased self-esteem. Exercise also reduces immune system chemicals that can make depression worse. Other ways in which exercise helps depression is in increased energy levels, a better night's sleep, a distraction from your worries, gets you out with other people, helps you feel in more control as you are contributing to relieving your depression, and increases

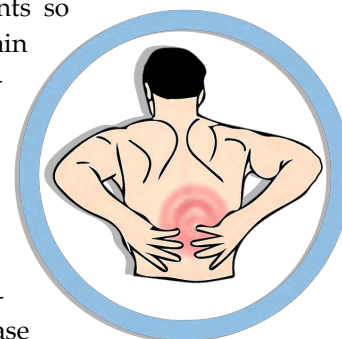
your confidence once you notice that your symptoms are improving.

In fact, people who exercise regularly have fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety compared to those who don't exercise. Exercise is an effective treatment for mild and moderate forms of depression. Researchers also have found that exercise is likely to reduce the tension associated with anxiety. Some studies have shown that exercise alone is as effective as medication and therapy combined in treating depression and anxiety. And, not only does exercise help in treating depression, it can also prevent people from becoming depressed again. Therefore, it is important to continue exercising after the symptoms of depression are gone. Some recent studies show that exercising outside has a better impact than exercising indoors. People who exercise outside do it more often and for longer periods of time, than those who exercise inside.



Pain Relief

Resting for short periods can help with pain, but too much rest can make pain worse. Resting for too long can stiffen muscles and joints so that when they are used again there is a greater risk of injury. Exercise is a common treatment for pain relief especially chronic pain. Depending on your level of health, it can also help decrease inflammation, increase mobility, and decrease overall pain levels so that medicine can either be avoided or reduced in dosage. The same endorphins that help with mood can reduce the intensity of the pain experienced by the brain. Regular exercise also helps with pain relief by improving muscle tone, strength, and flexibility. Even people with conditions such as arthritis can improve pain relief with specific exercises, including stretching, walking and swimming. Exercise programs should be started slowly, and avoid pushing oneself if pain increases by a significant degree. Remember, exercise is like medicine, and can be part of a daily strategy to assist in dealing with chronic pain.



Diabetes

In those people who have a risk of developing type 2 diabetes because of genetics or an excess of abdominal

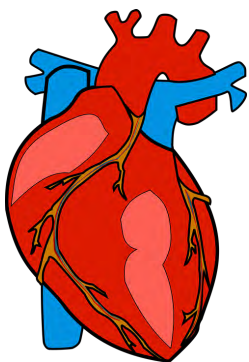


fat, regular exercise can help delay or even prevent diabetes from developing. Physical exercise reduces overall body fat; and type II diabetes typically manifests in adulthood in those who are overweight and obese. With people who have type 2 diabetes, regular physical activity is one of

the most important things that one can do to lower blood sugar levels in the blood and boost the body's sensitivity to insulin, counteracting insulin resistance, which prevents blood sugar from entering into the cells from the blood stream. It also helps reduce the risk of diabetics developing complications such as heart disease and strokes. Diabetics who walked at least two hours a week were less likely to die of heart disease than those who did not exercise, and when exercise increased to 3–4 hours a week their risk was decreased even more.

Heart Disease

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 17 million people around the world die from cardiovascular disease each year—over 29 percent of all deaths worldwide. WHO also adds that 22 percent of heart disease is caused by physical inactivity. It is an independent risk factor for the development of cardiovascular disease, which means that it does not have to be present with any other risk factor to cause disease. There is also a direct relation between physical inactivity and death from heart disease.



Studies prove that physical exercise reduces the risk of dying prematurely from heart disease because of its impact on: reducing the risk of high blood pressure, reducing blood pressure in people who already have high blood pressure, raising levels of good cholesterol (HDL) and reducing levels of bad cholesterol (LDL), lowering triglyceride levels, improving blood flow which prevents plaque buildup in the arteries, decreasing the tendency of blood to clot in blood vessels which decreases strokes and heart attacks, and after a heart attack preventing further heart attacks.

Brain

Exercise improves blood flow, bringing oxygen and nutrients to the brain, which helps create new brain cells and protects brain cells from dying. Exercise also releases beneficial proteins in the brain, which keep brain cells healthy. Exercise helps keep your mind sharp. Children who exercise tend to have better test scores in math and reading when compared to those who don't. It improves both short-term and long-term memory. It improves cognitive function in other areas also such as thinking, information processing, perception, concentration, reasoning, and the ability to learn. Just 30 minutes of physical activity, 3 times a week, enhances older adults' cognitive function and reduces the risk of developing dementia by increasing the levels of certain neurotransmitters in the brain.



Bones

Exercise is vital at every age to keep bones healthy. Regular exercise promotes bone formation and prevents bone loss associated with aging, creating stronger and more dense bones. After the 3rd decade of life we begin losing bone, which is why it is important to develop strong healthy bones before that time. Weight bearing and resistance exercises are the best for maintaining bones. These include exercises such as walking, jogging, playing tennis, and lifting weights. These exercises may prevent many forms of bone loss associated with aging, including reducing the risk of osteoporosis, which is a decrease in bone density. For those with osteoporosis, physical exercise can help to strengthen bone, but exercises need to be done in consultation with a medical professional to prevent breaking bones when exercising.



Cancer

One of the most potent cancer fighting weapons is exercise. Exercise can prevent weight gain and obesity which is implicated in many cancers including esophageal, pancreatic, colon, breast, endometrial, kidney, thyroid, liver and gallbladder cancer.

Exercise itself also reduces the risk of certain cancers. People who exercise regularly have a 40–50% lower risk of colon cancer compared to those who don't exercise regularly. And those who have exercised all their lives

have the lowest risk of colon cancer. Similarly, women who engage in moderate to vigorous exercise at least 3 hours a week have a 30–40% lower risk of breast cancer. Studies show that women who exercise the most have the lowest risk of breast cancer. The risk of lung cancer, which has one of the lowest survival rates, can be reduced if you are regularly active. Recent studies show that even light activity can provide a reduced risk of cancers.

Muscles

Physical exercise maintains, tones, and strengthens your muscle. It also increases the amount of muscle tissue.



Exercise also increases your muscular endurance (stamina); the amount of oxygen that a muscle is capable of using during exercise is increased with regular exercise.

Without regular exercise, we automatically lose 10% of our muscle mass with every decade after the age of 30. Strong muscles help maintain mobility as one ages, with increased balance and coordination. Lack of exercise results in 12% of falls in the elderly.

By increasing muscle strength and endurance and also improving flexibility and posture, regular exercise helps to prevent back pain. Orthopaedic surgeons usually prescribe exercises that increase muscle strength to better support the spine as well as improve flexibility and function.

Joints

Tendons and ligaments become less elastic without exercise, making it easy to get injuries caused by overuse.



Physical exercise increases the thickness of cartilage in the joints, which has a protective effect on the joints. Osteoarthritis begins when the cartilage that cushions the joints begins to wear away. Because cartilage does not have its own blood

supply, it must get its nutrients from the joint fluid that bathes it. Exercise compresses joints, forcing more nutrient-rich fluid into cartilage. People who performed the most vigorous weight-bearing exercise had the thickest, healthiest knee cartilage.

Prevention of obesity

In both developed and developing countries, overweight that obesity had been come increasingly common. In Western countries it has reached epidemic dimensions. In the USA, one quarter of Americans were

overweight in 1978, and in 1990, one third were overweight. The latest figures show that 60% are now overweight. In Europe, about half the adult population is currently overweight, and urban areas of many developing countries have similar numbers.

During physical exercise, you burn calories. The more intense the exercise, the more calories you burn, and the easier it is to keep your weight under control. When you exercise, you develop more muscle and reduce body fat. Muscle has a higher metabolism than does fat, thus your body will burn more calories overall with less fat and more muscle.

Obesity results in many chronic diseases, including diabetes, cancer, arthritis, and heart disease. When physical activity is combined with proper nutrition, it can help control weight and prevent obesity.

Promotes sleep

Physical exercise improves sleeping patterns by helping you fall asleep faster and to stay asleep. It also deepens your sleep. However, if some people exercise too close to bedtime, they may have trouble falling asleep. Exercising earlier in the day promotes better sleep for some.



Reduces the risk of dying prematurely

Frequent and regular exercise has been shown to help prevent or treat serious and life-threatening chronic illnesses. Studies show that the greatest potential for reduced risk of death is in the sedentary who become moderately active. Studies also show that exercising in middle age leads to better physical ability later in life. Regular physical activity reduces the risk of developing or dying from some of the leading causes of illness and death in the United States. Millions of North Americans suffer from illnesses that can be prevented or improved through regular physical activity. And those who participate in regular exercise live longer than those who don't exercise regularly.

At the end of the day, regular exercise produces a number of favourable changes to one's health. All of us have the ability to increase our physical fitness through regular exercise, and there is no excuse to remain sedentary. We all need to develop healthier lifestyles that include regular physical activity. Doing this will improve our quality of life throughout our lifetime, and prevent many of the chronic disabling diseases that affect society today.

Next Month: different types of beneficial exercise

CHILDREN'S CORNER:

The Abandoned Garden



At the end of town there was an abandoned house. At one time it belonged to a modest man who earned an honest living and was able to support his family comfortably. There he spent many happy days with his wife and three daughters. His wife loved to plant flowers and had made a beautiful garden around the house. Many people would pass by to admire her garden. The white fence complemented the wide variety of flowers and colours in her garden. The girls happily played in the large yard.

As time went on, the daughters grew up, got married and moved far away, visiting occasionally on holidays.

For many years the man and his wife remained in the house and the wife continued to keep her garden, well into their retirement years.

Time, however, does not stand still and as the couple aged, the man passed into the grave before his beloved wife. Although she grieved, she found comfort in her Bible. The Lord was with her and she held onto the heavenly hope that she would see her beloved husband once again. She would pray often and attend church every Sabbath as much as possible, until she became too weak to do so.

Slowly her garden began to have less and less flowers. Soon it was only those that grew up from the previous years that reseeded themselves. The lawn was also neglected. The house repairs were not done. She had no strength or money to keep the place in a very

good condition. Her daughters were far away and were not able to travel to help. And when they visited, they did not stay long. Soon it was time for the dear woman to join her husband in the grave, waiting for Jesus to return to reunite them once again.

Now, the lot was filled with weeds, rocks, and broken glass. The daughters were unable to sell it in this condition and could not repair it. Soon a few people in town began dumping their trash in the old lot. The dilapidated house sat right in the middle of the grounds. The windows had been broken out years ago. The house had found new tenants. It was filled with rats and mice and other creeping things. People went out of their way to avoid this spot. It was hopeless. The only thing that could fix this lot was a bulldozer.

One beautiful spring morning, a fine looking business woman walked by the old lot. The weeds were now waist high and flies were buzzing around the trash. The poor house looked sadder than it ever had. The woman paused, then began to walk around the outside of the lot. A few of the townsfolk watched as she took down several pages of notes, then quickly walked away.

Word spread quickly throughout the town that the woman worked for the district and was going to demand the city clean up the lot, bulldoze the house to the ground, and plow it under. It is an eyesore and a health hazard now that it had become a dumping ground.

This is what they were thinking and they would have to agree with her. After all, the abandoned lot gave the whole town a bad reputation. It did not matter if it would be very costly to clean it up, the city would just have to find the money from somewhere. "It just wasn't right having a messy looking place like that in our town," the people would say. "Someone had to do something, since the daughters have left it to grow wild after the passing of their parents."

Several days later the woman walked into City Hall. The clerk behind the desk was a little nervous, knowing that the city did not have the money that it would take to clean up the lot.

She walked up to the desk, pulled out her notes and said something the clerk would never forget. She asked, "How much is the abandoned house and lot at 371 Beacon street? I'd like to buy it."

The rumors going through the town could not have been further from the truth. The woman did not want to destroy the lot, she wanted to buy it.

The clerk found the few records there were for the property and looked carefully at them. "There are a lot of back taxes due. It would be quite costly to buy it, let alone the expense to clean it up."

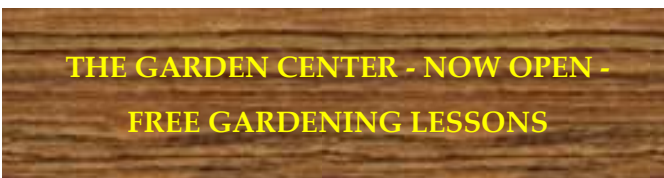
"Never you mind that, is the property for sale or not?" she replied.

The clerk scratched his head. "Yes Ma'am, the lot is for sale. The daughters have been wanting to sell it for years but no one has shown any interest until now." Hearing that, the woman bought the worthless eyesore right then and there.

She moved in with her husband and all summer long they worked extra hard. They cleared weeds, removed trash, and made major repairs to the house. Then, they trimmed the trees and bushes, and planted many kinds of beautiful flowers. They even added a cobblestone walkway leading up to the front door. Out back, behind the house, they added a small pond with a fountain. The lot that was once such an eyesore had now become a beautiful showplace once again. Love, time and a little work had transformed the lot. People went out of their way just to walk by and take a look at the beautiful view of the property as they had done before.

What the gardener did next also surprised the whole

town. She hung a sign out front that read:



When she was younger, someone had taught her how to do gardening and now, she wanted to teach others how to transform eyesores into things of beauty. Before long, the town contained many beautiful gardens.

We can compare some people to that old run-down lot. They look worthless and many people go out of their way to avoid them. It may be the poor person who cannot afford new clothing, or the hungry person begging on the street, or the drunkard lying in the ditch. The Bible says though that we *all* have trash in our lives. We *all* are that abandoned lot. The trash in our life is called sin.

The Good News is that none of us are worthless in God's eyes. The apostle Peter wrote, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Peter 3:9. The Lord sees value in what many may look at as worthless. He wants to clean the trash of sin from each of our lives. We cannot do it ourselves. We need to be willing to allow the Master Gardener to come and do it. We need to ask Jesus to forgive our sins and give us a new heart. When you do this, you will be born again and, like the gardener, you will want to share the good news with others. You can let others know about the wonderful work God has done in your life, and that He can do the same for them.

Think about this. When you look at others do you see an eyesore or a potential garden?



Sister Joy—Philippines

Judith T. Aparri, known by the name Joy, was a beautiful Christian woman who very much lived up to her name because she brought joy to many people.

Her daughter (Lovely) compared her to Martha. “She is our Martha in our humble home as she is a very hospitable and accommodating woman.” Joy was a very thoughtful and kind woman who loved missionary work and attended many conferences.

Joy was born in the Philippines on August 16, 1966. Her parents were very dedicated members of the International Missionary Society and raised their eight children in the church. Sister Joy became a canvasser (colporteur) working under Pastor Timonera’s leadership before she was married.



She married Benjamin Aparri on November 4, 1990 and thus her missionary focus was now within her home and her local church. Sister Joy was often elected as a children’s teacher in her local church as she had a great love for children.

Together with Benjamin (Benji), she raised three faithful young children, Lovely, Benjanette and Ivan.

After a long battle with Cancer, on January 20, 2020 the Lord saw it was time for this faithful soldier to lay down her weapons and rest until Jesus comes. We look forward to seeing Sister Joy once again in the near future. Our prayers are with her family and friends who grieve the loss of a dear loved and loving soul. May the Lord bless and comfort them as they seek to carry on her legacy by bringing joy to other people.

(left: Sister Joy with her husband Benji)

Congo

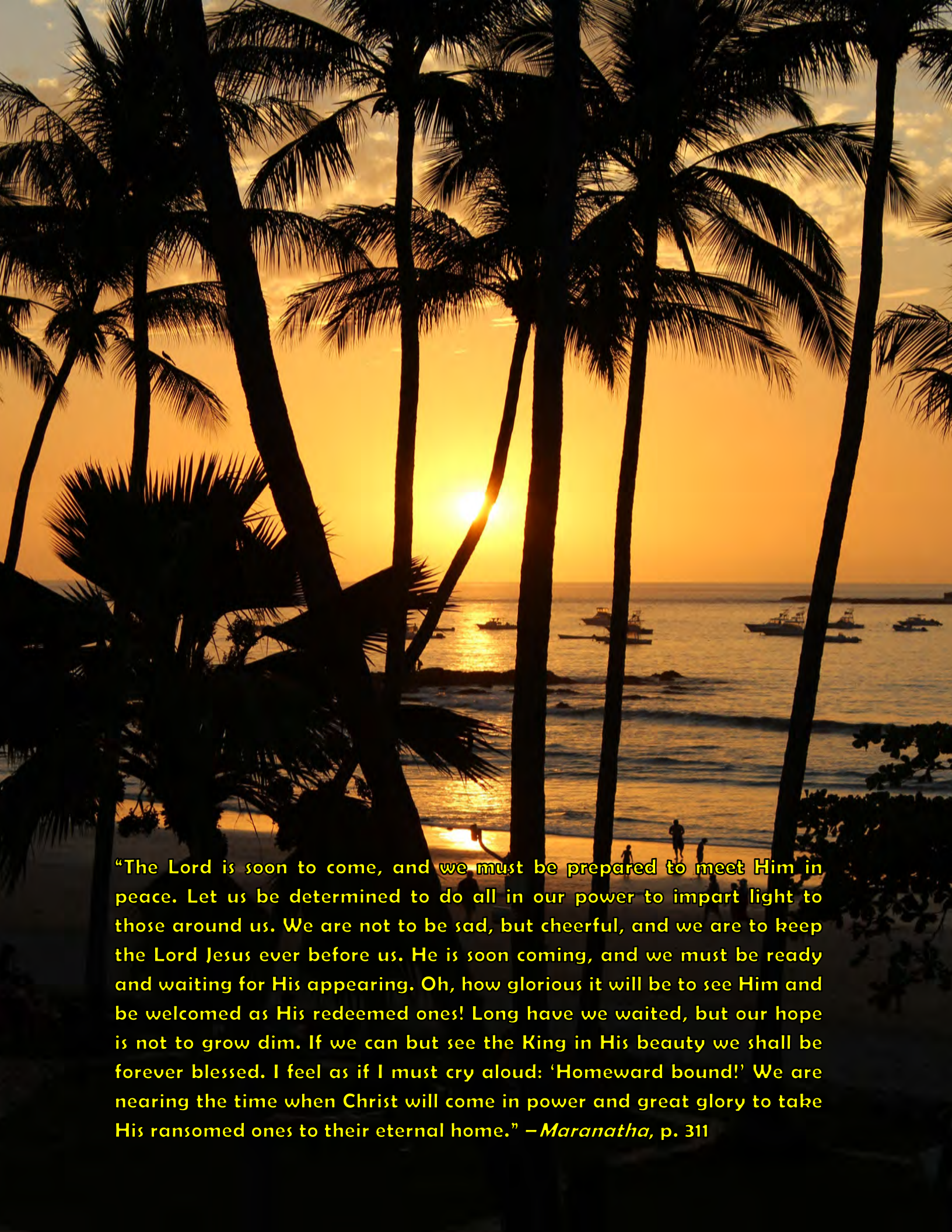


**Believers in
Goma,
East Congo
Field.
January 2020**

Lithuania



**First Baptisms
on the small
island of
Bonaire in the
Caribbean**

A tropical sunset scene with palm trees in the foreground, a beach, and several boats on the water. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow over the scene. The palm trees are silhouetted against the bright sky. In the background, several boats are visible on the water, and a few people can be seen on the beach. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and serene.

“The Lord is soon to come, and we must be prepared to meet Him in peace. Let us be determined to do all in our power to impart light to those around us. We are not to be sad, but cheerful, and we are to keep the Lord Jesus ever before us. He is soon coming, and we must be ready and waiting for His appearing. Oh, how glorious it will be to see Him and be welcomed as His redeemed ones! Long have we waited, but our hope is not to grow dim. If we can but see the King in His beauty we shall be forever blessed. I feel as if I must cry aloud: ‘Homeward bound!’ We are nearing the time when Christ will come in power and great glory to take His ransomed ones to their eternal home.” – *Maranatha*, p. 311