



*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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## A Simple Life

“As the location for a home is sought, let this purpose direct the choice. Be not controlled by the desire for wealth, the dictates of fashion, or the customs of society. Consider what will tend most to simplicity, purity, health, and real worth.” *—The Adventist Home*, p. 131

“Many need to learn how to make home attractive, a place of enjoyment. Thankful hearts and kind looks are more valuable than wealth and luxury, and contentment with simple things will make home happy if love be there.” *—The Adventist Home*, p. 108

“Furnish your home with things plain and simple, things that will bear handling, that can be easily kept clean, and that can be replaced without great expense. By exercising taste, you can make a very simple home attractive and inviting, if love and contentment are there.” *—The Adventist Home*, p. 150

“For what shall we hoard up treasures? To be swept away by the flames of the last day? Shall we lay up gold and silver, to be a witness against us in the Judgment,—to eat our flesh as it were fire? Shall we cling to our possessions till they fall into the hands of our enemies? . . . Now is the time to place our treasures where they will be eternally secure. . . . That which we give to the cause of God becomes our own forever. Says Christ, ‘Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.’ These alone, of all that we possess, are really ours. All that we lay up on earth, we must leave at last. It is only what we give for Christ that

we can take with us into the eternal world.” *—The Review and Herald*, December 6, 1887

“The time has come for us to take advance steps. We should beware lest a selfish, covetous spirit shut out the blessing of God. The Lord calls upon us to give of our means to support His cause. He requires more of us than merely the payment of the tithe. . . . Recall all the mercies and blessings that the Lord has bestowed upon you, and consider that He has made you stewards of his goods:

Then let each one examine himself and see if he is honoring the Lord with his substance. We should come before Him with both thank-offerings and sin-offerings. Our obligation to God is endless. His work must not languish for want of means. His claims must be met first, at whatever cost or sacrifice.” *—The Signs of the Times*, September 27, 1883

“May God help you who can do something now to make an investment in the bank of heaven. We do not ask a loan, but a free-will offering,—a return to the Master of His own goods which He has lent you. If you love God supremely, and your neighbor as yourself, we believe you will give tangible proofs of the same in free-will offerings for our mission work. There are souls to be saved, and may you be co-workers with Jesus Christ in saving these souls for whom Christ has given his Life. The Lord will bless you in the good fruit you may bear to His glory. May the same Holy Spirit which inspired the Bible take possession of your hearts, leading you to love His word, which is Spirit and life. May it open your eyes to discover the things of the Spirit of God.” *—The Review and Herald*, January 8, 1889

“Happiness is not found in empty show. The more simple the order of a well-regulated household, the happier will that home be.” *—The Adventist Home*, p. 150

*Ellen G. White*



# Keep Your Eyes Fixed on Jesus

Have you ever been lost in the woods, not knowing which direction to go? Many who have been lost start walking in circles, and after a while they return to the place where they started. This happens unless we have a goal and our eyes are fixed on it. Sister White saw the Advent people traveling on a narrow pathway, high above the world. "If they kept their eyes fixed on Jesus, who was just before them, leading them to the city, they were safe. But soon some grew weary, and said the city was a great way off, and they expected to have entered it before. . . . The light behind them went out, leaving their feet in perfect darkness, and they stumbled and lost sight of the mark and of Jesus, and fell off the path down into the dark and wicked world below." *—Early Writings*, p. 14–15

As soon as they lost sight of the mark, they fell off the road into the dark and wicked world below. We have all started the journey to the city of God. Once we were lost in sin and in the world, without direction, going in circles, living in vanity, without purpose or true meaning. Now we have a goal or mark towards which we are running. Paul writes to us, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Phi-

lipians 3:13–14

These verses portray Paul's single-minded dedication to the course laid out for him. His eyes see nothing else but the goal before him. He must not stumble, he must not stop, but continually press forward to the goal. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith: Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews 12:1–2

Sin hinders us on our journey, but also things that may not appear as sins weigh us down since they take our time and money, so that we have no time for Bible reading, prayer, and missionary work. One running a race travels light; all extra, unnecessary weight is left out. Let us keep looking to Jesus, His sufferings, His cross, and His death. Also let us run patiently, not spasmodically, but with steady constant speed. Satan knows that if our eyes can be turned away from Christ, away from the mark, we will stumble and fall off the road; therefore he sets attractions on both sides of the road to catch our attention, that we draw our eyes away from Jesus,

and from our goal.

There is a saying, "if we give the devil a little finger, he will take the whole hand." That little finger can be our thoughts, our imaginations, letting our minds dwell on things of the world; it can be also bad company, and, before we realize it, we have fallen into sin.

Jesus said the same, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much." Luke 16:10

Eve came to the Tree of Knowledge just to look at it, but that was enough to tempt her to eat of it. "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." Genesis 3:6

How many boys and girls and also adults only want to see, just to look, nothing more? As they look at the things of this world, they turn their eyes away from Jesus, and before they realize it, they have fallen into sin.

David made the same mistake. "And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked up on 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: as 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

David's sin started just by looking. Our prayer to God should be that which we find in Psalm 119:37,

"Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken Thou me in Thy way." When you come home from work, and you have a little time before you go to bed, now at this time you can watch television or you can read the Bible—which is better? If you read the Bible, what will happen? "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Corinthians 3:18

David expressed his great soul desire, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" Psalm 42:1-2

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Psalm 32:1-2

What is your soul's desire? Is it for a closer walk with God? Is it for purity of heart and Christlikeness? If it is, then you are going in the right direction.

It can be that even when we have almost made it, we have faithfully run the race, keeping our eyes fixed on the mark, that just before the end we turn our eyes away from Jesus, and fall off the road

Our work of sanctification is not a work of a moment, but continual progress. It is keeping our eyes on the goal, Jesus Christ, beholding Him, studying His life, copying His character. The closer we come to our destination the more dangers lie all around us. Satan is angry with those who have left his company and turned to God's way. This work involves our all—our heart, mind, strength, and our full attention; it must be the main purpose of our lives, or we will fail.

We have a wonderful destination; we are on our way to the New Jerusalem, to the city of God. Jesus is our example, walking before us. Let us keep our eyes fixed on Him daily. As long as our eyes are upon Him we are safe, and we will be in heaven. Amen.

*Timo Martin*



# Our Families, the Foundation of Society

“One well-ordered well-disciplined family tells more in behalf of Christianity than all the sermons that can be preached.” –*The Adventist Home*, p. 32. In other words, we can preach the Threefold Angels’ Message, have Bible studies and talk to people about Jesus; but, if our families fall apart, we should not expect that people will take us seriously. Only if we can show love and order in our families, will the sermons we give and the Bible studies we conduct be a blessing. No wonder Satan is trying so hard to destroy our families. We wish that we could say that problems in the families happen in the world only, and not in the church. Unfortunately, that is not the case. We must be on guard all the time.

While my wife, Franziska and I were building a house, we had rented part of a house from a man who was divorced. He said that his former wife was a devout Jehovah Witness, but at home she was a dragon. He was not impressed by her religion because of her behaviour at home. There are so many marriages that fall apart today; therefore, many people say, “Let’s not get married.” But that is not the answer. The Lord brought Eve to Adam; God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone.” Genesis 2:18

Not many people are happy to live alone; we are social beings, we need company, somebody to communicate with. For example, I was working as an outside contractor in a factory and from time to time we had to deal with the maintenance department. There was one man there—whenever you asked him a question or asked for his help, he would always snap at you and say, “Can’t you do it yourself?” If you asked to borrow a tool, he would say, “Don’t you have your own?” So, one day I asked one of the employees in that factory, “Why is this man so difficult to deal with?” The answer was, “He used to be a very nice



man before his wife died.” It is not easy to be alone.

When my wife and I got married, neither her parents nor my parents were able to attend the wedding, but my mom wrote me a letter. I do not remember much of what was written in the letter, but there were a few words I will never forget. She wrote, “When you are two, difficulties are only half as heavy to carry, but your joys will be double.” When you come home after a rough day at work and someone is there to cheer you up, you feel so much better. If you experience something joyful, you want to share your happiness. There is a satisfaction in sharing your experiences of the day with your loved ones.

One of the greatest gifts which God has given to us is the ability to speak. This is an amazing gift and this is how we can build on each other’s experiences. The achievements that man has reached would not have been possible without precise communication. One of the most important things in the family is to keep the communication open. Many misunderstandings happen because husband and wife do not sit down and discuss problems and come to a conclusion that is acceptable to both of them.

“How do I find the right spouse?” For the young man, “How do I find the right wife?” For the young lady, “How do I find the right husband?” There are many people living around us; never have there been

as many as today, and still it may be more difficult to find the right spouse than ever before. Try to find someone who has the same goals. Do not only look at the appearance. "But the Lord said to Samuel, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; . . . for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." 1 Samuel 16:7

How does God look at this person? Is he or she God-fearing? Can I share my faith with this individual? Is he or she realistic, truthful, and honest? Some years ago, I heard somebody say, "This woman is high maintenance." Some women can spend money faster than any man can earn it; and, unfortunately, some men are just as bad. According to statistics, money is the biggest reason for arguments in the families and also the most common reason for divorce. So therefore, if the husband and wife can agree how to budget and find a way how to stretch the dollars, you are off to a good start. If you love the Lord, only a spouse who serves God will be able to share your interests and support you in church activities. The real joys in life can only be appreciated to the fullest if your Saviour can join you in all that you do. Always remember, that Christ should be the centre of your family. If He is, then there is nothing that can separate you.

Do not be in too much of a hurry to get married. Many who get married very young get into trouble and the marriage falls apart. "Early marriages are not to be encouraged. A relation so important as marriage and so far-reaching in its results should not be entered upon hastily, without sufficient preparation, and before the mental and physical powers are well developed.

"Boys and girls enter upon the marriage relation with unripe love, immature judgment, without noble, elevated feelings and take upon themselves the marriage vows, wholly led by their boyish, girlish passions." – *The Adventist Home*, p. 79. Take your time. If you consider marriage, let the Lord lead you. Jesus says that if you ask for bread, He will not give you a stone. "Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?" Matthew 7:9. Listen to the advice of others, especially Christian parents. Be open with your parents about your friends. For a young lady, see how your boyfriend treats his mother; very likely this is how you will be treated. A young man who is contemplating marriage should ask himself

whether his future wife can cook, clean, and take care of the necessary duties in the home.

When I was young it was always said, "Do not get married before you have finished your education." That may not be quite the same today. Getting educated today generally takes longer than in the past and often people have to go back to school in order to keep up with new technology.

Who you marry is one of the most important decisions that you make in life, if not the most important. For almost any position that you apply for in the world, a licence is required, but nobody asks for your licence or qualifications when you want to get married. At the present time the General Conference is working on a course for those contemplating getting married.

Where is the best place to raise your family? Today, most people live in cities. Ellen G. White writes in *The Adventist Home*, page 137, "There is not one family in a hundred who will be improved physically, mentally, or spiritually by residing in the city." On page 139 she writes, "Take your families away from the cities is my message." It may not always be possible to live in the country, but cities have parks, trails, and green areas; make use of them. Have you ever noticed that people are friendlier when you meet them in nature than when you meet them downtown in a city? Think about John the Baptist; he was out in nature. The Sermon on the Mount was also out in nature and Jesus fed the 5,000 men and their families in the wilderness. So, try to spend some time in nature; it is good for your physical and mental health.

When you are looking for a place to live, look for a place where there is fresh air and a lot of sunlight. A good home should be well-insulated and have plenty of windows. When I do home repairs for people, I often come into a home and I ask myself, "Why is it so dark in here and why don't they open the curtains and let the sunshine come in?" If you can avoid it, do not live in a basement or in a low area where it is wet and damp. It is much healthier to live higher up where the wind is blowing.

May the Lord guide us and help us to make the right choices in life is my prayer. AMEN.

*Evald Pedersen*



## The Successful Family

tongue—so that when we are exposed to any evil, we will not be overcome by it. Jesus set us the greatest example in overcoming and He will give us the power to overcome.

In our homes, we as parents must manifest the spirit we want our children to develop. “Let fathers and mothers make a solemn promise to God, whom they profess to love and obey, that by His grace they will not disagree between themselves, but will in their own life and temper manifest the spirit that they wish their children to cherish.

“Parents should be careful not to allow the spirit of dissension to creep into the home; for this is one of Satan’s agents to make his impression on the character. If parents will strive for unity in the home by inculcating the principles that governed the life of Christ, dissension will be driven out, and unity and love will abide there.” *-Ibid.*, p. 178

“The cause of division and discord in families and in the church is separation from Christ. To come near to Christ is to come near to one another. The secret of true unity in the church and in the family is not diplomacy, not management, not a superhuman effort to overcome difficulties—though there will be much of this to do—but union with Christ.” *-Ibid.*, p. 179

“In His wisdom the Lord has decreed that the family shall be the greatest of all educational agencies. It is in the home that the education of the child is to begin. Here is his first school. Here, with his parents as instructors, he is to learn the lessons that are to guide him throughout life—lessons of respect, obedience, reverence, self-control. . . . If the child is not instructed aright here, Satan will educate him through agencies of his choosing. How important, then, is the school in the home!” *-Ibid.*, p. 182

Jesus Christ is the Great Teacher and fathers and mothers are His representatives, His co-workers and His co-teachers. They are to learn from God’s Word and then teach their children. The family circle is a

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” Deuteronomy 6:4-7

*The family is a special institution ordained by God. “There is a sacred circle around every family which should be preserved. No other one has any right in that sacred circle. . . . Friends and acquaintances we may have, but in the home life they are not to meddle. A strong sense of proprietorship should be felt, giving a sense of ease, restfulness, trust.” -The Adventist Home, p. 177*

The husband and wife are to be all to each other, keeping no secrets from each other nor sharing secrets they have between themselves with others. Neither should he/she complain to others about their spouse, even if it should be in a seemingly harmless manner. This may result in problems between them.

We are admonished to pray for the sanctification of the avenues to our soul—our eyes, our ears, and our



school where parents have been entrusted with a solemn work, namely to teach their children sound principles—how to pray, believe in the Word of God, to love the truth, and to stand firmly in it.

Those who do gardening know that before sowing and/or planting, the soil needs to be prepared by cultivating, composting, and removing all unwanted matter to make it fit for raising crops. After the sowing and planting has been done, we do not forget about our garden, but we look after its maintenance by weeding, watering, and checking for, and removing unwanted pests, if any. We continue to do whatever is necessary to promote growth, until the harvest is ready. Likewise, parents must work on the hearts and souls of their children—sowing the good seeds by word and deed, continuing to look after the work they have begun in order to reap a good harvest.

“What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” [Micah 6:8.] In order to be teachers, parents must be learners, gathering light constantly from the oracles of God and by precept and example bringing this precious light into the education of their children.” *–Ibid.*, p. 184

In addition to instruction in the Word of God, our children should also be taught responsibilities suitable to their age, sharing in the household chores to keep the home clean and orderly. Children need companionship; so, while teaching them the various duties, it is good to work together with them whenever possible. It is also very important that we spend time playing with our younger ones. Spending time together will form a bond between us and our children. Each child has his or her own personality which we need to consider when dealing with them, and let us remember not to prefer one child over another. We have some examples from history where this was the case and it did not result in a positive outcome.

There are many temptations and perils in this world, both inside and outside the home; therefore, parents must put many restrictions upon their children. Satan and his angels are working hard to sway the minds of the children, so parents must work twice as hard to bind their children to their heart. We must show our children that we wish to make them happy

and that we strive to do only what is for their good.

“Kindly instruct them and bind them to your hearts. It is a critical time for children. Influences will be thrown around them to wean them from you which you must counteract. Teach them to make you their confidant.” *–Ibid.*, p. 191

Everything is to be done in faith, love, patience, and kindness, remaining close to God and to our children, asking God for daily strength and to impart His grace to our children. Jesus, our Saviour, is always ready to help the faithful mother and father in their great work, as they strive to educate their children on the way to salvation. Human effort alone cannot do it.

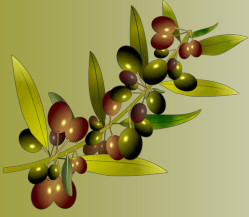
“No work can equal that of the Christian mother. She takes up her work with a sense of what it is to bring up her children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. How often will she feel her burden’s weight heavier than she can bear; and then how precious the privilege of taking it all to her sympathizing Saviour in prayer! She may lay her burden at His feet and find in His presence a strength that will sustain her and give her cheerfulness, hope, courage, and wisdom in the most trying hours. How sweet to the careworn mother is the consciousness of such a friend in all her difficulties!” *–Ibid.*, p. 204–205

“Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.” Psalm 31:24

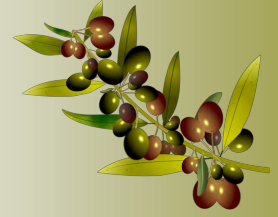
May the Lord help us all, as parents, to learn from our Great Teacher, Jesus Christ, our example, and create a home where love, peace, and unity reigns, and may we teach our children to walk in the way of the Lord, is my prayer. Amen.

*Franziska Pedersen*





# Gethsemane



The Pascal Supper finished, out they went, Jesus, Peter, John and James  
(Mark 14:33), to the garden where they often came – Gethsemane.

Jesus felt much heaviness, feared of what He had to face.

Dark forebodings of what lies ahead, now He meets with dread.

With groaning He does utter: “My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death”  
(v. 34), “Watch with Me and pray” (v. 38).

A stone’s throw forth He kneeled and prayed (Luke 22:42):

“Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me; nevertheless not My will,  
but Thine, be done.”

Jesus feels a terror wave roll over Him, it forced Him to the ground.

Darkness so immense, profound, engulfs His mind; suddenly He feels so keen  
the load of sin of all the world upon His anxious soul.

Satan with a sneer beholds the torment, he claps his hands: this is my moment!

I will bring Jesus down, to menace, scare, make Him give up,

I will triumph with my trap! With his evil angels he surrounds the praying frame,  
exerting all his devilish, cunning skill – he begins his game – to pour out at last

a heinous blast with wicked craft, his hate, contempt, disdain,

upon the Son of man. “How few accept You, most hate, reject You! What for  
to die, for a world that does not want You!”



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It is indeed the hour of decision, it forever seals the fate of man,

The outcome still hangs in the air, will Jesus consent to what He has to bear?

To do His Father’s will is His delight, but human nature shrinks to face the plight  
of the cross now looming over Him. If He now fails then all is lost to save  
the human race, to bear its guilt and pay the price – to give Himself as Sacrifice...

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Ere man from His own hand came forth this was His will to venture, as security  
if man would fall, the penalty for sin He would endure.

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The struggle deepens, intensifies the agony, His fingers grasp the earth to hold  
Him tight as to assure Jesus from a flight to flee this horrifying spot –  
to refuse His chosen lot.

Three times the pleas rise up to Heaven to spare the Son the dreadful cup,  
no answer comes and Satan presses hard to give all up.

He tempts the mind of Jesus to escape, He unto blood is fighting this debate!  
It is the contest of His life with Satan—who will win? Two powers for victory  
here strife, and guilty man lies in between—the severest of all conflicts—  
is because of him! (man).

Death to taste, this is Jesus' fear, it shudders the pure Innocent,  
To be made Sin itself! To bear the guilt! Justice the broken law demands—  
by death as penalty. Then bloody sweat drops from His face (Luke 22:44),  
so marred now in the conflict, and His stricken soul in all this turmoil  
is like shrouded in a haze.

All nature, heaven, angels with dismay behold the scene so doleful,  
As the Creator suffers untold woe on this wretched earth below...

-----  
But then His eyes see mankind tight in Satan's grip—hopelessly lost—  
His own creation! Now His love for man overpowers Jesus,  
He cannot give up man! The quest is settled, over! He rather dies and give it all,  
to warrant Satan's triumph a great fall!

With enormous effort He then says: "I drink the cup, Father, Thy will be done."

Jesus now is thoroughly shaken, He trembles, shivers, faints,  
His body can endure no more, exhausted to the core He lies like dead  
from the ordeal on the bloodstained earthen floor...

An angel comes to strengthen Him and tells Him of His Father's love.  
By this sweet comfort from above Jesus revives, new vigor rouses Him,  
All fear is gone, peace all within, He goes ahead awaiting what will come to Him.

Jesus conquered over Satan's power in that decisive, crucial hour!

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He returns to His disciples; He hears the noise of those approaching  
who bind Him, bring to trial, judge, condemn—and finally will crucify.  
Jesus's love for man will yield to all abuse, defy all scorn, and pain and shame,  
to fulfill for what He came—to the letter, till it is accomplished—  
man to be saved, and—Satan vanquished!

Amen!

*Edda Tedford, Canada*



# Grow in Grace



When there is no growth, there is no life. One day we were discussing Christian growth and one brother explained it in these words: "Don't be a spiritual dwarf." We love to see infants and watch their babyish behaviour, but the same behaviour would be troublesome if still retained when the child was two years old. No one would like to see his child delayed in physical, mental, spiritual, and intellectual growth, not being able to take its first steps. So, also, the Christian must grow.

As some infants who were weak and sickly in their early life become healthy and strong, and greatly outgrow some others who started out with far greater strength, so it is with the "new man". Some who began their spiritual journey with a weak and wavering faith, by the blessing of God and a diligent use of their talents, they outgrow some others who, in the beginning, had greater faith and advantages.

The apostle Peter knew that a Christian needs to grow and to not be a spiritual dwarf. Therefore he wrote, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and for ever. Amen." 2 Peter 3:18

## What does growing in grace signify?

We read in Mark 4:26, "And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground." "The germination of the seed represents the beginning of spiritual life, and the development of the plant is a beautiful figure of Christian growth. As in nature, so in grace; there can be no life without growth. The plant must either grow or die. As its growth is silent and imperceptible, but continuous,

so is the development of the Christian life. At every stage of development our life may be perfect; yet if God's purpose for us is fulfilled, there will be continual advancement. Sanctification is the work of a lifetime. As our opportunities multiply, our experience will enlarge, and our knowledge increase. We shall become strong to bear responsibility, and our maturity will be in proportion to our privileges." *-Christ's Object Lessons, p. 65*

**"The more you understand grace...the more you utilize grace... the more you benefit from grace... the more you act in grace... it will allow you to grow in grace."**

**Dr. Tony Evans**

"The work of sanctification is the work of a lifetime; it must go on continually; but this work cannot go on in the heart while the light on any part of the truth is rejected or neglected. The sanctified soul will not be content to remain in ignorance, but will desire to walk in the light and to seek

for greater light. As a miner digs for gold and silver, so the follower of Christ will seek for truth as for hidden treasures, and will press from light to a greater light, ever increasing in knowledge. He will continually grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. Self must be overcome. Every defect of character must be discerned in God's great mirror. We may discover whether or not we are condemned by God's standard of character." –*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 317

"Day by day God labors for man's sanctification, and man is to cooperate with Him, putting forth persevering efforts in the cultivation of right habits. He is to add grace to grace; and as he thus works on the plan of addition, God works for him on the plan of multiplication. Our Saviour is always ready to hear and answer the prayer of the contrite heart, and grace and peace are multiplied to His faithful ones. Gladly He grants them the blessings they need in their struggle against the evils that beset them.... Glorious is the hope before the believer as he advances by faith toward the heights of Christian perfection!" –*My Life Today*, p. 101

### **Christ, our pattern and example for our spiritual growth**

"Jesus, considered as a man, was perfect, yet He grew in grace. Luke 2:52: 'And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.' Even the most perfect Christian may increase continually in the knowledge and love of God.

"2 Peter 3:14, 18: 'Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless.' "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen.'" –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 339–340

"During His life on earth He was ever kind and gentle. His influence was ever fragrant, for in Him dwelt perfect love. He was never sour and unapproachable, and He never compromised with wrong to obtain favor. If we have His righteousness, we

shall be like Him in gentleness, in forbearance, in unselfish love. Shall we not, by dwelling in the sunshine of His presence, become mellowed by His grace?" –*In Heavenly Places*, p. 31

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Philippians 2:5

"We are to enter the school of Christ, to learn from Him meekness and lowliness. Redemption is that process by which the soul is trained for heaven. This training means a knowledge of Christ. It means emancipation from ideas, habits, and practices that have been gained in the school of the prince of darkness. The soul must be delivered from all that is opposed to loyalty to God." –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 330

### **Look to Christ**

"When the sinner sees his Saviour dying upon the cross under the curse of sin in his stead, beholding His pardoning love, love awakes in his heart. The sinner loves Christ, because Christ has first loved him, and love is the fulfilling of the law. The repenting soul realizes that God 'is faithful and just to forgive

**"Diligent heart-keeping is essential to a healthy growth in grace." –*Our High Calling*, p. 161**

us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' The Spirit of God works in the believer's soul, enabling him to advance from one line of obedience to another, reaching on from strength to greater strength, from grace to grace in Jesus Christ." –*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 374

"Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, saith the LORD of hosts." Zechariah 4:6

"In order to be candidates for heaven we must meet the requirement of the law: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself' (Luke 10:27). We can do this only as we grasp by faith the righteousness of Christ. By beholding Jesus we receive a living, expanding principle in the heart, and the Holy Spirit carries on the work, and the believer advances from grace to grace, from strength to strength, from character to character. He conforms

to the image of Christ, until in spiritual growth he attains unto the measure of the full stature in Christ Jesus. Thus Christ makes an end of the curse of sin, and sets the believing soul free from its action and effect." – *Ibid.*, p. 395

"He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law, is attempting an impossibility. Man cannot be saved without obedience, but his works should not be of himself; Christ should work in him to will and to do of His good pleasure. If a man could save himself by his own works, he might have something in himself in which to rejoice. The effort that man makes in his own strength to obtain salvation, is represented by the offering of Cain. All that man can do without Christ is polluted with selfishness and sin; but that which is wrought through faith is acceptable to God. When we seek to gain heaven through the merits of Christ, the soul makes progress. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, we may go on from strength to strength, from victory to victory; for through Christ the grace of God has worked out our complete salvation." – *Ibid.*, p. 364

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Titus 2:13

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right

hand of the throne of God." Hebrews 12:2

"So long as we are in the world, we shall meet with adverse influences. There will be provocations to test the temper; and it is by meeting these in a right spirit that the Christian graces are developed. If Christ dwells in us, we shall be patient, kind, and forbearing, cheerful amid frets and irritations. Day by day and year by year we shall conquer self, and grow into a noble heroism. This is our allotted task; but it cannot be accomplished without help from Jesus, resolute decision, unwavering purpose, continual watchfulness, and unceasing prayer. Each one has a personal battle to fight. Not even God can make our characters noble or our lives useful, unless we become co-workers with Him. Those who decline the struggle lose the strength and joy of victory." – *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 487

Finally Brethren, Christ wants us to grow in grace, fully into His stature. We need not be spiritual dwarfs. Let us help our brethren to wake up, those that are in spiritual slumber, that we may come into the unity of faith. As the apostle Paul exhorted us, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:" Ephesians 4:13. AMEN.

*Jenifer Akello (Uganda) and  
Victor Shumbusho (DR Congo)*

**"While all the powers of earth and hell are combined to destroy, God guards His children still. The Lord would not have His people in continual fear, hence He does not reveal to them a thousandth part of the efforts of their great adversary to allure and destroy. If they could discern the wonderful power of God constantly exerted in their behalf, would not their hearts be filled with gratitude for His love, and with awe at the thought of His majesty and wondrous power.**

**"There, upon the mountain-top, are the emissaries of Satan, devising evil against God's people, who are all unconscious of their danger. But He that keepeth Israel does not slumber. The Lord's eye discerns every plot against His own, and no weapon formed against His church shall prosper. God restrains the power of wicked men. He says to them, 'Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther.' What a thought is this! what a theme for contemplation! and what a response of love and faithfulness should it call forth from every child of God!" – *The Signs of the Times*, December 2, 1880**



## On the Mountain Top

Many people have experienced standing on top of a mountain. There are very high mountains where, from the top, you can see hundreds of kilometres in the distance, such as Mount Everest or Mount Kilimanjaro. Few have been to the tops of these. Many more have made experiences on mountains that are not so high, just very tall hills where you cannot see quite so far, but you still get a good view of the countryside. It is often a breathtaking experience to see the distant landscape.

When we are in the valleys we can view the tops of the mountains. Often we admire the mountain heights and desire to climb them, and find some way to the top. Sometimes there are roads and you can drive to the top, or cable cars to make it easier to get there as opposed to climbing. There is a certain exhilarating feeling one gets at the tops of the mountains.

*Many important events in the Bible took place on the top of mountains.*

**Abraham offered his son on Mount Moriah:** You wonder, why did God ask Abraham to go to the top of the mountain? And this is after having to walk for three days. Abraham had a lot of time to think in those three days. He could have backed out and changed his mind. But he went resolutely forward in faith.

“Side by side the father and the son journeyed in silence. The patriarch, pondering his heavy secret, had no heart for words. His thoughts were of the proud, fond mother, and the day when he should return to her alone. Well he knew that the knife would pierce her heart when it took the life of her son.

“That day—the longest that Abraham had ever experienced—dragged slowly to its close. While his son and the young men were sleeping, he spent the night in prayer, still hoping that some heavenly messenger might come to say that the trial was enough, that the

youth might return unharmed to his mother. But no relief came to his tortured soul. Another long day, another night of humiliation and prayer, while ever the command that was to leave him childless was ringing in his ears. Satan was near to whisper doubts and unbelief, but Abraham resisted his suggestions. As they were about to begin the journey of the third day, the patriarch, looking northward, saw the promised sign, a cloud of glory hovering over Mount Moriah, and he knew that the voice which had spoken to him was from heaven.

“Even now he did not murmur against God, but strengthened his soul by dwelling upon the evidences of the Lord's goodness and faithfulness.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets* p. 151

On top of a mountain, it is a private place; it is often a solitary place. You are far removed from the disturbances of the valley. It is not common to build a city on the top of the mountain. The Lord wanted Abraham to go through this experience alone. He did not want any interference from anyone to try to prevent him from following through. He had to make the decision alone. And what a tremendous victory was gained in Abraham's personal life, and for the rest of the universe and for all the generations that were to follow. That was truly a mountain top experience for Abraham. After Abraham had that close encounter with the Lord, after “sacrificing” his son, he was told to return to the valley and take up his daily duties at home. It was not for him to remain on Mount Moriah in the immediate presence of the Lord, as much he may have liked to.

*From the top of the mountain, Lot only saw the beautiful valley where Sodom and Gomorrah were situated and he chose to live there.* “And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom

and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east." Genesis 13:10–11

Lot chose to dwell in the valley. When you are on top of the mountains and look down, everything looks so calm and peaceful. You do not see the details of what is going on in the valley. You often only see a beautiful countryside or then a city in the distance, that shows little of the activity that is going on. Depending on the height, you may see the neat rows of houses, the streets, the trees that line the streets, the parks, but not really the people, or the activity. And nor can you see the pollution, the crime, or the corruption.

This was not the wisest decision Lot made. He only saw what he thought was the beauty from the distance. All too soon, he found out the reality of what life was really like in the valley. Although, he managed to remain faithful to the Lord, he lost almost his entire family to the corruption in the city. He went from the heights of Mamre, where Abraham dwelt and often communed with God, to the valley of corruption to dwell. The mistake Lot made was that he went to dwell there. While we are called to do missionary work in the cities and the crime-filled areas of the earth, we are not to set our roots down amongst them in our associations. We are to call them out of their situation to a higher experience that the Lord wants them to have.

*The Commandments were spoken from a mountain top.* Mountains can be seen from hundreds of kilometres away and so provided a good platform for the Lord to proclaim His commandments for all to see. "The top of Mount Sinai rose above all others, in a range of mountains in the barren desert. This mountain God chose as the place where He would make Himself known to His people." –*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 1, p. 106. From that mountain top the Lord made quite an impression upon the people. They requested that Moses speak to them in the future rather than the Lord speaking directly to them.

*Moses met with the Lord several times on the top of the*



*mountain.* A cloud covered the mountain when Moses was speaking with the Lord. No one entered into the presence of the Lord besides Moses. Again, it was a very solitary place. The Israelites could see the cloud, they knew the presence of God was there, but they could not enter. From there Moses received instructions from the Lord as to how to lead the people, how to build the tabernacle; he was also given the laws to govern the nation. And after spending 40 days in the presence of the Lord, Moses had to descend into the valley and take up his duties (many times unappreciated), in leading the people.

*Both Moses and Aaron died on the top of a mountain.* It was a very quiet and solitary place where they breathed their last. Aaron was accompanied by a few close family members but Moses was alone with the Lord. At Moses' death, being on top of the mountain had a two-fold purpose. Moses was alone with the Lord in a solitary place and secondly, from there he could view the Promised Land—hundreds of kilometres in the distance. He could see what it would be like. He saw only the beauty of it. Although he was told what would happen after they settled into the land, he personally could not enter. Both Aaron and Moses died peacefully on top of the mountain, not having to descend into the valley on this earth ever again.

*Balaam was called on a mission by Balak.* (Numbers 22 and 23). From the top of the mountain, Balak asked Balaam to curse Israel. Even though the devil would have loved to do this, the Lord said "No." From this precipice he could see the vast camp of Israel and the orderly fashion in which it was laid out. He could only stand in awe of the mighty God that was in their midst. How could he curse them? The Lord turned the curse into a blessing. All this while the nation of Israel had no idea what was going on. Evil men were plotting cursings, but God was turning the cursing into a blessing. Many times that will happen to God's children unbeknownst to them. Evil men plot curses, but the Lord turns curses into blessings. What a great God we serve, Who is always there to protect us! Although the Israelites were dwelling in the valley, the blessings came from the mountain top.

*Satan took Jesus to the top of the mountain* to show Him the valley far below, far away from the evil that was taking place. From the distance the details of the evil could not be seen. The devil told Jesus, "All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me." Matthew 4:9. He could have it all and did not need to die on the cross, if He would only bow down to



Satan. Jesus did not give in to the temptation. He knew what was really going on in the valley. "Then it was that divinity flashed through humanity, and the fallen angels saw Christ glorified as He said, 'Get thee behind Me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.'" —*The Youth's Instructor*, January 3, 1901. From a distance it did not seem so bad, but close up, Jesus knew it was much worse.

It is the same in our Christian life. If we are at a distance from Jesus, we do not look so bad, but when we come close to Him, we see how filthy our garments really are. Who would want to then come close? The distance is a deception. Being close is reality. People do not like the reality and find all kinds of substances and medications to distance themselves from the reality of their situation. They prefer to keep a distance. But if we come close to Christ, He will cover our filthy garments with His robe of righteousness.

*Jesus took three of His disciples on to the top of a mountain.* "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light." Matthew 17:1-2

The three disciples would have loved to remain on the mountain and be in the eternal presence of Jesus. "Here, where the glory of God is revealed, they long to tarry. . . . The entire night had been passed in the mountain; and as the sun arose, Jesus and His disciples descended to the plain. Absorbed in thought, the disciples were awed and silent. Even Peter had not a word to say. Gladly would they have lingered in that holy place which had been touched with the light of heaven, and where the Son of God had manifested His glory; but there was work to be done for the people, who were already searching far and near for Jesus." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 422, 426

All too soon Jesus led them back into the valley and they were approached by a man whose son was possessed by an evil spirit (Matthew 17:14-18). This the reality of the valley of life on this earth.

For Jesus to be able to manage in the valleys of life we read of Him, "And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." Luke 6:12. Here He found His strength for the days. Remember, Jesus make the ultimate sacrifice when He left the mountain top of heaven to come to this dismal valley (earth) and He lived and

died for the glory of God, for you and for me.

*Ellen G. White had a vision of heaven* (*Early Writings*, p. 14-20). She was so impressed that she asked to stay there on the mountain top, but she was told she had to return to the valley of this earth. What was her view of this earth when she returned?

"Then an angel bore me gently down to this dark world. Sometimes I think I can stay here no longer; all things of earth look so dreary. I feel very lonely here, for I have seen a better land. Oh, that I had wings like a dove, then would I fly away and be at rest!" —*Early Writings*, p. 19-20

*Although many important events occurred on the tops of the mountains, I want to now compare these mountain top experiences with our spiritual life.*

We cannot all climb mountains. We may not have a high mountain close by or we may not have access or the ability to climb. But we all are to make mountain top experiences in our Christian life—experiences when we feel very close to the Lord.

The reality is, though, that when you climb mountains, you cannot remain there. Soon you will have to descend into the valley once more and get up close to the reality of life in the valleys.

*Enoch was a faithful man of God* and in order to keep his faith strong, he had to retreat to a solitary place. He had to have a mountain top experience with the Lord in order to walk in the valleys of life to minister to the wicked.

"Enoch faithfully rehearsed to the people all that had been revealed to him by the spirit of prophecy. Some believed his words, and turned from their wickedness to fear and worship God. Such often sought Enoch in his places of retreat, and he instructed them, and prayed for them that God would give them a knowledge of His will. He finally chose certain periods for retirement, and would not suffer the people to find him, for they interrupted his holy meditations and communion with God. He did not exclude himself at all times from the society of those who loved him and listened to his words of wisdom; neither did he separate himself wholly from the corrupt. He met with the righteous and the wicked at stated times, and labored to turn the ungodly from their evil course, and instruct them in the fear of God, while he taught those who had the knowledge of God to serve Him more perfectly. He would remain with them as long as he could benefit them by his godly conversation and holy example, and then would withdraw him-

self for a season from all society—from the just, the scoffing and idolatrous, to remain in solitude, hungering and thirsting for communion with God, and that divine knowledge which He alone could give him.” — *The Signs of the Times*, February 20, 1879

Enoch spent time on the “mountains” with the Lord, and also descended in to the “valleys” to be right in the middle of evil society to bring them light from heaven. While Enoch often travelled to the valleys where there was evil, crime, and corruption, he did not dwell there. He dwelt in the mountains with the Lord.

*Elijah had two tremendous mountain top experiences on two different literal mountains.* The Lord worked in a mighty and miraculous manner through the prayer of Elijah on Mount Carmel, bringing fire from heaven which resulted in the people destroying the prophets of Baal, and falling on their faces before the Almighty. From there, in a panic, after hearing about the threatenings of Jezebel, Elijah fled to Mount Horeb where he was introduced to the solitary side of an encounter with the Lord. Elijah was shown the contrast.

When he arrived at mount Horeb, the Lord asked him, “What doest thou here, Elijah? I sent you to the brook Cherith and afterward to the widow of Sarepta. I commissioned you to return to Israel and to stand before the idolatrous priests on Carmel, and I girded you with strength to guide the chariot of the king to the gate of Jezreel. But who sent you on this hasty flight into the wilderness? What errand have you here? . . .

“Calling upon the prophet to leave the cave, the angel bade him stand before the Lord on the mount, and listen to His word. ‘And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave.’

“Not in mighty manifestations of divine power, but by ‘a still small voice,’ did God choose to reveal Himself to His servant. He desired to teach Elijah that it is not always the work that makes the greatest demonstration that is most successful in accomplishing His purpose.” — *Prophets and Kings*, p. 168

Although Elijah may likely have wanted to remain in the direct presence of the Lord it was not that time yet.

After revealing Himself to Elijah on the mountain, the Lord still had work for him to do. “‘Go,’ the Lord commanded Elijah, ‘return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus.’” — *Ibid.*, p. 169. From Mount Moriah the Lord sent Elijah back to the valley to do more work for Him.

“But the reaction which frequently follows elevation of faith and marked and glorious success, was pressing upon Elijah. He was exalted to Pisgah's top, to be humiliated to the lowliest valley in faith and feeling. But God's eye was still upon His servant. He loved him no less when he felt brokenhearted and forsaken of God and man than when, in answer to his prayer, fire flashed from heaven illuminating Carmel.” — *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 291

There is a time to be on the mountain, and a time to be in the valley and do the work quietly. His successor, Elisha, was a quiet prophet, who worked quietly amongst the people. There is no record of him speaking with large masses of people, kings, and dignitaries, other than those that went to seek him out like Naaman (2 Kings 5) and King Joash of Israel (2 Kings 13:14–19). Yet he was equally doing the work of the Lord. Sometimes the quiet heart-to-heart work is more effective than the public preaching. There is a time and place for both.

*Today*, we have spiritual mountain top experiences each Sabbath when we attend church and on a greater scale when we attend a conference. “It is important that the members of our churches should attend our camp meetings. . . it would be far better for you to let your business suffer than to neglect the opportunity of hearing the message God has for you.” — *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 38–39

During a conference, we are blessed to be surrounded by many believers all sharing the same faith and love of Jesus. How often we wish it would last just a little longer, but no, the time comes when we have to descend that mountain and go into the valleys of our day-to-day living at home. As much as we would like to remain on that spiritual mountain, the true test of our spiritual life is our ability to carry that power and spiritual energy we received when we descend the mountain; when we have returned home—sometimes to a very small church group—or to being an isolated member—just you and your family. You must carry that inspiration back home into your community.

Those mountain top experiences at conferences and on Sabbaths are not meant to just simply teach us new truth. Sometimes we may not learn anything new. The purpose of these times is to develop our character into

something beautiful; they are to make us more Christ-like. “None of us should go to the camp meeting depending on the ministers or the Bible workers to make the meeting a blessing to us. God does not want His people to hang their weight on the minister. . . . Each one should feel that in a measure the success of the meeting depends upon him.” –*Ibid.*, p. 41. Those who have come to a conference from the right motives often have left feeling like the Apostle Paul when he stated, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” Philippians 4:13. They wish that they could always feel like this.

Never forget the feelings you felt at conferences and on Sabbath. When Sabbath is over, or you return from a conference, begin to work immediately for the Lord, even if it is something small. If, during a spiritual meeting, God shows you something to do, do not say, “I’ll do it”—just *do it*. Go forward. “And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” Luke 9:62. Those mountain top experiences at conferences and on Sabbath are intended to give us inspiration to be able to live in the valley, to keep us going during the week even when we do not feel like it. We are to bring these experiences that we made, and the revelations that the Lord gave to us, into our everyday life. It is the ordinary daily life where we prove our spiritual stamina and strength.

Daily also, with our personal devotions, we are to have small mountain top experiences with the Lord in order to walk through the valley of our daily lives. Although we may not feel the exhilaration we felt at the conference, we have a calm peaceful trust that the Lord is with us.

In our spiritual lives, I am sure many of us have felt times when we were very close to the Lord, and other times when we felt very despondent and thought, “what’s the use?” “Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts?” Malachi 3:14. Ellen White also experienced times of despondency, as you read the biography of her life. The Lord wants us to trust Him implicitly, regardless of how we feel. Sometimes we are blessed with mountain top feelings but we will not always have mountain top feelings—the Lord is testing us. Just because you may feel despondent it does not mean that the Lord has forsaken you. We have to be able to trust Him at all times regardless of feelings.

Although the valley may seem like drudgery—like an endless round or repeated duties, it is in the valleys that we live for the glory of God. We may see His glory on the mountains, but we do not live there. We do not remain in solitude, reading, studying, and praying. It is there that we receive the inspiration to come down and work and live for His glory in the valleys of life. We live in the valleys but the blessings come from the mountains.

Hopefully we all take time to have mountain top experiences with the Lord. There are the solitary mountain top experiences, as seen in the life of Enoch, and the Lord’s message to Elijah on Mount Horeb, and also the public mountain top experiences which are equally important. I am sure that the Israelites never forgot the majesty displayed on Mount Sinai when the Lord spoke the Ten Commandments to them in awesome majesty. I am sure also that the Israelites never forgot the fire coming down from heaven and devouring Elijah’s sacrifice.

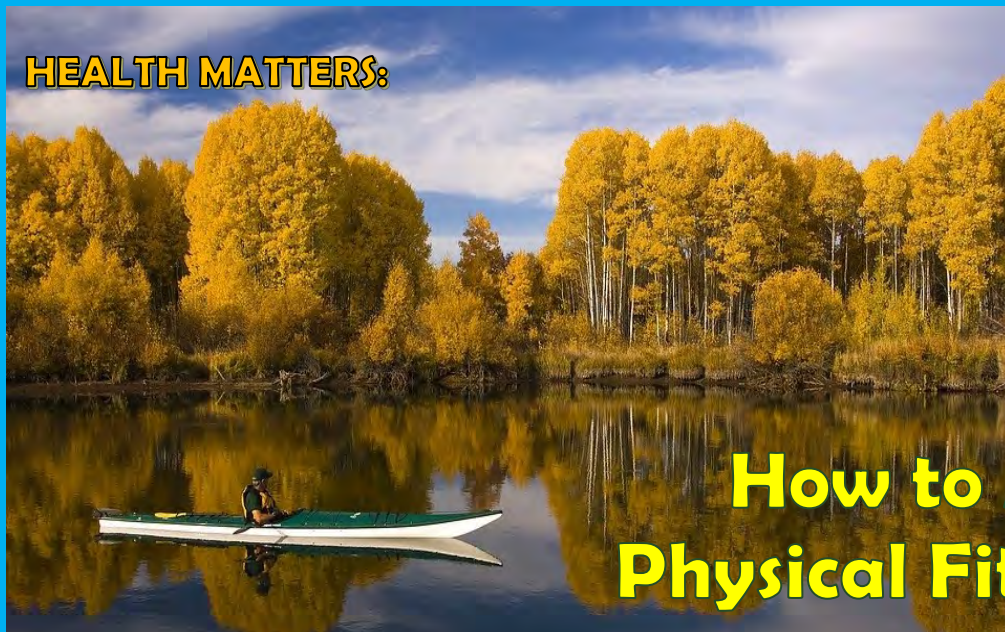
In the valleys of life we face trials and difficulties as the Lord molds and shapes our characters to be able to stand one day on Mount Zion—a place we will never have to retreat from down to the valleys ever again.

“Let us live in the sunlight of the cross of Calvary. Let us no longer dwell in the shadow, complaining of our sorrows, for this only deepens our trouble. Let us never forget, even when we walk in the valley, that Christ is as much with us when we walk trustingly there, as when we are on the mountain top. The voice said to us, ‘Will you not roll your burden upon the burden bearer, the Lord Jesus? Will you not live on the sunny side of the cross, saying: I know Him whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day? Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.’” –*The Signs of the Times*, July 25, 1895

*Wendy Eaton*



## HEALTH MATTERS:



# How to Attain Physical Fitness, Part 1

“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.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 238

As we learned in a previous article, there are five components that must function at optimum levels for good body fitness; these include body composition, muscular strength, flexibility, muscular endurance, and cardiovascular endurance. Almost all fitness programs consist of exercises that focus on one or more of these components. A comprehensive fitness programme should encompass all five aspects of physical fitness. Concentrating only in one or two areas is not enough to maintain good physical fitness.



Before we begin, it would be remiss not to mention that a doctor’s approval is needed in some scenarios, before starting a fitness program.

Some of these include: if you are a man over 45 or a woman over 55, being overweight, having high blood pressure, personal or family history of heart attack, high cholesterol, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, lung disease, you become dizzy with exertion, you feel pain or discomfort in your chest, jaw, neck, or arms during activity, you have not had a recent physical exam done by your doctor to ensure that you are in good health, or you have not been exercising regularly. If you are on regular medication, check with your doctor as to whether exercise will make the medication work differently or if it will change its side effects, or if your medication will affect the way your body reacts to exercise. Especially diabetics need to check with their doctors before starting an exercise routine, as exercise may lower blood sugar, and the medication doses that are prescribed may drop blood sugar to dangerously low levels. Many diabetics who lose weight as part of an exercise program may be able to permanently reduce the doses and the amount of medication they take.

So, to go back our topic, how do we ensure that we our fitness program includes exercises that focus on all of these areas? To ensure that a fitness program includes all that we need for peak physical fitness, we need to incorporate three different categories of exercise into our program. These three categories are aerobic, anaerobic, and flexibility exercises. In this month’s article we will go into detail into the first of these categories— aerobic fitness.

## AEROBIC FITNESS

Aerobic exercise, also known as cardiovascular exercise—“cardio” for short—or endurance activity, is the cornerstone of most fitness training programmes. The definition of aerobic means “with oxygen”. Therefore, when doing aerobic exercises, the body uses oxygen in order to create energy. Aerobic exercises address three components of physical fitness including cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, and body composition.

Aerobic-type exercises cause you to breathe faster and more deeply, maximizing the amount of oxygen that circulates in your blood. Oxygen, a necessary ingredient in creating energy, is taken up by all the cells in the body when we breathe. Glucose, the fuel needed to create energy, is also taken up by the cells; the process then takes place where the cells convert oxygen and glucose to ATP, or cellular energy.

When you are exercising your muscles must work harder which increases their demand for oxygen to

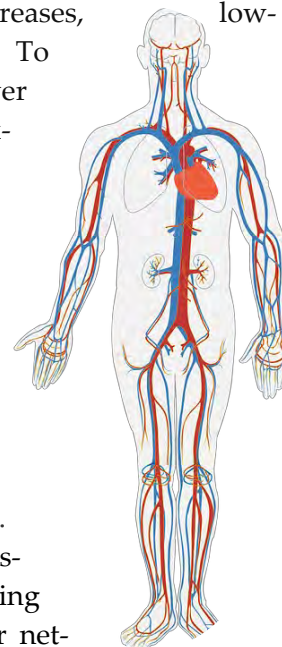


produce energy. So, how does aerobic exercise improve oxygen flow to the muscles when they are work-

ing? To improve cardio fitness, aerobic exercise involves using the large muscles of the body. More blood is needed for the muscle cells to produce more energy, so the heart beats faster to send more oxygen to the muscles. Over time, when engaging in regular cardio exercises, the left ventricle (chamber) of the heart enlarges so that more blood can be pumped out to the body with each beat. The larger cavity can hold more blood, and pump out more blood per beat, even when you are resting. Therefore, the heart becomes much more efficient and does not need to beat as quickly to send the same amount of blood and thus oxygen to the muscles. The resting and working heart rate then drops, because each beat delivers a bigger volume of blood, therefore fewer beats are needed. This takes work off your heart, and which is why car-

dio exercise is recommended for heart health.

Also, when your heart works less to pump blood, the force on your arteries decreases, lowering your blood pressure. To maintain an overall lower blood pressure, you must exercise regularly. Once you stop exercising, blood pressure can rise again. Aerobic exercise also stimulates the production of new blood vessels. As more blood vessels are created, there are more places for blood to flow, which results in more efficient circulation. This also lowers blood pressure because the circulating blood travels within a larger network of blood vessels. New blood vessels also grow in the muscles to keep up with the increased demand for oxygen, thus making muscles even more effective in taking in oxygen to create energy. You will need less oxygen to produce the same effect in the muscles, and you will feel less out-of-breath when you breathe during exercise.



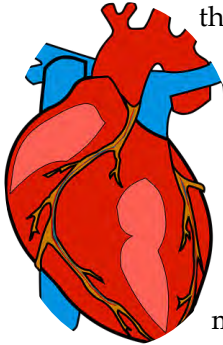
Lungs do not increase in size with exercise; however, the heart has a better ability to take in oxygen from the lungs, which increases the amount of oxygen available to the body. The better your aerobic fitness, the more your oxygen intake improves, and the more efficiently your heart, lungs and blood vessels transport oxygen throughout your body to the cells. Aerobic exercise reduces levels of LDL (“bad” cholesterol), which clog the arteries and can trigger a heart attack. At the same time, exercise can raise levels of HDL (“good” cholesterol). HDL helps protect against a heart attack by carrying plaque out of the arteries. Because exercise burns calories, combined with a proper diet, many who are overweight can achieve a normal body composition.

Every cell of the body requires oxygen; therefore, aerobic fitness not only improves the function of the cells required for physical activity, but also every other cell of the body benefits from increased oxygen levels, e.g. brain cells, Overall, with more oxy-

gen, we have more heart and muscle endurance, we have greater stamina and can do much more without getting tired. It is easier to perform routine physical tasks and also to rise to unexpected challenges. Thus, aerobic exercise not only benefits the physical health of the body, but improves quality of life in general.

## AEROBIC EXERCISE

In order to improve cardiovascular endurance, the heart must beat at a certain rate per minute for improvement to take place. Once that level is achieved,



the heart becomes more efficient in taking in oxygen to the body. The body needs the most oxygen when the large muscle groups are activated. Therefore, aerobic exercise involves movements that use the large muscles groups, as large amounts of oxygen are needed to be sent to the muscles to perform at their peak.

The way to identify whether the heart is working at a level to improve function is to determine how quickly the heart is pumping. The faster it pumps, the more oxygen is brought into the body. There is an easy way to calculate how quickly the heart must be going in order to improve fitness. First you must calculate the maximum heart rate that should occur while exercising. The maximum heart rate for men is 220 minus your age. For women it is 225 minus your age. The goal rate for exercising should be 70% of your maximum rate. When the heartbeat is faster than the 70% you are doing aerobic exercises. Let us take for example a 35-year-old male:  $(220-35=185) \times 70\%=130$ . Therefore, to improve cardiovascular fitness, his heart rate must remain above 130 for the length of the exercise session.

For the average person, the heart rate will be in the range of 120 to 130 beats per minute. You can determine your own heart rate by feeling for the vein on your wrist which extends behind your thumb. You can count how many beats there are in 15 seconds and multiply it by four. Many people also use fitness trackers which monitor heart rate.

Even moderate exercise benefits the cardiovascular system if the heart rate is maintained at the target level for at least 20 minutes, and minimum three times a week. However, many government health

departments are now promoting daily exercise because of the obvious benefits to one's health.

Aerobic exercise can either be low-impact (one foot always on the floor) or high-impact (both feet leave the floor). High impact is more jarring on the joints, but it also improves bone health more effectively. Because of other health conditions, many people cannot do high impact exercises. It doesn't matter which one you do; both will improve cardiovascular and muscular endurance.

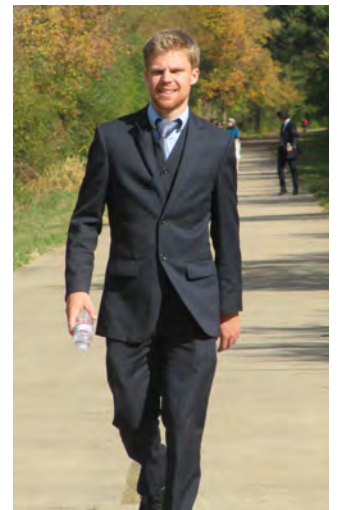
### *Examples of mild to moderate aerobic activities:*

- Rake leaves
- Take a walk around the block
- Play actively with the kids
- Walk up the stairs instead of taking the elevator
- Mow the lawn
- Park your car a little farther away from your destination
- Shovelling snow
- Vacuuming

### *Examples of higher intensity aerobic activities:*

- Brisk walking
- Jumping rope
- Jogging
- Bicycling
- Swimming
- Aerobic classes
- Racket sports
- Team sports
- Rowing
- Ice or roller-skating
- Cross-country or downhill skiing
- Using aerobic equipment (i.e., treadmill, stationary bike)

“Walking, in all cases where it is possible, is the best remedy for diseased bodies, because in this exercise all the organs of the body are brought into use. Many who depend upon the movement cure could accomplish more for themselves by muscular exercise than the movements can do for them. In



some cases, want of exercise causes the bowels and muscles to become enfeebled and shrunken, and these organs that have become enfeebled for want of use will be strengthened by exercise. There is no exercise that can take the place of walking. By it the circulation of the blood is greatly improved.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 78

Breathing properly when exercising is very important. Often people breathe too fast, too slow, too deeply, or too shallow. Sometimes people inhale and exhale at the wrong times; this can affect the exercise and how well you perform it. As we go about our daily lives, breathing comes naturally and we don't need to think about it. Our body needs oxygen so we automatically inhale, and when our body needs to get rid of carbon dioxide (waste product produced when muscles use oxygen), we automatically exhale. However, when not exerting themselves, most people tend to breathe from the upper part of their lungs, and only use 10–15% of their full lung capacity. When we begin to exercise, our body needs more oxygen, and it needs to get rid of more carbon dioxide, thus we begin to breathe more quickly. However, just an increase in rate, yet still breathing only from the upper area of the lungs can make one feel dizzy, as not enough oxygen is actually getting into the body.

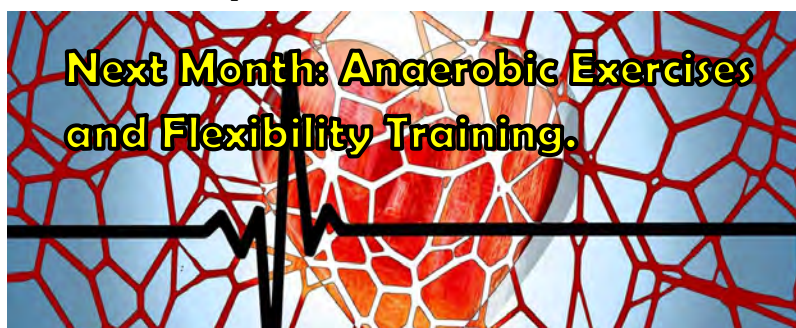
Diaphragmatic breathing or “belly” breathing, allows for deeper, fuller breaths, with increased oxygen intake. This can be practiced even before engaging in exercise. Your breathing should be deep, rhythmical, and relaxed. To breathe from your diaphragm, first relax your abdominal muscles. Keeping them too tight will restrict your ability to breathe deeply. When breathing, focus on your belly. You are breathing deeply when your belly goes in and out, instead of your shoulders rising and falling. The amount of time that it takes for you to inhale should be the same amount of time that it takes for you to exhale. As the exercise increases in intensity, breathing can become quicker, but should still remain deep and from the diaphragm. Breathing can be done either through the nose or through the mouth; some people find that they can get more air in when breathing through their mouth during intense exercise. Often people will breathe in pattern with the exercises they are performing. For example, when jogging, take a breath in every 2–3 steps, and then exhale every 2–3 steps. The main thing is to find a



breathing pattern that works for you, that you feel comfortable with.

For an effective aerobic exercise session, it should include a warm-up period prior to the activity and a cooling down period after the activity. These periods generally involve doing your activity more slowly and at a lower intensity. For example, before a brisk walk, walk slowly for 5–10 minutes. At the end of your walk, do the same thing for a cool down. A warm-up prepares your body for the activity. It slowly fires up your cardiovascular system by raising your body temperature and increasing blood flow to your muscles. A warm-up period may also help reduce muscle soreness and lessen your risk of injury. Cooling down after exercise allows for a gradual recovery of pre-exercise heart rate and blood pressure.

“The greatest benefit is not gained from exercise that is taken as play or exercise merely. There is some benefit derived from being in the fresh air and also from the exercise of the muscles; but let the same amount of energy be given to the performance of helpful duties, and the benefit will be greater, and a feeling of satisfaction will be realized; for such exercise carries with it the sense of helpfulness and the approval of conscience for duty well done.” –*The Adventist Home*, p. 506



## CHILDREN'S CORNER:

# The Owner's Manual



One day, a young man named Michael decided to go and purchase a car. He had worked hard for several years to save his money. He did not want an expensive car, just a good car that he would need when he attended University later that year. He had worked evenings and weekends during his last few years of high school and finally had gathered the necessary funds.

He was excited! With his father he went to purchase the vehicle that would serve him well for the years he was in university. Before going out, they prayed for the Lord to direct them to make the right purchase, that they would get a good solid car for a reasonable price.

After going to several dealers, and test driving many cars, finally they found one that would be reliable. They had prayed for a sign from the Lord, and the Lord answered their prayer and the purchase was made.

It was several days after the purchase of the car before Michael could receive the car. All the necessary papers would need to be filled out and the registration and plates had to be obtained. Michael had never owned a car before, and so was very excited when the day came for the car to be picked up.

Michael went with his father to the dealer and as the salesman was handing him the keys, he asked Michael if he would like to have the salesman go over some of the features in the car with him. Michael was too excited and impatient to wait so he declined the offer and simply stated, "I'm sure I can

figure it out by myself. Thanks anyway."

The salesman understood, seeing the excitement on the face of Michael. "Okay, but if you do find that you need help, the owner's manual is in the glove compartment." He wished him well and Michael was off.

Michael's father followed him in his own car as they went home and parked his car in the driveway. It was late in the day so he decided he would not drive it any more that night. In his evening prayers he thanked the Lord for the vehicle and prayed that, not only would it serve him well, but he prayed that somehow he also could be a blessing for others with his car.

The next morning Michael was up early and was out the door. He wanted to go out and drive his car once again. He excitedly ran to the car, inserted the key, and pulled on the door, but it would not open. Michael thought to himself, "That's odd, the doors opened at the dealership yesterday with no problem. How could this be? Had not the Lord provided this vehicle for him in answer to prayer? Was the vehicle already having mechanical problems? Michael was very much disturbed and his thoughts troubled him as he walked around the car looking longingly into the windows admiring the clean interior. At that time Michael's friend Scott came over.

"Nice car, Michael," said Scott. "But why are you walking around the outside looking in? Why not just get in and drive rather than just looking in the windows?"



Michael replied mournfully, "I just got this car yesterday and today the doors are stuck. I think the salesman was dishonest with me, even though I prayed. I don't know what kind of lesson the Lord is trying to teach me. I spent all my savings and do not have money to repair the stuck doors. I will have to work a few more weeks to make some more money."

Scott laughed and said, "Stuck? Did you try unlocking the doors first?"

"I did," Michael replied. "Let me show you." He put the key into the door lock, but the door would not open no matter how hard he tried to turn.

"You better be careful or you'll break that key off in the lock." Scott replied. "Let me see your key," he added.

"Do you have another key?" Asked Scott

Michael quickly replied, "Yes, I have two, I thought they were both the same. I left the other one in my bedroom. Let me go and get it."

When he brought the key he handed it to Scott. Upon comparison they were actually two different keys. "I bet this one is for the trunk that you have been trying. Try the one you had in your bedroom." replied Scott.

Michael finally unlocked the car doors with the key that had been in his bedroom and sat behind the wheel. He was now ready to go for a drive. Scott joined him in the passenger seat.

"Do you know what all the controls are for, Michael?" asked Scott.

Michael replied, "No not yet. I'll get around figuring them out sometime soon, I am sure I know the basics. Right now I want to take my car out for a little drive!"

Scott cautioned, "If I were you, I would take a few minutes to read the manual."

But Michael was impatient. Scott got out of the car as he had to be back home, and he watched as Michael backed out of the driveway.

Away went Michael down the street. The drive was going well. Michael felt exhilarated as he drove around the town and into the countryside. After an hour, he decided to return home. As he neared his home, it started to rain. Then it rained harder and harder. Michael could barely see and was frantically

looking around for the windshield wipers. He could not stop on this busy road with cars all around him. He tried this button, and than one; this lever and that. In his distraction, he scraped his car on a stone wall at the side of the road. The sickening sound of scraping metal made Michael very upset. A little further he found a place to stop. He pulled over and searched for the windshield wipers. He finally found them and drove the rest of the way home slowly and safely.

Although the car was still driveable, it had a nasty looking scrape on the side. It will be a costly repair,



but Michael learned his lesson. He went home, thanked God that it was not worse and he took out the owner's manual and began to read.

Many people are like Michael. They think the knowledge they have is enough get them through life. They are in such a hurry to get on with life that they do not take time to read the owner's manual God gave them. This owner's manual, the Bible, can help us have a richer, more fulfilled life in so many ways. It is wise to read the Bible often and follow the guidelines God has laid out for us. Time spent in worship is not time wasted. Even though we have a busy day ahead of us, the time for worship should not be shortened. The things of eternity should have first place in our lives. Only as we make time with the Lord—in reading His owner's manual for life on this earth, will we find peace and happiness. The Lord is waiting for you every morning when you wake up. Will you take time with Him to read through His manual?



# Tanzania



East African Symposium on Church Administration and Leadership in Dar Es Salam, Tanzania

## Brother Crosswell Rimsu—India



Brother Crosswell Rimsu, who was born in Meghalaya, North Eastern India on March 2, 1966 went to sleep in Jesus on January 25, 2020 due to kidney failure. He leaves behind his wife, Gretnilla, his two daughters, Roshina and Semirita, along with 3 sons, Bringward, Angkith, and Pemrose. All his children are in the faith. Brother Rimsu joined the International Missionary Society in 2005. He established the church in this region and was instrumental in establishing the North Indian Field. He was currently the president of North East India. He attended the General Conference session in South Africa in 2012 and in Italy in 2017. The Lord blessed his earnest labour and he established 12 new churches in this field. He served as a great missionary leader, and a loving husband and father, and as a great friend of all.

The church in India, as a whole, misses him very much and they urge your prayers for Brother Crosswell's family and the churches that he ministered to.

To travel to Brother Rimsu's family is a three day train ride for our Pastors in the southern region, close to Chennai (In Tirupattur). Pray that the Lord raises up another soldier of the faith to minister in that area of India. The Lord has asked Brother Crosswell to lay down the torch, and we look forward to seeing him soon when He returns to take home His elect.

# Honduras



## Missionaries in Cuba

Sister Leila with the  
Leader in Cuba, Jesus  
Bailey





**“To love as Christ loved means to manifest unselfishness at all times and in all places, by kind words and pleasant looks. These cost those who give them nothing, but they leave behind a fragrance that surrounds the soul. Their effect can never be estimated. Not only are they a blessing to the receiver, but to the giver; for they react upon him. Genuine love is a precious attribute of heavenly origin, which increases in fragrance in proportion as it is dispensed to others.” –*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol, 5, p. 1140**