



*The Reformation*  
**Messenger**  
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**Daily We are Choosing**  
Page 4

**If Thou Canst Believe...**  
Page 6

**The Father's Position and Responsibilities**  
Page 12



**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.

## **In This Issue:**

**3 Lessons from the Insects**

**4 Daily We are Choosing**

**6 If Thou Canst Believe. . .**

**11 What Promises Should We Claim in Prayer?**

**12 The Father's Position and Responsibilities**

**14 Coronavirus and You**

**19 A Message to the Youth**

**20 End and Reward of Evil**

**22 Health Matters: Physical Fitness:**

**Final Thoughts**

**26 Children's Story: The Young Pianist**

### **PHOTO CREDITS**

Front Cover: Helen Marttinen, Canada  
Back Cover: Helen Marttinen, Costa Rica  
Inside front cover: Ruaa Kheder, Iraq  
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- Telephone: 905-876-2518
- E-mail: [imsmessenger@yahoo.com](mailto:imsmessenger@yahoo.com)
- Internet: [www.imsmessenger.org](http://www.imsmessenger.org)
- Mail: RR #3, 7899 15 Side Road, Milton, ON L9T 2X7, Canada

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## Lessons from the Insects

"The Insects Teach Industry.--The industrious bee gives to men of intelligence an example that they would do well to imitate. These insects observe perfect order, and no idler is allowed in the hive. They execute their appointed work with an intelligence and activity that are beyond our comprehension. . . . The wise man calls our attention to the small things of the earth: 'Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise; which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.' 'The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer.' We may learn from these little teachers a lesson of faithfulness. Should we improve with the same diligence the faculties which an all-wise Creator has bestowed upon us, how greatly would our capacities for usefulness be increased. God's eye is upon the smallest of His creatures; does He not, then, regard man formed in His image, and require of him corresponding returns for all the advantages He has given him?" --*Child Guidance*, p. 59-60

"God placed our first parents in Paradise, surrounding them with all that was useful and lovely. In their Eden home nothing was wanting that could minister to their comfort and happiness. And to Adam was given the work of caring for the Garden. The Creator knew that Adam could not be happy without employment. The beauty of the Garden delighted him, but this was not enough. He must have labor to call into exercise the wonderful organs of the body. Had happiness consisted in doing nothing, man, in his state of holy innocence, would have been left unemployed. But He who created man knew what would be for his happiness; and no sooner had He created him, than He gave him his ap-

pointed work. The promise of future glory, and the decree that man must toil for his daily bread, came from the same throne. . . .

"Work is a blessing, not a curse. Diligent labor keeps many, young and old, from the snares of him who 'finds some mischief still for idle hands to do.' Let no one be ashamed of work, for honest toil is ennobling. While the hands are engaged in the most common tasks, the mind may be filled with high and holy thoughts.

"Only one hour lost each day, and what a waste of time in the course of a year! Let slumberers think of this, and pause to consider how they will give an account to God for lost opportunities." --*To Be Like Jesus*, p. 76

"Drowsiness and indolence destroy godliness, and grieve the Spirit of God. A stagnant pool is offensive; but a pure, flowing stream spreads health and gladness over the land. No man or woman who is converted can be anything but a worker. There certainly is and ever will be employment in heaven. The redeemed will not live in a state of dreamy idleness. There remaineth a rest for the people of God--a rest which they will find in serving Him to whom they owe all they have and are." --*Our High Calling*, p. 223

"None have an excuse for misusing their powers. Such misuse robs God of the service He demands. By creation and by redemption man is the Lord's. The qualities with which he has been endowed shows how high an estimate the Lord places on human beings. He has given every man his work. Every youth, every child, has a work to do in accordance with the Lord's revealed will. No one can waste his opportunities and privileges without robbing God. How can we ignore the responsibilities which rest upon us? The sun, the moon, the stars, the rocks, the flowing stream, the broad restless ocean, all teach lessons that we would do well to heed. Shall we not learn from God's great book of nature that He bestows His love, mercy, and grace on us every moment of our lives, that in turn we may serve Him and our fellowmen?" --*The Bible Echo*, August 7, 1899

*Ellen G. White*







## Daily We Are Choosing

When we wake up in the morning our choosing begins. We decide which clothing to put on. We decide what we want to eat for breakfast. We decide what we will read for morning worship. Then we decide what work we will do for the day. Also, we decide what thoughts we want to be thinking about. Our free time is important. We can watch television or read the Bible. Our religion requires many choices that we must make, like, will we do missionary work or do something at home for ourselves? In the time of Isaiah, the church of God, Israel, did not choose to be with God, but chose their own ways.

“He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog’s neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine’s blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before Mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighteth not.” Isaiah 66:3–4

We must choose first what we want, then God will respect the choice according we have chosen. We are what we have chosen.

“You can make yourself what you choose. If you will now face right about, cease to do evil and learn to do well, then you will be happy indeed; you will be successful in the battles of life, and rise to glory and honor in the better life than this. ‘Choose you this day whom ye will serve.’” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 565

Adam and Eve were given a choice with full warning what would happen as a result of their choice. To make a

wrong choice is normally the result of lack of knowledge. Jesus said that it was lack of knowledge that caused the Jews to reject Him. “And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.” Luke 19:41–42

Our choice is between blessing and curse. If we choose blessing, we will have a home in heaven and eternal life, but if we make a wrong choice, God cannot bless us. In London, England, a wealthy man called all his servants on his birthday to give each one of them a gift. Each one was offered a choice, a Bible or money. The first one said, “I cannot read very well, I will take the money!” The next one said, “my wife is sick, I need the money more than the Bible.” The third one said, “I have no time to read, I would rather take the money.” Finally the last servant, the errand boy desired the Bible, and when he opened it, between the pages was more money than all the other gifts put together. Also, there are precious truths in these holy pages of the Bible; if we understand this, we will read it every day. The leaders of God’s people had to make a choice between Jesus and Barabbas. Without hesitation they cried out, “give us Barabbas;” but, they paid dearly for their choice. In the year AD 70 the Roman army came and destroyed the city and killed over 1 million Jewish people.

In 1888 the leaders had a choice to accept the message of Christ’s righteousness that Jones and Waggoner presented to them, but they rejected it; and today, the church they belonged to is no longer the church of God.

David made a choice, “My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my

flesh crieth out for the living God. For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." Psalm 84:2, 10

David valued one day in the house of God more than 1000 days somewhere else. If we value church meetings like David did, we will never stay away from the church meetings. A. Hartford was a pastor who visited the Connecticut State prison. Among the prisoners he recognized his childhood friend. They went to the same school, and lived in the same neighborhood. Then at the age of 14 each made a different choice. One decided to become a Christian, and the other chose the life of sin, now condemned to prison. Millions of martyrs made a choice to die for Jesus when they could have saved their lives by choosing to deny their faith.

Gaining the whole world or losing all worldly goods as Jesus required the rich young man to do—which is your choice? Cain and Abel made a choice, the difference seemed small, they both served God, they both sacrificed on the altar, but in reality Abel chose God, and eternal life, and blessing, but Cain chose Satan, and a curse.

Noah preached to the people for 120 years that a flood is coming which will destroy all mankind, but their choice was not to believe it. If they had repented, as did the inhabitants of Nineveh, the disaster would have been averted.

Moses knew that their good future life depended on obedience to the law of God. "And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law. For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life: and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land, wither ye go over Jordan to possess it." Deuteronomy 32:46-47

This same counsel is given to us; if we decide to obey the law of God we have made a good choice. We will to have fullness of joy and life eternal.

Many people later regret the choices they made in everyday life. This will be true especially in the end of the world, when they see all the righteous going to heaven with Jesus, and the unrighteous not. All our decisions are influenced by our purpose in life, what we live for.

The Bible presents two classes of people, with different outlooks in life. Of one of the classes we read: "And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for to morrow we shall die. And it was revealed in mine

ears by the LORD of hosts, Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you til ye die, saith the Lord GOD of hosts." Isaiah 22:13-14

The purpose of life to this class is to have as much pleasure, entertainment, easy life, comforts, and much joy and gladness. The other class has a completely different outlook on life.

"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." Philippians 3:13-14

This class has chosen to put out forth a great effort with the help of Jesus to reach perfection in their lives; they are striving. Jesus said in Luke 13:24, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

After we have chosen Christ as our Saviour and are born again, we are not yet fully grown. Now we begin a life-long growing process. "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

We are to grow into the full stature of Christ. This means to choose for Christ every day in what we do, what we speak, and what we think. Then with the help of Jesus our characters become Christlike. "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." Ephesians 4:14-15

If we make right choices repeatedly they become habits; it is no more a choice, because we do it automatically. This process of growing up is called sanctification; the image of Satan is removed and the image of God is placed in us.

Eve made a wrong choice by eating of the forbidden tree. Still today we suffer from it. What parents choose to do in life gives an example to their children. Abraham's son chose to live the same kind of life as his father lived. If you want to make right choices in your life, read the Bible; it will tell you the best choices to make, and one day in heaven, you will be glad that you did them. Already in this life you will have fulness of joy. Amen.

*Timo Martin*



# “If Thou Canst Believe...”



“Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” Mark 9:23

How much is possible to those who believe? All. Do you believe this?

*“Can you believe it?”* Have you ever used that term, or heard it being used? This phrase is often used when we hear or experience something surprising and unexpected. Or then we also say “Believe it or not . . .” when something surprising and unexpected happened.

When Jesus was on this earth, many things happened that were unexpected and pleasantly surprising, and I am sure it left many people saying, “can you believe it?” When Jesus calmed the storm the disciples, “marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him!” Matthew 8:27. You can picture them saying, “Can you believe what just happened?”

Many times, when Jesus performed miracles He asked the person if they believed. When they answered “yes”, the miracle was performed. It was often those who believed in His healing power that sought Him out.

In the Book of Matthew, chapters 8 and 9, we read of events that happened in a journey Jesus made in the Galilean region of Israel. After his record of the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew states in Chapter 8:1, that Jesus came down from the mountain and, “great multitudes followed Him.” Matthew then goes on to record some of the experiences they made on this journey around Galilee, the people they met and healed, and experiences they made. He records how it was their faith/belief that brought their healing. Mark and Luke record many of the same experiences from this Galilean tour. On quite a few of the encounters Jesus made, He straightforwardly asked the person if they believed.

Let us retrace the steps of Jesus on this tour. First, we find that Jesus and His group of followers met a leper. Lepers were considered outcasts of society.

*“And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth His hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.” Matthew 8:2–3 (Mark 1:40–45; Luke 5:12–16)*

Leprosy was a terrible disease in Jesus’ day. “Of all diseases known in the East the leprosy was most dreaded. Its incurable and contagious character, and its horrible effect upon its victims, filled the bravest with fear. Among the Jews it was regarded as a judgment on account of sin, and hence was called ‘the stroke,’ ‘the finger of God.’ Deep-rooted, ineradicable, deadly, it was looked upon as a symbol of sin. By the ritual law, the leper was pronounced unclean. Like one already dead, he was shut out from the habitations of men. Whatever he touched was unclean.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 262

In this condition, his case would seem hopeless as far as salvation is concerned. He was cursed. Yet this particular outcast had heard of, and believed in, Jesus. That was enough. He had no fear of coming to Jesus in his frightful condition.

*“At sight of him the people fall back in terror. They crowd upon one another in their eagerness to escape from contact with him. Some try to prevent him from approaching Jesus, but in vain. He neither sees nor hears them. Their expressions of loathing are lost upon him. He sees only the Son of God. He hears only the voice that speaks life to the dying. Pressing to Jesus, he casts himself at His feet with the cry, ‘Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.’” —Ibid., p. 263*

The leper believed before Jesus said or promised any-

thing. He fell at Jesus' feet and said with confidence, "I know that you are able to make me clean if you want to." Jesus did not hesitate. He cured the poor outcast because he believed. I wonder if some of the people in the crowd were saying, "Can you believe what we just saw?"

Do you see yourself as this leper? Do you have faith that Jesus can remove all the taints of leprosy (sin) from your life? Every single one? Every thought, word, and motive? Every lustful desire? Or are you as the others in the crowd, feeling very pious and trying to keep the outcasts and terrible sinners away from the church? Are you wanting to keep the church pure and clean, closing the door to those outcasts whom you deem unworthy and would defile the church?

Next we read how Jesus entered Capernaum and met a Roman centurion; a Gentile from heathen roots. He had been friendly to the Jews and apparently learned of their religion and was amenable to it. He had also heard of the work of Jesus so when his servant got sick, he immediately believed that Jesus could heal the servant. He did not doubt.

*"And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto Him a centurion, beseeching Him, And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." Matthew 8:5-8 (Luke 7:1-10). "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. Go thy way; and as thou hast believed so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour." v. 10, 13*

Although being a Roman soldier, he had quite a humble opinion of himself, quite the contrast to many of the Jewish leaders. You would think it would be the opposite as Roman soldiers are often thought of as cruel and proud men and religious people as humble. But, no; here we see the opposite.

"The centurion said of himself, 'I am not worthy.' His heart had been touched by the grace of Christ. He saw his own unworthiness; yet he feared not to ask help. He trusted not to his own goodness; his argument was his great need. His faith took hold upon Christ in His true character. He did not believe in Him merely as a worker of miracles, but as the friend and Saviour of mankind." *-Ibid.*, p. 316-317

The centurion expressed his faith by simply saying, "I

know you can heal him. Just speak the word and my servant will be healed." Jesus answered by saying that the miracle will happen according to your belief. Jesus accepts everyone as friends and helps all, regardless of background or upbringing. All you have to do is believe. Here was a Gentile (a Roman) whom Jesus commended as having greater faith than the Jews.

How is our faith and belief? Do we see a greater belief in people of fallen religions? Unfortunately, sometimes we do. Some Christian organizations seem to have a greater missionary zeal than we see amongst some of our believers. In some heathen religions the suicide bombers really and truly believe they will be in heaven for their sacrifice. We need to have a greater faith than they have. We have a living God who is with us today.

Later we see that Jesus and His disciples were crossing the sea by boat.

*"And when He was entered into a ship, His disciples followed Him. And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but He was asleep. And His disciples came to Him, and awoke Him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And He saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm." Matthew 8:23-26 (Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:38-41)*

It is interesting to read here of a group of men who were lacking faith. These men were in contact with Jesus every day. They heard Him preach and saw Him heal the sick, but in a time of crisis, they did not believe.

When the storm arose, Jesus was peacefully sleeping as the disciples were feverishly trying to steer the boat and empty the water. They had forgotten that Jesus was on board. When they were ready to give up in despair they noticed Jesus. And cried out for Him to save them.

Jesus did not wake up to the shaking of the boat. He did



not wake up to the sound of the thunder or the pouring rain or lightning. That did not disturb Him in the least. Although it must have been loud, what did wake Him up was the cry for help. The storm was so loud that it drowned out their voices. Three times they called out to Him. Finally the third time, "In amazement and despair they exclaim, 'Master, carest Thou not that we perish?' How can He rest so peacefully, while they are in danger and battling with death?"

"Their cry arouses Jesus. As the lightning's glare reveals Him, they see the peace of heaven in His face; they read in His glance self-forgetful, tender love, and, their hearts turning to Him, cry, 'Lord, save us: we perish.'" *-Ibid.*, p. 334–335

The storms do not bother Jesus. He is Master of them. But He is ever so attentive to every cry for help.

"When Jesus was awakened to meet the storm, He was in perfect peace. There was no trace of fear in word or look, for no fear was in His heart. . . . He trusted in the Father's might. It was in faith--faith in God's love and care--that Jesus rested, and the power of that word which stilled the storm was the power of God.

"As Jesus rested by faith in the Father's care, so we are to rest in the care of our Saviour. If the disciples had trusted in Him, they would have been kept in peace. Their fear in the time of danger revealed their unbelief. In their efforts to save themselves, they forgot Jesus; and it was only when, in despair of self-dependence, they turned to Him that He could give them help." *-Ibid.*, p. 336

Jesus can hear our cry amidst all the tumult of this world, and He speaks peace to our lives. We need to believe and trust Him when difficulties suddenly rise unexpectedly. We cannot save ourselves, but He will bring order to every disordered situation we face if we will believe. As Christ stilled the storms on the Sea of Galilee, He can still the storms of life that burst unexpectedly and with violence over the human soul. Too often the reason we do not experience His power in our lives is that we are fearful and have little faith. Though He sorrowfully reproves our unbelief and self-confidence, He never fails to give us the help we need. Just believe.

After this experience on the lake, Jesus and His disciples meet two men possessed by demons. Although the demons spoke through these men, Jesus read their hearts, and in their hearts they were desiring freedom. These men believed, and Jesus freed them.

Jesus then enters the city and we find Him in a house, teaching. Many came to hear Him. Then we see a man come for healing. This man is paralyzed—again, an outcast. Mark and Luke write of the challenge it was for his friends to bring him to Jesus as the house was so crowded they could not enter. They ended up cutting through the roof to let him down for Jesus to heal.

*"And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." Matthew 9:2. "(then saith He to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house." Verse 6–7 (Mark 2:1–12; Luke 5:17–26)*

"Like the leper, this paralytic had lost all hope of recovery. His disease was the result of a life of sin, and his sufferings were embittered by remorse. He had long before appealed to the Pharisees and doctors, hoping for relief from mental suffering and physical pain. But they coldly pronounced him incurable, and abandoned him to the wrath of God. The Pharisees regarded affliction as an evidence of divine displeasure, and they held themselves aloof from the sick and the needy." *-Ibid.*, p. 267

Yet, this is not how Jesus looked at the sinner. Although his illness was seemingly his own fault, Jesus had mercy on him. He saw the man's faith—his belief. And, according to the man's faith, Jesus healed him.

"The Saviour looked upon the mournful countenance, and saw the pleading eyes fixed upon Him. He understood the case; . . . Now, in words that fell like music on the sufferer's ear, the Saviour said, 'Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.'

"The burden of despair rolls from the sick man's soul; the peace of forgiveness rests upon his spirit, and shines out upon his countenance. His physical pain is gone, and his whole being is transformed. The helpless paralytic is healed! the guilty sinner is pardoned!" *-Ibid.*, p. 268

Regardless of your past, if you believe. . . . Jesus can and will forgive all your sin. He will heal you of your spiritual illness and give you a new life. Old habits will easily be given up. New power takes over your life. You have the ability to resist all temptation with the power of God. Do you believe this?

*It is at this point in time that Jesus calls Matthew.* (You can read of this in call in Matthew 9:9; Mark 2:13–14; Luke 5:27–28). Matthew was a rich man, but also considered an outcast. He was a tax collector and these types



of men were often considered as traitors to the Jewish society. They were working for the enemy and often charged extra so they could pocket some of the funds. These men were hated and considered social and religious outcasts. Yet, Matthew believed. Jesus called him and he left his job immediately. Others hesitated, making excuses such as, "let me first go and bury my father" (Matthew 8:22), but Matthew makes no excuses. He did not stop to think, how will I pay my bills? How will I provide food for my family? No, he quit his job. He left all and followed immediately when called. He believed God would take care of him and his family and I am sure He never failed Matthew. Matthew became an immediate missionary. He made a feast and invited all his friends and associates to come so that they could hear the words of Jesus also.

Next, we read of a Jewish ruler who came to Jesus. There were a few other Jewish rulers who did believe in Jesus, such as Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea.

*"Behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped Him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay Thy hand upon her, and she shall live." Matthew 9:18.* Jesus went with this nobleman to his house to heal the little girl. *"He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. . . . He went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose." Matthew 9:24–25 (Mark 5:21–43; Luke 8:40–56).* This man, Jairus by name, was a ruler in the synagogue and he expressed his sincere belief. He simply said, "please come and lay your hand on my daughter as she is nearly dead. I want you to come and heal her." His faith and belief was rewarded. His daughter was healed according to his faith.

On the way to Jairus' house, a crowd followed Him and a sick woman was trying to reach Jesus to find healing from her sickness. Another outcast—remember, sickness, especially a prolonged one, was considered a punishment from God.

*"And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind Him, and touched the hem of His garment: For she said within*



*herself, If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole. But Jesus turned Him about, and when He saw her, He said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole.*

*And the woman was made whole from that hour." Matthew 9:20–22*

"As He was passing, she reached forward, and succeeded in barely touching the border of His garment. But in that moment she knew that she was healed. In that one touch was concentrated the faith of her life, and instantly her pain and feebleness gave place to the vigor of perfect health." *–Ibid., p. 343*

Jesus made it clear to everyone that there was no healing virtue in the touching of His garment. It was her faith in His divine power that brought her healing. She believed.

And finally, on our journey we see Jesus met some blind men. They were outcasts also, living the life of beggars

*"And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed Him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us. And when He was come into the house, the blind men came to Him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto Him, Yea, Lord. Then touched He their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes were opened." Matthew 9:27–30*



The blind men had no doubt about Jesus ability to heal them. Jesus asked them if they believed and they confidently answered, "Yea Lord". Their eyes were opened, according to their faith.

On this journey around Galilee we see that it was the outcasts of society, the heathens, who had the greatest faith. There was recorded that one Jewish ruler also had faith. At the end of His tour, we read of the religious leaders and their opinion on the work of Jesus. "But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils." Matthew 9:34

In the accounts of Jesus' life recorded in the gospels, there are many others who expressed strong faith and belief in Jesus, some of whom were either Gentiles or considered outcasts from Jewish society.

The wise men (Gentiles) came from a foreign land looking for Jesus. They firmly believed that the star would lead them to Jesus, whom they have read about and were looking forward to meeting (Matthew 2:1–2).

The woman from Canaan whose daughter was possessed by a devil (Matthew 15:22–28) was told by Jesus,

“woman, great is thy faith.” v. 28

It was the thief on the cross who asked Jesus for salvation in his dying hour, believing that Jesus could save him. He was a criminal, an outcast, a man condemned to die for his crime (Luke 23:42–43). Jesus promised Him salvation according to his faith.

It was a Roman soldier who said at the crucifixion, “Truly this was the Son of God.” Matthew 27:54

Jesus said, “Judge not, that ye be not judged.” Matthew 7:1. The gospel is available to every person. That person who may seem to be an outcast in society may be the very one who is being drawn to Jesus. We are call the rich, the poor, the sick and healthy—all are worthy of the love of Jesus.

When Jesus came down from the Mount of Transfiguration, He met a man whose son was possessed by a demon. The remaining nine disciples were unable to cast out the demon. Jesus came and was disheartened. He said, “O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you and how long shall I suffer you?” Mark 9:19. Then He spoke the words, “If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” Mark 9:23

***“And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.” Mark 9:24***

Are there times when you are lacking faith and belief? We need to pray the prayer of this father. Help my unbelief. “All things are possible with God, and by faith we may lay hold on His power. But faith is not sight; faith is not feeling; faith is not reality. ‘Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.’ To abide in faith is to put aside feeling and selfish desires, to walk humbly with the Lord, to appropriate His promises, and apply them to all occasions, believing that God will work out His own plans and purposes in your heart and life by the sanctification of your character; it is to rely entirely, to trust implicitly, upon the faithfulness of God.” *—Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 341–342

Yet, sadly, of the Jewish leaders we read in Matthew 23 that seven times Jesus called them hypocrites. Although a few believed, many were constantly trying to undermine His work and were always plotting His death while having an air of holiness. They were doing it for the good of the nation. They said, “It is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.” John 11:50

And when they accomplished their purpose, they taunted Him on the cross saying, “He saved others; Himself He cannot save.” Matthew 27:42. They had no faith or belief in Jesus as the Messiah who came to save them from their sins.

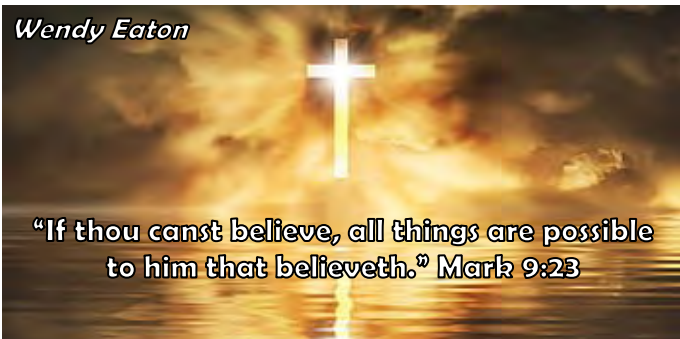
We are to pray in faith. “All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.” Matthew 21:22. “But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” Hebrews 11:6

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

“The only faith that will benefit us is that which embraces Him as a personal Saviour; which appropriates His merits to ourselves. Many hold faith as an opinion. Saving faith is a transaction by which those who receive Christ join themselves in covenant relation with God. Genuine faith is life. A living faith means an increase of vigor, a confiding trust, by which the soul becomes a conquering power.” *—Ibid.*, p. 347

“The time has come when we are to expect large blessings from the Lord. We must rise to a higher standard on the subject of faith. We have too little faith. The Word of God is our endorsement. We must take it, simply believing every word. With this assurance we may claim large things, and according to our faith it will be unto us.” *—That I May Know Him*, p. 226

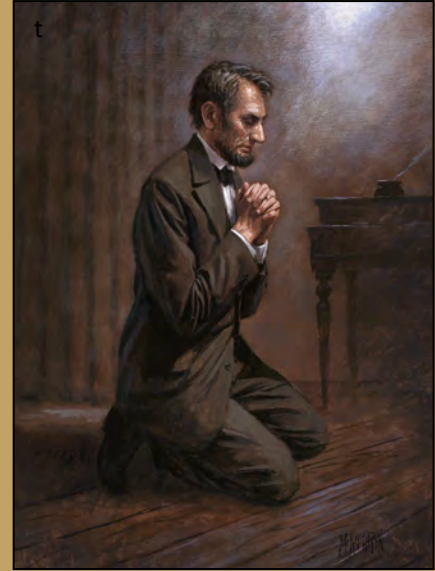
“Faith such as this is needed in the world today--faith that will lay hold on the promises of God's word and refuse to let go until Heaven hears. Faith such as this connects us closely with Heaven, and brings us strength for coping with the powers of darkness. And through faith we today are to reach the heights of God's purpose for us.” *—Prophets and King*, p. 157







# WHAT PROMISES SHOULD WE CLAIM IN PRAYER?



## PROMISES FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT

“Ask ye of the LORD for 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

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” Luke 11:13

Jesus’ sayings in Luke 11:11–13 reinforce this invitation. If human parents, with all their faults, know how to give their children gifts that are good for them, how much more will the heavenly Father give good gifts to his children who ask of Him, including and especially the gift of the Holy Spirit!

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. . . . And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” John 14:26; 16:8

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall He do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father. 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 14:12–14

“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

## PROMISES THAT GOD ANSWERS PRAYERS

“If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” John 15:7

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrews 4:16

“Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” Mark 11:24

“And call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.” Psalm 50:15

“Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 18:19

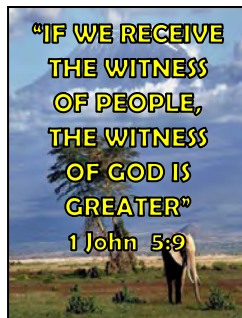
“And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.” Matthew 21:22

“And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” John 14:13–14

“And in that day ye shall ask Me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you.” John 16:23–24

“And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us.” 1 John 5:14

May God bless you,  
*Daniel Ndunguru, Arusha, Tanzania*





# The Father's Position and Responsibilities



"The husband and father is the head of the household." –*The Adventist Home*, p. 211. 1 Corinthians 11:3 says, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." In the family, the husband has more responsibilities than everyone else. "I saw that but few fathers realized their responsibility." –*Ibid.*, p. 211. Today, that is probably more the case than at any time before. We constantly hear appeals to help battered women and women's shelters, which tells us that the husbands are not living up to their responsibilities. It is well known that a man is supposed to be strong; a man is not to cry; a man is not supposed to give up. However, that is not always the way we men feel. There may come situations in your life when the burdens seem to be too difficult to bear. In these situations, let us not forget that we have a Heavenly Father that has promised to take care of us. Let us learn from Christ who was walking on this earth and doing good wherever He went. Try to do all in your power to make the life of your wife pleasant and happy. There is a saying, "Happy wife, happy life." There is also a hymn that says, "Precious Lord, take my hand. Lead me on, let me stand, I am tired, I am weak, I am worn; through the storm, through the night, lead me on, through the night: Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home."

Practice your faith at home. Practice your faith when you go to church and practice your faith when you go to work. We read in 1 Corinthians 11:3, that the head of man is Christ and the head of Christ is God

and the head of the woman is man.

What did God do? "God himself gave Adam a companion. He provided 'an help meet for him.' - - a helper corresponding to him - - one who was fitted to be his companion, and who could be one with him in love and sympathy. Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal to be loved and protected by him." –*Ibid.*, p. 25

Some men act as if God created woman from the foot. But if we read John 17, we see the close connection between God the Father, and Jesus the Son. And the same spirit that was between Jesus and His Father, should be between Jesus and His disciples. The same spirit should also exist between husband and wife. As Jesus loves His church, so is the father of the household to love his wife and children. If we really understand this concept, I do not think that we have to worry about the dominating husband where everyone has to tremble before him. Christ did not rule His disciples with an iron fist. Remember the upper room when no one was willing to do the servant's job, Jesus took the towel, put water in the basin and washed the disciple's feet. So, if you think about your authority, think about Jesus.

Did the disciples make mistakes? They certainly did. Did Jesus correct them? Yes, He did, but in love. If you want to know what God is like, read Luke 15:11–32, the parable about the prodigal son. The father did



not say, "Good riddance, we got rid of him. He was not a good farmer anyways." Many families split up too easily today, move on, want to forget the past and start a new life. Not so in God's family. The father was waiting for his son every day; his life was not the same before his son was home again. Our lives may be tough sometimes, but do not think that you can improve the situation by splitting up and running away. Our message for today is, "Here is the patience of the saints." Revelation 14:12

Many husbands come home tired in the evening thinking they have done their share, but often forgetting that the mother that has looked after the children, cooked, cleaned, washed clothes and maybe worked in the garden all day long, and has possibly worked harder than he has. These are the times when it will show what kind of father he is. Sometimes we men take our job too seriously and get carried away, not paying enough attention to the mother and the children. It never hurts for the husband to do the dishes once in a while.

Jacob gives us a good example when his brother Esau suggested that they should all travel together to their father's house. "Then Esau said, 'Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before thee.' But Jacob said to him, 'My lord knoweth that the children are tender, and the flocks and the herds with young are with me: and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die. Please let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant: and I will lead on softly, according as the cattle that goeth before me and the children are able to endure, until I come unto my lord in Seir.'" Genesis. 33.12-14. Jacob knew that



the families with the children and livestock could not travel like soldiers, and we as fathers should also understand that sometimes we have to be patient with our family. It is important for fathers to spend time with the children, especially with the boys. Take time to play with them, train them and do projects together with them. These are

the times that they will appreciate and remember later in life. In *The Adventist Home*, p. 224-228 we can read about the kind of husband not to be. Do not be bossy, do not be harsh. If you know you are right and your requirements are reasonable, you can be firm in your expectations. Do not raise your voice and do not act like a dictator. Show them in love that you care and you only want what is best for them and help them where necessary.



What if your wife would like to work outside the home? Maybe she is unhappy to be inside the four walls all the time. You may think that you make enough money, and you may think there is enough work at home, but she might still feel that she needs a change. Sit down and talk about it; try to find a suitable solution that everyone is happy with. There are also situations where it is difficult to get by on one income. Do not be too proud to let your wife help you to make ends meet.

In our case, when our son Paul was two to three years old, Franziska took care of two other young children. That way she was able to help with the income. It can make a big difference if you have a few extra dollars at the end of the month. When Paul started school, she started to clean houses for people. This way she could leave for work when he went to school and she was able to be home when school was out. It worked very well for us. Other mothers may say that they will not clean other people's dirt; they have enough to clean in their own home. We are all different and have to live our individual lives, but whatever you do, try to find a way so you also have time for each other and for your children. May the Lord bless us as fathers and help us to guide our families in the Lord's way. Amen.

*Evald Pedersen*



# Coronavirus and you

## Understanding COVID-19

The recent deadly outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus, or COVID-19, has spread from the city of Wuhan, China, to more than 188 countries worldwide. The disease has spread fear, and caused human suffering and death to many people around the world. On March 11, 2020, The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic. Every day more and more people are testing positive for COVID-19. As followers of Christ, what should we be doing at this time? This is what I will be writing about.

For myself, I can say that I am very grateful to God that I am alive, but why? You also are alive, because you are reading this. How blessed we are. We can thank God for His mercy. Many articles and news reports have been circulating about COVID-19. Ask yourself, what is your current attitude and understanding about it today?

### MAN SURPRISED, BUT NOT GOD

Many events surprise human beings when they occur. However God does not get surprised by any information or event. Regarding the reaction of worldly people, we read: “The present is a time of overwhelming interest to all living. Rulers and statesmen, men who occupy positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes, have their attention fixed upon the events taking place about us. They are watching the relations that exist among the nations. They observe the intensity that is taking possession of every earthly element, and they recognize that something great and decisive is about to take place—that the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 537

### UNDERSTANDING COVID-19

How well do you understand this pandemic? Why has this happened?

Many people have different views and interpretations of the current situation. It is not, however, the end of Earth’s history. But how can we understand this unexplainable pandemic? Different religious bodies and people have numerous views about the reasons for man’s suffering. Many have been asking, “Why, God, why?” when disaster strikes. And for centuries, religion has been trying to answer the question of how a loving or just God could allow humans to endure such suffering.

According to Wikipedia, we read: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four\\_Noble\\_Truths](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four_Noble_Truths)

**Buddhism:** According to the first two Noble Truths of Buddhism, all of life is suffering, and suffering is caused by attachments to worldly things. These attachments, which can take the form of greed, hatred, and ignorance in this life and past lives, can, unless mitigated, return as more suffering (karma).

**Hindus:** Many Hindus view suffering as punishment for misdeeds committed in this lifetime or past lives. They view suffering as a consequence of a person’s actions, committed in either this life or a past one.

**Judaism** believes that God’s sense of justice, and therefore the reasons for human suffering, are unknowable. To some Jews, knowing why God allows suffering is not as important as knowing that God will punish the perpetrators. Jewish tradition holds that suffering results from one’s own actions. [www.islamonline.net](http://www.islamonline.net)

**Muslims:** for many Muslims, suffering and adversity strengthen one’s faith, as pain often leads to repentance and prayer and good deeds. They view suffering as both a punishment for sin and a test of faith.

**Confucianists** attribute most suffering to “human failure and error” according to *A Dictionary of Comparative*



*Religion.* Confucian doctrine recognizes that while suffering can be reduced through virtuous living, much of it is caused by “spiritual agencies beyond man’s control. In such cases, man must stoically accept the decrees of Fate.”

**Buddhists** believe that suffering is experienced over many lifetimes, a cycle of rebirths that continue until a person’s negative actions, emotions, and cravings cease.

While these religious bodies state their beliefs to support today’s happening, overall let us understand that God’s words cannot be refuted and clearly points to the whole truth of the Bible, for example, with regards to the state of the dead, there is no teaching that one continues to “come back” until he has reached a state of purity. Says the word of God: “It is appointed unto men once to die but after that the judgment.” Hebrews 9:27 But what is truth out of all these ideas? The Bible has the answer. In it is found the ultimate truth. Says the Psalmist “Thy law is truth.” Psalm 119:142

President Woodrow Wilson said, “I am sorry for men who do not read the Bible every day...” If we did read the Bible we would know that the end of the world is very near. We read in Matthew 24:7 that pestilences will increase as we near the end of time. “The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, and the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.” Isaiah 24:4–5 (see also Isaiah 26:20–21)

Repeatedly, God’s messenger wrote: “I have been shown that the Spirit of the Lord is being withdrawn from the earth. God’s keeping power will soon be refused to all who continue to disregard His commandments. The reports of fraudulent transactions, murders, and crimes of every kind are coming to us daily. Iniquity is becoming so common a thing that it no longer shocks the senses as it once did.” –*Last Day Events*, p. 23

Christians should not be deceived about the source of afflictions. Sin is the cause of all suffering in the world today. God is often blamed for doing the devil’s work. Not one cancer has ever been caused by God.

From the Spirit of Prophecy, we just read that the Holy Spirit is withdrawing from the earth and, with Him, the

divine protection and blessing will also be withdrawn. This means that this crisis will not be the only one but other crises in the health, social, and religious sphere are sure to follow. We do not believe that this pandemic is the end of the world. According to Matthew 24:6–8, it is only the *beginning* of sorrows. “And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.” The Lord has enlightened His church with a correct understanding of prophecy, of historical events, and given light related to the signs of the times. We expect a few more prophecies to be fulfilled before the final end shall come. Our Saviour clearly advised His church not to be confused by false alarms, time setting, false prophets and teachers. However this international health crisis is not part of the seven last plagues written about in Revelation 16.

*“God would not allow any evil to exist unless out of it He could draw a greater good. This is part of the wisdom and goodness of God” - Saint Augustine (fourth-century)*

“God has not restrained the powers of darkness from carrying forward their deadly work of vitiating the air, one of the sources of life and nutrition, with a deadly miasma. Not only is vegetable life affected but man suffers from pestilence.... These things are the result of drops from the vials of God’s wrath being sprinkled on the earth, and are but faint representations of what will be in the near future.” –*Last Day Events*, p. 27

“The terrible reports we hear. . . tell the story that the end of all things is at hand. Now, just now, we need to be preparing for the Lord’s second coming.” –*Ibid.*, p. 23

“We shall see troubles on all sides. . . confusion, collision, and death without a moment’s warning will occur on the great lines of travel. The end is near, probation is closing. Oh, let us seek God while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near!” –*Maranatha*, p. 37

#### **GOD’S PURPOSE IN CALAMITIES**

“God has a purpose in permitting these calamities to occur. They are one of His means of calling men and women to their senses. By unusual workings through nature God will express to doubting human agencies that which He clearly reveals in His Word.” –*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 19, p. 79

“They are among the agencies by which He seeks to

arouse men and women to a sense of their danger.” – *Prophets and Kings*, p. 277

“The Lord will not interfere to protect the property of those who transgress His law, break His covenant, and trample upon His Sabbath, accepting in its place a spurious rest day. The plagues of God are already falling upon the earth, sweeping away the most costly structures as if by a breath of fire from heaven. Will not these judgments bring professing Christians to their senses? God permits them to come that the world may take heed, that sinners may be afraid and tremble before Him.” – *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 3 p. 311

### **YOUR HEALTH AND YOUR SALVATION ARE BOTH INVOLVED**

The situation concerning this global pandemic is changing daily. Things seem to be getting worse in some countries as they struggle to contain this new, deadly virus. Many people will be adversely affected psychologically, socially, economically, health-wise, and spiritually.

“Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.” 3 John 2. Therefore, get informed about COVID-19.

What are the symptoms? How can you protect yourself from becoming infected, or from spreading the disease? These questions are well answered in many ways in the media. Many documents are available on the internet and broadcasts have been made on the radio and on TV. I now want to mention a few of the recommendations to protect yourself.

Practice the laws of Health: Trust in God, eat a healthy diet, get adequate rest/sleep, and add exercise, and physical activity.

Follow the recommendations of reputable medical experts, not what you find on social media.

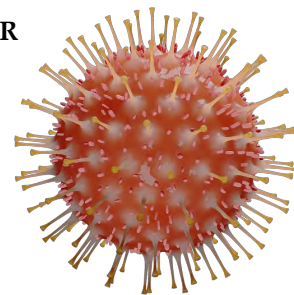
Do not be presumptuous. Practice good hand hygiene as a habit!

Do not panic, but be vigilant. Become informed, and stay informed.

If you can afford it, you should purchase and store additional essential food and other supplies in the event that you and your family will be required to self-isolate for 14 days.

### **IS THERE ANY HOPE FOR THE DEAD?**

As of now many souls have died because of the pandemic disease. Thousands were laid down to rest in different countries every day. There is panic all around the world. Many fear death as an enemy and take utmost care to preserve their lives. But you need not fear pain or torment after you die, for the Bible compares death to sleep. The first death is not the permanent end of our existence. We read of a resurrection in the Bible. God will bring back to life people who have died. (John 5:28–29). God promises a time when “death will be no more” (see Revelation 21:4).



*We should look for the reason when trials appear and have no illusions about the source of afflictions. Sin is the cause of all suffering in the world today.*

Even the faithful Job believed that after his death God would again restore him to life. Job asked: “If a man die, shall he live again?” Then he confidently answered: “all the days of my appointed time [time in the grave] will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer Thee.” Job 14:14–15

The resurrection was not a new concept to Lazarus’ sister, Martha. After Lazarus died, Jesus said to her: “Your brother shall rise again.” Martha believed in resurrections and said: “I know that he shall rise in the resurrection at the last day.” Jesus then said to her: “I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me though he were dead, yet shall he live.” John 11:23–25. He will come to life.

### **WILL THE SUFFERING EVER END?**

Humans have been trying to solve their political, religious, and social problems by themselves for thousands of years, but all their attempts have failed. A young girl whose homeland had been set afire by terrorist violence wrote: “Every day I hope that none of my family or my friends die . . . Perhaps we need a miracle.” Her words echo the thoughts of many people today. The solution to man’s problems lies beyond the human realm. Only man’s Creator can bring the correct solution to earth’s present difficulties, including this current pandemic.

*Despite advances in medicine*, heart disease remains the largest cause of death; cancer kills millions each year. “The world continues to be confronted by longstanding,



emerging, and reemerging infectious disease threats," said Dr. David Bloom.

**Despite material prosperity in some lands,** each year, millions of children die, billions of people live without access to adequate sanitation or shelter, hundreds of millions have no access to safe water, etc.

**Despite increased awareness of human rights** many are still being oppressed and atrocities, such as human trafficking, are still being carried on.

These are clear indications that the solution to man's problems lies beyond the human realm. Only God is a sure safeguard and our only hope.

Suffering will not continue indefinitely. God will address the cause of human suffering. The Bible says that God will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more. There will be no more pain any more nor any mourning or crying (see revelation 21:3-4). The Lord, God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed. This kingdom will not be passed on to any other people. It alone will stand forever (see Daniel 2:44). We can take comfort from the promise:, "Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you." 1 Peter 5:7

#### **HERE ARE 10 THINGS YOU SHOULD CONSIDER DURING THIS CURRENT PANDEMIC.**

**Spend more time than ever before in prayer.** Enlarge your list of prayer requests. Carefully consider those who need prayer and add them to your prayer list. Be grateful. The current quarantine measures have likely affected your daily personal and family routine. Do not forget to be thankful for your health and for what you have and not to complain



about what is lacking.

**Continue to meet with other believers as is permitted in your country, state, or city.** Every difficulty is filled with lessons that God wants to teach us. Do not neglect religious services if it is still possible to gather, if not in your church building then meet with a few believers to worship and pray together in someone's home. You may have to attend services online, however, you should not neglect to take time for worship; to meet,

praise and study the Word of God with other believers. Do not assume that because "there is no church," you have more time for your own personal activities. Services are available every Sabbath in many countries, on YouTube, Skype or other apps for you to get in touch with a small group of believers to worship and have a moment of devotion together. See the [www.biblewell.org](http://www.biblewell.org) and others.

**Use social media to encourage others.** Through social networks you can be a blessing to many others. Social media can be used as an evangelism tool to encourage other believers, and also to reach unbelievers. I encourage you to try the HEBRON CHALLENGE, developed by the Education Department of the International Missionary Society. See [www.imseducation.org](http://www.imseducation.org)

**Lift up your heads and place trust in God.** "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." Luke 21:28. Let us not forget that, the Lord divided the Red Sea, raised the dead, healed the sick, restored sight to the blind and gave speech to the dumb, walked on the waters of the sea; controlled the storm. . . and much more. Do not be overwhelmed by what you hear and see; if we do our best we can rest in God. He is a sure foundation that will never fail us.

**Study and memorize the Scriptures.** Take time to be more familiar with the Word of God. Also, take time each day singing alone or with your family. Read and study the prophecies to understand them better. Be more familiar with books such as, "Last Day Events," "The Great Controversy", etc. Read them with hope, not with fear.



**Improve family conversations.** We have been blessed by the wonderful studies by the Family Department of the International Missionary Society under the title "Seven Keys to the United Family" and also "The importance of Family Moments" which were studied during the month of May (see [www.sda1844.org](http://www.sda1844.org)). You can continue to read them again and again. There are many topics you can discuss with your spouse, your parents, your children, your neighbours, etc.

**Take care of your health and progress in Health Reform.** Make at least one specific positive change in your health. Health reform is progressive, yes, but make a decisive step. For example: get an extra hour of sleep., or increase your exercise time. If you cannot go out (or

are advised not to do so according to the COVID-19 restrictive rules), exercise at home.

**Reassess your priorities and what is important in life.** At this time, the current global crisis can help you slow down and consider what objects, people, and values are important in your life. What are some things you could not do without in the past, but are managing just fine without now? What have you paid too much attention to, even if it is not worth it? What place does your relationship with God have in this scenario?

**Ask God to give you peace of mind and balance.** We live in an age where thousands of people have turned to social media to post large amounts of information. Claim the promise of God that He “ensures peace” to those who continue to trust Him (Isaiah 26:3). Look behind and learn from the past. Look forward beyond the events of your every day life.

**Renew your commitment to Jesus and His church.** Use this time of social distancing when you are required to remain at home as much as possible to renew your commitment to be faithful to God, even unto death (Revelation 2:10). If you have not already done so, make a decision to be a positive influence in your neighbourhood and in your local church. Do not hide your light under a bushel, but be proactive in your religion. If you have fallen spiritually asleep,

use this crisis (which will probably not be the last) to wake up and commit to working for Jesus “while it is day” (John 9:4).

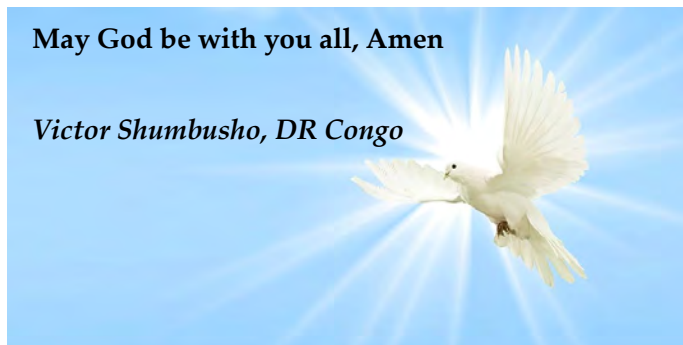
Many are caught in Satan’s web today. The world is in a more decided state of unbelief than ever before in regards to the soon coming of Christ. “You will not be able to say that He will come in one, two, or five years, neither are you to put off His coming by stating that it may not be for ten or twenty years.” –*The Review and Herald*, March 22, 1892.

“We are nearing the great day of God. The signs are fulfilling. And yet we have no message to tell us of the day and hour of Christ’s appearing..” –*Last Day Events*, p. 33

Our position must be one of waiting and watching. “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.” Romans 13:11

May God be with you all, Amen

Victor Shumbusho, DR Congo



**The following is a portion of a poem entitled, “The Old Year and the New,” written by Sarah E. Clough (*The Signs of the Times*, January 5, 1882)**

All in some way have been  
blessed,  
By many a wayside  
fount refreshed,  
And pleasant memories  
of the past  
Will linger long as life  
shall last;  
And if some crosses  
have been given,  
They serve as stepping  
stones to Heaven.



Sometimes we mourn in bitterness,  
And sadly question, why it is,  
That joy is often mixed with pain  
And loved ones ne’er will come  
again.  
The troubled spirit finds its rest  
In the sweet answer, “God knows  
best.”  
For not a sparrow e’er can fall  
Without His notice, and through all  
His wisdom and His love are shown;  
He surely careth for His own.



# A Message to the Youth

"We know the dangers and temptations that beset the youth at the present time are not few or small. . . . We live in an age when to resist evil calls for constant watchfulness and prayer. God's precious Word is the standard for youth who would be loyal to the King of heaven. Let them study the Scriptures. Let them commit text after text to memory, and acquire a knowledge of what the Lord has said. . . . And in trial let the youth spread out the Word of God before them, and with humble hearts, and in faith, seek the Lord for wisdom to find out His way, and for strength to walk in it. . . ." *—My Life Today*, p. 315

"A little time spent in sowing your wild oats, dear young friends, will produce a crop that will embitter your whole life; an hour of thoughtlessness, once yielding to temptation, may turn the whole current of your life in the wrong direction. You can have but one youth; make that useful. When once you have passed over the ground you can never return to rectify your mistakes....

"One wrong trait of character, one sinful desire cherished, will eventually neutralize all the power of the gospel. . . . The pains of duty and the pleasures of sin are the cords with which Satan binds men in his snares. Those who would rather die than perform a wrong act are the only ones who will be found faithful.

"The youth may have principles so firm that the most powerful temptations of Satan will not draw them away from their allegiance." *—Maranatha*, p. 82. "Who can know, in the moment of temptation, the terrible consequences which will result from one wrong, hasty step! Our only safety is to be shielded by the grace of God every moment, and not put out our own spiritual eyesight so that we will call evil, good, and good, evil. Without hesitation or argument we must close and guard the avenues of the soul against evil." *—The Adventist Home*, p. 403

"It is not safe for us to linger to contemplate the advantages to be reaped through yielding to Satan's suggestions. Sin means dishonor and disaster to every soul that indulges in it; but it is blinding and deceiving in its nature, and it will entice us with flattering presentations. If we venture on Satan's ground we have no assurance of protection from his power. So far as in us lies, we should close every avenue by which the tempter may find access to us." *—Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 118

"Never before was there so much at stake; never were there results so mighty depending upon a generation as upon these now coming upon the stage of action. Not for one moment should the youth think that they can acceptably fill any position of trust without possessing a good character. Just as well might they expect to gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles." *—Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students*, p. 536

*Ellen G. White*





# End and Reward of Evil



## Part 2

The war between two powers – good and evil, Christ and Satan – soon must polarize  
as each side does emphasize its cause of what sort it is,  
And in this conflict the human race the target is!

The last drama soon unfolds, for the battle is because of him and her,  
and in the climax of the forces, each soul must then decide which banner one upholds.

The fierce controversy will lay bare, what is truly at the core  
of each heart and what it treasures.

Allegiance to the law of God, the love for truth and righteousness;  
Or rebellion cherished, truth rejected, call evil good, there is no God –

This is the thought of many and are bold in wicked deeds, which bears the mold  
of whom so many follow – the banner of the Prince of darkness,  
the enemy to meekness, gentleness, and righteousness....

To the bloodstained banner of Lord Jesus few be true,  
the narrow, self-denying way and sometimes cumbersome,  
proves to be too wearisome...

The masses love the broader way, no self-denial, sacrifice is to display.

A gospel of prosperity with easy going, guilty free decree.

With all religions joining to be one, they think peace and safety will come....

Just when they expect it, sudden destruction then will come (1 Thessalonians 5:3).

Prophecy must be fulfilled, the world will end and Christ descend,  
the wicked at His brightness perish, His faithful ones redeemed from earth (Revelation 14:3)  
with the resurrected saints, be caught up to Him to mansions bright in the realms of blissful light.

.....

Satan and his host for 1000 years will wander in despondent wonder (Revelation 20:3)  
through the earth. No soul is there, but ugly ruins are left from all the works of men.

Thousand years he then must ponder, now he wishes to be yonder from this awful torn up place,  
as he with restless pace has to behold what his defiance had achieved – nothing – but his own defeat.  
His suffering then is immense, inconceivable, intense, for his ever active tactics find no victim to deceive,  
his beguiling lies still to believe.

Satan's torment during the millennium, is but a foretaste of what is yet to come –

The just reward for his rebellion, and mutiny with his host in Heaven,  
And his continuing warring against God on earth, with the morbid leaven  
of deceit, misleading man after his mold to follow his revolt.

Meanwhile in Heaven judgment will take place, for the wicked race  
then sleeping in the grave, recompense for them be deemed by Christ and His redeemed.

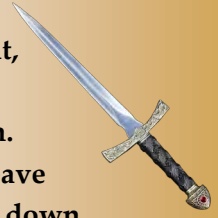
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Then a short, but final interlude will come.

The chain be loosed that kept the Devil bound (Revelation 20:7-8),  
And he once more be found, to exercise all satanic might, once more to fight,  
With the innumerable host of those who on his side stood post.  
The wicked dead are brought to life again, of whom the very first was Cain.  
Then shall Jesus, angels, all the saints, descend upon Mount Olive, it will cleave  
into a plain, very, very, great (Zechariah 14:4; EW 291), and the holy city coming down,  
for the scenes of the tremendous, final showdown.



The wicked see Christ's radiant glory, His majesty so grand, sublime,  
Beholding Him whom they derided, hated, spat upon, His loving call to follow Him resisted unto fury.  
The overwhelming, devastating truth whom they have rejected, is seen now clearly,  
and rouses bitterest, terror-stricken agony.

With one painful, far too late awareness what they have lost, they shout with one accord:  
"Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!" (EW 292; Matthew 21:9).

Still, even so, Satan stirs to go against the city, for they are many,  
Once more by his master skill, deceives the nations, Gog and Magog at his will.  
They prepare for battle, march, the city to surround, to seize for themselves its holy ground.  
Christ and the redeemed upon the glorious wall, behold the masses as the sand of seas,  
in bold approach draw near, while Satan with a hellish sneer, sees himself as conqueror,  
when suddenly from heaven fire falls and brimstone rains on the vast host (Revelation 20:8-10; EW 293-294).

The earth becomes a lake of fire; and like on Pharaoh and army

The waves closed in – they perished in the sea,

So will Satan and the wicked perish in the flames, to burn to ashes,

Till root and branch of evil is consumed, and pain and death and sin no more to be

The earth be cleansed and purified, and then created new....

.....

In view of eternity, the age of iniquity is like the twinkling of the eye.

Though till all of this will come to pass, what pain and sorrow sin does cause!

First it had turned Heaven upside down, brought to unfallen worlds dismay,

When man fell prey to the great lie, that caused such trauma to the planet, nature, creature,  
to make it all to moan and groan as the earth grows saturated with the toxic breath of Evil,

it is all the work of that Devil, the despicable!

Had not Christ laid aside His crown (this made the Evil One to frown),

To take the garb of fallen man to defeat the fallen angel's power,

For the human race would not have been the hopeful hour,

To pull him from the deadly pit, for Christ Himself did enter it!

O sister, brother, do consider, earth's closing days draw hither,

Rise up, repent, and search your heart, if your faith be found on guard

To face the strong delusion soon to come,

Where if it were possible, the elect be overcome (Matthew 24:24).

Eternal life, eternal death is here at stake, therefore be wide, wide, wide awake,

And make your covenant with God by sacrifice (Psalm 50:5),

Surrender now yourself to Christ – for He is yours, and you are His eternal prize!

Amen!



## HEALTH MATTERS:

# Physical Exercise: Final Thoughts



We have been learning about the benefits of physical exercise, how to exercise, and how to improve physical fitness. In this last article of the series, we will address some general information about physical exercise, and then we will look at some quotes from the Spirit of Prophecy, to see what Sister White counsels about physical exercise. Not all forms of physical exercise should be engaged in. This series of articles addresses the importance of physical exercise, with an emphasis on how to take care of the delicate machinery that God has created. Many do not have opportunities for physical exercise as part of their daily work; therefore, an exercise programme is important in developing the physical aspect of our bodies. All suggestions regarding exercise need to be balanced with the exercise of the brain, in studying the word of God, in the development of our characters, to prepare ourselves, body, mind, and soul, for the soon coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

### EXERCISE INTENSITY: WHY IT MATTERS

When we exercise, the intensity of the exercise matters if we want to improve our physical fitness—to strengthen our heart and our muscles. Remember, physical fitness encompasses a complex number of factors which all need to be addressed in order to obtain good physical fitness, including the efficiency of your heart muscle to bring oxygen to your muscles. How do you know how hard you should be exercising? When you exercise, do you feel like you are making an effort, or does the exercise feel effortless? Exercising at the correct intensity can help you can get the most out of your physical activity—making sure you are not overdoing or even underdoing it. When you are doing aerobic or cardiovascular activity, such as walking or biking, there are two basic ways to measure exercise intensity:

**How you feel.** Exercise intensity is subjective, which is a measure of how hard the physical activity feels to you while you are doing it—your own perceived exertion. Your perceived level of exertion may be different from what someone else feels doing the same exercise. For example, what feels to you like a vigorous bicycle ride can feel like an easy workout to someone who is more fit. If you are breathing faster and more deeply than normal, you are exerting yourself.

**Your heart rate.** Your heart rate offers a more objective look at exercise intensity. In general, the higher your heart rate during physical activity, the higher the exercise intensity. To determine if your heart is beating at a level in which the heart becomes more efficient, you must first calculate your maximum heart rate—the upper limit of what your cardiovascular system can handle during physical activity. Calculate your maximum heart rate by subtracting your age from 220. For example, if you are 50 years old, subtract 50 from 220 to get a maximum heart rate of 170. This is the maximum number of times your heart should beat per minute during exercise. Once you know your maximum heart rate, you can calculate your target heart rate zone—the level at which your heart is being exercised and conditioned but not overworked.

Studies show that your perceived exertion correlates well with your heart rate. So, if you think you are working hard, if your breathing has increased in rate and depth, your heart rate is likely elevated.

The American Heart Association (AHA) advises that people aim to reach between 50% and 85% of their maximum heart rate during exercise. Your exercise intensity must be at a moderate or vigorous level for maximum benefit.



Moderate exercise occurs when your heart rate is between 50–70% of your maximum heart rate. To gauge if you are exercising at a moderate intensity, here are some tips to help you to recognize moderate intensity exercise. Subjectively, the exercise feels somewhat hard. Your breathing quickens, but you are not out of breath. You develop a light sweat after about 10 minutes of activity. You can carry on a conversation, but you cannot sing.

Vigorous exercise occurs when your heart rate reaches 70–85% of your maximum heart rate. Subjectively, vigorous activity feels challenging. Some tips to recognize vigorous intensity exercise are: your breathing is deep and rapid; you develop a sweat after only a few minutes of activity; you cannot say more than a few words without pausing for breath.

For a 50-year old, to obtain moderate intensity exercise, target a heart rate between 85–119 beats per minute. For vigorous intensity exercise, target a heart rate between 119–144 beats per minute. If you are not fit or you are just beginning an exercise program, aim for the lower end of your target heart rate zone. Then, gradually build up the intensity. If you are healthy, and want to develop more fitness, aim for the vigorous intensity. Typically, a lower resting heart rate (averaging 60 beats per minute) indicates a well-conditioned heart. The more efficient a heart is, the less work it has to do to provide the muscles with oxygen, so it beats fewer times per minute. Also, the ability to be able to lower your heart rate quickly after an intense bout of exercise is a sign of good physical fitness.

If you have access to technology, a heart rate monitor is a useful device to determine your level of physical exertion. Also, an easy way of checking your heart rate is by placing your fingers along the inside of your forearm, just behind your thumb to feel for your pulse; or placing your fingers on your neck to feel for your pulse. Count for 15 seconds and multiply by four. For most people, a heart rate that is above 120 beats per minute is a good indication that you are exerting yourself adequately to improve physical fitness. A slow walk that does not elevate your heart rate will not improve your heart function. Tracking your heart rate over time and during different types of exercises will give you a good indication of your overall fitness, whether you need to improve, or whether



you are at a good level of physical fitness.

## HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOU EXERCISE?

The frequency of exercise should be adequate to maintain or improve physical fitness. Waiting too long between sessions of physical fitness can decrease the muscle and heart conditioning you have been working to improve. Overdoing the intensity and frequency of exercise can result in pain, sore muscles, and overuse injuries.

**Aerobic activity.** Try to get at least 150 minutes a week of moderate aerobic activity—such as brisk walking, swimming or mowing the lawn; or 75 minutes a week of vigorous aerobic activity—such as running or bicycling. You can also do a combination of moderate and vigorous activity, preferably spread throughout the course of a week. Each daily exercise session should be at least 20 minutes in length. Aim for doing aerobic activity at least three times a week. Increase the amount of sessions per week, and the length of time per session as your fitness improves.

**Anaerobic or Strength training.** Do strength training exercises at least twice a week. Consider free weights, weight machines or activities that use your own body weight—such as hill climbing or heavy gardening. The amount of time for each session is up to you.

**Increase frequency and intensity as fitness improves.** Allow your body enough time between sessions to recover from the exercise. Not waiting long enough in between means that you are exercising with a tired body, and you cannot perform the next exercise session effectively. You will get the most benefit from your workouts if you are exercising at the proper exercise intensity for your health and fitness goals. If you are not feeling any exertion or your heart rate is too low, pick up the pace. If you are worried that you are pushing yourself too hard or your heart rate is too high, back off a bit. However, balance is important. Beware of pushing yourself too hard too often. Overdoing it can increase your risk of soreness, injury, and burnout. If you are new to regular exercise and physical activity, start out at a light intensity and gradually build up to a moderate or vigorous intensity. If you are short of breath, in pain, or cannot work out as long as you had planned, your exercise intensity is probably higher than your fitness level allows. Back off a bit and build intensity gradually.

## EXERCISE FOR OUR BENEFIT

What type of exercise does God approve of? Does He approve of all exercise?

As you may recall from the first segment of the physical exercise series, God gave man work. Even before sin entered into the world, Adam and Eve were given the task of taking care of the Garden of Eden. Work was then, and still is now, a blessing. As seen in the example of Sodom and Gomorrah, idleness leads to many sins. How we take care of our bodies, how we use them, even *how* we exercise is important. Let us review some of the counsels Sister White gives regarding exercise; these will guide us into knowing what type of exercise we can engage in that glorifies God.

Children and youth have much energy; they are still growing and developing. Their bodies need exercise in order to develop and strengthen growing muscles and bones. Health guidelines state that children and adolescents need at least an hour of physical activity per day, with most of the activity being in the moderate to vigorous zone. Children should also engage in muscle and bone-strengthening exercises at least three days a week. Parents should exercise with their children to develop good habits of exercise that they will then continue throughout their lives. Children will tend to be more physically active if it is a family endeavour.

An imbalance is created in students if all of their time is spent in studying, without taking time for physical exercise. "Attention to recreation and physical culture will at



times, no doubt, interrupt the regular routine of school-work; but the interruption will prove no real hindrance. . . . There are modes of recreation which are highly beneficial to both mind and body. An enlightened, discriminating mind will find abundant means for entertainment and diversion, from sources not only innocent, but instructive. Recreation in the open air, the contemplation of the works of God in nature, will be of the highest benefit." *—The Adventist Home*, p. 496

Those who are guiding the youth in schools and in churches need to encourage the type of recreation and physical exercise that does not incite a spirit of competition and of display, which can lead to unchristlike characteristics that can be a stumbling block in a young person's pathway to a refinement of a Christian character.

Exercise can also be done to an excess which takes the student's time away from their studies.

"The question of suitable recreation for their pupils is one that teachers often find perplexing. Gymnastic exercises fill a useful place in many schools, but without careful supervision they are often carried to excess. In the gymnasium many youth, by their attempted feats of strength, have done themselves lifelong injury.

"Exercise in a gymnasium, however well conducted, cannot supply the place of recreation in the open air, and for this our schools should offer better opportunity. Vigorous exercise the pupils must have. Few evils are more to be dreaded than indolence and aimlessness. Yet the tendency of most athletic sports is a subject of anxious thought to those who have at heart the well-being of the youth. Teachers are troubled as they consider the influence of these sports both on the student's progress in school and on his success in afterlife. The games that occupy so much of his time are diverting the mind from study. They are not helping to prepare the youth for practical, earnest work in life. Their influence does not tend toward refinement, generosity, or real manliness.

"Some of the most popular amusements, such as football and boxing, have become schools of brutality. They are developing the same characteristics as did the games of ancient Rome. The love of domination, the pride in mere brute force, the reckless disregard of life, are exerting upon the youth a power to demoralize that is appalling.

"Other athletic games, though not so brutalizing, are scarcely less objectionable, because of the excess to which they are carried. They stimulate the love of pleasure and excitement, thus fostering a distaste for useful labour, a disposition to shun practical duties and responsibilities. They tend to destroy a relish for life's sober realities and its tranquil enjoyments. Thus the door is opened to dissipation and lawlessness, with their terrible results." *—Counsels on Health*, p. 189

A balance must be found with the use of both physical and mental exercise, to glorify God in our bodies. We become physically weak when we devote all our time to studying. On the other hand, we can become mentally and morally weak if we devote all our time to engaging in physical pursuits, to the detriment of our spiritual life.

"Those who are engaged in study should have relaxation. The mind must not be constantly confined to close thought, for the delicate mental machinery becomes



worn. The body as well as the mind must have exercise.

“It is the privilege and duty of Christians to seek to refresh their spirits and invigorate their bodies by innocent recreation, with the purpose of using their physical and mental powers to the glory of God. . . . I was shown that Sabbathkeepers as a people labor too hard without allowing themselves change or periods of rest. . . . The time spent in physical exercise is not lost. . . . a proportionate exercise of all the organs and faculties of the body is essential to the best work of each. When the brain is constantly taxed while the other organs of the living machinery are inactive, there is a loss of strength, physical and mental. The physical system is robbed of its healthful tone, the mind loses its freshness and vigor, and a morbid excitability is the result.” —*The Adventist Home*, p. 493–494

Sister White counsels parents and teachers to find the type of exercise for children and youth that not only develops their own physical powers, but which can be of benefit to others. The energies of the young, if guided in lines that help others will be a blessing to them, as well as to those that they are helping. Our life’s work on this earth is the same as was the work of our Master, in caring for others. Jesus not only cared for the souls of those He came into contact with, but also their health and their physical wellbeing. His physical labour, even as a young child, was spent in His father’s carpenter shop, thus providing the youth with the example of how to use their physical abilities in doing good for others.

“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.

“In the children and youth an ambition should be awakened to take their exercise in doing something that will be beneficial to themselves and helpful to others. The exercise that develops mind and character, that teaches the hands to be useful and trains the young to bear their share of life’s burdens, is that which gives physical strength and quickens every faculty. And there is a reward in virtuous industry, in the cultivation of the habit of living to do good.

“No recreation helpful only to themselves will prove so

great a blessing to the children and youth as that which makes them helpful to others. Naturally enthusiastic and impressible, the young are quick to respond to suggestion.” —*The Adventist Home*, p. 506

“*Missionary activity is an ideal exercise.*—There are plenty of necessary, useful things to do in our world that would make the pleasure amusement exercise almost wholly unnecessary.” —*Ibid.*, p. 509

Helping others is missionary work. Helping those who need assistance in their homes, on their farms is missionary work. Also, as we go out to canvass, we can get exercise from walking. But, beneficial exercise is also not always available. We can go out into the country and help those who live on farms or acreages, but we cannot always do this daily. So, we need to find exercise that is beneficial but also honouring to God. We can engage in sport activities, but we need to do it from the right motive. We need to be engaging in sport that is from the motive of exercise, but when it becomes a competition, when it becomes harmful, when it can potentially damage our bodies, then it is not something that God can bless. In all that we do with our physical bodies, whether it is eating and drinking or in exercise we have to remember that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost and that we should not do anything that would dishonour the bodies that God gave us for His glory, that our witness to the world would not be tainted by our lack of Christian courtesy or need for competition and showmanship in our exercise. Many of the team sports that young people engage in is very good for exercise in that it incorporates all the three forms of exercise that we need, and, if done in the right spirit, can be both health for the body and health for the mind.

“God has given you a habitation to care for and preserve in the best condition for His service and glory. Your bodies are not your own. . . . ‘What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.’ ‘Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.’” —*Child Guidance*, p. 448



# The Young Pianist



Tommy's mother loved to play her piano. She played it in the morning for worship, and in the evening again for worship. Sometimes during the day when she had a few free minutes, she loved to go and play a song or two. The music uplifted her soul, and gave her peace and drew her closer to God. Tommy loved to hear his mother play. He would sing along with her, and longed to play like her one day.

When Tommy was very little he would often be found sitting at the piano, playing a few random keys here and there.

Seeing his attraction to the piano, Tommy's mother decided to enrol him in piano lessons at the young age of five. Tommy was excited at first and eagerly looked forward to his lessons every week. However, after some time, it became tedious. As much as he tried, he could not play as nicely as his mother. And the daily practice was getting very tiring. Sometimes he just wanted to play outside with his friends. In another year or two, he was getting a little better, but as he was now in elementary school, he had to find the time to practice after his homework from school. Tommy was getting discouraged and wanting to quit. He became irritable when it came time to practice. He was getting frustrated when he had to go to his lessons. Oh how many other things he wanted to do rather than practice the piano day after day. One day he told his mother he wanted to quit. It was not possible for him to play like his mother. He did not want to practice any more. He wanted to play outside with his friends after his homework was done.

Tommy's mother did not know what to do. So she went and prayed to God. Should she force him to continue practicing? Or should she honour his wishes and let him quit? Her thoughts went back to her own childhood when she was learning to play the piano. She too, had been frustrated at times. The learning seemed to go so slow. As hard as she tried, she never seemed to be able to play as well as her own mother and teacher. But her mother encouraged her to continue and today she was happy that her mother had insisted. She now prayed, asking the Lord how she can encourage Tommy to continue practicing.

After she prayed, she went on her with her day, trusting that God would direct her. Later in the afternoon, she picked up the newspaper that had been delivered to her house and she read it.

There she saw an advertisement for a piano concert by a famous pianist, who was coming into their city to play. She felt that this was an answer to her prayer. She decided to take Tommy to listen to this concert pianist as he was a much better piano player than her. Perhaps the concert would inspire him.

The day of the concert had arrived and Tommy was getting a little excited. He had never been to a concert in such a fancy concert hall. He was not sure what was going to be more exciting, sitting in the fancy seat or listening to the musician play the piano.

As evening arrived, they quietly entered the concert hall. Tommy was immediately awed by the vast size of the hall and the luxurious surroundings.



After they were seated, his mother spotted a friend in the audience a few rows ahead and decided to walk down the aisle to greet her. Mother told Tommy to sit still in his seat and wait. She would be back in a few minutes.

Tommy, had a curious and adventurous streak in his character. He was not going to sit still when there was such a fancy hall to be explored. He wanted to see all the corners of the hall that were not immediately visible to his sight. He was curious what was behind various doors, and curtains.

Seizing the opportunity to explore the wonders of the concert hall, when mother left Tommy quickly rose and started to walk around the hall. He eventually came to a door that said, "No Admittance." This did not deter Tommy. His curiosity got the better of him and he quickly opened the door and walked through.

Soon enough the house lights dimmed and the concert was about to begin, so mother quickly returned to her seat only to discover that Tommy was not in his seat. Perhaps he went to the washroom, she told herself, and will soon return to his seat.

Suddenly, the curtains parted and spotlights focused on the impressive Steinway piano on the stage. In horror, the mother saw her Tommy was sitting at the keyboard, innocently playing "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." At that moment, the great piano master made his entrance. Quickly assessing the situation, he moved to the piano, and whispered in the boy's ear, "Don't quit. Keep playing."

Then, leaning over, the piano master reached down with his left hand and began filling in a bass part. Soon, his right arm reached around to the other side

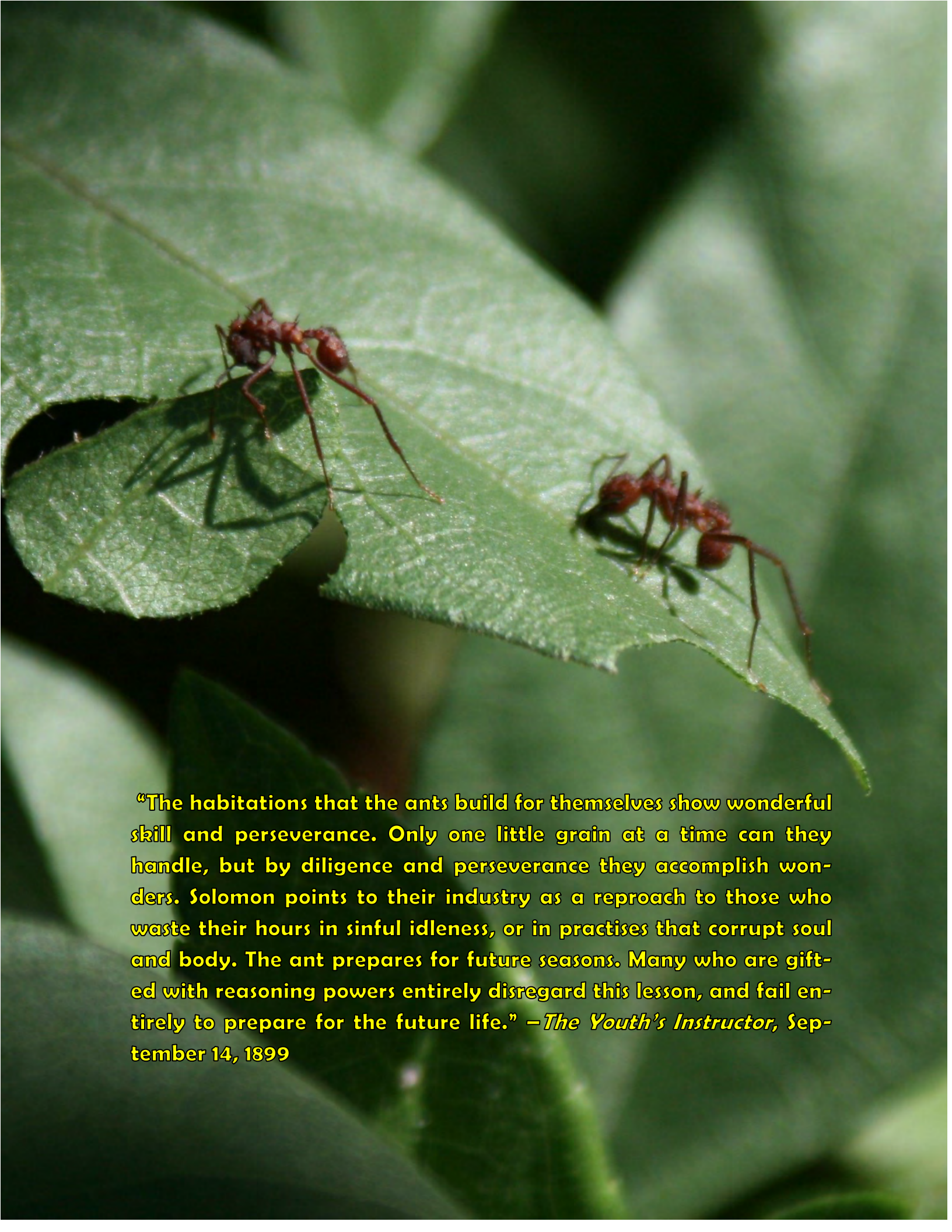
of the child and he added a running obligato. Together, the old master and the young novice transformed a frightening situation into a wonderfully creative experience. The audience was so mesmerized that they could not recall what else the great master played—only the classic "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star."

After the song, Tommy was quietly escorted back to his seat. This was an experience Tommy never forgot. After this Tommy took up his piano practice with enthusiasm. He did not need to be told to practice any longer. He came home from school and went immediately to the piano. On his days off, he would wake up and go to the piano. He wanted to be like that master pianist one day. And his practice paid off. One day he could play the piano as well as, if not better than, his mother and he could play to her in her old age and comfort her. She was just as enthralled at his playing for her as Tommy had been enthralled at her playing when he was a little boy.

That's the way it is with God. Sometimes we try and what we are doing seems hardly noteworthy. We try our best, but the results are not exactly what we expect. It seems that to others the work is so natural but for us, it seems to tedious. However, with the hand of the Master to help us, our life's work truly can be beautiful. Next time you get discouraged and think your work is not worth anything, listen to the voice of God, whispering in your ear, "Don't quit. Keep playing."

Feel His loving arms around you. Know that His strong hands are there helping you turn your feeble attempts into true masterpieces. God does not call those who are perfect but He helps those who are willing and the result can be perfect. He will always be there to love and guide you on your Christian journey. Sometimes the Christian life can be tedious, Sometimes people want to give up. However, we need to have the Master with us to help us and encourage us to continue. He never forces us to practice or forces us to live for Him. He only helps and encourages us and has promised never to leave us or forsake us. So do not get discouraged. The Master will always be with you to help you. Just keep on playing, and He will play right along with you, adding beautiful harmony to your simple life.





**“The habitations that the ants build for themselves show wonderful skill and perseverance. Only one little grain at a time can they handle, but by diligence and perseverance they accomplish wonders. Solomon points to their industry as a reproach to those who waste their hours in sinful idleness, or in practises that corrupt soul and body. The ant prepares for future seasons. Many who are gifted with reasoning powers entirely disregard this lesson, and fail entirely to prepare for the future life.” –*The Youth’s Instructor*, September 14, 1899**