



The Reformation
Messenger
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Our Song

Page 4

Standards of Family Living

Page 14

Appointed Unto Death

Page 18

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 Thorns and Thistles

4 Our Song

**6 The Spirituality of the Law—and its
Binding Claims**

12 To Pray Without Ceasing

14 Standards of Family Living

18 Appointed Unto Death

**23 Health Matters: Electrolytes:
Our Body's Electrical System**

26 Children's Corner: The Fruit Stand

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Thorns and Thistles

“And unto Adam He said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” Genesis 3:17-19

“God made man perfectly holy and happy; and the fair earth, as it came from the Creator's hand, bore no blight of decay or shadow of the curse. It is transgression of God's law--the law of love--that has brought woe and death. Yet even amid the suffering that results from sin, God's love is revealed. . . . The thorn and the thistle--the difficulties and trials that make his life one of toil and care--were appointed for his good as a part of the training needful in God's plan for his uplifting from the ruin and degradation that sin has wrought. The world, though fallen, is not all sorrow and misery. In nature itself are messages of hope and comfort. There are flowers upon the thistles, and the thorns are covered with roses.” *Steps to Christ*, p. 9-10

“But many refuse to gather these flowers, choosing instead the thorns and thistles. At every step they weep and mourn, when they might rejoice in the Lord because He has made the road to heaven so pleasant.” *My Life Today*, p. 338

“We must not think when we are afflicted that the anger of the Lord is upon us. God brings us into trials in order that we may be drawn near to Him. The psalmist says, ‘Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all’ (Psalm 34:19). He does not desire us to be under a cloud. . . . He does not desire

us to go in anguish of spirit. We are not to look at the thorns and the thistles in our experience. We are to go into the garden of God's Word and pluck the lilies and roses and the fragrant pinks of His promises. Those who look upon the difficulties in their experience will talk doubt and discouragement, for they do not behold Jesus, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world.” *That I May Know Him*, p. 278

“Let us not begin to grumble, because we see thistles and thorns. God did not tell you to look upon these. He did not bid you grasp the thorns, that would wound and

bruise your flesh, and grieve your spirit. Turn your eyes away from these things to the attractive loveliness of that which is beautiful. Think on these things, talk of the wonderful works of your Creator and Redeemer. Talk of the price that was given to win these things for you. Dwell upon the theme of salvation. Talk of the tender love of God, who gave His only begotten Son to die on Calvary, that we might come into possession of eternal riches.” *The Signs of the Times*, June 29, 1888

“As we look at the promises of God we find comfort and hope and joy, for they speak to us the words of the Infinite One. Properly to appreciate these precious promises we should study them carefully, examining them in detail. How much joy we might bring into life, how much goodness into the character, if we would but make these promises our own! As we journey in the upward way, let us talk of the blessings strewn along the path. As we think of the mansions Christ is preparing for us, we forget the petty annoyances which we meet day by day. We seem to breathe the atmosphere of the heavenly country to which we are journeying, and we are soothed and comforted. . . . Let us honor God by weaving more of Jesus and heaven into our lives.” *My Life Today*, p. 338

Ellen G. White





How many verses have you already learned? Every day we are learning more verses. We learn the first verse when we leave the world and sin behind. The world will not give us up easily, so we need mighty help from God as did Ancient Israel.

When all seems hopeless and lost, a way of escape will open, and

There was a multitude of people on the side of the Red Sea, happy, smiling, and rejoicing. A little earlier they had been in cruel bondage, hated and exploited. The Egyptian army had been coming closer to them. But now they were free, safe, and happy, and singing a song—a new song—a song that was of their experience and of great victory, and salvation. The Egyptian army had been destroyed to the last man. God had helped them mightily.

This song is similar to our new song that we will be singing—the song of our experience and our victory, with God's help.

“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.” Revelation 14:1–3

“And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over his number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints.” Revelation 15:2–3

We must learn this song here on earth; there are many verses to this song. If there is one verse that we do not learn, we can never go to heaven to sing this new song.

we can sing with David: “Blessed be the LORD, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth.” Psalm 124:6–8

It was the mighty power of God that broke the snare, and we stand on the shore. We are free, and singing the song of victory.

Another verse in our song that we learn is to walk the second mile. The first mile fulfills the law, the second mile is from love. Jesus walked the second mile. The law does not say that the innocent must die for the guilty. No, it was the love of Jesus toward guilty sinners that made Him decide to give up His life for us.

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.” Matthew 5:38–41

Jesus also said: “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.” Matthew 5:44

Have you learned this verse? You may know the words, but do you know the melody? Can you sing it? Can you love the worst, most sinful person in the world so much that you would give your life for him? Jesus did it. Without this verse your song is not complete.

Another verse that is difficult for many to learn is:

“Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” Matthew 16:24

This is a verse of self-denial. To deny ourselves something that we love very much, that we want to enjoy, is the hardest battle that we are asked to fight. To deny ourselves food and drinks that we are craving is not easy, but we must say a firm “no” to the temptation. Adam and Eve lost this battle at the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil.

Paul writes, “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” Romans 13:14

Besides this we must carry our cross, which is not easy. Our choir leader, Jesus, is teaching us the verses of this new song. By His own life He gave us an example, which we must learn.

The melody of our new song has also notes in the minor key. There are times when we pass through utter soul anguish, sorrow, heartache, and disappointments, when we see only darkness around us. Then our faith is tested to the utmost, and we may almost burn, but this all has a purpose.

Put a grain of sand inside an oyster shell; it irritates and rubs against the sensitive skin of the oyster, but the result is a beautiful pearl. Put a thorn in the flesh of Paul, and a faithful Apostle is created. There may be something painful in your life that creates a beautiful character fit for heaven.

Jesus, “Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered.” Hebrews 5:8. Isaiah writes of Him, “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.” Isaiah 53:3. Does this verse in our new song appeal to you? Do you see beauty in it? Are you willing to learn this verse of our song?

Another verse in our song we find in John 3:30, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” I must become smaller, I must be more unnoticed, I must be put aside. “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.” Philippians 2:3

Jesus said, “Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.” Matthew 11:2. “But He giveth more grace. Wherefore He saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

James 4:6. Meekness and humility are one of the most beautiful verses in our song.

“Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.” 1 Peter 3:3-4.

Many educated and talented persons have difficulty learning this verse, because they are too proud of themselves.

Another beautiful verse in our song we find in Luke 23:34, “Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” Matthew 6:12, 14-15

If someone has offended and hurt us, to forgive him means to love him, and to forget all what he has done. What would our world look like if this attribute would be practiced? It is the spirit of revenge that creates misery and unhappiness. A spirit of forgiveness creates a happy fellowship in our church. Our families also can be as heaven on earth.

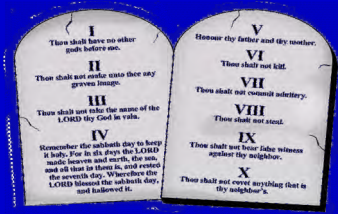
“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.” Psalm 32:1. When all our sins are forgiven, then only can we be truly happy, and enjoy our Christian walk. It is then that we have learned a new verse in our song.

In our new song there are verses of unselfish love, that no worldly love song can equal. There are verses of patience, when there seems to be no end to our trials and sorrows. There are verses of praise and adoration to the Lamb of God, our Lord, Jesus Christ. This is the main theme of our song, that through Christ we overcame, by His might and power we gained the victory. But, there is not even one verse of defeat or failure, not one line expresses turning back.

The 144,000 who sing this new song have had similar experiences in life, similar trials and sorrows; therefore, they all together can sing this new song, in a mighty chorus. We will be invited over and over to sing this song again and again. May the Lord help all of us to daily learn the verses of this song.

Timo Martin

The Spirituality Of The Law - And Its Binding Claims



The World Wide Web dictionary's explanation of the two qualities of law is here laid out. "The letter of the law versus the spirit of the law is an idiomatic antithesis (natural opposites). When one obeys the letter of the law but not the spirit, one is obeying the literal interpretation of the words (the "letter") of the law, but not necessarily the intent of those who wrote the law. Conversely, when one obeys the spirit of the law but not the letter, one is doing what the authors of the law intended, though not necessarily adhering to the literal wording." - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Letter_and_spirit_of_the_law#:~:

Paul, in the word of God, states: "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." 2 Corinthians 3:6. In ancient times, under the old covenant, the Law was written on stone. It was "obey and live"! Today this covenant is written in the heart. Its spiritual requirements are, however, no less. Its claims are just as binding. Its demands are still perfect obedience. Paul put the same idea of "obey and live" this way: "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Romans 8:13. Same mandate.

"The gospel of the New Testament is not the Old Testament standard lowered to *meet* the sinner and save him in his sins. God requires of all his subjects, obedience, entire obedience to all His commandments. He demands now as ever perfect righteousness as the only title to heaven." -*The Review and Herald*, September 21, 1886

Today we will seek to open to view the spiritual nature of the law of God.

Let us first consider the character of the law. Paul says it is holy, just, and good. The psalmist says: "The Law of

the Lord is perfect." Psalm 19:7. Therefore, the law's intention is to "love God supremely and our neighbor as ourselves. Without the exercise of this love, the highest profession of faith is mere hypocrisy. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor thyself. On these two commandments,' says Christ 'hang all the law and the prophets' (Matthew 22:37-40)." -*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 218

This, therefore, is God's spiritual law; it was His intention for the law to be carried out in the lives of humanity. The letter of the law is the literally written code and must not be confused with the spiritual requirements of the law. Too often professed commandment keepers seek to live the letter of the law and are oblivious of the spirit of the law and its far-reaching nature. It may come as a shock to many when it is realized too late that the spirit of the law and its requirements go way beyond the letter, and that the binding claims of the law must be satisfied. It behooves professed commandment keepers to truly put an even greater effort in seeking first "the kingdom of God, and His righteousness." Matthew 6:33

The spirituality of the law calls for absolute obedience. Any deviation is considered a sin, and since sin is a transgression of the law, "whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law" (1 John 3:4); and because "all unrighteousness is sin," (1 John 5:17) it stands to reason that "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). In other words, the said law will not tolerate sin.

States E.G. White: "The transgression of God's law in a single instance, in the smallest particular, is sin. And the non-execution of the penalty of that sin would be a crime in the divine administration. God is a judge, the avenger of justice, which is the habitation and foundation of His throne. He cannot dispense with His law, He cannot do away with its smallest item in order to meet and pardon sin. The rectitude and justice and moral excellence of the law must be maintained and vindicated before the heavenly universe and the worlds unfallen." -*Manuscript 21*, p. 194

The said writer continued in another place: "By this law, which governs angels, which demands purity in the most secret thoughts, desires, and dispositions, and which shall 'stand fast forever' (Psalm 111:8), all the world is to be judged in the rapidly approaching day of God. Transgressors may flatter themselves that the Most High does not know, that the Almighty does not consider; He will not always bear with them. Soon they will receive the reward of their doings, the death that is the wages of

sin." —*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 220

Agrees the Psalmist: "I have seen an end of all perfection: but Thy commandment is *exceeding* broad." Psalm 119 :96. "Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Thy law is the truth." Psalm 119:142

Christ, in His Sermon on the Mount, sought to bring to the forefront the spiritual nature of the law and its consequences if a legal render only is given. "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca [vain fellow], shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Matthew 5:21–22, 27–28

"Christ illustrates the nature of true religion. He shows that it consists not in systems, creeds, or rites, but in the performance of loving deeds" —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 497

"He shows how far-reaching their principles are, and exposes the fatal mistake of the Jews in their outward show of obedience. He declares that by the evil thought or lustful look the law of God is transgressed. One who becomes a party to the least injustice is breaking the law and degrading his own moral nature. Murder first exists in the mind. He who gives hatred a place in his heart is setting his feet in the path of the murderer." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 310

E. J. Waggoner, in his "*Christ and His Righteousness*" 1888 study, made this remark: "Take the first commandment, 'Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.' The apostle tells us of some 'whose gods is their belly.' Philippians 3:19. But gluttony and intemperance are self-murder, and so we find that the first commandment runs through to the sixth. This is not all, however, for he tells us that covetousness is idolatry. Colossians 3:5. The tenth commandment cannot be violated without violating the first and second. In other words, the tenth commandment coincides with the first, and we find that the decalogue is a circle having a circumference as great as the universe and containing within it the moral duty of every creature. In short, it is the measure of the righteousness of God, who inhabits eternity." —*Christ and His Righteousness*, E.J. Waggoner, p. 51

James adds: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For He that

said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law." James 2:10–11

Here is the sum of what is being brought to bear which brings out the point clearly: "Says the psalmist, 'The law of the LORD is perfect' Psalm 19:7. How wonderful in its simplicity, its comprehensiveness and perfection. . . . It is so brief that we can easily commit every precept to memory, and yet so far-reaching as to express the whole will of God, *and to take cognizance, not only of the outward actions, but of the thoughts and intents, the desires and emotions, of the heart.* Human laws cannot do this. They can deal with the outward actions only. A man may be a transgressor, and yet conceal his misdeeds from human eyes; he may be a criminal—a thief, a murderer, or an adulterer—but so long as he is not discovered, the law cannot condemn him as guilty. The law of God takes notes of the jealousy, envy, hatred, malignity, revenge, lust, and ambition that surge through the soul, but have not found expression in outward action, because the opportunity, not the will, has been wanting. And these sinful emotions will be brought into the *account in the day when 'God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.'* Ecclesiastes 12:14). —*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 217

Many "small sins"—as it were "little foxes," are passed over lightly. Year after year many are palliating with sin—adding sin to sin so readily—unsuspecting its large wages, without understanding the gravity of the claims of the law, and are in danger of being weighed in the balance and found wanting on that day when indeed "God shall bring every work into judgment." Ecclesiastes 12:14

Oh, that this is directed to every professed commandment keeper. To the youth, Solomon declared, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that in all of these things God will bring thee to judgment." Ecclesiastes 11:9. He admonished, "put away evil from thy flesh." (v. 10)

For years many have been hearing the Word, hearing that perfect obedience is the requirement of the law. Yet they continue to not see the utter sinfulness of sin. Not seeking with all the heart to obtain this prerequisite to heaven-perfect obedience. Saith James: "For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being

not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." James 1:23–25

Our deeds are all meticulously being recorded in the books of heaven for weal or woe. Here is a most fearsome statement by E. G. White: "God's law reaches the feelings and motives, as well as the outward acts. It reveals the secrets of the heart, flashing light upon things before buried in darkness. God knows every thought, every purpose, every plan, every motive. The books of heaven record the sins that would have been committed had there been opportunity. God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing. By His law He measures the character of every man. As the artist transfers to the canvas the features of the face, so the features of each individual character are transferred to the books of heaven. God has a perfect photograph of every man's character, and this photograph He compares with His law." —*The Signs of the Times*, July 31, 1901

She continues in another place: "The condemning power of the law of God extends, not only to the things we do, but to the things we do not do. We are not to justify ourselves in omitting to do the things that God requires. We must not only cease to do evil, but we must learn to do well. God has given us powers to be exercised in good works; and if these powers are not put to use, we shall certainly be set down as wicked and slothful servants. We may not have committed grievous sins; such offenses may not stand registered against us in the book of God; but the fact that our deeds are not recorded as pure, good, elevated, and noble, showing that we have not improved our entrusted talents, places us under condemnation." —*Selected Messages*, bk.1, p. 220

Do you and I understand our obligation to this law? That it is not just adhering to the letter? God requires far more than the outward rendering. After reading all the above statements and recognizing the strong demands of the law, it is incumbent on all who are mindful of the binding claims of the law to "seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness..." Matthew 6:33

On the one end of the spectrum, we may have a zeal for God but that will not be adequate; it will not satisfy the binding claims of the law—perfect obedience. This was Ancient Israel's mistake. Says Paul, bemoaning Israel's ignorance: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God." Romans 10:1–3

This is also applicable to leading men! Paul, in his day, saw the double standard; he saw the pretentious piety—a people who prided themselves as commandment keepers, yet privately the law was continuously being transgressed. Paul was constantly seeking to bring about the true nature of the law. Sadly, the spirit of the law was a road less traveled.

Said he to those who considered themselves as deeply religious: "Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, And knowest His will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou, not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou, commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written." Romans 2:17–24

"Men in responsible positions, teaching the claims of God's law, whose mouths are filled with arguments in vindication of His law, against which Satan has made such a raid—over such he sets his hellish powers and his agencies at work and overthrows them upon the weak points in their character, knowing that he who offends on one point is guilty of all, thus obtaining complete mastery over the entire man. Mind, soul, body, and conscience are involved in the ruin. If he be a messenger of righteousness and has had great light, or if the Lord has used him as His special worker in the cause of truth, then how great is the triumph of Satan! How he exults! How God is dishonored!" —*The Adventist Home*, p. 327

Today the narrow look of the law, or worse yet, sinful practices are now so entrenched and are such a part of the professed Israel of God that it is not looked upon with any great length as of a sinful act; many no longer see the utter sinfulness of sin—remorse is lacking as sin continues. Rarely, leading men now call sin by its right name. In olden days, prophets after prophets were sent to warn the people to cry aloud, to spare not, to lift up their voice like a trumpet, to show the people their transgression (Isaiah 58:1). In Christ's time, He used as an object lesson the Pharisee that went into the church to pray, boldly presenting his self-righteous deeds.

Oh, church member, what is written against your name?

Do you know that the stiff penalty of the law will be meted out if action is not taken to obtain perfection of character? Angels are perhaps amazed as to what they must record. Love, which is the fulfilling of the law as per God's intention—first to Him and our fellow human being—is given little place in daily life. Each for himself. In the meanwhile, the spirituality of the law considers what is hardly noticeable.

One more Spirit of Prophecy statement will suffice to prove that obedience to the law of God is mandatory, as it were, obligatory.

“The law of God, as presented in the Scriptures, is broad in its requirements. Every principle is holy, just, and good. The law lays men under obligation to God; it reaches to the thoughts and feelings; and it will produce conviction of sin in every one who is sensible of having transgressed its requirements. If the law extended to the outward conduct only, men would not be guilty in their wrong thoughts, desires, and designs. But the law requires that the soul itself be pure and the mind holy, that the thoughts and feelings may be in accordance with the standard of love and righteousness.” —*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 211

Dear Reader, after reading these statements, can you and I honestly say that we are keeping God's commandments perfectly?

Paul, at his conversion, saw the commandment in its all-encompassing character for what it was. The pen of inspiration wrote: “As far as outward acts where concerned—he was ‘blameless’ (Philippians 3:6); but when the spiritual character of the law was discerned, when he looked into the holy mirror, he saw himself a sinner. Judged by a human standard, he had abstained from sin, but when he looked into the depths of God's law, and saw himself as God saw him, he bowed in humiliation and confessed his guilt. He did not go away from the mirror and forget what manner of man he was, but he exercised genuine repentance toward God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. He was washed, he was cleansed. He says, ‘I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet. . . . For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.’” —*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1076

“The apostle Paul, in relating his experience, presents an important truth concerning the work to be wrought in conversion. He says. ‘I was alive without the law once,’—he felt no condemnation; ‘but when the commandment came,’ when the law of God was urged upon

his conscience, ‘sin revived, and I died.’ [Romans 7:9.] Then he saw himself a sinner, condemned by the divine law. —*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 297

This is the point that each professed commandment keeper must reach. He or she, after looking squarely at the far-reaching claims of the law must, like Paul, see himself a sinner as God sees him. We cannot change the fact that the law of God is the righteousness of God and demands perfect obedience. It will not bend. It is in its right to condemn, but we can find out how to satisfy its demands.

Today the true nature of the commandment is herein being brought to you and me. We can look into this master mirror and walk away, or we can seek this righteousness that is of God and truly seek the righteousness that heaven accepts.

The question now is, how? How can we who are “carnal, sold under sin” (Romans 7:14) have this righteousness that the law demands? As it is, we are carnal, and the law is spiritual. Can the natural man walk in perfect obedience? Can you? Can I? Truly this is certainly a dichotomy—so to speak—a contradiction. We must keep the law perfectly, without which no one can see the Lord, yet we have not the ability to. We are fundamentally fallen creatures, with a natural propensity to sin, a natural bent to evil. “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.” Jeremiah 13:23. Sadly, “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one.” Romans 3:10

How then can it be bridged? Looking at this we could throw our arms up and say, “what's the use”? But is there a way out of this quagmire? Does the Bible speak of any such righteous persons? Yes! Isaiah spoke of such, says he, “Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is My law.” Isaiah 51:7. John, in His vision, saw such, “Here” writes he, “is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God...” Revelation 14:12

There, therefore, is a righteousness that can be had. It is for us to seek it out. We go to the word of God “for therein is the righteousness of God revealed.” Romans 1:17. We read: “Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the



law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Romans 3: 19–20

In other words, while the law is the righteousness of God it cannot justify the sinner. It cannot pardon. We must, therefore, go to the next verse (v. 21) to find further truth. We read; "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets." An amazing turn! Let's read on to get this awe-inspiring, full truth: "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. . . . Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Romans 3:22–26, 28

Surely, a new day has dawned. Here stands an incredible paradigm shift—a model that equally satisfies the claims of the law—Christ becoming our righteousness.

Through faith, we can have the same genuine thing—righteousness! Affirms the pen of inspiration: "The law demands righteousness, and this the sinner owes to the law; but he is incapable of rendering it. The only way in which he can attain to righteousness is through faith. By faith he can bring to God the merits of Christ, and the Lord places the obedience of His Son to the sinner's account. Christ's righteousness is accepted in place of man's failure, and God receives, pardons, justifies, the repentant, believing soul, treats him as though he were righteous, and loves him as He loves His Son. This is how faith is accounted righteousness." —*The Review and Herald*, November 4, 1890

Truly marvelous grace of our loving Lord! Righteousness is imputed to us and obtaining it is by faith. This is what was said of Abraham. He believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Now, it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed unto him, but for us also to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification. Here it is—justification by faith. We are told that, "The just shall live by faith." Romans 1:17

"Faith is the condition upon which God has seen it fit to promise pardon to sinners; not that there is any virtue in faith whereby salvation is merited, but because faith can

lay hold of the merits of Christ, the remedy provided for sin. Faith can present Christ's perfect obedience instead of the sinner's transgression and defection. When the sinner believes that Christ is his personal Saviour, then according to His unfailing promises God pardons his sin, and justifies him freely. The repentant soul realizes that his justification comes because Christ, as his substitute and surety, has died for him, is his atonement and righteousness." —*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 366–367

Says Jeremiah in prophetic tones: "In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." Jeremiah 23:6. Praise God! Through faith, we have the genuine thing—righteousness—one that satisfies the demands of the law.

Without a doubt, "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Psalm 85:10. Really and truly "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16

But, where is the law? One may ask, is it not the righteousness of God? E. J. Waggoner put forward this particularly good point: "The law" he asserts, "is not ignored by this process. Note carefully: Who gave the law? Christ. How did He speak it? 'as one having authority' even as God. The law springs from Him the same as from the Father and is simply a declaration of the righteousness of His character. Therefore, the righteousness which comes by the faith of Jesus Christ is the same righteousness that is epitomized in the law; and this is further proved by the fact that it is 'witnessed by the law.'" He continues "...There is in the transaction no ground for finding fault. God is just and at the same time the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. In Jesus dwells all the fullness of the Godhead; He is equal with the Father in every respect in every attribute. Consequently, the redemption that is in Him is infinite." —*Christ and His Righteousness*, E. J. Waggoner, p. 61–63

Paul asked: "Do we then make the law void through faith?" He answers, "God forbid: we establish the law." Romans 3:31. This refutes all arguments that the law is nailed to the cross. Many misinterpret Romans 10:4, namely: "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness." His death did not "end" the law, so to speak, void it. The word "end" in the Greek translation is "*Telos*" and has a few meanings: "end", "goal", "objective;" but according to one source, a clearer statement in the Italian translation, "*Diodati*", reads: "Christ is the goal of the law for righteousness." His goal was to essentially carry out the

true intention of the law. Christ's death in no way nullifies the law. He came to establish it—to make it honorable. He stated: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." Matthew 5:17

Dear Reader, righteousness has now been imputed to us. Says the psalmist, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit is no guile." Psalm 32:1–2

Affirms the Spirit of Prophecy: "...It is the Father's prerogative to forgive our transgressions and sins, because Christ has taken upon Himself our guilt and reprieved us, imputing to us His own righteousness. His sacrifice satisfies fully the demands of justice. . . . God's boundless mercy is exercised toward those who are wholly undeserving. He forgives transgressions and sins for the sake of Jesus, who has become the propitiation for our sins. Through faith in Christ, the guilty transgressor is brought into favor with God and into the strong hope of life eternal." *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 9, p. 301. "If we comply with the conditions the Lord has made, we shall secure our election to salvation. Perfect obedience to His commandments is the evidence that we love God, and are not hardened in sin." *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1079

So then, "As the penitent sinner, contrite before God, discerns Christ atonement in his behalf, and accepts this atonement as his only hope in this life and the future life, his sins are pardoned. This is justification by faith. Every believing soul is to conform his will entirely to God's will, and keep in a state of repentance and contrition, exercising faith in the atoning merits of the Redeemer, and advancing from strength to strength, from glory to glory." *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 9, p. 301

Repentance and obedience are the work of the Holy Spirit. Says Christ: "And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." John 16:8. "It is the Holy Spirit that convicts of sin. If the sinner responds to the quickening influence of the Spirit, he will be brought to repentance and aroused to the importance of obeying the divine requirements. . . . Having brought conviction of sin, and presented before the mind the standard of righteousness, the Holy Spirit withdraws the affections from the things of this earth and fills the soul with a desire for holiness." *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 52–53

The faith of Jesus becomes yours, then will surely be fulfilled these sublime words: "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Revela-

tion 14:12. His character would have been fully formed in the one who fully enters this experience. In His life, He manifested genuine love. Declares the Spirit of Prophecy: "Genuine faith always works by love. When you look to Calvary it is not just to quiet your soul in the nonperformance of duty. . . but to create faith in Jesus, faith that will work, purifying the soul from the slime of selfishness. When we lay hold of Christ by faith, our work has just begun. Every man has corrupt and sinful habits that must be overcome by vigorous warfare. Every soul is required to fight the fight of faith. If one is a follower of Christ, he cannot be sharp in deal, he cannot be hard-hearted, devoid of sympathy. He cannot be coarse in his speech. He cannot be full of pomposity and self-esteem. He cannot be overbearing, nor can he use harsh words, and censure and condemn. The labor of love springs from the work of faith. . . . While it is true that our busy activities will not in themselves ensure salvation, it is also true that faith which unites us to Christ will stir the soul to activity." *Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 20

Declares Paul: "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Romans 13:8–10

"In closing, The question now is, how do we truly attain unto this perfection that we are required to have? Affirms the Spirit of Prophecy: "'We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord' (2 Corinthians 3:18). Christ is the sinner's advocate. Those who accept His gospel behold Him with open face. They see the relation of His mission to the law, and they acknowledge God's wisdom and glory as revealed by the Saviour. The glory of Christ is revealed in the law, which is a transcript of His character, and His transforming efficacy is felt upon the soul until men become changed to His likeness. They are made partakers of the divine nature, and grow more and more like their Saviour, advancing step by step in conformity to the will of God, till they reach perfection." *Selected Messages*, bk., 1, p. 240

Rose Powell





To Pray Without Ceasing

Ask yourself, do you find it hard to kneel down regularly and pray to God? This has been a common problem for some Christians for thousands of years. If we neglect to pray we also resist the Holy Spirit and we are ill prepared to go through experiences such as men like Abraham, Job, Daniel and other great men and women in the Bible went through.

"Prayer is the breath of the soul. It is the secret of spiritual power. No other means of grace can be substituted and the health of the soul be preserved. Prayer brings the heart into immediate contact with the Wellspring of life, and strengthens the sinew and muscle of the religious experience. Neglect the exercise of prayer, or engage in prayer spasmodically, now and then, as seems convenient, and you lose your hold on God. The spiritual faculties lose their vitality, the religious experience lacks health and vigor...." —*Messages to Young People*, p. 249

We need to learn to live our life in prayer. Another way of saying this is, as the Apostle Paul wrote, to "pray without ceasing." 1 Thessalonians 5:17. Many of us realize that this counsel is a correct one. Yet, how many do it? How many of us can honestly say that we "pray without ceasing"? Do we feel discouraged if and when we are reminded of this and we are aware that we are not regularly practicing it?

"Pray without ceasing." Three short words; yet, charged with much meaning. What does it mean to pray without ceasing? Does it mean to be on your knees all day?

If prayer is the "breath of the soul" then it should be important to us. If "praying without ceasing" is to be a key ingredient in the mixture of our life, then it is important to understand what this really means.

How does this idea of ceaseless prayer have a practical application in our lives?

I, personally, came to the conclusion that ceaseless prayer is more about how I live rather than prayer being just an act that I perform. I had to start to learn to live my life in prayer, to live in prayer.

I want to pose a question to you: Do we pray to God when we feel we need something, or do we pray to God when we feel we need Him? There is a distinct difference.

If we pray to God when we need something, the more God provides for us then the less we will pray to Him. If you think about it, this is borne out in many examples. The poorer the country the easier it is to do missionary work, the more receptive the population, and the more spiritual the people seem.

On the other hand, in the wealthier society it can be noted that the people with the most blessings from God are often less spiritual or receptive to God. Some people come to a rich country from a poor one and as they gradually gain a better standard of living, the spirituality they often arrived with becomes less and less present over time.

This does not just refer to physical things, but this could be emotional and spiritual needs as well.

But, if we pray to God when we need *Him*, then the more we come to need *Him* the more we will pray. If we are well off and do not feel we need *Him*, we will pray less.

All need to learn to pray without ceasing, whether rich or poor, old or young. The reality is that we need to learn to live in prayer.

The apostle Paul uses this expression often throughout his writings, this idea of ceaseless prayer.

“See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Thessalonians 5:15–23

Paul is speaking about how to live our life and that this concept of ceaseless prayer is an instrumental part of our sanctification, a change in our nature from earthly, to the Holy or divine. It is a lifestyle change.

If you look at the Greek word for “ceasing” used here by Paul, *Adeileptos*, it means without omission or interruption. Does this sound like your life in prayer? If we are to apply this correctly then we need to learn to live this way so that prayer encompasses us just as the oxygen we breathe or the water we drink. Without each we will die. Without prayer we will not live.

Are you looking for something to pray for? Do you not have anything to pray for? How can we pray always? Maybe you get bored, tired or lose concentration. What can you do about this?

The apostle Paul used this expression in another place. “First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.” Romans 1:8–10

Paul wrote that without ceasing he prayed for the believers at Rome. Without omission or interruption, his thoughts and connection to God were of the believers in Rome.

Further on in this chapter of Paul’s letter to the Romans he reveals the substance of his thoughts and prayers for them. “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.” Romans 1:17

That faith or belief in God is an experience that is born

of a need for God, which is evidenced by a living connection with Him. It is not something we do but how we are to live. Live in prayer!

If you want to be able to go through experiences like many of the faithful people in the Bible then you need to live in prayer.

“Every worker who follows the example of Christ will be prepared to receive and use the power that God has promised to His church for the ripening of earth’s harvest. Morning by morning, as the heralds of the gospel kneel before the Lord and renew their vows of consecration to Him, He will grant them the presence of His Spirit, with its reviving, sanctifying power. As they go forth to the day’s duties, they have the assurance that the unseen agency of the Holy Spirit enables them to be ‘laborers together with God.’” –*The Acts of The Apostles*, p. 56

Do you have this assurance? Do you live each day, all day with the “unseen agency of the Holy Spirit”? This is a promise that God gives to you; but, do you believe it?

Do you feel an increasing need of God? When a person has a real need, they will do almost anything to fulfill that need. If a person is thirsty the first instinct that they have is to look for clean water to drink. If your access to oxygen is restricted how long will it take before you are in a panic?

When the need is great, we will do almost anything to fulfill it. The question is, how much do you need God? I am not talking about how much you are told, or you have read that your need is, but how much do you estimate your need?

It is actually very simple to gauge your need. Just think about the things you do every day and ask yourself—do you live in prayer?

To live in prayer is the only way we will be able to resist temptation every day, and one day be found victorious and ready to meet Jesus.

May we all learn to live daily in prayer. In this time in which we live, as we near the close of this earth’s history, it is much more important and urgent that we keep our connection with heaven strong. The devil wants to destroy us, but God has promised to protect those who are, moment by moment, holding on to His mighty hand for help. Amen.

John Formosa



Standards of Family Living



“Every Christian home should have rules and parents should, in their words and in their deportment toward each other, give to the children a precious living example of what they desire them to be...” *–The Adventist Home*, p. 305

Christian fathers and mothers must first, like children, learn at the feet of Jesus to submit their will to God’s will in all things, so that they will, in their family, represent the kind of government that their Lord requires. There is no better or wiser plan created by humans than what God has for us in His Holy Word. This is the safest and best guide to follow in the training of our children.

“Who can better understand all the needs of children than their Creator? Who can feel a deeper interest in their welfare than He who bought them with His own blood?” *–Ibid.*, p. 306

Parents should always remember that their children will imitate them, so where they act and speak kindly to one another, the children will in most cases behave in the same manner. But where harshness of any kind is practiced, the children will also follow these examples.

In *The Adventist Home* on page 308, Ellen White writes about two families using different modes of governing. One family was “governed without a harsh word or look.” She also visited other families where, “an authoritative tone, and harsh rebukes and severe punishments were often administered.”

The following was her observation, “In the first case the children followed the course pursued by the parents and seldom spoke to one another in harsh tones. In the second, also the parental example was imitated by the children; and cross words, faultfindings, and disputes were heard from morning till night.”

God has given us His law because He loves us and He wants the best for us and our children.

These rules should control both the parents and the children. We must, however, be careful not to implement some of our own rules which may be too rigid or too difficult to live by. If that is the case, the children may want to get around them by disregarding them altogether. Try to instruct in uniform firmness and love. Gentle discipline and calm loving words will accomplish much more than severity. It is also good to remember not to criticise our children for every little thing.

“The combined influence of authority and love will make it possible to hold firmly and kindly the reins of family government.

“Words that intimidate, creating fear and expelling love from the soul, are to be restrained. . . .

“Children need constant watchcare and tender love. Bind them to your hearts, and keep the love as well as the fear of God before them.” *–Ibid.*, p. 308–309

“Never should parents cause their children pain by harshness or unreasonable exactions. Harshness drives souls into Satan’s net. . . .

“Harsh words sour the temper and wound the hearts of children, and in some cases these wounds are difficult to heal. Children are sensitive to the least injustice, and some become discouraged under it and will neither heed the loud, angry voice of command nor care for threatenings of punishment.” *–Ibid.*, p. 307–308

The responsibility of guiding their children aright is great, and one that must be shared by mother and father with much prayer. They must communicate and establish the goal they wish to reach. Sometimes mismanage-

ment occurs when one is too indulgent (it is often the mother) and the father may be too strict. We may not use harshness or force while teaching our children, but neither should there be weak leniency. The mother should never imply that the father's family management skills are lacking—never work against the father's plans. When the parents are not united in how to raise their children, their children will be confused and lose the respect and their confidence in both parents which are necessary for a well-governed family.

Sometimes the mother allows her children to practice wrong habits, and then she tries to hide these from the father because she knows that he would disapprove. However, should the father find out about this, the mother then comes up with an excuse or tells a half-truth; she tries to cover it up. This will undermine the efforts made in forming a good character in the children. Sometimes the mother does not realize, or take it seriously enough to understand that the father is just as much interested in their children as she is, and he needs to be informed when they go astray so that they can be corrected where necessary while they are young. Children are bright and notice the disunion in their parents and this has a negative effect on them.

"The children begin young to deceive, cover up, tell things in a different light from what they are to their mother as well as their father. Exaggeration becomes habit, and blunt falsehoods come to be told with but little conviction or reproof of conscience." *-Ibid.*, p. 313

"There should always be a fixed principle with Christian parents to be united in the government of their children. . . .

"The family firm must be well organized. Together the father and mother must consider their responsibilities, and with a clear comprehension undertake their task. There is to be no variance." *-Ibid.*, p. 313-314

"Where religion is a practical thing in the home, great good is accomplished. Religion will lead the parents to do the very work God designed should be done in the home. Children will be brought up in the fear and admonition of the Lord." *-Ibid.*, p. 318

With kindness and self-control mother and father need to instruct their children when young, when their hearts are impressible. Teach them eternal things, the will of God. Remember, you are living in the presence of God. It is a bad mistake to think it is alright to teach your children when they get older, that they will, on their own, look for a religious experience and turn out alright. If

we do not plant seeds of love, truth, and the heavenly attributes in the children's hearts and minds, Satan will sow tares. If you are leaving them to make their own decision in childhood and youth to do whatever they think to be right, you are neglecting the responsibility placed upon you by God.

"Let parents seek God for guidance in their work. On their knees before Him they will gain a true understanding of their great responsibilities, and there they can commit their children to One who will never err in counsel and instruction." *-Ibid.*, p. 321

Father and mother are to show in their life that Jesus is everything to them. It is from Him you have learned patience, love and kindness. All your children are to be nourished with the lessons of Christ. Pray with your children and teach them how to pray to Jesus for their needs. Guard each child so that Satan shall not influence them and draw them away. Do everything you can, never losing sight of the goal before you. Do not be discouraged, but be determined, for God will be at your side.

"Parents, take your children with you into your religious exercises. Throw around them the arms of your faith, and consecrate them to Christ. Do not allow anything to cause you to throw off your responsibility to train them aright; do not let any worldly interest induce you to leave them behind. Never let your Christian life isolate them from you. Bring them with you to the Lord; educate their minds to become familiar with divine truth. Let them associate with those that love God. Bring them to the people of God as children whom you are seeking to help to build characters fit for eternity." *-Ibid.*, p. 321-322

We should often speak to our children and young people in our homes of the heavenly home which the followers of Christ will one day live in. If mothers and fathers do this, the Lord will guide the young into all truth and fill their hearts with the desire to prepare them to be among those getting entrance into the mansions Jesus is preparing in heaven for those that love Him.

"Parents are to make the religion of Christ attractive by their cheerfulness, their Christian courtesy, and their tender, compassionate sympathy; but they are to be firm in requiring respect and obedience. Right principles must be established in the mind of the child.

"We need to present to the youth an inducement for right doing. Silver and gold is not sufficient for this. Let

us reveal to them the love and mercy and grace of Christ, the preciousness of His word, and the joys of the overcomer. In efforts of this kind you will do a work that will last throughout eternity." *-Ibid.*, p. 323

As parents, we should remember that it is very important that we lead a consistent life. We must live what we preach. Our facial expressions, our voices, and our physical behaviour all have an influence upon the mind. By our deportment, we show what is in our heart. By leading a consistent life we will exert a positive influence towards the molding of the characters of our children and youth. It must be clear that our family understands that our Heavenly Father is to be worshipped and obeyed and that nothing is to take precedence over this.

"'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.' This fact should be woven into the very life and character. The right conception of God through the knowledge of Christ, who died that we might be saved, should be impressed upon their minds." *-Ibid.*, p. 324

Sometimes parents may think that they do not have enough time to study the Word of God daily and also instruct their family. But we are admonished to cut out everything unnecessary of a temporal nature so that we will not neglect receiving the spiritual instructions we need for ourselves and for our children.

Abraham, who was called "the Friend of God", left a wonderful example for parents of our days to follow. We read in *Patriarchs and Prophets* p. 142-143 as follows: "Abraham's affection for his children and his household led him to guard their religious faith, to impart to them a knowledge of the divine statutes, as the most precious legacy he could transmit to them, and through them to the world. All were taught that they were under the rule of the God of heaven. There was to be no oppression on the part of parents and no disobedience on the part of children. God's law had appointed to each his duties and only in obedience to it could any secure happiness or prosperity.

"His own example, the silent influence of his daily life, was a constant lesson. The unswerving integrity, the benevolence and unselfish courtesy, which had won the admiration of kings, were displayed in the home. There was a fragrance about the life, nobility and loveliness of character, which revealed to all that he was connected with Heaven.

"Like Abraham, parents should command their households after them. Let obedience to parental authority be

taught and enforced as the first step in obedience to the authority of God."

The parents who love their children spend many years—from infancy to young adulthood—training and educating their children to obey the Law of God and their God-fearing parents, and how to live in peace, happiness and unity, serving their Lord and Creator. But there comes a day when the children grow up and leave their parents' home to establish their own home and family. This, however, does not end their obligation to love and respect their father and mother. This is a lifelong obligation ordained by God.

"A true Christian will never be unkind, never under any circumstances be neglectful of his father or mother, but will heed the command, 'Honour thy father and thy mother.' God has said, 'Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man.' . . . " *-The Adventist Home*, p. 362-363

As our parents grow older, they may not be able to do everything for themselves, but will need some help with various things, such as, grocery shopping, cleaning their house, appointments, etc. The children should gladly help in proportion to their parents' need, even though it may not always be convenient for them, so that father and mother can live a happy and worry-free life. When the children have grown in grace and in the knowledge of Christ, reflecting His image, they will treat their parents with kindness and respect; when infirmities come upon father and/or mother and they are no longer able to care for themselves, their children will do everything that is in their power to bring joy into the life of their parents.

When our elderly parents live on their own and cannot get out much, they may often get lonely. Then we must keep in touch with them by dropping in on them for a visit and/or speak with them on the telephone as often as possible to let them know that we care about them. Our parents looked after us when we were small and helpless. They fed us, clothed us, gave us love, companionship, shelter, educated us, and much more. When they are elderly and needy, it is the children's privilege to express their gratitude by bringing them as much love, respect, and happiness as they possibly can.

"There is no better recommendation in this world than that a child has honored his parents, no better record in the books of heaven than that he has loved and honored father and mother." *-Ibid.*, p. 361

There may come a time when our parents will need

more help than we can give them by making visits to their home, or one of our parents may pass away and the one that remains is not able to look after himself. At such a time many families choose to place their loved father or mother into an institution—a nursing home—where they would be together with other elderly people. The Spirit of Prophecy instructs us not to send our aged family members away from home to be cared for by strangers, but if at all possible, the members of every family are to take care of their own relatives. Of course, there may be circumstances where it is not possible to care for them ourselves. In that case, we must do for them the best we can.

“All who have Christ’s spirit will regard the feeble and aged with special respect and tenderness.” *–Ibid.*, p. 363

At this time, I just want to share with you our family’s experience of having our father live in our home with us when he was elderly and in need of help.

Our mother passed away almost 12 years before our father. We knew that our father would not be able to look after himself, so our family (five siblings with spouses), including our dad, discussed what to do. We all agreed that the best thing for our dad was to come live with us, Evald, our son Paul and myself. So, on the day of our mother’s funeral, our father came to live with us.

Dad had his own bedroom, and shared the bathroom with Paul, who was ten years old at that time; but the whole house was there for him just as it was for us. While living together, we learned new things about one another since we had not lived in the same home for many years and both of us had grown older, but all went well. Dad and Paul also learned to know one another better and got along very well. It was good for all of us to live under one roof. We belonged together; we were one family.

My father had been used to doing hard physical work all his life; and, although he was not able any longer to do the same, he often asked us what he could do in the garden and/or yard to help keep the property nice. He wanted to contribute and feel useful and by doing light chores; he spent time in the fresh air and got some physical exercise outdoors. It made him feel needed and brought him happiness to be part of our household. He also went for daily walks and made friends with a couple around his own age where he was able to witness for the Lord. Our dad lived with us for almost twelve years, until the day he fell asleep. Having our

father live with us was a great blessing for us all. We remember this time with fondness and thank the Lord for His grace.

Here are some wonderful inspired words written by Ellen G. White I wish to share with you:

“Children, let your parents, infirm and unable to care for themselves, find their last days filled with contentment, peace, and love. . . . let them go down to the grave receiving from you only words of kindness, love, mercy, and forgiveness. . . . You desire the Lord to love and pity and forgive you, . . . and will you not treat others as you would wish to be treated yourself?” *–Ibid.*, p. 363

“The thought that children have ministered to the comfort of their parents is a thought of satisfaction all through the life, and will especially bring them joy when they themselves are in need of sympathy and love. Those whose hearts are filled with love will regard the privilege of smoothing the passage to the grave for their parents an inestimable privilege. They will rejoice that they had a part in bringing comfort and peace to the last days of their loved parents.” *–Ibid.*, p. 363

May our good Lord help us to raise our children with love and patience, to honour God and respect their parents. And may He also give us wisdom and strength to look after our own parents in times of need is our prayer. Amen.

Franziska Pedersen

**Below: Franziska and Evald Pederson
with their son, Paul, and
Joseph Polzer, father of Franziska**



Appointed Unto Death



When you think of the word “spectacle”, what comes to your mind initially? For many, it is a visually striking public performance or display, especially on a large scale: or some unseemly or unusual behavior by a person; they behave foolishly or badly in public. So, a spectacle can be either an exciting event (public entertainment) or embarrassing event. The word “spectacle” in English has Latin roots. It has been around for over 700 years coming from the Latin word: *spectaculum*, from *spectare*, which literally translated means, “to look”

Interestingly, the apostle Paul use the word “spectacle” to describe himself and his co-workers. “For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.” 1 Corinthians 4:9

Why the word “spectacle”? Who would want to purposely be a spectacle to the world? From a worldly perspective, only some foolish-minded people, perhaps. Some people, by accident, create a spectacle. For example: you are walking through your office with a large pile of important papers and then you slip on a wet floor and the papers go flying every which way, and some get wet from the puddle on the floor. We can say, you created quite a spectacle at that moment. It was an accident; but, when you create a spectacle on purpose, people look at you as a fool or mentally deranged.

Some take this verse to mean that, as Christians, we

have to purposely live at cross purposes to the world—to purposely dress and act in such an outlandish manner as to be not only a spectacle but viewed as obnoxious by the world. This is not true. We are to live for Christ, sincerely and honestly, and if then we find ourselves out of harmony with the world it should not be in an open, obnoxious, and outlandish manner, purposefully.

In the above verse, the word “spectacle” has a marginal reading that reads “Gr. Theatre.” It comes from the Greek word *Theatron*. When Paul uses this analogy to describe himself and his co-workers, he is referring to the public entertainment in his day (an exciting event for the people) of the cruel ancient Roman games—the practice of providing entertainment in their amphitheatres. The Colosseum at Rome became the centre for these “entertainments.” In the verse, Paul also mentions that they were “appointed to death.” What does he mean? Looking back to those Roman games, they did have specific people who were “appointed unto death.”

The common practice was that, in the morning, those criminals to whom they gave a chance of escaping with their lives fought with the wild beasts, armed. But, in the afternoons, the poorest and weakest prisoners were brought in to fight with the beasts without weapons. Nobody expected too much from their performance. They were “appointed unto death.” The spectators loved to watch their dying agonies. Other times the afternoon entertainments saw the gladiators fight. They

were armed and fought each other until one or both died. If a gladiator managed to live he was not set free. They too were “appointed unto death.” They were brought out to fight again and again, until they were killed. There was no hope of freedom for them ever. That was their appointed life—death.

What does it mean that they were “appointed unto death” in a spiritual sense? Those who believe and teach predestination can argue that some persons were born to die. They are appointed unto death, and regardless of how good they live their lives, they will never attain to eternal life because they were appointed (predestinated) unto death (the second death). They can fight against sin and self, but it will be of no avail. Their destiny is death. However, nothing could be further from the truth.

As we see, Paul uses this terminology to describe himself and the other apostles.

The phrase “appointed unto death” is from one Greek word: *epithanatiou*. It can also be translated to say, “Doomed to death”. The word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It clearly denotes the certainty of death (the first death); being destined to death, as in the Roman games.

The reality is that we are all appointed to death when we sin, “by one man’s offence death reigned.” Romans 5:17. However, many of us do enjoy some years of peaceful living and do not consider death as immediate, but at some point in time in the future. We are not appointed to death in the same way as the Roman gladiators were.

Figuratively, Paul represents himself and his co-workers as on this arena or stage, contending with foes, and destined to death. Around him and above him are an immense host of human beings and angels, looking on at the conflict, and awaiting the outcome. He is not alone or unobserved. He is made public; and the universe gazes on the struggle. Angels (and unfallen beings in the universe) and human beings are the spectators gazing upon the conflicts and struggles of the apostles. Many worldly spectators watch with mockery and scorn. Their continued conflicts, trials, and persecutions, most certainly would terminate in their death. This is true for all true believers in Christ. If the devil had his way, all true believers would have their life taken as soon as possible. In God’s permissive will, however, (for their salvation), He has “appointed” them (permitted the devil to harass them) in the sight of the universe, to pains, and trials, and persecutions, and

poverty, and want, which would eventually terminate only in their death—for their salvation—to purify them in the furnace of affliction.

“The world is a theater; the actors, its inhabitants, are preparing to act their part in the last great drama.” – *Maranatha*, p. 138. “The Christian is a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. Singular?—Yes; he has a most singular, peculiar character, because his life is worked out after the divine similitude. The inhabitants of unfallen worlds and of the heavenly universe are watching with an intense interest the conflict between good and evil.” – *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1088. It will not get easier as time goes on because the church will become even more strange in its appearance to the world. There will be a marked contrast between the followers of Christ and the world when the Sunday Laws are enforced, and the death decree is made against all those who refuse the Mark of the Beast. They will be clearly and surely then be “appointed unto death.”

Although not so much in common use today, the word “spectacle” has also the meaning of eyeglasses. People wear spectacles (eyeglasses) so that they can see better. They have poor vision. Many people require reading glasses as they get older. Reading glasses are nothing more than magnifying glasses. A magnifying glass is used to enlarge things so you can get a better look. We could say that we are under a magnifying glass to the entire universe, as well as to our friends and acquaintances not in the church. Unfortunately, there are members (unconverted), who love to use their spiritual magnifying glass and study every detail in the lives of their brothers, sisters, and especially leaders of the church, looking for defects which they will then magnify with unholy glee and spread rumours and contempt against them, so as to appear perfect and well-off themselves. They judge others and have a high opinion of themselves.



“We are a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. Unbelievers are watching those who profess to be the children of God to see if they are in reality that which they profess to be. Is it consistent for us to talk of Christ’s self-denial, of His self-sacrifice, and yet walk and work contrary to His example?” – *The Upward Look*, p. 29.

So, shall we run and hide to avoid being a spectacle—to spare our lives rather than to be appointed unto death?

Shall we keep our faith hidden from worldly friends, acquaintances, co-workers and employers? Shall we keep quiet so as to avoid any conflict with the world? "Never, for one moment, let the impression be left upon anyone that it would be for his profit to hide his faith and doctrines from the unbelieving people of the world, fearing that he might not be so highly honoured if his principles were known.

"It is no time to be ashamed of our faith. We are a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. The whole universe is looking with inexpressible interest to see the closing work of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. At such a time as this, just as the great work of judging the living is to begin, shall we allow unsanctified ambition to take possession of the heart? What can be of any worth to us now except to be found loyal and true to the God of heaven? What is there of any real value in this world when we are on the very borders of the eternal world?" –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 526

In many places that Paul went he was rejected, but he did not run and hide. The Christian life is to be lived out openly and publicly. There is no such thing as a secret disciple. The world should know who and what we are and they should see that we have a clear devotion to that cause. It requires boldness and courage to do so. It can only be done by a life that is thoroughly devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ.

You are not your own. Nothing is hidden that will not be found out. There are no secrets that you can withhold from God. Your life is clearly visible to all the inhabitants of the universe and your thoughts and motives are open to God as though you audibly spoke them.

The thought that many eyes are upon believers, when struggling with difficulties or temptations, should encourage them to be more faithful. Not All Christians suffer to the same extent. Some suffer greater hardships than others. God knows what you are able to manage (with His help) and He has promised to be with you in all your trials. Yet, everyone who would be faithful in Christ Jesus, must be prepared for poverty and contempt. Whatever the believers in Christ suffer from men, they must learn not to complain. It is much better to be rejected, and despised by the world, than to be in good favour with the world and be rejected by God. You cannot live for both. Though cast off by the world as vile, yet we may be precious to God, gathered up with His own hand, and placed upon His throne.

The reason that some are not rejected in the world now is because their position as Christians is not very well

known. The tendency of some is to hesitate when they are faced with ridicule or persecution, but God needs men and women in our day to do His will.

When you read the context surrounding verse 9, in 1 Corinthians chapter 4, you read that the apostle Paul is being very direct and straightforward with the Corinthian church. He does not beat around the bush. He tells them exactly how he views their spiritual condition. Then we get a clear idea as to why he wrote what he did in verse 9.

At the beginning of his letter to the Corinthians, Paul sets the tone by saying, "the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are." 1 Corinthians 1:25–28

Then in chapter 4, Paul wrote to them very ironically. There was a problem in the church in Corinth that he wanted to address. He gets to the heart of the matter by



bringing it home personally to the believers. "Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you. . . . We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day. I write not these things to shame you, but as my

beloved sons I warn you." 1 Corinthians 4:8, 10-14

The Corinthian believers esteemed themselves to be rich in spiritual things. Paul compares these proud believers with his own life.



Sarcastically, he said they were living as if they were kings, and he wishes he could also do the same (verse 8). In verse 7, he asks them, "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"

Paul then goes on to show the contrast of their attitudes and lifestyle with those of himself, the other apostles, and, of course, Jesus. He wants to show them the true path of those who live as servants of Christ. He shows how they are lowly esteemed from a worldly perspective. Instead of living as kings, as the Corinthian believers were trying to do, Paul and his fellow workers were living as men condemned to death row—a spectacle for all to see. Both men and angels were watching to see how poorly they lived in human terms.

Paul wants the Corinthian believers to understand two things. Firstly, how much those who ministered to them in spiritual matters have sacrificed of their lives—their comforts for the gospel. And secondly, to expect that a life spent in service to Christ may include pain and loss of comfort instead of wealth and power. He describes himself and his co-workers as "A spectacle of the world" (v. 9); "Fool's for Christ's sake." (v. 10); "Filth of the world." (v. 13); and "Offscouring of all things." (v. 13). Can this be said of every true believer in Christ? Would you describe yourself as such? Would you describe your church leaders and missionaries, the servants of the Lord, as such? This is how the world may view the true Christians, but in God's eyes they are jewels.

All true believers should be willing to suffer shame for the cause of Jesus Christ. This is becoming an increasingly foreign concept in modern day (false) Christianity—to want to appear different from the world. Some in God's church could find themselves in this danger also. Paul wrote much of the true dangers facing Christians. "We not only believe in the Lord but we suffer for His sake." Philippians 1:29. Paul states it as a certainty that, "We will suffer tribulation." 1 Thessalonians 3:4. The promise though is, "If we suffer with Him, we will be glorified with Him" (Romans 8:17); and "If we suffer with Him, we will reign with Him." 2 Timothy 2:12

Now let us consider our own missionaries in our

church. Ask yourself today, is there a difference in the lifestyle between regular members and missionaries? Can Paul's words be true today for some in God's church?

How often do some judge our missionaries? Do some get paid a low salary and are left to be a part of the lower class community, considered a low income family, depending on government support (in those countries where this is a privilege), to supplement their income so that they can live just at, or just above, the poverty line? While we have good jobs and fine houses?

Some will also judge our missionaries for their methods or labour, their number of souls won to the faith. Some want our churches to grow, and they sit back and judge the work of the missionary and blame the lack of growth on their work, doing little missionary work themselves.

Is it God's plan that the apostles and missionaries should be subject to contempt and suffering; and be made poor and persecuted, while the rest of the church members live well, have nice houses and have high honours? What kind of home did Jesus have? Are we greater than He? Let us show the proper respect for our missionaries who have sacrificed the wealth of this world to preach the gospel.

We have no reason to be proud; all we have, or are, or do, that is good, is owing to the free and rich grace of God. A sinner saved by grace must be out of his mind if he becomes proud of his actions and is self-righteous.

In the end of his second letter to the Corinthians, regarding all his trials, the apostle Paul could say, "And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Paul did not complain about his lot in life. He gladly suffered for the Lord. He said that he took pleasure in infirmities.

"In the experience of the apostle John under persecution, there is a lesson of wonderful strength and comfort for the Christian. God does not prevent the plottings of wicked men, but He causes their devices to work for good to those who in trial and conflict maintain their faith and loyalty. Often the gospel laborer carries on his work amid storms of persecution, bitter opposition, and

unjust reproach. At such times let him remember that the experience to be gained in the furnace of trial and affliction is worth all the pain it costs. Thus God brings His children near to Him, that He may show them their weakness and His strength. He teaches them to lean on Him. Thus He prepares them to meet emergencies, to fill positions of trust, and to accomplish the great purpose for which their powers were given them." *-The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 574-575

When Jesus went to the cross, was He made a spectacle to the world? Yes. To die by crucifixion was a very public and shameful event. Jesus came to this earth and was "appointed unto death." It was prophesied that He would bear the penalty of man's sin. He died the agony of the second death; but, He went with joy. "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; *who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*" Hebrews 12:2

"The joy set before Christ, which sustained Him in all His sufferings, was the salvation of poor sinners. This should be our joy and the spur of our ambition in the cause of our Master. In so doing we please God and manifest our love and devotion to Him as His servants. He first loved us, and withheld not from us His beloved Son, but gave Him from His bosom to die that we might have life. Love, true love for our fellow men, evinces love to God. We may make a high profession, yet without this love it is nothing. Our faith may lead us to even give our bodies to be burned, yet without self-sacrificing love, such as lived in the bosom of Jesus and was exemplified in His life, we are as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal." *-Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 115-116

Often when facing a tragedy of some sort, we do not face it with joy. Sadness and anguish may initially set in and then a slow realization and acceptance that this was God's plan and purpose for our life or the life of a loved one. And then joy fills the heart finally, after much prayer, counselling and soul searching. Joy in understanding that it is all in God's plan for our salvation. The joy does not come immediately with many, though. As we have faith and see the Lord's purpose being fulfilled in our lives, we can have a calm and peaceful trust in His leading. Many martyrs went singing to their death.

"Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If

they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also." John 15:20

"My brethren, *count it all joy* when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." James 1:2-4

"Multitudes in the world are witnessing this game of life, the Christian warfare. And this is not all. The Monarch of the universe and the myriads of heavenly angels are spectators of this race; they are anxiously watching to see who will be successful overcomers and win the crown of glory that fadeth not away. With intense interest God and heavenly angels mark the self-denial, the self-sacrifice, and the agonizing efforts of those who engage to run the Christian race. The reward given to every man will be in accordance with the persevering energy and faithful earnestness with which he performs his part in the great contest." *-Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 34-35

"Be brave in God. Put on the whole armor of God, and let unbelievers about you see that your life is not spoiled because you stand loyal and true to all the commandments of God. You can be, and God requires you to be, a decided witness for Him." *-Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 189. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Luke 12:32

This is the most honourable death. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Galatians 2:20

Jesus will one day come to, "to loose those that are appointed to death;" Psalm 102:20. Amen.

Wendy Eaton



HEALTH MATTERS:

ELECTROLYTES: Our Body's Electrical System

In the last series of articles on physical exercise, mention was made about electrolytes and needing to ensure a proper electrolyte balance in the body. In this article we will learn more about the electrolytes that our body contains, what their role and function is, and how they contribute to our health.

Most people are not as familiar with the term “electrolytes” as they are with the term “minerals”. We are all aware that our bodies need specific minerals from our food in order to survive. Minerals are inorganic substances, and because they maintain their structure when consumed, they easily find their way into the body through the foods and drinks we consume. Some of these minerals include sodium, potassium, zinc, selenium, and copper. In fact, our bodies need 16 essential minerals that we obtain from food and fluids. Except for sodium, it is unlikely to ingest too many electrolytes from our diet alone.

However, some minerals, such as sodium and potassium are also referred to as electrolytes. Are minerals and electrolytes the same thing? Read the next statement carefully: *All electrolytes are minerals, but not all minerals are electrolytes.* Confusing? Minerals are important for our body; but some minerals that our body uses are important for their function as electrolytes. What does this mean?

Electrolytes are defined as: minerals in our body that contain an electric charge, meaning they are able to conduct electricity when dissolved in a fluid such as water or blood.

All electrically charged substances, such as electrolytes are known as ions. When a molecule has an equal number of protons and electrons, they are considered neutral and they do not carry a charge. Any molecule that has an uneven number of protons or electrons is known as an ion, and contains an electrical charge. If a molecule contains more electrons than protons, it carries a negative charge. And, if a molecule contains more protons than electrons, it carries a positive charge. Each type of electrolyte in the body carries either a negative charge or a positive charge.

Why is it so important that our bodies contain electrolytes that are able to conduct electricity? Many processes in the body rely on a small electric current to function, and electrolytes provide this charge. As a whole, all the electrolytes in our

body work together to maintain a proper electrical balance in the body within our cells, in the fluid outside of our cells, and in our blood. Movement of electrolytes in and out of cells creates energy.

The main electrolytes that our body needs are: sodium, potassium, chloride, magnesium, phosphorus, and calcium. All these essential electrolytes must be obtained from food that we eat, and water that we drink.

FLUID BALANCE

The body is made up of 60% water. Of this, 40% is found within cells, or intra-cellular. The rest of the water is found in the extra-cellular areas of the body, such as in your blood, spinal fluid, and the space in between cells. Because all electrolytes

carry a charge, either positive or negative, when immersed in water they all assist in regulating the fluid levels of the body. Water moves in and out of cells depending on the level of electrolytes outside of, or inside of cells.

The number of electrolytes relative to the amount of fluid both within cells and outside of the cells, is called osmolality. Under normal conditions, the osmolality is the same inside and outside your cells, which means that there is an equal balance of electrolytes inside and outside of your cells. If osmolality is unequal, if one side has less or more electrolytes than the other, water from the side with fewer electrolytes will move to the side with more electrolytes to equalize electrolyte concentrations within and outside of cells. A proper balance of fluid in the body is vital to good health, and a proper balance of electrolytes is critical in maintaining a proper fluid balance. The most important electrolytes for maintaining a proper fluid balance in the body are potassium and sodium.

ELECTROLYTE IMBALANCES

In order for our body to function, the electrolytes in our body must be maintained in a very strict balance. Each electrolyte level must stay within a fairly small range. There must not be too much or too little of each. Electrolyte imbalances can cause many different types of symptoms, depending on which electrolyte is affected, and whether the level is too high or too low. Mild imbalances can make you feel unwell; severe imbalances can lead to death. If we are healthy, and eat a nutritious diet, our electrolytes will be maintained in proper balance in order for them to do their work.

Typically, dehydration is the main cause for an electrolyte imbalance. Dehydration can occur when the body loses fluids from prolonged vomiting or diarrhea, sweating, or a high fever, and the lost fluids and electrolytes are not replaced. Other causes include a diet that is lacking in minerals, malabsorption issues when your body is unable to absorb electrolytes, certain medications (diuretics, laxatives), and kidney disease.

Electrolyte levels in the body can easily be determined by a blood test. Minor electrolyte imbalances can be corrected by making diet changes, to include food sources high in the specific electrolyte that is lacking. For example, a low potassium

level can be corrected by eating foods such as bananas.

Mild dehydration that is caused by loss of fluids, such as with vigorous exercise in the heat, can usually be treated just by replacing the water that has been lost. However, with moderate or severe dehydration, electrolytes that are typically lost during dehydration, especially sodium and potassium, need to be replaced. This is more often in the case of prolonged vomiting or diarrhea. If someone is severely dehydrated, intravenous fluids which contain the lost electrolytes can be administered. Certain illness such as diabetes can cause excess urination, with subsequent fluid loss leading to dehydration. Medications to treat high blood pressure, such as diuretics, can create an imbalance of sodium in the body. Diuretics treat high blood pressure by flushing the body of excess sodium; this causes water to also leave the body via the kidneys, which lowers blood pressure levels by decreasing the volume of blood in the blood vessels. When the kidneys get rid of excess sodium, it often will flush out potassium also, leading to low potassium levels, which can cause heart rhythm irregularities. With kidney disease, the kidneys are not able to flush out excess electrolytes; electrolytes are retained and levels of electrolytes in the body will rise, leading to imbalances.

Many people take supplements of various types to add nutrients that may be missing from, or containing low levels, in one's diet. Care needs to be taken so that supplementing with electrolytes do not lead to problems caused by excess electrolytes in the body. For example, too much phosphorus can inhibit your ability to absorb magnesium. Also, taking in too much sodium through table salt or processed foods, can cause you to end up losing calcium. Calcium binds with excess sodium in the body and is excreted when the body senses that sodium levels must be lowered.

Let us look at some of the roles of specific electrolytes:

Potassium (K+): Potassium is the third-most abundant mineral in the body and is the main electrolyte inside of cells. 98% of the potassium in the body is found in the cells. Of that, 80% is contained in the muscle cells, while 20% is found in bones, liver, and in the red blood cells. The level of potassium in the cells determines the amount of water inside cells.

When potassium is dissolved in water, it produces positively charged ions and is a key component in the body's fluid balance. Because it conducts electricity, it is important for the nervous system, which relays messages between your brain and the rest of your body. The brain sends messages via nerve impulses, to the heart, to the muscles, to reflexes, and many other body functions.



To create these nerve impulses, a sodium ion, which is negatively charged, must move into cells and potassium ions, which are positively charged, must

move out of the cells. This movement changes the voltage of the cell, which creates a nerve impulse. Potassium sends messages to the muscles to contract, including the contraction of the heart when it beats to pump blood around the body. When potassium moves in and out of a cell

it helps maintain a regular heartbeat.

Either too low or high blood potassium levels will affect the nerve signals in the nervous system, and can weaken muscle contractions, including the muscle of the heart. Muscle cramping can also occur. When the heart does not beat properly, it cannot effectively pump blood to the brain, organs and muscles. Low potassium levels are common in people taking certain types of medications for high blood pressure. Hyperkalemia, when potassium levels in the blood are too high, is considered the most dangerous electrolyte imbalance, as it can lead to irregular heartbeats and death.

Because of its properties, a potassium-rich diet is linked to many powerful health benefits. It may protect against stroke by ensuring a good blood flow to the brain. Potassium reduces the amount of calcium lost from the body via urine, thus helping prevent osteoporosis. Because less calcium is present in the urine, potassium-rich diets also help prevent kidney stones—typically formed from calcium. A potassium-rich diet may also reduce high blood pressure by helping the body remove excess sodium by increasing urine production.

Foods that are high in potassium include bananas, oranges, cantaloupe, honeydew, apricots, grapefruit (some dried fruits, such as prunes, raisins, and dates, are also high in potassium), spinach, broccoli, potatoes, sweet potatoes, mushrooms, peas, strawberries, and cucumbers.

Calcium (Ca²⁺): Calcium is the most abundant mineral in the body, and is an electrolyte with a positive charge. Most of the body's calcium is stored in the bones and teeth, where it supports their structure and hardness. The body also needs calcium for muscles to move and for nerves to carry messages from the brain to all the other body parts. Also, calcium helps blood vessels move blood throughout the body, and helps to release hormones and enzymes that control many body functions. It aids in blood clotting after an injury.

A calcium deficiency will not produce short-term symptoms because the body maintains calcium levels by taking it directly from the bones. However, this can lead to osteoporosis, with an increased risk of bone fractures. As a calcium deficiency progresses, symptoms can include confusion or memory loss, muscle spasms, particularly in the legs and back, numbness and tingling in the hands, feet, and face. It results in weak nails, slower hair growth, and fragile, thin skin. Low calcium levels can also lead to abnormal heart rhythms. High calcium levels can cause constipation, loss of appetite and nausea. A calcium deficiency is usually easy to treat by adding more calcium to your diet. Taking the wrong type of calcium supplement can lead to kidney stones. The best supplement is whole food calcium from red marine algae.



Calcium is contained in many foods, including green vegetables such as kale, broccoli and collard greens. Other foods high in calcium include dried figs, edamame, nuts, portobello mushrooms, and legumes. Calcium is also added to some foods, including soy beverages, fruit juices, and tofu. These

products will be labeled as having calcium added to them. Most grains have some calcium, and add significant amounts of calcium to the diet because of the quantities of grain products eaten, which are often made with calcium-fortified flour. To ensure better absorption of calcium from your diet, take a Vitamin D supplement or obtain Vitamin D through sunlight.

Magnesium (Mg^{2+}): Magnesium, which is a positive ion, is required for more than 600 different reactions in the body. About 60% of the magnesium in the body is found in the bones, while the rest is in muscles, soft tissues, and fluids, including our blood. Every cell in the body contains magnesium. It helps to maintain normal nerve function, supports a healthy immune system, maintains a steady heartbeat, and helps bones remain strong. Magnesium also helps regulate blood sugar levels and also assists in the production of new proteins from amino acids. It helps convert food into energy,



helps create and repair DNA, and allows muscles to contract and relax. During exercise, you need 10–20% more magnesium than when you are resting. Magnesium helps move blood sugar into your muscles and dispose of lactic acid, which can build up during exercise and cause fatigue.

Low magnesium levels are linked to an increased risk of depression, insulin resistance, metabolic disorder, chronic inflammation, and diabetes. Inflammation in the body leads to many of the chronic diseases associated with elevated levels of inflammation, such as heart disease, strokes, and arthritis. Research is being done on magnesium's role in preventing and managing disorders such as high blood pressure, heart disease, and diabetes. High magnesium levels can lead to low blood pressure, breathing problems, and heart attacks.

Studies suggest that approximately 50% of people in the developed countries get less than the recommended daily amount of magnesium in their diets. Diets high in protein, calcium, or Vitamin D will increase the need for magnesium. The following foods are good to excellent sources of magnesium: pumpkin seeds, spinach, Swiss chard, black beans, quinoa, almonds, cashews, and avocados.

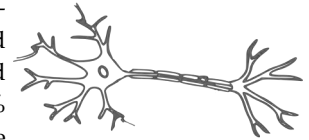
Chloride (Cl^-): Chloride, which is a negative ion, makes up a large majority of the extracellular fluid. Chloride is able to move freely in and out of cells, and can transport nutrients into cells as it enters. It, along with other electrolytes, maintains the proper fluid balance inside and outside the cells. It helps maintain proper blood volume, blood pressure, and maintains the pH of the body fluids. It is a key component of hydrochloric acid (stomach juice); its extreme acidity kills



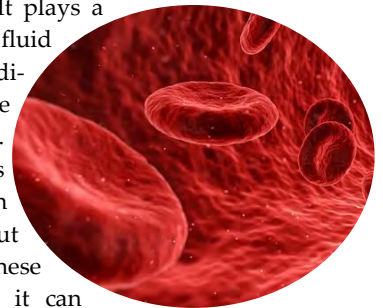
germs in our food, and breaks down foods, especially protein, so that they can be digested. Those prone to acid reflux can develop erosion of the esophagus because of the very acidic nature of the stomach acids. Low levels of chloride affect our body's ability to digest food.

High levels of chloride can lead to increased blood pressure, along with a buildup of fluid in people with congestive heart failure, cirrhosis, or kidney disease. Most of the chloride in our diet comes from table salt, in the form of sodium chloride. Other food sources of chloride are soy sauce; processed foods; small amounts are contained in breads and vegetables.

Phosphate (PO_4^{3-}): Phosphate is a negative ion, the second most abundant electrolyte in the body, made up of the mineral, phosphorus. Phosphate is needed to build and repair bones and teeth, help nerves function, and make muscles contract. About 85% of phosphate is found in bones. The rest of it is stored in tissues throughout the body, and is involved as a building block in substances used by the cell for energy production, to build cell membranes, and to create DNA. Low phosphate levels cause muscle weakness, heart and respiratory failure, and seizures. The mineral phosphorus is found in protein-rich foods.



Sodium (Na^+): Sodium is an electrolyte that carries a positive charge. Most of the body's sodium is located in the blood and in the fluid surrounding cells. It plays a big role in maintaining a proper fluid balance; the total amount of sodium in the body affects the amount of fluid in the blood. Low sodium in the blood causes water to move into cells. High sodium causes fluid to move out of the cells. When either of these things happens in brain cells, it can cause personality changes, headache, confusion and lethargy. If the sodium drop is severe, it can result in seizures, coma and death. A key symptom of excess sodium is thirst, to bring the blood volume of sodium back to normal. Excess sodium levels are more dangerous in the elderly, as their sense of thirst is diminished. If the body senses that either blood volume or sodium levels are too high, it will excrete sodium from the kidneys, bringing them back into balance. Sodium also plays a role in nerve and muscle function.



"Thinking men's minds labor too hard. They frequently use their mental powers prodigally; while there is another class whose highest aim in life is physical labor. The latter class do not exercise the mind. Their muscles are exercised, while their brain is robbed of intellectual strength; and the brain-workers neglect exercising the muscles, and rob their bodies of strength and vigor. Those who are content to devote their lives to physical labor, and leave others to do the thinking for them, while they simply carry out what other brains have planned, will have strength of muscle, but feeble intellects. Their influence for good is small in comparison with what it might be if they would use their brains as well as their muscles. This class fall more readily if attacked with disease, because the system is not vitalized by the electrical force of the brain to resist disease." —*Counsels on Education*, p. 20–21

CHILDREN'S CORNER:



The Fruit Stand

Little Rose was born with a serious health condition. She was born without the ability to see. How sad her parents were that their little daughter could not see the beautiful things on the earth such as the flowers, the trees, the grass and the sunshine. More than that, she could never see their faces or the faces of her siblings.

Yet, her parents loved Jesus and dedicated Little Rose to the Lord and asked for help in raising her. Thankfully Rose could hear and so they sang beautiful hymns to her, and as she grew in understanding they read to her many Christian children's books, about the stories in the Bible, from Adam and Eve, to Abraham, Joseph, Moses and David. And most importantly the story of Jesus and how He suffered for our sins.

Rose had never been able to see so she had no idea as to what she was missing. Her parents did their best to help her lead as normal a life as possible. She entered school and learned to read using Braille. She eventually became quite proficient in the use of a computer by touch and sound.

And Rose learned to love Jesus and accepted her lack of sight as the will of God. She looked forward to the day when she would one day be able to see the face of Jesus and the face of her parents. She loved to read those portions of the Bible where Jesus healed the blind people, yet she also accepted the fact that Jesus may decide that she must be blind for the rest of her life and she was happy, always smiling. She spoke of the love of Jesus with whomever she met and she had lifted the spirits of many downcast friends and

strangers. She was also one of the most faithful attendants at her local church. She loved to also sing songs to honour and glorify her Redeemer and was the lead singer in the local church choir at the age of 16.

As Rose grew she had become quite independent and was able to take care of many of her own needs at home. She also had her guide dog, Goliath, who helped her to walk around town.

When Rose reached the age of 16, she also wanted to start to be able to make some money of her own so that she could support herself and purchase things for herself without having to always depend on her parents.

The opportunity arose of having a fruit stand in the airport. Rose had apples, bananas and oranges for sale. She set up her stand and, day-by-day, people came by and purchased her fruit. She always smiled and gave them a religious pamphlet as well, and told them, "God bless you." Her customers went away smiling and happy and her work was going quite well.

It happened one day that a group of salesmen were hurrying through the airport. Their meeting had run late and they were in a hurry to catch their plane home. They had assured their wives that they would be home in plenty of time for Friday night's dinner. In their rush, with tickets and briefcases in hand, moving quickly through the airport terminal, one of these salesmen inadvertently kicked over Rose's table. Ap-

ples, bananas, oranges, and pamphlets flew everywhere. Without stopping or looking back, they all managed to reach the plane in time as they had nearly missed boarding.

All but one that is. His name was Stephen. Stephen was raised in a Christian home. He was very active in the church until he got married and got this new job. He was now so busy with work and home and family, that he had stopped attending church, and not taking time for worship and praying. But now Stephen's conscience bothered him and the Christian principles he was raised with touched his heart. Something bothered him about the situation. Yes, he also wanted to be home with his wife and family for dinner time. But as he thought about it, he could not stop thinking about the situation. He experienced a twinge of compassion for the girl whose fruit stand had been overturned. Although he had reached the boarding gate with the other salesmen, he could not board. He told the other men to go on without him. He waved good-bye and told one of them to call his wife when they arrived at their home destination and explain that he will be taking a later flight. Then, he returned to the terminal to the overturned fruit stand. The fruit was still all over the terminal floor.

Stephen was glad he did. When he returned, he realized that the girl running the stand, Rose, was totally blind! She was having much difficulty gathering up the fruit herself. Rose was softly crying, tears running down her cheeks in sadness, all the while helplessly groping for her spilled produce as the rushing crowd swirled about her, no one stopping and no one caring for her plight.

No one else, that is, except Stephen. The salesman knelt on the floor with her, gathered up the fruit, put them back on the table and helped organize her display. As he did this, he noticed that many of them had become battered and bruised. These he set aside in another basket.

When he had finished, he pulled out his wallet and said to Rose, "Here, please take this \$40 for the damage we did. Are you okay?" She nodded through her tears. "I hope we didn't spoil your day too badly," he said.

Rose smiled. She thanked him from the bottom of her heart, gave him a pamphlet and said, "God bless you."

As Stephen started to walk away, Rose called out to him, "Mister. . ." He paused and turned to look back into those blind eyes. She continued, "Are you Jesus? Or one of His angels?"

"No," Stephen replied hesitatingly, embarrassed.. "I... I am just a common salesman."

"You must be one of His true followers at least—a true Christian. What church do you attend? It must be filled

with wonderful people like you."


Stephen was stunned by her words. He did not know how to respond. He felt sorry for Rose being blind and his first thought was to ask Rose about her own life. Rose happily told him of her own experience with Jesus and how she was born blind, and how good her life was with Jesus. His own eyes now filled with tears as he thought back to his own life in the past four years. How happy this young woman was, and how ungrateful he had been to Jesus for all the good things He had done for, and given to, him. He was more glad now that he had stopped to help Rose. He right then and there opened his heart and told his life story to Rose, and in the end thanked her for listening to him. He said that she was more of a help to him than he had been to her. He had helped her with her physical needs, but she had helped him with his spiritual needs. He then had a prayer together with Rose and went on his way to find another flight.

As Stephen walked away, he kept on praying. He had not prayed in four years and now he felt a calm, peaceful trust in God as he continued to commune with his heavenly Father. At that moment, he made a decision to return to his former commitment to Jesus. He continued to pray, started to have worship with his family and became a prominent member of his church once more. He was thankful that the Lord stopped him in the airport to help Little Rose. Her faith in Jesus, her happy demeanor, regardless of her ailment had reached the depths of Stephen's heart. Rose will now have another star in her crown for helping Stephen find his way back to Jesus.

"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Matthew 25:40. "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." 1 Peter 3:15

You have been blessed to be able to see. Your eyes are good. But you too can be like Rose in that you can carry some Christian pamphlets with you at all times and give them out to others as the Lord directs. And also be ready to share your faith as often as the opportunity presents itself. Then you will also have many stars in your crown, and will have the smile of Jesus upon you.





“Notwithstanding the curse was pronounced upon the earth that it should bring forth thorns and thistles, there is a flower upon the thistle. The world is not all sorrow and misery. God's great book of nature is open for us to study, and from it we are to gain more exalted ideas of His greatness and unexcelled love and glory. He who laid the foundation of the earth, who garnished the heavens and

marshaled the stars in their order, He who has clothed the earth with a living carpet, and beautified it with lovely flowers of every shade and variety, would have His children appreciate His works, and delight in the simple, quiet beauty with which He has adorned their earthly home.” – *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol., 5, p. 1087