



The Reformation
Messenger
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WE BELIEVE: The all-wise loving God created all things in the universe by His Son, Jesus Christ. He is

the Owner and Sustainer. He met the challenge to His loving leadership and authority by reconciling the world to Himself through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, the Word made flesh. The Holy Spirit, Jesus' representative on earth convicts of sin, guides into truth, and gives strength to overcome all

unrighteousness. The Bible is the record of God's dealings with mankind and the standard of all doctrine, the Ten Commandments are the transcript of His character and the foundation of all enduring reform. His people, in harmony with God's word and under the direction of the Holy Spirit call all men everywhere to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus. Bible prophecy reveals that earth's history will soon close with the visible return of Jesus Christ as King to claim all who have accepted Him as the world's only Redeemer and their Lord.

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The Tiny Flower

“My mother was a great lover of flowers, and took much pleasure in cultivating them, and thus making her home attractive and pleasant for her children. . . .

“There was a beautiful pink flower in the garden called the rose of Sharon. I remember approaching it and touching the delicate petals reverently; they seemed to possess a sacredness in my eyes. My heart overflowed with tenderness and love for these beautiful creations of God. I could see divine perfection in the flowers that adorned the earth. God tended them, and His all-seeing eye was upon them. He had made them and called them good.

“‘Ah,’ thought I, ‘If He so loves and cares for the flowers that He has decked with beauty, how much more tenderly will He guard the children who are formed in His image.’ I repeated softly to myself, ‘I am a child of God, His loving care is around me, I will be obedient and in no way displease Him, but will praise His dear name and love Him always.’”—*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, p. 144–145

“The great Master Artist calls our attention to the soulless flowers of the field, pointing out the beautiful tints and the wonderful variety of shades one flower may possess. Thus God has revealed His skill and care. Thus He would show the great love He has for every human being. . . .

“The flowers of the field, in their endless variety, are always ministering to the delight of the children of men. God Himself nourishes every root, that He may express His love to all who will be softened and subdued by the works of His hands. We need no artificial display. God’s love is represented by the beautiful things of His creation. These things mean more than many suppose.”—*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1086–1087

“In this book of nature opened to us—in the beautiful, scented flowers, with their varied and delicate coloring—God gives to us an unmistakable expression of His love.

After the transgression of Adam, God might have destroyed every opening bud and blooming flower, or He might have taken away their fragrance, so grateful to the senses. In the earth, seared and marred by the curse, in the briars, the thistles, the thorns, the tares, we may read the law of condemnation; but in the delicate color and perfume of the flowers, we may learn that God still loves us, that His mercy is not wholly withdrawn from the earth.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 291

“Some are better adapted than others for doing a certain work; therefore it is not correct to think that every one can be a canvasser. Some have no special adaptability for this work, but they are not, because of this, to be regarded as faithless or unwilling. The Lord is not unreasonable in His

requirements. The church is as a garden in which is a variety of flowers, each with its own peculiarities. Though in many respects all may differ, yet each plant and flower has a value of its own.”—*Manual for Canvassers*, p. 14

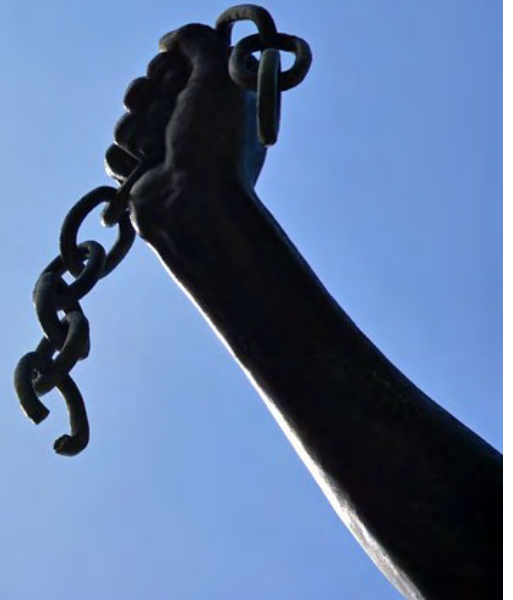
“John’s was a nature that longed for love, for sympathy and companionship. He pressed close to Jesus, sat by His side, leaned upon His breast. As a flower drinks the sun and dew, so did he drink in the divine light and life. In adoration and love he beheld the Saviour, until likeness to Christ and fellowship with Him became his one desire, and in his character was reflected the character of his Master.”—*Education*, p. 87

“Sinful man can find hope and righteousness only in God, and no human being is righteous any longer than he has faith in God and maintains a vital connection with Him. A flower of the field must have its root in the soil; it must have air, dew, showers, and sunshine. It will flourish only as it receives these advantages, and all are from God. So with men. We receive from God that which ministers to the life of the soul. We are warned not to trust in man, nor to make flesh our arm. A curse is pronounced upon all who do this.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 366–367

“The secret of life’s success is in a careful, conscientious attention to the little things. God makes the simple leaf, the tiny flower, the blade of grass, with as much care as He creates a world. The symmetrical structure of a strong, beautiful character is built up by individual acts of duty. All should learn to be faithful in the least as well as in the greatest duty. Their work cannot bear the inspection of God unless it is found to include a faithful, diligent, economical care for the little things.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 572

Ellen G. White

How to Overcome Sin



One of the most important studies we need to do is how to overcome sin, how to reach the perfection required for salvation. We are in a war against a foe that is stronger than we are. Our enemy is Satan. He was in third place in heaven at one time, more intelligent than all the other angels. Now after 6,000 years of practice in deceiving the world, he is a very dangerous enemy. He defeated the world before the flood, except for eight persons who were still on God's side

Even with God's people in the wilderness, Satan deceived all the older people except two—Joshua and Caleb—out of 600,000 men who left Egypt.

Men of great intellect and of great knowledge have not been a match for him. Powerful nations have fallen into his deceptions. Even professed Christians and ministers of the gospel, have bowed their heads to him in submission. One-third of the angels in heaven broke their allegiance with God and joined with Satan in his rebellion.

"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." Revelation 12:9

The devil deceives many in the world. He gives gifts—to Eve he gave a fruit. He hypnotized Adam. He offered the whole world to Jesus. God also gives gifts; when we are heirs with Christ we are given passage to the whole universe. We do not even need a passport to enter the country of heaven.

Although most of the world is deceived by him, he goes

war against a particular group of people. "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Revelation 12:17. He wars very earnestly against the little faithful remnant. The war is against you and I.

No man is able to resist him. No man has ever overcome him alone. No man has been able to see through his deceptions alone. Out of all the Christians today, a remnant will be saved.

And yet, we must overcome him, we must defeat Satan or we will be lost. We have a promise in the Bible. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son." Revelation 21:7. He that overcomes the power of Satan and his angels, who overcomes sin and sinful desires in his body and soul, shall inherit all.

In our world today there are more than 2 billion Christians who have started a war against Satan with the purpose of overcoming him and to receiving the reward promised to the overcomer. The Bible tells us that only a small remnant will be able (with the help of Jesus) to defeat the power of evil and to win the battle. In order to win this war and overcome all sin, we need a helper who is stronger than our enemy. That helper is Jesus.

Since the beginning of this earth's history, for 6,000 years men have waged a war against Satan and his power, but most of them have lost the battle in the end

because they battled alone and lost. In cemeteries around the world there are millions of victims of Satan. They passed from life unto death, fighting in vain for the victory. All their prayers, offerings, and religious exercises were in vain.

Yet, Satan has been defeated. There are men and women and children who have asked help from Jesus and have been able to overcome Satan and his deceptions. How did they do it? What weapons did Jesus give us to use? We must know the answers to these questions so that we can overcome and be victorious also. In heaven there will be men and women, children, teenagers and small babies who have gained the victory. It can be done.

If we follow the instructions given to us in the Bible we all will be in heaven. We all will be overcomers. We all will be perfect in character. And how to do it is the most important study for us.

Goliath was stronger than David, a more experienced man of war. All the host of Israel was afraid of him, no one dared to go against him. Then comes David, a young shepherd boy and the giant was defeated so easily.

“This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.” 1 Samuel 17:46. David spoke with confidence, without the fear of defeat. He had not a shadow of doubt that he might lose the battle.

Those who were afraid and had doubted, could they have easily overcome Goliath? Would they have lost and perished because they had no confidence in God’s help?

When the children of Israel went against Jericho, the great city, they gained the victory so easily when they followed the instructions of God. But a little later they went against a small city, Ai, and were badly defeated. What made the difference? This time sin had entered into the camp of Israel—just one sinner. Achan had disobeyed the commandment of God and because of this their power was gone and a curse was upon them. Therefore, they fled before the enemy.

Balak, the king of Moab tried to defeat the people of Israel so he called Balaam to curse them. But every time Balaam tried to curse Israel, God turned it into a blessing. Israel was victorious; the king of Moab could not defeat them.

But then, Balaam made a plan as to how to defeat Israel. He told Balak to lead them into sin, to make a great feast and invite Israel’s young people to the feast. Now they could be defeated so easily. They lost to their enemy.

Satan is after God’s people to destroy them. If angels would not protect us, we would not live anymore. We lose this protection when we disobey God and continue in a lifestyle of sin.

Satan is an accuser. If he sees you do something wrong, then before the good angels he will accuse you. Satan will say, “How can you give peace in the heart of a person who has caused heartache and sorrow to someone else?” Satan also says, “Look at this person, he did not forgive his brother—how can you forgive him? Look, he was dishonest, he lied, he stole something. How can you protect him in return?”

Satan picks on our sins, and weaknesses and tells God’s angels, “God rejected me. And you give grace to the people who are just as bad as I am. They are selfish, covetous, and jealous.” Sometimes God may not protect us or our property if we reject Him and walk away from Him.

In our warfare, we all have a Goliath on our way against whom we must fight. We all have a dangerous enemy who tries to defeat us, to stop our progress. This Goliath may be an appetite for harmful foods or drinks. It may be a bad habit that we engage in, or perhaps a desire to read forbidden books or watch television shows, or a difficulty in loving our enemies. This Goliath may be covetousness, pride, selfishness, jealousy, or an unforgiving spirit. Millions of Christians have fallen as victims to these giants.

Because of this mighty enemy, many Christians try to justify their failures by saying, “No one can keep the law of God; it is impossible to be perfect. No one can overcome all sins.” And so easily they fall into the hands of their enemy, Satan.

A Christian who has not overcome his sin, who plays with his enemy, is the greatest loser in this world. “Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you. . . . Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not.” Jeremiah 5:15, 21. They are called foolish and without understanding.

“Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard.” Proverbs 13:15. The way of a transgressor is hard, full of misery, disappointments—a

joyless and unhappy life.

David said, "For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me." Psalm 38:4

"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Proverbs 14:12

For a moment, the way of Satan may look good, as it did to Adam and Eve. But in a little while, there is a disappointment. Depression is the result of defeat; worry and anxiety are signs of defeat, showing that Satan has gained the victory. Boredom is a result of defeat, and also self-pity. Loss of self-respect shows that Satan has overcome us. Confusion of mind is a blindness that Satan has cast upon people. Millions of Christians are suffering these direct results of Satan's victory.

The ancient Israelites wept all night in agony and fear, while Joshua and Caleb had peace. When a Christian is victorious and overcomes Satan, there is peace, joy, love, and power to do all things correctly; there is also cheerfulness and happiness, and a busy active life in helping others.

Only a victorious Christian knows how to live a good life. Only he can truly enjoy life. The joy of Jesus is far greater than all that worldly entertainment can give us.

In order to overcome our enemies, these giants, Goliaths that fight against us, we need to follow certain instructions.

The first thing to do is found in Hebrews 11:25, "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." The key word here is "choosing." Moses chose rather to suffer affliction than enjoy the pleasures of sin. Is this your choice? Have you made up your mind to suffer affliction, to deny yourself and carry your cross, rather than enjoy pleasures of this world for a season?

The second thing to do is found in 1 John 5:4-5, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God." To be born of God; by faith we are born again of the Holy Spirit. A born-again Christian is a happy person, his joy is full.

"But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." John 1:12. Come to Christ to receive power. If someone is lacking this power they have not come to Christ yet. False christs cannot give power to overcome

sin.

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Resist him! Do not invite Satan to tempt you. When you take a magazine or book in your hand that is inspired by Satan, you do not resist him. When you turn on the television to watch a show, you are not resisting him. You are inviting him to come and tempt you. When you spend time with the company of people who do not love God, or go to a place of entertainment, you are not resisting Satan, but again you are inviting him to tempt you.

"Pray without ceasing." 1 Thessalonians 5:17. Evil thoughts cannot enter your mind if you pray without ceasing. It takes practice, but it is a wonderful weapon against our enemy.

Fasting and prayer—when other things have failed, fasting will gain a victory. "And when He was come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, Why could not we cast him out? And He said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting." Mark 9:28-29. It is the best way to gain willpower, to subdue desires and appetites, lusts of the flesh and body. Sister White had never eaten whole wheat bread, and it did not agree with her taste. She said to her stomach, "you will get nothing until you are ready to accept this bread." And, soon enough, her stomach was ready to have this bread. Some have difficulty with a vegetarian diet. Try doing the same. Jesus said that there are things that can be overcome by fasting and prayer only.

There is one more instruction—to love God and to hate sin. Eve did not hate sin, she desired to eat from the tree of knowledge; she wanted it. Also, if we love sin or the bad habit or bad indulgence, we will never overcome. We must learn to hate sin. This happens at Calvary. If you love to read these worldly books, if you love to watch these sinful shows, if you love to eat harmful foods and drinks, you will never overcome. One who loves sin will not be able to fight against it. If we love this world, the love of the Father is not in us.

"Many desire the final reward and victory which are to be given to overcomers, but are not willing to endure toil, privation, and denial of self, as did their Redeemer. . . . The controlling power of appetite will prove the ruin of thousands, when, if they had conquered on this point, they would have had moral power to gain the victory over every other temptation of Satan. . . . As we near the close of time, Satan's temptation to indulge appetite will be more powerful and more difficult to

overcome." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 491

Those who indulge appetite and passion, their words are not utilized by the Spirit of God so as to reach the hearts of the hearers. Their minds are not clear.

If you fail in overcoming, there is a reason for it. You did not surrender to Christ. This must be done in order to overcome sin. Everything depends on overcoming Satan. There are seven promises for the overcomer in Revelation chapters 2 and 3. But, there is not even one promise for those who fail. We must not fail. We must not give up. Be strong. Stand for God, for the truth, and fight manfully, in the strength of God; defeat Satan and the power of sin.

Isaiah gives us this promise, "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? But thus saith the LORD, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children." Isaiah 49:24–25. If you have been a captive of the mighty, you can escape; there is a way out.

"And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." 2 Timothy 2:26. The captive of the devil can be recovered.

"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 15:57. "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place." 2 Corinthians 2:14. Christ is mightier than Satan. Through Him you can overcome.

We can be healed and our troubled hearts can have peace. Our depression will be gone, worry and anxiety will be put away.

"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." Isaiah 53:5. By His death we can live. By His blood we will overcome. If you love Him you will hate sin that



caused such suffering to your Redeemer.

Jesus said, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much." Luke 16:10. Become faithful in the smallest things; start with little evils and soon you can tackle the giants. But, if you neglect the little sins, you will never overcome the greater ones. As you gain victories daily, as you resist temptations daily, when you are faithful in the smallest things, you are defeating the devil. You will change daily.

Enoch had many names written on him: Victory, purity, holiness. Before these can be written on you and me, we must fight and overcome. In the Bible we are called a holy nation, purity of heart must reflect on our countenances.

The Bible is clear on how to overcome; how to gain the victory. By helping others to overcome, we help ourselves. By looking to Jesus, we change to His likeness. By lifelong, persevering effort to discipline, and by self-denial Jesus will help you defeat our enemy, so you can become overcomers.

"One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the LORD your God, He it is that fighteth for you, as He hath promised you." Joshua 23:10. If God is with us, who can be against us? Wonderful is the reward of the overcomer. May the Lord give this victory to all of us. Amen.

Timo Martin

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The Greatest Blessings



When we think of the word “blessing” we often think of good things. We are in a state of happiness.

The word “blessing”, as a noun, is defined on *dictionary.com* as: “a special favor, mercy, or benefit,” or, “a favor or gift bestowed by God, thereby bringing happiness.” So, blessings are equated with happiness.

It is commonly thought that you would be supremely blessed (happy) if you had many possessions, a marriage partner, fame, children, and so on. When you do well and receive a promotion, or you receive an increase in material wealth and possessions, you often think that you have been blessed. It is true that all good things come from God and thus if we have been blessed by God we should give all honour and glory to Him, who gives us life and strength to perform our daily duties.

In the *Sermon on the Mount*, the word “blessed” comes from the Greek word *Makarios*, which is the closest word in Greek to our English *happy*. *Makarios* appears 50 times in the New Testament.

When Jesus spoke the *Sermon on the Mount*, He did not say that it was the the elite who are blessed (happy). It is not the rich and powerful who are blessed. It is not the high and mighty who are blessed. It is not the people living in huge mansions who are blessed. Rather, Jesus said it is the lowly, the poor, the hungry, the thirsty, the meek, the persecuted or the mourning, who are blessed (happy).

In the world, the word “blessed” has most often been used to describe the rich, the famous, and the powerful, but Jesus came to inform them that they are wrong. The blessed in His kingdom are those who the world views as at the bottom of humanity.

God is described using the word *Makarios* by the Apos-

tle Paul to Timothy. “According to the glorious gospel of the blessed [Makarios] God, which was committed to my trust.” 1 Timothy 1:11. “Which in His times He shall show, who is the blessed [Makarios] and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.” 1 Timothy 6:15. Thus, we can say that God is supremely happy. He is perfect, lives in a beautiful place with the universe at His command. He owns it all. And yet, He is not selfish. He wants to share His happiness with you. He gives you both small and large blessings every day, for the purpose of bringing you happiness. Perhaps the blessings do not come in the way you expect, but He knows best.

All was happiness and blessed in the Garden of Eden until sin entered. And then, even though He had it all, “Jesus did not count heaven a place to be desired while we were lost. He left the heavenly courts for a life of reproach and insult, and a death of shame. He who was rich in heaven’s priceless treasure, became poor, that through His poverty we might be rich.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 417

In order to restore happiness, the plan of salvation was created to bring hope and happiness to lost mankind. The Lord has promised to give you blessings while living on this earth, and He has promised eternal life for those who remain faithful. He wants you to be happy here and now, and throughout eternity.

Every day we are given blessings. When we feel discouraged, we need to do as the song states, “Count your blessings name them one by one., And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.” (See *International Hymnal*, Song # 539)

We have been given many great blessings such as life, health and strength, food, clothing and a place to live, but what is the greatest blessing? When you think of the

word “greatest” it is the best, and there can be nothing better. Think for a moment and ask yourself what you think is the greatest blessing that God has given you.

We will now read of many *great blessings* that the Lord has given to us while living here on this earth. When you read the following quotes, substitute the word “happiness” in your mind when you see the word “blessing”, and think how the Lord means this experience to bring you happiness. The term, “greatest blessings” is used for many different blessings in the Spirit of Prophecy. There are multiple “greatest blessings” that we can read of; not just one that is the greatest.

Sacrifice of Jesus: Perhaps the greatest blessing we have is the fact that Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice for us. He willingly took the punishment and penalty that we deserve. Being innocent, He died a very cruel and horrible death so that we who are guilty could have life. How many contemplate and appreciate this great blessing? It should fill our hearts with joy and gladness every time we think about His great sacrifice. It should make us have no desire to sin.

The purpose of the sacrifice of Jesus was to restore the image of God in man, since it has been marred by sin. Once this image is restored, then the person is prepared to live in the mansions of glory that have been prepared in heaven for the redeemed. “Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.” Romans 4:7–8. Yes, true happiness is restored once the burden of sin is removed.

“God expects human beings to walk in the light, to testify before angels and before men that they acknowledge Christ as the great propitiation for sin and that they respect His sacrifice as their *greatest blessing*.” –*In Heavenly Places*, p. 153

“We are to have free access to the atoning blood of Christ. This we must regard as the most precious privilege, the *greatest blessing*, ever granted to sinful man. And how little is made of this great gift! How deep, how wide and continuous is this stream! To every soul thirsting after holiness there is repose, there is rest, there is the quickening influence of the Holy Spirit, and then the holy, happy, peaceful walk and precious communion with Christ. Then, oh, then, can we intelligently say with John, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.’” –*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1111

Helping Others: Many people in the world like to be

served or they work for self alone. They think that having plenty of leisure time will bring them happiness, but this is not true. They are deceived. The real path to happiness is in serving others. Jesus said, “But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.” Luke 14:13–14. “I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Acts 20:35. Receiving can bring happiness, but giving gives much more happiness. In the time of Jesus, the Pharisees did not like to help the poor, sick and unfortunate. They considered these people cursed of God. Thus they lost a great blessing that was intended for them.

“Like the first is the second commandment—‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.’ Matthew 22:39. The law of love calls for the devotion of body, mind, and soul to the service of God and our fellow men. And this service, while making us a blessing to others, brings the *greatest blessing* to ourselves. Unselfishness underlies all true development. Through unselfish service we receive the highest culture of every faculty. More and more fully do we become partakers of the divine nature. We are fitted for heaven, for we receive heaven into our hearts.” –*Education*, p. 16. In helping others, the greatest blessing (happiness) falls upon the one who is doing the helping.

Trials: “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him.” James 1:12. “But and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled.” 1 Peter 3:14. “If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified.” 1 Peter 4:14

Here we read that happy are they who endure temptation and who suffer for righteousness’ sake. How can this be? The Apostle Paul and Silas had learned to happily endure trials. They sang while sitting in prison. “Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.” Acts 16:24–25. Paul stated, “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” 2 Corinthians 5:18. “If Paul, troubled on every side, perplexed, persecuted, could

call his trials light afflictions, of what has the Christian of today to complain? How trifling are our trials in comparison with Paul's many afflictions! They are not worthy to be compared with the eternal weight of glory awaiting the overcomer. They are God's workmen, ordained for the perfection of character. However great the deprivation and suffering of the Christian, however dark and inscrutable may seem the way of Providence, he is to rejoice in the Lord, knowing that all is working for his good." *-The Review and Herald, May 6, 1902*

"Those things which seem to the Christian most grievous to be borne often prove his *greatest blessing*. Reproach and falsehood have ever followed those who were faithful in the discharge of duty. A righteous character, though blackened in reputation by slander and falsehood, will preserve the purity of its virtue and excellence. Trampled in the mire, or exalted to heaven, the Christian's life should be the same, and the proud consciousness of innocence is its own reward. The persecution of enemies tests the foundation upon which the reputation really rests. . . . God will finally vindicate the right, honor the guiltless, and hide them in the secret of His pavilion from the strife of tongues." *-Spiritual Gifts, vol. 2, p. 212-213*

"Supposed difficulties that seemed so large at a distance as to be unbearable, have proved to be the *greatest blessings*. When oppressed, light from heaven has come in clear rays, and the realities of the promise of the sufficiency of Christ is a continual strength and defense. . . . To every soul who meets difficulties in the strength of Jesus and is not overcome, who faces enemies and opposers, and in the strength of Christ stands firmly, who undertakes and discharges duties in the meekness of wisdom, not calculating the results, knowing that none of these things can be met in human strength, his experience becomes knowledge that Christ is faithful that hath promised. . . . Although he may be enclosed in prison walls he may believe it is for the truth's sake. Jesus is by his side. We are not to be rash, bold, presumptuous, defiant. In Jesus we may trust; having faith in His power to save, we may be conquerors." *-The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials, p. 492-493*

"God, in His great love, is seeking to develop in us the precious graces of His Spirit. He permits us to encounter obstacles, persecution, and hardships, not as a curse, but as the *greatest blessing* of our lives. Every temptation resisted, every trial bravely borne, gives us a new experience, and advances us in the work of character building. The soul that through divine power resists temptation, reveals to the world and to the heavenly universe the efficiency of the grace of Christ." *-Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, p. 117*

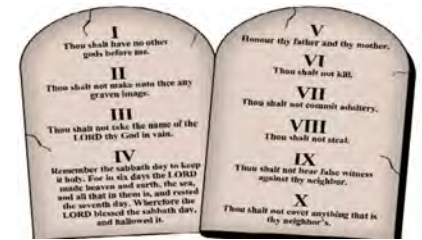
Discipline: Closely related to trials is discipline. The purpose of discipline is to bring one back to the straight and narrow way. Back to obedience when they are disobeying and sometimes it requires trials. Thus discipline for some seems grievous. If correction is not heeded though, the correction may become stronger, much to the dislike of the wayward.

The truth is, children who receive no discipline are not truly happy. They have no guidelines for proper living. Discipline is not always pleasant, but it brings happy results. Children who receive Christian discipline love their parents and have learned to love Jesus. They are blessed and happy.

The Lord disciplines His children also. "It is for our present happiness and our future good that God subjects us to discipline. The *greatest blessing* that His children have is the discipline that He sends them. He never leads them otherwise than they would choose to be led if they could see the end from the beginning and discern the glory of the purpose that they are fulfilling, as workers together with Him." *-This Day With God, p. 122*

Law: "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." Luke 11:28. "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 1:25

Along with discipline, comes the law. Without a law, there would not be a need for discipline. A law can be the greatest blessing, but it can be a great curse to those who choose not to obey it. Satan's original accusation against God was that there was no need for the law. His claim was that the angels knew right from wrong without the need of a law. The law was just a burden. Many today view the Law of God as a yoke of bondage and believe it has been done away with. Sad.



"What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.' But that which would have been their *greatest blessing* became their condemnation, because they were disobedient, unthankful, unholy." *-The Review and Herald, July 17, 1900.* "The *greatest blessing* bestowed upon the world is the privilege of understanding the oracles of God. The word of God should not be a dead letter to us, but spirit and life; for through the truth we are to be sanctified." *-The*

Signs of the Times, April 6, 1891

Prayer: Prayer connects fallen man to the most powerful Being in the universe. Prayer has power to move mountains (Matthew 17:20). In the Bible we can read how prayer stopped the mouths of lions (Daniel 6) and stopped the sun in its course in the heavens (Joshua 10:12–14). Prayer can change the heart of man from a heart of stone to a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26). Thus if we follow the command to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17), we can move forward and face any circumstance the evil one may bring against us. “If God be for us, who can be against us?” Romans 8:31

“To neglect the duty of praying with our children is to lose one of the *greatest blessings* within our reach, one of the greatest helps amid the perplexities, cares, and burdens of our lifework.” —*The Adventist Home*, p. 266. “The *greatest blessing* that God can give to man is the spirit of earnest prayer. All heaven is open before the man of prayer. . . . The ambassadors of Christ will have power with the people after they have, with earnest supplication, come before God.” —*Review and Herald*, October 20, 1896. Happy are those who are daily communing with Jesus, moment by moment.

Work: How few people actually enjoy work. Many find work tedious and cannot wait to finish their work so that they can spend more time in rest and pleasure. After the fall, Adam was told, “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.” Genesis 3:19. The land would not always yield the best, and thorns and thistles would arise. This work was meant as a much needed discipline that was to be a great blessing. It was meant to bring mankind happiness through honest labour, whereas idleness results in evil and corruption as seen in history in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

“I have been shown that much sin has resulted from idleness. Active hands and minds do not find time to heed every temptation which the enemy suggests, but idle hands and brains are all ready for Satan to control. The mind, when not properly occupied, dwells upon improper things. Parents should teach their children that idleness is sin.” —*The Adventist Home*, p. 284

“Industry is the *greatest blessing* that men, women, and children can have.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 97

Holy Spirit: When Jesus went to heaven the disciples were disheartened, so Jesus promised to send them the Comforter. He then told them what the Comforter would do. The Comforter “will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” John 16:8. “He will guide you into all truth.” John 16:13. Praise the Lord.

This is where comfort (happiness) is found—reproof of sin and being led into the truth. Jesus said, “the truth shall make you free.” John 8:32. What is truth and true freedom? It is being set free from the burden of sin. Unfortunately many love their sin and do not want this freedom.

“I beseech the members of every church to seek now for the *greatest blessing Heaven can bestow*--the Holy Spirit. If in faith you seek for a greater measure of God’s Spirit, you will be constantly taking it in and breathing it out. Daily you will receive a fresh supply. Your everyday experience will be enriched by the rich current of God’s love.” —*The Upward Look*, p. 143. The guidance of the Holy Spirit is needed every moment of our lives. We should pray daily for the Holy Spirit’s direction.

Knowledge of Self: The Holy Spirit gives one a knowledge of themselves. Not many have a knowledge of self. Many think they are good, and on the way to heaven, but are sadly deceived. One of the duties of the Holy Spirit is to “reprove the world of sin.” He can use church leaders and pastors. He also uses our fellow members, family members, co-workers and friends. When reprovved of wrong, rather than accepting the reproof in humility, some make excuses to try to justify themselves. “These are precious opportunities that we are enjoying. Jesus is present with us today; for He has promised, ‘Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.’ His presence insures a blessing; but blessings do not always consist in a happy flight of feeling. The *greatest blessing* we can have is a correct knowledge of ourselves, that we may see our defects of character, and by divine grace remedy them.” —*The Signs of the Times*, May 22, 1884

Speech: Speech can be one of the greatest blessings or it can be one of the greatest curses. “For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” Matthew 12:37

To prevent using speech as a curse, it is very necessary to have the Holy Spirit. “Of all the gifts which God has given to man, none is more noble or a *greater blessing* than the gift of speech, if it is sanctified by the Holy Spirit. It is with the tongue we convince and persuade; with it we offer prayer and praise to God; and with it we convey rich thoughts of the Redeemer’s love.” —*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 316–317. Misuse of this blessing has separated friends and family and have even started wars. Making good use of this talent can bring blessings and joy to the giver and to the receiver.

Night: Interesting how night is considered one of the *greatest blessings* God has given to humanity. “God has

given us night as one of His *greatest blessings*, bringing quiet and repose to overworked bodies and minds. We cannot prosecute any labor, however interesting and essential, without periods of rest, when the human machinery shall stand still. When the hour of retirement comes, we should yield to nature's sweet restorer. If her claims are not obeyed, if the hours of sleep are abridged, the result will be weariness and want of every power. God has not constituted men to pursue one round of either labor or enjoyment." Taken from a pamphlet by Ellen G. White, called *The Judgment*, p. 38-39

Many stay up all hours of the night needlessly, for selfish reasons. Satan has perverted God's order. Many evil deeds are done in the darkness of the night. However, the Lord does not want His children to overwork themselves even in His vineyard by staying up all hours of the night every night. Yes, Jesus spent many nights in prayer, but His prayers were not for selfish purposes; He prayed for the good of humanity. If you need to work nights, make sure that there is sufficient time for rest in between.

There are other areas of *greatest blessings* that you can read of in the Spirit of Prophecy if you want to do more research. I have just brought out a few. Some of these the world does not view as blessings and they do not appreciate them (hard work, law, trials etc.). The world has it all backwards. The kingdom of God is made up of meek, quiet individuals, who will be restored into the image of God by the refining process and experiences of life that the Lord is leading them through. They will be patient and appreciative of His leading and use every blessing that heaven has provided.

In closing, please read the following quote slowly and carefully. "The greatest light and blessing that God has bestowed is not a security against transgression and apostasy in these last days. Those whom God has exalted to high positions of trust may turn from heaven's light to human wisdom. Their light will then become darkness, their God-entrusted capabilities a snare, their character an offense to God. God will not be mocked. A departure from Him has been and always will be followed by its sure results." -*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 7, p. 186

Unless we accept the blessings from the Lord and use them wisely we can lose our happiness. One of Satan's greatest temptations is to keep one so busy and occupied that they have little time for spiritual pursuits and missionary work. Even if the deeds are not evil in themselves, if it takes away from our time of worship, it is a

problem. "If Satan can keep the human agent intoxicated with worldly ambition and worldly plans, he is well pleased. We deprive ourselves of the *greatest blessings* by failing to cooperate with our Redeemer in seeking to raise the fallen race, by failing to be God's helping hand in the restoration of humanity." -*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 19, p. 143

What is the greatest blessing you can give to Jesus in return for all the blessings He has given you? Your heart, your life, your service—your all. Even though you are considered "filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6), and your "heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jeremiah 17:9), God sees great value in you. He will be very happy with your sacrifice. In everything you are and everything you possess He values. The Lord is refining you in the furnace of affliction because He sees beauty and potential in you. Never forget how much the Lord suffered for your salvation. Much more than we will ever be asked to suffer. Rejoice!

What the world sees as the greatest blessings could, in reality, be the greatest curse (fame, wealth, etc.) and many people are not happy. There is much depression, greed and corruption apart from God. Just trust God to lead you day by day and count your blessings. In all your experiences of life God has a blessing (happiness) for you.

"And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God." Revelation 19:9. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection:" Revelation 20:6. This is the utmost *greatest blessing* promised to the redeemed in the future which we are all looking forward to sharing in. I know I will be supremely happy if I have a part in the first resurrection as opposed to the second and find myself seated at the great table in heaven for the marriage supper of the Lamb. I hope to see you there. Amen.

Wendy Eaton





NOAH – *The Story of the Flood*

Based on Genesis 5–9, in Four Parts

Part One: The Call



*Enoch the godly one at 65 begat a son – Methuselah;
The meaning of the name, given him by Providence,
Had this distinct significance that – “When he dies it will come.”
Therein lies – the coming of the flood, foretold 969 years by God.
Methuselah begat Lamech beside sons and daughters.
And then at 182 years Lamech begat Noah,
And more sons and daughters.
Not in his early adulthood did Noah have a family,
But after 500 years then three sons were born to him,
Of whom the first was Japheth (Genesis 10:21), the second Ham,
then the third was Shem to complete the family.*

*These generations were God’s faithful from the line of Seth (Genesis 5),
Their children’s children multiplied on earth.
In the process of time these children mingled with the line of Cain’s
Descendants, people who were not repentant,
Feared not God, His holy Law observe did not.
By marrying their daughter’s, son’s,
God’s people did corrupt themselves though not at all at once.
There were mighty ones among them, also giants, great and famous men.
Till riches, fame, prosperity, defiled their humility and godliness,
Till at last God’s people joined in acts of grave unrighteousness.*

.....

*And God saw the wickedness, the evil and the violence of men on earth,
And it grieved Him in His heart,
As evil thoughts did fill the mind of men continually, that He decided finally,
To make an end – destroying men and beast with every thing that does exist,
Also fowls and every bird, for He repented to have created man on earth.
His Spirit would no longer strive with men –
Yet 120 years shall still be granted them.
Centuries longevity gave great opportunity, to increase capacity, ability of minds
To imagine enterprises of all kinds,
Becoming skillful in producing, making, and creating
Splendid works of architecture, music, art,
For these people were extremely keen and smart.*

*But when in their heart they did from God depart,
 Another spirit, dark, sinister entered in – corrupting mind and soul within,
 Turning virtue into lust, profanity, vulgarity,
 gentleness to cruelty,
 Meekness into greediness, kindness into force the weaker to oppress.
 Greed for power, riches, provoked actions of great wickedness,
 Disregard for right and justice filled the minds of men with malice,
 Terror, violence was on display, causing fear and horror every day.*

.....

*Yet there was one, a righteous man – Noah was his name,
 He found grace in God’s sight, and spoke to him of the great blight
 He would bring upon the earth, to end all loathsome mirth.
 He gave instruction, him to build an ark – a boat of giant size*



*With all the measurements precise.
 Making lower, middle, upper storeys,
 Dividing into rooms and chambers for living, sleeping,
 And much storage with the lumber cut of hardest timber,
 Then pitch all outside, inside well with pitch.*

*Store fodder, food, animals in pairs of seven of the clean,
 Male and female of the unclean,
 Of every kind, and also birds and fowls and every creeping thing,
 He into the ark shall bring.
 Above a window to give light within, at the side a door to keep all in.
 “For I will bring a flood of waters to destroy all flesh,
 And living creatures, hills and nature to cover all with water.
 But with you I make My covenant to save you with your family
 In the ark you build accordingly.”*

The Bible says: “Noah did all what God had said.”

.....

*Now imagine his reaction – when he heard of the destruction,
 The beautiful created world – be drowned in the fury then unfurled –
 Every thing alive to perish, the lovely scenery no more to cherish!
 For there is no more remedy to stay the tide of man’s iniquity.*

*Noah – he was stunned, it grieved his heart, it hit him very hard,
 What great sorrow this must be to God –*

*His own creation to wipe out.
 With solemn earnestness did yield to God’s command,
 Determined faithfully to execute this great demand.
 Though his own life was turned now upside down,
 Yet he did not dare to make a frown.*

.....

*He realized what controversy he would meet,
 Carefully and gently must indeed,
 First tell his family and win their help and trust;*

*And praying much to be made wise for this exceeding unique enterprise.
There is much thinking, planning to be done,
Skilled helpers won and hired, and a right place,
Must first be found, a perfect, even nearby ground.*

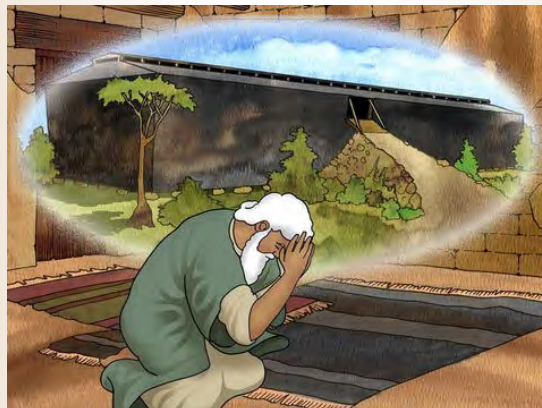
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*The shock was immense, emotions were intense,
Eyes staring in sheer disbelief at one another,
of uncle, nephews, sons and father, mother.
When they heard those troubling news – this is not a story to amuse –
That all achievements, treasures on the earth
One day shall be of no more worth,
All animals and loved ones, children, friends and parents,
Be covered, drowned by mighty torrents,
This made the hearers shake and quiver.
And what God says will be a fact,
Wherefore this made on all a very great impact.
But Noah calmed their fear, for to the righteous God will then be near,
To keep them safe there in the ark – the ark will be the mark
For salvation who by faith do enter in, and honour God with trusting fully Him.*

*Then the troubled souls relaxed and got encouraged,
They were God's faithful ones and wanted now to be engaged
And of use – no time to lose – nor hamper doubt,
But to the business go about.*

*120 years are given for the task to be accomplished,
A project of such magnitude needs collaboration,
Harmonious attitudes, commitments, zeal, cooperation,
To face hostility and ridicule, from the worldly, wicked crowds,
Who will surely throw their doubts into their faces,
As no one had yet seen some rainy clouds. . . .
Lamech, Methuselah with their big clan
Helped with vigour Noah in God's plan,
Straight forward went for this great project,
That was no ordinary target, but a divinely given object.*

*End of Part One.
To be continued.*



Edda Tedford, Canada

HEALTH MATTERS:



Seeds: Flax: A Versatile Plant

Last month we began our series on seeds, discussing the health benefits of chia seeds in particular. All plants, in order to grow, need to contain a seed, which begins life for a new plant. Thus, most of our fruits and vegetables contain seeds, including tomatoes, apples, green beans, and strawberries, also grains such as wheat and barley.

Although all plants contain seeds, we are specifically addressing the plants we eat known as oil seeds. This month we will look at flaxseed, and its role as part of a nutritious and balanced diet.

Flaxseed, or linseed, is the seed of the flax plant, a beautiful blue-flowering herb, and is one of the world's oldest crops. Flax was initially domesticated as a textile crop in the Fertile Crescent region of the world in the Middle East. It was also extensively cultivated in ancient Egypt, mummies were embalmed using linen, the fabric made from flax. Egyptian clothing also consisted of linen. The Roman Empire used it for sails in their ships. In Europe, a large linen industry flourished in the Middle Ages, used to make clothes, tablecloths and bed linens. Colonists to North America brought flax with them. However, by the 20th century, cotton began to be produced at a much cheaper cost, and flax production began to be grown mostly in Russia. Since that time,



flax has lost its importance as a textile due to the easy availability of other cheaper fibres. However, linen clothing is still popular today, but it is very expensive as the process to produce linen is long and complex. It is a very strong, absorbent cloth, and dries faster than cotton. Because of these qualities, linen is comfortable to wear in hot weather. Today, flax is grown in the temperate climates of Europe, Asia and the Mediterranean. It can also be found as an ingredient in oil paints, wood finish, or putty. I use linseed soap to clean my horse's leather saddle and bridle. And, of course, flax is also being grown as a food crop.

Flax was used in Biblical times. A famous reference to flax is in the story of Rahab, who hid the two spies that came to search out Jericho. "But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof." Joshua 2:6. Flax stalks are very tough and durable. Solomon describes a virtuous woman as one "who seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands." Proverbs 31:11. At this time in world's history, flax was still being used mainly as a fabric, but it was also consumed as a food, and as a medicine to relieve abdominal pains. In Revelation 19:8 "the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints," which is a symbol of a pure character.



Flaxseeds are either yellow or brown in colour. The yellow variety is not as healthy as the brown variety. Unlike chia, which we reviewed last month, in order to reap the benefits of flaxseed, it must be ground using a grinder or food processor. The flaxseed has a tough out-

er shell so that whole flaxseed will pass through your intestine undigested, preventing its digestion and absorption into the body. Whole flax has a long shelf life. Buying pre-ground flax has a shorter shelf life than the whole seeds; only buy what you can use before the “best buy” date. When ground flaxseeds go rancid, they will have a sour smell and bitter taste. To optimize the use of the flaxseeds you purchase, buy whole seeds and then grind them when needed. Store ground flaxseed in the fridge in an airtight, non-transparent container to prevent spoilage.

Flaxseeds can be found in most grocery stores and health food stores, either whole or ground. They are also available as an oil and in capsules. They are high in fibre and Omega-3 fatty acids as well as in several phytochemicals, the main one called lignans. One tablespoon (10 grams) of ground flaxseed contains 4.3 grams of fat (3 of those grams are fatty acids, including Omega -3 and -6); 2.8 grams of fibre; 55 calories; 7% water, 1.9 grams of protein; 3 grams of carbohydrates; 0.2 grams of sugar. Flaxseed also contains high levels of thiamine (Vitamin B1), copper, molybdenum, magnesium, calcium, zinc and phosphorus.

Flaxseed is also a high-quality source of plant protein, the amount can be comparable to the protein found in soybeans.

It may come as a surprise, but flaxseed contains even more potassium than do bananas, which are known for their high levels of potassium. This mineral is important for cell and muscle function. It also helps to maintain normal blood pressure.

As we learned last month, chia seeds contain the highest amount of plant-based Omega-3 fatty acids. Omega-3 is considered an essential fatty acid, essential because it must be obtained from the diet. Daily Omega-3 requirements are 1,100 mg for women and 1,600 mg for men. A tablespoon of flaxseed provides 730–1,095 mg of Omega-3.

Flaxseed, contains the second-highest amount of Omega -3, in the form of alpha-linolenic acid (ALA). Due to the high content of Omega-3 fatty acids, flaxseeds have a lower ratio of Omega-6 to Omega-3 than many other seeds. A lower ratio of Omega-6 to Omega-3 has been linked to a lower risk of many chronic diseases. Flax is well-known for its properties that benefit heart health by reducing inflammation in the arteries. Omega-3 is also beneficial for brain health and can improve mood. Flaxseed oil has the highest concentration of Omega-3, followed by ground flaxseeds, and then whole flaxseed, mainly because the Omega-3 is trapped inside its hard

outer covering.

The phytochemicals known as lignans are present in high levels in flaxseed and is one of the richest known dietary sources of lignans. They are a type of phytoestrogen that help in reducing the risk of developing osteoporosis, heart disease, and cancers that are sensitive to hormones such as breast, uterus and prostate cancer. Flaxseed has also been shown to lower the risk of other cancers such as colon, skin and lung cancer. Lignans also prevent heart disease by reducing cholesterol; the lignans bind with cholesterol-rich acids and carry them down the digestive tract where they are then eliminated from the body. They also help to lower blood sugar, reducing the risk of diabetes. According to the World Health Organization, in 2012, 1 in 10 people worldwide have diabetes. Some studies have shown that supplementing the diet with 10–20 grams of flaxseed powder could reduce fasting blood sugar by up to 20%.

As with many phytochemicals in plants, lignans also have antioxidant properties. Antioxidants protect seeds from being damaged as they grow, and they have the same protective properties during the metabolic processes of our bodies. The anti-inflammatory content of flaxseed also prevents illnesses that occur because of too much inflammation in the body, such as diabetes, metabolic syndrome, and obesity. Flaxseed contains 75–800 times more lignans than other plant foods.

Because of its content of both soluble and insoluble fibres, flaxseed is able to improve digestive health by relieving both diarrhea and constipation. The soluble fibre can create a feeling of fullness, thus reducing hunger and decreasing cravings. It can also lower total blood cholesterol, and the “bad” cholesterol levels, while raising the “good” cholesterol levels. This will help to reduce the risk of heart disease and strokes. Fibre also help to reduce blood pressure, especially when eaten every day.

Flax has a mild nutty flavour, which is often unnoticeable when added to other foods. There are many ways you can incorporate flaxseed into your diet. You can add a tablespoon of flaxseed into your hot or cold breakfast cereal, into oatmeal. It can be added to dressings, dips, or vegan mayonnaise. It can even be added into soups and sauces. Make it part of a smoothie or a protein shake. You can mix ground flaxseed into yogurt. Flax can be added to baked goods, it can also be used as a flour substitute, using up to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of flax seed instead of flour. Flax can be used instead of eggs in a recipe. Mix 1 tablespoon of flax with 3 tablespoons of water.



Allow it to sit until it forms a gel. This is a great way to make vegan-based baked goods. Because flaxseed is high in fibre, it should be consumed with plenty of water or other fluids.

Flax is also available as an oil, found either in liquid or capsule form. It comes from the seed of the flax plant. The oil is made by cold pressing ripened and dried fresh flax seeds. This process releases the oil. Cold pressing to obtain oil from a plant is a healthy method because it retains all the lignans that would be damaged if the process to remove the oil uses heat. It contains all the healthy Omega-3 fatty acids as the seeds do, but it does not contain the healthy fibre contained in ground flaxseeds. It just contains 100% fat, but a very healthy unsaturated fat which is heart protective. Flax oil has a very short shelf life, so be mindful of the “best buy” date, store it in a cool, dark place. It should be stored in the fridge. The oil can be used in salads as a dressing, or it can be used as a sauce or a dip, add it to shakes, smoothies and yogurts. Flaxseed oil should not be used in cooking as it burns at low temperatures; the Omega-3 breaks down and harmful free radicals are formed. Flaxseed oil is available in capsule form for those who do not want to eat flaxseeds. Make sure that the capsules are vegan as many flaxseed capsules contain gelatin.

A 2018 study found a link between flaxseed oil and its ability to reduce the kind of stress in the body that produces inflammation. It specifically reduced inflammatory cytokines, messages that your immune system sends out that encourage inflammation. Cytokines are a necessary part of the immune system, but they can also contribute to chronic inflammation. Excess cytokines are stored in fat tissue; therefore, people who are obese suffer the impact of excess inflammation in the body which leads to certain diseases such as heart disease, arthritis, and kidney disease.

Diverticula are small, bulging pouches that can develop in the lining of your digestive system, most commonly in the large intestine. They are common, especially over the age of 40. Many people have these pouches in their intestines, often just because of aging, however they can also result from lifestyle related issues. When these pouches occur the condition is called diverticulosis. They generally do not cause a problem. At times these pouches can become inflamed or even infected, leading to diverticulitis, with symptoms such as severe abdominal pain, fever, nausea, and a change in bowel

movements. Diverticulitis can occur with a high-fat, low fibre diet. Many people have the belief that diverticulitis is caused by small foods such as seeds getting trapped in the diverticula, but this is not true. In fact, foods such as flaxseeds are high in fibre and would prevent flare-ups of diverticulitis.

Flax may not be good for people with certain medical conditions. Remember that flaxseeds are high in potassium and so people with kidney disease need to be careful about the amount of potassium they consume since kidney disease can elevate potassium in the body to dangerous levels. Although the phytoestrogen content of flax can help prevent breast and ovarian cancers, if you are being treated for either of these cancers and the cause is hormone-related, flaxseed should be avoided. The large Omega-3 content may reduce blood clotting and thin the blood. People who are taking blood thinners already because of heart disease or a previous stroke should consult their doctor before adding large amounts of flax to their diet. Flax helps in lowering blood pressure. If you are on blood pressure medication, taking flaxseed might decrease your blood pressure too much. Certain substances contained in flaxseeds may impair thyroid function in individuals who already have thyroid problems; high amounts of flaxseeds should be avoided.

To obtain the health benefits of flaxseed, aim for eating 2 tablespoons of seeds per day. As is with any high-fiber food that you introduce into your diet, eating large amounts can make you feel bloated and can cause diarrhea. When starting to use flaxseed start with a teaspoon a day and then increase it over a number of days. Using various sources of Omega-3 will also increase the variety of nutrients in your diet; this will ensure that you are not depriving yourself of certain nutrients.

As well as consuming flaxseeds, they can be also used topically. Flax poultices are valuable for topical wound care, infections, and respiratory illnesses. They are also used in hospitals to ease the discomfort and abdominal cramping women experience who have just given birth. Flax is known as the herb which “draws out”. It drains wounds, draws out infections while killing pain, soothes inflammations and heals tissues. A flax poultice can even draw splinters from the skin and absorb poisons from bites and stings. It can be applied to the chest during a respiratory illness and will draw out congestion from the lungs and encourage coughing to rid the lungs of mucus. The poultice can also help people with asthma and bronchitis. It also has the ability to reduce coughs, moisturizing the throat and lung passages. Flax

poultices can be used for burns, ulcerated wounds, insect bites, boils, and skin infections. Sister White tells the story of an 18-month-old child who had a painful swelling on his knee, possibly from an insect bite. She advised that a poultice of charcoal and flaxseed be applied to the knee; the poultice provided instant relief.

To make a flax poultice, slowly add water to ground flaxseed until it becomes a paste. The ratio of flax to water should be 1 part flax to 3 parts water. When using a poultice for chest infections, the poultice should be hot. For burns and other skin irritations, cool water is best. Apply the poultice by spreading the paste over the affected area. Cover it first with a layer of plastic and then wrap in a clean cloth. Leave the poultice on for about 3 hours and reapply as needed.

The lignans contained in flaxseeds are beneficial for skin health. They assist in the prevention of fine lines and wrinkles on the face by reducing irritation and inflammation. The Omega-3 fatty acids also prevent skin from drying, keeping it moisturised and smooth, keeping the skin tight and less sagging with age, making the skin more radiant. The fibre contained in flaxseed helps speed up the skin's healing process.

Because flaxseeds are phytoestrogens, they help in reducing acne breakouts. Acne is also triggered by the secretion of excess oils on the face from the sebaceous glands, whose purpose is to keep the skin moist. The production of sebum (oil) from the sebaceous gland is regulated by flaxseeds, thus also preventing acne. Creating a flaxseed face mask is the best home remedy in reducing oil secretion and also adding a healthy glow to your face. It also helps to combat irritation, inflammation, rashes, and redness, as well as assisting skin cells to heal faster. Flax also helps to exfoliate the skin, removing dead skin, impurities, and blackheads. Mix flax seed powder with water to form a gel. Apply the gel on the face, leaving it to dry for at least 15 minutes. Once it dries, wash it off with water and pat dry. The skin on your face should feel tight and firm afterwards. It also



works well as an exfoliator to remove dead skin from the face.

The antioxidants in flaxseed are also good for hair by reducing free radicals and strengthening the roots which reduces hair loss. When skin is dry, the scalp can develop eczema and dandruff. The oils in flaxseed keeps the moisture in the scalp and the roots of the hair intact, preventing dandruff and dry hair. You can also make a flaxseed hair mask. Mix flaxseeds with warm coconut oil and apply the mixture on your hair starting from the root to the tip. Also, use the oil on your scalp. Leave the oil in for at least 30 minutes before washing it off. The coconut oil and flaxseeds mixture are perfect keeping moisture in your hair and preventing hair loss.

You can also make a flaxseed hair gel. Mix flaxseeds with water and boil it for a few minutes. Keep stirring till the water develops a gel-like consistency. Then use a sieve to separate the gel from the seeds. Apply the gel on the hair regularly for healthy hair. The gel will not dry off and retains moisture in the hair.

Flaxseeds can contribute to healthy teeth. They have a good amount of calcium, magnesium, zinc and other minerals which are essential for healthy teeth. If you chew whole flaxseed, the granular particles are good for removing plaque and other germs.

Flax is one of the foods that is known as “superfoods” because of the variety of nutrients it contains and the many health benefits derived from it. Use flax as a part of your diet to increase the intake of important nutrients, and to ward off many of the chronic diseases that plague mankind through poor lifestyle choices.

Flax provides us with a powerful message that Christ brought to the Jewish people. “To help Christ the very presence of trouble was a call for help. The poor, the sick, the desolate, the outcasts, the discouraged, the desponding, found in Him a compassionate Saviour, a Might Healer. ‘A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till He send forth judgment into victory.’ Christ identifies His interests with those of suffering humanity, and He tells us that whatever we do to relieve a sufferer, we do for Him.” – *Medical Ministry*, p. 121. Jesus wanted to uplift the suffering ones, and He would not do anything to worsen their suffering, but instead provided them the peace and assurance that only a life hid with Him could find.

NEXT MONTH: CONTINUATION OF SEEDS SERIES



Little Wolf's Gifts



Little Wolf was a young Indigenous boy who lived in a small village in the Canadian prairies over 200 years ago. His father was the chief of the village and he had loved Little Wolf very much and was preparing him to become chief one day. They did not know about the God in heaven, but believed in spirits. There were the spirits in the trees, in the sun, in the wind. All these spirits could bring blessings, if treated well. The Indigenous people also had statues of spirits that they brought offerings to that would make the spirits happy and bring blessings to the village. When things went wrong, it was believed that the spirits were angry and needed more offerings. Little Wolf was a happy child. He and his younger sister often played together along with the other village children when their chores were completed.

One day things changed. There was war between their village and the neighboring village. Their crops had grown so well that year and the neighbours had begun to steal from their crops. It was a terrible war and in that war, Little Wolf's father died. This was a terrible calamity for the family.

The sad part was that the villagers did not help Little Wolf and his family. Instead they blamed them for their losses and stated they had not been generous enough with their offerings to the spirits. Little Wolf's mother believed them, and began to give more and more offerings to the spirits. Daily life became difficult. Eventually the fortunes in the village improved, but not before Little Wolf and his family had given most of their food and their material goods to the spirits. They moved out of their nice little home to the edge of village into a very small little hut. Little Wolf was still young, so his uncle decided to take over as chief. He claimed that Little Wolf had no rights because it was his father and family who had brought the disaster to the village.

Little Wolf and his sister were very lonely. For a few years, none of the other children wanted to play with them. They scarcely had enough food to eat. They and their mother had to work long and hard every day to feed themselves. Little Wolf learned to hunt on his own at the age of ten to help

provide for his mother and sister. Life was a challenge for many years, and Little Wolf still did not understand why the spirits were so angry with them after they had given everything that they owned to the spirits. Why were the villagers so unkind and even their own family members? Had they not suffered enough?

By the time Little Wolf was 14, things improved a little. They still had very little and had to work hard, but he began to make a few friends who were sympathetic and were satisfied that their suffering had appeased the spirits. Life in the village had been peaceful and prosperous for a few years, so they felt that there was no harm in befriending Little Wolf and his family once more. Little Wolf still had many doubts and fears in his mind about the spirits. He had suffered so much and did not want to do things wrong to make the spirits angry again. Although he harboured much hatred in his heart for the sufferings he had experienced, he tried to act good so that the spirits would smile on him.

Before his 15th birthday some strange men came to visit their village. They had white skin like he had never seen before.

Little Wolf silently stalked up to the camp fire that night. Not a single twig snapped as he cowered on the ground hiding behind some trees. His curiosity led him there, but he did not want to be seen and heard.

There were some Indigenous women who were kneeling down beside the fire, a couple of old men, and . . . Little Wolf could not believe his eyes: Strong Bear and even Chief Wild Buffalo were there! The white men had come from a country, which was far away on the other side of the water, to talk to the Indigenous people from the book of God. They sometimes used words from a language which only Strong Bear and his brother Black Horse understood. They had both visited the white skinned people's towns. However the men mainly spoke in their tribal language. Little Wolf had heard about these white skinned people but had never seen them.

Little Wolf heard every word in his hideout: "The great

God made humans. God loves us but we humans do not always listen to God, we often do things which are bad: Lies, stealing, bad thoughts—God calls those things “sins”. These sins separate us from God, because He does not want to see the sins. Like the valley between two mountains, the badness separates us from God.”

Little Wolf felt warmed by the thought of a God who is love. The spirits had been so harsh and demanding. He understood the meaning of sins. He had also lied before and annoyed his sister. Can he really not become close to this God of love because of this? “There must be some possibility!” ponders Little Wolf, as he crept back.

On the next evening even more Indigenous people were by the camp fire than yesterday. Little Wolf hesitated a little. None of his friends were there. They would probably laugh at him. Suddenly Little Wolf felt a hand on his shoulder. “Come and listen to the white man,” said Strong Bear. “Then you don’t need to hide behind the tree.” Somebody had seen him yesterday!

This day the white men spoke about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. “God sent His Son to earth. He lived amongst the people almost 2000 years ago. The Lord Jesus never sinned, quite the opposite; He healed lots of sick people and even raised people from the dead. However the people did not want Him. They hated Him so much that they killed Him in the end. He died on the cross as the innocent one and died for all human’s sins.” The missionary took a little break and then he continued: “The great God in heaven can therefore forgive all of the bad things in our lives, if we tell Him, because the Lord Jesus paid the price for our sins. It is as if He is now a bridge over the deep valley of sins.”

“Then there is a way to God,” thought Little Wolf relieved, “but simply talking to God? I am going to bring God a gift, because He sacrificed His son Jesus. That will surely impress Him more than if I simply tell Him all about my sins.” After all, the spirits he had believed in were always wanting gifts in exchange for blessings. That night he fell asleep with these thoughts in mind.

Early in the morning Little Wolf woke up before dawn. He ate his breakfast quickly and then took his tomahawk, the little hatchet with the sharp, shiny blade and a painted wooden handle. With determination he walked up to the white man’s tent. “I ... I heard what you told us at the camp fire,” said Little Wolf sluggishly, and then he blurted out: “I would like to get to God too. I want to tell Him that I love Him because He let His son Jesus die for my sins. For this reason, I would like to give God my tomahawk!”

The missionary shook his head: “The tomahawk is not enough, Little Wolf,” he said, “God wants more from you!” The Indigenous boy crept away sadly before the missionary could explain. God does not want his tomahawk. He wants more? Is He like all the other spirits he has grown up to

believe? Maybe. He went home and collected an embroidery bag from the tent wall and ran back with big steps. “White man,” he gasped, “here is the bow and arrow from my father who gave me it before he died. I would like to give this to God!” The missionary shook his head once again: “It still is not enough. God wants even more from you!”

That night, Little Wolf’s sleep was troubled. He thought long and hard. In the morning he came up with a brilliant idea and crept out of the tent before breakfast. He took a lasso and led his beloved pony, Flying Wind. He loved this pony very much. What he wanted to do now is very, very difficult. However, God had sacrificed His Son, so should not he give God his pony?

“I would like to give God my pony.” Little Wolf’s voice shook a little as he stood in front of the missionary. “Is that still too little?” The missionary nods. “It still isn’t enough!” – “But I haven’t got anything else,” replied Little Wolf, unable to hide his tears. “How can I show God that I love Him?”

“God does not want any of your gifts. God wants you yourself, Little Wolf,” answered the missionary. “Everything that you brought is very valuable, but they cannot pay for your sins. The Lord Jesus wants your heart. He wants you yourself! He wants you to confess your sins, and ask Him to come into your life. This is the way to show Him that you love Him!” “Can I simply speak to God?” asked Little Wolf doubtfully. “Yes, quite simply,” nodded the missionary. Then Little Wolf prayed for the first time in his life. “Lord Jesus, you see lots of bad things which I have already done. I am very sorry for this, please forgive me. Come into my heart and help me to live just like You want me to. Thank you for dying for me.”

“Your friends might not understand you when you tell them that you want to follow the Lord Jesus.” The white man looked at Little Wolf kindly, “but the Lord Jesus will help you to do what He would like. You can ask Him every day.” The Indigenous boy’s dark eyes lighted up joyfully as he said goodbye to the man who had showed him Jesus. Then he galloped away on Flying Wind and he is rid of his guilty sins—everything is forgiven. He was happier now than he had ever been in his life. He never worshipped or was afraid of the spirits that he had grown up to sacrifice to. He was true to his word and faithfully worshipped the God of heaven.

In the Bible, Samuel told King Saul, “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice.” 1 Samuel 15:22. Our sins will always stand between us and God. However God does not want us to be separated from Him. While God appreciates all your gifts, the best gift you can give Him is for you to give up your sins and give Him your heart. “My son, give Me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe My ways.” Proverbs 23:26. Will you give Him your heart today?

Panama



Baptism in Togo

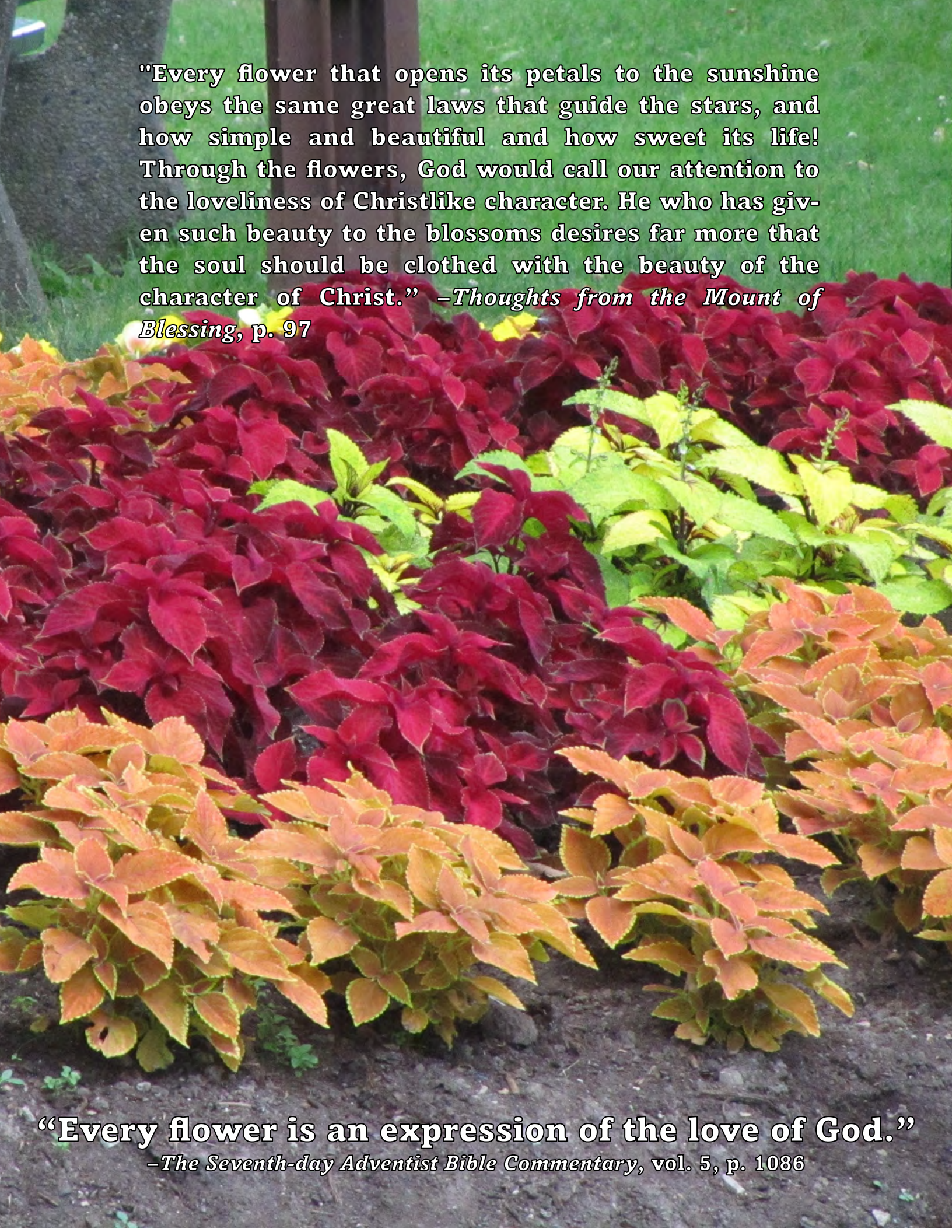


Swaziland



Missionary Work in Bolivia





"Every flower that opens its petals to the sunshine obeys the same great laws that guide the stars, and how simple and beautiful and how sweet its life! Through the flowers, God would call our attention to the loveliness of Christlike character. He who has given such beauty to the blossoms desires far more that the soul should be clothed with the beauty of the character of Christ." -Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 97

"Every flower is an expression of the love of God."
-The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 5, p. 1086