



The Reformation
Messenger
VOLUME 29, NUMBER 12, DECEMBER 2022

Watch
Page 4

Get it Today
Page 8

Dan
Page 16

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 Christ Our Helper

4 Watch

8 Get it Today

13 Naomi's Sorrow

16 Dan

20 Health Matters: Stress!

25 Children's Corner:

Dishonesty Does Not Pay

PHOTO CREDITS

Front Cover: Helen Marttinen, Canada

Inside front Cover, Page 3: Wendy Eaton, Sea of Galilee, Israel

Back Cover: Wendy Eaton, Capernaum, Israel

The Reformation Messenger is published monthly. It is an Official Publication of the International Missionary Society the Seventh-Day Adventist Church Reform Movement, Canadian Field. Subscriptions can be paid online on the website or by mail.

- Telephone: 905-876-2518
- E-mail: ismessenger@yahoo.com
- Internet: www.ismessenger.org
- Mail: RR #3, 7899 15 Side Road, Milton, ON L9T 2X7, Canada

COST:

Black & White x \$27.00 per year. Colour x \$47.00 per year.
(Add \$10.00 North America and \$20.00 overseas shipping & handling)

Purchase all 28 years of the Messenger for \$200.00 (shipping included in price). Bound in books by year.

Catalogue is available upon request for all articles for 28 years.



Christ Our Helper

“The only begotten Son of God came to this world to redeem the fallen race. He has given us evidence of His great power. He will enable those who receive Him to build up characters free from all the tendencies that Satan reveals. We can resist the enemy and all his forces. The battle will be won, the victory gained, by him who chooses Christ as his leader, determined to do right because it is right.

“Our divine Lord is equal to any emergency. With Him nothing is impossible. He has shown His great love for us by living a life of self-denial and sacrifice, and by dying a death of agony. Come to Christ just as you are, weak, helpless, and ready to die. Cast yourself wholly on His mercy. There is no difficulty within or without that can not be surmounted in His strength. Some have stormy tempers; but He who calmed the stormy Sea of Galilee will say to the troubled heart, ‘Peace, be still.’ There is no nature so rebellious that Christ can not subdue it, no temper so stormy that He can not quell it, if the heart is surrendered to His keeping.

“He who commits his soul to Jesus need not despond. We have an all-powerful Saviour. Looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith, you can say, ‘God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.’

“Do not think that the Christian life is free from temptation. Temptations will come to every Christian. Both the Christian and the one who does not accept Christ as his leader will have trials. The difference is that the latter is serving a tyrant, doing his mean drudgery, while the Christian is serving the One who died to give him eternal

life. Do not look upon trial as something strange, but as the means by which we are to be purified and strengthened. ‘Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations,’ James admonishes, ‘knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.’

“In the future life we shall understand things that here greatly perplex us. We shall realize how strong a helper we had, and how angels of God were commissioned to guard us as we followed the counsel of the Word of God.

“To all who receive Him, Christ will give power to become the sons of God. He is a present help in every time of need. Let us be ashamed of our wavering faith. Those who are overcome have only themselves to blame for their failure to

resist the enemy. All who choose can come to Christ and find the help they need.

“There stands among you the mighty Counselor of the ages, inviting you to place your confidence in Him. Shall we turn away from Him to uncertain human beings, who are as wholly dependent on God as we ourselves are? Have we fallen so far below our privileges? Have we not been guilty of expecting so little that we have not asked for what God is longing to give?

“I will mention the loving-kindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which He hath bestowed on them according to His mercies, and according to the multitude of His loving-kindnesses. For He said, Surely they are My people, children that will not lie: so He was their Saviour. In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old.’

“Let us have more confidence in our Redeemer. Turn not from the waters of Lebanon to seek refreshment at broken cisterns, which can hold no water. Have faith in God. Trustful dependence on Jesus makes victory not only possible, but certain. Though multitudes are pressing on in the wrong way, though the outlook be ever so discouraging, yet we may have full assurance in our Leader; for ‘I am God,’ He declares, ‘and there is none else.’ He is infinite in power, and able to save all who come to Him. There is no other in whom we can safely trust.” —*The Review and Herald*, June 9, 1910

Ellen G. White



Watch

tim to Satan, and lost his life here and his eternal life. Judas did not watch, and lost all for his carelessness. Peter did not watch and he there-

fore denied the Lord three times.

Have you sometimes crossed a street and someone yells, "Watch out!?" There is a car coming, and if you do not jump out of the way, you can get killed or at least hurt. Or on a construction site, someone yells, "Watch out, a piece of lumber is falling from the top?"

Normally we are watching traffic, we look both directions before we cross a busy street. When we do a business deal we watch that we do not get cheated. If you mountain climb you watch carefully where you set your feet so that you do not fall down. Our whole life we are constantly watching for danger, and yet accidents do happen, people get hurt and killed, property damage happens.

If we are careful and keep our eyes open, we can prevent many mishaps. But for invisible dangers, how can we watch for them? A ship hits a hidden rock and this is the most dangerous. Sometimes we do not see a poison in our food. In religion we are surrounded by a thousand dangers.

On the highways nobody will purposely try to hit you with their cars. But, in religion, Christians have to watch someone who is purposely trying to hurt or kill them if he only has a chance. If a real lion is near you, you would watch that it would not kill you; but, an invisible lion is more dangerous, and that is Satan; we do not see him.

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Peter 5:8. And in every careless moment, he will attack you.

God had told Adam and Eve to watch for Satan, to be careful about him, but in a careless moment, they both fell victim to him.

Balaam did not watch well enough and he also fell a vic-

There are thousands of examples we could find where a Christian, by carelessness, lost his faith. The Seventh-day Adventists did not watch in the time of the war and therefore the church joined with the governments in fighting in the war, and disfellowshipped faithful members from the church. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Matthew 26:41. We have good intentions to be faithful, to obey God, but the flesh is weak.

To illustrate the need of watching and being vigilant, Jesus spoke six parables.

First parable: "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning. Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say to all, Watch." Mark 13:33-37

Jesus spoke of the nighttime when people normally sleep, and told His followers to watch through the night, lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping.

Second parable: "But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an your as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Matthew 24:43-44. The Master of the house is to watch that the thief may not come in, in the night, and steal.

Third parable: "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler of his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, my lord delayeth his coming: And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matthew 24:45-51

Fourth parable: The ten virgins. "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in



with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." Matthew 25:1-13. They all waited for the Lord to come, but some were careless and did not watch for themselves.

Fifth parable: Talents. "For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had

received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliverdst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents." Matthew 25:14-28. The man with one talent neglected to use his talent, and was cast into outer darkness.

Think if one of us had a talent, that is, some ability, and we would not use it right to the honour of God, what will happen to us then?

Sixth parable: "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. Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, yet cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in: naked, and ye clothed Me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me not. Then shall they also answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee? Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me." Matthew 25:40-45. Something we neglected to do for the least of the brethren, was not done to Christ.

Do we learn from these six parables, how important it is for us to be sober and vigilant, to keep our eyes open and watch for the enemy, not once in a while but constantly, every moment?

The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. “Peter answered and said unto Him, Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice. Peter said unto Him, Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.” Matthew 26:33–35

Can we say the same as Peter, though we should die, we will not be offended? You can call us by bad names, you can insult us, take our property away, you can even kill us, but we will not be offended. Yet, how often our weak flesh makes us feel hurt and offended and become even revengeful and bitter.

Satan tries to divide our church. We must watch to preserve unity and love in the church. Division can begin with something small. Maybe you do not like one member in the church. You might not hate him, but you do not love him either. You do not want to speak to him nor invite him to your house or visit him. This is just a little beginning, later you put him down when talking to others. It may begin with just a feeling in your heart. But the end result is that the church can be divided. Satan has gained the victory, because we did not watch the little beginnings of bitterness, just a little root of bitterness.

Unity and love among the church members is so important that we cannot take chances in this regard. If you think that someone does not like you, do not take it lightly. Do not ignore this little danger signal. Look for him purposely, go to him, talk to him, invite him to your home, and do not give up until he is your friend again. Then you answer the prayer of Jesus, that they may be one as Jesus and His Father are one.

Sister White had a vision. An angel called three times: “Draw together, draw together, draw together.” Unity is strength.

Many things we leave until later—not today, sometimes later we will do it. Watch your time, not one minute is to be wasted. Watch for opportunities to do good, to help someone, to be kind to someone. Watch for your feelings, your mind, if a little anger, a little careless attitude comes in, it is Satan now tempting you. If Bible reading is neglected, you are in great danger. If you would rather stay home than go to church, Satan has hypnotized you. Watch for a missionary spirit, that it is now needed more than ever before.

Last night I had a dream. There was a meeting for lost sons and daughters. I spoke to them about the love of God. About 20 young people were present. I said to the children and young people, Watch that you do not slowly separate away from the truth, from the church, from God. It is called backsliding—drifting away little by little and finally losing your faith. When we resist the Holy Spirit and refuse to obey, and say, “not yet, not yet. I am not ready to make a full surrender yet.” If you do not turn around, one day religion becomes foolishness to you. You do not believe the Bible anymore, and the Holy Spirit does not speak to you anymore.

In *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pages 200–215, the whole chapter speaks of watching. Christ is an example to us. Jesus fasted 40 days in the wilderness for a good reason, to deny Himself, to put this human flesh into obedience to the spirit and mind. But our tables are frequently spread with luxuries, neither healthful nor necessary, only to gratify the appetite, because we love these things more than we love self-denial. Jesus laboured earnestly to do good to others—to help them, to save them. How often do we neglect missionary work and care for ourselves and our families only?

Jesus prayed constantly, often through the whole night. Our prayers are often short and few, and only occasionally. Jesus submitted to the will of God, His Father. In the end of His prayer He said, “Not My will but Thy will be done.” How often do we forget to ask God that His will be done in our lives, but insist that our will only be done?

“Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him: but I will maintain mine own ways before Him.” Job 13:15. If it is God’s will that I die a martyr’s death, I will still trust Him and obey Him.

Keep your eyes on Jesus, all the time. If you turn them away, even for a moment, you will fall. Satan is determined to keep you out of heaven. When we understand the magnitude of Christ’s sacrifice, Him dying in man’s stead, then pride and self-esteem cannot flourish in the heart that keeps fresh the memory of the scenes of Calvary. There Christ has shown that His love to us was stronger than death.

When we become involved in worldly enterprises, and we are interested in the exciting amusements, we become cold-hearted, like frozen, to the cause of God and to the lost suffering humanity.

Why was the death of Christ so different from the death

of the martyrs who also were tortured and put to death? The bodily pain was but a small part of the agony of Jesus. The sins of the world were upon Him, also the sense of His Father's wrath, as He suffered the penalty of the law transgressed. It was these that crushed His divine soul.

"Legions of evil angels were all about the Son of God, yet the holy angels were bidden not to break their ranks and engage in conflict with the taunting, reviling foe. Heavenly angels were not permitted to minister unto the anguished spirit of the Son of God. It was in this terrible hour of darkness, the face of His Father hidden, legions of evil angels enshrouding Him, the sins of the world were upon Him, that the words were wrenched from His lips: 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?'" –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 214

When we contemplate these scenes at Calvary, and understand the cost of redemption, the price that He paid for us, can we then remain indifferent and careless? Can we still turn to the world, enjoy the pleasures of sin, even for a moment?

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Luke 21:36

Are we worthy to escape the punishment of the wicked? Are we worthy to stand before the Son of man? If our sacrifice for Him is less than His sacrifice was for us, are we worthy to stand before Him, or would we be ashamed like Adam and Eve, and try to hide ourselves from His presence?

"Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they

see his shame." Revelation 16:15

Are our garments of righteousness clean, without spot or wrinkle? Are we reflecting the image of Jesus fully?

How many will wake up suddenly and realize that their lamps have gone out? The oil is gone, the Holy Spirit has been grieved and has finally left the soul, never to return. An empty formal religion is all that is left. And it is just because we did not watch and pray in this solemn time of preparation and waiting.

When the enemy comes to you with temptations, to gratify appetite, or to gratify your eyes with worldly amusements, or your ears, to waste time in vanity, then quickly turn your eyes to Calvary, to the suffering Saviour and pray earnestly for help. God has promised to send rather every angel from heaven to your help than let you perish and fall into sin.

One hour without watching and praying, and you will fall into sin. Let there not be one hour without prayer. Watch every moment for the enemy. He may come as a friend to you. He may offer something that you would enjoy very much. Do not take the counsel of Jesus lightly. Watch and pray or all will be lost. Amen.

Timo Martin

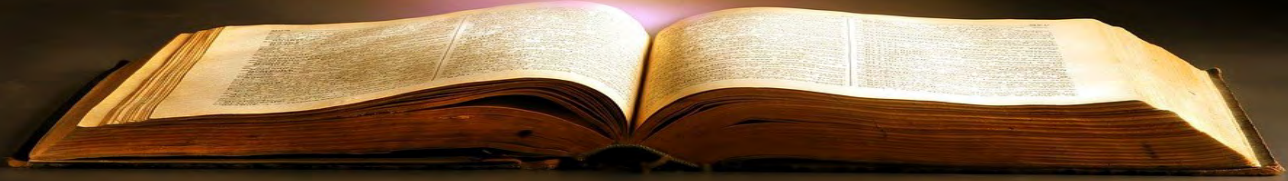


DO YOU WANT TO BE A BLESSING FOR YOUR FELLOW BELIEVERS AROUND THE WORLD?

Please feel free to submit any articles, poems, personal testimonies, or photos, as the Holy Spirit inspires you and we will gladly publish them.

Send to: ismessenger@yahoo.com

Get It Today



Get it today, not tomorrow. It is possible in this life that we may need something but lack the means to get it today. I repeat though, “get it today,” but what are we to get? And why today, not tomorrow? “To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.” Hebrews 4:7. Because “there is a day that God hath appointed for the close of this world’s history. . . . The day is at hand when the destiny of every soul will be fixed forever. . . . Great pains should be taken to keep this subject before the people. The solemn fact is to be kept not only before the people of the world, but before our own churches also, that the day of the Lord will come suddenly, unexpectedly.” – *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 335–336 (1895). “We are nearing the great day of God. The signs are fulfilling.” – *Last Day Events*, p. 33. God gives us only one day of life at a time. We are not promised tomorrow. (See Proverbs 27:1, 23, 24). Today is the day to do our best and endeavour to follow the will of God. There will be no opportunity in the grave to which we are all going, but know not when.

Are you wise, yes or no? Or just sometimes? If somebody comes, observes your words and actions and tells you, “my dear you are not wise,” how would you feel? What is the opposite of wisdom? It is, foolishness, stupidity, etc. Wisdom is needed by everyone.

“But, where can wisdom be found?” Learning is intended to make us wise. Education is said to be absolutely necessary for success in today’s world. But we can become so absorbed in striving for temporal success that we lose sight of the purpose of true education. Sometimes we fail to reach the most important goals. Education is deemed necessary for academic success with financial security as the ultimate goal.

Our world tends to extol the virtues of knowledge. Those whose minds are capable of storing a multitude of facts are thought to be especially intelligent. Notice, however,

that Solomon presents the essence of true education. Knowledge without wisdom ultimately is not worth much. The wise person knows how to interpret and apply available knowledge. Knowledge has value when it is wisely used for the uplifting of humanity.

WISDOM

“The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility.” Proverbs 15:33. Wisdom is needed by every one of us. When meditating on wisdom, Job asked: “But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding?” Job 28:12, 20

Showing its value, he states: “Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living. The depth saith, It is not in me: and the sea saith, It is not with me. It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. The gold and the crystal cannot equal it: and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold. No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls: for the price of wisdom is above rubies. The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold. Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air.” Job 28:13–19, 21

In the following verses Job reveals the source of wisdom: “God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof. For He looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven. And unto man He said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.” Job 28: 23–24, 28

What Job is saying is that man is able to find treasures that are hidden, but wisdom is beyond his grasp. Job compares wisdom to material possessions. But, there is

no precious metal or stone that can be compared to the value of wisdom. Wisdom belongs to God. For man, the only way to wisdom is through God. God grants wisdom according to a person's efforts to seek after Him.

Job explains clearly that wisdom cannot be compared to earthly possessions. For example, one cannot add cars to animals as if they belong to the same category (15 cars + 5 cats = 20 what? It makes no sense). Money constitutes material possession, wisdom is a spiritual entity. The two categories cannot be bridged. There is, however, a bridge between wisdom and fellowship with God. Blessed is the person who understands that wisdom is linked to fellowship with the Creator and not to the earthly goods he possesses. This is why Solomon asked for wisdom more than earthly riches.

"Give me now wisdom and knowledge that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this Thy people, that is so great? And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge My people, over whom I have made thee king: Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like." 2 Chronicles 1:10-12

Solomon knew that wisdom is above everything. He prayed for it, and his prayer was answered. "Solomon, in his youth, made David's choice his own. Pure and noble in character, he was named Jedidiah, the beloved of the Lord. . . . The Lord imparted to Solomon the wisdom that he desired above earthly riches, honor, or long life. His petition for a quick mind, a large heart, and a tender spirit, was granted. He became the wisest of earthly monarchs, because God gave him superior wisdom and an understanding heart." *-The Review and Herald, October 19, 1905*

It is sad to note that much of what the world esteems as wisdom is, in reality, worthless. "Worldly wisdom is foolishness with God. Those who rely upon it will surely err." *-The Desire of Ages, p. 354*

Moses knew that God is the only source of true wisdom. Before his death, he encouraged the congregation of Israel, with these words, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. *Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these stat-*

utes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." Deuteronomy 4:2, 6. In his prayer in Psalm 90:12, Moses says "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." Without wisdom, we are not able to number our days. There is no true wisdom apart from "the fear of the Lord" (Proverbs 1:7; 9:10). This is not referring to fear in the sense of being afraid. We fear God when we reverence and respect Him. (See Exodus 20:20). The ability to act wisely in every situation of life stems from a close connection with God by which the humble believer becomes a sharer of His holy character.

When the old life of sin has been put away, and Christ has been given control of mind, body, emotions, motives, and plans, the practices of the believer will be wise. (See Colossians 3:5-10). When the Lord has control of a mind through the power of His Spirit, that mind is a wise, and righteous mind.

Throughout history, people who feared the Lord were shown to have wisdom in their service. "And all the women that were wise hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen. And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun goats' hair." Exodus 35:25-26. "Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whom the LORD put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the LORD had commanded." Exodus 36:1

Since wisdom is the fear of the Lord and the keeping of His commandments, let us obtain it today. Once we have obtained it, we can sing with the psalmist as follows:

"Depart from me, ye evildoers: for I will keep the commandments of my God. I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget Thy commandments. Thou through Thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for Thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Thy precepts. I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep Thy word. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. I hate vain thoughts: but Thy law do I love. Order my steps in Thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me. Give me understanding, and I shall keep Thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Teach me, O LORD, the way of Thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end. Remove from me the way of lying: and grant me Thy law graciously. I have chosen

the way of truth: Thy judgments have I laid before me. Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken Thou me in Thy way. I keep Thy law continually for ever and ever." Psalm 119:115, 176, 98-101, 105, 113, 133, 34, 33, 29, 30, 37, 44

"I am a stranger in the earth: hide not Thy commandments from me. Make me to understand the way of Thy precepts: so shall I talk of Thy wondrous works. I will run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou shalt



enlarge my heart. Make me to go in the path of Thy commandments; for therein do I delight. Incline my heart unto Thy testimonies, and not to covetousness. I will speak of Thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed. I will delight myself in Thy commandments, which I have loved. My hands also will I lift up unto Thy commandments, which I have

loved; and I will meditate in Thy statutes. At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto Thee because of Thy righteous judgments. I am a companion of all them that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy precepts. Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed Thy commandments. Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept Thy word. I will keep Thy precepts with my whole heart. It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes. The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver. They that fear Thee will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in Thy word. I hope in Thy word. Give me understanding, that I may know Thy testimonies. All Thy commandments are faithful: they persecute me wrongfully; help Thou me. Deliver me from the oppression of man: so will I keep Thy precepts." Psalm 119:19, 27, 32, 35, 36, 46-48, 62, 63, 66, 67, 69, 71, 72, 74, 81, 125, 86, 134

Get it today. "If you are right with God today, you are ready if Christ should come today." *-In Heavenly Places*, p. 227. Obtaining wisdom is possible today. Be firm in your decision to obtain wisdom. We must live "As If Each Day Might Be Our Last. We should watch and work and pray as though this were the last day that would be granted us. Our only safety is in doing our work for each day as it comes, working, watching, waiting, every moment relying on the strength of Him who was dead and who is alive again, who lives forevermore. Each morning consecrate yourselves and your children to God for that day. Make no calculation for months or years; these are

not yours. One brief day is given you. As if it were your last on earth, work during its hours for the Master. Lay all your plans before God, to be carried out or given up, as His providence shall indicate." *-Last Day Events*, p. 77

In every age people have sacrificed to obtain knowledge that was regarded as acceptable in their social situation. In some periods throughout history philosophical knowledge was of greatest value. Today, scientific knowledge is regarded by many as of greater value than either philosophical or religious knowledge. The kind of knowledge that God invites us to receive is an experience in holiness. To know by experience Christ's saving grace opens for us the gates of the New Jerusalem.

Knowledge and wisdom are not the same. Wisdom is knowing how to use knowledge correctly. Unless our knowledge connects us to the Source of all wisdom and righteousness, and unless through His power we are being restored to His image, with our sights fixed on eternity, all acquired knowledge falls short of being true wisdom, for they do not make us truly wise.

Paul wrote: "The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." 1 Corinthians 1:25. What is of greater value to you, an education that the world values or a personal union with Christ? If you are a parent, what are you more interested in your children having? Suppose they are confronted with a choice between achieving recognition in the world and obeying the commandments of God; how would you advise them? Are you seeking the kind of wisdom that comes from God, or that which the world values? How would you define the difference between these two kinds of wisdom?

Wisdom for home and family: Much wisdom is needed when dealing with your family members; spouse, parents, children or anyone who is related to you. "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." James 3:13-18

"Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is fool-

ishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain." 1 Corinthians 3:18-20

Wisdom in behaviour: "The children of God are called to be representatives of Christ, showing forth the goodness and mercy of the Lord. As Jesus has revealed to us the true character of the Father, so we are to reveal Christ to a world that does not know His tender, pitying love. . . . The apostle Paul says to the disciples of Jesus, 'Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ,' 'known and read of all men.' 2 Corinthians 3:3, 2. In every one of His children, Jesus sends a letter to the world. If you are Christ's follower, He sends in you a letter to the family, the village, the street, where you live. Jesus, dwelling in you, desires to speak to the hearts of those who are not acquainted with Him. Perhaps they do not read the Bible, or do not hear the voice that speaks to them in its pages; they do not see the love of God through His works. But if you are a true representative of Jesus, it may be that through you they will be led to understand something of His goodness and be won to love and serve Him." *Steps to Christ*, p. 115

Wisdom in seeking wisdom: How do I learn to depend on Christ to direct my steps? How can I come to the point of accepting His leading in my life? How will my life change when I cease living it in my own independent way, and allow God to recreate me into a true disciple bearing the image of His Son?

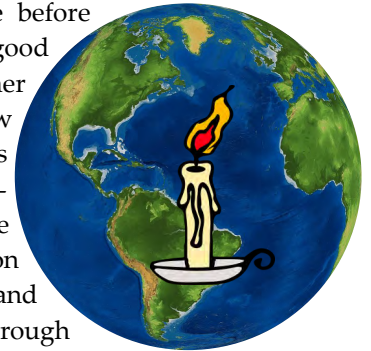
Wisdom for industry and work: Work hard but faithfully. Pray always. Submit yourself to your employer and obey. "The Christian in his business life is to represent to the world the manner in which our Lord would conduct business enterprises. In every transaction he is to make it manifest that God is his teacher.

"'Holiness unto the Lord' is to be written upon daybooks and ledgers, on deeds, receipts, and bills of exchange. Those who profess to be followers of Christ, and who deal in an unrighteous manner, are bearing false witness against the character of a holy, just, and merciful God.

"Every converted soul will, like Zacchaeus, signalize the entrance of Christ into his heart by an abandonment of the unrighteous practices that have marked his life. Like the chief publican, he will give proof of his sincerity by making restitution. The Lord says, 'If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; . . . none of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: . . . He shall surely live.' Ezekiel 33:15, 16." *The Desire of Ages*, p. 556

Wisdom among unbelievers: "In the work of soul-winning, great tact and wisdom are needed. The Saviour never suppressed the truth, but He uttered it always in love. In His intercourse with others, He exercised the greatest tact, and He was always kind and thoughtful. He was never rude, never needlessly spoke a severe word, never gave unnecessary pain to a sensitive soul. He did not censure human weakness. He fearlessly denounced hypocrisy, unbelief, and iniquity, but tears were in His voice as He uttered His scathing rebukes. He never made truth cruel, but ever manifested a deep tenderness for humanity. Every soul was precious in His sight. He bore Himself with divine dignity; yet He bowed with the tenderest compassion and regard to every member of the family of God. He saw in all, souls whom it was His mission to save." *Gospel Workers*, p. 117

Be Wise with your coworkers: "Ye are the light of the world. Let your light so shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matthew 5:14, 16. "Christians are set as light bearers on the way to heaven. They are to reflect to the world the light shining upon them from Christ. Their life and character should be such that through them others will get a right conception of Christ and of His service." *Steps to Christ*, p. 115



Wisdom from church members: Do I learn from the experience of others, or do I insist on trying everything myself?

Wisdom in your actions and reactions: "We must give others an example of not stopping at every trifling offense in order to vindicate our rights. We may expect that false reports will circulate about us; but if we follow a straight course, if we remain indifferent to these things, others will also be indifferent. Let us leave to God the care of our reputation. And thus, like sons and daughters of God, we shall show that we have self-control. We shall show that we are led by the Spirit of God, and that we are slow to anger. Slander can be lived down by our manner of living; it is not lived down by words of indignation." *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1161

Wisdom in maintaining unity among our brothers: We need to be peacemakers, and live peacefully with all men. "Let us cherish a spirit of confidence in the wisdom of our brethren. We must be willing to take advice and caution from our fellow laborers. . . . It is a mistake to

withdraw from those who do not agree with our ideas. This will not inspire our brethren with confidence in our judgment. It is our duty to counsel with our brethren, and to heed their advice. We are to seek their counsel, and when they give it, we are not to cast it away, as if they were our enemies. Unless we humble our hearts before God, we shall not know His will. Let us be determined to be in unity with our brethren. This duty God has placed upon us. We shall make their hearts glad by following their counsel, and make ourselves strong through the influence that this will give us. Moreover, if we feel that we do not need the counsel of our brethren, we close the door of our usefulness as counselors to them." *—Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 500

Wisdom for your speech: Do you need to improve your speech? Do it today. There is a saying that, "It is better to be silent and be thought a fool than to speak up and remove all doubt." We need always to be swift to hear, but slow to speak, slow to anger. The crucial question is "Does my heart instruct my mouth? Is the wisdom that God has made available evident in my speech?" Wisdom is needed to be victorious. We must be found without "guile" in our mouths.

Many Christians have overlooked the importance of speech in preparing the character for heaven. "Speech is one of the great gifts of God. It is the means by which the thoughts of the heart are communicated. It is with the tongue that we offer prayer and praise to God. With the tongue we convince and persuade. With the tongue we comfort and bless, soothing the bruised, wounded soul. With the tongue we may make known the wonders of the grace of God. With the tongue also we may utter perverse things, speaking words that sting like an adder." *—The Review and Herald*, May 12, 1910

Wisdom in thoughts: The Revised Standard Version translates Proverbs 14:15: "The simple believes everything, but the prudent looks where he is going." There is need of wisdom in planning for the future. To put aside savings to take care of future expenses is not contrary to God's will. Insofar as this is possible, it is the prudent thing to do. The counsel given to one person applies, in principle, to each of us: "Every week you should lay by in some secure place five or ten dollars not to be used up unless in case of sickness. With economy you may place something at interest. With wise management you can save something after paying your *debts*." *—Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 329

Wisdom in your relationships: "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." Proverbs 13:20. Since we are inevitably influenced by our friends, let us choose them wisely. As we

grow closer to God, we will also be drawn into closer unity with those who are likeminded. "You must not walk independently of all counsel. It is your duty to counsel with your brethren. This may touch your pride, but the humility of a mind taught by the Holy Spirit will listen to counsel, and will banish all self-confidence. When counsel is given that conflicts with your personal wishes, you are not to think that your own wisdom is sufficient for you to give counsel to others, or that you can afford to neglect the counsel given." *—Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 315

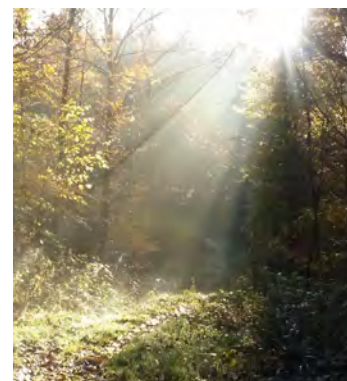
Wisdom in all: "We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day." 1 Corinthians 4:10–13

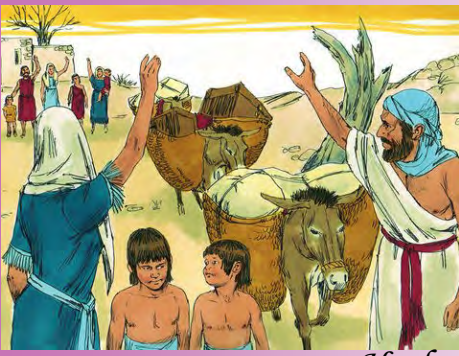
The wisdom that comes from God ensures the right use of knowledge and leads to eternal success.

"The fear of the Lord lies at the very foundation of all progress; it is the beginning of wisdom. . . . As you are bought with a price, even the precious blood of the Son of God, He requires that you make a right use of the privileges you enjoy. Your intellectual and moral faculties are God's gifts, talents intrusted to you for wise improvement. . . . It is for you to determine whether or not the weighty responsibilities that rest upon you shall be faithfully met, whether or not your efforts shall be well directed and your best." *—Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 85

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Ephesians 5:15–20. Let us end with this wonderful verse: "To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen." Romans 16:27. May the Lord help us to get wisdom to hear and benefit from their instruction.

Victor Shumbusho, DR Congo





Naomi's Sorrow

Based on the "Book of Ruth"



*How she moaned – how she groaned,
Her heart so ached – was sorely grieved as she perceived,
That life was just not dealing fair,
For dead was now her second son – leaving her without an heir!
Even though – life must go on...
Forward bent from sorrow, Naomi said, "Tomorrow
I will leave this land with nothing in my hand,
Full have I come – empty now return to home..."*

.....

*"From Bethlehem with husband Elimelech and two young sons I came,
Sojourning here in Moab to escape the deadly famine.
Then we settled, made ourselves a home,
Life looked secure for future years to come.
Each son did find a lovely mate
There was happiness, contentment, all was great.
Then – suddenly, my loving husband passed away
He was my comfort every day...
O, How I miss him still! Though years have gone, I will
Always feel the loss, for my great love and joy he was...
My oldest, Mahlon, bravely did provide for us, and all was well.
Then he was stricken by some strange disease,
Nothing helped, his death had robbed me of my peace.
Mahlon had no son, so to Chilion we held on,
Hoping he would beget a son.*

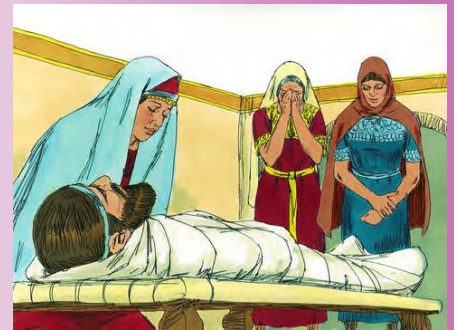
But alas, it was not long – then even precious Chilion – he was gone...

*So, we women worked to make ends meet,
Serving masters, to have food to eat.
Tears and pain filled our hearts and days,
Uncertainty loomed over us in all its ways.*

*My soul is sorely grieved,
I am bereaved, bereaved, bereaved!
"Oh God! Thine arrow hit me very hard,
It simply tears my heart apart!*

*I am crushed, the burden of my loss, weighs heavy on,
Wears me down, have no one left who is my own...*

*"Orpha, Ruth, my dear daughters I must leave,
This place of my misfortune here no more can face.*



*I heard in Judah there is bread again,
 God had blessed the land, gone has now the famine.
 You are dear to me, I will return from where I did come,
 So, I bid you also to go home,
 To your mother's house, God shall also bless you with a new, dear spouse."
 They all wept, yet Ruth and Orpha would not leave Naomi,
 But she urged them stay behind in their own homeland
 New happiness to find.*

*Then Orpha kissed her, weeping then did go.
 Ruth, she said, "Constrain me not to leave you,
 Please do hear me, you are my mother and I love you dearly.
 Where you are going, I will go,
 Where you will live, I will live,
 Thy people be my people,
 Thy God shall be my God. Where you die, I will die.
 I will be with you till death part you and me."*



*"O, Ruth, my daughter, how precious is your love in my distress,
 To stay with me in my great loneliness!
 We are both widows, together shall we bear our loss,
 So come with me, lets go, may God cause His grace
 And favour come upon you in great measure,
 And secure you are most blessed future!"
 Then with their few possessions on two donkeys on they went
 Marching toward Naomi's homeland.*

.....

*Passing through the river Arnon into Reuben northward,
 Up to crossing Jordan, westward into Benjamin
 Then south to Judea into Bethlehem.
 They journeyed what they could each day,
 Progressing more or less, depending on the way,
 Finding shelters for some rest and Inns to stay,
 Though Naomi's heart was filled with grief,
 Her mind did also find relief,
 Having Ruth's presence close beside with her devotion and compassion,
 Helping, caring in all the journey's wearisome occasions.
 God's grace, His protecting, mighty hand,
 Was daily over them in travelling through the land.
 After crossing Jordan and the last leg of travel now before them
 To Naomi's home in Bethlehem, her mind was getting anxious,
 Mixed feelings robbed her to be joyous –
 How could she face her friends and neighbours?
 What will they think, seeing she comes home without her family?*

*Alone – yet with a heathen stranger at her side,
it will indeed to all a quite peculiar sight!...*

*Then entering the little town, Naomi, she was not at ease –
Two women with two donkeys – who are these?*

The people looked, then one woman shouted: “It is Naomi!”

*At this some others quickly came, happily to greet her,
then was shrouded by a throng*

to welcome her, whom they were missing for so long.

They shout, “Naomi, Naomi!”

But she cried out in woesome tone: “Call me not Naomi!

Call me Mara, (bitter) for the LORD had dealt very bitterly with me!

Full I went out, but now returned alone...”

.....

At last Naomi stepped into her house again,

Past sweet memories did pierce her heart with pain,

Living here with her beloved, returning now as one berobbed,

Left alone – it was truly grievous, sad and bittersome.

But as she saw the gentle, caring love of Ruth,

Comforting her where she ever could,

Naomi’s mind looked upward, forward once again,

Trusting God will not be in vain.

Her heart was knit with that of Ruth, as this precious Moabite

Loved God’s truth, thus Naomi overcame her sadness and distress,

She so wished for Ruth to find true happiness.

What seemed that God dealt very hard,

In causing so much grief of heart,

Which then Naomi could not understand,

But the ways and thoughts of God are grand,

By choosing Ruth to meet her in a strange land,

Then bring this Moabite to her homeland.

By Providence then to unite her with Boaz, the wealthy kinsman,

Then Naomi’s woe was turned to greatest joy,

When she became nurse to the firstborn boy!

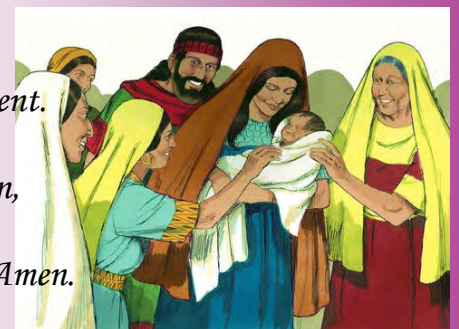
So that at the end Naomi’s soul was satisfied, content.

She also did then understand.

Her tears and sorrow for her loss, were not in vain,

For she will see her loved ones once again,

To live blissfully and happily – throughout eternity. Amen.



Edda Tedford, Canada



Dan

Although it was not according to God's will for Jacob to have so many wives, Rachel felt that the Lord had heard her bitter cries for a child and now has given her justice in answer to her prayer.

Upon his death bed, when Jacob was pronouncing the blessings to his sons, he made a two-fold pronouncement about Dan. "Dan

The previous month I wrote an article about the tribe of Ephraim and why they were not included in the 144,000 with the other tribes as mentioned in the book of Revelation chapter 7:4-8.

This month, I would like to research the tribe of Dan. Dan also has been eliminated in Revelation.

If the tribes mentioned are representative of the character traits and challenges that the true followers of God are to face and overcome in order to be included in the 144,000, it would be well for us to understand the reason why some would not be there. We want to make sure not to make the same mistakes and find ourselves unable to gain entrance into heaven.

Those specifically who are following the footsteps of the tribe of Dan, would do well to take heed.

Dan and Ephraim had the same opportunities and privileges as had the other tribes. They were raised by the same parents. They went through similar experiences in early life. They journeyed back to Canaan and lived in the same environment as shepherds in Canaan with their brothers, but their course in life was much different.

Regarding the history of Dan we read:

Firstly, Dan was the 5th son of Jacob. He was born to Rachel's handmaid, Bilhah. "And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a son. And Rachel said, God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son: therefore called she his name Dan." Genesis 30:5-6

shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward. I have waited for Thy salvation, O LORD." Genesis 49:16-18

The Danites were endowed with the keen discernment necessary to be good judges. Judging is a good thing if it is done in a godly manner. Rachel gave an appropriate name for her son to mean judgment.

From the beginning the name of Dan was used in connection with judgment. Samson was from the tribe of Dan and he ruled for 20 years (Judges 13:24-25).

The second part of Jacob's statement regarding Dan however tells of a very opposite character trait. He says that Dan will be like a serpent in the path that bites the heel of a horse from behind so that the rider falls off backwards. For those who have ridden horses, perhaps at one point in time, the horse got scared and spooked. What happened to the rider? Depending on how wildly the horse reacted through fear, the rider may have fallen off. This is an unexpected event. And so, also when an adder bites the heel of the horse.

This ended up being the true character of Dan. What a contrast between a judge and a serpent that is ready to attack a horse's heel.

We see a combination of the two in the experiences of Samson. While he was a judge in Israel, he was cunning as a serpent in overthrowing his foes. In this sense, this

character trait was a blessing for God's cause. In the work of the Lord we are told to be as "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." Matthew 10:16. Serpents truly have been known to be wise, but usually are connected with evil, being stealthy and sly. We are asked to have the wisdom of the serpents, but not their evil. Use the wisdom for good.

In the first promise to Adam and Eve, Satan, taking on the form of a serpent, was prophesied to, one day, bruise the heel of the Son of God (Genesis 3:15).

Had the Danites remained faithful, they would have been a blessing in the nation. However, rather than using this talent for the honour and glory of God, they used their keen discernment to detect evil in others instead of the good and thus they became as serpents. There are people out there who make a religion of looking for evil in others. They go searching for it with stealth, and they study people as if they were under a microscope.

To have your heel bruised or bitten, someone must have come from behind you. It came as an unexpected surprise. You did not see them. And so, when someone does a sly evil deed, they can be labelled as "a snake". This was the end result of the tribe of Dan. They became like serpents.

In the wilderness, the tribe of Dan was given a great responsibility—an exalted position. "The standard of the camp of Dan shall be on the north side by their armies: and the captain of the children of Dan shall be Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai." Numbers 2:25

In the building of the sanctuary in the wilderness, the Lord did not choose the Egyptians, even though some of them were very talented. "Among the multitude were Egyptians, who had acted as overseers for such work, and thoroughly understood how it should be done. But the work was not dependent upon them. The Lord united with human agencies, giving them wisdom to work skillfully.

"Skill in the common arts is a gift from God. He provides both the gift and the wisdom to use the gift aright." —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 96

"Christ . . . gave to the builders of the tabernacle wisdom to execute the most skillful and beautiful workmanship. He said, 'See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; . . . And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and in the hearts of all that are wise hearted I have put wisdom, that they may

make all that I have commanded thee.' Exodus 31:2–6." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 349

Years later when Solomon built his temple it was a descendent of Dan whom the King of Tyre sent to help with the craftsmanship (2 Chronicles 2:13–14). Why was this descendent of Dan living in a heathen country?

Since these talents remained with the tribe of Dan, living in the far north, they were attracted to the wealthy city of Tyre and intermarried with the people there (1 Kings 7:13–14). "The descendants of these workmen inherited to a large degree the talents conferred on their forefathers. For a time these men of Judah and Dan remained humble and unselfish; but gradually, almost imperceptibly, they lost their hold upon God and their desire to serve Him unselfishly. They asked higher wages for their services, because of their superior skill as workmen in the finer arts. In some instances their request was granted, but more often they found employment in the surrounding nations. In place of the noble spirit of self-sacrifice that had filled the hearts of their illustrious ancestors, they indulged a spirit of covetousness, of grasping for more and more. That their selfish desires might be gratified, they used their God-given skill in the service of heathen kings, and lent their talent to the perfecting of works which were a dishonor to their Maker." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 62–63

People who view themselves as very self-important and lend their talents to the world for personal gain when there is a need in the cause of God, are repeating the sins of Dan.

Regarding his inheritance in Canaan we read:

Dan was one of the larger tribes of Israel (64,400—Numbers 26:42–43) and from the Biblical record, the land they were given was not large enough for them. "The coast of the children of Dan went out too little for them." Joshua 19:47

Why, one could ask, were they given an inheritance that was not large enough for their tribe?

The reason why it was too little is because the powerful Amorites dwelt there. "And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain: for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley." Judges 1:34

They were not able to occupy their selected territory due to a lack of faith. Had they trusted in God and remained there, the Lord would have given them victory over the Amorites. Rather than stay in their allotted inheritance and trust the Lord to help them drive out the

Amorites, they took matters in their own hands. They decided to move north (Judges 18:1–31). Their original inheritance was in the central region on the western side, by the Mediterranean Sea. In the process of moving north the Danites stole Micah’s idols (Judges 18:14–19) and Micah’s priest agreed to be the priest for the Danites (Judges 18:18–20, 27). “Therefore the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem, and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and possessed it, and dwelt therein, and called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father.” Joshua 19:47

Thus they went out from the original plan of God as to where they were supposed to dwell. The intention was for them to conquer the Amorites and extend their boundaries to the sea; however, they went their own way. They did not like the land that the Lord gave them for an inheritance.

Has the Lord laid out a plan for your life? Are you satisfied with that plan or do you want to change or “improve” on that plan?

This city of Dan became the northernmost city in the nation of Israel and you often can read “from Dan to Beersheba” quoted in the Bible, which would include the entire expanse of the nation. Jeroboam, first king of the northern kingdom of Israel, set up two golden calves for worship, one at each end of the nation, one in Beersheba and one in Dan.

The tribe of Dan rejected their God and was one of the first tribes to give over to idolatry (Judges 18:30).

Backbiting—Evil speaking

Dan represents the back biter because the serpent attacks the heel of the horse (back stabbing). What better way can evil speaking be described than how Jacob described it here. It bites the heel so that the rider falls off backwards.

“And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.” James 3:6-8

Words are very powerful. Words have divided families and friends. Words have started wars. Inappropriate words can keep you out of heaven. “For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” Matthew 12:37

“Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off.” Psalm 101:5. This is serious. You slander your neigh-

bour and the Lord cuts you off.

“Who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in Thy holy hill? He that backbiteth not with his tongue.” Psalm 15:1, 3

In the nation of Israel there was a young man whose mother was from the tribe of Dan and his father an Egyptian, and therefore his family had to dwell outside the camp. He finally got fed up and decided to do as he wanted and pitch his tent within the camp (Leviticus 24:10–11).

He “left his own part of the camp, and entering that of the Israelites, claimed the right to pitch his tent there. This the divine law forbade him to do, the descendants of an Egyptian being excluded from the congregation until the third generation. A dispute arose between him and an Israelite, and the matter being referred to the judges was decided against the offender.

“Enraged at this decision, he cursed the judge, and in the heat of passion blasphemed the name of God. He was immediately brought before Moses.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 407

And what was his punishment?

“And they put him in ward, that the mind of the LORD might be showed them. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp; and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him.” Leviticus 24:12–14

This man decided to rebel against the expressed command of God, and when called into account, rather than repenting, he cursed God.

Have you ever spoken a word unadvisedly in the heat of the moment and said something you should not have said? Have you ever slandered anyone? Family, friends, teachers, fellow-students, employers, church leaders, anyone with whom you disagree with? Have you spoken evil behind someone’s back? Backstabbed anyone?

“Evil-speaking is a two-fold curse, falling more heavily upon the speaker than upon the hearer. He who scatters the seeds of dissension and strife, reaps in his own soul the deadly fruits. How miserable is the tale-bearer, the surmiser of evil! He is a stranger to true happiness.” —*The Signs of the times*, February 8, 1883

Is there hope of forgiveness? All sin that is repented of can be forgiven. Sin that cannot be forgiven is the sin against the Holy Spirit. The sin against the Holy Spirit is a refusal to repent.

“What constitutes the sin against the Holy Ghost? It is

willfully attributing to Satan the work of the Holy Spirit. For example, suppose that one is a witness of the special work of the Spirit of God. He has convincing evidence that the work is in harmony with the Scriptures, and the Spirit witnesses with his spirit that it is of God. Afterward, however, he falls under temptation; pride, self-sufficiency, or some other evil trait, controls him; and rejecting all the evidence of its divine character, he declares that that which he had before acknowledged to be the power of the Holy Spirit was the power of Satan. It is through the medium of His Spirit that God works upon the human heart; and when men willfully reject the Spirit and declare it to be from Satan, they cut off the channel by which God can communicate with them. By denying the evidence which God has been pleased to give them, they shut out the light which had been shining in their hearts, and as the result they are left in darkness." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 634

When someone brings you reproof, accept it immediately and repent. Do not make any excuses.

After the time of David, Dan is mostly referred to as the city in the far north and not referred to the tribe. Sadly, they departed far from the Lord and dwelt among the heathen. And thus you do not find Dan mentioned with the 144,000.

Although all the tribes of Israel made their mistakes, most overcame. The Ephraimites and Danites did not choose to change their course of action. This was their downfall. Sins of idolatry and evil-speaking are very difficult to overcome, but not impossible.

We need to have an experience like Isaiah. "Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." Isaiah 6:6-7

Then when the Lord asks us "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" We can answer, "Here am I; send me." Isaiah 6:8

And also like Jeremiah, "Then the LORD put forth His hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put My words in thy mouth." Jeremiah 1:9

The sin of idolatry is a very deep-rooted sin and very difficult to give up. There are so many things that can be included in this beyond just material objects. They can be pride, self-importance, pride of one's own opinion, love of ease and pleasure, and so on. Anything that detracts us from the service of God. Anything that we waste our time

with and thus have less time for devotions and doing the work of the Lord. Even working for the Lord can be an idol if one works many hours and does not have time for personal devotions or they work to be seen of men.

Idolatry begins in the heart and only the guilty person may be aware that it exists. Perhaps you may not know and should pray the prayer of David, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Psalm 139:23. The answer may not come directly from the Lord, but it may come from another person. Whatever the source, we must accept the reproofs given.

Backbiting and evil speaking also begin in the heart. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Matthew 12:34

Again, we should pray like David, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my Redeemer." Psalm 19:14

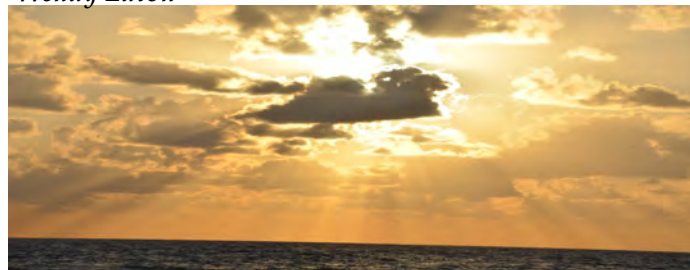
Each person is the architect of their own character.

The last mention of Dan is found in Amos 8:14. "They that swear by the sin of Samaria, and say, Thy god, O Dan, liveth; and, The manner of Beersheba liveth; even they shall fall, and never rise up again." The gods of Dan will perish one day and never rise again.

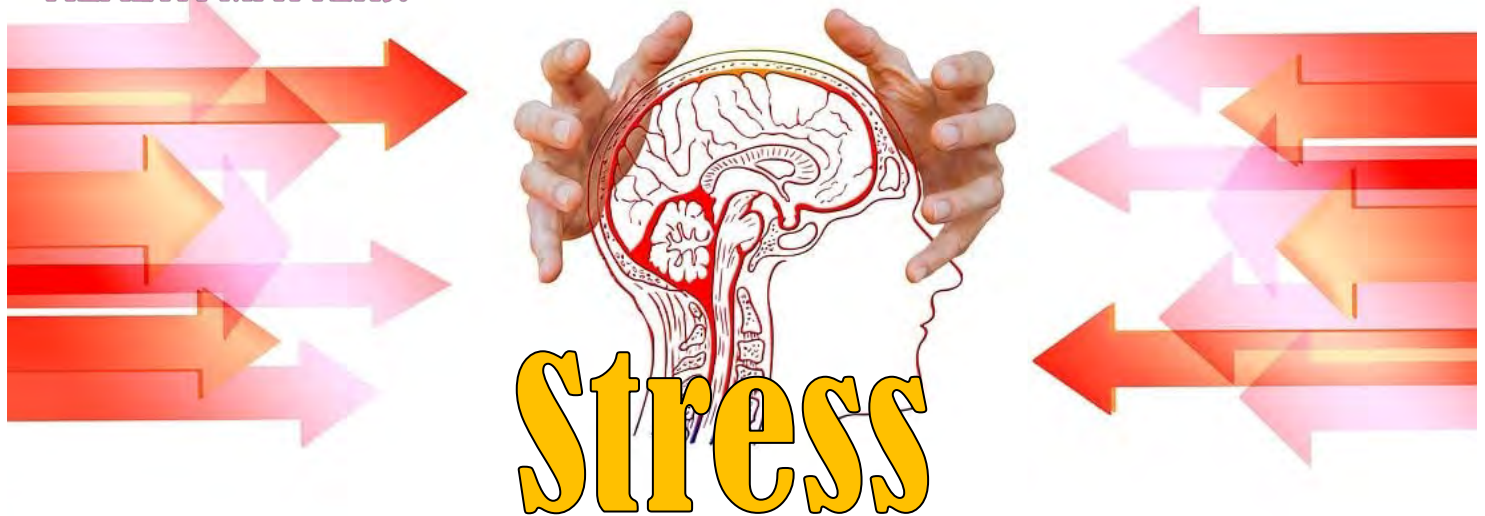
It would do well with us to guard carefully our words and our thoughts and claim the Lord's promise when He says, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them." Ezekiel 36:26

A new heart of flesh will only speak the words of Jesus; only do His deeds and "mortify the deeds of the body." Romans 8:13. In other words, put to death anything that is unChristlike in our words, our thoughts, our actions, and our motives. It can be done, with the help of the Lord. We will then be ready to meet Jesus when He comes again in the clouds of glory.

Wendy Eaton



HEALTH MATTERS:



The COVID-19 pandemic, the war in the Ukraine, floods, hurricanes, drought, increase in crime, trying to juggle all of life's responsibilities, including work, family, and school! What can this all lead to? STRESS! We all use the word "stress" often, but do we know what it means? "I'm so stressed out!" "All this stress is making me crazy!"

First of all, let us define stress. "Stress is a feeling of emotional or physical tension. It can come from any event or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, or nervous." A slightly different definition states that stress is "a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or very demanding circumstances." Regardless of how stress is defined, it is viewed as a negative state to be in. We do not tend to say we are stressed, with a smile on our face, and a feeling of happiness.

What does it actually mean when someone is feeling stress? And do we all feel stress in the same way? And do the same things stress one person vs another person? Is there something that stresses all humans universally? Can stress be a good thing? We will explore the answers to these questions and more in this month's health article.

How common is stress? In a research study, 80% of Americans reported that they had at least one symptom of stress in the previous month. And, 20% reported being under extreme stress.

Hans Selye is considered the pioneer of stress research. He began using the word "stress" after completing his medical training in Montreal in the 1920s. He noticed that all the patients in the hospital who were suffering

from various illnesses actually *looked* sick; he determined that they were all under physical stress. He borrowed the word from physics, where stress is defined as a force that produces strain on a physical body, like bending a piece of metal until it breaks. Think about how you feel when you have a cold, and how you respond to it. The sick person's response to illness creates behaviours that actually help with healing such as staying in bed, reducing activity, staying home from work, and avoiding social interactions; the person feels pain more readily, stops eating, and feels mentally depressed. This is considered beneficial in that the behaviour of a person who is sick conserves energy to allow the body to fight infections and to heal.

When looking at the two definitions for stress, it can then be determined that people could be stressed by different situations. What one person sees as a situation that can create a feeling of nervousness can be perceived as another person as exciting. Therefore, one's perception as to whether an event is stressful or not contributes to whether one is stressed or not. A simple example is with public speaking. Some people are very nervous when they speak in front of a group of people, whereas others see it as exhilarating and enjoyable. Therefore, the feeling of stress is very individual, as what stresses one person will not stress another. Some scenarios are stressful for everyone; poverty, hunger, war, and natural disasters would be universal reasons for stress.

Our own thoughts can cause us to feel stress. Often people worry over the future, relationships, money. When we have thoughts about our life that are negative, it will automatically cause us to have negative emotions. There

is a direct correlation between our thoughts and feelings. Often, if you change the way you think about a situation, it will change your feelings about the situation. The most basic example is a glass that contains water to its half-way point. If you consider that the glass is half-empty, it creates a negative emotion. If you see glass as half-full, you will feel positive about the water in the glass. The amount has not changed, but your perception about the amount is different, and you then feel differently.

Think about a situation that is physically taxing, such as having to climb a mountain. The ones who are more likely to achieve the climb will be those who see it as a challenge vs those who sees it as a hardship. We all have control over our thoughts. We can choose how we feel about a situation. We can reduce our stress by viewing something in a positive light vs in a negative light. This is not always easy, as many situations affect our ability to enjoy life, such as living in poverty, and not being able to provide for our family. Often these situations are not in our control to change.

The full impact of stress is hard to predict, as different events cause lesser or greater emotional and physical tension. Stress is also accumulative. Many people can accept and even deal with one stressful scenario, but when multiple stressors (things that can cause stress) are experienced, the level of one's ability to manage stress diminishes. Some people have personalities that can cope with a higher level of stress than another person. Often one's perception of an event depends on the way we look at the world, other people and ourselves. If we see the world as a scary place, and other people as unsupportive, and ourselves are incapable, we will automatically see events in a negative light and then will generate feelings of stress. However, if we see the world as something to be enjoyed, as other people being warm and caring, and ourselves as having the skills to deal with difficult events, we will experience lower levels of stress.

In 1967, two scientists, Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe examined the medical records of 5,000 patients, to determine whether stressful life events might lead to illness. They then developed a list of 43 stressful life events, and gave each of them a score, beginning with "death of a spouse" as the top stressful event, having a score of 100. People would look at which of the 43 life events they had experienced in the last two years, and add up the score. They were able to determine that the higher the score, the more likely the person would develop an illness, therefore proving their hypothesis that

stress leads to illness. Any score above 300 led to an 80% increased risk of "health breakdown" or illness in the following two years. This list only looked at personal life events that could be considered stressful, such as losing a job. It did not look at stressors that were external to one's personal experience such as natural disasters, wars, or corrupt governments.

Many events were listed as "changes", even for the better, such as marriage, changes in residence or social activities, starting school. Change is a very common cause of stress. We get accustomed to specific routines, and we do not handle change very easily, even if the change will make a positive impact on our lives.

Stress is a normal feeling. We have all experienced stress throughout our lives, and we can experience different levels of stress at any given time. There are two main types of stress. The first one is called acute stress. This is very short-term stress that goes away quickly. For example, stepping off the curb and realizing there is a car coming and you quickly jump back. The situation was stressful as the consequences of being hit by a car could be very dire; however, this stress lasted only seconds. Having an argument with someone, being late for an appointment, and trying to meet a work deadline are acute stressors. This type of stress happens fairly regularly but is short-lived.

These short-term, unpredictable events that make us feel that we do not have full control over the situation trigger a response from our mind and body to cope with these situations in the form of the release of stress hormones. When our stress response is working well, we will be able to perform at our peak, optimum level, thus being able to cope effectively with all the stress that gets thrown our way every day.

The second type of stress is referred to as chronic stress. It lasts for a longer period of time. Chronic stress is something that lasts weeks to months, and maybe even



years. Examples are working in a job that you hate but need because it pays the bills, being in an unhappy marriage, living with a chronic illness or a disability, or living in poverty. The citizens of countries that are dealing with the aftermath of natural disasters can be under stress for many years, with loss of infrastructure, housing, food, and medical aid. Chronic stress often forces one to change their identity and social roles. With chronic stress, the person never knows when the stress will end or if it ever can end. Hopes and dreams one had for their future are gone. These chronic stressors can lead to health problems, especially if you have not found a way to manage the stress. During chronic stress, your body is constantly releasing stress hormones, which can cause wear and tear on your mind and body. Our body's response to stress was never intended to be constantly activated. This overuse of the stress response system can contribute to the breakdown of many body systems.

So, how does the stress response help us to perform well during times of acute stress? I mentioned that stress actually creates changes in our body. In the short-term these changes are helpful to deal with the stressful situation. However, if stress becomes chronic, the changes in our body can cause us to become ill or develop chronic physical and mental problems.

When we encounter a stressful situation, our body goes into high alert. We have an early-warning alarm system in a part of our brain called the hypothalamus. Through a combination of nerve and hormone signals, it sends a message to our adrenal glands to release a surge of hormones, including adrenaline and cortisol. Adrenaline



causes our rate of breathing to increase, our heart to beat faster, raises our blood pressure, and provides an energy surge for our muscles. Our concentration becomes very focused, and we are at a heightened level of alertness; we are ready

for either flight or fight mode. The changes in the brain during acute stress actually cause stem cells to develop into new nerve cells, and once they mature in the next few weeks after the stressful event, improve mental performance. Acute stress is good for the brain to keep it alert. An area in the brain known as the hippocampus is critical to memory. Acute stress increases the number of

cells in the hippocampus, improving memory. Chronic stress elevates cortisol, which suppresses the production of new cells in the hippocampus, impairing memory.

Cortisol increases the glucose (sugar) in the bloodstream, improves our brain's ability to use glucose to increase brain power, and increases the availability of those substances that repair tissues. Cortisol also suppresses functions that we do not need while we are dealing with stress; these include our digestive system, our reproductive system, our growth process and certain parts of our immune system. The parts of the immune system that remain activated are those that deal with injuries and subsequent infections that could enter the blood or skin that are caused by either the fight or flight response. Any wound in the skin can introduce bacteria into the body. Thus, adaptive stress-induced changes in the immune system would speed up the healing and repair of wounds and help prevent infections from taking a hold. The shutting down of unnecessary immune responses and other body functions improves the ability of the stress-fighting functions to perform, to increase the chances of survival. Nowadays, we rarely encounter similar physical stressors. Much of our stress is psychological; however, our body still reacts to psychological stress in the same way that it reacts to physical stress.

We either use these changes in our body to run away from stress, or we use these changes to fight the stress. When I mentioned the example of stepping off the curb in front of a car, these body changes will allow our brain to realize there is danger and our muscles react by jumping back quickly before we get hit. The body's stress response system stops once the perceived threat is over, and hormone levels return back to normal. Your heart rate and blood pressure drop back to normal, and the other body systems that were turned off resume their normal functioning.

This is ideal for short-term stress, but how about if the stress is chronic and our body remains in a "fight or flight mode" for a long time? High levels of stress hormones can disrupt many of the body's processes needed for day-to-day functioning. As was mentioned, our body's stress response shuts down certain systems that are not needed when responding to stress. But, long-term, these body functions are necessary to our continued survival, such as the function of our digestive and reproductive system. Also, some of the body's adaptive responses to short-term stress can cause health problems if they are sustained for any period of time. Let us look at some of the body's responses to chronic stress

and what long-term consequences can occur.

Firstly, another component of chronic stress is the way people cope with stress; they often use alcohol or drugs, they eat unhealthy foods, they do not get enough sleep. All these also can affect one's health in a negative way. These behaviours also affect the way the immune system reacts, which can lead to chronic illnesses.

Our muscles are tensed and ready to react in a stressful situation, we have increased capability to run, jump, fight, and flee. But, what happens when our muscles are constantly tensed? Often tension and migraine headaches result from muscle tension in the shoulders, neck, and head. Low back pain and upper body pain can also be a result of stress, specifically job stress. When people are in pain, they tend to decrease their physical activity, which can lead to muscle atrophy and a worsening of one's physical stamina and fitness.

The cardiovascular system, comprising of the heart and blood vessels supply the body with oxygen and nourishment. During periods of acute stress, the heart



pumps harder, sending out more blood and at a faster rate to increase the supply of oxygen and nourishment to such areas as the

brain, muscles, and nerves. The blood vessels constrict to divert more energy to these areas; this constriction leads to higher blood pressure. However, in the long run, elevated blood pressure can lead to heart attacks and strokes. Elevated blood pressure also damages the walls of blood vessels, creating the perfect environment for plaque to develop.

The acute stress response triggers inflammation which fights infections quickly. However, when long-term stress occurs, this inflammation becomes detrimental and increases inflammation throughout the body. This inflammation targets the blood vessels in the heart, one way in which stress leads to heart attacks. Women tend to suffer less from heart related stress prior to menopause, as the hormone estrogen allows women's bodies to handle stress better. After menopause, women's response to stress and its impact on the heart equals that of men.

During stress, the hormone cortisol increases the level

of fuel that the body requires by releasing glucose (sugar) and fatty acids from the liver into the blood stream to be used by your cells. If you are under chronic stress, your body becomes unable to keep up with this constant glucose surge, and you are at a higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

Our immune system is made up of billions of white blood cells which fight off bacteria, viruses and cancers in our body. Under chronic stress, cortisol decreases the amount of white blood cells, and impairs their ability to communicate with each other to fight disease. The white blood cells try to counter-attack the high levels of cortisol; however, it, in turn, impacts the cells' ability to fight inflammation. Thus, chronic stress suppresses the function of the immune system to fight disease and we are more prone to infections, such as colds and flus. Cortisol also leads to a chronic level of inflammation in the body, contributing to ongoing infections, heart disease. These high levels of inflammation lead to illnesses such as diabetes, depression and other immune disorders.

When stress becomes chronic, the ability of the immune system to adapt decreases. Studies show that chronic stress has negative effects on all aspects of the immune system. This negative effect leads to increases in infections, in chronic illnesses, and in cancers. This effect was similar between genders and between the young and old. However, as humans age, the immune system does not function as well. Those with other diseases also had less of an immune response, showing that the immune system loses its ability to fight illness when it is already stressed. Often the immune system can cause autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, Crohn's disease, and asthma, where the immune system attacks the body, as sees itself as an invader, causing illness. This is another indicator that the immune system becomes unbalanced when it is under stress.

In general, research findings show that acute stress enhances the immune system and chronic stress suppresses the immune system. Research shows that the most chronic stressors were associated with the more overall immune suppression. Thus, the longer the stress, the more detrimental were the changes to the immune system. Long-term stress is often less controllable and creates a sense of hopelessness that anything will ever change for the better. This creates both physical and psychological stress. Even with chronic stress, psychological differences in personality and emotions create different responses to stress. It was found that those who were most optimistic and felt they were coping

with the stress had better immune system responses.

Chronic stress affects the digestive system and causes a number of problems. Food can move too quickly or slowly through the digestive system, causing either diarrhea or constipation. It affects digestion, determining which foods get absorbed. The intestines contain a tight barrier, preventing most food bacteria from being absorbed into the body. Stress makes this barrier weaker, allowing the bacteria which should remain in the gut to be absorbed into the body. Although most bacteria are taken care of by the immune system and do not make us sick, the constant need for the immune system to respond can create chronic problems. Stress can make inflammatory bowel disease and irritable bowel syndrome worse. These disorders make the nerves of the gut more sensitive, it can change the microbiome of the gut, and it can change the gut's immune responses. This number may appear astounding to many, in that 70% of the body's immune system is contained in the gut. Once chronic stress occurs, the proper functioning of the gut as well as the immune system components becomes impaired. Often people cope with stress by eating, even when not hungry. This can lead to weight gain and all the other health problems that come from being overweight.

When our mind is in a period of a heightened sense of alertness, we will have trouble sleeping. Our brain cannot sustain long periods of concentration and eventually our focus and memory becomes impaired. This can lead to mental health issues. There is a direct correlation between stress, anxiety, and depression. With anxiety, you feel high levels of worry, unease or fear. Often anxiety can lead to depression, which causes feelings of sadness, guilt and shame. You develop a lack of motivation to take care of yourself. You become disinterested in the things that you normally enjoy. Depression can also cause physical problems such as fatigue, lack of appetite, poor sleep and concentration. You are unable to keep up with school or work responsibilities. You withdraw from others and become isolated. This, in turn, worsens depression.

The reproductive system shuts down under stress. If stress is prolonged in men, it interferes with their ability to procreate. For women, it can interfere

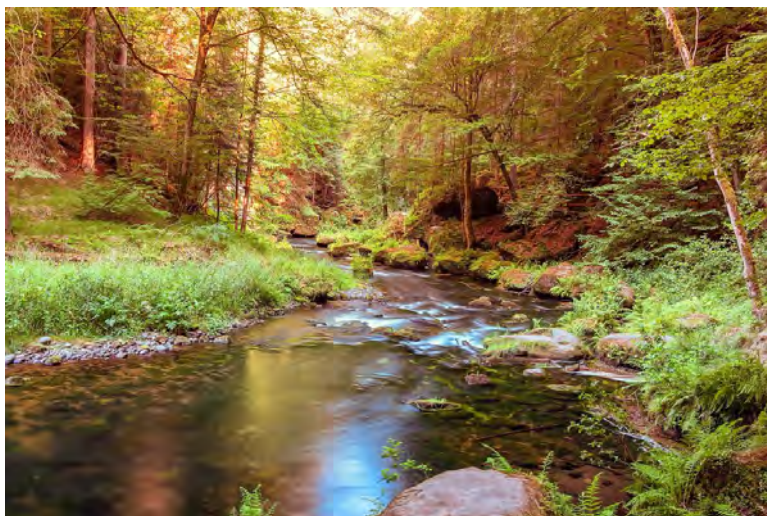


with the normal function of the menstrual cycle, also leading to issues with infertility.

Ellen White counsels a minister who overworked himself: "I have been listening to the words of my Guide in regard to Elder ----, and the substance of them was this: The blood being attracted to the weakest point, there is a wearing of the channel through which the blood flows. This condition of things is making his condition a critical one, and his brethren will need to exercise great caution, that they may not excite by any course of action. Unless this human agent shall change his course of action in continuous labor, and submit to have the peace of God rule in his heart, there will be a rush of blood to the brain, which will disqualify him for labor. He will counteract his own work. . . . Through your strong feelings the blood veins are filled with blood, and you are in serious danger of losing your life. Therefore you need to place yourself in a position where you will not have upon you a pressure of the necessity of continuous labor, and where you must have the guidance and control of others." –*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 3, p. 308

Our response to acute stress is adaptive and allows our mind and body to cope with these situations with competence and skill. This is not the case with chronic stress. With so many negative health consequences of chronic stress, we need to be able to manage stress so that its impact does not lead to other health issues. Stress can be managed with lifestyle changes, acceptance of situations that we cannot change, and altering the way we perceive events that we may view as stressful. Next month we will look at ways to cope with stress that lessen its impact on our mental and physical health.

NEXT ISSUE: HOW TO COPE WITH STRESS



Dishonesty Does Not Pay



During the winter of 1849–1850, James and Ellen White held meetings with Adventists in Oswego, New York.

A young man named Hiram Patch and his girlfriend were attending these meetings. They were soon to be married. Both had decided to lay the right foundation for their new home by becoming Christians and joining a church. But, which church should they join?

While trying to decide, they were persuaded to attend some revival meetings being conducted by the county treasurer in one of the large Sunday-keeping churches. He seemed to have a great burden for the unconverted, and he earnestly prayed for sinners.

Hiram Patch and his fiancée were uncertain whether to join this big church where this treasurer preached or the little company of Sabbathkeepers meeting in a home. He went to both churches for a while.

During one meeting of these Sabbathkeepers, while Hiram was present, Ellen White was given a vision. Her attention was directed to Hosea 5:7: "They have dealt treacherously against the Lord." She was told that these words applied to the people who were conducting the revival meetings in the Sunday-keeping church.

After the vision she said to Hiram Patch, "Wait a month, and you will know for yourself the character of these persons. The Lord will reveal to you which church you should join." Hiram replied, "I will wait."

Within two weeks the county treasurer became acutely ill while conducting a meeting. He was taken home and put to bed. The county sheriff and a constable were appointed to take over the affairs of the treasurer's office during his absence.

While checking the account books, they found a shortage of \$1,000. They did not want to believe that this man, who seemed so sincere and earnest in preaching at these revival meetings, could be guilty of stealing. He might have paid it out in some business transaction or deposit-

ed it in the bank and forgotten to enter the details in the book, they reasoned. So, they decided to go visit him and give him a chance to explain.

But they agreed to be cautious; if he had actually taken the money, he would surely try to hide the truth, and hide the money. It was arranged that one man would hide out and watch the back door of the house while the other would enter the front. So, the constable hid himself in a shed near the back door while the sheriff knocked on the front door. Almost immediately the constable saw a woman come out the back door with a sack in her hand. He watched her go quickly to a snowbank, dig a hole, deposit the sack, and cover it.

The sheriff chatted for a moment with the sick man, then told him of the perplexity at the office, suggesting that probably he could explain what happened to the money. The treasurer became excited, raised his hand to heaven, and said, "I call God to witness that I know nothing about the money."

Just then his wife entered the bedroom. "What's the matter? Why are you so excited?" she asked.

"They think we have their money."

The wife also raised her hand and said, "God is my witness that we do not have the money, nor do we know anything about it." As she finished speaking, the constable entered with the sack of money. Holding it out before them, he said, "Madam, what is this? I saw you rush from the house and deposit this in the snowbank, and here it is, the missing sack of money, all \$1,000 of it."

It did not take long for news to get around town, and the revival suddenly collapsed. The prediction made in the vision had come true. Hiram and his fiancée saw the truth about the character of the leader of the Sunday-keeping revival and joined the Sabbathkeeping company.

That same winter the Whites held meetings also in Camden. Before going there, Ellen was shown the Adventists

in that place. Among them she saw a woman who professed to be very holy, but who was a hypocrite, deceiving the church.

This woman taught that it was possible for a person to reach a state of perfection that would place them above the law of God. She herself professed to have reached that perfect state.

During one of the Camden meetings Sister White was again shown this woman and was told that she was a pretender who was not living right. After the vision, Ellen related what she had seen. With dignity the woman rose and said, "God knows my heart, and if you could see it, you would know that it is pure, and clean." The meeting closed.

Soon afterward the woman became so ill that she thought she was dying. In great agitation she cried, "I must see Sister White; I have a confession to make to her. I told her I was a good woman, that I was pure. It is not so. I am a wicked woman. The man I am living with is not my husband. I left a good husband in England, and one little child, and ran away with this man. We were never married. I have been professing to be a doctor, and have been selling medicine that I swore cost me one dollar a bottle, but it cost me only twelve cents a bottle."

No one in the company had known this woman before she joined the believers. No one could have told Sister White what kind of person she was. But God knew. Many times He sent warnings of this kind to protect His people from such pretenders and to show how much He hates sin and hypocrisy.

But was it only great sins which were rebuked? Does God overlook what we call "little sins"? Would God, the Creator of the universe, notice so small an act as taking a hairnet?

Let us read of one more experience from Sister White.

At one time several young ladies connected with the Healdsburg College were living with her family. Some were students, and some were teachers. One day Ellen was dressing in her room and missed her hairnet. It was a beautiful one, nicely woven, which she wore whenever she went out. She looked around her room, then searched the house, but could not find it.

When the family came together, she asked, "Has anyone seen my hairnet? I'm sure it was on my dresser last night, but I cannot find it now." There was no response.

Soon after this she happened to be passing by one of the girls' rooms on her way to another room, when she heard a voice say, "Lift the lid of that trunk." Because it

was not her nature to look into other people's personal possessions, she kept on walking.

Again the voice said, "Lift the lid of that trunk." The command was so insistent that she went back and lifted the lid. There on the top lay the missing hairnet.

Ellen closed the trunk and made no mention of what she had seen, but once again she asked the girls about the net. She knew now who had taken it, but she wanted to give the offender a chance to confess. No one answered.

While sitting before the fireplace the next day, Ellen had a very brief vision. There flashed before her eyes the picture of a young girl holding the net over a kerosene lamp and burning it.

Sister White knew now that it was useless for her to wait any longer for the girl to confess; so she called the girl to her and told her about the voice she had heard, and about finding the net in the trunk, and about the brief vision of her burning the net.

The young girl started to cry and tell whole story. "I don't know why I took it," she said. "I don't know why I didn't return it when you first asked about it. But after so much was said, I was ashamed to admit that I was the guilty one."

How did this girl react to this experience? Did she say, "It's no use for me to try to be a Christian; everyone will call me a thief; nobody will have confidence in me"?

No, indeed! She confessed. She accepted God's promised forgiveness. Her failure had shown her that she could not, of herself, do right. She needed the Saviour's help. Right there she gave herself fully to Jesus and made Him her personal Saviour.

"'A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape.' Proverbs 19:5. Men may think to hide their evil deeds from human eyes, but they cannot deceive God. 'All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.' Hebrews 4:13." —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 252

Today, we do not have Sister White, who will be given a vision when someone is dishonest. However, we do have to remember that every dishonest deed done, every lie spoken, every negative work spoken, is recorded by the recording angel, and if we do not confess our sins, we will one day have to meet them in the judgement. Only with the help of Jesus can you keep doing what is right and if you make a mistake along the way, confess immediately and ask the Lord to help you do better next time.

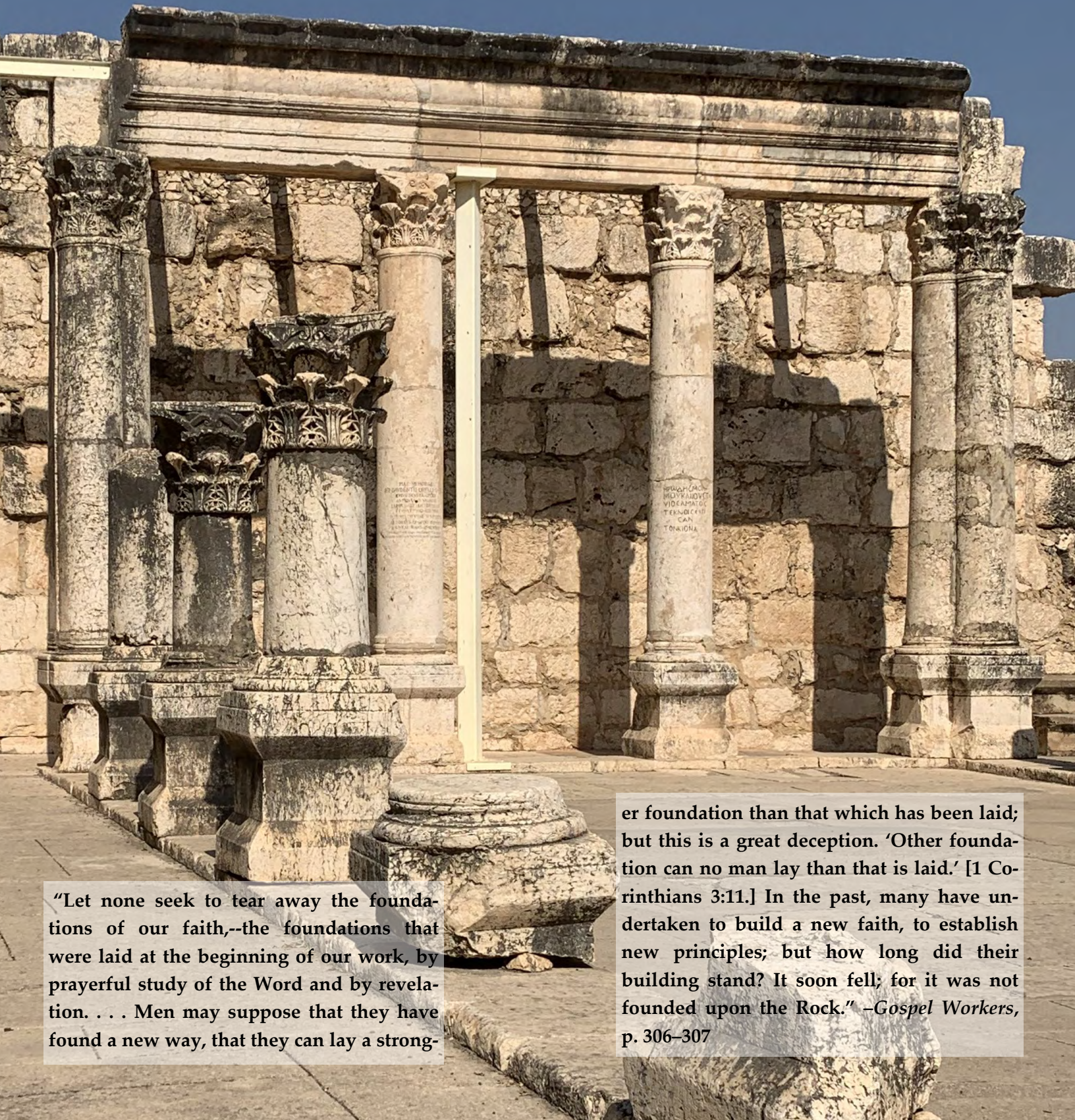
Vanuatu



Malawi



“The enemy is seeking to divert the minds of our brethren and sisters from the work of preparing a people to stand in these last days. His sophistries are designed to lead minds away from the perils and duties of the hour. They estimate as of little value the light that Christ came from heaven to give to John for His people. They teach that the scenes just before us are not of sufficient importance to receive special attention. They make of no effect the truth of heavenly origin, and rob the people of God of their past experience, giving them instead a false science. ‘Thus saith the Lord: Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein.’ [Jeremiah 6:16.]



“Let none seek to tear away the foundations of our faith,—the foundations that were laid at the beginning of our work, by prayerful study of the Word and by revelation. . . . Men may suppose that they have found a new way, that they can lay a strong-

er foundation than that which has been laid; but this is a great deception. ‘Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid.’ [1 Corinthians 3:11.] In the past, many have undertaken to build a new faith, to establish new principles; but how long did their building stand? It soon fell; for it was not founded upon the Rock.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 306–307