

Country Living

*Sabbath Bible Lessons*

Senior Division

January-March 2004

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*Sabbath Bible Lessons*, a daily study program, is based solely on the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy without additional comments. The quotations are as brief as possible to provide concise, direct thoughts. Brackets [ ] are supplied in some cases to ensure clarity, proper context, and smooth readability. Further study in the source materials is strongly recommended.

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# Foreword

The people of God are privileged over all the inhabitants of the earth in that they have direct instruction from the Lord Himself. This instruction is updated to meet the needs of His children in every age. Long before the new and popular organic, environmental, and ecological movements, and long before the deterioration and quality of food which led to the cry to return to organic foods and organic methods, the Lord had given light to His people.

But few have given serious heed to the warning given. Now the need is becoming so obvious to all that it is no longer as easy to obey. Country land, which was before relatively cheap, is now costly due to the heightened demand. The increase of crime against persons and property is reaching epidemic proportions and, as it was foretold, is rapidly getting worse. And today's cities are held hostage to supermarkets and utility companies for all their needs.

"The Lord desires His people to move into the country, where they can settle on the land and raise their own fruit and vegetables, and where their children can be brought in direct contact with the works of God in nature. Take your families away from the cities, is my message."—*Medical Ministry*, p. 311.

The warning has been given. Now each Sabbath School student should examine the instructions which we will study, and make plans for their future prosperity. Let none rush blindly into a supposed country living without first studying the issue through. When done in our wisdom, country living fails; but when we give the direction of our lives into the control of our Maker, we are sure to succeed in all His commands.

*The General Conference Sabbath School Department*

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## First Sabbath Offering

### for Dallas, Texas

Texas is one of the largest geographic territories of the United States. Today it is one of the fastest growing parts of the Central United States Field (which has the responsibility of carrying forward the work in 12 mid-American states). Key to proclaiming the gospel in this state is the large metropolis of Dallas. As a commercial hub, this large city of 1.3 million inhabitants is also the transit point for many persons traveling on business.

As a state Texas is the heartland of the “Bible Belt” of America. This has been a traditionally Protestant and conservative state. But an increase in immigration from Latin America has meant that Roman Catholicism is today one of the largest religious groups in Texas. There is a people here who are in need of the present truth.

When visiting Texas in 1879, Sister White wrote a letter to her son about the work there: “Willie, your heart would ache to look upon this vast field in Texas with only one preacher and calls coming in from every direction for help. I tell you that God could use hundreds of young men if they would only give themselves to the work to labor humbly in God. . . . My soul is stirred to its very depths. So many are in darkness, yet longing for light. They are not satisfied with their present condition. They are pleading for preachers to come. They hear the Word gladly but the moral darkness is so great one or two discourses are shedding merely a glimmer of light.

“There are needed not only ministers but those who can act as missionaries—men and women of good understanding, of moral worth with moral backbone, who can circulate around among the people and shed light, precious light, everywhere.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 16, p. 69.

The church in this city has grown steadily over the years and the current meeting place is no longer able to meet the needs of the members and many visitors. To that end your help is needed. The funds collected this Sabbath will go towards building a lighthouse in Dallas, so that the gospel may shine forth throughout the region.

PROJECT 04B

*The Central United States Field Committee*



# The Exodus

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4).

“God has chosen us out of the world that we might be a peculiar and holy people.”—*The Review and Herald*, November 10, 1885.

**Suggested Readings:** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 259, 260, 290–298; 377–383.  
Psalm 78.

## Sunday

December 28

### 1. MOVING OUT

- a. After many years of peace and prosperity, why did God’s people become slaves in Egypt? Exodus 1:5–14.

“Those who were true to God understood that [their bondage] was because of Israel’s departure from Him—because of their disposition to marry with heathen nations, thus being led into idolatry—that the Lord had permitted them to become bondmen.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 260.

- b. Why did the people want to leave Egypt? Exodus 2:23.

“In their distress [the Israelites] cried unto the Lord for deliverance from the Egyptian yoke, that they might be freed from the corrupting influence of idolatry.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 259.

- c. What was God’s purpose in taking them to Canaan? Exodus 8:1.

“God brought the Israelites from Egypt, that He might establish them in the land of Canaan, a pure, holy, and happy people. In the accomplishment of this object He subjected them to a course of discipline, both for their own good and for the good of their posterity.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 378.

**2. WHERE ARE WE HEADING?**

- a. **What is God's purpose for His people today and how does it compare with His purpose for Israel so many years ago? 1 Peter 2:9.**

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“It was [the Lord's] purpose to make of this nation of slaves a people who would reveal His character to the idolatrous nations of the world.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 505.

“[Likewise today, it] is God's purpose to manifest through His people the principles of His kingdom. That in life and character they may reveal these principles, He desires to separate them from the customs, habits, and practices of the world.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 321.

- b. **Was Israel prepared for the deliverance of God when they first asked for help? Exodus 6:6–9.**

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“The Hebrews had expected to obtain their freedom without any special trial of their faith or any real suffering or hardship. But they were not yet prepared for deliverance. They had little faith in God, and were unwilling patiently to endure their afflictions until He should see fit to work for them. Many were content to remain in bondage rather than meet the difficulties attending removal to a strange land; and the habits of some had become so much like those of the Egyptians that they preferred to dwell in Egypt.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 260.

- c. **How do many respond to God's call today? Proverbs 1:24–33.**

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“May the Lord forbid that the history of the children of Israel in departing from God, in refusing to walk in the light, in refusing to confess their sins of unbelief and rejection of His messages, should be the experience of the people claiming to believe the truth for this time. For if they do as did the children of Israel in the face of warnings and admonitions, the same result will follow in these last days as came upon the children of Israel.”—*The Review and Herald*, October 21, 1890.

- d. **What should characterize our attitude instead? 1 Samuel 3:10; Isaiah 25:1.**
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**3. NO MURMURING ALLOWED**

- a. **What was a great deterrent for God's professed people in their journeying to the Promised Land? Exodus 16:8; Hebrews 3:12.**

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“The children of Israel seemed to possess an evil heart of unbelief. They were unwilling to endure hardships in the wilderness. When they met with difficulties in the way, they would regard them as impossibilities. Their confidence in God would fail, and they could see nothing before them but death.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 221.

- b. **What had God proven to the Israelites with the pillar of cloud and fire? Exodus 13:21; 33:14.**

- c. **What has God promised us as we follow Him in all things? Matthew 28:20. Even with these promises, too often how do we respond to God's desire to lead in our life?**

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“The unbelief and murmurings of the children of Israel illustrate the people of God now upon the earth. Many look back to them, and marvel at their unbelief and continual murmurings, after the Lord had done so much for them, in giving them repeated evidences of His love and care for them. They think that they should not have proved ungrateful. But some who thus think, murmur and repine at things of less consequence. They do not know themselves. God frequently proves them, and tries their faith in small things; and they do not endure the trial any better than did ancient Israel.

“Many have their present wants supplied; yet they will not trust the Lord for the future. They manifest unbelief and sink into despondency and gloom at anticipated want. Some are in continual trouble lest they shall come to want and their children suffer. When difficulties arise or when they are brought into strait places—when their faith and their love to God are tested—they shrink from the trial and murmur at the process.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 223.

**4. HE PROVED HIMSELF**

- a. In providing manna, what was the lesson that God taught? Exodus 16:15; Psalm 78:24; Isaiah 33:16.

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- b. What were the people to learn from the miracle of water? Psalm 105:41; Isaiah 41:17.

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- c. What other aspects of God’s character can we learn from His care for Israel in the wilderness? Psalm 105:37; Matthew 6:25–34.

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“Moses told the people that God had hitherto preserved them, that they had not been harmed by the serpents, which was a token of His care for them. He told them it was because of their needless murmurings, complaining of the hardships in their journey, that God had permitted them to be bitten of serpents. This was to show them that God had preserved them from many and great evils, which if He had permitted to come upon them, they would have suffered that which they could call hardships. But God had prepared the way before them. There was no sickness among them. Their feet had not swollen in all their journeys, neither had their clothes waxed old. God had given them angels’ food, and purest water out of the flinty rock. And with all these tokens of His love, if they complained, He would send His judgments upon them for their ingratitude, and make them to realize His past merciful care for them, of which they had been unmindful.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 315.

“He who cares for the birds and the flowers will care for the beings formed in His own image.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 266.

- d. Where does God wish to lead His people now? Psalm 23:2, 3.

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“God alone can guide us safely in paths which lead to the better country.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 373.

“[During His time on earth,] when [the great Teacher] could, He would lead [His eager listeners] away from the crowded cities, to the quiet of the country. Here He would pray with them and talk to them of eternal truths.”—*Evangelism*, pp. 53, 54.

**5. HIS WAY IS BEST**

- a. What do we know about our Creator? 1 John 4:8; Malachi 3:6.

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- b. What do we know about all of His ways? Deuteronomy 32:4; Hosea 14:9; Revelation 15:3.

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- c. What is the Lord’s desire for our life today? Joshua 1:7; 1 Kings 2:3; 3 John 2.

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“Are not the tokens of God’s love sufficient to fill our hearts with thanksgiving and praise? Jesus desires us to trust in Him, bearing patiently the delays we can not help. He remembers every word He has spoken to lead His children to trust in Him. He is ever mindful of His covenant. His word will never fail. May the Lord increase our faith in our Intercessor.”—*The Watchman*, March 13, 1902.

“Make God your entire trust. Pray, pray, pray, pray in faith. Trust then the keeping of your soul to God. He will keep that which is committed to Him against that day. . . . Walk humbly with God. The Lord sees every sorrow, every grief, every trial that besets the human soul, and He knows how to apply the balm.”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 268.

**PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What was God’s purpose in taking His people to Canaan?
2. What is God’s purpose for my life, and am I willing to let Him lead to accomplish His will?
3. What was the greatest problem of Israel, and is there any parallel in our life?
4. In what areas of our daily living do we need to trust in God more?
5. If God provided for His people in the wilderness, will He provide for us even when He calls us to live in the country?

# Cutting Loose

“Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us” (Psalm 62:8).

“We cannot trust to our own wisdom, our own experience, our own knowledge of the truth; we must be daily learners, looking to our heavenly Teacher for instruction, and then, without regard to ease, pleasure, or convenience, we must go forward, knowing that He is faithful who has called.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 362.

**Suggested Readings:** *Steps to Christ*, pp. 105–113.  
*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 20–28.

## Sunday

January 4

### 1. A COMMON DILEMMA

- a. **What is the very nature of human beings apart from Christ? Deuteronomy 28:66. Who is the author of this? Genesis 3:1.**

“There is nothing that [Satan] desires more than to destroy confidence in God and in His word. Satan stands at the head of the great army of doubters, and he works to the utmost of his power to beguile souls into his ranks. It is becoming fashionable to doubt.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 526.

- b. **Is it easy to trust in an uncertain future? Describe the lives of two men who have shown us by example how to respond to God’s call. Hebrews 11:7, 8.**

- c. **How can we overcome doubt today? Matthew 21:21; Romans 10:17.**

“Disguise it as they may, the real cause of doubt and skepticism, in most cases, is the love of sin. The teachings and restrictions of God’s word are not welcome to the proud, sin-loving heart, and those who are unwilling to obey its requirements are ready to doubt its authority.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 111.

## Monday

January 5

### 2. YOU WANT ME TO CHANGE?

- a. **Men and women often want what is familiar. What problem did Israel have shortly after leaving Egypt? Numbers 11:5; Acts 7:39.**

“As [Israel] at one time hankered after the leeks and onions of Egypt, and murmured because they did not have everything to gratify their appetites, and declared their choice to go back into bondage rather than deny their appetites, so they now insulted God to His face in throwing off His wise rule.”—*1888 Materials*, p. 922.

- b. **How did God deal with their attitude? Numbers 11:10, 18–21; 14:26–35.**

“God gave the people that which was not for their highest good, because they persisted in desiring it; they would not be satisfied with those things that would prove a benefit to them. Their rebellious desires were gratified, but they were left to suffer the result. They feasted without restraint, and their excesses were speedily punished. ‘The Lord smote the people with a very great plague’ (Numbers 11:33). Large numbers were cut down by burning fevers, while the most guilty among them were smitten as soon as they tasted the food for which they had lusted.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 382.

- c. **What is the primary goal of God’s dealing with us? Is it to change our location only, or our attitude too? Deuteronomy 8:1–6.**

“I was shown the conformity of some professed Sabbathkeepers to the world. Oh, I saw that it is a disgrace to their profession, a disgrace to the cause of God. They give the lie to their profession. They think they are not like the world, but they are so near like them in dress, in conversation, and actions, that there is no distinction. . . . Why is it so hard to lead a self-denying, humble life? Because professed Christians are not dead to the world. It is easy living after we are dead. But many are longing for the leeks and onions of Egypt. . . . They do not enter through the straight gate and narrow way.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 131.

**3. THE WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE**

- a. **What experience did Moses have that enabled him to be used by God? Exodus 2:15.**

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“When Moses was feeding his flock in the pastures of Midian, the Lord was preparing him for a position of great responsibility; he was to be a laborer together with God. Educated in the court of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, he was imperfectly qualified to take his place as the leader of a suffering, tempted people, to help them in their oppression, sympathize with their sufferings, and conduct them through a rough and dangerous desert to the land of promise. The Lord in His providence took Moses from the king’s court and gave him the humble work of a shepherd, that, while caring for the sheep in the desert, he might be trained for the trials and hardships and perils of the wilderness and qualified for the office of a shepherd of his own flock, for a church whose God was the Lord. Forty years was Moses in this training school in the mountains.”—*The Signs of the Times*, August 24, 1891.

“[Moses] had also been fitted for his duties by long years of quiet meditation and communion with God in the wilderness of Horeb.”—*Ibid.*, May 6, 1886.

- b. **Could Israel have entered the Promised Land sooner than they did? What was the underlying reason for God giving them forty years in the desert? Hebrews 12:7–11.**

- c. **What lesson did God teach many in the wilderness? Are we in need of the same lesson? Colossians 3:2.**

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“Spiritual prosperity continues only so long as man depends wholly upon God for wisdom and for perfection of character. And those who feel most their need of dependence upon God are usually those who have the least amount of earthly treasure and human honor on which to depend.”—*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 147.

“We should be continually loosening our hold upon earth, and fastening it upon Heaven.”—*The Signs of the Times*, August 14, 1884.

**4. WHO REAPED THE BENEFITS?**

- a. **Did the adults who left Egypt reap any benefits from their wilderness wanderings? Why or why not? Hebrews 3:8, 9, 17–19.**

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“The wilderness wandering was not only ordained as a judgment upon the rebels and murmurers, but it was to serve as a discipline for the rising generation, preparatory to their entrance into the Promised Land.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 407.

- b. **Could they have had a different experience? Hebrews 3:7; 4:1, 2.**

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“When Moses made known to Israel the will of God concerning them, they seemed sincerely to repent of their sinful conduct. But the Lord knew that they sorrowed because of the result of their evil course, rather than from a deep sense of their ingratitude and disobedience. But their repentance came too late; the just anger of God was awakened, and their doom was pronounced, from which there was no reprieve. When they found that the Lord would not relent in His decree, their self-will again arose, and they declared that they would not return into the wilderness.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 153.

- c. **What is our great need and why? Psalm 4:5.**

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“The conflict before us calls for the exercise of a spirit of self-denial, for distrust of self and for dependence on God alone, for the wise use of every opportunity for the saving of souls.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 74.

“When we have a realization of our weakness, we learn to depend upon a power not inherent. Nothing can take so strong a hold on the heart as the abiding sense of our responsibility to God. Nothing reaches so fully down to the deepest motives of conduct as a sense of the pardoning love of Christ. We are to come in touch with God, then we shall be imbued with His Holy Spirit, that enables us to come in touch with our fellowmen.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 493.

## 5. WHAT ABOUT ME?

- a. How can we know the condition of our heart? Jeremiah 17:9. Whom should we ask to search it? Psalm 139:23, 24.
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- b. If I find that I have been unwilling to follow any of God's counsels, what should I do? Ezekiel 18:30; Psalm 51:6-10.
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“Oh, how many lose the richest blessings that God has in store for them in health and spiritual endowments! There are many souls who wrestle for special victories and special blessings that they may do some great thing. To this end they are always feeling that they must make an agonizing struggle in prayer and tears. When these persons search the Scriptures with prayer to know the expressed will of God, and then do His will from the heart without one reservation or self-indulgence, they will find rest. All the agonizing, all the tears and struggles, will not bring them the blessing they long for. Self must be entirely surrendered. They must do the work that presents itself, appropriating the abundance of the grace of God which is promised to all who ask in faith.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 165.

- c. Are there any promises that I can claim as I seek to know and to do God's will? 2 Chronicles 7:14; Isaiah 41:9, 10; 1 John 1:9.
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## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Is doubt something that I can accept in my Christian experience?
2. What should I do if I am still desiring things of the world?
3. Why does God discipline and teach us and desire to bring change into our life?
4. Even if my experience has not been what it should be, is there hope?
5. Is my repentance real? Am I now willing to make any changes necessary to bring my life into harmony with God's will?

## Time to Contemplate

“Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).

“When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 58.

**Suggested Readings:** *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 359-363.  
*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 140-142.

## 1. NO WICKED THING BEFORE MY EYES

- a. God has several reasons for calling His people to the country. What do your eyes notice when you enter the city? The country? What Bible principle do we need to understand? Psalm 101:3.
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“So great is the wickedness of these cities that much of what the eyes see and the ears hear has a demoralizing influence.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 10, p. 209.

- b. What does God want us to concentrate upon? Philippians 4:8.
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“Instead of dwelling where only the works of men can be seen, where the sights and sounds frequently suggest thoughts of evil, where turmoil and confusion bring weariness and disquietude, go where you can look upon the works of God. Find rest of spirit in the beauty and quietude and peace of nature. Let the eye rest on the green fields, the groves, and the hills. Look up to the blue sky, unobscured by the city's dust and smoke, and breathe the invigorating air of heaven. Go where, apart from the distractions and dissipations of city life, you can give your children your companionship, where you can teach them to learn of God through His works, and train them for lives of integrity and usefulness.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 367.

**2. CALLED BY ITS RIGHT NAME**

- a. **Why is it so important what we look at and think about? 2 Corinthians 3:18.**

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“The mind of a man or woman does not come down in a moment from purity and holiness to depravity, corruption, and crime. It takes time to transform the human to the divine, or to degrade those formed in the image of God to the brutal or the satanic. By beholding we become changed. Though formed in the image of his Maker, man can so educate his mind that sin which he once loathed will become pleasant to him. As he ceases to watch and pray, he ceases to guard the citadel, the heart, and engages in sin and crime. The mind is debased, and it is impossible to elevate it from corruption while it is being educated to enslave the moral and intellectual powers, and bring them in subjection to grosser passions. Constant war against the carnal mind must be maintained; and we must be aided by the refining influence of the grace of God, which will attract the mind upward and habituate it to meditate upon pure and holy things.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 478, 479.

- b. **Why does God want our spiritual eyesight to be improved? Ezekiel 3:17; 44:23; Hebrews 5:14.**

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“In the existing state of religious declension, there is crying need of earnest, faithful Nehemiahs and Ezras—men who will not shun to call sin by its right name, and who will not shrink from vindicating the honor of God. Those upon whom God has laid the burden of His work are not to hold their peace, and cover prevailing evils with a cloak of false charity. Men of courage and energy are needed to expose fashionable sins. Iniquity must not be palliated and excused.”—*The Signs of the Times*, January 24, 1884.

“While the servant of Christ should seek with all patience and love to save sinners, he should on no account give license to sin. He must not allow his perceptions to be dulled by contact with iniquity, or his judgment to be perverted by the world's opinion. By excusing and palliating sin, we lose a sense of its heinous character. Compassion for the erring should not degenerate into indulgence for transgression. In order to preserve the safe mean, the Christian must add to patience godliness. Then he will see as God sees.”—*The Review and Herald*, December 20, 1881.

**3. ARE YOUR EARS TUNED?**

- a. **Not only does Jesus want our spiritual eyesight improved, but also our hearing. What does He promise us if we follow His instruction? Revelation 2:7; Isaiah 30:21.**

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“Jesus does not, after giving us general directions, leave us to guess the way amid bypaths and dangerous passes. He leads us in a straight path; and while we follow Him, our footsteps will not slide. It was Jesus that led ancient Israel, though the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night concealed Him from their view; and in this important period of the world's history, He will as manifestly lead His people. The path is no uncertain one. The way is marked out, and every step is ordered of the Lord.”—*The Signs of the Times*, March 6, 1884.

- b. **How can we foil the attempts of Satan to block our way to progress? James 4:7.**

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

- c. **How do I learn to hear the voice of Christ personally? Hebrews 3:15.**

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“In offering the prayer that Christ has given, we surrender ourselves to the guidance of God, asking Him to lead us in safe paths. We cannot offer this prayer in sincerity, and yet decide to walk in any way of our own choosing. We shall wait for His hand to lead us.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 117, 118.

“We must individually hear Him speaking to the heart. When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God. He bids us, ‘Be still, and know that I am God’ (Psalm 46:10).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 363.

## 4. SLOW DOWN THE PACE

- a. **In today's hectic lifestyle, what is God calling us to do? Psalm 46:10.**

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“We must turn away from a thousand topics that invite attention. There are matters that consume time and arouse inquiry, but end in nothing. The highest interests demand the close attention and energy that are so often given to comparatively insignificant things.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 456.

“But if you do only those things necessary to your temporal comfort and happiness, you will find time to read your Bible with prayerful interest and to perfect a Christian character.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 112.

- b. **Many have so much to do that it is hard to be still. What is God's answer to this? Ephesians 2:10; James 4:15.**

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“Overwork sometimes causes a loss of self-control. But the Lord never compels hurried, complicated movements. Many gather to themselves burdens that the merciful heavenly Father did not place on them. Duties He never designed them to perform chase one another wildly. God desires us to realize that we do not glorify His name when we take so many burdens that we are overtaxed and, becoming heart-weary and brain-weary, chafe and fret and scold. We are to bear only the responsibilities that the Lord gives us, trusting in Him, and thus keeping our hearts pure and sweet and sympathetic.”—*The Review and Herald*, October 31, 1907.

- c. **Are there only bad things that we are to set aside to have quality time with our Lord and our families? Luke 10:38–42; 21:34.**

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“One of the dangers of the present age is devoting too much time to business matters and to unnecessary cares, which we create for ourselves, while the development of Christian character is neglected.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 359.

“The Lord remembers that we are but dust, and He does not expect more of us than we can do. . . . Do not try to crowd two days' work into one.”—*The Signs of the Times*, August 5, 1897.

## 5. OUR EXAMPLE

- a. **Jesus prepared for His public work in many ways. Where and when did He commune with His Father? Isaiah 50:4.**

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“[Jesus] seemed as one who was set apart. His hours of happiness were found when alone with nature and with God. Whenever it was His privilege, He turned aside from the scene of His labor, to go into the fields, to meditate in the green valleys, to hold communion with God on the mountainside or amid the trees of the forest. The early morning often found Him in some secluded place, meditating, searching the Scriptures, or in prayer. From these quiet hours He would return to His home to take up His duties again, and to give an example of patient toil.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 89, 90.

- b. **Even in the midst of pressing needs, with multitudes clamoring for His time and help, what did Jesus do and where? Matthew 14:23.**

- c. **What can we learn from Christ's instruction to His disciples? Mark 6:31.**

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“A great work was before [the disciples], and first of all they must learn that their strength was not in self, but in God. Like Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, like David among the hills of Judea, or Elijah by the brook Cherith, the disciples needed to come apart from the scenes of their busy activity, to commune with Christ, with nature, and with their own hearts.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 360.

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **What must we understand in choosing our dwelling place?**
2. **Why is it important that we be not surrounded by sin?**
3. **Do I know how to hear God's voice leading me daily?**
4. **How can I simplify my life to leave time for the most important things?**
5. **Does Jesus want me to be always busy? What should I change?**

# Imperceptibly Changed

“He hath made every thing beautiful in his time” (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

“I urge our people to make it their lifework to seek for spirituality. Christ is at the door.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 356.

**Suggested Readings:** *Conflict and Courage*, p. 15.  
*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 110–113.  
*My Life Today*, pp. 87, 88.

## Sunday

January 18

### 1. LEARNING FROM OTHERS

- a. **It is said that you can tell what you are like by the friends you choose. What is shown by the place where we choose to dwell? Proverbs 13:20.**

“Like attracts like. Like appreciates like. Holiness allies itself with holiness, faith with faith.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 705.

- b. **In the history of Abraham and Lot, there are some very important lessons. When given the choice of where to live, where did Lot go? Genesis 13:11–13. Was this a wise plan?**

“Evil associations are always detrimental to piety and devotion, and principles that are approved by God may be undermined by such associations. God would have none of us like Lot, who chose a home in a place where he and his family were brought into constant contact with evil. Lot went into Sodom rich; he left with nothing, led by an angel’s hand, while messengers of wrath waited to pour forth the fiery blasts that were to consume the inhabitants of that highly favored city and blot out its entrancing beauty, making bleak and bare a place that God had once made very beautiful.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 89.

“In choosing a home, God would have us consider, first of all, the moral and religious influences that will surround us and our families.”—*Christian Education*, p. 225.

## Monday

January 19

### 2. MOTIVATION

- a. **What was the motivating reason for Lot’s choice of Sodom? Genesis 13:10. What about us—how may the place where we live be affecting us? Luke 8:14.**

“Lot chose Sodom as a place of residence because he looked more to the temporal advantages he would gain than to the moral influences that would surround himself and his family.”—*The Signs of the Times*, May 29, 1884.

- b. **What did Lot lose by living in the city of Sodom? Genesis 19:23–26, 36–38.**

“The dwellers in Sodom were corrupt; vile conversation greeted [Lot’s] ears daily, and his righteous soul was vexed by the violence and crime he was powerless to prevent. His children were becoming like these wicked people, for association with them had perverted their morals. . . . It is Satan’s purpose to attract men and women to the cities, and to gain his object he invents every kind of novelty and amusement, every kind of excitement. And the cities of the earth today are becoming as were the cities before the Flood.”—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 48.

“What did [Lot] gain so far as the things of this world are concerned? His possessions were destroyed, part of his children perished in the destruction of that wicked city, his wife was turned to a pillar of salt by the way, and he himself was saved so as by fire. Nor did the evil results of his selfish choice end here; but the moral corruption of the place was so interwoven with the character of his children that they could not distinguish between good and evil, sin and righteousness.”—*The Signs of the Times*, May 29, 1884.

- c. **What can we learn from Lot so that we do not repeat the same mistake? Proverbs 1:10, 15, 16.**

“If we place ourselves under objectionable influences, can we expect God to work a miracle to undo the results of our wrong course? No, indeed. Get out of the cities as soon as possible.”—*The General Conference Bulletin*, March 30, 1903.

**3. THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY**

- a. **Abraham made a different decision. Where did he make his home? Genesis 13:12.**

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“After the separation from Lot, Abraham again received from the Lord a promise of the whole country. Soon after this he removed to Hebron, pitching his tent under the oaks of Mamre and erecting beside it an altar to the Lord. In the free air of those upland plains, with their olive groves and vineyards, their fields of waving grain, and the wide pasture grounds of the encircling hills, he dwelt, well content with his simple, patriarchal life, and leaving to Lot the perilous luxury of the vale of Sodom.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 133.

- b. **What were the results in his family? Genesis 18:18, 19.**

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“[Abraham’s] godly example and righteous course, united with his faithful instructions to his servants and all his household, led them to fear, love, and reverence the God of Abraham.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 93.

- c. **What can we implement into our own life from Abraham’s example? Proverbs 22:6.**

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“Who will be warned? We say again, Out of the cities. Do not consider it a great deprivation, that you must go into the hills and mountains, but seek for that retirement where you can be alone with God, to learn His will and way.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 355.

“Fathers and mothers should feel that a duty devolves upon them to guide the affections of the youth, that they may be placed upon those who will be suitable companions. They should feel it a duty, by their own teaching and example, with the assisting grace of God, to so mold the character of the children from their earliest years that they will be pure and noble and will be attracted to the good and true. Like attracts like; like appreciates like. Let the love for truth and purity and goodness be early implanted in the soul, and the youth will seek the society of those who possess these characteristics.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 176.

**4. PREPARED FOR DUTY**

- a. **Character is developed by many things, including our surroundings and associations. What was developed in the life of Elisha in his country home? 1 Kings 19:19.**

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“The attention of Elijah was attracted to Elisha, the son of Shaphat, who with the servants was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen. He was educator, director, and worker. Elisha did not live in the thickly populated cities. His father was a tiller of the soil, a farmer. Far from the city and court dissipation, Elisha had received his education. He had been trained in habits of simplicity, of obedience to his parents and to God. Thus in quietude and contentment he was prepared to do the humble work of cultivating the soil. But though of a meek and quiet spirit, Elisha had no changeable character. Integrity and fidelity and the love and fear of God were his. He had the characteristics of a ruler, but with it all was the meekness of one who would serve. His mind had been exercised in the little things, to be faithful in whatsoever he should do; so that if God should call him to act more directly for Him, he would be prepared to hear His voice.

“The surroundings of Elisha’s home were those of wealth; but he realized that in order to obtain an all-round education, he must be a constant worker in any work that needed to be done. He had not consented to be in any respect less informed than his father’s servants. He had learned how to serve first, that he might know how to lead, instruct, and command.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, April 14, 1898.

- b. **How did this prepare him for God’s work? Luke 16:10; 1 Corinthians 10:31.**

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“Elisha waited contentedly, doing his work with fidelity. Day by day, through practical obedience and the divine grace in which he trusted, he obtained rectitude and strength of purpose. While doing all that he possibly could in cooperating with his father in the home firm, he was doing God’s service. He was learning how to cooperate with God.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, April 14, 1898.

## 5. CHANGED FROM WITHIN

- a. As we decide to follow the Lord's plan and live in country places, what will surround us? Ecclesiastes 3:11 (first part); Genesis 1:31.

"I look at these flowers, and every time I see them I think of Eden. They are an expression of God's love for us. Thus He gives us in this world a little taste of Eden. He wants us to delight in the beautiful things of His creation, and to see in them an expression of what He will do for us. He wants us to live where we can have elbow room. His people are not to crowd into the cities. He wants them to take their families out of the cities, that they may better prepare for eternal life. . . . If God controls our minds, what shall we be?—Christian gentlemen and Christian ladies. God can fill our lives with His peace and gladness and joy. He wants His joy to be in us, that our joy may be full."—*The General Conference Bulletin*, March 30, 1903.

- b. As we behold the beautiful things of God's creation, what will happen? Romans 1:20 (first part).

"I urge our people to make it their lifework to seek for spirituality. Christ is at the door. This is why I say to our people, Do not consider it a privation when you are called to leave the cities and move out into the country places. Here there await rich blessings for those who will grasp them. By beholding the scenes of nature, the works of the Creator, by studying God's handiwork, imperceptibly you will be changed into the same image."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 356.

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What should be our first consideration in choosing a home?
2. Will God protect us when we do not follow His counsel?
3. What was different about Abraham's life?
4. How can country living produce a different character?
5. What will happen when we surround ourselves with God's creation coupled with the desire to know Him better?

## The Creator's Plan

**"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever" (2 Peter 3:18).**

"[The people who were under the Lord's direction] were tillers of the soil and keepers of flocks and herds; and in this free, independent life, with its opportunities for labor and study and meditation, they learned of God and taught their children of His works and ways. This was the method of education that God desired to establish in Israel."—*The Adventist Home*, p. 181.

**Suggested Readings:** *Education*, pp. 20–22.  
*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 416–420.

## 1. WHAT IS EDUCATION?

- a. What is included in the meaning of education? Proverbs 9:10.

"True education means more than taking a certain course of study. It is broad. It includes the harmonious development of all the physical powers and the mental faculties. It teaches the love and fear of God and is a preparation for the faithful discharge of life's duties."—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 64.

"The education that brings the student into close relation with the Teacher sent from God is true education."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 514.

- b. What occurs in the counterfeit method of education? Proverbs 14:12.

"There are two classes of educators in the world. One class is those whom God makes channels of light, and the other class is those whom Satan uses as his agents, who are wise to do evil. . . . The other class is in league with the prince of darkness, who is ever on the alert that he may find an opportunity to teach others the knowledge of evil."—*Christian Education*, pp. 70, 71.

**2. ARE YOU LEARNING YOUR ABC'S?**

- a. What is God's specific instruction regarding how to teach our children His will? Deuteronomy 6:6–9.

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“So long as God gives me power to speak to our people, I shall continue to call upon parents to leave the cities and get homes in the country, where they can cultivate the soil and learn from the book of nature the lessons of purity and simplicity. The things of nature are the Lord's silent ministers, given to us to teach us spiritual truths. They speak to us of the love of God and declare the wisdom of the great Master Artist.”—*The Adventist Home*, pp. 146, 147.

“It is God's plan that agriculture shall be connected with the work of our sanitariums and schools. Our youth need the education to be gained from this line of work. It is well, and more than well—it is essential—that efforts be made to carry out the Lord's plan in this respect.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 228.

- b. Why does God choose this way? Psalms 32:8; 37:3.

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“Study in agricultural lines should be the A, B, and C of the education given in our schools. This is the very first work that should be entered upon. Our schools should not depend upon imported produce, for grain and vegetables, and the fruits so essential to health.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 179.

“Students should be given a practical education in agriculture. This will be of inestimable value to many in their future work. The training to be obtained in felling trees and in tilling the soil, as well as in literary lines, is the education that our youth should seek to obtain. Agriculture will open resources for self-support. Other lines of work, adapted to different students, may also be carried on. But the cultivation of the land will bring a special blessing to the workers. We should so train the youth that they will love to engage in the cultivation of the soil.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 311.

“Thorough work is to be done in cultivating the land, and from this the students are to learn how necessary it is to do thorough work in cultivating the garden of the heart.”—*The Review and Herald*, September 1, 1904.

**3. THE CONTRAST**

- a. Describe the contrast between the results of God's method versus the results of the enemy's method. Psalm 128:1–6; Proverbs 3:1–8.

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The education centering in the family was that which prevailed in the days of the patriarchs. For the schools thus established, God provided the conditions most favorable for the development of character. The people who were under His direction still pursued the plan of life that He had appointed in the beginning. Those who departed from God built for themselves cities, and, congregating in them, gloried in the splendor, the luxury, and the vice that make the cities of today the world's pride and its curse. But the men who held fast God's principles of life dwelt among the fields and hills. They were tillers of the soil and keepers of flocks and herds; and in this free, independent life, with its opportunities for labor and study and meditation, they learned of God and taught their children of His works and ways.

“This was the method of education that God desired to establish in Israel.”—*Education*, pp. 33, 34.

- b. Why is the place where God's method of education is to be done so important? Genesis 2:15.

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“Never can the proper education be given to the youth in this country, or any other country, unless they are separated a wide distance from the cities.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 312.

- c. What is included in this method of educating? Ecclesiastes 9:10.

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“In the children and youth an ambition should be awakened to take their exercise in doing something that will be beneficial to themselves and helpful to others. The exercise that develops mind and character, that teaches the hands to be useful, that trains the young to bear their share of life's burdens, is that which gives physical strength and quickens every faculty. And there is a reward in virtuous industry, in the cultivation of the habit of living to do good.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 147.

4. THE RESULTS

- a. What were the results upon society from Joseph’s, David’s, and Daniel’s godly education? Genesis 45:26; 2 Samuel 5:3; Daniel 2:48.

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“It is by the youth and children of today that the future of society is to be determined, and what these youth and children shall be depends upon the home. To the lack of right home training may be traced the larger share of the disease and misery and crime that curse humanity. If the home life were pure and true, if the children who went forth from its care were prepared to meet life’s responsibilities and dangers, what a change would be seen in the world!”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 351.

- b. As we teach our children according to the Creator’s plan, what will be the result in our children’s life? Psalm 147:13, 14; Proverbs 8:32, 33.

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“Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do. The men in whom this power is developed are the men who bear responsibilities, who are leaders in enterprise, and who influence character.”—*Education*, p. 17.

- c. Are there exceptions to the plan? Can we choose to do otherwise and still have good results? 1 Corinthians 15:33; Galatians 6:7.

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“There is not one family in a hundred who will be improved physically, mentally, or spiritually by residing in the city. Faith, hope, love, happiness, can far better be gained in retired places, where there are fields and hills and trees. Take your children away from the sights and sounds of the city, away from the rattle and din of streetcars and teams, and their minds will become more healthy. It will be found easier to bring home to their hearts the truth of the word of God.”—*The Paulson Collection*, p. 14.

5. THE GREATEST TEACHER

- a. What can we learn from Jesus in His childhood? Luke 2:52. Where did He gain His knowledge? Job 12:7, 8.

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“What were the conditions chosen by the infinite Father for His Son? A secluded home in the Galilean hills; a household sustained by honest, self-respecting labor; a life of simplicity; daily conflict with difficulty and hardship; self-sacrifice, economy, and patient, glad-some service; the hour of study at His mother’s side, with the open scroll of Scripture; the quiet of dawn or twilight in the green valley; the holy ministries of nature; the study of creation and providence; and the soul’s communion with God—these were the conditions and opportunities of the early life of Jesus.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 365.

- b. What was the purpose in learning this way? Isaiah 50:4.

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“Apart from the unholy ways of the world, [Jesus] gathered stores of scientific knowledge from nature. He studied the life of plants and animals, and the life of man. . . . Continually He was seeking to draw from things seen illustrations by which to present the living oracles of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 70.

“The parents of Jesus were poor, and dependent upon their daily toil. He was familiar with poverty, self-denial, and privation. This experience was a safeguard to Him. In His industrious life there were no idle moments to invite temptation. No aimless hours opened the way for corrupting associations. So far as possible, He closed the door to the tempter.”—*Ibid.*, p. 72.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is the difference between true and false education?
2. Are agriculture and industry options in God’s method of educating?
3. What is the different result of each method?
4. How will godly education affect our society at large?
5. What did Jesus show by His example regarding the best education?

## First Sabbath Offering

### World Disaster Relief Fund

The recent events which have been taking place are ones of great distress. The earth is shaking in upheaval in preparation for the closing events of this world's history. As these things occur around us (such as poverty, disease, floods, earthquakes), it is necessary to use our means to help those in need.



"I have been instructed to refer our people to the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah. Read this chapter carefully and understand the kind of ministry that will bring life into the churches. The work of the gospel is to be carried by means of our liberality as well as by our labors. When you meet suffering souls who need help, give it to them. When you find those who are hungry, feed them. In doing this you will be working in lines of Christ's ministry. The Master's holy work was a benevolent work. Let our people everywhere be encouraged to have a part in it."—*Welfare Ministry*, p. 29.

"The condition of things in the world shows that troublous times are right upon us. The daily papers are full of indications of a terrible conflict in the near future. Bold robberies are of frequent occurrence. Strikes are common. Thefts and murders are committed on every hand."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 11.

"Poverty and distress in families will come to our knowledge, and afflicted and suffering ones will have to be relieved. We know very little of the human suffering that exists everywhere about us, but as we have opportunity we should be ready to render immediate assistance to those who are under a severe pressure."—*Welfare Ministry*, p. 137.

Please remember this important work on February 7. Let your gift be the means by which suffering is alleviated and help is granted to those who feel helpless. The funds here collected will be used to aid victims around the world.

"The poor are God's heritage. Christ has given His life for them. He calls upon those whom He has appointed to act as His stewards, to give liberally of the means entrusted to them to relieve the poor and to support His work in the earth. The Lord is rich in resources. He has appointed men to act as His treasurers in this world. That which He has given them they are to use in His service."—*Ibid.*, p. 272.

PROJECT 00X

*The General Conference Welfare Department*

## Problems and Solutions

"O Lord, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction" (Jeremiah 16:19).

"If in the providence of God we can secure places away from the cities, the Lord would have us do this. There are troublous times before us."—*Maranatha*, p. 180.

**Suggested Reading:** *Country Living*, pp. 7–12.

### Sunday

February 1

#### 1. WARNINGS

a. **What does God tell us about the times ahead? 2 Timothy 3:1.**

"Perilous times are before us. The whole world will be involved in perplexity and distress."—*Counsels on Health*, p. 503.

b. **In view of the many things to happen in the future, what does God wish us to do? Psalm 91.**

"I am bidden to declare the message that cities full of transgression, and sinful in the extreme, will be destroyed by earthquakes, by fire, by flood. All the world will be warned that there is a God who will display His authority as God. His unseen agencies will cause destruction, devastation, and death. All the accumulated riches will be as nothingness. . . .

"Strictly will the cities of the nations be dealt with, and yet they will not be visited in the extreme of God's indignation, because some souls will yet break away from the delusions of the enemy, and will repent and be converted, while the mass will be treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath."—*Evangelism*, p. 27.

"In harmony with the light given me, I am urging people to come out from the great centers of population. Our cities are increasing in wickedness, and it is becoming more and more evident that those who remain in them unnecessarily do so at the peril of their soul's salvation."—*Sermons and Talks*, vol. 2 p. 289.

**2. THE AIR WE BREATHE**

- a. In view of Romans 12:1, 2, how are we to care for our health?
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“Men and women must be taught to take a careful view of every habit and every practice, and at once put away those things that cause an unhealthy condition of the body and thus cast a dark shadow over the mind.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 137.

- b. Describe a few of God’s special blessings often taken for granted. Job 22:12; 37:14–18. Where can all this be best appreciated?
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“Life in the open air, away from the congested cities, is health-restoring. The pure air has in it health and life. As it is breathed in, it has an invigorating effect on the whole system.”—*Medical Ministry*, p. 232.

“Air is the free blessing of heaven, calculated to electrify the whole system.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 701.

- c. How did the ancient prophet foresee city streets? Nahum 2:4. What were we told many years ago about the city air, and how has this condition worsened since then?
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“The noise and excitement and confusion of the cities, their constrained and artificial life, are most wearisome and exhausting to the sick. The air, laden with smoke and dust, with poisonous gases, and with germs of disease, is a peril to life.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 262.

“[Satan] imparts to the air a deadly taint, and thousands perish by the pestilence.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 590.

“The physical surroundings in the cities are often a peril to health. The constant liability to contact with disease, the prevalence of foul air, impure water, impure food, the crowded, dark, unhealthy dwellings, are some of the many evils to be met. It was not God’s purpose that people should be crowded into cities, huddled together in terraces and tenements.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 365.

**3. BREAD AND WATER**

- a. What warning are we given in Revelation 13:17?
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“The time is fast coming when the controlling power of the labor unions will be very oppressive. Again and again the Lord has instructed that our people are to take their families away from the cities, into the country, where they can raise their own provisions; for in the future the problem of buying and selling will be a very serious one. We should now begin to heed the instruction given us over and over again: Get out of the cities into rural districts, where the houses are not crowded closely together, and where you will be free from the interference of enemies.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 141.

- b. What is the promise of God for the last days? Isaiah 33:16.
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“With proper, intelligent cultivation the earth will yield its treasures for the benefit of man. The mountains and hills are changing; the earth is waxing old like a garment; but the blessing of God, which spreads a table for His people in the wilderness, will never cease.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 178.

“Wait on the Lord and have one purpose in view, to seek the eternal good of all those with whom you are connected, holding fast your integrity in the strength of your God. He will redeem His promise. Your bread shall be provided; your water shall be sure. This means not only temporal bread and water but the bread and water of eternal life.”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 268.

- c. What are the conditions in receiving this promise? Isaiah 33:14, 15; 1 John 2:3, 4.
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“Obedience to God’s commands is the condition upon which His promises are fulfilled.”—*The Signs of the Times*, November 30, 1904.

## 4. IS IT TIME YET?

- a. What can we learn from Lot about delay? **Genesis 19:12–17, 24.**

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“More and more, as time advances, our people will have to leave the cities. For years we have been instructed that our brethren and sisters, and especially families with children, should plan to leave the cities as the way opens before them to do so. Many will have to labor earnestly to help open the way. But until it is possible for them to leave, so long as they remain, they should be most active in doing missionary work, however limited their sphere of influence may be. As they yield their talents and their all to God to be used as He may direct; as they live out their consecration by engaging in practical missionary work wherever opportunity affords, God will bless them with wisdom and discretion, and in His own way and time He will make it possible for them to place themselves where they will not be surrounded constantly with the contaminating influences of modern city life.”—*The Review and Herald*, September 27, 1906.

- b. In the experience of Noah’s day, other warnings are given for those that think they have lots of time. **Genesis 7:13–23.**

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“Ere long there will be such strife and confusion in the cities, that those who wish to leave them will not be able.”—*The General Conference Bulletin*, April 6, 1903.

- c. What signs multiplying around us should prompt us to serious, prayerful consideration and action? **Matthew 24:15–18.**

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“As the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman armies was the signal for flight to the Judean Christians, so the assumption of power on the part of our nation in the decree enforcing the papal sabbath will be a warning to us. It will then be time to leave the large cities, preparatory to leaving the smaller ones for retired homes in secluded places among the mountains. And now, instead of seeking expensive dwellings here, we should be preparing to move to a better country, even a heavenly. Instead of spending our means in self-gratification, we should be studying to economize.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 464, 465.

## 5. ARK OF REFUGE

- a. What can we learn from God’s faithful prior to the Flood? **Hebrews 11:7.**

- b. What ark of refuge do we have now? **Revelation 12:10, 14.**

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“Our homes should be a place of refuge for the tempted youth. Many there are who stand at the parting of the ways. Every influence, every impression, is determining the choice that shapes their destiny both here and hereafter. Evil invites them. Its resorts are made bright and attractive. . . . These youth need a hand stretched out to them in sympathy. . . . If we would . . . invite them to our homes, and surround them with cheering, helpful influences, there are many who would gladly turn their steps into the upward path.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 354, 355.

“As the decree issued by the various rulers of Christendom against commandment keepers shall withdraw the protection of government and abandon them to those who desire their destruction, the people of God will flee from the cities and villages and associate together in companies, dwelling in the most desolate and solitary places.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 626.

- c. From what else will country living protect us? **Isaiah 8:12; Jeremiah 17:5; Psalm 146:3.**

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“The trades unions will be one of the agencies that will bring upon this earth a time of trouble such as has not been since the world began.”—*Spalding and Magan Collection*, p. 260.

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What warnings are we given about what will happen in the future?
2. What needed blessing abounds in the country?
3. How will God provide our bread and water before the crisis?
4. When is the best time to move to the country?
5. Why should we be learning to grow our own food even now?

# The Missionary Work

“And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled” (Luke 14:23).

“Serious times are before us, and there is great need for families to get out of the cities into the country, that the truth may be carried into the byways as well as the highways of the earth.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 178.

**Suggested Reading:** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 85–89.

## Sunday

February 8

### 1. ONLY IN THE CITIES?

- a. **We are all familiar with God’s command to go into the cities to share the gospel. Where else are we commissioned to preach? Acts 1:8; 13:47.**

“Christ instructs His messengers to go also to those in the byways and hedges, to the poor and lowly of the earth. In the courts and lanes of the great cities, in the lonely byways of the country, are families and individuals—perhaps strangers in a strange land—who are without church relations, and who, in their loneliness, come to feel that God has forgotten them. They do not understand what they must do to be saved. Many are sunken in sin. Many are in distress. They are pressed with suffering, want, unbelief, despondency. Disease of every type afflicts them, both in body and in soul. They long to find a solace for their troubles, and Satan tempts them to seek it in lusts and pleasures that lead to ruin and death.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 232, 233.

- b. **Most of the fathers of the faithful mentioned in Hebrews 11 did not live in the city. Whose call did they hear? John 10:2–4, 27.**

“It was the Son of God that gave to our first parents the promise of redemption. It was He who revealed Himself to the patriarchs. Adam . . . understood the gospel.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 366.

## Monday

February 9

### 2. ENOCH’S METHODS

- a. **What principle is key to a victorious Christian life? Ephesians 5:11. How did it affect the patriarch Enoch in his choice of where to live?**

“He [Enoch] did not make his abode with the wicked. . . . He placed himself and his family where the atmosphere would be as pure as possible. Then at times he went forth to the inhabitants of the world with his God-given message. . . . After proclaiming his message, he always took back with him to his place of retirement some who had received the warning.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, pp. 1087, 1088.

- b. **How did Enoch do his missionary work? Mark 16:15.**

“The power of Christ, the crucified Saviour, to give eternal life, should be presented to the people. . . . Enoch was a representative of Christ as surely as was the beloved disciple John. Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him. To him was committed the message of the second coming of Christ. . . . The message preached by Enoch and his translation to heaven were a convincing argument to all who lived in his time.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 392.

“As God’s commandment-keeping people, we must leave the cities. As did Enoch, we must work in the cities but not dwell in them.”—*Evangelism*, pp. 77, 78.

- c. **What was linked with personal effort? 1 Thessalonians 5:17.**

“Distressed by the increasing wickedness of the ungodly, and fearing that their infidelity might lessen his reverence for God, Enoch avoided constant association with them, and spent much time in solitude, giving himself to meditation and prayer. Thus he waited before the Lord, seeking a clearer knowledge of His will, that he might perform it. To him prayer was as the breath of the soul; he lived in the very atmosphere of heaven.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 85.

**3. OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE**

- a. **What missionary opportunities are available in rural areas? Proverbs 20:5; Mark 5:19.**

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“In our planning for the extension of the work, far more than the cities alone must be comprehended. In out-of-the-way places are many, many families that need to be looked after in order to learn whether they understand the work that Jesus is doing for His people.

“Those in the highways are not to be neglected; neither are those in the hedges; and as we journey about from place to place and pass by house after house, we should often inquire, ‘Have the people who are living in these places heard the message? Has the truth of God’s Word been brought to their ears? Do they understand that the end of all things is at hand, and that the judgments of God are impending? Do they realize that every soul has been bought with an infinite price?’ As I meditate upon these things, my heart goes out in deep longing to see the truth carried in its simplicity to the homes of these people along the highways and places far removed from the crowded centers of population. . . . It is our privilege to visit them and acquaint them with God’s love for them and with His wonderful provision for the salvation of their souls.”—*Evangelism*, p. 45.

“The Lord will work through those who will open the Scriptures to the people who have made their homes in these retired places of the country. I appeal to my brethren and sisters to unite in doing this good work, and carry it to completion. . . . The people who live in the country places are often more easily reached than are those who dwell in the thickly populated cities. Here among the scenes of nature, Christian character is more easily formed than amid the wickedness of city life. When the truth takes hold of the hearts of the simple-hearted, and the Spirit of God works upon their minds, leading them to respond to the proclamation of the Word, there will be some raised up to help support the cause of God both by their means and their labors.”—*The Paulson Collection*, pp. 8, 9.

- b. **What else will touch the hearts for Jesus? Luke 9:2.**

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“In our efforts to help the sick, we are to take them away from the cities, where they are continually annoyed by the noise of trains and street cars, and where there is little besides houses to see, to places where they can be surrounded by the scenes of nature, where they can have the blessing of fresh air and sunshine.”—*Manuscript*, vol. 4, p. 281.

**4. ANOTHER METHOD**

- a. **When we think of missionary work, what is the main method that comes to mind? Romans 10:14.**

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- b. **God has also ordained other interesting ways to reach the people. Consider some possibilities. Proverbs 27:18; 31:16, 26; Ecclesiastes 5:9.**

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“Christian farmers can do real missionary work in helping the poor to find homes on the land and in teaching them how to till the soil and make it productive. Teach them how to use the implements of agriculture, how to cultivate various crops, how to plant and care for orchards.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 193.

“Our own homes and surroundings should be object lessons, teaching ways of improvement, so that industry, cleanliness, taste, and refinement may take the place of idleness, uncleanness, coarseness, and disorder. By our lives and example we can help others to discern that which is repulsive in their character or their surroundings, and with Christian courtesy we may encourage improvement. As we manifest an interest in them, we shall find opportunity to teach them how to put their energies to the best use.”—*Ibid.*, p. 196.

- c. **How are we to warn the cities from country places? Luke 14:23.**

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“The cities are to be worked from outposts. Said the messenger of God, ‘Shall not the cities be warned? Yes, not by God’s people living in them, but by their visiting them, to warn them of what is coming upon the earth.’”—*Evangelism*, p. 77.

“Why did our Saviour labor to sow the seed in out-of-the-way places? Why did He travel slowly away from the villages which had been His places for communicating light by opening the Scriptures? There was a world to hear, and some souls would accept the truth who had not yet heard it. Christ traveled slowly and opened the Scriptures in their simplicity to minds that would receive the truth.”—*Ibid.*, p. 47.

5. THE PREREQUISITES

a. What are the prerequisites for missionary work wherever you live? Matthew 22:37-39.

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b. How can we answer the question, "Do I really love my neighbor?" Isaiah 41:6.

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"Wherever the people of God are placed, in the crowded cities, in the villages, or among the country byways, there is a home mission field for which a responsibility is laid upon them by their Lord's commission. They are to take up the duty that lies nearest. First of all is the work in the family; next they should seek to win their neighbors to Christ, and to bring before them the great truths of this time."—*The Review and Herald*, April 23, 1901.

"Those in the highways are not to be neglected; neither are those in the hedges; and as we journey about from place to place and pass by house after house, we should often inquire, 'Have the people who are living in these places heard the message? Has the truth of God's Word been brought to their ears? Do they understand that the end of all things is at hand, and that the judgments of God are impending? Do they realize that every soul has been bought with an infinite price?' As I meditate upon these things, my heart goes out in deep longing to see the truth carried in its simplicity to the homes of these people along the highways and places far removed from the crowded centers of population. . . . It is our privilege to visit them and acquaint them with God's love for them and with His wonderful provision for the salvation of their souls."—*Evangelism*, p. 45.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Where is the gospel to be preached?
2. How was Enoch successful in his missionary work?
3. What is different about dealing with people in country places?
4. How can our country homes be a missionary center?
5. What is most needed before reaching out to others?

# Practically Speaking – How?

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5).

"It will not answer to follow our own judgment and inclination in choosing our surroundings. We should seek counsel of God, and let Him lead. . . . Let us be willing to become pilgrims and strangers here, that we may gain a better country, even a heavenly."—*The Signs of the Times*, May 29, 1884.

**Suggested Readings:** *Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 497-499.  
*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 309, 310.

1. MAJOR DECISIONS

a. Before making any major decisions, what should we do? Isaiah 45:11; Psalm 25:5.

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"The wisdom of any human agent is not sufficient for the planning and devising in this time. Spread every plan before God with fasting, [and] with the humbling of the soul before the Lord Jesus, and commit thy ways unto the Lord. The sure promise is, He will direct thy paths. He is infinite in resources. The Holy One of Israel, who calls the host of heaven by name, and holds the stars of heaven in position, has you individually in His keeping."—*Spalding and Magan Collection*, p. 84.

b. How can we know for certain God's desire for our life? Judges 20:27.

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"There are ways by which the Lord leads and guides His people. God has all wisdom and all knowledge. He has said, [James 1:5 quoted]. . . . The true, earnest seeker will give up his way for God's ways, that he may be guided into paths wherein God may choose to lead him, where the Lord has great blessings awaiting him, although it may seem to short-sighted human beings there is only loss and disaster."—*1888 Materials*, p. 279.

## 2. CAUTIONS

- a. What cautions are given by the Lord and why? Proverbs 14:29; 21:5.

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“Your letter tells me, my brother, that there are many who are stirred deeply to move out of Battle Creek. There is need, great need, of this work being done, and now. Those who have felt at last to make a move, let it not be in a rush, in an excitement, or in a rash manner, or in a way that hereafter they will deeply regret that they did move out.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 361.

“There may be individuals who will make a rush to do something, and enter into some business they know nothing about. This God does not require. Think candidly, prayerfully, studying the Word with all carefulness and prayerfulness, with mind and heart awake to hear the voice of God. . . . To understand the will of God is a great thing. . . .

“Should some move hastily and fly out of Battle Creek, and be brought into discouragement, they will reflect, not upon themselves for moving unadvisedly, but upon others who, they will charge, brought a pressure to bear upon them. All their discomfiture and defeat are charged back upon those who should not be reflected upon.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 362, 363.

- b. What spiritual preparation is vital? Job 37:2; Acts 22:14. What practical preparation is needed? Proverbs 24:27; 1 Thessalonians 3:10; 4:11, 12.

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“No man who can earn his own livelihood has a right to depend on others.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 278.

“Take heed that there shall be no rash movements made in heeding the counsel in moving from Battle Creek. Do nothing without seeking wisdom of God, who hath promised to give liberally to all who ask, and who upbraideth not. All that anyone can do is to advise and counsel, and then leave those who are convicted in regard to duty to move under divine guidance, and with their whole hearts open to learn and obey God.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 361.

## 3. PROMPT, WELL-CONSIDERED ACTION

- a. Name some dangers of which we should be aware. Luke 14:28–30; Acts 24:25; Hebrews 3:15–19.

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“Let everyone take time to consider carefully; and not be like the man in the parable who began to build, and was not able to finish. Not a move should be made but that movement and all that it portends are carefully considered—everything weighed. . . . To every man was given his work according to his several ability. Then let him not move hesitatingly, but firmly, and yet humbly trusting in God.”—*Country Living*, p. 26.

“Beware of procrastination. Do not put off the work of forsaking your sins and seeking purity of heart through Jesus. Here is where thousands upon thousands have erred to their eternal loss. I will not here dwell upon the shortness and uncertainty of life; but there is a terrible danger—a danger not sufficiently understood—in delaying to yield to the pleading voice of God’s Holy Spirit, in choosing to live in sin; for such this delay really is. Sin, however small it may be esteemed, can be indulged in only at the peril of infinite loss. What we do not overcome, will overcome us and work out our destruction.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 32, 33.

“The season for action is spent in hesitancy, thinking that tomorrow will do; but tomorrow is frequently found to be too late.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 453.

- b. When delaying obedience to God, what is the result? Jeremiah 8:20.

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“It requires discernment to distinguish the voice of God. Those who will not act when the Lord calls upon them, but who wait for more certain evidence and more favorable opportunities, will walk in darkness, for the light will be withdrawn. The evidence given one day, if rejected, may never be repeated.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 258.

“Erelong there will be such strife and confusion in the cities, that those who wish to leave them will not be able. We must be preparing for these issues. This is the light that is given me.”—*The Review and Herald*, April 14, 1903.

**4. IN THE MULTITUDE OF COUNSELORS**

- a. Explain how these proverbs can help in our moving to the country. Proverbs 11:14; 15:22; 19:20.

“While some teachers may be strong and efficient in teaching in the lines of Bible doctrines, they will not all be men who have a knowledge of practical life, and can advise perplexed minds with surety and safety. They do not discern the perplexing situation that must necessarily come to every family who shall make a change. Therefore, let all be careful what they say; if they know not the mind of God in some matters, let them never speak from a guess or suppose so. If they know nothing definite, let them say so, and let the individual rely wholly upon God. Let there be much praying done, and even with fasting, that not one shall move in darkness, but move in the light as God is in the light.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 362.

- b. From what type of counselors should we ask advice? Proverbs 12:17.

“O for generals, wise and considerate, well-balanced men, who will be safe advisers, who have some insight into human nature, who know how to direct and counsel in the fear of God.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 362.

- c. What else should we remember about moving to a new location? Ecclesiastes 4:12.

“The lay members of our churches can accomplish a work which, as yet, they have scarcely begun. None should move into new places merely for the sake of worldly advantage; but where there is an opening to obtain a livelihood, let families that are well grounded in the truth enter, one or two families in a place, to work as missionaries. They should feel a love for souls, a burden of labor for them, and should make it a study how to bring them into the truth. They can circulate our publications, hold meetings in their own houses, become acquainted with their neighbors, and invite them to come to the meetings and Bible readings. They can let their light shine in good works.”—*The Review and Herald*, May 15, 1888.

**5. LET HIM LEAD**

- a. How does the Lord Jesus show His direction? Proverbs 6:23; Psalm 73:24.

“There are three ways in which the Lord reveals His will to us, to guide us, and to fit us to guide others. How may we know His voice from that of a stranger? How shall we distinguish it from the voice of a false shepherd? God reveals His will to us in His word, the Holy Scriptures. His voice is also revealed in His providential workings; and it will be recognized if we do not separate our souls from Him by walking in our own ways, doing according to our own wills, and following the promptings of an unsanctified heart, until the senses have become so confused that eternal things are not discerned, and the voice of Satan is so disguised that it is accepted as the voice of God. Another way in which God’s voice is heard is through the appeals of His Holy Spirit, making impressions upon the heart, which will be wrought out in the character. If you are in doubt upon any subject you must first consult the Scriptures. . . . You ought to be able to distinguish His voice.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 512.

- b. How has Christ led others in the past? Acts 8:29; 9:11.

“And all through the generations of the past, Christ has spoken; Christ has led His people, and has been the light of the world.”—*The Review and Herald*, February 18, 1890.

- c. How can we be assured that Christ will lead us today in the same way? Psalm 25:9; Romans 8:14.

“The Lord desires to lead us all gently and consistently.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 1, p. 291.

**PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What must we do before making any major decision?
2. Why must we be very careful and prayerful before moving?
3. How long is it safe to delay doing what God has said?
4. What type of counsel should we seek regarding moving?
5. Do I know how to hear and heed God’s voice?

# What to Look for

“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went” (Hebrews 11:8).

“Not more surely is the place prepared for us in the heavenly mansions than is the special place designated on earth where we are to work for God.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 327.

**Suggested Readings:** *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 363–370.  
*The Adventist Home*, pp. 148–156.

## Sunday

February 22

### 1. HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

- a. **The Lord will direct to homes that are in accordance with His principles of health and well-being. To what type of location will the Lord lead us and why? Matthew 7:24, 25.**

“So far as possible, all buildings intended for human habitation should be placed on high, well-drained ground. This will ensure a dry site and prevent the danger of disease from dampness and miasma.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 274.

- b. **Why are damp areas to be avoided? Matthew 7:26, 27.**

“The emanations from damp, moldy rooms and clothing are poisonous to the system.”—*The Health Reformer*, February 1, 1874.

“This matter [of good ventilation] is often too lightly regarded. Continuous ill-health, serious diseases, and many deaths result from the dampness and malaria of low-lying, ill-drained situations.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 274.

“If we would have our homes the abiding place of health and happiness we must place them above the miasma and fog of the lowlands, and give free entrance to heaven’s life-giving agencies.”—*Ibid.*, p. 275.

## Monday

February 23

### 2. PHYSICAL NEEDS

- a. **What special blessing from heaven should always be available? Ecclesiastes 11:7.**

“In building, many make careful provision for their plants and flowers. The greenhouse or window devoted to their use is warm and sunny; for without warmth, air, and sunshine, plants would not live and flourish. If these conditions are necessary to the life of plants, how much more necessary are they for our own health and that of our families and guests!

“Dispense with heavy curtains, open the windows and the blinds, allow no vines, however beautiful, to shade the windows, and permit no trees to stand so near the house as to shut out the sunshine. The sunlight may fade the drapery and the carpets, and tarnish the picture frames; but it will bring a healthy glow to the cheeks of the children.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 275.

- b. **What else is necessary for our homes and families, even though it is becoming harder to find? Song of Solomon 4:15.**

“[The camp] is a good location, half encircled with a swift-running stream of pure, soft water in a grove of cottonwood trees.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 21, p. 198.

- c. **In light of the events ahead, what else should we consider about our water supply? Proverbs 5:15.**

“Our great anxiety about the place was the matter of an ample supply of water. . . . The water is soft and pure, and we are greatly rejoiced to know that there is an abundant supply. This well is a treasure more valuable than gold or silver or precious stones.”—*The Review and Herald*, March 16, 1905.

“Perfect cleanliness, plenty of sunlight, careful attention to sanitation in every detail of the home life, are essential to freedom from disease and to the cheerfulness and vigor of the inmates of the home.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 276.

## 3. BUILDING BLOCKS

- a. What types of dwelling places are best in damp climates, and why?

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“Brick and stone buildings are not the most desirable for a sanitarium, for they are generally cold and damp. . . . For health a wooden building is preferable to one of brick.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, pp. 83, 84.

- b. What various considerations should be made in preparing a home?

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“In the building of houses it is especially important to secure thorough ventilation and plenty of sunlight. Let there be a current of air and an abundance of light in every room in the house. Sleeping rooms should be so arranged as to have a free circulation of air day and night. No room is fit to be occupied as a sleeping room unless it can be thrown open daily to the air and sunshine. In most countries bedrooms need to be supplied with conveniences for heating, that they may be thoroughly warmed and dried in cold or wet weather.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 274, 275.

“Every room in the house should be thoroughly ventilated every day, and in damp weather should be warmed by fires.”—*The Health Reformer*, February 1, 1874.

- c. Name one aspect of bondage that was described by those in Babylon under captivity. Lamentations 5:4. How did Sister White’s home freely offer a comfortable contrast, even to promote health, for which she was grateful?

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“I thought of our large and convenient house at Battle Creek, with its high and airy rooms, and asked myself the question, Would we not make more rapid progress toward health were we at our own home? I thought of the large reservoir of hot water upon our stove—ready for use at any time, and our immense cistern of soft water, and our filter in the cellar, our various bathing pans, and bathroom fitted up with a stove.”—*The Review and Herald*, February 27, 1866.

## 4. SWEET SIMPLICITY

- a. Why can the humble Christian be thankful, even if starting out in a small dwelling? Psalm 49:16–18; Proverbs 15:25.

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“Parents can secure small homes in the country, with land for cultivation where they can have orchards and where they can raise vegetables and small fruits to take the place of flesh meat, which is so corrupting to the life blood coursing through the veins. On such places the children will not be surrounded with the corrupting influences of city life. God will help His people to find such homes outside the cities.”—*Medical Ministry*, p. 310.

“All through the mountains there were little valleys where families might locate and have a few acres of land for garden or orchard.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 1, p. 334.

- b. What principles do we need to understand in all aspects of setting up our homes? Proverbs 15:16, 17; 24:3; 1 Timothy 6:8.

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“Practice economy in your homes. By many, idols are cherished and worshiped. Put away your idols. Give up your selfish pleasures. Do not, I entreat you, absorb means in embellishing your houses, for it is God’s money, and it will be required of you again.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 450.

“Puritan plainness and simplicity should mark the dwellings and apparel of all who believe the solemn truths for this time. All means needlessly expended in dress or in the adorning of our houses is a waste of our Lord’s money. It is defrauding the cause of God for the gratification of pride.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 189.

“Furnish your home with things plain and simple, things that will bear handling, that can be easily kept clean, and that can be replaced without great expense. By exercising taste, you can make a very simple home attractive and inviting, if love and contentment are there.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 370.

“You are under obligation to God always to be patterns of propriety in your home. . . . Remember that in heaven there is no disorder, and that your home should be a heaven here below. Remember that in doing faithfully from day to day the little things to be done in the home, you are a laborer together with God, perfecting a Christian character.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 110.

5. THE EXTRAS

- a. What else should we think of in viewing potential homes? Colossians 4:15.

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“If we had a suitable place for meeting we could invite the neighbors to come in. But our long, narrow dining room crowded as closely as if packed is not a very suitable place for worship. I am assigned a little space in the corner of the room, and am packed up close to the wall. Nevertheless the Lord Jesus is in the assembly.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 240.

- b. Our planning should also include this vital part of our Christian experience. Romans 12:13.

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“As the decree issued by the various rulers of Christendom against commandment keepers shall withdraw the protection of government and abandon them to those who desire their destruction, the people of God will flee from the cities and villages and associate together in companies, dwelling in the most desolate and solitary places.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 626.

“If you have God’s presence and possess earnest, loving hearts, a humble home made bright with air and sunlight, and cheerful with the welcome of unselfish hospitality, will be to your family and to the weary traveler, a heaven below.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 527.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What type of surroundings are best for our houses?
2. Do you trust that God knows where to find what you need?
3. Are you planning for the time when we cannot use utilities?
4. What is actually needed for the comfort of our families?
5. Do you have the facilities to share your home with others?

First Sabbath Offering

Youth Building Project



Once again this year the General Conference Sabbath School Department, in conjunction with the General Conference Youth Department, is sponsoring a youth building project. Young people from many different countries have volunteered their time to go to needy countries and assist in the building of houses of worship for the brethren.

The last project was conducted in the Caribbean island-nation of Haiti. Young people from Australia, Austria, Canada, Germany, and the United States traveled to help the brethren in this developing Mission. By the grace of God they were able to build a church and renovate the Mission complex. All this while ministering to the needs of the community which they were visiting.

This year the project is being conducted in the Pacific region to assist the island-nation of Papua New Guinea. The brethren here are full of love for the Lord, but their means are very limited. Now young people from around the globe are planning to come to this jungle land and build a proper house of worship for these wonderful souls.

While not all can go on the project, all can assist in the work. Your help is needed. Construction supplies, materials and equipment are needed to finish this task. Please remember the great needs in this part of the world as you give to this special First Sabbath Offering.

*The General Conference Youth Department*

# Financing the Project

**“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33).**

“You have a lesson to learn. . . . It is to make a little go the longest way.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 395.

**Suggested Reading:** *The Adventist Home*, pp. 392–396.

## Sunday

February 29

### 1. WHICH COSTS MORE?

a. **What must be the first consideration in our planning of location? Matthew 6:33.**

b. **We studied earlier about Lot. What should he have considered in his choice of location, especially in behalf of his family? Mark 8:36, 37.**

c. **What principles will make our own life simpler and happier? Philippians 4:11; Proverbs 16:8.**

“Often we lament the scanty resources available; but were Christians thoroughly in earnest, they could multiply the resources a thousandfold. It is selfishness, self-indulgence, that bars the way to our usefulness.

“How much means is expended for things that are mere idols, things that engross time and thought and strength that should be put to a higher use. How much money is wasted on expensive houses and furniture, on selfish pleasures, luxuries, and unwholesome food.”—*The Signs of the Times*, December 15, 1909.

“Oh, that we could be satisfied with less heart longings, less striving for things difficult to obtain wherewith to beautify our homes, while that which God values above jewels, the meek and quiet spirit, is not cherished. The grace of simplicity, meekness, and true affection would make a paradise of the humblest home.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 622.

## Monday

March 1

### 2. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

a. **In order to meet the financial challenges of life, there are some principles we must implement. What are they? Proverbs 10:4; 11:24; 16:20; 28:8.**

“Wisdom must be shown in the matter of purchasing. Money must be made to go as far as possible. By careful management, many dollars may be saved.”—*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 267.

“Had Brother and Sister B been economical managers, denying themselves, they could ere this have had a home of their own, and besides this have had means to draw upon in case of adversity.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 30.

b. **Another aspect of financial success was taught by Jesus in John 6:12. What is it and how can we apply its principle?**

“Christ said, ‘Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost.’ . . . And by precept and example parents should teach their children the science of making a small amount go as far as possible. Many poor families are poor because they spend their money as soon as they receive it.”—*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 269.

“If you have extravagant habits, cut them away from your life. Such habits, indulged, will make you bankrupt for eternity. And habits of economy, industry, and sobriety are, even in this world, a better portion for you and your children than a rich dowry.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 452.

“In order to save the dollars, dimes and pennies must be carefully treasured. Men who have been successful in business have always been economical, persevering, and energetic.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 452.

“If ever there was a time when sacrifices should be made, it is now. My brethren and sisters, practice economy in your homes. Put away the idols that you have placed before God. Give up your selfish pleasures. Do not, I beg of you, spend means in embellishing your houses; for your money belongs to God, and to Him you must give an account for its use. Do not use the Lord’s money to gratify the fancies of your children. Teach them that God has a claim on all they possess, and that nothing can ever cancel this claim.”—*The Review and Herald*, December 24, 1903.

**3. WHAT TO DO WITH DEBT**

- a. **What should be our goal? Romans 13:8. Why? Proverbs 22:7.**

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“You had better live very humbly, and keep a clear conscience. Owe no man anything, and you will not have so much perplexity. Live within your means. Shun debts, as you would a great evil.”—*To Whom It May Concern*, p. 7 (Pamphlet 107, written 1869).

“You must see that one should not manage his affairs in a way that will incur debt. . . . When one becomes involved in debt, he is in one of Satan’s nets, which he sets for souls. . . . Abstracting and using money for any purpose, before it is earned, is a snare.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 392.

- b. **How can we accomplish this? Proverbs 3:9, 10; 12:11; 2 Kings 4:7.**

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“Make a solemn covenant with God that by His blessing you will pay your debts and then owe no man anything if you live on porridge and bread. It is so easy in preparing your table to throw out of your pocket twenty-five cents for extras. Take care of the pennies, and the dollars will take care of themselves. It is the mites here and the mites there that are spent for this, that, and the other that soon run up into dollars. Deny self at least while you are walled in with debts. . . . Do not falter, be discouraged, or turn back. Deny your taste, deny the indulgence of appetite, save your pence, and pay your debts. Work them off as fast as possible. When you can stand forth a free man again, owing no man anything, you will have achieved a great victory.”—*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 257.

- c. **What is often the cause of debt? Luke 16:10.**

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“I was shown that you, my brother and sister, have much to learn. You have not lived within your means. You have not learned to economize. If you earn high wages, you do not know how to make it go as far as possible. . . . Dollars slip from your pocket very easily.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 431, 432.

**4. CAUTION IS NEEDED**

- a. **What cautions need to be heeded as we seek to work diligently to get out of debt or remain out of it? Proverbs 27:23; 1 Corinthians 9:25; Philippians 4:5.**

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“Remember that man must preserve his God-given talent of intelligence by keeping the physical machinery in harmonious action. Daily physical exercise is necessary to the enjoyment of health. It is not work but *overwork*, without periods of rest, that breaks people down, endangering the life forces. Those who overwork soon reach the place where they work in a hopeless way.”—*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 375 (author’s italics).

“I ask you again not to overwork. We must keep a little strength in reserve to meet the emergencies that will arise. Do not, because you have a deposit in the bank, keep drawing on it until you have overdrawn. You and I both need to heed this caution.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 17, p. 310.

“Some will not injure themselves, but others, who are conscientious, will certainly overwork. Periods of rest are necessary for all, especially women.”—*Evangelism*, p. 494.

- b. **What are the results of overwork? 1 Corinthians 9:27.**

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“Bring into the day’s work hopefulness, courage, and amiability. Do not overwork. Better far leave undone some of the things planned for the day’s work than to undo oneself and become overtaxed, losing the courage necessary for the performance of the tasks of the next day. Do not today violate the laws of nature, lest you lose your strength for the day to follow.”—*The Signs of the Times*, May 10, 1905.

“Overwork sometimes causes a loss of self-control. But the Lord never compels hurried, complicated movements. Many gather to themselves burdens that the merciful heavenly Father did not place on them. Duties He never designed them to perform chase one another wildly. God desires us to realize that we do not glorify His name when we take so many burdens that we are overtaxed and, becoming heart-weary and brain-weary, chafe and fret and scold. We are to bear only the responsibilities that the Lord gives us, trusting in Him, and thus keeping our hearts pure and sweet and sympathetic.”—*The Review and Herald*, October 31, 1907.

## 5. THINGS TO REMEMBER

- a. What should we remember as we strive to accomplish God's will? **Philippians 4:19; Luke 12:30; Matthew 6:32.**

"His hand of infinite love is moved to supply our needs."—*This Day With God*, p. 27.

"Though it is a spiritual kingdom, fear not that your needs for this life will be uncared for. If you give yourself to God's service, He who has all power in heaven and earth will provide for your needs."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 99.

- b. As we find our country homes, what else should we always keep in mind? **1 Chronicles 29:14.**

"All that we have is the Lord's. Our money, our time, talents and ourselves, all belong to Him. He has lent them to us, to test and prove us, and to develop what is in our hearts."—*The Signs of the Times*, April 1, 1875.

"All our influence belongs to God. All that we acquire is to be used to His glory. All the property that the Lord has entrusted to us is to be held on the altar of God, to be returned to Him again."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 147.

"Religion and business are not two separate things; they are one. Bible religion is to be interwoven with all we do or say. Divine and human agencies are to combine in temporal as well as in spiritual achievements. They are to be united in all human pursuits, in mechanical and agricultural labors, in mercantile and scientific enterprises. There must be cooperation in everything embraced in Christian activity."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 349, 350.

## Friday

March 5

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Do I have the characteristic of contentment in my life?
2. Am I diligent and careful in my use of money?
3. What is my attitude and practice regarding credit?
4. Have I learned to be balanced in my work and rest?
5. Do I trust that the Lord will provide my needs as I obey His will?

# Don't Bring the City to the Country

**"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit" (Romans 8:5).**

"If [many Sabbathkeepers] would have a true and saving influence, let them live out their profession, show their faith by their righteous works, and make the distinction great between the Christian and the world."—*The Review and Herald*, January 6, 1863.

**Suggested Readings:** *The Review and Herald*, January 6, 1863.  
*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 81, 82.

## Sunday

March 7

## 1. WHAT DO YOU LOVE?

- a. In some areas, it is very easy to bring the city to the country. How is this done and how can we guard against it? **2 Timothy 3:4; 1 Peter 2:11.**

- b. What was Israel's real reason for wanting to go back to Egypt? **Numbers 11:4–6.**

"[Israel] at one time hankered after the leeks and onions of Egypt, and murmured because they did not have everything to gratify their appetites."—*1888 Materials*, p. 922.

- c. How does modern Israel show the same desire for "Egypt"? **1 John 2:15, 16.**

"Why is it so hard to lead a self-denying, humble life? Because professed Christians are not dead to the world. It is easy living after we are dead. But there is a hankering after the leeks and onions of Egypt. They have a disposition to dress and act as much like the world as possible, and yet go to heaven. Such climb up some other way. They do not enter through the narrow way and straight gate."—*The Review and Herald*, January 6, 1863.

## 2. WHICH IS EASIER?

- a. In studying the early history of mankind, where did the righteous often dwell and why? Hebrews 11:38. What occupations did they pursue?

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“Abel had led a pastoral life, dwelling in tents or booths, and the descendants of Seth followed the same course, counting themselves ‘strangers and pilgrims on the earth,’ seeking ‘a better country, that is, an heavenly’ (Hebrews 11:13, 16).”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 81.

- b. Where did the unrighteous choose to make their homes and what were their occupations? Genesis 4:17.

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“[Cain] had first chosen his occupation as a tiller of the soil, and he now founded a city, calling it after the name of his eldest son. He had gone out from the presence of the Lord, cast away the promise of the restored Eden, to seek his possessions and enjoyment in the earth under the curse of sin, thus standing at the head of that great class of men who worship the god of this world. In that which pertains to mere earthly and material progress, his descendants became distinguished.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 81.

- c. What principle did the children of faithful Seth fail to understand and what were the results? Genesis 6:2; 2 Corinthians 6:14–18.

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“For some time the two classes remained separate. The race of Cain, spreading from the place of their first settlement, dispersed over the plains and valleys where the children of Seth had dwelt; and the latter, in order to escape from their contaminating influence, withdrew to the mountains, and there made their home. So long as this separation continued, they maintained the worship of God in its purity. But in the lapse of time they ventured, little by little, to mingle with the inhabitants of the valleys. This association was productive of the worst results. . . . The children of Seth, attracted by the beauty of the daughters of Cain’s descendants, displeased the Lord by intermarrying with them, . . . and they lost their peculiar, holy character.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 81.

## 3. WE HAVE AN ADVERSARY

- a. Does Satan like that we grow closer to Jesus? 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:12.

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“As Satan sees his time is short, he leads [those who are selfish and covetous] on to be more and more selfish, more and more covetous, and then exults as he sees them wrapt up in themselves, close, penurious and selfish. If the eyes of such could be opened, they would see Satan in hellish triumph, exulting over them and laughing at the folly of those who accept his suggestions and enter his snares.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1, p. 181.

- b. Why can we be sure that trials and testings will come to us, even in the country? 1 Peter 4:12.

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“I saw some, with strong faith and agonizing cries, pleading with God. Their countenances were pale and marked with deep anxiety, expressive of their internal struggle. . . . Evil angels crowded around, pressing darkness upon them to shut out Jesus from their view, that their eyes might be drawn to the darkness that surrounded them, and thus they be led to distrust God and murmur against Him. Their only safety was in keeping their eyes directed upward. Angels of God had charge over His people, and as the poisonous atmosphere of evil angels was pressed around these anxious ones, the heavenly angels were continually wafting their wings over them to scatter the thick darkness.”—*Early Writings*, pp. 269, 270.

- c. How should we respond when circumstances occur which tempt us to go back to all the conveniences of city life? Philippians 3:13, 14.

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“It is easier to go in an evil way than to do right; for Satan and his angels are constantly tempting to do wrong.

“But there is One who has promised to hear the needy when they cry. Go to God when tempted to speak or act wrong. Ask Him in faith for strength, and He will give it.”—*An Appeal to the Youth*, p. 58.

## 4. THE BLESSING OF INDUSTRY

- a. Country living calls for something more. What is it? **Genesis 3:19; 2 Thessalonians 3:12.**

- b. How does the Lord consider physical labor? **2 Thessalonians 3:6–13.**

“To the dwellers in Eden was committed the care of the garden, ‘to dress it and to keep it.’ Their occupation was not wearisome, but pleasant and invigorating. God appointed labor as a blessing to man, to occupy his mind, to strengthen his body, and to develop his faculties. In mental and physical activity Adam found one of the highest pleasures of his holy existence. And when, as a result of his disobedience, he was driven from his beautiful home, and forced to struggle with a stubborn soil to gain his daily bread, that very labor, although widely different from his pleasant occupation in the garden, was a safeguard against temptation and a source of happiness. Those who regard work as a curse, attended though it be with weariness and pain, are cherishing an error. The rich often look down with contempt upon the working classes, but this is wholly at variance with God’s purpose in creating man. What are the possessions of even the most wealthy in comparison with the heritage given to the lordly Adam? Yet Adam was not to be idle. Our Creator, who understands what is for man’s happiness, appointed Adam his work. The true joy of life is found only by the working men and women. The angels are diligent workers; they are the ministers of God to the children of men. The Creator has prepared no place for the stagnating practice of indolence.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 50.

- c. How do we consider work? Are we viewing it as described in **1 Corinthians 3:9 and 10:31?**

“The Christian religion is practical. It does not incapacitate one for the faithful discharge of any of life’s essential duties. . . . It is not a religion of inaction that is here sketched, but one that requires the energetic use of all the mental and physical powers.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 419.

## 5. ANOTHER MISTAKE

- a. Lot made a mistake often repeated by our generation. What was it? **Genesis 19:20.**

“Lot, not desiring to flee to the mountains, had pleaded with the Lord to spare a smaller city a few miles from Sodom to which he could flee. What unbelief he manifested! His faith was very weak. . . . The result of their going to Zoar is plainly recorded in the Scriptures. All the cities surrounding Sodom were corrupted with the sins of the Sodomites. . . . Lot could have preserved his family from many evils had he not made his home in that wicked, polluted city. All that Lot and his family did in Sodom could have been done by them, even if they had lived in a place some distance from the city. Enoch walked with God, and yet he did not live in the midst of any city, polluted with every kind of violence and wickedness, as did Lot in Sodom.”—*Southern Union Worker*, October 16, 1913.

- b. Instead of still wanting convenience, pleasures and ease, what should our hearts desire? **Isaiah 30:15; Ecclesiastes 8:5.**

“God calls upon His creatures to turn their attention from the confusion and perplexity around them, and admire His handiwork. As we study His works, angels from heaven will be by our side to enlighten our minds and guard them from Satan’s deceptions. As you look at the wonderful things that God’s hand has made, let your proud, foolish heart feel its dependence and inferiority. How terrible it is when the acknowledgment of God is not made when it should be made! How sad to humble oneself when it is too late!”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 457.

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In what specific ways are the city lifestyle too often brought to the country?
2. Why did God’s people choose the occupations they did?
3. How can we deal with the temptation to want an easy life?
4. How do I look at work? How should I look at it?
5. Where is the best place to enjoy the quiet beauty of God’s creation?

# God's Training Center

**“This is he . . . , The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight” (Matthew 3:3).**

“[The wilderness] was an atmosphere calculated to perfect moral culture and to keep the fear of the Lord continually before [John the Baptist].”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 109.

**Suggested Readings:** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 459, 460.  
*The Youth's Instructor*, January 7, 1897.

## Sunday

March 14

### 1. NOT ONE GREATER

**a. We have studied briefly a few patriarchal examples of country living already, but now let us look at the greatest prophet. What was his name? Matthew 11:11. Why is he described as the forerunner of Christ? Matthew 3:11.**

**b. Where did the Holy Spirit lead John's parents to live? Luke 1:39, 40. Where did John choose to live as he matured? Luke 3:2.**

“An angel from heaven came to instruct [Zacharias and Elisabeth] as to how they should train and educate their child, so as to work in harmony with God in preparing a messenger to announce the coming of Christ. As parents they were to faithfully cooperate with God in forming such a character in John as would fit him to perform the part God had assigned him as a competent worker. . . . The parents might have reasoned that he had a special work to do for the Lord and the Lord would take care of him. But the parents did not thus reason; they moved to a retired place in the country, where their son would not be exposed to the temptations of city life, or induced to depart from the counsel and instruction which they as parents would give him. They acted their part in developing a character in the child that would in every way meet the purpose for which God had designed his life.”—*The Signs of the Times*, April 16, 1896.

## Monday

March 15

### 2. HOW DID JOHN LEARN?

**a. Why were such special instructions given for the upbringing of John? Psalm 86:10, 11.**

“John was called to do a special work; he was to prepare the way of the Lord, to make straight His paths.”—*The Review and Herald*, February 18, 1890.

**b. Why was John placed in the country and educated differently than his contemporaries? Luke 1:13–17; Psalm 32:8.**

“The Lord did not send [John] to the school of the prophets and rabbis. He took him away from the assemblies of men to the desert, that he might learn of nature and nature's God. God did not desire him to have the mold of the priests and rulers. He was called to do a special work.”—*The Review and Herald*, February 18, 1890.

“In the educational system there was no place for that personal experience in which the soul learns for itself the power of a ‘Thus saith the Lord,’ and gains that reliance upon the divine word which alone can bring peace, and power with God. Busied with the round of forms, the students in these schools found no quiet hours in which to commune with God and hear His voice speaking to their hearts. That which the rabbis regarded as superior education was in reality the greatest hindrance to true education. It was opposed to all real development. Under their training, the powers of the youth were repressed, and their minds were cramped and narrowed.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 438, 439.

“He subjected himself to privation and solitude in the wilderness, where he could preserve the sacred sense of the majesty of God by studying His great book of nature and there becoming acquainted with His character as revealed in His wonderful works. It was an atmosphere calculated to perfect moral culture and to keep the fear of the Lord continually before him.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 109.

“The principle of self-denial and self-sacrifice, as revealed in the example of Christ, of John the Baptist, of Daniel and the three worthies, is to pass like a plowshare through hereditary and cultivated habits through all circumstances and surroundings.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 20, p. 114.

## 3. HOW TO SEE SIN

- a. Why did John choose the wilderness after knowing what God's purpose was for him? Psalm 101:3.

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“John did not feel strong enough to stand the great pressure of temptation he would meet in mingling with society. He feared his character would be molded according to the prevailing customs of the Jews; and he chose to separate himself from the world, and make the wilderness his home. He denied himself the ordinary comforts of life; his food was simple; his clothing, a garment made of camel's hair, and confined about the waist by a leathern girdle.”—*The Youth's Instructor*, January 7, 1897.

“John, the forerunner of Christ, did not expose himself to evil conversation and the corrupting influences of the world. He feared the effect upon his conscience, that sin might not appear to him so exceedingly sinful. He chose rather to have his home in the wilderness, where his senses would not be perverted by his surroundings. Should we not learn something from this example of one whom Christ honored and of whom He said: ‘Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist’ (Matthew 11:11)?”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 109.

- b. In order to be prepared to speak against sin, what did John have to do? Leviticus 10:10, 11; Psalm 119:48; Ephesians 5:11; Hebrews 5:14.

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“John had a special work to do for God. He was to deal with the sins and follies of the people. In order to be fitted for this important public work, he must qualify himself in private by seeking heavenly knowledge. He must meditate and pray, and by studying become acquainted with the prophecies and the will of God. . . . In the calm retirement of the wilderness, John became strong in spirit. By his strictly temperate habits he secured to himself physical, mental, and moral health. His discernment was clear, his judgment correct.”—*The Youth's Instructor*, January 7, 1897.

## 4. ANOTHER JOHN THE BAPTIST?

- a. We are told that John is representative of another group of people. Who are they? Malachi 4:5, 6; Revelation 18:1.

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“[John] was a representative of those living in the last days, to whom God has entrusted sacred truths to present before the people, to prepare the way for the second appearing of Christ. And the same principles of temperance which John practiced should be observed by those who in our day are to warn the world of the coming of the Son of man.”—*Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 39.

- b. In what ways are we to imitate the lifestyle of John? Mark 1:1-6.

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“John separated himself from friends and from the luxuries of life. The simplicity of his dress, a garment woven of camel's hair, was a standing rebuke to the extravagance and display of the Jewish priests, and of the people generally. His diet, purely vegetable, of locusts and wild honey, was a rebuke to the indulgence of appetite and the gluttony that everywhere prevailed. . . . The great subject of reform is to be agitated, and the public mind is to be stirred. Temperance in all things is to be connected with the message, to turn the people of God from their idolatry, their gluttony, and their extravagance in dress and other things.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 62.

“John the Baptist was a man filled with the Holy Ghost from his birth, and if there was anyone who could remain unaffected by the corrupting influences of the age in which he lived, it was surely he. Yet he did not venture to trust his strength; he separated himself from his friends and relatives, that his natural affections might not prove a snare to him. He would not place himself unnecessarily in the way of temptation nor where the luxuries or even the conveniences of life would lead him to indulge in ease or to gratify his appetite, and thus lessen his physical and mental strength. By such a course the important mission upon which he came would have failed of its accomplishment.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 108.

## 5. THE LAST WORK

- a. What is the last work for the people of God on earth? Matthew 3:1, 2; 2 Timothy 4:2.

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“In this age, just prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, such a work as that of John is to be done. God calls for men who will prepare a people to stand in the great day of the Lord. . . . As a people who believe in Christ’s soon appearing, we have a message to bear—‘Prepare to meet thy God’ (Amos 4:12). Our message must be as direct as was the message of John. He rebuked kings for their iniquity. Notwithstanding that his life was imperiled, he did not hesitate to declare God’s word. And our work in this age must be done as faithfully.”—*Maranatha*, p. 116.

- b. What will be needed to be able to fulfill our commission? 2 Timothy 2:3, 4; Mark 13:13.

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“The season of distress and anguish before us will require a faith that can endure weariness, delay, and hunger—a faith that will not faint though severely tried.” —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 369.

“In order to give such a message as John gave, we must have a spiritual experience like his.”—*Maranatha*, p. 116.

“We may refuse to be corrupted, and place ourselves where evil association shall not corrupt our hearts. Individually the youth should seek for association with those who are toiling upward with unflinching steps.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 234.

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Where was the home of the forerunner of Christ?
2. What was gained by his dwelling in the wilderness?
3. Why is it important for us to be separated from sin?
4. What are the characteristics of that special group of people who are preparing for the second coming of Jesus?
5. How will the dwelling place help or hinder the preparation for the last work?

## Preparing for Heaven

“As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9).

“Heaven is where Christ is. Heaven would not be heaven to those who love Christ if He were not there. Are we individually forming characters that will be meet for the society of Christ and the heavenly angels?”—*The Review and Herald*, October 19, 1897.

**Suggested Reading:** *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 68–74.

## 1. PREPARATION TIME

- a. Why are we given time to live on this place called Earth? Ephesians 4:13.

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“We cannot enter heaven with any deformity or imperfection of character, and we must be fitted for heaven now in this probationary life.”—*The Signs of the Times*, February 15, 1892.

“Every moment of our probationary time is precious; for it is our time for character building. We should give most diligent heed to the culture of our spiritual nature. We should watch our hearts, guarding our thoughts lest impurity tarnish the soul. We should seek to keep every faculty of the mind in the very best condition, that we may serve God to the extent of our ability. Nothing should be permitted to interrupt our communion with God.”—*The Review and Herald*, October 31, 1912.

- b. What is the real goal before us, and how are we to prepare for it every single day? Revelation 3:12; Galatians 2:20.

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“The propensities that control the natural heart must be subdued by the grace of Christ before fallen man is fitted to enter heaven and enjoy the society of the pure, holy angels.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 273.

**2. THE ATMOSPHERE OF HEAVEN**

- a. **What is Heaven like? 1 Corinthians 2:9; Revelation 21:3.**
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- b. **Where can we possibly prepare for that kind of atmosphere? Psalm 23:1, 2.**
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“To many of those living in the cities who have not a spot of green grass to set their feet upon, . . . if these could be taken to some farming district, surrounded with the green fields, the woods and hills and brooks, the clear skies and the fresh, pure air of the country, it would seem almost like heaven.

“Cut off to a great degree from contact with and dependence upon men, and separated from the world’s corrupting maxims and customs and excitements, they would come nearer to the heart of nature. God’s presence would be more real to them. Many would learn the lesson of dependence upon Him. Through nature they would hear His voice speaking to their hearts of His peace and love, and mind and soul and body would respond to the healing, life-giving power.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 191, 192.

- c. **Though we are reminded daily of the effects of sin, what is speaking to our senses of the love of Christ? Psalm 104.**
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“Nature speaks to our senses without ceasing. The open heart will be impressed with the love and glory of God as revealed through the works of His hands. The listening ear can hear and understand the communications of God through the things of nature. The green fields, the lofty trees, the buds and flowers, the passing cloud, the falling rain, the babbling brook, the glories of the heavens, speak to our hearts, and invite us to become acquainted with Him who made them all.”—*Christian Education*, p. 54.

“The constant contact with the mystery of life and the loveliness of nature, as well as the tenderness called forth in ministering to these beautiful objects of God’s creation, tends to quicken the mind and refine and elevate the character; and the lessons taught prepare the worker to deal more successfully with other minds.”—*Education*, p. 112.

**3. LESSONS IN ABUNDANCE**

- a. **What did Jesus use to teach us grand and wonderful spiritual truths? Matthew 6:26, 28; John 3:8; 10:14.**
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“Many are the ways in which God is seeking to make Himself known to us and to bring us into communion with Him. Nature speaks to our senses without ceasing. The open heart will be impressed with the love and glory of God as revealed through the works of His hands. The listening ear can hear and understand the communications of God through the things of nature. The green fields, the lofty trees, the buds and flowers, the passing cloud, the falling rain, the babbling brook, the glories of the heavens, speak to our hearts, and invite us to become acquainted with him who made them all.

“Our Saviour bound up His precious lessons with the things of nature. The trees, the birds, the flowers of the valleys, the hills, the lakes, and the beautiful heavens, as well as the incidents and surroundings of daily life, were all linked with the words of truth, that His lessons might thus be often recalled to mind, even amid the busy cares of man’s life of toil.”—*Christian Education*, p. 54.

- b. **What lesson of Jesus prophesied the approaching storm? Matthew 7:24–27; 1 Corinthians 10:4.**
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“God has revealed what is to take place in the last days, that His people may be prepared to stand against the tempest of opposition and wrath. Those who have been warned of the events before them are not to sit in calm expectation of the coming storm, comforting themselves that the Lord will shelter His faithful ones in the day of trouble.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 325.

“You need to watch with the greatest care how you build. There is a storm coming which will test your hope to the utmost. You should dig deep and lay your foundation sure. . . .

“Be careful . . . that your foundation is solid rock, that you are riveted to it, Christ being that Rock.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 414.

**4. PROTECTION IN THE STORM**

- a. **How can we be sure we are building on the Rock, Christ Jesus? 1 John 5:14, 15.**

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“The important future is before us. To meet its trials and temptations, and to perform its duties, will require great faith, energy, and perseverance. But we may triumph gloriously; for not one watching, praying, believing soul will be ensnared by the devices of the enemy. All heaven is interested in our welfare, and waits our demand upon its wisdom and strength. Every opposing influence, whether open or secret, may be successfully resisted, ‘not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts’ (Zechariah 4:6). God is just as willing now as anciently to work through human efforts, and to accomplish great things through weak instrumentalities.”—*The Watchman*, December 25, 1906.

“It is not enough, [Christ] says, for you to hear My words. By obedience you must make them the foundation of your character. Self is but shifting sand. If you build upon human theories and inventions, your house will fall. By the winds of temptation, the tempests of trial, it will be swept away. But these principles that I have given will endure. Receive Me; build on My words.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 314.

- b. **Will God protect us when we do not follow His counsel? 1 Samuel 2:30; Mark 7:6. What about if we do heed it?**

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“The baleful influence of sin poisons the life of the soul. Our only safety is in separation from those who live in its darkness. The Lord has enjoined upon us to come out from among them and be separate, and to touch not the unclean thing, and He will receive us and will be a Father unto us, and we shall be His sons and daughters. If we wish to be adopted into the family of God, to become children of the heavenly King, we must comply with His conditions; we must come out from the world and stand as a peculiar people before the Lord, obeying His precepts and serving Him.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 109, 110.

“Suppose that residence in the country or in a village is not as favorable for obtaining a livelihood, not as conducive to advancement in temporal things; would not God honor your trust in Him? and would not self-denial for Christ's sake make your lot a blessed one?”—*The Review and Herald*, January 20, 1891.

**5. THE CALL**

- a. **God has mercifully given a message to His people. What is it? 2 Corinthians 6:17.**

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“Before the overflowing scourge shall come upon the dwellers of the earth, the Lord calls upon all who are Israelites indeed to prepare for that event. To parents He sends the warning cry, Gather your children into your own houses; gather them away from those who are disregarding the commandments of God, who are teaching and practicing evil. Get out of the large cities as fast as possible. Establish church schools. Give your children the word of God as the foundation of all their education.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 195.

“The Lord’s message was, ‘Out of the cities; break up the continual temptation to engage in commercial business, which has been such a great injury to the work.’ A failure to heed the messages given, and repeated for years, has been a decided injury to the souls of many.”—*The Publishing Ministry*, p. 165.

- b. **What should be our willing response to His call to our heart? Joshua 24:15; Isaiah 6:8.**

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“The world must hear the warning. When the call comes, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ send back the answer clear and distinct, ‘Here am I; send me’ (Isaiah 6:8).”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 333.

**PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. **What preparation is needed before we can meet Christ?**
2. **What is God’s method of developing Christ’s character in us?**
3. **Why did Jesus use nature to teach?**
4. **Will God protect us in the storm when we fail to obey Him?**
5. **How will I respond to God’s call to country living?**

# FIRST SABBATH OFFERINGS



**JANUARY 3**  
Texas  
(See p. 4.)

**FEBRUARY 7**  
World Disaster Relief  
Fund (See p. 30.)



**MARCH 6**  
Papua New Guinea  
(See p. 51.)