



SABBATH BIBLE LESSONS

Senior Division

The Christian's *Relationships*

Vol. 93, No. 2

April–June, 2017

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Foreword

Our characters are influenced to a great degree by the relationships that we form. God should be the most important influence in our life because our relationship with Him affects all our other relationships. God is our Creator, and He wants to be our Saviour and our Guide through life.

“Without a living faith in Christ as a personal Saviour, it is impossible to make our influence felt in a skeptical world. We cannot give to others that which we do not ourselves possess. It is in proportion to our own devotion and consecration to Christ that we exert an influence for the blessing and uplifting of mankind. If there is no actual service, no genuine love, no reality of experience, there is no power to help, no connection with heaven, no savor of Christ in the life. Unless the Holy Spirit can use us as agents through whom to communicate to the world the truth as it is in Jesus, we are as salt that has lost its savor. By our lack of the grace of Christ we testify to the world that the truth which we claim to believe has no sanctifying power; and thus, so far as our influence goes, we make of no effect the word of God.”—*The Review and Herald*, July 27, 1905.

“Our life is to be bound up with the life of Christ; we are to draw constantly from Him, partaking of Him, the living Bread that came down from heaven, drawing from a fountain ever fresh, ever giving forth its abundant treasures. If we keep the Lord ever before us, allowing our hearts to go out in thanksgiving and praise to Him, we shall have a continual freshness in our religious life. Our prayers will take the form of a conversation with God as we would talk with a friend. He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Often there will come to us a sweet joyful sense of the presence of Jesus. Often our hearts will burn within us as He draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch. When this is in truth the experience of the Christian, there is seen in his life a simplicity, a humility, meekness, and lowliness of heart, that show to all with whom he associates that he has been with Jesus and learned of Him.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 129, 130.

As we accept Jesus as our personal Saviour and Friend, He will guide us in all our other relationships. He will help us to choose our close friends wisely. We will be a blessing to our friends and family. We will work together with our brothers and sisters in the faith in reaching out to others. We will respect law and order. May God help us as we study this quarter about *The Christian's Relationships* to learn how to build positive relationships with God and those around us, revealing the love of God toward humanity.

The General Conference Sabbath School Department

First Sabbath Offering for the Moscow Church expansion

Moscow is the capital of Russia, the largest country in the world and the ninth most populous. Surveys show that around 70% of the population is Christian, with the Orthodox Church being the largest denomination. The megacity of Moscow itself has a population of more than 20 million people. The city is the largest transit junction of Russia and her neighboring countries. Every day the ways of millions of people from different countries and continents cross here.



The work of reformation began here during the communist era when the ministers were temporarily residing in this city. Having no premises for the meetings, the believers had to gather in private apartments.

“A great work is committed to those who present the truth in . . . Russia, the home of millions . . . whose souls are as precious in the sight of God as our own, who know nothing of the special truths for this time.”—*Evangelism*, p. 408.

In 2001, a minister with his family was sent to work in this region. In 2002 the believers purchased a piece of land in Moscow on which was situated an unfinished building. That same year they completed the construction of the building and dedicated it as a house of worship. As the work developed, the property became the headquarters of the Russian Field. From this city the work is carried in the Middle Asian countries, Belarus, and Latvia.

The work is developing in this region and as many visitors, unbelievers, and representatives of other denominations are visiting our meetings, the church cannot seat all those who attend. For this reason it was decided to expand the church.

At present we are building a larger church on the same piece of land. But our means are insufficient to fulfill the project. We need your prayers and your financial support. Many people will be able to come to this church thanks to your participation! Together with you we want to see the fulfillment of God’s promises to regard and bless every gift and hear every prayer! We are grateful to you for your help and support!

Your brothers and sisters in Moscow

The Creator and His Creation

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth” (Genesis 1:26).

“After the earth with its teeming animal and vegetable life had been called into existence, man, the crowning work of the Creator, and the one for whom the beautiful earth had been fitted up, was brought upon the stage of action.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 44.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 33–51.

Sunday

March 26

1. THE JOY OF CREATION

- a. How does the Bible describe everything that God had made? Genesis 1:31.

“As the earth came forth from the hand of its Maker, it was exceedingly beautiful. Its surface was diversified with mountains, . . . noble rivers and lovely lakes. . . . Graceful shrubs and delicate flowers greeted the eye at every turn. . . . The entire landscape outvied in beauty the decorated grounds of the proudest palace. The angelic host viewed the scene with delight, and rejoiced at the wonderful works of God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 44.

- b. What should lead us to praise God? Psalm 139:14.
-

“The real evidence of a living God is not merely in theory; it is in the conviction that God has written in our hearts, illuminated and explained by His word. It is in the living power in His created works, seen by the eye which the Holy Spirit has enlightened.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 325.

2. THE PURPOSE OF OUR WORLD

- a. What does Scripture teach regarding the origin of all created things? Genesis 2:4; Colossians 1:16.
-

“The Sovereign of the universe was not alone in His work of beneficence. He had an associate—a coworker who could appreciate His purposes, and could share His joy in giving happiness to created beings. . . . The Father wrought by His Son in the creation of all heavenly beings.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 34.

“God spoke, and His words created His works in the natural world. God’s creation is but a reservoir of means made ready for Him to employ instantly to do His pleasure.”—*Lift Him Up*, p. 66.

- b. For what purpose did God create the world? Isaiah 45:18; Revelation 4:11.
-

“God created the earth to be the abode of holy, happy beings. That purpose will be fulfilled when, renewed by the power of God and freed from sin and sorrow, it shall become the eternal home of the redeemed.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 540.

- c. How were Adam and Eve created, and what plan did God have for them? Genesis 1:26; Psalm 8:5, 6.
-

“Created to be ‘the image and glory of God’ (1 Corinthians 11:7), Adam and Eve had received endowments not unworthy of their high destiny. Graceful and symmetrical in form, regular and beautiful in feature, their countenances glowing with the tint of health and the light of joy and hope, they bore in outward resemblance the likeness of their Maker. Nor was this likeness manifest in the physical nature only. Every faculty of mind and soul reflected the Creator’s glory. Endowed with high mental and spiritual gifts, Adam and Eve were made but ‘little lower than the angels’ (Hebrews 2:7), that they might not only discern the wonders of the visible universe, but comprehend moral responsibilities and obligations.”—*Education*, p. 20.

3. JEHOVAH, THE TRUE AND LIVING GOD

- a. How does the Lord, the true God, differ from other gods? Jeremiah 10:11, 12.
-

“On every leaf of the forest or stone of the mountains, in every shining star, in earth and air and sky, God’s name was written. The order and harmony of creation spoke to them of infinite wisdom and power.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 51.

- b. Why does God deserve all our obedience and reverence above all other things? Isaiah 42:5; 45:5; Psalm 139:13, 15, 16.
-

“Jehovah, the eternal, self-existent, uncreated One, Himself the Source and Sustainer of all, is alone entitled to supreme reverence and worship. Man is forbidden to give to any other object the first place in his affections or his service. Whatever we cherish that tends to lessen our love for God or to interfere with the service due Him, of that do we make a god.”—*Ibid.*, p. 305.

- c. What can we learn from the attitude of the angels towards God? Isaiah 6:1–3; Psalm 96:8, 4.
-

“Humility and reverence should characterize the deportment of all who come into the presence of God. In the name of Jesus we may come before Him with confidence, but we must not approach Him with the boldness of presumption, as though He were on a level with ourselves. There are those who address the great and all-powerful and holy God, who dwelleth in light unapproachable, as they would address an equal, or even an inferior. There are those who conduct themselves in His house as they would not presume to do in the audience chamber of an earthly ruler. These should remember that they are in His sight whom seraphim adore, before whom angels veil their faces. God is greatly to be revered; all who truly realize His presence will bow in humility before Him.”—*Ibid.*, p. 252.

“Supreme love to God will be shown by every man or woman who is a true follower of Jesus. . . . We are His creatures, the work of His hands, and He is justly entitled to reverence, honor, and love.”—*The Signs of the Times*, March 4, 1897.

4. GOD THE LIFE-GIVER

- a. How did God give life to the first man? Genesis 2:7. Because of His ability to give life, how is God described? Psalm 36:9.

“When God had made man in His image, the human form was perfect in all its arrangements, but it was without life. Then a personal, self-existing God breathed into that form the breath of life, and man became a living, intelligent being. All parts of the human organism were set in action.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 415.

“The beating heart, the throbbing pulse, every nerve and muscle in the living organism, is kept in order and activity by the power of an ever-present God.”—*Ibid.*, p. 417.

- b. What did Abraham believe about God’s ability to restore life? Hebrews 11:19.

“As [father and son] came to the place which God had pointed out to Abraham, he built there an altar and laid the wood in order, ready for the sacrifice, and then informed Isaac of the command of God to offer him as a burnt offering. He repeated to him the promise that God several times had made to him, that through Isaac he should become a great nation, and that in performing the command of God in slaying him, God would fulfill His promise, for He was able to raise him from the dead.”—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 82.

- c. How will this power be manifested in the future? Romans 8:11; 1 Corinthians 15:51–54.

“The earth mightily shook as the voice of the Son of God called forth the sleeping saints. They responded to the call and came forth clothed with glorious immortality. . . . Then the living saints and the risen ones raised their voices in a long, transporting shout of victory. Those bodies that had gone down into the grave bearing the marks of disease and death came up in immortal health and vigor. The living saints are changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and caught up with the risen ones, and together they meet their Lord in the air.”—*Early Writings*, p. 287.

5. CREATED AS PART OF GOD'S FAMILY

- a. How is Adam's relationship to God described? Genesis 1:27; Luke 3:38. What was his nature like before the Fall?

"Man was to bear God's image, both in outward resemblance and in character. Christ alone is 'the express image' (Hebrews 1:3) of the Father; but man was formed in the likeness of God. His nature was in harmony with the will of God. His mind was capable of comprehending divine things. His affections were pure; his appetites and passions were under the control of reason. He was holy and happy in bearing the image of God and in perfect obedience to His will.

"As man came forth from the hand of his Creator, he was of lofty stature and perfect symmetry. His countenance bore the ruddy tint of health and glowed with the light of life and joy. Adam's height was much greater than that of men who now inhabit the earth. Eve was somewhat less in stature; yet her form was noble and full of beauty."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 45.

- b. What freedom does God give to every soul? Romans 14:12, 5 (last part).

"The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all intelligent beings depends upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love—service that springs from an appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced obedience; and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service."—*Ibid.*, p. 34.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How does understanding God more fully affect our relationship with Him?
2. What was God's purpose in the creation?
3. How will obedience to God and His will help us reverence Him?
4. How is our very existence dependent upon Jehovah?
5. Why has God given us the freedom of choice in our relationship with Him?

Jesus Christ: Our Example

“I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you” (John 13:15).

“Love for God, zeal for His glory, and love for fallen humanity, brought Jesus to earth to suffer and to die. This was the controlling power in His life. This principle He bids us adopt.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 330.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 71–74, 426–431.

Sunday

April 2

1. JESUS AS A MAN

- a. What qualities did Jesus exhibit while on earth? **Philippians 2:8; Luke 22:42.**

“Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, [Christ] represented the character of God, and was constantly engaged in service for God and man. . . . As Jesus was in human nature, so God means His followers to be. In His strength we are to live the life of purity and nobility which the Saviour lived.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 21.

- b. What was the focus of Jesus’ life on earth? **John 17:4; 4:34; Psalm 40:8.**

“[Jesus] endured every trial to which we are subject. And He exercised in His own behalf no power that is not freely offered to us. As man, He met temptation, and overcame in the strength given Him from God. He says, ‘I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart.’ Psalm 40:8. As He went about doing good, and healing all who were afflicted by Satan, He made plain to men the character of God’s law and the nature of His service. His life testifies that it is possible for us also to obey the law of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 24.

2. PUTTING GOD FIRST

- a. **What should we make the highest priority in our life? Matthew 6:33; 1 Thessalonians 2:11, 12.**
-

“The yoke that binds to service is the law of God. The great law of love revealed in Eden, proclaimed upon Sinai, and in the new covenant written in the heart, is that which binds the human worker to the will of God. . . . ‘I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me’ (John 6:38). . . .

“[Christ] bids those who are serving the world] seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and His promise is that all things needful to them for this life shall be added.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 329, 330.

- b. **What does it take to follow God fully? Jeremiah 29:13; Luke 14:33; Galatians 2:20.**
-

“Seek God with all the heart. . . . In sincerity, in soul hunger, cry after God. Wrestle with the heavenly agencies until you have the victory. Put your whole being into the Lord’s hands, soul, body, and spirit, and resolve to be His loving, consecrated agency, moved by His will, controlled by His mind, infused by His Spirit.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 131.

- c. **What will be the positive result when we enter into a deep relationship with God, surrendering ourselves fully to Him? Isaiah 26:3; Matthew 5:16.**
-

“Those who take Christ at His word, and surrender their souls to His keeping, their lives to His ordering, will find peace and quietude. Nothing of the world can make them sad when Jesus makes them glad by His presence. In perfect acquiescence there is perfect rest. . . . Our lives may seem a tangle; but as we commit ourselves to the wise Master Worker, He will bring out the pattern of life and character that will be to His own glory.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 331.

3. A LIFE OF LOVING SERVICE

- a. What are the two basic principles of Christianity? Matthew 22:36–40. How are we to express our love for our neighbor? Luke 10:29–37.
-

“In the story of the good Samaritan, Christ illustrates the nature of true religion. He shows that it consists not in systems, creeds, or rites, but in the performance of loving deeds, in bringing the greatest good to others, in genuine goodness. . . .

“Man’s destiny will be determined by his obedience to the whole law. Supreme love to God and impartial love to man are the principles to be wrought out in the life.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 497, 498.

- b. What should be our basis for a life of service to the world? 1 John 4:11, 12; 3:16–18.
-

“A thoroughgoing Christian draws his motives of action from his deep heart love for his Master. Up through the roots of his affection for Christ springs an unselfish interest in his brethren. Love . . . illuminates the countenance and subdues the voice; it refines and elevates the whole being.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 490.

- c. What was Jesus’ life mission? Luke 19:10.
-

“From His earliest years [Jesus] was possessed of one purpose; He lived to bless others.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 70.

“Jesus worked to relieve every case of suffering that He saw. He had little money to give, but He often denied Himself of food in order to relieve those who appeared more needy than He. . . . He possessed a tact which none of [His brothers] had, or desired to have. When they spoke harshly to poor, degraded beings, Jesus sought out these very ones, and spoke to them words of encouragement. To those who were in need He would give a cup of cold water, and would quietly place His own meal in their hands. As He relieved their sufferings, the truths He taught were associated with His acts of mercy, and were thus riveted in the memory.”—*Ibid.*, p. 87.

4. WORKING FOR THE SPIRITUAL NEED OF OTHERS

- a. What character trait do we need in order to minister to others as Jesus did? Philippians 2:5–8; Luke 22:26; Matthew 23:11, 12.
-

“In His life and lessons, Christ has given a perfect exemplification of the unselfish ministry which has its origin in God. God does not live for Himself. By creating the world, and by upholding all things, He is constantly ministering for others. ‘He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.’ Matthew 5:45. This ideal of ministry God has committed to His Son. Jesus was given to stand at the head of humanity, that by His example He might teach what it means to minister. His whole life was under a law of service. He served all, ministered to all. Thus He lived the law of God, and by His example showed how we are to obey it.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 649.

- b. What group of people did Jesus especially encourage to come to Him for help? Mark 10:13–16.
-

“In the children who were brought in contact with Him, Jesus saw the men and women who should be heirs of His grace and subjects of His kingdom. . . . In His teaching He came down to their level. He, the Majesty of heaven, did not disdain to answer their questions and simplify His important lessons to meet their childish understanding. He planted in their minds the seeds of truth, which in after years would spring up, and bear fruit unto eternal life.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 512–515.

- c. With whom else does Jesus want us to labor? Luke 5:32.
-

“[The Redeemer] came to represent the Father in bringing the message of hope and salvation to our world. He lived not for Himself; He did not consult His own ease and pleasure; He did not yield to temptation; and He condescended to die in order that sinful men might be redeemed, and live eternally in the mansions He was to prepare for them. His mission was to teach souls who were dying in their sins.

“This work Christ has laid upon every one whom He has purchased.”—*Lift Him Up*, p. 208.

5. GOD WORKING THROUGH US

- a. What was the source of Jesus' power? John 14:10.

"If Christ is dwelling in our hearts, He will work in us 'both to will and to do of His good pleasure.' Philippians 2:13. We shall work as He worked; we shall manifest the same spirit. And thus, loving Him and abiding in Him, we shall 'grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.' Ephesians 4:15."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 75.

- b. How can we too have this experience, and what will be the result? John 15:7.

"'If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.' When you pray, present this promise. It is our privilege to come to Him with holy boldness. As in sincerity we ask Him to let His light shine upon us, He will hear and answer us. But we must live in harmony with our prayers. They are of no avail if we walk contrary to them."—*Child Guidance*, p. 499.

"Be sure that Christ is in you, that your heart is broken and submissive and humble. God will accept only the humble and contrite. Heaven is worth a lifelong, persevering effort; yes, it is worth everything. God will help you in your efforts if you strive only in Him."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 259.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did Jesus represent God's character when He was here on earth?
2. How can we find the peace and rest that only God can give?
3. What will love for God lead to, and how will this love manifest itself?
4. What did Jesus see in the children brought to Him, and how did He minister to them?
5. What does it mean to "live in harmony with our prayers"?

The Holy Spirit—Our Divine Guide

“And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left” (Isaiah 30:21).

“The Godhead was stirred with pity for the race, and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit gave themselves to the working out of the plan of redemption.”—*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 190.

Suggested Readings: *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 47–56;
Our High Calling, pp. 150–154.

Sunday

April 9

1. THE THIRD PERSON OF THE GODHEAD

- a. How do we know that the Holy Spirit has a personality? 1 Corinthians 2:11; Romans 8:16, 26.

“The Holy Spirit has a personality, else He could not bear witness to our spirits and with our spirits that we are the children of God. He must also be a divine person, else He could not search out the secrets which lie hidden in the mind of God.”—*Evangelism*, p. 617.

“We need to realize that the Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person, is walking through these grounds. . . . [From a talk to the students at the Avondale School.]”—*Ibid.*, p. 616.

- b. In what three names is a person to be baptized, and why? Matthew 28:19.
-

“There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.”—*Ibid.*, p. 615.

2. A HEAVENLY TEACHER

- a. What is another name given to the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures, and what work does He do for us? John 14:16, 26.
-

“The Comforter is called ‘the Spirit of truth.’ His work is to define and maintain the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and thus He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind. By directing men to false standards, he misshapes the character. Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.

- b. How is the Holy Spirit also a guide to us? John 16:13.
-

“If men are willing to be molded, there will be brought about a sanctification of the whole being. The Spirit will take the things of God and stamp them on the soul. By His power the way of life will be made so plain that none need err therein.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 53.

“How earnestly should we pray that He who ‘searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God,’ He whose office it is to bring all things to the remembrance of God’s people, and to guide them into all truth, may be with us in the investigation of His Holy Word.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 111.

- c. What is one way the Holy Spirit impresses truth upon our mind? Luke 24:32.
-

“The promised Holy Spirit, that He would send after He ascended to His Father, is constantly at work to draw the attention to the great official sacrifice upon the cross of Calvary, and to unfold to the world the love of God to man, and to open to the convicted soul the precious things in the Scriptures.”—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 132.

3. A REGENERATING AGENT

a. Describe the workings of the Spirit. John 3:8.

“Though we cannot see the Spirit of God, we know that men who have been dead in trespasses and sins, become convicted and converted under its operations. The thoughtless and wayward become serious. The hardened repent of their sins, and the faithless believe. The gambler, the drunkard, the licentious, become steady, sober, and pure. The rebellious and obstinate become meek and Christlike. When we see these changes in the character, we may be assured that the converting power of God has transformed the entire man. We saw not the Holy Spirit, but we saw the evidence of its work on the changed character of those who were hardened and obdurate sinners. As the wind moves in its force upon the lofty trees and brings them down, so the Holy Spirit can work upon human hearts, and no finite man can circumscribe the work of God.”—*Evangelism*, p. 288.

b. How will the Spirit make impressions upon the heart? John 16:8.

“Only when the truth is accompanied to the heart by the Spirit, will it quicken the conscience or transform the life. A minister may be able to present the letter of the word of God; he may be familiar with all its commands and promises; but his sowing of the gospel seed will not be successful unless this seed is quickened into life by the dew of heaven. Without the co-operation of the Spirit of God, no amount of education, no advantages, however great, can make one a channel of light.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 284.

“Who but the Holy Spirit presents before the mind the moral standard of righteousness and convinces of sin, and produces godly sorrow which worketh repentance that needeth not to be repented of, and inspires the exercise of faith in Him who alone can save from all sin?”—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 132.

“Of what avail would it have been to us that the only begotten Son of God had humbled Himself, endured the temptations of the wily foe, and wrestled with him during His entire life on earth, and died the just for the unjust that humanity might not perish, if the Spirit had not been given as a constant, working, regenerating agent to make effectual in our cases what has been wrought out by the world’s Redeemer?”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 137.

4. THE SPIRIT'S WORK IN THE HEART

- a. How does the Holy Spirit prompt us to do what is right? Isaiah 30:21.

“He who does the will of God, who walks in the path that God has marked out, cannot stumble and fall. The light of God’s guiding Spirit gives him a clear perception of his duty, and leads him aright till the close of his work.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 527.

“But those who desire to be true to Christ will listen to the voice that says, ‘This is the way, walk ye in it’ (Isaiah 30:21). They will decide to take the course of the righteous, although it is more difficult to pursue, more painful to follow, than the way of their own heart.”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 251.

- b. How does the Spirit help us in our weaknesses? Romans 8:26.

“Christ, our Mediator, and the Holy Spirit are constantly interceding in man’s behalf, but the Spirit pleads not for us as does Christ who presents His blood, shed from the foundation of the world; the Spirit works upon our hearts, drawing out prayers and penitence, praise and thanksgiving. The gratitude which flows from our lips is the result of the Spirit striking the cords of the soul in holy memories, awakening the music of the heart.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, pp. 1077, 1078.

- c. What role does the Spirit play in our conversion? Ezekiel 36:25–27.

“Men may be church members, and may apparently work earnestly, performing a round of duties from year to year, and yet be unconverted. . . . But when the truth is received as truth by the heart, it has passed through the conscience, and has captivated the soul with its pure principles. It is placed in the heart by the Holy Spirit, who reveals its beauty to the mind, that its transforming power may be seen in the character.”—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 217.

5. NO CONDEMNATION

- a. What is written about our standing with God when we are led by His Spirit? Romans 8:1.

“Henceforth you are not your own; you are bought with a price. ‘Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold; . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot’ (1 Peter 1:18, 19). Through this simple act of believing God, the Holy Spirit has begotten a new life in your heart. You are as a child born into the family of God, and He loves you as He loves His Son.

“Now that you have given yourself to Jesus, do not draw back, do not take yourself away from Him, but day by day say, ‘I am Christ’s; I have given myself to Him;’ and ask Him to give you His Spirit and keep you by His grace. As it is by giving yourself to God, and believing Him, that you become His child, so you are to live in Him. The apostle says, ‘As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.’ Colossians 2:6.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 51, 52.

- b. How close will our relationship then be to Jesus? Matthew 10:20.

“Then with Christ working in you, you will manifest the same spirit and do the same good works—works of righteousness, obedience. . . .

“Our only ground of hope is in the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and in that wrought by His Spirit working in and through us.”—*Ibid.*, p. 63.

Friday

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What relationship does the Holy Spirit have to the Father and to the Son?
2. How does the Holy Spirit work to impress truth upon the mind?
3. How do we know that the Holy Spirit is at work in someone’s life?
4. How does the Holy Spirit intercede for us?
5. As the Holy Spirit begets a new life in the heart, what will we be led to do each day?

Having a Personal Walk With God

“O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him” (Psalm 34:8).

“God desires to restore His image in you. Believe that He is your Helper. Resolve to become acquainted with Him. As you draw nigh to Him with confession and repentance, He will draw nigh to you with mercy and forgiveness.”—*The Review and Herald*, February 15, 1912.

Suggested Reading: *Education*, pp. 253–261.

Sunday

April 16

1. A CHANGE OF HEART

- a. **What is our natural heart like, and what does God want to give us in exchange for it? Jeremiah 17:9; Ezekiel 36:26.**

“When Jesus speaks of the new heart, He means the mind, the life, the whole being. To have a change of heart is to withdraw the affections from the world, and fasten them upon Christ. To have a new heart is to have a new mind, new purposes, new motives. What is the sign of a new heart?—a changed life. There is a daily, hourly dying to selfishness and pride.”—*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 100.

- b. **What experience does God want us to have as we receive the new heart? Job 22:21; Jeremiah 24:7.**

“Whatever line of investigation we pursue with a sincere purpose to arrive at truth, we are brought in touch with the unseen, mighty Intelligence that is working in and through all. The mind of man is brought into communion with the mind of God, the finite with the Infinite. The effect of such communion on body and mind and soul is beyond estimate.

“In this communion is found the highest education.”—*My Life Today*, p. 264.

2. TRUSTING IN GOD AS OUR FATHER

- a. What examples do we have from Scripture which show supreme trust? Luke 23:46; Genesis 22:7–9.
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“Amid the awful darkness, apparently forsaken of God, Christ had drained the last dregs in the cup of human woe. In those dreadful hours He had relied upon the evidence of His Father’s acceptance heretofore given Him. He was acquainted with the character of His Father; He understood His justice, His mercy, and His great love. By faith He rested in Him whom it had ever been His joy to obey. And as in submission He committed Himself to God, the sense of the loss of His Father’s favor was withdrawn. By faith, Christ was victor.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 756.

- b. What does trusting in God involve? Proverbs 3:5, 6.
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“Lean to your own understanding, dear brethren, as you make your way through the world, and you will reap sorrow and disappointment. Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and He will guide your steps in wisdom, and your interests will be safe for this world and for the next.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 427.

- c. In whom do we naturally tend to put our trust, and what advice does God give us? Psalm 118:8, 9; Proverbs 29:25.
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“Whatever position in life we may occupy, whatever our business, we must be humble enough to feel our need of help; we must lean implicitly on the teachings of God’s word, acknowledge His providence in all things, and be faithful in pouring out our souls in prayer.”—*Ibid.*

“Every individual must seek by earnest prayer to know the Word of God for himself, and then to do it. . . . Bring all your burdens, both public and private, to the Lord and wait upon Him. You will then have an individual experience, a conviction of His presence and His readiness to hear your prayer for wisdom and for instruction that will give you assurance and confidence in the Lord’s willingness to succor you in your perplexities.”—*This Day With God*, p. 82.

3. SPENDING TIME WITH THE WORD

- a. What experience does the Lord want us to have in our personal Bible study? Jeremiah 15:16; Psalm 34:8.
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“The soul that is nourished by the bread of life will have every faculty vitalized by the Spirit of God.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 153.

“Each one must appropriate the blessing to his own soul, or he will not be fed. . . . You know you would not be nourished by seeing a well-spread table, and by others eating. We would starve if we did not partake of physical nourishment, and we shall lose our spiritual strength and vitality if we do not feed on spiritual bread. . . .

“Those who eat and digest this Word, making it a part of every action and of every attribute of character, grow strong in the strength of God. It gives immortal vigor to the soul, perfecting the experience, and bringing joys that will abide forever.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 22.

- b. What must we first do in order to be able to speak to others of God’s great works? Psalm 119:27.
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- c. What other blessings come to us as we spend time in studying the Word of God? Psalms 17:4; 119:11, 93; Romans 10:17.
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“The Holy Spirit loves to address the youth, and to discover to them the treasures and beauties of God’s word. The promises spoken by the great Teacher will captivate the senses and animate the soul with spiritual power that is divine. There will grow in the fruitful mind a familiarity with divine things that will be as a barricade against temptation.

“The words of truth will grow in importance, and assume a breadth and fullness of meaning of which we have never dreamed. The beauty and riches of the word have a transforming influence on mind and character. The light of heavenly love will fall upon the heart as an inspiration.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 132.

“The heart that is stored with the precious truths of God’s Word is fortified against the temptation of Satan, against impure thoughts and unholy actions.”—*My Life Today*, p. 28.

4. SPEAKING TO GOD

- a. What should we never forget in bringing our supplications to God? **Philippians 4:6.**

“‘Thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given thee.’ Thanksgiving and praise should be expressed to God for temporal blessings and for whatever comforts He bestows upon us. God would have every family that He is preparing to inhabit the eternal mansions above give glory to Him for the rich treasures of His grace.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 148.

“If we keep the Lord ever before us, allowing our hearts to go out in thanksgiving and praise to Him, we shall have a continual freshness in our religious life. Our prayers will take the form of a conversation with God as we would talk with a friend. He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Often there will come to us a sweet joyful sense of the presence of Jesus.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 129.

- b. What was Jesus’ example of communion with His Father when on earth? **Luke 6:12.**

“The Saviour was an untiring worker. He did not measure His work by hours. His time, His heart, His strength, were given to labor for the benefit of humanity. Entire days were devoted to labor, and entire nights were spent in prayer, that He might be braced to meet the wily foe in all his deceptive working, and fortified to do His work of uplifting and restoring humanity.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 45.

- c. How often should we pray? **Psalms 5:3; 55:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:17.**

“If we would develop a character which God can accept, we must form correct habits in our religious life. Daily prayer is as essential to growth in grace, and even to spiritual life itself, as is temporal food to physical well-being. We should accustom ourselves to often lift the thoughts to God in prayer. If the mind wanders, we must bring it back; by persevering effort, habit will finally make it easy.”—*Messages to Young People*, pp. 114, 115.

5. WHEN GOD HEARS

- a. What are the conditions upon which God hears and answers prayer? Isaiah 57:15; Matthew 21:22.

“Prayer is heaven’s ordained means of success in the conflict with sin and the development of Christian character. The divine influences that come in answer to the prayer of faith will accomplish in the soul of the suppliant all for which he pleads. For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christlike temper, for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised, we may ask; and the promise is, ‘Ye shall receive.’”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 564.

“Ask God to do for you those things that you cannot do for yourselves. Tell Jesus everything. Lay open before Him the secrets of your heart; for His eye searches the inmost recesses of the soul, and He reads your thoughts as an open book. When you have asked for the things that are necessary for your soul’s good, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 299.

- b. When only does God not hear our prayers? Psalm 66:18.

“The willful commission of a known sin silences the witnessing voice of the Spirit, and separates the soul from God. . . . God will honor those only who honor Him.”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 114.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to have a new heart?
2. How did Jesus show trust in His Father, even when He suffered under the sense of the loss of His Father’s favor?
3. As we fill our minds with the Word of God, what will our Christian experience be like?
4. How can our prayers become like a conversation with God?
5. What types of things can we tell God in prayer, and how does this affect our relationship with Him?

Living the Golden Rule

“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them” (Matthew 7:12).

“The golden rule is the principle of true courtesy, and its truest illustration is seen in the life and character of Jesus.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 135.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 133–136.

Sunday

April 23

1. DEFINING THE GOLDEN RULE

a. What is the “golden rule”? Matthew 7:12.

“The Jews had been concerned about what they should receive; the burden of their anxiety was to secure what they thought their due of power and respect and service. But Christ teaches that our anxiety should not be, How much are we to receive? but, How much can we give? The standard of our obligation to others is found in what we ourselves would regard as their obligation to us.

“In your association with others, put yourself in their place. Enter into their feelings, their difficulties, their disappointments, their joys, and their sorrows. Identify yourself with them, and then do to them as, were you to exchange places with them, you would wish them to deal with you. This is the true rule of honesty.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 134.

b. What is the basis for the golden rule? Matthew 22:37–39.

“You are to show forth in your life what it means to love God with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself. Connected with the God of wisdom and love, you will demonstrate to the world the fact that you are not living for this world, but for that which is not temporal but eternal.”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 90.

2. CARING FOR THE LESS FAVORED

- a. To whom do we owe the privilege of giving the gospel message both by precept and by example? Romans 1:14, 15.
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“Everyone who has been made a steward of the manifold grace of God is called upon to impart to souls in ignorance and darkness, even as, were he in their place, he would desire them to impart to him. . . . By all that you have known of the love of God, by all that you have received of the rich gifts of His grace above the most benighted and degraded soul upon the earth are you in debt to that soul to impart these gifts unto him.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 135.

- b. Who else are we to have special care for in this life? James 1:27; Job 29:15, 16.
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“Whatever you may possess above your fellows places you in debt, to that degree, to all who are less favored. Have we wealth, or even the comforts of life, then we are under the most solemn obligation to care for the suffering sick, the widow, and the fatherless exactly as we would desire them to care for us were our condition and theirs to be reversed.”—*Ibid.*, p. 136.

“By our love and service for [Christ’s] needy children we prove the genuineness of our love for Him.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 205.

- c. Why was Jesus not accepted by many people when He lived on earth? Isaiah 53:2. What can we learn from this Bible record when trying to help others?
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“Instead of seeking to become a favorite yourself, or to flatter one who may be highly regarded, see if there is not a poor child who is not a favorite, to whom no special kindnesses are shown, and make this one the object of your unselfish attention. Those who are especially attractive will be at no loss for friends; while those who are less pleasing in appearance, who are timid and hard to become acquainted with, may have choice traits of character, and they are the purchase of the blood of Christ.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 259.

3. FULFILLING THE PRINCIPLES OF THE LAW

a. How did Jesus live the principles of the law? Acts 10:38.

“Oh, what rays of softness and beauty shone forth in the daily life of our Saviour! What sweetness flowed from His very presence! The same spirit will be revealed in His children. Those with whom Christ dwells will be surrounded with a divine atmosphere. Their white robes of purity will be fragrant with perfume from the garden of the Lord. Their faces will reflect light from His, brightening the path for stumbling and weary feet.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 135.

b. What is necessary in order for us to follow Christ in loving God and our fellow man? Luke 9:23; Galatians 2:20.

“Man is required to love God supremely, with his might, mind, and strength, and his neighbor as himself. This he cannot possibly do unless he denies himself. To deny self means to rule the spirit when passion is striving for the mastery; to resist the temptation to censure and to speak words of faultfinding; to have patience with the child that is dull, and whose conduct is grievous and trying; to stand at the post of duty even though others may fail; to lift responsibilities wherever and whenever duty requires, not to gain applause, not for policy, but for the sake of the Master, who has given each of His followers a work that is to be done with unwavering fidelity. To deny self means to do good when inclination would lead us to serve and please ourselves. It means to work patiently and cheerfully for the good of others, even though our efforts may not seem to be appreciated.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 223.

c. How does Jesus enable us to follow His example? Titus 2:14.

“Our acceptance with God is sure only through His beloved Son, and good works are but the result of the working of His sin-pardoning love. They are no credit to us, and we have nothing accorded to us for our good works by which we may claim a part in the salvation of our souls. Salvation is God’s free gift to the believer, given to him for Christ’s sake alone.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1122.

4. LOVING THE UNLOVELY

- a. How can we go beyond the world's standard of goodness? Matthew 5:44–47.

“He [Christ] would have us love those who oppress us and do us harm. We must not express in words and acts the spirit they manifest, but improve every opportunity to do them good.”—*The Upward Look*, p. 220.

“He who on the mount gave the precept, ‘Love your enemies,’ Himself exemplified the principle, not rendering ‘evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing’ (Matthew 5:44; 1 Peter 3:9).”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 265.

- b. How can we live Christ's standard of love in a practical way? Proverbs 20:22; 24:29, 17; 25:21, 22.

“It was to bring the bread of life to His enemies that our Saviour left His home in heaven. Though calumny and persecution were heaped upon Him from the cradle to the grave, they called forth from Him only the expression of forgiving love. Through the prophet Isaiah He says, ‘I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting.’ ‘He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth.’ Isaiah 50:6; 53:7. And from the cross of Calvary there come down through the ages His prayer for His murderers and the message of hope to the dying thief.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 71.

- c. What happens to those who give to others? Matthew 7:2 (second part); Luke 6:38.

“Whatever we give, we shall receive again. The earthly blessings which we impart to others may be, and often are, repaid in kind. What we give does, in time of need, often come back to us in fourfold measure in the coin of the realm. But, besides this, all gifts are repaid, even in this life, in the fuller inflowing of His love, which is the sum of all heaven's glory and its treasure.”—*Ibid.*, p. 136.

5. UNSELFISH MINISTRY

- a. What attitude is necessary in order to follow the example of Jesus in unselfish ministry? Philippians 2:4.

“The heart in which the love of Christ is cherished, will possess that charity which seeketh not her own.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 133.

“Paul was deeply anxious that the humiliation of Christ should be seen and realized. He was convinced that if men could be led to consider the amazing sacrifice made by the Majesty of heaven, selfishness would be banished from their hearts.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 501.

“Everyone who accepts Christ as his personal Saviour will long for the privilege of serving God. Contemplating what heaven has done for him, his heart is moved with boundless love and adoring gratitude. He is eager to signalize his gratitude by devoting his abilities to God’s service. He longs to show his love for Christ and for his purchased possession. He covets toil, hardship, sacrifice.”—*Ibid.*, p. 502.

- b. What else should we remember as we work together as a church? Romans 12:16, 17; 1 Corinthians 1:10.

“The strength of God’s people lies in their union with Him through His only-begotten Son, and their union with one another. There are no two leaves of a tree precisely alike; neither do all minds run in the same direction. But while this is so, there may be unity in diversity.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1083.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to follow the golden rule?
2. How does the golden rule apply to giving the gospel message?
3. What are some practical ways in which I can deny myself?
4. How did Jesus reveal His love toward those who mistreated Him?
5. As I consider the great sacrifice Jesus has made for me, how can I show my love for Him?

First Sabbath Offering for World Missions

We live in the last moments of the history of planet Earth, and our Lord has anxiously been waiting for a long time to take us home. The prophetic events that unfold right before our eyes tell us that the second coming of Jesus is near, even at the door. Unfortunately, the gospel message has not reached the end of the world and not every person has had the opportunity to hear the truth for this time. “Men will soon be forced to great decisions, and they must have opportunity to hear and to understand Bible truth, in order that they may take their stand intelligently on the right side.”—*Evangelism*, p. 25.



As members of God's church, it is our privilege to represent His character and to take part in spreading the gospel to the end of the world by committing our time, strength, and financial resources to this special work.

Thanks to the prayers and financial contributions from our members and friends, new missions are being instituted in many regions. These new missions still need our support until they are well established and become self-supporting. We also need to carry forward the opening of new missions. Every year we collect a special offering to supply the necessary means to spread the message in many parts of the globe.

“At this time there should be representatives of present truth in every city, and in the remote parts of the earth. The whole earth is to be illuminated with the glory of God's truth. The light is to shine to all lands and all peoples. And it is from those who have received the light that it is to shine forth.”—*Ibid.*, p. 407.

“Missionaries are needed in fields that have yet been scarcely entered. New fields are constantly opening. The truth must be translated into different languages, that all nations may enjoy its pure, life-giving influences.”—*Ibid.*, p. 409.

This Sabbath we earnestly appeal to you to unite your efforts with those of the missionaries and their families by giving liberally to the support of our world missions. In this way we can together help lighten the earth with God's glory and hasten Jesus' return.

Your brethren from the Missionary Department

Choosing Your Friends

“Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3).

“I would warn all, both young and old, Be careful what friendships you form and what companions you choose. Take heed lest what you now think to be pure gold turns out to be base metal.”—*The Signs of the Times*, November 26, 1896.

Suggested Reading: *The Adventist Home*, pp. 455–465.

Sunday

April 30

1. A TRUE FRIEND

- a. What are some qualities which a good friend should have? Proverbs 17:17; 18:24 (first part).
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“Those who are fighting the battle of life at great odds may be strengthened and encouraged by little attentions that cost only a loving effort. To such the strong, helpful grasp of the hand by a true friend is worth more than gold or silver. Words of kindness are as welcome as the smile of angels.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 158.

“Things will go wrong with every one; sadness and discouragement press every soul; then a personal presence, a friend who will comfort and impart strength, will turn back the darts of the enemy that are aimed to destroy. Christian friends are not half as plentiful as they should be. In hours of temptation, in a crisis, what a value is a true friend! . . . The true friends who will counsel, who will impart magnetic hopefulness, the calming faith that uplifts the soul,—oh, such help is worth more than precious pearls.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 3, p. 1163.

“Whoever is foolish enough to flatter you cannot be your true friend. Your true friends will caution, entreat, and warn you, and reprove your faults.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 226.

- b. How devoted is a real friend? John 15:13; Job 6:14 (first part).
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2. CHOOSING WISELY

- a. What are some important things to consider when choosing friends? Romans 12:9; 1 Corinthians 15:33.
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“It is wrong for Christians to associate with those whose morals are loose. An intimate, daily intercourse which occupies time without contributing in any degree to the strength of the intellect or morals is dangerous. If the moral atmosphere surrounding persons is not pure and sanctified, but is tainted with corruption, those who breathe this atmosphere will find that it operates almost insensibly upon the intellect and heart to poison and to ruin. It is dangerous to be conversant with those whose minds naturally take a low level. Gradually and imperceptibly those who are naturally conscientious and love purity will come to the same level and partake of and sympathize with the imbecility and moral barrenness with which they are so constantly brought in contact. . . .

“Nothing can more effectually prevent or banish serious impressions and good desires than association with vain, careless, and corrupt-minded persons. . . .

“Choose for . . . associates those who love the purity of truth, whose morals are untainted, and whose habits are pure.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 125, 126.

- b. How is the friendship of David and Jonathan described? 1 Samuel 18:1.
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- c. What are some other qualities to look for in a good friend? Proverbs 11:13; Luke 7:13; Galatians 5:22, 23.
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“Wear the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. Cherish the grace of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness. This is the fruit of the Christian tree. Planted by the rivers of water, it always brings forth its fruit in due season.

“If we have the love of Christ in our souls, it will be a natural consequence for us to have all the other graces—joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. . . .

“When the love of Christ is enshrined in the heart, . . . His presence will be felt.”—*My Life Today*, p. 50.

3. LEARNING FROM THE MISTAKES OF OTHERS

- a. **What do we know about the historical accounts provided in Scripture? 1 Corinthians 10:11, 12.**
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“If the iniquities of the Hebrews had been omitted from the Sacred Record, and only their virtues recounted, their history would fail to teach us the lesson that it does.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 11.

- b. **How did Samson choose his closest friends? What was the result? Judges 14:3.**
-

“Had Samson obeyed the divine commands as faithfully as his parents had done, his would have been a nobler and happier destiny. But association with idolaters corrupted him. The town of Zorah being near the country of the Philistines, Samson came to mingle with them on friendly terms. Thus in his youth intimacies sprang up, the influence of which darkened his whole life. A young woman dwelling in the Philistine town of Timnath engaged Samson’s affections, and he determined to make her his wife. To his God-fearing parents, who endeavored to dissuade him from his purpose, his only answer was, ‘She pleaseth me well.’ The parents at last yielded to his wishes, and the marriage took place.

“Just as he was entering upon manhood, the time when he must execute his divine mission—the time above all others when he should have been true to God—Samson connected himself with the enemies of Israel.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 562, 563.

- c. **As Lot chose where to live, what was the deciding factor, and what fact did he ignore? Genesis 13:10, 12, 13. What effect did the associations of Sodom have upon his family? 2 Peter 2:7, 8; Genesis 19:14.**
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“The influence of [Lot’s] wife and the associations of that wicked city would have led him to apostatize from God had it not been for the faithful instruction he had early received from Abraham. The marriage of Lot and his choice of Sodom for a home were the first links in a chain of events fraught with evil to the world for many generations.”—*Ibid.*, p. 174.

4. UNSAFE FRIENDSHIPS

- a. How does God view friendship with the world? James 4:4.

“Between the worldly man and the one who is faithfully serving God, there is a great gulf fixed. Upon the most momentous subjects,—God and truth and eternity,—their thoughts and sympathies and feelings are not in harmony. One class is ripening as wheat for the garner of God, the other as tares for the fires of destruction. How can there be unity of purpose or action between them?”—*Evangelism*, p. 620.

- b. What further counsel does God give on worldly friendships? 2 Corinthians 6:14, 17.

“You cannot mingle with worldlings, and partake of their spirit, and follow their example, and be at the same time a child of God. The Creator of the universe addresses you as an affectionate Father. If you separate from the world in your affections, and remain free from its contamination, escaping the corruption that is in the world through lust, God will be your Father, He will adopt you into His family, and you will be His heir. In place of the world, He will give you, for a life of obedience, the kingdom under the whole heavens. He will give you an eternal weight of glory and a life that is as enduring as eternity.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 44.

- c. What do these types of friendships show about the condition of our heart? How does God look upon this? Matthew 10:37, 38.

“God calls for an unconditional surrender of the heart and affections to Him. If you love friends, brothers or sisters, father or mother, houses or lands, more than Me, says Christ, you are not worthy of Me.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 45.

“Remember that in the lives of the followers of Christ must be seen the same devotion, the same subjection to God’s work of every social claim and every earthly affection, that was seen in His life. God’s claims must ever be made paramount.”—*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 53.

5. INTIMATE FRIENDSHIPS

- a. In choosing our closest friendships, especially those leading to marriage, what should we never forget? Matthew 22:37; Luke 14:33.

“Every association we form, however limited, exerts some influence upon us. The extent to which we yield to that influence will be determined by the degree of intimacy, the constancy of the intercourse, and our love and veneration for the one with whom we associate.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 459.

“Just in proportion to the strength of the friendship, will be the amount of influence which friends will exert over one another for good or for evil. . . .

“If choice is made of companions who fear the Lord, the influence will lead to truth, to duty, and to holiness.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 455, 456.

- b. Why shouldn't we choose intimate friends from among those who do not share our faith or from those who are unconverted? Amos 3:3.
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“As Solomon's wives turned his heart away from God to idolatry, so do frivolous companions, who have no depth of principle, turn away the hearts of those who were once noble and true, to vanity, corrupting pleasures, and downright vice.”—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 192.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are some things that a true friend will do for you?
2. Why is it dangerous to be closely associated with those whose minds operate on an immoral level?
3. What can we learn from Samson's mistake in choosing his friends?
4. What is involved in unconditionally surrendering our heart and our affections to God?
5. What factors determine how much we yield to the influence of our associations?

Marrying and Giving in Marriage

“For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark” (Matthew 24:38).

“The path to eternal life is steep and rugged. Take no additional weights to retard your progress.”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 441.

Suggested Reading: *The Adventist Home*, pp. 94–120.

Sunday

May 7

1. THE DAYS OF NOAH

- a. What sinful choices did God’s people make in Noah’s day? Genesis 6:1, 2.
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“The great crime in the marriages of the days of Noah was that the sons of God formed alliances with the daughters of men. Those who professed to acknowledge and revere God associated with those who were corrupt of heart; and without discrimination they married whom they would.”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 456.

- b. How will it be just before Christ’s return? Matthew 24:37, 38.
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“There are many in this day who have no depth of religious experience, who will do exactly the same things as were done in the days of Noah. They will enter into marriage without careful and prayerful consideration. Many take upon themselves the sacred vows as thoughtlessly as they would enter into a business transaction; true love is not the motive for the alliance.”—*Ibid*.

“There is in itself no sin in eating and drinking, or in marrying and giving in marriage. . . . But in the days of Noah men married without consulting God or seeking His guidance and counsel.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 121.

2. FOLLOWING ISAAC'S EXAMPLE

- a. **What important requirement did Abraham give his trusted servant in choosing a wife for Isaac? Genesis 24:3; 2 Corinthians 6:14.**
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“Never should God’s people venture upon forbidden ground. Marriage between believers and unbelievers is forbidden by God. But too often the unconverted heart follows its own desires, and marriages unsanctioned by God are formed. . . .

“Those who profess the truth trample on the will of God in marrying unbelievers; they lose His favor and make bitter work for repentance. The unbelieving may possess an excellent moral character, but the fact that he or she has not answered to the claims of God and has neglected so great salvation is sufficient reason why such a union should not be consummated. The character of the unbelieving may be similar to that of the young man to whom Jesus addressed the words, ‘One thing thou lackest’; that was the one thing needful.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 63.

- b. **Whom did the servant trust to make the choice, and what test was given? Genesis 24:12–14.**
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“Remembering the words of Abraham, that God would send His angel with him, he prayed earnestly for positive guidance. In the family of his master he was accustomed to the constant exercise of kindness and hospitality, and he now asked that an act of courtesy might indicate the maiden whom God had chosen.

“Hardly was the prayer uttered before the answer was given. Among the women who were gathered at the well, the courteous manners of one attracted his attention. As she came from the well, the stranger went to meet her, asking for some water from the pitcher upon her shoulder. The request received a kindly answer, with an offer to draw water for the camels also, a service which it was customary even for the daughters of princes to perform for their fathers’ flocks and herds. Thus the desired sign was given. The maiden ‘was very fair to look upon,’ and her ready courtesy gave evidence of a kind heart and an active, energetic nature.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 172, 173.

- c. **How were the wishes of Rebekah respected? Genesis 24:58.**
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3. GOD'S PURPOSE IN MARRIAGE

- a. Why did God select “an help meet for man,” and how is a good wife described? Genesis 2:18; Proverbs 18:22; 19:14.
-

“God Himself gave Adam a companion. He provided ‘an help meet for him’—a helper corresponding to him—one who was fitted to be his companion, and who could be one with him in love and sympathy. Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him. A part of man, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, she was his second self; showing the close union and the affectionate attachment that should exist in this relation. ‘For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it.’ Ephesians 5:29.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 251.

“God made from the man a woman, to be a companion and helpmeet for him, to be one with him, to cheer, encourage, and bless him, he in his turn to be her strong helper. All who enter into matrimonial relations with a holy purpose—the husband to obtain the pure affections of a woman’s heart, the wife to soften and improve her husband’s character and give it completeness—fulfill God’s purpose for them.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 99.

- b. What provision did God make within the family after sin? Genesis 3:16 (last part); Colossians 3:18, 19; Ephesians 5:22, 25.
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“In the creation, God had made [Eve] the equal of Adam. Had they remained obedient to God—in harmony with His great law of love—they would ever have been in harmony with each other; but sin had brought discord, and now their union could be maintained and harmony preserved only by submission on the part of the one or the other. Eve had been the first in transgression; and she had fallen into temptation by separating from her companion, contrary to the divine direction. It was by her solicitation that Adam sinned, and she was now placed in subjection to her husband. Had the principles enjoined in the law of God been cherished by the fallen race, this sentence, though growing out of the results of sin, would have proved a blessing to them; but man’s abuse of the supremacy thus given him has too often rendered the lot of woman very bitter.”—*Ibid.*, p. 115.

4. FOLLOWING THE DIVINE PATTERN

- a. How should husbands and wives copy the example of the way Jesus related to His Father? John 5:20 (first part); 8:29.
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“Let each give love rather than exact it. Cultivate that which is noblest in yourselves, and be quick to recognize the good qualities in each other. The consciousness of being appreciated is a wonderful stimulus and satisfaction. Sympathy and respect encourage the striving after excellence, and love itself increases as it stimulates to nobler aims.

“Neither the husband nor the wife should merge his or her individuality in that of the other. Each has a personal relation to God. Of Him each is to ask, ‘What is right?’ ‘What is wrong?’ ‘How may I best fulfill life’s purpose?’ Let the wealth of your affection flow forth to Him who gave His life for you. Make Christ first and last and best in everything. As your love for Him becomes deeper and stronger, your love for each other will be purified and strengthened.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 361.

- b. What other important attribute was shown in Jesus’ relationship with His Father? John 10:30; Ephesians 4:3.
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“Without mutual forbearance and love no earthly power can hold you and your husband in the bonds of Christian unity. Your companionship in the marriage relation should be close and tender, holy and elevated, breathing a spiritual power into your lives, that you may be everything to each other that God’s word requires. When you reach the condition that the Lord desires you to reach, you will find heaven below and God in your life.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 112.

“Anything that would mar the peace and unity of the family should be firmly repressed, and kindness and love should be cherished. He who manifests the spirit of tenderness, forbearance, and love will find that the same spirit will be reflected upon him. Where the Spirit of God reigns, there will be no talk of unsuitability in the marriage relation. If Christ indeed is formed within, the hope of glory, there will be union and love in the home. Christ abiding in the heart of the wife will be at agreement with Christ abiding in the heart of the husband. They will be striving together for the mansions Christ has gone to prepare for those who love Him.”—*Ibid.*, p. 120.

5. DEALING WITH CONFLICT

- a. What spirit should be manifest in husbands and wives, especially when there are difficulties? James 4:6, 7, 10.

“It is a hard matter to adjust family difficulties, even when husband and wife seek to make a fair and just settlement in regard to their several duties, if they have failed to submit the heart to God.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 119.

“Though difficulties, perplexities, and discouragements may arise, let neither husband nor wife harbor the thought that their union is a mistake or a disappointment. Determine to be all that it is possible to be to each other. Continue the early attentions. In every way encourage each other in fighting the battles of life. Study to advance the happiness of each other. Let there be mutual love, mutual forbearance. Then marriage, instead of being the end of love, will be as it were the very beginning of love. The warmth of true friendship, the love that binds heart to heart, is a foretaste of the joys of heaven.

“All should cultivate patience by practicing patience. By being kind and forbearing, true love may be kept warm in the heart, and qualities will be developed that Heaven will approve.”—*Ibid.*, p. 106.

- b. Describe the love that Christ wants us to have for each other, especially when things don't go our way. John 15:12; 1 Corinthians 13:4–7.

“True affection will overlook many mistakes; love will not discern them.”—*Ibid.*, p. 47.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why were most of the marriages in Noah's day considered sinful?
2. Why is it wrong to marry someone who has good morals but is just not a believer?
3. What is God's holy purpose for marriage?
4. What can we do to encourage someone to live a nobler life?
5. What is necessary in order to work through family difficulties?

A Christian Family

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. . . . And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:1, 4).

“The best test of the Christianity of a home is the type of character that results from its influence. The very first work of parents is to secure the blessing of God in their own hearts, and then bring this blessing into their homes.”—*The Bible Echo*, October 15, 1894.

Suggested Reading: *The Adventist Home*, pp. 181–208.

Sunday

May 14

1. OUR PRIMARY FOCUS

- a. With what aim should we work for our households? Isaiah 8:18.
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“Parents, God desires you to make your family a sample of the family in heaven. Guard your children. Be kind and tender with them. . . . One well-ordered, well-disciplined family is a greater power in demonstrating the efficiency of Christianity than all the sermons in the world. When fathers and mothers realize how their children copy them, they will watch carefully every word and gesture.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1118.

- b. What is of utmost importance in training our children? Ephesians 6:4.
-

“By far the largest number of parents have neglected their God-given work, by failing to educate and train their children, from the first dawning of reason, to know and love Christ. By painstaking effort parents are to watch the opening, receptive mind and make everything in the home life secondary to the positive duty enjoined upon them by God—to train their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 183.

2. HOME RELIGION

- a. What kind of attitude should parents communicate to their children? Ephesians 4:2, 32.
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“As you associate in family relationship, be careful to speak kind, tender words, which will comfort and encourage. Do not forget the little acts of kindness which do so much to help the member of the family who is struggling with infirmities which no one but himself can understand.

“It does not pay to persist in having one’s own way, to be unwilling to yield in the little things which are of small consequence, thus bringing bitterness and wrath into the home. Life is too short, too full of sorrow. We have no time to spare for the bruising of any sore, tempted heart.

“Let each one be kind and considerate of the other. Never let the sun go down upon your wrath. Never close your eyes in sleep without making right the little, pettish difficulties which hurt and bruise the soul.”—*This Day With God*, p. 225.

- b. How should love be shown in the home? Romans 12:9, 10.
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“In many families there is a great lack in expressing affection one for another. While there is no need of sentimentalism, there is need of expressing love and tenderness in a chaste, pure, dignified way. Many absolutely cultivate hardness of heart and in word and action reveal the satanic side of the character. Tender affection should ever be cherished between husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters. Every hasty word should be checked, and there should not be even the appearance of the lack of love one for another. It is the duty of everyone in the family to be pleasant, to speak kindly.

“Cultivate tenderness, affection, and love that have expression in little courtesies, in speech, in thoughtful attentions.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 198.

“Let the tenderness and mercy that Jesus has revealed in His own precious life be an example to us of the manner in which we should treat our fellow beings. . . . Many have fainted and become discouraged in the great struggle of life, whom one word of kindly cheer and courage would have strengthened to overcome. . . . We cannot tell how far reaching may be our tender words of kindness, our Christ-like efforts to lighten some burden. The erring can be restored in no other way than in the spirit of meekness, gentleness, and tender love.”—*My Life Today*, p. 235.

3. HONOR AND RESPECT IN THE HOME

- a. What is the fifth commandment, and what is significant about this commandment? Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:2. How can children best be taught to obey this command?
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“Parents are entitled to a degree of love and respect which is due to no other person. God Himself, who has placed upon them a responsibility for the souls committed to their charge, has ordained that during the earlier years of life parents shall stand in the place of God to their children. And he who rejects the rightful authority of his parents is rejecting the authority of God. The fifth commandment requires children not only to yield respect, submission, and obedience to their parents, but also to give them love and tenderness, to lighten their cares, to guard their reputation, and to succor and comfort them in old age. . . .

“If [children] disrespect and dishonor their earthly parents, they will not respect and love their Creator.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 293.

“The best way to educate children to respect their father and mother is to give them the opportunity of seeing the father offering kindly attentions to the mother and the mother rendering respect and reverence to the father. It is by beholding love in their parents that children are led to obey the fifth commandment and to heed the injunction, ‘Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.’”—*Ibid.*, pp. 198, 199.

- b. Whom else should we respect? Leviticus 19:32; Proverbs 16:31.
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“Reverence should be shown for God’s representatives—for ministers, teachers, and parents who are called to speak and act in His stead. In the respect shown to them He is honored.

“And God has especially enjoined tender respect toward the aged. He says, ‘The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.’ Proverbs 16:31. It tells of battles fought, and victories gained; of burdens borne, and temptations resisted. It tells of weary feet nearing their rest, of places soon to be vacant. Help the children to think of this, and they will smooth the path of the aged by their courtesy and respect, and will bring grace and beauty into their young lives.”—*Education*, p. 244.

4. THE FAMILY FIRM

- a. What outstanding characteristic will be revealed by every true Christian family? 1 Corinthians 14:40. How can all cooperate in maintaining order in the home?
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“Every member of the family should realize that a responsibility rests upon him individually to do his part in adding to the comfort, order, and regularity of the family. One should not work against another. All should unitedly engage in the good work of encouraging one another; they should exercise gentleness, forbearance, and patience, speak in low, calm tones, shunning confusion, and each doing his utmost to lighten the burdens of the mother. Things should no longer be left at loose ends, all excusing themselves from duty, leaving others to do that which they can and should do themselves. These things may be trifles; but when all are put together, they make great disorder and bring down the frown of God. It is the neglect of the littles, the trifles, that poisons life’s happiness. A faithful performance of the littles composes the sum of happiness to be realized in this life.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 699, 700.

- b. What are some of the blessings of work? Colossians 3:23, 24; Ecclesiastes 5:12. What should we teach our children regarding the benefits of regular work?
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“God appointed labor as a blessing to man, to occupy his mind, to strengthen his body, and to develop his faculties. . . . The true joy of life is found only by the working men and women.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 50.

“The youth need to be taught that life means earnest work, responsibility, caretaking. They need a training that will make them practical—men and women who can cope with emergencies. They should be taught that the discipline of systematic, well-regulated labor is essential, not only as a safeguard against the vicissitudes of life, but as an aid to all-round development.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 347.

“If the children share the labor with their mother, they will learn to regard useful employment as essential to happiness, ennobling rather than degrading.”—*Ibid.*, p. 349.

5. THE MINISTRY OF THE HOME

- a. What can we teach our children in order to prepare them for service for the Master? Galatians 5:13 (last part); Proverbs 15:33; 1 Peter 5:5.
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“Very early the lesson of helpfulness should be taught the child. As soon as strength and reasoning power are sufficiently developed, he should be given duties to perform in the home. He should be encouraged in trying to help father and mother, encouraged to deny and to control himself, to put others’ happiness and convenience before his own, to watch for opportunities to cheer and assist brothers and sisters and playmates, and to show kindness to the aged, the sick, and the unfortunate. The more fully the spirit of true ministry pervades the home, the more fully it will be developed in the lives of the children. They will learn to find joy in service and sacrifice for the good of others.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 36.

- b. What can hinder our Christian witness if we are not careful? 1 Corinthians 15:33.
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“It is not safe for Christians to choose the society of those who have no connection with God, and whose course is displeasing to Him. . . . Many invite to their homes relatives who are vain, trifling, and ungodly; and often the example and influence of these irreligious visitors produce lasting impressions upon the minds of the children in the household.”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 432.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How important is it for parents to train their children to know and love Christ?
2. What happens when we insist on having our own way in things of little consequence?
3. How can parents teach their children to respect them?
4. What are some of the benefits of work?
5. In true ministry, where will we learn to find joy?

Living With Our Relatives

“Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12).

“Do not yield your religious claims and privileges in order to gratify the wishes of your unconsecrated friends and relatives. You are called to take your position for the truth, even if it should be in direct opposition to those who are closely connected with you.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 117.

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies*, vol. 5 pp. 542–549;
Sons and Daughters of God, pp. 51, 52.

Sunday

May 21

1. PUTTING GOD FIRST

- a. **What place should God have in our life? What about our other relationships? Matthew 22:37–39.**

“When the Spirit of God is in man it leads him to relieve rather than to create suffering. . . . We are to care for every case of suffering, and to look upon ourselves as God’s agents to relieve the needy to the very uttermost of our ability. . . . There are some who manifest great affection for their relatives, for their friends and favorites, who yet fail to be kind and considerate to those who need tender sympathy, who need kindness and love.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 52.

- b. **What promises do we have when we put God before any human tie? Matthew 19:29; Hebrews 13:5 (second part).**

“If you have to forsake father, mother, sisters, brothers, wife, and children for Christ’s sake, you will not be friendless. God adopts you into His family; you become members of the royal household, sons and daughters of the King who rules in the heaven of heavens.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 510.

2. HELPING OUR FAMILIES AS WELL AS OTHERS

- a. Where should we begin our work for Christ? Proverbs 22:6; Isaiah 8:18.
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“In forming a relationship with Christ the renewed man is but coming back to his appointed relationship with God. . . . His duties lie round him, nigh and afar off. His first duty is to his children and his nearest relatives. Nothing can excuse him from neglecting the inner circle for the larger circle outside. . . .

“As parents faithfully do their duty in the family, restraining, correcting, advising, counseling, guiding,—the father as a priest of the household, the mother as a home missionary,—they are filling the sphere God would have them fill. By faithfully doing their duty in the home, they are multiplying agencies for doing good outside the home. They are becoming better fitted to labor in the church. By training their little flock discreetly, binding their children to themselves and to God, fathers and mothers become laborers together with God.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 223.

- b. If Christ abides in us, how will we treat others? Isaiah 50:4.
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“He who is a Christian will have kind words for his relatives and associates. He will be kind, courteous, loving, sympathetic, and will be educating himself for an abode with the family above.”—*My Life Today*, p. 196.

- c. What can we learn from the example of Jesus in His ministry when tempted to focus all our attention within our own family? Luke 19:10.
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“We must put self and selfishness under our feet, and exemplify in our lives the spirit of self-sacrifice and disinterested benevolence manifested by Jesus when He was upon earth. All should have an interest for their relatives, but should not allow themselves to be shut up to them as though they were the only ones whom Jesus came to save.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 77.

3. NOT BENDING OUR PRINCIPLES

- a. What is the reason we are health reformers today? 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20; 10:31; 2 Timothy 1:7; Isaiah 7:15. Why will we not change our health practices when we meet with friends and relatives?
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“Those who elevate the standard as nearly as they can to the order of God, according to the light God has given them through His word and the testimonies of His Spirit, will not change their course of action to meet the wishes of their friends or relatives, be they one or two or a host, who are living contrary to God’s wise arrangement. If we move from principle in these things, if we observe strict rules of diet, if as Christians we educate our tastes after God’s plan, we shall exert an influence which will meet the mind of God. The question is, ‘Are we willing to be true health reformers?’” —*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, pp. 35, 36.

- b. How are we meant to live a Christian life? 1 John 3:18; Matthew 5:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:12. What danger do we face when we change our practices in order to please our ungodly relatives?
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“Many feel that they must make some concessions to please their irreligious relatives and friends. As it is not always easy to draw the line, one concession prepares the way for another, until those who were once true followers of Christ are in life and character conformed to the customs of the world. The connection with God is broken. They are Christians in name only.” —*Messages to Young People*, p. 432.

- c. How does God call us to behave when we are outside of the church? 1 Timothy 4:12; 2 Corinthians 6:17, 18; Titus 2:14.
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“The reason we have had so little influence upon unbelieving relatives and associates is that we have manifested little decided difference in our practices from those of the world.” —*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 289.

“In the presence of your relatives and friends, in all your business relations, in your associations with the world,—anywhere and everywhere, under all circumstances,—stand up for Jesus.” —*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 341.

4. STANDING FIRM IN OUR DECISIONS

- a. **Instead of being influenced by worldly friends and relatives, how should we make our decisions?** 1 Corinthians 11:1; James 1:5; Psalm 119:105; Galatians 5:24.

“You allow the words of your relatives and special friends to influence your propositions and affect your decisions. You credit them too readily and incorporate their views into your own ideas and are too often led astray. . . . Your judgment, your feelings, your views, influence them, and, in turn, they influence you; and a strong current will be set flowing in a wrong direction unless you are all humble and thoroughly consecrated to God.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 506.

“The precious lives God has given us are not to be molded by unbelieving relatives in a way to please the carnal mind, but to be spent in a manner which God can approve.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 236.

- b. **What responsibility has been given to parents regarding their own children?** Proverbs 22:6. **How can friends and relatives hinder this work?**

“Be careful how you relinquish the government of your children to others. No one can properly relieve you of your God-given responsibility. . . . Men and women should pay all the respect and deference due to their parents; but in the matter of the management of their own children, they should allow no interference, but hold the reins of government in their own hands.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 288.

- c. **What warning is given to those who do not maintain their Christian principles wherever they are?** James 1:6 (second part), 8.

“May God give every man a sense of his own personal helplessness to steer his own vessel straight and safely into the harbor. The grace of Christ is essential every day. His matchless grace alone can save our feet from falling.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1109.

“Never yield the truth to please anyone. Be decided, be fixed, be established, be not of a doubtful mind.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2, p. 266.

5. A SPECIAL WORK

- a. What work is there for those who live in divided homes? 1 Corinthians 7:12–14, 16.

“We receive many letters soliciting advice. One mother says her husband is an unbeliever. She has children, but they are taught by the father to disrespect the mother. She is deeply burdened for her children. She does not know what course she can pursue. She then expresses her anxiety to do something in the cause of God, and inquires if I think she has a duty to leave her family, if she is convinced she can do no good to them.

“I would answer: My sister, I cannot see how you could be clear before the Lord and leave your husband and your children. I cannot think you would feel that you could do this yourself. . . . I am sure that it must be your duty to care for your own children. This is your field where you have your appointed work. . . .

“Because Satan uses the father of your children to counteract your work, do not be discouraged; do not give up the conflict. Do as you wish them to do. Treat your husband with kindness at all times and on all occasions, and bind your children to your heart with the cords of love. . . .

“This makes your work plain, to let your light shine in the household where Satan is at work to secure your children to himself. . . . Talk not and plead not for the sympathy of your husband and your children, but simply live the life of Christ. In words, in spirit, in character, in meekness, in patience and forbearance, in cheerfulness, be a signpost pointing out the way, the path that leads heavenward.”—*Testimonies on Sexual Behavior*, pp. 44, 45.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. If we love God supremely, how will we treat others? Who will we be careful not to neglect?
2. To which group of people do we owe our first duty? Is this our only duty?
3. How can we have a positive influence on our unbelieving relatives?
4. Who should hold the reins of government over the children? Why?
5. What missionary work is there for a parent who lives in a divided home?

First Sabbath Offering for the Madrid church property

Spain is a sovereign state largely located on the Iberian Peninsula in southwestern Europe. It also has archipelagos in the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, and several small territories on and near the North African coast. It is a democracy of over 46 million people with a parliament and a constitutional monarchy. Spain has a thriving tourism industry, being the third most visited country in the world (2014). According to research (2015), 71.8% of the population of Spain considers itself Catholic. However, only 48.4% of Spaniards between the ages 18 and 24 say they are Catholics, while 47.1% either do not consider religious matters, or are unbelievers or atheists.



Madrid, historically categorized as a “village,” is the capital of Spain. With 3.2 million inhabitants, it is the largest municipality of the Community of Madrid. The total population of the metropolitan area is 6.5 million. It is the commercial base for many multinational companies and is also the political, economic, and cultural center of Spain.

The Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement was officially registered in Spain as a Non-Catholic confession in 1972. Since then many believers, pastors, and workers are working hard in preaching the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in this Field.

Due to good working conditions, many of our believers from other countries had migrated to Spain by the year 2000 and onwards. This created the need to buy a property in Madrid, which we then made into a temple of worship. To assist us in establishing this lighthouse for the Lord, we contracted a financial commitment with a bank. So far we have paid back more than a third of what is owed. However, Spain's economic status has declined in recent years and many believers were forced to migrate to other countries, thus decreasing the Madrid church membership. This has created a difficulty for us here in meeting the repayment commitments necessary to secure the church property.

For this reason, we appeal to the good heart of all our brothers, sisters, children, and friends around the world to please help us in this need by providing a generous offering to this cause. In advance and wholeheartedly we express our gratitude, asking the Lord to bless all of you and your families.

Your brothers and sisters from Madrid

The Church Family

“Let brotherly love continue” (Hebrews 13:1).

“All are liable to make mistakes. No one is perfect. The Lord Jesus died for the erring that they might be forgiven. It is not our work to condemn. Christ did not come to condemn, but to save.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 292.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 73–77.

Sunday

May 28

1. HELPING THOSE AROUND US

- a. For which groups of people are we to have a special care? Galatians 6:10. Why? Matthew 12:50.
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“I saw that it is in the providence of God that widows and orphans, the blind, the deaf, the lame, and persons afflicted in a variety of ways have been placed in close Christian relationship to His church; it is to prove His people and develop their true character. Angels of God are watching to see how we treat these persons who need our sympathy, love, and disinterested benevolence. This is God’s test of our character. If we have the true religion of the Bible, we shall feel that a debt of love, kindness, and interest is due to Christ in behalf of His brethren; and we can do no less than to show our gratitude for His immeasurable love to us while we were sinners unworthy of His grace, by having a deep interest and unselfish love for those who are our brethren and who are less fortunate than ourselves.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 511.

- b. If we have pure religion, what duty will we fulfill? James 1:27; Mark 14:7.
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“Wherever there is human need and suffering, there is a field for missionary work.”—*Welfare Ministry*, p. 35.

2. CULTIVATING BROTHERLY LOVE

- a. **How was the love of God shown toward us? Under what obligation does this love place us? 1 John 4:9, 11; John 3:16.**
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“When the sinner sees his Saviour dying upon the cross under the curse of sin in his stead, beholding His pardoning love, love awakes in his heart. The sinner loves Christ, because Christ has first loved him.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 374.

“Christ abiding in the soul will not quarrel with Christ in another soul. We must learn to bear with the peculiarities of those around us. If our will is under the control of Christ’s will, how can we be at variance with our brethren? If we are at variance, we may know that it is because self needs to be crucified. He whom Christ makes free is free indeed. We are not complete in Christ unless we love one another as Christ has loved us. When we do this, as Christ has given us commandment, we shall give evidence that we are complete in Him.”—*This Day With God*, p. 262.

- b. **What relationship must we have with God before we can love our brethren and sisters? 1 John 4:7, 12.**
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“All who have been born into the heavenly family are in a special sense the brethren of our Lord. The love of Christ binds together the members of His family, and wherever that love is made manifest there the divine relationship is revealed.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 638.

“Our duty is to live in the atmosphere of Christ’s love, to breathe His love deeply, and to reflect its warmth around us.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 175.

- c. **How are we to love one another? 1 Peter 1:22, 23.**
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“God alone can lead you to so recognize His mercy, love, and forbearance that you will have the faith that works by love and purifies the soul. This is the gift of God.”—*Lift Him Up*, p. 252.

“We need to cherish love in our hearts. We should not be ready to think evil of our brethren. We must put the least construction on what they do or what they say. We must be Bible Christians.”—*This Day With God*, p. 83.

3. GROWING IN OUR OWN EXPERIENCE

- a. What choice can you and I make in order to grow in our Christian experience? Ephesians 4:21–24.
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“Conversion is a work that most do not appreciate. It is not a small matter to transform an earthly, sin-loving mind and bring it to understand the unspeakable love of Christ, the charms of His grace, and the excellency of God, so that the soul shall be imbued with divine love and captivated with the heavenly mysteries. When he understands these things, his former life appears disgusting and hateful. He hates sin, and, breaking his heart before God, he embraces Christ as the life and joy of the soul. He renounces his former pleasures. He has a new mind, new affections, new interest, new will; his sorrows, and desires, and love are all new. . . . The Word of God, which was dull and uninteresting, is now chosen as his study, the man of his counsel. It is as a letter written to him from God, bearing the inscription of the Eternal. His thoughts, his words, and his deeds are brought to this rule and tested. He trembles at the commands and threatenings which it contains, while he firmly grasps its promises and strengthens his soul by appropriating them to himself.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 139.

- b. In which ways are we to grow spiritually? 2 Peter 3:18.
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“The Christian is to gain strength by strengthening others. ‘He that watereth shall be watered also himself.’ This is not merely a promise; it is a divine law, a law by which God designs that the streams of benevolence, like the waters of the great deep, shall be kept in constant circulation, continually flowing back to their source. In the fulfilling of this law is the secret of spiritual growth. . . .

“How is it possible that we may grow in grace? It is possible to us only as we empty our hearts of self, and present them to Heaven, to be molded after the divine Pattern. . . . As we appropriate the blessing of God, we shall be able to receive greater measures of His grace.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 947.

“We may know more and more of Jesus through an interested searching of the Scriptures, and then following the ways of truth and righteousness therein revealed. Those who are ever growing in grace will be steadfast in the faith, and moving forward.”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 121.

4. DEALING WITH THE ERRING

- a. In our interactions with our brothers and sisters, what should we remember? Luke 21:19; John 15:12.
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“Give love to them that need it most. The most unfortunate, those who have the most disagreeable temperaments need our love, our tenderness, our compassion. Those who try our patience need most love.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 281.

“We need not begin by *trying* to love one another. The love of Christ in the heart is what is needed. When self is submerged in Christ, true love springs forth spontaneously.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 497.

“There is need of showing Christlike patience and love for the erring one, but there is also danger of showing so great toleration for his error that he will look upon himself as undeserving of reproof, and will reject it as uncalled for and unjust.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 504.

“You should help those who stand most in need of help, those who are less favorably situated, who are erring and faulty, and who may have injured you and tried your patience to the utmost. It is just such ones that Jesus pities, because Satan has more power over them and is constantly taking advantage of their weak points and driving his arrows to wound them where they are least protected.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 75.

- b. If a brother offends someone and we hear about it, what is the first step we should take? Matthew 18:15; Leviticus 19:16.
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“Do not listen to reports against a brother or a sister. . . . Ask the one who brings the accusation if he has obeyed the word of God in regard to this matter. Christ has left explicit directions as to what should be done. Go to your brother and tell him his fault between him and you alone. . . .

“Whether or not the grievance is between you and the one accused, the injunction of Christ is the same. Your brother needs help. Tell him, not someone else, that reports are being circulated about him. Give him opportunity to explain. It is possible that the reports are false and that the difficulties may be adjusted by some simple explanation. This treatment is due everyone supposed to be in error.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 292.

5. PROMOTING RESTORATION

- a. What attitude should we have toward those in error? What should be our aim? Galatians 6:1, 2; 1 Peter 4:8; Titus 3:2.

“Bear in mind that the work of restoring is to be our burden. This work is not to be done in a proud, officious, masterly way. . . .

“He who ignores the grave necessities of his brother will in the providence of God be brought over the same ground that his brother has traveled in trial and sorrow, and by a bitter experience it will be proved to him that he is as helpless and needy as was the suffering one whom he repulsed.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 398, 399.

- b. What often hinders the restoration of the erring? Proverbs 11:13; 18:8.

“Gossip, and tale-bearing, and revealing of secrets, and dissecting of character, separate the soul from God. It is death to spirituality and a calm religious influence. . . .

“Christians should be careful in regard to their words. They should never carry unfavorable reports from one of their friends to another, especially if they are aware that there is a lack of union between them. It is cruel to hint and insinuate, as though you knew a great deal in regard to this friend or that acquaintance of which others are ignorant. Such hints go further, and create more unfavorable impressions, than to frankly relate the facts in an unexaggerated manner. What harm has not the church of Christ suffered from these things!”—*Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 185, 186.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How will we show that we practice true Bible religion?
2. How do Bible Christians treat their brothers and sisters in the faith?
3. How can we become stronger Christians?
4. How can we love one another? To whom especially should we show love?
5. If we refuse to help in the restoration of our erring brother or sister, what will happen to us?

The Church: A Light to the World

“Ye are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14).

“That which God purposed to do for the world through Israel, the chosen nation, He will finally accomplish through His church on earth today.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 713.

Suggested Reading: *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 9–24.

Sunday

June 4

1. A PEOPLE TO REVEAL GOD’S CHARACTER

- a. What purpose is to be accomplished through the church? Ephesians 3:9–11; 2 Corinthians 4:6; 1 Peter 2:9.
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“From the beginning it has been God’s plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to ‘the principalities and powers in heavenly places,’ the final and full display of the love of God. Ephesians 3:10.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9.

- b. What ministry has God given to us, and how are we partakers of this ministry? 2 Corinthians 5:18, 19; John 20:21.
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“Man had become so degraded by sin that it was impossible for him, in himself, to come into harmony with Him whose nature is purity and goodness. But Christ, after having redeemed man from the condemnation of the law, could impart divine power to unite with human effort. Thus by repentance toward God and faith in Christ the fallen children of Adam might once more become ‘sons of God’ (1 John 3:2).”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 64.

2. WORKING IN UNION WITH CHRIST

- a. What did Jesus ask the Father in behalf of the disciples so that they might have power to witness to the world? John 17:20, 21.
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“In these first disciples [set apart by Christ] was presented marked diversity. They were to be the world’s teachers, and they represented widely varied types of character. In order successfully to carry forward the work to which they had been called, these men, differing in natural characteristics and in habits of life, needed to come into unity of feeling, thought, and action. This unity it was Christ’s object to secure. To this end He sought to bring them into unity with Himself.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 20.

“We seldom find two persons exactly alike. Among human beings as well as among the things of the natural world, there is diversity. Unity in diversity among God’s children—the manifestation of love and forbearance in spite of difference of disposition—this is the testimony that God sent His Son into the world to save sinners. . . .

“The closer our union with Christ, the closer will be our union with one another.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 286.

- b. What attitude within the church is a powerful witness to others of the truth we profess to believe? Ephesians 4:1–3, 31, 32.
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“We have a character to maintain, but it is the character of Christ. . . . The Christ in us will meet the Christ in our brethren, and the Holy Spirit will give that union of heart and action which testifies to the world that we are children of God.”—*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 211.

“Learn of the great Teacher. Words of kindness and sympathy will do good as a medicine, and will heal souls that are in despair. The knowledge of the word of God brought into the practical life will have a healing, soothing power.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 163.

“Many have fainted and become discouraged in the great struggle of life, whom one word of kindly cheer and courage would have strengthened to overcome. . . . We cannot tell how far reaching may be our tender words of kindness, our Christ-like efforts to lighten some burden. The erring can be restored in no other way than in the spirit of meekness, gentleness, and tender love.”—*My Life Today*, p. 235.

3. REVEALING GOD'S LOVE TO OTHERS

- a. **How should we act toward our brothers and sisters in the faith? Philippians 2:3. Why should we be humble in our opinions of ourselves? Matthew 23:8; 1 Corinthians 4:7; 2 Corinthians 10:12.**
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“Those who, in the spirit and love of Jesus, will become one with Him, will be in close fellowship one with another, bound up by the silken cords of love.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 300.

“Crucify self; esteem others better than yourselves. Thus you will be brought into oneness with Christ. Before the heavenly universe, and before the church and the world, you will bear unmistakable evidence that you are God’s sons and daughters. God will be glorified in the example that you set.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 188.

- b. **Where there is no open transgression of principle, what rule should we follow in respect for each other’s convictions? Romans 14:10, 13.**
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“There are rights which belong to every individual. We have an individuality and an identity that is our own. No one can submerge his identity in that of any other. All must act for themselves, according to the dictates of their own conscience.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 422.

“No one man’s voice and influence should ever be allowed to become a controlling power.”—*Medical Ministry*, p. 165.

- c. **What condition must we meet if we are to have true fellowship with our brethren and sisters? What will then happen to our experience? 1 John 1:7.**
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“God will accept everyone that comes to Him trusting wholly in the merits of a crucified Saviour. Love springs up in the heart. There may be no ecstasy of feeling, but there is an abiding, peaceful trust. Every burden is light; for the yoke which Christ imposes is easy. Duty becomes a delight, and sacrifice a pleasure. The path that before seemed shrouded in darkness becomes bright with beams from the Sun of Righteousness. This is walking in the light as Christ is in the light.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 354.

4. WORKING IN HARMONY

- a. How does Paul's Damascus-road-experience and conversion reveal God's plan to use members of the church to save sinners? Acts 9:6, 10, 11, 15.
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"In the conversion of Paul are given us important principles which we should ever bear in mind. The Redeemer of the world does not sanction experience and exercise in religious matters independent of His organized and acknowledged church, where He has a church.

"Many have the idea that they are responsible to Christ alone for their light and experience, independent of His acknowledged followers in the world. But this is condemned by Jesus in His teachings and in the examples, the facts, which He has given for our instruction. Here was Paul, one whom Christ was to fit for a most important work, one who was to be a chosen vessel unto Him, brought directly into the presence of Christ; yet He does not teach him the lessons of truth. He arrests his course and convicts him; and when he asks, 'What wilt Thou have me to do?' the Saviour does not tell him directly, but places him in connection with His church. They will tell thee what thou must do."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 432, 433.

- b. What interrelationship is there between us, the church body, and Christ? Ephesians 4:14–16.
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"Although a company of Christians united in church capacity have not all the same talents, yet it is the duty of everyone to work. Talents differ, but to every man is given his work. All are dependent upon Christ in God. He is the glorious Head of all grades and classes of people associated through faith in the Word of God. Bound together by a common belief in heavenly principles, they are all dependent on Him who is the Author and Finisher of their faith. He has created the principles that produce universal oneness, universal love. His followers should meditate upon His love. They should not stop short of reaching the standard set before them. If the principles of Christianity are lived, they will produce universal harmony and perfect peace. When the heart is imbued with the Spirit of Christ, there is no quarreling, no seeking for the supremacy, no striving to be reigning lords."—*The Upward Look*, p. 104.

5. ORGANIZED FOR SERVICE

- a. How should we manifest our love for our brethren and sisters?
1 John 3:18.

“All who have been born into the heavenly family are in a special sense the brethren of our Lord. The love of Christ binds together the members of His family, and wherever that love is made manifest there the divine relationship is revealed. ‘Everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God’ (1 John 4:7).

“Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, but they have cherished His principles. Through the influence of the divine Spirit they have been a blessing to those about them.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 638.

- b. How did Jesus show that the life of service is linked to true greatness? Mark 9:35; Matthew 20:25–28.

“The Saviour’s life on earth was not a life of ease and devotion to Himself, but He toiled with persistent, earnest, untiring effort for the salvation of lost mankind. From the manger to Calvary He followed the path of self-denial and sought not to be released from arduous tasks, painful travels and exhausting care and labor. . . . It was His meat and drink to do the will of God and to finish His work. Self and self-interest had no part in His labor.

“So those who are the partakers of the grace of Christ will be ready to make any sacrifice, that others for whom He died may share the heavenly gift. They will do all they can to make the world better for their stay in it.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 78.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is the church meant to reveal to the world?
2. How can we show true unity in the church?
3. How can we have that love for others that goes beyond feelings?
4. What common bond unites us to our brethren and sisters?
5. If we follow Jesus’ example of service to others, what will we be willing to do?

Faithful in Business

“Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men” (Proverbs 22:29).

“Religion must be made the great business of life. Everything else should be held subordinate to this. All our powers of soul, body, and spirit, must be engaged in the Christian warfare. We must look to Christ for strength and grace, and we shall gain the victory as surely as Jesus died for us.”—*The Sanctified Life*, p. 93.

Suggested Reading: *Education*, pp. 135–145.

Sunday

June 11

1. FOLLOWING THE PATTERN

- a. **How should we conduct all of our business affairs? Hebrews 8:5; Matthew 5:48.**

“Into all to which the Christian sets his hand should be woven the thought of the life eternal. If the work performed is agricultural or mechanical in its nature, it may still be after the pattern of the heavenly. . . . Through the grace of Christ every provision has been made for the perfecting of Christlike characters, and God is honored when His people in all their social and business dealings reveal the principles of heaven.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 154.

- b. **What was Jesus like in His work life before taking on His ministry? Luke 2:52.**

“Jesus carried into His labor cheerfulness and tact. It requires much patience and spirituality to bring Bible religion into the home life and into the workshop, to bear the strain of worldly business, and yet keep the eye single to the glory of God. This is where Christ was a helper. He was never so full of worldly care as to have no time or thought for heavenly things.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 73.

2. UNBENDING INTEGRITY

- a. **What does God weigh in the heavenly balances? 1 Samuel 2:3; Isaiah 26:7; Psalm 62:9.**
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“God weighs motives, purposes, character. All men are weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, and God would have all realize this fact. . . .

“There is not a motive in the depths of the heart, not a secret within us, not a design that God does not fully comprehend. . . . God requires all the heart, mind, soul, and strength, and ‘love thy neighbour as thyself.’ This is placed in one scale, while every individual character has to pass the weighing test by being placed in the opposite scale. . . .

“If found wanting in the day of God it will be a terrible thing, therefore we want to be closely examining our own motives and actions by the holy law of God, to repent of every act of transgression, and as sinners lay hold of the merits of Christ to supply the deficiency. The blood of Christ alone will do this.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 139.

- b. **How does God want us to act in all of our dealings with others? Romans 12:17; Job 31:6.**
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“A truly honest man will never take advantage of weakness or incompetency in order to fill his own purse. He accepts a fair equivalent for that which he sells. If there are defects in the articles sold, he frankly tells his brother or his neighbor, although by so doing he may work against his own pecuniary interests.

“In all the details of life the strictest principles of honesty are to be maintained. These are not the principles which govern our world, for Satan, deceiver, liar, and oppressor is the master, and his subjects follow him and carry out his purposes. But Christians serve under a different Master, and their actions must be wrought in God, irrespective of all selfish gain.”—*My Life Today*, p. 330.

- c. **What does God promise to those who are faithful? Philippians 4:19.**
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“Whatever the business you may qualify yourself to engage in, never entertain the idea that you cannot make a success of it without sacrificing principle.”—*The Review and Herald*, August 19, 1884.

3. CHRISTIAN BUSINESSPEOPLE

- a. What were Daniel's enemies forced to admit concerning his work? Daniel 6:4. What can we learn from his experience?
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"Those who labor in business lines should take every precaution against falling into error through wrong principles or methods. Their record may be like that of Daniel in the courts of Babylon. When all his business transactions were subjected to the closest scrutiny, not one faulty item could be found. The record of his business life, incomplete though it is, contains lessons worthy of study. It reveals the fact that a businessman is not necessarily a scheming, policy man. He may be a man instructed of God at every step. Daniel, while prime minister of the kingdom of Babylon, was a prophet of God, receiving the light of heavenly inspiration. His life is an illustration of what every Christian businessman may be."—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 248.

- b. What can we learn from Abraham concerning the way we conduct our business? Genesis 23:7–16.
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"Observe [Abraham] as he engages in a business transaction with the sons of Heth, to purchase a burying place for Sarah. In his grief he does not forget to be courteous. He bows before them, although he is God's nobleman. Abraham knew what genuine politeness was and what was due from man to his fellow men.

"We should be self-forgetful, ever . . . watching for opportunities to cheer others and lighten and relieve their sorrows and burdens by acts of tender kindness and little deeds of love. These thoughtful courtesies, that, commencing in our families, extend outside the family circle, help make up the sum of life's happiness."—*My Life Today*, p. 192.

- c. What example did Jesus give us? Ephesians 5:2.
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"I point you to the life of Jesus as a perfect pattern. His life was characterized by disinterested benevolence. . . . What sacrifices has He made for us that we should not perish, but have everlasting life! Heaven will be cheap enough if we resign every selfish interest to obtain it."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 218.

4. OVERREACHING IN TRADE

- a. Give an example of someone in the Bible who was dishonest in their business practices. Luke 19:2–7.
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“‘The chief among the publicans,’ Zacchaeus, was a Jew, and detested by his countrymen. His rank and wealth were the reward of a calling they abhorred, and which was regarded as another name for injustice and extortion. Yet the wealthy customs officer was not altogether the hardened man of the world that he seemed. Beneath the appearance of worldliness and pride was a heart susceptible to divine influences.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 552, 553.

- b. What was he led to do? Luke 19:8.
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“Every converted soul will, like Zacchaeus, signalize the entrance of Christ into his heart by an abandonment of the unrighteous practices that have marked his life. Like the chief publican, he will give proof of his sincerity by making restitution. The Lord says, ‘If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; . . . none of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: . . . He shall surely live’ (Ezekiel 33:15, 16).

“If we have injured others through any unjust business transaction, if we have overreached in trade, or defrauded any man, even though it be within the pale of the law, we should confess our wrong, and make restitution as far as lies in our power. It is right for us to restore not only that which we have taken, but all that it would have accumulated if put to a right and wise use during the time it has been in our possession.”—*Ibid.*, p. 556.

- c. Who was a dishonest businessman? Why? John 12:4–6.
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“Judas was treasurer for the disciples, and from their little store he had secretly drawn for his own use, thus narrowing down their resources to a meager pittance. . . . Judas had no heart for the poor. Had Mary’s ointment been sold, and the proceeds fallen into his possession, the poor would have received no benefit.”—*Ibid.*, p. 559.

5. PRACTICAL COUNSEL

- a. What advice are we given concerning business partnerships with unbelievers? Amos 3:3; 2 Corinthians 6:14, 15.

“Some of our brethren engaged in business have not kept the Sabbath according to the commandment. Some have been in partnership with unbelievers, and the influence of these Sabbath-breaking associates has had its effect upon them. Some have been so blinded that they could not discern the danger in such connections, but it is only the greater because unperceived.”—*Historical Sketches*, p. 215.

- b. How should we conduct our business, knowing that Jesus is coming soon? Proverbs 22:29.

“Belief in the near coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven will not cause the true Christian to become neglectful and careless of the ordinary business of life. The waiting ones who look for the soon appearing of Christ will not be idle, but diligent in business. Their work will not be done carelessly and dishonestly, but with fidelity, promptness, and thoroughness. Those who flatter themselves that careless inattention to the things of this life is an evidence of their spirituality and of their separation from the world are under a great deception. Their veracity, faithfulness, and integrity are tested and proved in temporal things. If they are faithful in that which is least they will be faithful in much.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 309.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What thought should we take with us in everything we do?
2. What should we never allow ourselves to think concerning the success of our business?
3. What can we learn from Daniel’s business practices while working in a heathen nation?
4. What is our duty if we find that we have cheated anyone?
5. How should our work be done, considering the soon coming of Jesus?

Our Duty to Governing Powers

“Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s” (Matthew 22:21).

“True Christian influence, exerted for the accomplishment of the work God has appointed, is a precious agency, and it must not be united with politics, or bound up in a confederacy with unbelievers. God is to be the center of attraction.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 483, 484.

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 394–397;
Ibid., vol. 9, pp. 232–244.

Sunday

June 18

1. THE CHRISTIAN AND THE STATE

- a. What is to be the attitude of God’s people toward civil government? Romans 13:1–4; 1 Peter 2:13, 14, 17; Titus 3:1. What are we to do when God’s law is set aside by rulers of this world? Acts 4:19.
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“I saw that it is our duty in every case to obey the laws of our land, unless they conflict with the higher law which God spoke with an audible voice from Sinai, and afterward engraved on stone with His own finger.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 361.

- b. What would be the condition of our society if it were brought under the restraining power of God’s law? Isaiah 48:18; 32:17.
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“In conformity to the divine requirements there is a transforming power that brings peace and good will among men. If the teachings of God’s word were made the controlling influence in the life of every man and woman, if mind and heart were brought under its restraining power, the evils that now exist in national and in social life would find no place.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 192.

2. BEING A PART OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

- a. Although we are citizens here on earth and subject to rulers as ordained by God, where is our primary citizenship? Philippians 3:20. What does Jesus say about His kingdom? John 18:36; Luke 17:21.
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“The kingdom of God begins in the heart.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 506.

- b. How are we as Christians to live out the principles of God’s kingdom while here on earth? John 3:5; 1:12, 13; Mark 1:14, 15.
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“Not by the decisions of courts or councils or legislative assemblies, not by the patronage of worldly great men, is the kingdom of Christ established, but by the implanting of Christ’s nature in humanity through the work of the Holy Spirit. ‘As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.’ John 1:12, 13. Here is the only power that can work the uplifting of mankind. And the human agency for the accomplishment of this work is the teaching and practicing of the word of God.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 509, 510.

- c. What else do we know about the nature of God’s kingdom? Psalm 145:13; 2 Peter 1:11. How did this affect the way Jesus dealt with earthly government?
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“The government under which Jesus lived was corrupt and oppressive; on every hand were crying abuses,—extortion, intolerance, and grinding cruelty. Yet the Saviour attempted no civil reforms. He attacked no national abuses, nor condemned the national enemies. He did not interfere with the authority or administration of those in power. He who was our example kept aloof from earthly governments. Not because He was indifferent to the woes of men, but because the remedy did not lie in merely human and external measures. To be efficient, the cure must reach men individually, and must regenerate the heart.”—*Ibid.*, p. 509.

3. THE CHRISTIAN, A MODEL CITIZEN

- a. Which words of Jesus are sometimes misinterpreted as referring to swearing under oath? Matthew 5:34–37. To what, then, is Jesus actually referring?
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“I saw that the words of our Lord, ‘Swear not at all,’ do not touch the judicial oath. ‘Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.’ This refers to common conversation. Some exaggerate in their language. Some swear by their own life; others swear by their head—as sure as they live; as sure as they have a head. Some take heaven and earth to witness that such things are so. Some hope that God will strike them out of existence if what they are saying is not true. It is this kind of common swearing against which Jesus warns His disciples. . . .

“I was shown that when it is actually necessary, and they are called upon to testify in a lawful manner, it is no violation of God’s word for His children to solemnly take God to witness that what they say is the truth, and nothing but the truth.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 201, 202.

- b. What should be our attitude towards participation in politics? Why? 1 Timothy 2:1–3; Hebrews 11:13. Why can’t we vote for political parties?
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“The Lord would have His people bury political questions. On these themes silence is eloquence. . . . We cannot with safety vote for political parties; for we do not know whom we are voting for. We cannot with safety take part in any political schemes.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 475.

- c. Why should we pay taxes? Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:7.
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“Holding in His hand the Roman coin, upon which were stamped the name and image of Caesar, [Christ] declared that since they were living under the protection of the Roman power, they should render to that power the support it claimed, so long as this did not conflict with a higher duty. But while peaceably subject to the laws of the land, they should at all times give their first allegiance to God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 602.

4. PEACEFUL, LAW-ABIDING CITIZENS

- a. To what extent should we foster peace with others? Matthew 5:9; Romans 12:18.

“It is not wise to find fault continually with what is done by the rulers of government. It is not our work to attack individuals or institutions. . . . Our work is to prepare a people to stand in the great day of God. . . .

“We should weed out from our writings and utterances every expression that, taken by itself, could be so misrepresented as to make it appear antagonistic to law and order. Everything should be carefully considered, lest we place ourselves on record as encouraging disloyalty to our country and its laws. We are not required to defy authorities. There will come a time when, because of our advocacy of Bible truth, we shall be treated as traitors; but let not this time be hastened by unadvised movements that stir up animosity and strife.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 394.

- b. In what ways can Christ’s followers promote peace? Romans 12:19–21; 1 Peter 3:8–11. How should our demeanor be toward our brethren and sisters? Matthew 7:12.

“Cherish a supreme reverence for justice and truth, and a hatred for all cruelty and oppression. Do unto others as you would wish them to do to you. God forbids you to favor self, to the disadvantage of another.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 942.

- c. Why else then do we not go to war? John 18:36; Matthew 26:51, 52; Luke 9:56. What was the position given to the Lord’s messenger regarding the U.S. Civil War?

“I was shown that God’s people, who are His peculiar treasure, cannot engage in this perplexing war, for it is opposed to every principle of their faith. In the army they cannot obey the truth and at the same time obey the requirements of their officers. There would be a continual violation of conscience. Worldly men are governed by worldly principles. They can appreciate no other. Worldly policy and public opinion comprise the principle of action that governs them. . . . But God’s people cannot be governed by these motives.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 361.

5. HOW TO MEET INJUSTICE

- a. How should we deal with those who may treat us unfairly, even in the government? Romans 12:19; Colossians 4:6; Ephesians 4:29.

“Let God have the matter of condemning authorities and governments wholly in His own keeping. In meekness and love let us as faithful sentinels defend the principles of truth as it is in Jesus.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 397.

“When Christ and heaven are the theme of contemplation, the conversation will give evidence of the fact. The speech will be seasoned with grace, and the speaker will show that he has been obtaining an education in the school of the divine Teacher.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 443.

“Kind words are as dew and gentle showers to the soul.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 122.

- b. How should we follow Jesus’ example in serving others when faced with laws calling for us to worship on Sunday? Acts 10:38.

“When we devote Sunday to missionary work, the whip will be taken out of the hands of the arbitrary zealots who would be well pleased to humiliate Seventh-day Adventists. When they see that we employ ourselves on Sunday in visiting the people and opening the Scriptures to them, they will know that it is useless for them to try to hinder our work by making Sunday laws.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 232, 233.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is our duty in regards to the laws of our land?
2. Why did Jesus keep aloof from worldly governments?
3. For what should we refrain from voting—and why?
4. Why shouldn’t we criticize the rulers of government?
5. How can we witness in a positive way through our speech? How is this too often done in a negative way?

First Sabbath Offerings



APRIL 1

for the Moscow's Church
expansion
(See p. 4.)

MAY 6

for World Missions
(See p. 30.)



JUNE 3

for the Madrid church
property
(See p. 51.)

