

SABBATH BIBLE LESSONS

Senior Division



LESSONS FROM THE
Epistles of Peter (I)

Vol. 100, No. 2

April–June 2024

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

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Foreword

Who of us has not gone through situations similar to that of Peter, the outspoken disciple? His humanity is surely one to which we can all relate, at least in some way. His enthusiastic zeal and ready willingness to do his Master's bidding is inspiring. We can surely empathize with his occasional, embarrassing mistakes and be encouraged by the way he rose again after a fall. The maturing process Peter underwent through God's leading brought him into a noble apostleship, with two epistles worthy of being placed in the sacred canon of holy Writ.

For these reasons, over the next three months, Sabbath school students around the world will be focusing on the *Lessons From the Epistles of Peter (I)*. Rich gems of truth from this inspired man of God are designed to fortify our walk with the Lord in trying times.

One of the key points of Peter's epistle is that the people of God are to be living lives that build up the body of Christ to be a shining witness to a sin-darkened world.

"A revival and a reformation must take place, under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. Revival and reformation are two different things. Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from spiritual death. Reformation signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices. Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit. Revival and reformation are to do their appointed work, and in doing this work they must blend."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 128.

An interesting testimony brings a strong appeal to each one of us that we can all glean for our spiritual growth as we study the first epistle of Peter: "My brother, if you will, you can be a strong man in God. You have talents of ability that God has entrusted to your keeping to be sanctified to His service. But if you do not yield up all to Christ, your ability will prove dangerous both to yourself and to others, leading them to walk apart from the truth and away from Christ.

"The members of the church in—need very much done for them. They must have fervent zeal for Christ, must be more humble, more patient, more kind, more teachable, more Christlike in every respect. In their character they should manifest to the world the sanctifying power of grace. God forbid that you should, by precept or example, bar the way to this essential work. Will you work with Jesus? Will you be true to the Lord who has bought you? Will you put into the background all matters of minor importance? You must be baptized into a larger faith, a larger charity. You need greater reverence for things of eternal importance."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 570, 571.

May the Lord help us all to take this to heart as we study!

The General Conference Sabbath School Department

First Sabbath Offering for the Narang Mandi Church, Pakistan

The message of the Seventh-day Adventist Reform Movement entered Pakistan in the latter part of the twentieth century. The total population of Pakistan is 241.5 million and the religion of the majority of the people is Islam (96.47%), followed by Hinduism (2.14%) Christianity (1.27%), and other religions (0.11%). Our country is surrounded by Afghanistan, China, India, the Arabian Sea and Iran. Agriculture contributes to around 20.9% of the gross domestic product. The economy of Pakistan is classified as that of a low-income developing country. The nation ranks poorly in most of the development indicators set by the United Nations Development Programme and World Bank.



The city of Narang Mandi is situated in the Muridke district within the state of Punjab. The total population of this overall district is over 500,000. In recent decades, we have conducted meetings, seminars and other activities for the development of church activities among our brethren in Pakistan. Even amid the troubles faced, we are able to sustain our faith in Christ. Now our activities have spread across our country. We are pressing forward to develop various aspects of the Lord's work such as missionary outreach, health education, leadership development, establishing education centers, and repairing our old churches in Pakistan.

“The Lord is speaking to His people at this time, saying, Gain an entrance into the cities, and proclaim the truth in simplicity and in faith. The Holy Spirit will work through your efforts to impress hearts. Introduce no strange doctrine into your message, but speak the simple words of the gospel of Christ, which young and old can understand. The unlearned as well as the educated are to comprehend the truths of the third angel's message, and they must be taught in simplicity. If you would approach the people acceptably, humble your hearts before God and learn His ways.”—*Medical Ministry*, p. 299.

All our offerings should be presented with cheerfulness; God's claims would be welcomed and His cause would be considered as justly entitled to a portion of the funds entrusted to our hands. The brethren and sisters from the Pakistan Mission are thanking you, our dear brothers, sisters and youth for the generous donation toward His cause in this challenging part of the world . . . “for God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Your brothers and sisters from the Pakistan Church

An Apostle of Jesus Christ

MEMORY TEXT: “The Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:31, 32).

“It was after Peter had been led to self-renunciation and entire reliance upon divine power, that he received his call to act as an under-shepherd. . . . Not until he had learned his weakness, could he know the believer’s need of dependence on Christ.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 515.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 244–251.

Sunday

March 31

1. RESPONDING TO CHRIST’S CALL

a. Describe Simon Peter’s first encounter with Jesus. John 1:40–42.

“Andrew sought to impart the joy that filled his heart. Going in search of his brother Simon, he cried, ‘We have found the Messiah.’ Simon waited for no second bidding. He also had heard the preaching of John the Baptist, and he hastened to the Saviour. The eye of Christ rested upon him, reading his character and his life history. His impulsive nature, his loving, sympathetic heart, his ambition and self-confidence, the history of his fall, his repentance, his labors, and his martyr death—the Saviour read it all.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 139.

b. Under what circumstances did Jesus officially call Peter and his brother to become His disciples? Matthew 4:18–20.

“The prompt, unquestioning obedience of these men, with no promise of wages, seems remarkable; but the words of Christ were an invitation that carried with it an impelling power. Christ would make these humble fishermen, in connection with Himself, the means of taking men out of the service of Satan, and placing them in the service of God.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 24.

2. A SINCERE AND ZEALOUS DISCIPLE

- a. How did Peter see himself at the beginning of his discipleship? Luke 5:8.

“In the days of Christ the religious leaders of the people felt that they were rich in spiritual treasure. The prayer of the Pharisee, ‘God, I thank Thee, that I am not as the rest of men’ (Luke 18:11, R.V.), expressed the feeling of his class and, to a great degree, of the whole nation. But in the throng that surrounded Jesus there were some who had a sense of their spiritual poverty. When in the miraculous draft of fishes the divine power of Christ was revealed, Peter fell at the Saviour’s feet, exclaiming, ‘Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord’ (Luke 5:8); so in the multitude gathered upon the mount there were souls who, in the presence of His purity, felt that they were ‘wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked’ (Revelation 3:17).”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 6, 7.

- b. What did Peter believe in regard to who Jesus was? Matthew 16:13–16.

“From the first, Peter had believed Jesus to be the Messiah. Many others who had been convicted by the preaching of John the Baptist, and had accepted Christ, began to doubt as to John’s mission when he was imprisoned and put to death; and they now doubted that Jesus was the Messiah. . . . Many of the disciples who had ardently expected Jesus to take His place on David’s throne left Him when they perceived that He had no such intention. But Peter and his companions turned not from their allegiance. The vacillating course of those who praised yesterday and condemned today did not destroy the faith of the true follower of the Saviour. Peter declared, ‘Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ He waited not for kingly honors to crown his Lord, but accepted Him in His humiliation. . . .

“Jesus answered Peter, saying, ‘Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven.’

“The truth which Peter had confessed is the foundation of the believer’s faith. It is that which Christ Himself has declared to be eternal life. But the possession of this knowledge was no ground for self-glorification. Through no wisdom or goodness of his own had it been revealed to Peter. Never can humanity, of itself, attain to a knowledge of the divine. . . . Only the spirit of adoption can reveal to us the deep things of God. . . . The fact that Peter discerned the glory of Christ was an evidence that he had been ‘taught of God.’ ”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 411, 412.

3. EAGER FOR ANSWERS

- a. **What biblical examples show Peter's inquiring mind and reveal how we can grow by developing the same attitude? Matthew 15:15; 18:21; 19:27; Mark 13:3, 4.**
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"No other study will so ennoble every thought, feeling, and aspiration as the study of the Scriptures. . . . Here we learn how to improve the present life and how to secure the future life. No other book can satisfy the questionings of the mind and the craving of the heart. By obtaining a knowledge of God's word, and giving heed thereto, men may rise from the lowest depths of ignorance and degradation to become the sons of God. . . .

"As an educating power the Bible is without a rival. Nothing will so impart vigor to all the faculties as requiring students to grasp the stupendous truths of revelation. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell. If occupied with commonplace matters only, to the exclusion of grand and lofty themes, it will become dwarfed and enfeebled. If never required to grapple with difficult problems, or put to the stretch to comprehend important truths, it will, after a time, almost lose the power of growth. . . .

"In the word of God the mind finds subject for the deepest thought, the loftiest aspiration."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 24, 25.

"The most inquisitive may safely learn in the school of Christ that which will prove for their present and everlasting good."—*An Appeal to Mothers*, p. 32.

- b. **While inquisitiveness in spiritual matters is encouraged (John 5:39), when does healthy human curiosity have a limit? Deuteronomy 29:29.**
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"[Satan] is constantly seeking to excite a spirit of irreverent curiosity, a restless, inquisitive desire to penetrate the secrets of divine wisdom and power. In their efforts to search out what God has been pleased to withhold, multitudes overlook the truths which He has revealed, and which are essential to salvation."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 54, 55.

"We must not attempt to lift with presumptuous hand the curtain behind which He veils His majesty. . . . It is a proof of His mercy that there is the hiding of His power, that He is enshrouded in the awful clouds of mystery and obscurity; for to lift the curtain that conceals the Divine Presence is death."—*The Review and Herald*, April 7, 1885.

4. LITTLE FAITH, LOTS OF SELF-CONFIDENCE

- a. What should we learn from Peter's first recorded experience of walking by faith? Matthew 14:28–31.

"[Peter] should have kept his eye lifted upward to Jesus; but he looked down at the troubled waves, and his faith failed."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 273.

"Unless he makes it his life business to behold the uplifted Saviour, and by faith to accept the merits which it is his privilege to claim, the sinner can no more be saved than Peter could walk upon the water unless he kept his eyes fixed steadily upon Jesus. Now, it has been Satan's determined purpose to eclipse the view of Jesus and lead men to look to man. . . . For years the church has been looking to man and expecting much from man, but not looking to Jesus, in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 93.

- b. The longer Peter was with Jesus, how did he overestimate himself and his ability to withstand a major trial? Matthew 26:33–35, 69–75.

"There is nothing so offensive to God or so dangerous to the human soul as pride and self-sufficiency. Of all sins it is the most hopeless, the most incurable."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 154.

"The history of no one of the disciples better illustrates Christ's method of training than does the history of Peter. Bold, aggressive, and self-confident, quick to perceive and forward to act, prompt in retaliation yet generous in forgiving, Peter often erred, and often received reproof. . . . Patiently, with discriminating love, the Saviour dealt with His impetuous disciple, seeking to check his self-confidence, and to teach him humility, obedience, and trust.

"But only in part was the lesson learned. Self-assurance was not uprooted. . . .

"For them all, Peter's experience had a lesson. To self-trust, trial is defeat. The sure outworking of evil still unforsaken, Christ could not prevent. But as His hand had been outstretched to save when the waves were about to sweep over Peter, so did His love reach out for his rescue when the deep waters swept over his soul."—*Education*, pp. 88, 89.

- c. Why don't many years of church membership guarantee greater strength in faith? Romans 11:20–22; 1 Corinthians 10:12; 8:2.

5. A CONVERTED APOSTLE

- a. Why does God not always stop us from pursuing our own course, knowing it can end up in sin and shame? Isaiah 48:17; Luke 22:31, 32.
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“Christ had said to Peter, before his denial of Him, ‘When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.’ Luke 22:32. These words were significant of the wide and effectual work which this apostle was to do in the future for those who should come to the faith. For this work, Peter’s own experience of sin and suffering and repentance had prepared him. Not until he had learned his weakness, could he know the believer’s need of dependence on Christ. . . . Now, converted and accepted, He was to deal with the sheep and lambs committed to his care as tenderly as Christ had dealt with him.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 515, 516.

- b. In his later years, what encouragement did the converted Peter give in his letters to believers under trial? 1 Peter 3:14; 4:12–14.
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“These letters bear the impress of having been written by one in whom the sufferings of Christ and also His consolation had been made to abound; one whose entire being had been transformed by grace, and whose hope of eternal life was sure and steadfast.”—*Ibid.*, p. 517.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. When I hear the voice of Jesus calling in various life circumstances, how can I be sure to respond as promptly and zealously as Peter did?
2. As the number of years of my profession of Christianity lengthen, what must I never, ever forget?
3. In today’s age of constant distractions, where do I need to direct my natural inquisitiveness if I am serious about being saved for eternity?
4. In what aspects of life may I be in danger of self-trust and self-sufficiency?
5. When I err, how can I draw positive lessons out of that experience?

The “Strangers”

MEMORY TEXT: “Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations” (1 Peter 1:6).

“We are travelers, pilgrims and strangers, on earth. Let us not spend our means in gratifying desires that God bids us repress. Let us rather set a right example before our associates. Let us fitly represent our faith. . . . Let your influence impress souls with the sacredness of God’s requirements.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 452.

Suggested Reading: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 17–38.

Sunday

April 7

1. AN EPISTLE TO A SPECIAL AUDIENCE

a. How did Peter refer to the Christians scattered in Asia Minor to whom his first epistle was primarily addressed? 1 Peter 1:1.

b. While Christ’s followers are strangers to this world, how are they seen by God? 1 Peter 1:2; 2:9; Ephesians 2:19.

“The people of God—the true Israel—though scattered throughout all nations, are on earth but sojourners, whose citizenship is in heaven.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 447.

“The condition of being received into the Lord’s family is coming out from the world, separating from all its contaminating influences. The people of God are to have no connection with idolatry in any of its forms. They are to reach a higher standard. We are to be distinguished from the world, and then God says, ‘I will receive you as members of My royal family, children of the heavenly King.’ As believers in the truth we are to be distinct in practice from sin and sinners. Our citizenship is in heaven.

“We should realize more clearly the value of the promises God has made to us, and appreciate more deeply the honor He has given us.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 481.

2. THE ELECT OF GOD

- a. When Peter calls us the “elect” of God, does it mean that once chosen we cannot be lost? Explain by comparing John 15:16 to Luke 3:8, 9; Luke 6:13–16 to John 6:70, 71; Isaiah 41:8, 9 to Romans 11:20–23.

“When Judas was chosen by our Lord, his case was not hopeless. He had some good qualities. In his association with Christ in the work, by listening to His discourses, he had a favorable opportunity to see his wrongs. . . . He was even placed in a position by our Lord where he could have his choice either to develop his covetous disposition or to see and correct it. He carried the little means collected for the poor and for the necessary expenses. . . .

“This little money was to Judas a continual temptation. . . . Our Saviour rebuked him for this covetousness. This rankled in the heart of Judas, until, for a small sum of money, he consented to betray his Lord. There will be those among Sabbathkeepers who are no truer at heart than was Judas.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 41, 42.

- b. On what main principle is the election “according to the foreknowledge of God” established? 2 Peter 3:9; 1 Timothy 2:4; Ephesians 1:4, 5.

“The Father sets His love upon His elect people who live in the midst of men. These are the people whom Christ has redeemed by the price of His own blood; and because they respond to the drawing of Christ, through the sovereign mercy of God, they are elected to be saved as His obedient children. . . . Everyone who will humble himself as a little child, who will receive and obey the Word of God with a child’s simplicity, will be among the elect of God.”—*The Signs of the Times*, January 2, 1893.

- c. What should we do to secure our election and avoid repeating the sad fate of Judas? 2 Peter 1:10; 3:17; 1 John 3:2, 3.

“If we comply with the conditions the Lord has made, we shall secure our election to salvation. Perfect obedience to His commandments is the evidence that we love God, and are not hardened in sin.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1079.

3. WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

- a. To whom is ascribed all glory for electing and predestinating us for salvation—and why? 1 Peter 1:3; Psalm 72:18, 19.
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“At the very beginning of his first letter the aged servant of God ascribed to his Lord a tribute of praise and thanksgiving. ‘Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ ”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 517.

- b. With what words does Peter seek to comfort brethren facing severe persecution? 1 Peter 1:3 (last part), 4. See also Hebrews 11:26.
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“In this hope of a sure inheritance in the earth made new, the early Christians rejoiced, even in times of severe trial and affliction. ‘Ye greatly rejoice,’ Peter wrote, ‘though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.’ ”—*Ibid.*, pp. 517, 518.

- c. Why does God permit temptations, suffering and afflictions to come upon His elect? 1 Peter 1:6, 7; Matthew 5:11, 12.
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“Trials and obstacles are the Lord’s chosen methods of discipline and His appointed conditions of success. He who reads the hearts of men knows their characters better than they themselves know them. He sees that some have powers and susceptibilities which, rightly directed, might be used in the advancement of His work. In His providence He brings these persons into different positions and varied circumstances that they may discover in their character the defects which have been concealed from their own knowledge. He gives them opportunity to correct these defects and to fit themselves for His service. Often He permits the fires of affliction to assail them that they may be purified.

“The fact that we are called upon to endure trial shows that the Lord Jesus sees in us something precious which He desires to develop. . . . The Lord allows His chosen ones to be placed in the furnace of affliction to prove what temper they are of and whether they can be fashioned for His work.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 471.

4. STATEMENTS ABOUT FAITH

- a. **What is the only way God can bring us “unto salvation”? 1 Peter 1:5; Luke 8:48.**
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“The faith in Christ which saves the soul is not what it is represented to be by many. ‘Believe, believe,’ is their cry; ‘only believe in Christ, and you will be saved. It is all you have to do.’ While true faith trusts wholly in Christ for salvation, it will lead to perfect conformity to the law of God. Faith is manifested by works.”—*The Review and Herald*, October 5, 1886.

“In order that we may be kept by the power of God through faith, the desires of the mind should be continually ascending in silent prayer for help, for light, for strength, for knowledge. But thought and prayer cannot take the place of earnest, faithful improvement of the time. Work and prayer are both required in perfecting Christian character.”—*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 317.

- b. **Why does faith need trials? 1 Peter 1:7; Job 23:10; James 1:3.**
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“In the religious life of every soul who is finally victorious there will be scenes of terrible perplexity and trial; but his knowledge of the Scriptures will enable him to bring to mind the encouraging promises of God, which will comfort his heart and strengthen his faith in the power of the Mighty One. . . . The trial of faith is more precious than gold. All should learn that this is a part of the discipline in the school of Christ, which is essential to purify and refine them from the dross of earthliness.”—*Ibid.*, p. 81.

- c. **How does the apostle Peter describe the essence of faith? 1 Peter 1:8, 9. Compare this to Paul’s definition of faith. Hebrews 11:1.**
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“Let us never forget, even when we walk in the valley, that Christ is as much with us when we walk trustingly there as when we are on the mountaintop. The voice said to us, ‘Will you not roll your burden upon the Burden Bearer, the Lord Jesus Christ? Will you not live on the sunny side of the cross?’ ”—*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 811.

5. THE MYSTERY OF SALVATION

- a. Why did “salvation by grace” through faith, become easier to understand after Christ’s incarnation and death? 1 Peter 1:10–12; Luke 10:24; 1 John 1:1–3.

“Even the prophets who were favored with the special illumination of the Spirit did not fully comprehend the import of the revelations committed to them. . . .

“Yet . . . they earnestly sought to obtain all the light which God had been pleased to make manifest. . . . What a lesson to the people of God in the Christian age, for whose benefit these prophecies were given to His servants! . . . Contrast their holy zeal with the listless unconcern with which the favored ones of later ages treat this gift of Heaven. What a rebuke to the ease-loving, world-loving indifference which is content to declare that the prophecies cannot be understood!”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 344.

- b. Why is the plan of redemption a mystery even for the angels? 1 Peter 1:12 (last part); 1 Corinthians 4:9.

“By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. . . . Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. God’s wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which ‘angels desire to look,’ and it will be their study throughout endless ages. Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 19, 20.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What can remind me that I am a stranger, a pilgrim, in this world—one who should not feel at home here?
2. How can I secure my election and salvation?
3. What will better equip me to bear trials and temptations valiantly?
4. What tends to weaken—or to strengthen—my faith?
5. How can I invest more time to study the plan of redemption more deeply?

Obedient Children of God

MEMORY TEXT: “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Peter 1:22).

“When we lay hold of Christ by faith, our work has just begun. Every man has corrupt and sinful habits that must be overcome by vigorous warfare. Every soul is required to fight the fight of faith.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 20.

Suggested Reading: *Steps to Christ*, pp. 43–48.

Sunday

April 14

1. CHOOSING OUR THOUGHTS CAREFULLY

- a. According to the Word of God, where does true obedience begin? 1 Peter 1:13, 14; Romans 12:2.
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“All true reformation begins with soul-cleansing. It is by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the mind through the power of the Holy Spirit, that a change is wrought in the life.

“By beholding Christ we become changed. If the mind dwells upon temporal things constantly, these things become all-absorbing, affecting the character, so that God’s glory is lost sight of and forgotten. The opportunities that are within reach for them to become conversant with heavenly things, are overlooked. Spiritual life dies.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 105.

- b. Where does the natural course of human thoughts and motives run? Genesis 6:5; Jeremiah 17:9.
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- c. What shall we do when we realize that our thoughts and motives are not clean? Acts 8:22.
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2. SOBRIETY OF THOUGHT

- a. How can we “gird up the loins of our mind” in a practical sense? Genesis 4:7.
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“Those who would not fall a prey to Satan’s devices, must guard well the avenues of the soul; they must avoid reading, seeing, or hearing that which will suggest impure thoughts. The mind must not be left to dwell at random upon every subject that the enemy of souls may suggest. The heart must be faithfully sentineled, or evils without will awaken evils within, and the soul will wander in darkness. ‘Gird up the loins of your mind,’ Peter wrote, ‘be sober.’ ”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 518.

- b. Why is it immensely important to control the thoughts of our heart? Proverbs 23:7 (first part); 24:9 (first part).
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“The thoughts must be brought into subjection to the will of God, and the feelings under the control of reason and religion. Our imagination was not given us to be allowed to run riot and have its own way, without any effort at restraint and discipline. If the thoughts are wrong, the feelings will be wrong; and the thoughts and feelings combined make up the moral character. When we decide that as Christians we are not required to restrain our thoughts and feelings, we are brought under the influence of evil angels, and invite their presence and their control. If we yield to our impressions and allow our thoughts to run in a channel of suspicion, doubt, and repining, we shall be unhappy, and our lives will prove a failure.”—*The Review and Herald*, April 21, 1885.

- c. Why does the apostle Peter plead with us to be sober and “hope to the end” for grace? 1 Peter 1:13 compared to 5:8.
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“Guard faithfully your thoughts. Keep every approach to your heart well fortified. You must put up the bars against the approach of Satan. Watchfulness at one point while others are neglected will not avail. . . . There are perils before us which we must meet, and our only safety is in God.”—*This Day With God*, p. 174.

3. FLEE FROM FORMER LUSTS AND BE HOLY

- a. In what various aspects of our life are we to be extremely sober-minded in order to become holy? 1 Peter 1:14, 15; 4:2, 3.
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“Let none flatter themselves that sins cherished for a time can easily be given up by and by. This is not so. Every sin cherished weakens the character and strengthens habit; and physical, mental, and moral depravity is the result. You may repent of the wrong you have done, and set your feet in right paths; but the mold of your mind and your familiarity with evil will make it difficult for you to distinguish between right and wrong. Through the wrong habits formed, Satan will assail you again and again.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 281.

- b. Although we are constantly reminded to be holy (1 Peter 1:15, 16)—which may somehow sound as if it could be achieved through our own efforts—in reality, by what means are we enabled to become holy? Leviticus 20:7, 8; Philippians 2:13; Titus 3:5.
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“Although we have no merit in ourselves, in the great goodness and love of God we are rewarded as if the merit were our own. When we have done all the good we can possibly do, we are still unprofitable servants. . . . What we have accomplished has been wrought solely through the grace of Christ, and no reward is due to us from God on the ground of our merit.”—*The Review and Herald*, June 27, 1893.

- c. After the appeal to be sober, why does the apostle remind us about the judgment to come? 1 Peter 1:17; Colossians 3:5, 6.
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“Every man's work passes in review before God and is registered for faithfulness or unfaithfulness. Opposite each name in the books of heaven is entered with terrible exactness every wrong word, every selfish act, every unfulfilled duty, and every secret sin, with every artful dissembling. Heaven-sent warnings or reproofs neglected, wasted moments, unimproved opportunities, the influence exerted for good or for evil, with its far-reaching results, all are chronicled by the recording angel.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 482.

4. REDEEMED BY CHRIST

- a. **What does Peter bring as a good reason why putting forth efforts to overcome former lusts is not only worth it, but also our duty? 1 Peter 1:4, 18, 19; 1 Corinthians 6:18–20.**
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“All men have been bought with this infinite price. By pouring the whole treasury of heaven into this world, by giving us in Christ all heaven, God has purchased the will, the affections, the mind, the soul, of every human being. Whether believers or unbelievers, all men are the Lord’s property. All are called to do service for Him, and for the manner in which they have met this claim, all will be required to render an account at the great judgment day.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 326.

- b. **When was the plan of redemption established? 2 Timothy 1:8, 9.**
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“God had a knowledge of the events of the future, even before the creation of the world. He did not make His purposes to fit circumstances, but He allowed matters to develop and work out. He did not work to bring about a certain condition of things, but He knew that such a condition would exist. The plan that should be carried out upon the defection of any of the high intelligences of heaven—this is the secret, the mystery which has been hid from ages. And an offering was prepared in the eternal purposes to do the very work which God has done for fallen humanity.”—*The Signs of the Times*, March 25, 1897.

- c. **From where does faith in God actually come? Romans 10:17; 1 Peter 1:21.**
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“No man can create faith. The Spirit operating upon and enlightening the human mind, creates faith in God. In the Scriptures faith is stated to be the gift of God, powerful unto salvation, enlightening the hearts of those who search for truth as for hidden treasure. The Spirit of God impresses the truth on the heart. The gospel is called the power of God unto salvation because God alone can make the truth a power which sanctifies the soul.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 940.

5. THE CROWN OF OBEDIENCE

- a. After appealing to the believers to war against our former lusts, what goal does the apostle set forth as the ultimate form of obedience? 1 Peter 1:22.

“Peter continued, ‘see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.’ The word of God—the truth—is the channel through which the Lord manifests His Spirit and power. Obedience to the word produces fruit of the required quality—‘unfeigned love of the brethren.’ This love is heaven-born and leads to high motives and unselfish actions.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 519.

“‘Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren.’ . . . How important, then, it is that all who take hold of the work, those who canvass and those who work in the office, shall faithfully preserve and practice the highest, holiest principles of the Word of God.”—*The Publishing Ministry*, p. 297.

“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. [1 Peter 1:22 quoted.] . . .

“We must inquire into the character of our thoughts and feelings, our tempers, purposes, words, and deeds. . . . Unless we search diligently examining our hearts in the light of God’s Word, self-love will prompt to a much better opinion of ourselves than we should have.”—*This Day With God*, p. 83.

“If there were not some lack in our own experience, we would not be so suspicious of our brethren. It is the one whose conscience condemns him that so readily passes judgment. Let everyone tremble and be afraid of himself. . . . ‘Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren.’ ”—*The Review and Herald*, October 29, 1901.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What should I do if a sinful or impure thought enters my mind?
2. How often should I search my heart in regard to the nature of my motives?
3. How can I cultivate a deeper sense of purity in my life?
4. What can more fully develop my gratitude for the price Jesus paid for me?
5. How genuine is my love toward my brothers and sisters?

The Word of God

MEMORY TEXT: “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Peter 2:2).

“The word of God is the seed. Every seed has in itself a germinating principle. In it the life of the plant is enfolded. So there is life in God’s word.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 38.

Suggested Reading: *Messages to Young People*, pp. 189–191.

Sunday

April 21

1. A NECESSARY REQUIREMENT

a. What mandatory condition of salvation did Jesus present to His listeners? John 3:5–7; Matthew 18:1–3.

b. To what does Peter point as the means by which we may be converted (born again)? 1 Peter 1:23.

“The change of heart by which we become children of God is in the Bible spoken of as birth. . . .

“When truth becomes an abiding principle in the life, the soul is ‘born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.’ This new birth is the result of receiving Christ as the word of God. Then by the Holy Spirit divine truths are impressed upon the heart, new conceptions are awakened, and the energies hitherto dormant are aroused to cooperate with God. . . . Christ was the revealer of truth to the world. By Him the incorruptible seed—the Word of God—was sown in the hearts of men.

“The Word destroys the natural, earthly nature, and imparts a new life in Christ Jesus. The Word destroys the natural, earthly nature, and imparts a new life in Christ Jesus. The Holy Spirit comes to the soul as a Comforter. By the transforming agency of His grace, the image of God is reproduced in the disciple; he becomes a new creature. Love takes the place of hatred, and the heart receives the divine similitude.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 19.

2. ETERNAL VS. TEMPORAL AND CORRUPTIBLE

a. **What prophetic words did Peter quote when speaking of the fragility of human life? 1 Peter 1:24; Isaiah 40:6–8.**

b. **Throughout the Bible, to what is the life of a human compared—and why? Psalm 103:15, 16; James 4:14.**

“We have no time to lose. We know not how soon our probation may close. At the longest, we have but a brief lifetime here, and we know not how soon the arrow of death may strike our hearts. . . .

“Are we prepared? Have we become acquainted with God, the Governor of heaven, the Lawgiver, and with Jesus Christ whom He sent into the world as His representative? When our lifework is ended, shall we be able to say, as did Christ our example: ‘I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. . . . I have manifested Thy name’? John 17:4–6.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 454.

c. **In contrast to human life being like grass and vapor, what is as eternal as God? 1 Peter 1:25; Psalm 119:89.**

“Like the builders of these houses on the rock, said Jesus, is he who shall receive the words that I have spoken to you, and make them the foundation of his character and life. Centuries before, the prophet Isaiah had written, ‘The word of our God shall stand forever’ (Isaiah 40:8); and Peter, long after the Sermon on the Mount was given, quoting these words of Isaiah added, ‘This is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you’ (1 Peter 1:25). The word of God is the only steadfast thing our world knows. It is the sure foundation. ‘Heaven and earth shall pass away,’ said Jesus, ‘but My words shall not pass away.’ Matthew 24:35. . . .

“In receiving the word, we receive Christ. And only those who thus receive His words are building upon Him. . . . Christ, the Word, the revelation of God—the manifestation of His character, His law, His love, His life—is the only foundation upon which we can build a character that will endure.

“We build on Christ by obeying His word. . . . Holiness is . . . the result of surrendering all to God.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 148, 149.

3. REMOVING THE STUMBLING BLOCKS

- a. Name some stumbling blocks which hinder us from receiving the Word of God as it is in Jesus. 1 Peter 2:1, 2.

“Receive in the fullness of your heart the words of Christ, and be doers of His word. We cannot receive the blessings that the love and presence of Christ can bring us, if we cherish feelings that will mar the unity that Christ prayed might exist among His disciples.”—*The Review and Herald*, July 25, 1893.

“It is self that we have first to do with. Criticize the heart closely. Search it to see what hinders the free access of God’s Spirit.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 21.

“There is to be no sharp speaking, no fretful scolding, for angels of God are walking up and down in every room. . . . Little mistakes may be made, but words of censure arouse feelings of retaliation, and God is dishonored. . . . Any word spoken thoughtlessly or unadvisedly should be retracted on the spot. . . . This is our work.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 182.

- b. Give examples of how unsundered bitterness, hypocrisy and envy have hindered people from receiving the Word of God. Genesis 4:5–8; Mark 15:10; Acts 13:44, 45.

“Our prayers do not always seem to receive an immediate answer. . . . When we make request of Him, He may see that it is necessary for us to search our hearts and repent of sin. Therefore He takes us through test and trial, He brings us through humiliation, that we may see what hinders the working of His Holy Spirit through us.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 143.

“Envy is not merely a perverseness of temper, but a distemper, which disorders all the faculties. . . .

“The envious man shuts his eyes to the good qualities and noble deeds of others. He is always ready to disparage and misrepresent that which is excellent. Men often confess and forsake other faults, but there is little to be hoped for from the envious man. Since to envy a person is to admit that he is a superior, pride will not permit any concession. If an attempt be made to convince the envious person of his sin, he becomes even more bitter. . . .

“The envious man diffuses poison wherever he goes, alienating friends and stirring up hatred and rebellion against God and man.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 56.

4. DESIRING THE SINCERE MILK OF THE WORD

- a. After pointing to the Word of God as a power to convert our souls, what kind of “desire” is Peter exhorting us to exercise? 1 Peter 2:2.

“The appreciation of the Bible grows with its study. . . .

“There is nothing more calculated to strengthen the intellect than a study of the Bible. No other book is so potent to elevate the thoughts, to give vigor to the faculties, as the broad, ennobling truths of the Bible. If God’s Word were studied as it should be, men would have a breath of mind, a nobility of character, that is rarely seen in these times.

“No knowledge is so firm, so consistent, so far reaching, as that obtained from a study of the Word of God.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 135.

- b. Name one of the reasons why people refuse to study the Word of God. John 3:19, 20.

“You have neglected the Scriptures. You despise and reject the testimonies because they reprove your darling sins and disturb your self-complacency.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 49.

- c. What did many philosophers of Athens spend all their time doing, and what similar problem faces us today, especially with the intemperate use of the Internet and social media? Acts 17:21–23, 32; 2 Corinthians 4:3, 4.

“Oh, that the young would reflect upon the influence which exciting stories have upon the mind! Can you, after such reading, open the word of God and read the words of life with interest? Do you not find the book of God uninteresting?”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 416.

“Many are enfeebling the mind by the reading of stories and novels, and are losing their relish for the word of God. They are becoming mental inebriates, and will be unable to look at the solemn questions of life and destiny in the right light, unless they put away this practice.”—*The Review and Herald*, April 14, 1891.

5. GROWING SPIRITUALLY

- a. What is impossible if we do not remain diligent students of God's word? 2 Peter 3:18 (first part).

"The apostle exhorted the believers to study the Scriptures, through a proper understanding of which they might make sure work for eternity. Peter realized that in the experience of every soul who is finally victorious there would be scenes of perplexity and trial; but he knew also that an understanding of the Scriptures would enable the tempted one to bring to mind promises that would comfort the heart and strengthen faith in the Mighty One."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 521.

- b. In what danger are those who have tasted "that the Lord is gracious" but neglect applying God's word to their hearts? 1 Peter 2:3; Hebrews 6:4–6.

"Many are looking with self-complacency upon the long years during which they have advocated the truth. They now feel that they are entitled to a reward for their past trials and obedience. But this genuine experience in the things of God in the past makes them more guilty before Him for not preserving their integrity and going forward to perfection. The faithfulness for the past year will never atone for the neglect of the present year. A man's truthfulness yesterday will not atone for his falsehood today."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 63.

"Let us individually seek the Lord. Let those whose religious experience in the past has been only a surface work, draw near to God."—*Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 216.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are the fruits of a true conversion experience?
2. How can I know if I'm ready to meet the Lord if I were to die tonight?
3. Is there any brother or sister in the church that I don't like? If yes, why? Could the cause of my feeling towards them be hidden jealousy or envy?
4. How often would it be advisable for me to have personal Bible study?
5. Describe the difference between growing in Christ and stagnating.

First Sabbath Offering for World Missions

“Heaven stands indignant at the neglect shown to the souls of men. Would we know how Christ regards it? How would a father and mother feel, did they know that their child, lost in the cold and the snow, had been passed by, and left to perish, by those who might have saved it?”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 825.



Spiritually speaking, who are these children “lost in the cold and the snow”?

“Millions upon millions of human souls ready to perish, bound in chains of ignorance and sin, have never so much as heard of Christ’s love for them. Were our condition and theirs to be reversed, what would we desire them to do for us? All this, so far as lies in our power, we are under the most solemn obligation to do for them.”—*Ibid.*, p. 640.

“Everywhere the light of truth is to shine forth, that hearts, now in the sleep of ignorance, may be awakened and converted. In all countries and cities the gospel is to be proclaimed.”—*Evangelism*, p. 19.

“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?” (Romans 10:14, 15, first part).

Global evangelism is needed now, while the doors are still open. Indeed, at this hour we truly can echo the words of Jesus: “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world” (John 9:4, 5).

Not all can personally go everywhere the message needs to go on this dark planet. Yet to take this message nevertheless costs something from all of us: Time, care, energy, and money must be heartily invested in this work until the whole earth is lightened with the glory of God. Your faithful generosity toward world missions can make a big difference!

Your brethren from the General Conference

Living Stones

MEMORY TEXT: “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5).

“Those who understand the truth for this time must take heed how they hear and how they build and educate others to practice.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 22.

Suggested Reading: *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, pp. 272–274.

Sunday

April 28

1. ILLUSTRATED IN THE PAST

- a. Referring to Isaiah’s prophecy (Isaiah 28:16), how does Peter illustrate Jesus Christ? 1 Peter 2:4, 6.

- b. On what historical event is this illustration built? 1 Peter 2:7.

“In building the temple of Solomon the stones were entirely prepared at the quarry, so that when they were brought . . . the workmen had only to place them in position. . . .

“Not an instrument was to be used upon the stone when it was brought to the place of building. One stone of irregular shape was brought from the quarry to be used in the foundation of the temple. But the workmen could find no place for it. . . . There it lay unused, and the laborers passed around it or stumbled over it, greatly annoyed by its presence. Long it remained a rejected stone. But when the builders came to the laying of the corner-stone, for a long time they searched in vain for a stone of sufficient size and strength . . . [to] bear the great weight which would rest upon it. Should they make an unwise selection of a stone for this important place, the safety of the entire building would be endangered. . . .

“The attention of the builders was finally attracted to this large stone, and they examined it closely. It had already borne every test. . . . The stone was accepted, brought to its assigned position and found to be an exact fit.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, pp. 36, 37.

2. THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE

- a. **Although Jesus named Simon “Cephas,” which means “a stone” (see John 1:42; Matthew 16:18, 19), why could Peter not be “the rock” upon which Christ built His church? Matthew 26:73, 74; Galatians 2:11–13.**

“Peter was prompt and zealous in action, bold and uncompromising; and Christ saw in him material that would be of great value to the church.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 488.

“Peter was not the rock upon which the church was founded. The gates of hell did prevail against him when he denied his Lord with cursing and swearing. The church was built upon One against whom the gates of hell could not prevail.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 413.

“Christ did not refer to Peter as being the rock upon which he would found his church. His expression, ‘this rock,’ applied to *Himself* as the foundation of the Christian church. In Isaiah 28:16, the same reference is made. . . . It is the same stone to which reference is made in Luke 20:17, 18. . . . Also in Mark 12:10, 11. . . .

“These texts prove conclusively that Christ is the rock upon which the church is built.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, pp. 272, 273.

- b. **Give evidence that rather than being the foundation of the church, Peter was one of the various brethren in leadership. Galatians 2:9; 1 Peter 5:1; Ephesians 2:20, 21.**

“James presided at the council [see Acts chapter 15], and his final decision was, ‘Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them [Gentiles].’ . . .

“This ended the discussion. In this instance we have a refutation of the doctrine held by the Roman Catholic Church that Peter was the head of the church. . . . Nothing in the life of Peter gives sanction to the claim that he was elevated above his brethren as the vicegerent of the Most High.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 194, 195.

- c. **Whom did Peter consider to be the only solid rock and true foundation of the church? 1 Peter 2:3–6.**

3. A STUMBLING BLOCK

- a. Name one quality ascribed to Jesus and how it is to relate to the gospel message for sinners. 1 Peter 2:4 (first part), 7.
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“As the word of life is spoken, let your heartfelt response testify that you receive the message as from heaven. This is very old-fashioned, I know; but it will be a thank offering to God for the bread of life given to the hungry soul. This response to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit will be a strength to your own soul and an encouragement to others. It will give some evidence that there are in God’s building living stones that emit light.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 367.

- b. How do we know that even those familiar with the present truth are in danger of “stumbling at the word”? Romans 9:31–33; 1 Peter 2:8.
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“The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones [at the SDA General Conference held in Minneapolis in 1888]. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 91, 92.

“Some have been cultivating hatred against the men whom God has commissioned to bear a special message to the world. They began this satanic work at Minneapolis. Afterward, when they saw and felt the demonstration of the Holy Spirit testifying that the message was of God, they hated it the more, because it was a testimony against them. They would not humble their hearts to repent.”—*Ibid.* pp. 79, 80.

“I was shown the low state of God’s people . . . they had departed from Him, and had become lukewarm. They possess the theory of the truth, but lack its saving power.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 210.

“The message to the Laodicean church is applicable to our condition. How plainly is pictured the position of those who think they have all the truth, who take pride in their knowledge of the Word of God, while its sanctifying power has not been felt in their lives.”—*Faith and Works*, pp. 82, 83.

4. BEING A LIVELY (LIVING) STONE

a. How does Peter illustrate Christian growth? 1 Peter 2:5.

b. What does it mean to be a “lively stone” in God’s spiritual house? Ephesians 4:13, 15, 16. Contrast this to Revelation 3:1 (last part), 2.

“Now we have to work with these men who are really intelligent. . . . These rough stones we bring if possible into the workshop of God where they will be hewed and squared, and all the rough edges removed, and they be polished under the divine hand until they will make precious stones in the temple of God and shall be living stones emitting light. Thus they may grow up into a holy temple for God.”—*Evangelism*, p. 573.

“The Lord will not accept a heartless service, a round of ceremonies that are really Christless. His children must be lively stones in God’s building. If all would give themselves unreservedly to God, if they would cease to study and plan for their amusement, for excursions, and pleasure-loving associations, and would study the words, . . . they would never hunger or thirst for excitement or change. If it is for our true interest to be spiritual and if the salvation of our people depends on our being riveted on the Eternal Rock, would we not better be engaged in seeking for that which will hold the whole building to the chief corner stone, that we may not be confused and confounded in our faith.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 461, 462.

c. What is the best “spiritual sacrifice” we may offer to God? 1 Peter 2:5 (last part); Psalm 51:17; 1 Samuel 15:22 (second half).

“Burnt offerings and sacrifices were not acceptable to God in ancient times unless the spirit was right with which the gift was offered. Samuel said: ‘. . . Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.’ All the money on earth cannot buy the blessing of God nor ensure you a single victory.

“Many would make any and every sacrifice but the very one they *should* make, which is to yield themselves, to submit their wills to the will of God.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 84.

5. ARE WE WHAT WE CLAIM TO BE?

- a. What words of the Bible do we tend to boastfully apply to ourselves? 1 Peter 2:9 (first part), 10.
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- b. To what class of people only, can the above words from 1 Peter 2:9 be applied? 1 Peter 2:5, 9 (last part); Matthew 5:16; Romans 2:28, 29.
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“He whose mind is enlightened by the opening of God’s word to his understanding will realize his responsibility to God and to the world, and he will feel that his talents must be developed in a way that will produce the very best results; for he is to ‘show forth the praises’ of Him who has called him ‘out of darkness into His marvelous light.’ 1 Peter 2:9. While growing in grace and in a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, he will realize his own imperfections, he will feel his real ignorance, and he will seek constantly to preserve and put to the stretch his powers of mind, that he may become an intelligent Christian.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 37.

“God has a people who will not receive the mark of the beast in their right hand or in their forehead. God has a place for His people to fill in this world, to reflect light.”—*The Review and Herald*, April 15, 1890.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- How can I be sure to be building on Jesus rather than my own ideas?
- Christ saw in Peter qualities that would be of great value to the church. What can I be doing to make my church better?
- How might I be in danger of counting my years of faithful work for the church or my progress in various aspects of reform as a merit for salvation?
- What can make me truly a “lively stone” in God’s temple?
- What identifies a holy, “peculiar” Christian in contrast to one who simply claims the name?

Witnessing to the World

MEMORY TEXT: “For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men” (1 Peter 2:15).

“The crown of Christ is to be lifted above the diadems of earthly potentates.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 68.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 358–361.

Sunday

May 5

1. AVOIDING THAT WHICH WARS AGAINST THE SOUL

- a. What is one of the most important and yet most challenging battles for every pilgrim? 1 Peter 2:11; 1 John 2:15, 16.

“The apostle Peter understood the relation between the mind and the body, and raised his voice in warning to his brethren: ‘Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.’ Many regard this text as a warning against licentiousness only; but it has a broader meaning. It forbids every injurious gratification of appetite or passion. Every perverted appetite becomes a warring lust. Appetite was given us for a good purpose, not to become the minister of death by being perverted, and thus degenerating into ‘lusts which war against the soul.’ . . .

“The strength of the temptation to indulge appetite can be measured only by the inexpressible anguish of our Redeemer in that long fast in the wilderness. He knew that the indulgence of perverted appetite would so deaden man’s perceptions that sacred things could not be discerned. . . . If the power of indulged appetite was so strong upon the race, that, in order to break its hold the divine Son of God, in man’s behalf, had to endure a fast of nearly six weeks, what a work is before the Christian! Yet, however great the struggle, he may overcome. By the help of that divine power . . . he, too, may be entirely successful in his warfare with evil, and at last may wear the victor’s crown in the kingdom of God.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, pp. 166, 167.

2. PREACHING THROUGH GOOD WORKS

- a. **Why are all true Christians perceived as strangers and even as enemies of this world? 1 Peter 2:12; 1 Corinthians 1:18, 23; 2:14.**
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“Among his [Paul’s] Jewish hearers there were many who would be angered by the message he was about to proclaim. In the estimation of the Greeks his words would be absurd folly. He would be looked upon as weak-minded for attempting to show how the cross could have any connection with the elevation of the race or the salvation of mankind.

“But to Paul the cross was the one object of supreme interest.”—*The Acts of Apostles*, p. 245.

“The spirit of the world is no more in harmony with the spirit of Christ today than in earlier times, and those who preach the word of God in its purity will be received with no greater favor now than then. The forms of opposition to the truth may change, the enmity may be less open because it is more subtle; but the same antagonism still exists and will be manifested to the end of time.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 144.

- b. **To what does Peter point as the best technique in preaching the Gospel and dealing with the “ignorance of foolish men”? 1 Peter 2:12, 15.**
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“Our ministers and teachers are to represent the love of God to a fallen world. With hearts melted in tenderness let the word of truth be spoken. Let all who are in error be treated with the gentleness of Christ. If those for whom you labor do not immediately grasp the truth, do not censure, do not criticize or condemn. Remember that you are to represent Christ in His meekness and gentleness and love. We must expect to meet unbelief and opposition. The truth has always had to meet these elements. But though you should meet the bitterest opposition, do not denounce your opponents. . . .

“You should conduct yourself with meekness toward those who are in error, for were not you yourself recently in blindness in your sins? And because of the patience of Christ toward you, should you not be tender and patient toward others? God has given us many admonitions to manifest great kindness toward those who oppose us, lest we influence a soul in the wrong direction.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 120, 121.

3. CHRISTIAN SUBMISSION

- a. Describe the attitude that we should have toward civil authorities and the laws of the land. 1 Peter 2:13–17.

“The apostle plainly outlined the attitude that believers should sustain toward the civil authorities: ‘Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man.’ ”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 522.

- b. Give examples of what should be done in cases when the law of the land conflicts with the law of God—and with what attitude. Acts 5:29; Exodus 1:15–17; Daniel 6:7–10, 21, 22.

“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.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 361.

“We are not required to defy authorities. Our words, whether spoken or written, should be carefully considered, lest we . . . appear antagonistic to law and order. We are not to say or do anything that would unnecessarily close up our way. We are to go forward in Christ’s name, advocating the truths committed to us. If we are forbidden by men to do this work, then we may say, as did the apostles.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 69.

“He who has God’s law written in the heart will obey God rather than men. . . . The wisdom and authority of the divine law are supreme.

“I was shown that God’s people, who are His peculiar treasure, cannot engage in this perplexing war [The American Civil War, 1861–1865], 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.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 361.

- c. If we are “servants” in our workplace, what type of workers are we to be? 1 Peter 2:18; Colossians 3:23.

“There is science in the humblest kind of work, and if all would thus regard it, they would see nobility in labor.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 315.

4. SUFFERING WRONGFULLY

- a. **What should be our attitude toward those who mistreat, offend, despise or mock us? 1 Peter 2:19, 20; Romans 12:19–21.**
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“We cannot afford to let our spirits chafe over any real or supposed wrong done to ourselves. Self is the enemy we most need to fear. No form of vice has a more baleful effect upon the character than has human passion not under the control of the Holy Spirit. No other victory we can gain will be so precious as the victory gained over self.

“We should not allow our feelings to be easily wounded. We are to live, not to guard our feelings or our reputation, but to save souls. . . . Whatever others may think of us or do to us, it need not disturb our oneness with Christ. . . .

“Do not retaliate. So far as you can do so, remove all cause for misapprehension. Avoid the appearance of evil. Do all that lies in your power, without the sacrifice of principle, to conciliate others. . . .

“If impatient words are spoken to you, never reply in the same spirit.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 485, 486.

- b. **Why does God permit us to suffer at the hands of cruel and wicked people? Matthew 5:11, 12, 43–48.**
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“The mysterious providence which permits the righteous to suffer persecution at the hand of the wicked has been a cause of great perplexity to many who are weak in faith. Some are even ready to cast away their confidence in God because He suffers the basest of men to prosper, while the best and purest are afflicted and tormented by their cruel power. How, it is asked, can One who is just and merciful, and who is also infinite in power, tolerate such injustice and oppression? This is a question with which we have nothing to do. God has given us sufficient evidence of His love, and we are not to doubt His goodness because we cannot understand the workings of His providence. . . .

“[The Lord] does not forget or neglect His children; but He permits the wicked to reveal their true character, that none who desire to do His will may be deceived concerning them. Again, the righteous are placed in the furnace of affliction, that they themselves may be purified.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 47, 48.

5. FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE

- a. After encouraging Christians to meet afflictions and persecution with joy, what does Peter bring as the strongest argument to do so? 1 Peter 2:21–24.

“Jesus suffered for us more than any of His followers can be made to suffer through the cruelty of wicked men. Those who are called to endure torture and martyrdom are but following in the steps of God’s dear Son.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 47.

- b. What encouraging illustration does the apostle bring at the end of his thoughts on how we are to face afflictions? 1 Peter 2:25; John 10:11.

“Christ is represented as hunting, searching, for the sheep that was lost. It is His love that encircles us, bringing us back to the fold. His love gives us the privilege of sitting together with Him in heavenly places.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 479.

“Our workers—ministers, teachers, physicians, directors—all need to remember that they are pledged to cooperate with Christ. . . . They are to cherish a constant sense of the Saviour’s love, of His efficiency, His watchfulness, His tenderness. They are to look to Him as the shepherd and bishop of their souls. Then they will have the sympathy and support of the heavenly angels. Christ will be their joy and crown of rejoicing. Their hearts will be controlled by the Holy Spirit, and they will have a knowledge of the truth which merely nominal believers can never gain.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 284.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How can I be delivered from slavery to appetite and passions?
2. What will make my life a living testimony of the power of the Gospel?
3. What are some ways I can better manifest obedience toward authority?
4. When falsely accused or even yelled at, what is to be my response?
5. What will make me truly willing to suffer for Jesus?

An Appeal to Husbands and Wives

MEMORY TEXT; “While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear” (1 Peter 3:2).

“The home is too sacred a place to be polluted with vulgarity, sensuality, and recrimination. There is a Witness who declares, ‘I know thy works.’ Let love, truth, kindness, and forbearance be the plants cultivated in the garden of the heart.”—*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 1, p. 157.

Suggested Reading: *The Adventist Home*, pp. 99–112, 177–180.

Sunday

May 12

1. A BIBLICAL QUALITY OFTEN OVERLOOKED

- a. What vital principle for family happiness is often rejected by women today? 1 Peter 3:1 (first part); Ephesians 5:22–24; Colossians 3:18.

“Sister, what did you expect of your husband when you married him? Did you expect to take the reins of government in your own hands, and bring his will into harmony with that perverse, stubborn will of yours? How much rest, contentment, peace, and joy has your husband realized in his married life? But very little. . . . The wife must not consider herself a doll, to be tended, but a woman, one to put her shoulder under the real, not imaginary, burdens, and live an understanding, thoughtful life, considering that there are other things to be thought of than herself.

“Do you think it is no disappointment to your husband that he finds you what God has shown me you are? Did he marry you with the expectation that you would bear no burdens, share no perplexities, exercise no self-denial? Did he think that you would feel under no obligation to control self, to be cheerful, kind, and forbearing, and to exercise common sense?”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 17, pp. 310, 311.

- b. What is the most effective way for a converted wife to reach her unbelieving husband? 1 Peter 3:1, 2; 1 Corinthians 7:10, 13, 14.

2. PROMOTING A HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIP

- a. **What biblical example does Peter use as a model for a wife's relationship to her husband? 1 Peter 3:4–6. Explain the balance revealed in this relationship. Genesis 21:9–12.**
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“The instruction given to Abraham touching the sacredness of the marriage relation was to be a lesson for all ages. It declares that the rights and happiness of this relation are to be carefully guarded, even at a great sacrifice. Sarah was the only true wife of Abraham. Her rights as a wife and mother no other person was entitled to share. She revered her husband, and in this she is presented in the New Testament as a worthy example. But she was unwilling that Abraham's affections should be given to another, and the Lord did not reprove her for requiring the banishment of her rival.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 147.

- b. **What too often makes a husband miserable in the family circle and damages his reputation in society? Proverbs 14:1; 25:24; 27:15; contrast this with 1 Peter 3:4.**
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“Very many husbands and children who find nothing attractive at home, who are continually greeted by scolding and murmuring, seek comfort and amusement away from home. . . . The wife and mother, occupied with her household cares, frequently becomes thoughtless of the little courtesies that make home pleasant to the husband and children, even if she avoids dwelling upon her peculiar vexations and difficulties in their presence. While she is absorbed in preparing something to eat or to wear, the husband and sons go in and come out as strangers.

“While the mistress of the household may perform her outward duties with exactitude, she may be continually crying out against the slavery to which she is doomed, and exaggerate her responsibilities and restrictions by comparing her lot with what she styles the higher life of woman. . . . While she is fruitlessly yearning for a different life, she is nourishing a sinful discontent and making her home very unpleasant for her husband and children.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 249.

“The minister's wife who is not devoted to God is no help to her husband. While he dwells upon the necessity of bearing the cross, and urges the importance of self-denial, the daily example of his wife often contradicts his preaching and destroys its force.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 210. [1892 edition.]

3. DANGEROUS FORMS OF PRIDE

- a. How does a Christian wife make herself attractive? Proverbs 31:25–29.
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“[The wife] should diligently do all in her power to bind her husband to herself by strictest fidelity to him and faithfulness in making his home cheerful and attractive.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 598.

“God is displeased with disorder, slackness, and a lack of thoroughness in anyone. These deficiencies are serious evils, and tend to wean the affections of the husband from the wife when the husband loves order. . . . A wife and mother cannot make home agreeable and happy unless she possesses a love for order, preserves her dignity, and has good government; therefore all who fail on these points should begin at once to educate themselves in this direction.”—*The Adventist Home*, pp. 22, 23.

- b. Whom does an unconverted woman often try to attract—and with what consequences? Proverbs 7:6, 7, 10, 18, 19; 2 Kings 9:30; Isaiah 3:16–26.
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“There will be women who will become tempters, and who will do their best to attract and win the attention of men to themselves.”—*The Review and Herald*, May 17, 1887.

“Showy, extravagant dress too often encourages lust in the heart of the wearer and awakens base passions in the heart of the beholder. God sees that the ruin of the character is frequently preceded by the indulgence of pride and vanity in dress.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 416.

- c. While most Christian women may not consciously seek to entice men into adultery, against what form of pride are all warned? 1 Peter 3:3; 1 Timothy 2:9.
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“Nothing has been as great a hindrance to you [and your husband] both as your pride. You are both fond of display; this has no part in good, humble religion.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 493.

“The Bible teaches modesty in dress. . . . This forbids display in dress, gaudy colors, profuse ornamentation. Any device designed to attract attention to the wearer or to excite admiration is excluded from the modest apparel which God’s Word enjoins.

“Self-denial in dress is a part of our Christian duty. To dress plainly and abstain from display of jewelry and ornaments of every kind is in keeping with our faith.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 423.

4. THE HUSBAND'S DUTY

- a. **After appealing to wives, what serious admonition does Peter address to husbands—and the spiritual consequence of disregarding it? 1 Peter 3:7.**
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“Let the husband aid his wife by his sympathy and unfailing affection. If he wishes to keep her fresh and gladsome, so that she will be as sunshine in the home, let him help her bear her burdens. His kindness and loving courtesy will be to her a precious encouragement, and the happiness he imparts will bring joy and peace to his own heart.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 218.

- b. **Give an example how an unconverted husband can make his wife's life miserable. 1 Samuel 25:3, 14, 17, 23–25.**
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“If the husband is tyrannical, exacting, critical of the actions of his wife, he cannot hold her respect and affection, and the marriage relation will become odious to her. She will not love her husband, because he does not try to make himself lovable. Husbands should be careful, attentive, constant, faithful, and compassionate. They should manifest love and sympathy. . . . When the husband has the nobility of character, purity of heart, elevation of mind, that every true Christian must possess, it will be made manifest in the marriage relation. . . . He will seek to keep his wife in health and courage. He will strive to speak words of comfort, to create an atmosphere of peace in the home circle.”—*Ibid.*, p. 228.

- c. **What should be the attitude of a truly Christian husband toward his wife, to inspire her to respond favorably in turn? Ephesians 5:25, 28, 33; Colossians 3:19.**
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“Husbands should study the Pattern, and seek to know what is meant by the symbol presented in Ephesians. . . . The husband is to be as a Saviour in his family. Will he stand in his noble, God-given manhood, ever seeking to uplift his wife and children? . . . Let every husband and father study to understand the words of Christ, not in a one-sided manner, merely dwelling upon the subjection of the wife to her husband, but in the light of the cross of Calvary study as to his own position in the family circle.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 21, p. 216.

5. NO “BOSS” IN THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

- a. How close should be the relationship between husband and wife?
Genesis 2:23, 24; Matthew 19:4–6.
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“Neither husband nor wife is to make a plea for rulership. The Lord has laid down the principle that is to guide in this matter. The husband is to cherish his wife as Christ cherishes the church. And the wife is to respect and love her husband. Both are to cultivate the spirit of kindness, being determined never to grieve or injure the other.”—*The Adventist Home*, pp. 106, 107.

“We must have the Spirit of God, or we can never have harmony in the home. The wife, if she has the spirit of Christ, will be careful of her words; she will control her spirit, she will be submissive, and yet will not feel that she is a bonds slave, but a companion to her husband. If the husband is a servant of God, he will not lord it over his wife; he will not be arbitrary and exacting. We cannot cherish home affection with too much care; for the home, if the Spirit of the Lord dwells there, is a type of heaven. . . . If one errs, the other will exercise Christlike forbearance and not draw coldly away.

“Neither the husband nor the wife should attempt to exercise over the other an arbitrary control. Do not try to compel each other to yield to your wishes. You cannot do this and retain each other’s love. Be kind, patient, and forbearing, considerate, and courteous. By the grace of God you can succeed in making each other happy, as in your marriage vow you promised to do.”—*Ibid.*, p. 118.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How can my attitude and tone of voice toward my spouse more consistently reflect the principles God has clearly directed?
2. Why should I be quicker to admit my faults and ask forgiveness from my spouse?
3. Why does God call me to be ready/willing to die for my spouse?
4. How can I avoid ever cheating on my spouse in my thoughts?
5. Why would it be wise for my spouse and I to prayerfully consider whether we may be guilty of pride of display—either in dress, cooking skills, or possessions such as a vehicle, electronics, house, etc.?

The Christian's Attitude

MEMORY TEXT: “Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous” (1 Peter 3:8).

“Those who profess to be followers of Christ and are at the same time rough, unkind, and uncourteous in words and deportment have not learned of Jesus. A blustering, overbearing, faultfinding man is not a Christian; for to be a Christian is to be Christlike.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 427.

Suggested Reading: *The Adventist Home*, pp. 421–429.

Sunday

May 19

1. A TRUE CHRISTIAN DESCRIBED

a. How does Peter depict a true Christian? 1 Peter 3:8.

“The value of courtesy is too little appreciated. Many who are kind at heart lack kindness of manner. Many who command respect by their sincerity and uprightness are sadly deficient in geniality. This lack mars their own happiness and detracts from their service to others.”—*Education*, p. 240.

b. Which uniquely Christlike attitude does Peter especially emphasize? 1 Peter 3:9; Matthew 5:44.

“All are to be treated with refinement and delicacy, as the sons and daughters of God.

“Christianity will make a man a gentleman. Christ was courteous, even to His persecutors; and His true followers will manifest the same spirit.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 489.

“This religion teaches us to exercise patience and long-suffering when brought into places where we receive treatment that is harsh and unjust.

...

“There is constant need of patience, gentleness, self-denial, and self-sacrifice in the exercise of Bible religion.”—*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 248.

2. WATCHING OUR WORDS

- a. **What important principle did Peter re-emphasize as the condition of a happy life here, as well as in the life to come? Psalm 34:12, 13; 1 Peter 3:10.**
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“Satan is working in every church to spoil the flock of God. . . . I am instructed to say to every soul who professes to be a follower of Christ, ‘Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips, that they speak no guile.’ Through self-exaltation Satan works to ruin the soul, and his working may be seen in every church. My brethren and sisters, keep strict guardianship over your spirit. Guard your words, lest Satan lead you to repeat his own history.”—*The Upward Look*, p. 114.

- b. **Give examples of people who violated this principle, and how it caused embarrassment and disgrace, especially for the one who spoke them. 1 Samuel 14:24–27, 43–45; Esther 6:6–10.**
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“Let not one word of fretfulness, harshness, or passion escape your lips. The grace of Christ awaits your demand. His Spirit will take control of your heart and conscience, presiding over your words and deeds. Never forfeit your self-respect by hasty, thoughtless words. See that your words are pure, your conversation holy.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 219.

- c. **How will violation of this principle hinder many from being entrusted with eternal life? 1 Peter 3:10 (last part) compared to Revelation 14:5; 21:27.**
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“When these tea and coffee users meet together for social entertainment, . . . their tongues are loosened, and they begin the wicked work of talking against others. Their words are not few or well chosen. The tidbits of gossip are passed around, too often the poison of scandal as well. These thoughtless gossipers forget that they have a witness. An unseen Watcher is writing their words in the books of heaven. All these unkind criticisms, these exaggerated reports, these envious feelings, expressed under the excitement of the cup of tea, Jesus registers as against Himself.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 423.

3. SEEKING PEACE

- a. **Of what other important principles of Christian life does Peter remind us? 1 Peter 3:11; Isaiah 1:16, 17.**
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- b. **How can we “eschew evil and do good”? Jeremiah 13:23 compared to 1 Corinthians 6:9–11; John 3:5; James 4:7.**
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“[Those to whom the apostle Paul is writing] must reveal in their lives the glorious change wrought in them by Christ’s transforming grace. . . . They could not change their own hearts. And when by their efforts souls were led from the ranks of Satan to take their stand for Christ, they were not to claim any credit for the transformation wrought. . . .

“The power of God is the one element of efficiency in the grand work of obtaining the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil. . . . Man can accomplish nothing without God, and God has arranged His plans so as to accomplish nothing in the restoration of the human race without the cooperation of the human with the divine. The part man is required to sustain is immeasurably small, yet in the plan of God it is just that part that is needed to make the work a success.

“The great change that is seen in the life of a sinner after conversion is not brought about by any human goodness.”—*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 319.

- c. **What hope and promise is given to those who have yielded themselves to the transforming power of the Gospel, yet are still being defeated by various temptations? 1 Peter 3:12; John 14:13, 14.**
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“By faith and prayer all may meet the requirements of the gospel. No man can be forced to transgress. His own consent must be first gained; the soul must purpose the sinful act before passion can dominate over reason or iniquity triumph over conscience. Temptation, however strong, is never an excuse for sin. ‘The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers.’ Cry unto the Lord, tempted soul. Cast yourself, helpless, unworthy, upon Jesus, and claim His very promise. The Lord will hear. He knows how strong are the inclinations of the natural heart, and He will help in every time of temptation.

“Have you fallen into sin? Then without delay seek God for mercy and pardon.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 177.

4. FEARLESSLY DOING GOOD

- a. **What practical advice given by Peter, if followed, can help us solve many problems in relationships? 1 Peter 3:13; Proverbs 15:1.**

“Words spoken in reply to one who is angry usually act as a whip, lashing the temper into greater fury. But anger met by silence quickly dies away. Let the Christian bridle his tongue, firmly resolving not to speak harsh, impatient words.”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 136.

- b. **What should be our course with people who cannot seem to be softened regardless of our gentle caution with them? 1 Peter 3:14, 16, 17.**

“Jesus Himself never purchased peace by compromise. . . . The servants of Christ are called to the same work, and they should beware lest, in seeking to prevent discord, they surrender the truth. . . . Real peace can never be secured by compromising principle. And no man can be true to principle without exciting opposition. A Christianity that is spiritual will be opposed by the children of disobedience. But Jesus bade His disciples, ‘Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul.’ Those who are true to God need not fear the power of men nor the enmity of Satan. In Christ their eternal life is secure. Their only fear should be lest they surrender the truth, and thus betray the trust with which God has honored them.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 356.

- c. **What is to be the source of all our good works and kind words? 1 Peter 3:16 (first part); Acts 24:16; Hebrews 9:14.**

“In the Word of God we read that there are good and bad consciences, and the fact that your conscience does not condemn you in not keeping the law of God, does not prove that you are uncondemned in His sight. Take your conscience to the Word of God and see if your life and character are in accordance with the standard of righteousness which God has there revealed.”—*The Review and Herald*, September 3, 1901.

5. KNOWING WHEREIN WE STAND

- a. **What are the main reasons why we are to study God's word daily?** Joshua 1:8; Psalm 119:11; 1 Peter 3:15; 2 Timothy 2:15.
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- b. **In what great danger are many today who claim to believe in the present truth?** Hosea 4:6.
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“Are the youth in a position where they can with meekness and fear give an answer to every man that asketh a reason of their hope? I saw that the youth greatly fail of understanding our position. Terrible scenes are just before them, a time of trouble which will test the value of character.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol.1, pp. 507, 508.

“The present message—justification by faith—is a message from God. . . .

“We are not safe if we neglect to search the Scriptures daily for light and knowledge. . . . There is not one in one hundred who understands for himself the Bible truth on this subject that is so necessary to our present and eternal welfare.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 359.

“Many look to their ministers to bring the light from God to them. . . . Such lose much. If they would daily follow Christ . . . they might obtain a clear knowledge of His will, and thus be gaining a valuable experience. For want of this very experience, brethren professing the truth walk in the sparks of others' kindling; they are unacquainted with the Spirit of God and have not a knowledge of His will, and are therefore easily moved from their faith. They are unstable, because they trusted in others to obtain an experience for them.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 644.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **What is my attitude toward my spouse, children, brethren, and coworkers?**
2. **Name some key steps to strengthen us on how to control our tongue.**
3. **What should I do if defeated by a temptation?**
4. **Explain the difference between good works and kind words coming from a pure conscience vs. selfish motives in an attempt to build a good reputation.**
5. **How can I obtain a deeper understanding of the beliefs I profess?**

First Sabbath Offering for a Foreign Mission Project in the Pacific Region

The work of spreading the gospel message in this world is a tremendous task, due to the many souls yet to hear the good news of salvation. The Lord declares that “this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:14). God loves every single one of the 7.8 billion people in this world and wants them all to have a chance to turn to Him.



There are many religions in Pacific region including Taoism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity; however, the vast majority identify as non-religious or atheist. There is truly a great work to do here.

“The whole world is opening to the gospel. Ethiopia is stretching out her hands unto God. From Japan and China and India, from the still-darkened lands of our own continent, from every quarter of this world of ours, comes the cry of sin-stricken hearts for a knowledge of the God of love. Millions upon millions have never so much as heard of God or of His love revealed in Christ. It is their right to receive this knowledge. They have an equal claim with us in the Saviour’s mercy. And it rests with us who have received the knowledge, with our children to whom we may impart it, to answer their cry.”—*Education*, pp. 262, 263.

Although the spreading of the message may not have some of the same freedoms in some areas as others, the truth does find a way to human hearts and there are many believers in the message of reformation in places you might not expect. This Sabbath we ask you to pray especially for this work, that God will enable it to go forward to prepare more souls for His kingdom.

For the truth to go forward, means are greatly needed to help facilitate a place of worship to forward the cause of truth in the northern part of this great field of labor. We ask you to give generously.

“For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it” (Isaiah 55:11).

On behalf of your brothers and sisters far away

The Baptism Everyone Needs

MEMORY TEXT: “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 3:21).

“I entreat the church members in every city that they lay hold upon the Lord with determined effort for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.”—*Counsels on Health*, p. 548.

Suggested Reading: *Steps to Christ*, pp. 17–22.

Sunday

May 26

1. THE ONLY WAY OF SALVATION

a. What did Peter state in writing and preaching in regard to the only possible way of salvation? 1 Peter 3:18; Acts 4:10–12.

b. Why couldn't God in His mercy simply forgive and save sinners without sacrificing His Son? Isaiah 26:10 and Romans 8:7 compared to Romans 5:10 and Colossians 1:20–22.

“In his sinless state, man held joyful communion with [God]. . . . But after his sin, he could no longer find joy in holiness, and he sought to hide from the presence of God. . . . The sinner could not be happy in God's presence; he would shrink from the companionship of holy beings. Could he be permitted to enter heaven, it would have no joy for him. The spirit of unselfish love that reigns there . . . would touch no answering chord in his soul. His thoughts, his interests, his motives, would be alien to those that actuate the sinless dwellers there. He would be a discordant note in the melody of heaven. Heaven would be to him a place of torture. . . . It is no arbitrary decree on the part of God that excludes the wicked from heaven; they are shut out by their own unfitness for its companionship. The glory of God would be to them a consuming fire.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 17, 18.

2. ASSURANCE THROUGH HIS RESURRECTION

- a. Although we are saved through Christ's death, in what sense are we also "saved by the resurrection of Jesus"? 1 Peter 3:21 (last part); 1 Corinthians 6:14; 15:22, 23; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-16.
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- b. What does Peter explain in regard to who actually fulfilled the Father's command and resurrected Jesus? Compare Acts 2:22-24 to 1 Peter 3:18.
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"He who died for the sins of the world was to remain in the tomb for the allotted time. He was in that stony prison house as a prisoner of divine justice. . . . He was bearing the sins of the world, and His Father only could release Him."—*The Youth's Instructor*, May 2, 1901.

"By raising Christ from the dead, the Father glorified His Son before the Roman guard, . . . satanic host, and before the heavenly universe."—*Lift Him Up*, p. 102.

"Then the mighty angel, with a voice that caused the earth to quake, was heard: Jesus thou Son of God, thy Father calls thee! And He who had earned the power to conquer death and the grave came forth."—*The Present Truth*, February 18, 1886.

"God is clothed with power; He is able to take those who are dead in trespasses and sins, and by the operation of the Spirit which raised Jesus from the dead, transform the human character, bringing back to the soul the lost image of God."—*The Youth's Instructor*, February 7, 1895.

- c. Who will resurrect all the saints into immortality at Christ's return, and under what condition only will that be possible? Romans 8:9-11.
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"The mortal bodies are quickened by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.

. . .

"The vitalizing power of the Spirit of Christ dwelling in the mortal body binds every believing soul to Jesus Christ. . . .

"The Lifegiver will call up His purchased possession in the first resurrection. . . . By the power of the Saviour that dwelt in them while living and because they were partakers of the divine nature, they are brought forth from the dead."—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 271.

"Death is looked upon by Christ as sleep—silence, darkness, sleep. He speaks of it as if it were of little moment. . . . And to the believing one, death is but a small matter. With him to die is but to sleep.

"The same power that raised Christ from the dead will raise His church."—*My Life Today*, p. 295.

3. THE “POWER” BEHIND THE GOSPEL

- a. Whom did Jesus use to preach the Gospel, and appeal to fallen humanity in Old Testament times? 1 Peter 3:18 (last part), 19, 20. To understand who were the “spirits in prison,” compare this phrase to Proverbs 5:22; Isaiah 42:6, 7; 61:1.
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“God is constantly appealing to the human heart, bidding it recognize His love and mercy. . . . Thus He has pleaded with mankind in all ages. In Noah’s day Christ spoke to men through a human agency and preached to those who were in bondage to sin.”—*This Day With God*, p. 278.

“Before this the Spirit had been in the world; from the very beginning of the work of redemption He had been moving upon men’s hearts.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 669.

- b. After His ascension, whom did Christ send to empower the apostles to continue the gospel work? John 14:12, 16, 17; 20:21, 22; Acts 1:2.
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“While Christ was on earth, the disciples had desired no other helper. Not until they were deprived of His presence would they feel their need of the Spirit, and then He would come.

“The Holy Spirit is Christ’s representative, but divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. Therefore it was for their interest that He should go to the Father, and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth. No one could then have any advantage because of his location or his personal contact with Christ. By the Spirit the Saviour would be accessible to all. In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high.”—*Ibid.*

- c. What promise of God is to be fulfilled again in the time of the end, in a greater way than it was in the time of the apostles? Joel 2:28–31; Hosea 6:3.
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“The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 611.

4. THE BAPTISM EVERYONE NEEDS

- a. Explain the complete baptism necessary for salvation. Mark 1:7, 8; John 3:3, 5.
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“The atmosphere of the church is so frigid. . . . The warmth of their first love is frozen up, and unless they are watered over by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, their candlestick will be removed out of its place, except they repent and do their first works.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 167, 168.

- b. Why do many Christians have a hard time keeping the vows made at their baptism by water? Hebrews 5:11, 12; 6:1, 2.
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“There are many who give no decided evidence that they are true to their baptismal vows. Their zeal is chilled by formality, worldly ambition, pride, and love of self.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 155.

“How greatly do the workers need a baptism of the Holy Spirit, that they may become true missionaries for God.”—*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 155.

“It is our work today to yield our souls to Christ, that we may be fitted for the time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord—fitted for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.”—*Evangelism*, p. 702.

- c. Who only can purify our conscience to make our baptismal vows a real “answer of a good conscience toward God”? Compare 1 Peter 3:21 to Hebrews 9:14; Romans 8:9, 10.
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“What we need is a conscience quickened by the Spirit of God; for with many, conscience has been stupefied by indulgence in sin and unbelief. We must know what religion is, and realize that we must have a living connection with the God of heaven.”—*The Signs of the Times*, July 25, 1892.

“Who but the Holy Spirit presents before the mind the moral standard of righteousness and convicts 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.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 3, pp. 137, 138.

5. DIRECTING OUR THOUGHTS

- a. Where does Peter once again point in leading us to salvation? 1 Peter 3:21 (last part), 22; Hebrews 8:1.
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“[The Lord Jesus] sits at the right hand of God and receives supreme honor as God, the glory He had before the world was. He distributes His gifts to all who by faith shall claim them. . . .

“We have an inexhaustible storehouse, an ocean of love in the God of our salvation.”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 338.

“He arose from the tomb enshrouded with a cloud of angels in wondrous power and glory—the Deity and humanity combined. He took in His grasp the world over which Satan claimed to preside as his lawful territory, and by His wonderful work in giving His life, He restored the whole race of men to favor with God.

“Let no one take the limited, narrow position that any of the works of man can help in the least possible way to liquidate the debt of his transgression. This is a fatal deception. If you would understand it, you must cease haggling over your pet ideas, and with humble hearts survey the atonement. This matter is so dimly comprehended that thousands upon thousands claiming to be sons of God are children of the wicked one, because they will depend on their own works. God always demanded good works, the law demands it, but because man placed himself in sin where his good works were valueless, Jesus’ righteousness alone can avail. Christ is able to save to the uttermost because He ever liveth to make intercession for us. All that man can possibly do toward his own salvation is to accept the invitation. . . . No sin can be committed by man for which satisfaction has not been met on Calvary. Thus the cross, in earnest appeals, continually proffers to the sinner a thorough expiation.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 343.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How can I find greater joy in talking and thinking of Jesus and His Word?
2. What evidence is there of the work of the Holy Spirit in me?
3. What would enhance the extent of the Holy Spirit to use me in service?
4. How can I experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit in fullness?
5. What too often causes us to lose sight of Jesus and thereby lose faith?

Living a New Life

MEMORY TEXT: “That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God” (1 Peter 4:2).

“Those who are truly sanctified will reverence and obey the Word of God as fast as it is opened to them, and they will express a strong desire to know what is truth on every point of doctrine.”—*Faith and Works*, p. 121.

Suggested Readings: *That I May Know Him*, p. 104;
Prophets and Kings, pp. 701, 702.

Sunday

June 2

1. AN EVER-ENCOURAGING THOUGHT

- a. What does the apostle Peter advise us to consider in order to be strengthened and encouraged when assailed by manifold temptations and afflictions? 1 Peter 4:1; Hebrews 12:3.

“We may strengthen our faith and quicken our love by going often to the foot of the cross, and there contemplating our Saviour’s humiliation.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 361.

“[1 Peter 4:1 quoted] Let us inquire: What would our Saviour have done in our circumstances? . . . This question is answered by the example of Christ. He left His royalty, laid aside His glory, sacrificed His riches, and clothed His divinity with humanity, that He might reach men where they were. His example shows that He laid down His life for sinners.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 79.

“Christ was tempted in all points as we are tempted. Let those who are bowed down under trial and temptation, and who feel that their friends have forsaken them, think of Christ . . . alone in the wilderness, meeting temptations more severe than any that are brought against them. Let them not give up in despair, but reach out a trembling hand of faith to grasp the hand that is held out to save. Let them cast their helpless souls upon Jesus, who, because He has passed over the ground knows how to deliver them that are tempted.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 21, p. 12.

2. THROUGH SUFFERING INTO VICTORY

- a. **Why does God purposely allow us to go through suffering and affliction? 1 Peter 4:1 (last part); 2 Corinthians 12:7–10.**
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“When the Saviour revealed Himself to Paul in the bright beams of His glory. . . . He was made physically blind by the glory of the presence of Him whom he had blasphemed, but it was that he might have spiritual sight, that he might be awakened from the lethargy that had stupefied and deadened his perceptions.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1058.

“One great fear that had oppressed me was that if I obeyed the call of duty, and went out declaring myself to be one favored of the Most High with visions and revelations for the people, I might yield to sinful exaltation, and . . . bring upon myself the displeasure of God, and lose my own soul. . . .

“I now entreated that if I must go and relate what the Lord had shown me, I should be preserved from undue exaltation. Said the angel: ‘Your prayers are heard, and shall be answered. If this evil that you dread threatens you, the hand of God will be stretched out to save you; by affliction He will draw you to Himself, and preserve your humility. Deliver the message faithfully; endure unto the end, and you shall eat the fruit of the tree of life and drink of the water of life.’ ”—*Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White*, pp. 67, 68.

- b. **Although tempted by the sinful desires of the flesh, what should be the goal of every Christian? 1 Peter 4:2, 15; Ephesians 4:17, 22–24.**
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“God requires more of His followers than many realize. If we would not build our hopes of heaven upon a false foundation we must accept the Bible as it reads and believe that the Lord means what He says. He requires nothing of us that He will not give us grace to perform. We shall have no excuse to offer in the day of God if we fail to reach the standard set before us in His word.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 171.

“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. . . . When [the soul] understands these things, his former life appears disgusting and hateful. He hates sin. . . . He renounces his former pleasures. He has a new mind, new affections, new interest, new will.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 139.

3. SOME HABITS TO OVERCOME

- a. Which of the sinful lusts does Peter mention as common and difficult to overcome? 1 Peter 4:3.

Lasciviousness, lusts: “The liberties taken in this age of corruption should be no criterion for Christ’s followers. These fashionable exhibitions of familiarity should not exist among Christians. . . . If lasciviousness, pollution, adultery . . . are the order of the day among those who know not the truth, . . . how important that the class professing to be followers of Christ, . . . stand in marked contrast to that class who are controlled by brute passions!”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 329.

Excess of wine: “The only way in which any can be secure against the power of intemperance is to abstain wholly from wine, beer, and strong drinks. . . . It is he that overcometh who will be honored, and whose name will not be blotted out of the book of life.”—*Child Guidance*, pp. 401, 402.

Revellings, banquetings: “Professed Christians who are superficial in character and religious experience are used by the tempter as his decoys. This class are always ready for the gatherings for pleasure or sport, and their influence attracts others. Young men and women who have tried to be Bible Christians are persuaded to join the party. . . . They do not discern that these entertainments are really Satan’s banquet, prepared to keep souls from . . . receiving the white robe of character, which is the righteousness of Christ. They become confused as to what it is right for them as Christians to do.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 518.

“Many who have adopted the health reform have left off everything hurtful; but does it follow that . . . they can eat just as much as they please? They sit down to the table . . . give themselves up to appetite and eat to great excess. . . .

“And what influence does overeating have upon the stomach? It becomes debilitated, the digestive organs are weakened, and disease, with all its train of evils, is brought on as the result. . . .

“They feel bad, and it appears to them that their children are very bad. They cannot speak calmly to them, nor, without especial grace, act calmly in their families. All around them are affected by the disease upon them; all have to suffer the consequences of their infirmity. . . .

“Even health reformers can err in the quantity of food.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, pp. 135, 136.

Abominable idolatries: “They were not to conform to the customs of the heathen, nor to preserve the monuments of their abominable idolatries. However precious the material, or exquisite the workmanship, all that pertained to the heathen worship must be destroyed.”—*The Signs of the Times*, January 13, 1881.

4. CHRISTLIKE EVERYWHERE AND ALWAYS

- a. **What is the most common consequence we will face in this life once we choose to live according to God’s will? 1 Peter 4:4, 12.**

“As the time of the end draws near, Satan . . . will employ human agents to mock and revile those who ‘build the wall.’ ”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 659.

“With tears [the people of God] will warn the wicked of their danger in trampling upon the divine law, and with unutterable sorrow they will humble themselves before the Lord in penitence. The wicked will mock their sorrow and ridicule their solemn appeals. But the anguish and humiliation of God’s people is unmistakable evidence that they are regaining the strength and nobility of character lost in consequence of sin.”—*Ibid.*, p. 590.

- b. **What must every Christian remember while being mocked or despised? 1 Peter 4:5, 13–16; 2 Peter 2:12.**

- c. **What should be our attitude when our mockers are prospering—and, on the other hand, when something bad happens to them? What about towards all those who do evil to us? 1 Peter 4:17–19; Matthew 5:44.**

- d. **What do we need to keep in mind with regard to those persons who mock and despise us—and how can we achieve this state of mind? 1 Peter 4:6; Ephesians 2:3–5; 2 Timothy 2:24–26.**

“When you meet those, who . . . are prejudiced against the truth, do not urge your peculiar views too strongly. Talk with them at first of subjects upon which you can agree. Bow with them in prayer. . . . Both you and they will be brought into a closer connection with heaven, prejudice will be weakened, and it will be easier to reach the heart.”—*Evangelism*, p. 446.

5. REMEMBERING IN ALL SITUATIONS

- a. What should we always remember regardless of whether we are prosperous, healthy and happy, or are sick, sad, or suffering loss? 1 Peter 4:7.
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“If we take counsel with our doubts and fears, or try to solve everything that we cannot see clearly, before we have faith, perplexities will only increase and deepen. But if we come to God, feeling helpless and dependent, as we really are, and in humble, trusting faith make known our wants to Him whose knowledge is infinite, who sees everything in creation, and who governs everything by His will and word, He can and will attend to our cry, and will let light shine into our hearts. Through sincere prayer we are brought into connection with the mind of the Infinite. We may have no remarkable evidence at the time that the face of our Redeemer is bending over us in compassion and love, but this is even so. We may not feel His visible touch, but His hand is upon us in love and pitying tenderness. . . .

“Perseverance in prayer has been made a condition of receiving. We must pray always if we would grow in faith and experience. . . . Peter exhorts believers to be ‘sober, and watch unto prayer.’ 1 Peter 4:7. . . . Unceasing prayer is the unbroken union of the soul with God, so that life from God flows into our life; and from our life, purity and holiness flow back to God.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 96–98.

“The apostle’s words were written for the instruction of believers in every age, and they have a special significance for those who live at the time when ‘the end of all things is at hand.’ His exhortations and warnings, and his words of faith and courage, are needed by every soul.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 518.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Where should I “go” by faith when afflicted and in distress—and why?
2. For what purpose does God lead us through sufferings and afflictions?
3. Am I still a slave to my former, worldly lusts? If yes, for how long do I plan to postpone my complete surrender?
4. What is to be my attitude towards those who mock me?
5. What might be hindering me from having as intense a prayer life as I should have?

Fervent Charity

MEMORY TEXT: “And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8).

“Love’s agencies have wonderful power, for they are divine.”—*Education*, p. 114.

Suggested Reading: *Education*, pp. 113–118.

Sunday

June 9

1. DEPTH OF LOVE—THE GREAT INDICATOR

a. How has sin perverted the depth of our love? Genesis 3:12.

“Love, gratitude, loyalty to the Creator—all were overborne by [Adam’s] love to Eve. She was a part of himself, and he could not endure the thought of separation [after she had eaten the forbidden fruit.] . . . He resolved to share her fate; if she must die, he would die with her. . . .

“[Later, before God], Adam could neither deny nor excuse his sin; but instead of manifesting penitence, he endeavored to cast the blame upon his wife, and thus upon God Himself.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 56, 57.

b. What is the simplest way to determine whether I am a true Christian? 1 John 2:9; 4:20; John 13:35.

“Last night I dreamed that a small company were assembled together to have a religious meeting. There was one who came in and seated himself in a dark corner, where he would attract little observation. There was not a spirit of freedom. The Spirit of the Lord was bound. Some remarks were made. . . . It became apparent that there was not the love of Jesus in the hearts of those who claimed to believe the truth and there was, as the sure result, an absence of the spirit of Christ. . . . The assembling together had not been refreshing to anyone.

“As the meeting was about to close, the stranger arose and with a voice that was full of sorrow and of tears, he told them that they had a great want in their own souls, and in their own experience, of the love of Jesus.”—*This Day With God*, p. 157.

2. UNDERSTANDING THE PRINCIPLE OF LOVE

a. **On what principle is the concept of love in this world built? Luke 6:32–34.**

b. **On what principle is true, divine love built? Matthew 5:44, 45; John 15:13; 1 John 4:7–11.**

“Love is more than an impulse, an emotion. It is a living, active, working principle. It is not guided by the feelings, but by the will. In it is comprehended the stern resolve of a mind subdued and softened, which lays hold of the strength of the Infinite, saying, I will serve Thee even unto death.”—*The Signs of the Times*, June 20, 1900.

“If every one seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness would be always ready to work the works of Christ, how much easier would become the path to heaven! The blessings of God would flow into the soul, and the praises of the Lord would be on your lips continually. You would then serve God from principle. Your feelings might not always be of a joyous nature; clouds would at times shadow the horizon of your experience; but the Christian’s hope does not rest upon the sandy foundation of feeling. Those who act from principle, will behold the glory of God beyond the shadows, and rest upon the sure word of promise. They will not be deterred from honoring God, however dark the way may seem. Adversity and trial will only give them an opportunity to show the sincerity of their faith and love.”—*The Review and Herald*, October 20, 1910.

c. **If we, being baptized, are still having a hard time to forgive, yield, and show love and forbearance, what are we missing? Romans 8:7–10; 1 John 4:8.**

“True sanctification unites believers to Christ and to one another in the bonds of tender sympathy. This union causes to flow continually into the heart rich currents of Christlike love, which flows forth again in love for one another.

“The qualities which it is essential for all to possess are those which marked the completeness of Christ’s character—His love. . . .

“It is the greatest and most fatal deception to suppose that a man can have faith unto life eternal, without possessing Christlike love for his brethren.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1141.

3. A PRINCIPLE TO BE LEARNED

a. What holy principle does Peter bid us to learn and exercise in our daily life? 1 Peter 4:8 (first part); 1:22.

b. In what sense will charity “cover the multitude of sins”? 1 Peter 4:8 (last part) compared to Proverbs 17:9; James 5:19, 20.

“If you think your brother has injured you, go to him in kindness and love, and you may come to an understanding and to reconciliation. When you deal with the erring, you should always keep in mind the fact that you are dealing with Christ in the person of His saints. Go to your brother whom you think in the wrong, and lovingly talk with him alone; if you succeed in settling the trouble, you have gained your brother without exposing his frailties, and the settlement between you has been the covering of a multitude of sins, from the observation of others. Others will not need to know of your difficulty, and thus be put on the alert to watch with suspicion everything the one you think at fault may do, and put a wrong construction on his motives.”—*The Review and Herald*, February 24, 1891.

“The Scriptures plainly teach that the erring are to be treated with forbearance and consideration. If the right course is followed, the apparently obdurate heart may be won to Christ. The love of Jesus covers a multitude of sins. His grace never leads to the exposing of another’s wrongs unless it is a positive necessity.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 267.

“‘Above all things,’ the apostle writes, ‘have fervent charity among yourselves’ (1 Peter 4:8). Do not listen to reports against a brother or a sister. Be very cautious how you take up a reproach against your neighbor. 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. Do not excuse yourself from this, saying, There is no personal grievance between the one who is accused and myself. The rules given by Christ are so definite, so explicit, that this excuse is not valid.

“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.”—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 292.

4. AN ESSENTIAL FRUIT OF LOVE

- a. To what trait of character does Peter point as a good sign of God's love abiding in the heart? 1 Peter 4:9.
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- b. Why is hospitality a vital Christian virtue? Hebrews 13:2; Romans 12:13.
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“Even among those who profess to be Christians, true hospitality is little exercised. Among our own people the opportunity of showing hospitality is not regarded as it should be, as a privilege and blessing. There is altogether too little sociability, too little of a disposition to make room for two or three more at the family board, without embarrassment or parade. Some plead that ‘it is too much trouble.’ . . .

God is displeased with the selfish interest so often manifested for ‘me and my family.’ Every family that cherishes this spirit needs to be converted by the pure principles exemplified in the life of Christ. Those who shut themselves up within themselves, who are unwilling to be drawn upon to entertain visitors, lose many blessings.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 343, 344.

“I am acquainted with persons who make a high profession, whose hearts are so encased in self-love and selfishness. . . . They have all their lives thought and lived only for self. To make a sacrifice to do others good, to disadvantage themselves to advantage others, is out of the question with them. . . . Self is their idol. Precious weeks, months, and years pass into eternity, but they have no record in heaven of kindly acts, of sacrificing for others’ good, of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, or taking in the stranger.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 26.

- c. What shallow, false “hospitality” is practiced by many Christian families? Job 1:4; 2 Kings 20:13–15.
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“It is a denial of Christ to make preparation for visitors which requires time that rightly belongs to the Lord. . . .

“Needless worries and burdens are created by the desire to make a display in entertaining visitors. In order to prepare a great variety for the table, the housewife overworks; because of the many dishes prepared, the guests overeat; and disease and suffering, from overwork on the one hand and overeating on the other, are the result. These elaborate feasts are a burden and an injury.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 343.

5. TRUE CHRISTIAN SERVICE

- a. Name one aspect of how charity is manifested in the life of a true Christian. 1 Peter 4:10.
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“God has appointed to every man his work according to his ability. It is by education and practice that persons are to be qualified to meet any emergency which may arise; and wise planning is needed to place each one in his proper sphere, that he may obtain an experience that will fit him to bear responsibility.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, pp. 221, 222.

“The youth especially should feel that they must train their minds, and take every opportunity to become intelligent, that they may render acceptable service to Him who has given His precious life for them. . . . Let everyone improve every opportunity with which in the providence of God he is favored, to acquire all that is possible in revelation or science. . . .

“Every talent that has been given to men is to be exercised that it may increase in value, and all the improvement must be rendered back to God. If you are defective in manner, in voice, in education, you need not always remain in this condition. You must continually strive that you may reach a higher standard both in education and in religious experience. . . . God does not provide a way whereby any one may have an excuse for doing slipshod work; and yet a great deal of this kind of work has been offered to Him by those who work in His cause, but it is not acceptable unto Him.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 213–215.

- b. What should be the only purpose for all our service? 1 Peter 4:11; Colossians 3:23.
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PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is the difference between divine love and worldly “love”?
2. What principle lies at the foundation of Christian charity?
3. How can I cultivate nobler habits of hospitality?
4. What types of Christian service would be good for me to develop?
5. How can I ensure that my work is for God rather than careless and slipshod?

An Appeal to Church Leaders

MEMORY TEXT: “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time” (1 Peter 5:6).

“Those who have stood as representative men are not all Christian gentlemen. There is prevalent a spirit that seeks the mastery over others.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 260.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 347–359.

Sunday

June 16

1. AN EXPERIENCE EACH LEADER NEEDS

- a. **When did the apostle Peter become a true pastor, ready to care for the souls of others? Matthew 26:75; John 21:15–17; 1 Peter 5:1.**

“Peter denied the Man of Sorrows. . . . But he afterward repented and was reconverted. He had true contrition of soul and gave himself afresh to his Saviour. . . . He was ready then to pity the tempted. He was humbled and could sympathize with the weak and erring. He could caution and warn the presumptuous, and was fully fitted to strengthen his brethren.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 416.

- b. **Likewise, what experience must every pastor and church leader have today? John 3:1–3.**

“Nicodemus was converted as the result of this interview. The words of Christ are spoken just as verily to presidents of conferences, elders of churches, and those occupying official positions in our institutions, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ ”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 369.

“The converting power of God must come upon the hearts of the ministers, or they should seek some other calling. . . .

“Unless the ministers are converted men, the churches will be sickly and ready to die.”—*Evangelism*, p. 643.

2. EXHORTING WITH AUTHORITY

- a. **What must be considered by the church before calling a person to service, and by the individual before accepting the call? 1 Peter 5:2 (first half).**

“God has repeatedly shown that persons should not be encouraged into the field without unmistakable evidence that He has called them. The Lord will not entrust the burden for His flock to unqualified individuals. Those whom God calls must be men of deep experience, tried and proved, men of sound judgment, men who will dare to reprove sin in the spirit of meekness, men who understand how to feed the flock.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 209.

“Every man who accepts responsibilities as a counselor, everyone who is dealing with human souls . . . will never be wiser until he becomes of much less consequence in his own estimation. . . . This change should take place in every man before he accepts a position as a leader or ruler in connection with the sacred work of God.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 370, 371.

- b. **Of what danger did Peter warn those laboring in the Lord’s vineyard? 1 Peter 5:2 (second half).**

“The desire to grasp large wages, with a determination to deprive others of their God-given rights, has its origin in Satan’s mind. . . . Little dependence can be placed on those that have been taken in this snare, unless they are thoroughly converted and renovated.”—*Ibid.*, p. 393.

“The men in positions of trust should regard the means they handle as God’s revenue, and use it in an economical manner. . . .

“The power to use and disburse the Lord’s money is not to be left to the judgment of any one man. An account must be given for every dollar expended. God’s means is to be used at the proper times and in the right places.”—*Medical Ministry*, p. 165.

- c. **Although working for the Lord is not a high paying career, what considerations should be made by the church? 1 Timothy 5:17, 18.**

“Every worker in our institutions should receive fair compensation. If the workers receive suitable wages, they have the gratification of making donations to the cause. It is not right that some should receive a large amount and others, who are doing essential and faithful work, very little.”—*The Publishing Ministry*, p. 239.

3. A HUMBLER ATTITUDE NEEDED

- a. **What is the main cause of problems among brethren in positions of weighty responsibility? 1 Peter 5:3; 3 John 9.**

“The spirit of domination is extending to the presidents of our conferences. If a man is sanguine of his own powers and seeks to exercise dominion over his brethren, feeling that he is invested with authority to make his will the ruling power, the best and only safe course is to remove him, lest great harm be done and he lose his own soul and imperil the souls of others.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 362.

- b. **What appeal is given to all local church leaders and elders, which, if followed, will prevent pride and a spirit of self-importance among brethren in higher positions? 1 Peter 5:2 (first part); 1 Corinthians 6:2–5.**

“I have been shown that it is a mistake to suppose that the men in positions of special responsibility at Battle Creek have wisdom which is far superior to that of ordinary men. . . .

“Many have educated themselves to write or ask for counsel and advice when brought into difficult places. But it is a mistake for those who are placed in responsible positions in our different institutions to depend upon the men. . . . A weak, sickly experience will be the lot of those who are educated to depend wholly upon others. . . .

“Are the men at Battle Creek to be regarded as infinite in wisdom?”—*Ibid.*, pp. 374, 375.

“Look not to men in high positions of responsibility for strength, for they are the very men who are in danger of considering a position of responsibility as evidence of God’s special power. Our churches are weak because the members are educated to look to and depend upon human resources, and thousands of dollars are needlessly expended in transporting finite men from one place to another, in order that they may settle little difficulties.”—*Ibid.*, p. 380.

- c. **What would enable less experienced workers to gain greater insight for success? Give an example when a lack of this caused failure. 1 Peter 5:5 (first part); 1 Kings 12:6–8, 16; Luke 6:39.**

“The young can exert a powerful influence if they will give up their pride and selfishness, and devote themselves to God.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 485.

“Let the young cultivate a teachable spirit, that they may be benefited by the efforts of those who seek to help them.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, August 31, 1893.

4. PETER’S EXAMPLE OF HUMILITY

- a. **How do we know that a one-time genuine conversion or experience with the Lord is not enough for a pastor—or for any believer? 2 Corinthians 13:5; Hebrews 3:13.**

“When Peter, at a later date, visited Antioch, he won the confidence of many by his prudent conduct toward the Gentile converts. For a time he acted in accordance with the light given from heaven. He so far overcame his natural prejudice as to sit at table with the Gentile converts. But when certain Jews who were zealous for the ceremonial law, came from Jerusalem, Peter injudiciously changed his deportment toward the converts from paganism. . . . This revelation of weakness on the part of those who had been respected and loved as leaders, left a most painful impression on the minds of the Gentile believers. The church was threatened with division.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 197, 198.

- b. **When an error or the behavior of a minister, Bible worker, or church leader brings open bitterness or confusion into the church, how are they to be rebuked? Galatians 2:14; 1 Timothy 5:20.**

- c. **What should be the attitude of a converted leader, when publicly rebuked? 1 Peter 5:5 (second part), 6; James 5:16.**

“Paul, who saw the subverting influence of the wrong done to the church through the double part acted by Peter, openly rebuked him for thus disguising his true sentiments. In the presence of the church, Paul inquired of Peter. . . .

“Peter saw the error into which he had fallen, and immediately set about repairing the evil that had been wrought, so far as was in his power. God, who knows the end from the beginning, permitted Peter to reveal this weakness of character in order that the tried apostle might see that there was nothing in himself whereof he might boast. Even the best of men, if left to themselves, will err in judgment. . . .

“The history of this departure from right principles stands as a solemn warning to men in positions of trust in the cause of God. . . . The greater the responsibilities placed upon the human agent, and the larger his opportunities to dictate and control, the more harm he is sure to do.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 198, 199.

5. ENCOURAGEMENT FOR WEARY WORKERS

- a. What is often a cause of discouragement in the life of a gospel worker? 1 Peter 5:5 (last part).

“We have too many sensitive ministers who are feeble in experience, deficient in the Christian graces, lacking in consecration, and are easily discouraged. . . . Men are wanted in this work who will not murmur or complain at hardships or trials, knowing that this is a part of the legacy that Jesus has left them. They should be willing to go without the camp and suffer reproach and bear burdens as good soldiers of Christ.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 423.

- b. When Satan tries to discourage any of us by pointing to problems in the church, to what promise should we cling? 1 Peter 5:4, 7.

“Let nothing prevent us from offering our petitions in the name of Jesus, believing with unwavering faith that God hears us, and that He will answer us. Let us carry our difficulties to God, humbling ourselves before Him. There is a great work to be done; and while it is our privilege to counsel together, we must be very sure, in every matter, to counsel with God, for He will never mislead us. We are not to make flesh our arm. If we do, . . . unbelief will steal in, and our faith will die.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 487.

“The spirit of the true shepherd is one of self-forgetfulness. He loses sight of self in order that he may work the works of God. . . . Cooperating with the great Burden Bearer, he shares their afflictions, comforts their distresses, relieves their soul hunger, and wins their hearts to God.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 527.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. When was the last time I was in tears on my knees at the foot of the cross?
2. Do I somehow think that if I get a higher position I can do more for the Lord?
3. Why should the aim for a higher position in the church not enter my mind?
4. What is my attitude towards those who point out my errors?
5. Whom do I see as guilty for my moments of discouragement?

Be Sober, Be Vigilant

MEMORY TEXT: “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

“From the days of Adam to our own time, our great enemy has been exercising his power to oppress and destroy. He is now preparing for his last campaign against the church.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 510.

Suggested Readings: *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 126, 127; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 39–48.

Sunday

June 23

1. KNOWING WHAT HE WAS TALKING ABOUT

- a. What serious admonition did Peter write in the conclusion of his first epistle? 1 Peter 5:8.

“Satan is constantly at work, but few have any idea of his activity and subtlety. The people of God must be prepared to withstand the wily foe. . . . Satan’s step is noiseless, his movements stealthy, and his batteries masked. He does not venture to show himself openly, lest he arouse the Christian’s dormant energies and send him to God in prayer. . . .

“Man is Satan’s captive and is naturally inclined to follow his suggestions and do his bidding. He has in himself no power to oppose effectual resistance to evil. . . . It is only through Christ that Satan’s power is limited.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 293, 294.

- b. What did Peter later learn as the secret that would have helped him be victorious in the palace of Caiaphas at Jesus’ trial? Matthew 26:38, 40, 41.

“Self-confidence leads to neglect of watchfulness and of humble, penitential prayer. There are outward temptations to be shunned and inward foes and perplexities to be overcome, for Satan adapts his temptations to the different characters and temperaments of individuals.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 445.

2. KNOW WHO YOUR ENEMY IS

- a. **Aside from coming with characteristics of a lion, name another way the enemy of our souls often approaches his prey. 2 Corinthians 11:14.**
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“Satan is constantly seeking the ruin of those who are ignorant concerning his devices, yet feel no special need of the prayers and counsel of experienced and godly friends. Many of the youth who come to _____ with good resolutions to live Christian lives fall in with a class of young people who take them by the hand and, under the guise of friendship, lead them directly into Satan’s snare. The enemy does not always come as a roaring lion; he frequently appears as an angel of light, assuming friendly airs, presenting peculiar temptations which it is difficult for the inexperienced to withstand.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 207.

- b. **Through what avenues of the soul is Satan gaining the most success, especially in this age of nearly universal mobile phone and Internet access? 1 Peter 2:11; 1 John 2:16.**
-

“Many of the young . . . read everything they can obtain. Exciting love stories and impure pictures have a corrupting influence. Novels are eagerly perused by many, and, as the result, their imagination becomes defiled. . . . Photographs of females in a state of nudity are frequently circulated [especially online]. . . . The lust of the eye and corrupt passions are aroused by beholding and by reading. The heart is corrupted through the imagination. The mind takes pleasure in contemplating scenes which awaken the lower and baser passions. These vile images, seen through defiled imagination, corrupt the morals and prepare the deluded, infatuated beings to give loose rein to lustful passions. Then follow sins and crimes which drag beings formed in the image of God down to a level with the beasts, sinking them at last in perdition. Avoid reading and seeing things which will suggest impure thoughts. Cultivate the moral and intellectual powers. . . .

“I appeal to parents to control the reading [and Internet access] of their children.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 410. [Bracketed words added.]

“Through appetite, Satan controls the mind and the whole being.”—*Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 37.

“Many Christian mothers, who, by their example and by the education which they are giving their children, are preparing them to become gluttons and winebibbers. Children are frequently indulged in eating what they choose and when they choose, without reference to health.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 235.

3. THE ONLY WAY TO VICTORY

- a. **What must every Christian have in order to resist Satan? 1 Peter 5:9 (first part); James 4:7.**
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“[Eve] disbelieved the words of God, and this was what led to her fall. In the judgment men will not be condemned because they conscientiously believed a lie, but because they did not believe the truth, because they neglected the opportunity of learning what is truth.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 55.

“When they have merely a theory, a shallow faith they cannot explain, a sudden temptation will cause them to drift away with the current bearing toward the world.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 332.

- b. **What makes many Christians easy prey for Satan, even though they claim to believe the Word of God? Proverbs 19:2; Hosea 4:6 (first part); compare to Romans 10:17; 15:4.**
-

“Temptations often appear irresistible because, through neglect of prayer and the study of the Bible, the tempted one cannot readily remember God’s promises and meet Satan with the Scripture weapons.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 600.

- c. **What truth should be an encouragement for every soul under siege by Satan’s attacks? 1 Peter 5:9, 10; 1:6, 7; 2 Corinthians 4:17.**
-

“Peter wrote to the believers at a time of peculiar trial to the church. Many had already become partakers of Christ’s sufferings, and soon the church was to undergo a period of terrible persecution. . . . Soon grievous wolves were to enter in, not sparing the flock. But none of these things were to bring discouragement to those whose hopes were centered in Christ. With words of encouragement and good cheer Peter directed the minds of the believers from present trials . . . ‘to an inheritance incorruptible . . .’ ‘The God of all grace,’ he fervently prayed, ‘who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.’ ”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 528.

4. THE CHURCH IN BABYLON

- a. To what episodes in history does Peter compare the Christian church as being scattered in “Babylon” and oppressed by earthly powers? Daniel 3:1–6; Esther 3:8; 1 Peter 5:13.
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“In a land where idol worship was of universal prevalence, the beautiful and priceless image in the plain of Dura, representing the glory of Babylon, . . . should be consecrated as an object of worship. . . . A decree went forth that on the day of the dedication all should show their supreme loyalty to the Babylonian power by bowing before the image. . . .

“On that eventful day the powers of darkness seemed to be gaining a signal triumph. . . .

“But God decreed otherwise. Not all had bowed the knee to the idolatrous symbol of human power. . . .

“Pointing to the fiery furnace, [the king] reminded them of the punishment awaiting them if they should persist in their refusal to obey his will. But firmly the Hebrews testified to their allegiance to the God of heaven.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 505–507.

“The decree that will finally go forth against the remnant people of God will be very similar to that issued by Ahasuerus against the Jews. Today the enemies of the true church see in the little company keeping the Sabbath commandment, a Mordecai at the gate. The reverence of God’s people for His law is a constant rebuke to those who have cast off the fear of the Lord and are trampling on His Sabbath.

“Satan will arouse indignation against the minority who refuse to accept popular customs and traditions.”—*Ibid.*, p. 605.

“The powers of earth and hell arrayed themselves against Christ in the person of His followers. Paganism foresaw that should the gospel triumph, her temples and altars would be swept away; therefore she summoned her forces to destroy Christianity.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 39.

- b. Why is there little or no persecution in most places today? John 15:19.
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“It is only because of the spirit of compromise with sin, because the great truths of the word of God are so indifferently regarded, because there is so little vital godliness in the church, that Christianity is apparently so popular with the world. Let there be a revival of the faith and power of the early church, and the spirit of persecution will be revived, and the fires of persecution will be rekindled.”—*Ibid.*, p. 48.

5. LESSONS IN THE END OF THE EPISTLE

a. Who helped Peter in writing his epistle? 1 Peter 5:12.

b. How do we know that Silvanus was an active missionary and coworker with Peter and Paul (who most likely helped them with Greek grammar in writing some of their epistles)? 2 Corinthians 1:19; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1. How was this paralleled in the life of Ellen G. White?

“While my husband lived, he acted as a helper and counselor in the sending out of the messages that were given to me. . . . The instruction I received in vision was faithfully written out by me. . . .

“Afterward we examined the matter together, my husband correcting grammatical errors and eliminating needless repetition. Then it was carefully copied for the persons addressed, or for the printer. . . .

“After my husband’s death, faithful helpers joined me, who labored untiringly in the work of copying the testimonies and preparing articles for publication.

“But the reports that are circulated, that any of my helpers are permitted to add matter or change the meaning of the messages I write out, are not true.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 50.

c. What good Christian custom was set up by the apostles and should still be practiced among believers today? 1 Peter 5:14.

“The holy salutation . . . should ever be considered in its true character. *It is a holy kiss*. It should be regarded as a sign of fellowship to Christian friends when parting, and when meeting again after a separation of weeks or months. . . . There can be no appearance of evil when the holy kiss is given at a proper time and place.”—*Early Writings*, p. 117.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How does self-confidence often precede a fall into temptation?
2. How can my passions or appetite cause me to fall prey to Satan’s wiles?
3. Why would more frequent and consecrated personal Bible study help me?
4. Explain the balance between good public relations vs. wrong compromise.
5. What can I do to help the church advance in spreading the gospel?

First Sabbath Offerings



APRIL 6

for the Narang Mandi Church,
Pakistan
(see p. 4.)

MAY 4
for World Missions
(see p. 25.)



JUNE 1

For a Foreign Mission Project
in the Pacific Region
(see p. 46.)