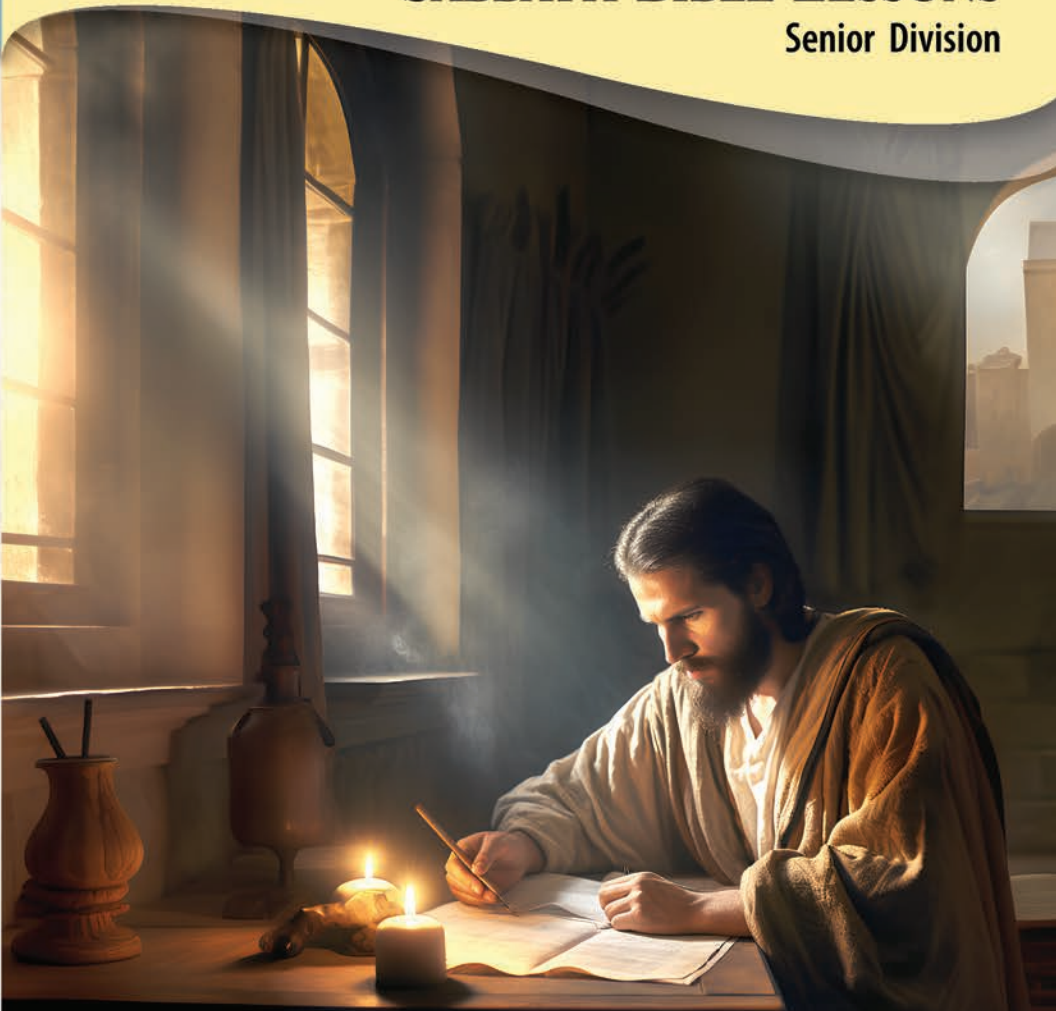


SABBATH BIBLE LESSONS
Senior Division



STUDIES IN THE
Epistle of James

Vol. 100, No. 4

October–December 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.

Illustrations: Sermonview on the front cover; Map Resources on pp. 4, 51, 72.

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Foreword

The epistle of James is straightforward. How greatly we need the messages in it right now! So, for the next three months, Sabbath school students worldwide will be delving into *Studies in the Epistle of James*. Vital points on the influence of the tongue (for good or evil), obedience to God by faith, the power of prayer, and the example of Elijah are just a few key topics. Why is this all so relevant today?

“The sin of this age is disregard of God’s express commands. The power of influence in a wrong direction is very great.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 483.

“Let none deceive themselves with the belief that they can become holy while willfully violating one of God’s requirements. The commission of a known sin silences the witnessing voice of the Spirit and separates the soul from God. ‘Sin is the transgression of the law.’ And ‘whosoever sinneth [transgresseth the law] hath not seen Him, neither known Him.’ 1 John 3:16.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 472.

“Today there is need of the voice of stern rebuke; for grievous sins have separated the people from God. Infidelity is fast becoming fashionable. ‘We will not have this man to reign over us,’ is the language of thousands. Luke 19:14. The smooth sermons so often preached make no lasting impression; the trumpet does not give a certain sound. Men are not cut to the heart by the plain, sharp truths of God’s word.

“There are many professed Christians who, if they should express their real feelings, would say, What need is there of speaking so plainly? They might as well ask, Why need John the Baptist have said to the Pharisees, ‘O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?’ Luke 3:7. Why need he have provoked the anger of Herodias by telling Herod that it was unlawful for him to live with his brother’s wife? The forerunner of Christ lost his life by his plain speaking. Why could he not have moved along without incurring the displeasure of those who were living in sin?

“So men who should be standing as faithful guardians of God’s law have argued, till policy has taken the place of faithfulness, and sin is allowed to go unreprieved. When will the voice of faithful rebuke be heard once more in the church?”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 140, 141.

“Ample provisions have been made for every son and daughter of Adam to obtain individually a knowledge of the divine will, to perfect Christian character, and to be purified through the truth.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 644.

We truly need God’s help and are clearly assured that “for every earnest prayer put up in faith for anything, answers will be returned. They may not come just as we have expected; but they will come, not perhaps as we have devised, but at the very time when we most need them.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 209. Amen!

The General Conference Sabbath School Department

First Sabbath Offering for a Chapel in Reading, Pennsylvania, USA

The Eastern United States Field (EUSF) is divided into eight geographical areas composed of the states of Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire. The work in Pennsylvania is currently experiencing rapid growth.



It is estimated that over 53% of the people in this state are religious—comprised of Methodists, Lutherans, Baptists, Pentecostals, and others, with 28.3% Catholics. In the early colonial days, Pennsylvania had been a place of refuge for pilgrims seeking religious freedom to escape persecution in Europe. This history is still evident in the large number of traditional Amish believers who continue to dwell in large farm communities throughout the county of Lancaster, wearing plain apparel and traveling by horse and buggy.

Over the years, a few SDARM members have lived in Pennsylvania and missionary training was provided here as well. But the current revival of interest in the present truth began in 2016 in the city of Reading after two members moved here from New York. The group expanded and started meeting every Sabbath afternoon, congregating in a park during the summer and at a sister's home in the winter. After several months of study, many were baptized into the Reform faith.

Reading has a population of over 95,000 and is a manufacturing center for electronic components, medical devices, energy-storage technology and more. Our church here is now the largest within the Eastern U.S. Field. More new souls are being prepared to join God's people. At present, we worship in a rented facility and would like to establish our presence and expand for greater outreach. "Wherever a company of believers is raised up, a house of worship should be built. . . . In many places where the message has been preached and souls have accepted it, they are in limited circumstances, and can do but little toward securing advantages that would give character to the work. Often this renders it difficult to extend the work."—*Evangelism*, p. 376.

As such, we are appealing to our brethren and sympathizers from all over the world to help us develop a house of worship in the Reading area, that more souls can be brought into the fold. Your kind generosity will be greatly appreciated, and the Lord will bless you in turn.

Your brethren from the Eastern United States Field

God's Message Through James

MEMORY TEXT: “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting” (James 1:1).

“There is no person, no nation, that is perfect in every habit and thought. One must learn of another. Therefore God wants the different nationalities to mingle together, to be one in judgment, one in purpose. Then the union that there is in Christ will be exemplified.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, pp. 180, 181.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, pp. 190–203.

Sunday

September 29

1. DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

- a. Who were the three men named “James” that were associated with Christ—and which one do we usually notice? Matthew 10:2, 3; 13:55.
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- b. Name some special moments with Jesus that James, the brother of John, experienced. Luke 8:51–55; Matthew 17:1, 2; Mark 14:32–34.
-

“John, the son of Zebedee, had been one of the first two disciples who had followed Jesus. He and his brother James had been among the first group who had left all for His service. Gladly they had forsaken home and friends that they might be with Him; they had walked and talked with Him; they had been with Him in the privacy of the home, and in the public assemblies. He had quieted their fears, delivered them from danger, relieved their sufferings, comforted their grief, and with patience and tenderness had taught them, till their hearts seemed linked with His, and in the ardor of their love they longed to be nearest to Him in His kingdom.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 548.

“Near the entrance to the garden, Jesus left all but three of the disciples, bidding them pray for themselves and for Him. With Peter, James, and John, He entered its secluded recesses. These three disciples were Christ’s closest companions. . . . Now in His great struggle, Christ desired their presence near Him. Often they had passed the night with Him in this retreat.”—*Ibid.*, p. 686.

2. DRINKING OF THE CUP

- a. Describe the original aim of James, son of Zebedee, along with his brother, John. Mark 10:35–38.

“At every possible opportunity, John took his place next the Saviour, and James longed to be honored with as close connection with Him.

“Their mother was a follower of Christ, and had ministered to Him freely of her substance. With a mother’s love and ambition for her sons, she coveted for them the most honored place in the new kingdom. For this she encouraged them to make request.

“Together the mother and her sons came to Jesus, asking that He would grant a petition on which their hearts were set.

“ ‘What would ye that I should do for you?’ He questioned.

“The mother answered, ‘Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on the left, in Thy kingdom.’

“Jesus bears tenderly with them, not rebuking their selfishness in seeking preference above their brethren. He reads their hearts, He knows the depth of their attachment to Him. Their love is not a mere human affection; though defiled by the earthliness of its human channel, it is an outflowing from the fountain of His own redeeming love. He will not rebuke, but deepen and purify. He said, ‘Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?’ They recall His mysterious words, pointing to trial and suffering, yet answer confidently, ‘We are able.’ They would count it highest honor to prove their loyalty by sharing all that is to befall their Lord.

“ ‘Ye shall drink indeed of My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with,’ He said; before Him a cross instead of a throne, two malefactors His companions at His right hand and His left.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 548, 549.

- b. Exactly as Christ had foretold, what happened to James and to his brother, John, after the Lord’s ascension? Acts 12:1, 2; Revelation 1:9.

“John and James were to share with their Master in suffering; the one, first of the brethren to perish with the sword; the other, longest of all to endure toil, and reproach, and persecution.”—*Ibid.*, 549.

3. WHO WROTE THE EPISTLE?

- a. How does Inspiration describe James, the son of Alphaeus—one of the twelve (yet not the Zebedee brother of John)? Mark 15:40.
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“There were Levi Matthew the publican, called from a life of business activity, and subservience to Rome; the zealot Simon, the uncompromising foe of the imperial authority; the impulsive, self-sufficient, warmhearted Peter, with Andrew his brother; Judas the Judean, polished, capable, and mean-spirited; Philip and Thomas, faithful and earnest, yet slow of heart to believe; James the less and Jude, of less prominence among the brethren, but men of force, positive both in their faults and in their virtues; Nathanael, a child in sincerity and trust; and the ambitious, loving-hearted sons of Zebedee.”—*Education*, pp. 85, 86.

- b. Why is it likely that the author of the epistle of James (referred to as an apostle since he knew the Lord in person) would be the half-brother of Christ—and how does his description of himself show that his character had been transformed by the Lord’s influence? James 1:1 (first half).
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“Christ was misunderstood by His brothers; for He was not like them. He worked to relieve every case of suffering that He saw, and He was always successful. He had little money to give, but He often gave His own humble food to those whom He thought more needy than Himself. His brothers felt that His influence went far to counteract theirs; for when they spoke harshly to poor, degraded souls with whom they came in contact, Christ sought these very ones, and spoke words of encouragement to them. If when in the family circle, He could do no more, He would as quietly and secretly as possible, give the wretched beings He was trying to help, the cup of cold water, and then place His own meal in their hands.”—*This Day With God*, p. 59.

- c. How did Paul show his respect for James, the brother of Jesus? Galatians 1:17–19; Acts 21:18.
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4. CLARIFYING SOME ISSUES

- a. **What reveals that James, the brother of Christ, was a man of influence at an important council in the early church? Acts 15:5, 6, 13, 19, 20.**
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“In this instance James seems to have been chosen as the one to announce the decision arrived at by the council. It was his sentence that the ceremonial law, and especially the ordinance of circumcision, should not be urged upon the Gentiles, or even recommended to them. James sought to impress the minds of his brethren with the fact that, in turning to God, the Gentiles had made a great change in their lives and that much caution should be used not to trouble them with perplexing and doubtful questions of minor importance, lest they be discouraged in following Christ.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 195.

- b. **What commonly held—but erroneous—claim is refuted by the prominent role of James at this important council? Matthew 16:18.**
-

“James presided at the council, and his final decision was, ‘Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God.’

“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. Those who, as popes, have claimed to be his successors, have no Scriptural foundation for their pretensions. 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. If those who are declared to be the successors of Peter had followed his example, they would always have been content to remain on an equality with their brethren.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 194, 195.

“The Saviour did not commit the work of the gospel to Peter individually. At a later time, repeating the words that were spoken to Peter, He applied them directly to the church. And the same in substance was spoken also to the twelve as representatives of the body of believers. If Jesus had delegated any special authority to one of the disciples above the others, we should not find them so often contending as to who should be the greatest. They would have submitted to the wish of their Master, and honored the one whom He had chosen.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 414.

5. THE ISRAEL OF GOD

- a. To whom is this epistle written—and how does it involve all who accept Jesus as Lord? James 1:1 (second half); Galatians 3:27–29.

“Among the Israel of God were to be numbered many who were not descendants of Abraham after the flesh.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 367.

“The life of Christ established a religion in which there is no caste, a religion by which Jew and Gentile, free and bond, are linked in a common brotherhood, equal before God.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 191.

“Christianity makes a strong bond of union between master and slave, king and subject, the gospel minister and the degraded sinner who has found in Christ cleansing from sin.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 460.

- b. In prophecy, what name is given to the final spiritual Israel—and how is their experience just prior to Christ’s return described? Revelation 7:4.

“Soon we heard the voice of God like many waters, which gave us the day and hour of Jesus’ coming. The living saints, 144,000 in number, knew and understood the voice, while the wicked thought it was thunder and an earthquake. . . .

“The 144,000 were all sealed and perfectly united. On their foreheads were the words God, New Jerusalem, and a glorious star containing Jesus’ new name. At our happy, holy state the wicked were enraged, and would rush violently up to lay hands on us to thrust us into prison, when we would stretch forth the hand in the name of the Lord, and they would fall helpless to the ground. Then it was that the synagogue of Satan knew that God had loved us, who could wash one another’s feet, and salute the brethren with a holy kiss, and they worshiped at our feet.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 59.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did James, the son of Zebedee, grow to be more Christlike?
2. How did James, the half-brother of Jesus, grow to be more Christlike?
3. What evidences in Scripture show that Peter was not the head apostle?
4. How does Paul explain the unity and equal value of all Christians?
5. What illustrates the ultimate victory of the spiritual Israel of God?

Wisdom for Coping

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

“You need not go to the ends of the earth for wisdom, for God is near. It is not the capabilities you now possess or ever will have that will give you success. It is that which the Lord can do for you. . . . He longs to give you understanding in temporal as well as in spiritual matters. He can sharpen the intellect. He can give tact and skill. Put your talents into the work, ask God for wisdom, and it will be given you.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 146.

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 120, 121; vol. 2, pp. 232–235.

Sunday

October 6

1. PLEADING FOR WISDOM

- a. Why do we really need more than human wisdom in life, and how is it accessible to us? James 1:5.

“We need to have far less confidence in what man can do and far more confidence in what God can do for every believing soul. He longs to have you reach after Him by faith. He longs to have you expect great things from Him.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 146.

“The mere hearing of sermons Sabbath after Sabbath, the reading of the Bible through and through, or the explanation of it verse by verse, will not benefit us or those who hear us, unless we bring the truths of the Bible into our individual experience. The understanding, the will, the affections, must be yielded to the control of the word of God. Then through the work of the Holy Spirit the precepts of the word will become the principles of the life.

“As you ask the Lord to help you, honor your Saviour by believing that you do receive His blessing. All power, all wisdom, are at our command. We have only to ask.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 514.

2. STRENGTHENED BY TRUST

- a. How will we be benefited if we regard the wisdom of God as far superior to our own, even in the common things of life? Proverbs 3:3-8.
-

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.’ Such a promise is of more value than gold or silver. If with a humble heart you seek divine guidance in every trouble and perplexity, His word is pledged that a gracious answer will be given you. And His word can never fail. Heaven and earth may pass away, but His word will never pass away. Trust in the Lord, and you will never be confounded or ashamed. ‘It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.’

“Whatever position in life we may occupy, whatever our business, we must be humble enough to feel our need of help; we must lean implicitly on the teachings of God’s word, acknowledge His providence in all things, and be faithful in pouring out our souls in prayer. Lean to your own understanding, dear brethren, as you make your way through the world, and you will reap sorrow and disappointment. Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and He will guide your steps in wisdom, and your interests will be safe for this world and for the next. You need light and knowledge. You will take counsel either of God or your own heart; you will walk in the sparks of your own kindling, or will gather to yourself divine light from the Sun of Righteousness.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 427.

- b. Why do we need to wean ourselves from heavily leaning on other people for guidance? Jeremiah 17:5-8.
-

“When perplexities arise, and difficulties confront you, look not for help to humanity. Trust all with God. The practice of telling our difficulties to others only makes us weak, and brings no strength to them. It lays upon them the burden of our spiritual infirmities, which they cannot relieve. We seek the strength of erring, finite man, when we might have the strength of the unerring, infinite God.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 146.

3. DEVELOPING GREATER STABILITY

- a. What condition must we meet before the Lord can answer our petition? James 1:6 (first part); Mark 11:24. Explain one example of how we can determine to develop strength in this regard. 1 Corinthians 6:3-5.
-

“Few realize the responsibilities resting upon the few ministers who bear the burdens in this cause. The brethren frequently call these men from the work to attend to their little matters, or to settle some church trial, which they can and should attend to themselves. ‘If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.’ He must be earnest and persevering. If he is irresolute, doubting continually whether the Lord will indeed do as He has promised, he will receive nothing.

“Many look to their ministers to bring the light from God to them, seeming to think this a cheaper way than to be to the trouble of going to God for it themselves. Such lose much. If they would daily follow Christ and make Him their guide and counselor, 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, pp. 643, 644.

- b. To what is a professed Christian compared whose faith begins to waver? James 1:6 (last part); Genesis 49:4 (first part). How can we avoid this?
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“The faith of most Christians will waver if they constantly neglect to meet together for conference and prayer.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 106.

“Take the word of Christ as your assurance. Has He not invited you to come unto Him? Never allow yourself to talk in a hopeless, discouraged way. If you do you will lose much. By looking at appearances and complaining when difficulties and pressure come, you give evidence of a sickly, enfeebled faith. Talk and act as if your faith was invincible.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 146, 147.

4. SHUNNING A DIVIDED HEART

- a. **How can we ensure that our prayer for wisdom will be answered?**
 Luke 18:1; James 1:6, 7.

“[The] petition for wisdom is not to be a meaningless prayer, out of mind as soon as finished. It is a prayer that expresses the strong, earnest desire of the heart, arising from a conscious lack of wisdom to determine the will of God.

“After the prayer is made, if the answer is not realized immediately, do not weary of waiting and become unstable. Waver not. Cling to the promise, ‘Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it.’ Like the importunate widow, urge your case, being firm in your purpose. Is the object important and of great consequence to you? It certainly is. Then waver not, for your faith may be tried. If the thing you desire is valuable, it is worthy of a strong, earnest effort. You have the promise; watch and pray. Be steadfast and the prayer will be answered; for is it not God who has promised? If it costs you something to obtain it you will prize it the more when obtained. You are plainly told that if you waver you need not think that you shall receive anything of the Lord. A caution is here given not to become weary, but to rest firmly upon the promise. If you ask, He will give you liberally and upbraid not.

“Here is where many make a mistake. They waver from their purpose, and their faith fails. This is the reason they receive nothing of the Lord, who is our Source of strength. None need go in darkness, stumbling along like a blind man; for the Lord has provided light if they will accept it in His appointed way, and not choose their own way. He requires of all a diligent performance of everyday duties.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 130, 131.

- b. **Why must we avoid double-mindedness? James 1:8; Psalm 86:11.**

“While professing to be Christians, many have the mold of the world upon them, and their affections are not set upon God. They are double-minded, making an attempt to serve God and mammon at the same time. . . . By trying to serve two masters, they are unstable in all their ways, and cannot be depended upon. . . .

“Of what profit is it to say pleasant things, to deplore the work of Satan, and yet at the same time to enter into the fulfillment of all his devices? This is being double minded.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 938.

5. REMEMBERING JACOB

- a. How does Jesus illustrate the intensity with which we should offer up our petitions for strength to carry out God's will? Matthew 11:12.

“The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.’ This violence takes in the whole heart. To be double minded is to be unstable. Resolution, self-denial and consecrated effort are required for the work of preparation. The understanding and the conscience may be united; but if the will is not set to work, we shall make a failure. Every faculty and feeling must be engaged. Ardor and earnest prayer must take the place of listlessness and indifference. Only by earnest, determined effort and faith in the merits of Christ can we overcome, and gain the kingdom of heaven. Our time for work is short. Christ is soon to come the second time.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1096.

“With the great truth we have been privileged to receive, we should, and under the Holy Spirit’s power we could, become living channels of light. We could then approach the mercy seat; and seeing the bow of promise, kneel with contrite hearts, and seek the kingdom of heaven with a spiritual violence that would bring its own reward. We would take it by force, as did Jacob. Then our message would be the power of God unto salvation. Our supplications would be full of earnestness, full of a sense of our great need; and we would not be denied. The truth would be expressed by life and character, and by lips touched with the living coal from off God’s altar.

“When this experience is ours, we shall be lifted out of our poor, cheap selves that we have cherished so tenderly. We shall empty our hearts of the corroding power of selfishness, and shall be filled with praise and gratitude to God. We shall magnify the Lord, the God of all grace, who has magnified Christ. And He will reveal His power through us, making us as sharp sickles in the harvest field. God calls upon His people to reveal Him.”—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 217.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Describe some vital keys to gaining greater wisdom from Heaven.
2. What happens when we are satisfied with relying on human knowledge?
3. How can I do my part to free up the ministers to focus on new souls?
4. In what areas of life might I be more double-minded than I realize?
5. Explain the power and relevance of Jacob’s wrestling for the last days.

Facing Temptation

MEMORY TEXT: “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him” (James 1:12).

“Speak and act in harmony with your prayers. It will make an infinite difference with you whether trial shall prove your faith to be genuine, or show that your prayers are only a form.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 146.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 477–492.

Sunday

October 13

1. A SPIRITUAL GROWTH FACTOR

a. Describe the secret of how James 1:2 can be fulfilled in us. Nehemiah 8:10.

“All trials that are received as educators will produce joy. The whole religious life will be uplifting, elevating, ennobling, fragrant with good words and works. The enemy is well pleased to have souls depressed, downcast, mourning and groaning; he wants just such impressions made as to the effect of our faith. But God designs that the mind shall take no low level. He desires every soul to triumph in the keeping power of the Redeemer.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 365, 366.

b. Why does God permit trials to come upon us? James 1:3; Romans 5:3.

“If we overcome our trials and get victory over the temptations of Satan, then we endure the trial of our faith, which is more precious than gold, and are stronger and better prepared to meet the next. But if we sink down and give way to the temptations of Satan, we shall grow weaker and get no reward for the trial and shall not be so well prepared for the next. In this way we shall grow weaker and weaker, until we are led captive by Satan at his will. We must have on the whole armor of God and be ready at any moment for a conflict with the powers of darkness.”—*Early Writings*, p. 46.

2. BETTER RESULTS THAN WE'VE IMAGINED

- a. Explain the benefits of exercising patience. James 1:4; Luke 21:19.
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“God is too wise and good to answer our prayers always at just the time and in just the manner we desire. He will do more and better for us than to accomplish all our wishes. And because we can trust His wisdom and love, we should not ask Him to concede to our will, but should seek to enter into and accomplish His purpose. Our desires and interests should be lost in His will. These experiences that test faith are for our benefit. By them it is made manifest whether our faith is true and sincere, resting on the word of God alone, or whether depending on circumstances, it is uncertain and changeable. Faith is strengthened by exercise. We must let patience have its perfect work, remembering that there are precious promises in the Scriptures for those who wait upon the Lord.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 231.

- b. How and why does James show us a bigger picture than the mere temporal view of power and prosperity in this corrupt world? James 1:9–11.
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“At this time, before the great final crisis, as before the world’s first destruction, men are absorbed in the pleasures and the pursuits of sense. Engrossed with the seen and transitory, they have lost sight of the unseen and eternal. For the things that perish with the using, they are sacrificing imperishable riches. Their minds need to be uplifted, their views of life to be broadened. They need to be aroused from the lethargy of worldly dreaming.

“From the rise and fall of nations as made plain in the pages of Holy Writ, they need to learn how worthless is mere outward and worldly glory. Babylon, with all its power and its magnificence, the like of which our world has never since beheld—power and magnificence which to the people of that day seemed so stable and enduring—how completely has it passed away! As ‘the flower of the grass’ it has perished. So perishes all that has not God for its foundation. Only that which is bound up with His purpose and expresses His character can endure. His principles are the only steadfast things our world knows.”—*Education*, p. 183.

“Worldly treasure is fleeting. Only through Christ can we obtain eternal riches.”—*The Review and Herald*, December 10, 1901.

3. IN THE HEAT OF THE BATTLE

- a. **In facing temptation, what must we prayerfully do, and why? James 1:12.**
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“Put away all pretense and affectation. Act your simple, natural self. Be truthful in every thought and word and deed, and ‘in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.’ Ever remember that the moral nature needs to be braced with constant watchfulness and prayer. As long as you look to Christ, you are safe; but the moment you think of your sacrifices and difficulties, and begin to sympathize with and pet yourself, you lose your trust in God and are in great peril.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 522.

“We should move steadily forward, never losing heart or hope in the good work, whatever trials beset our path, whatever moral darkness may encompass us. Patience, faith, and love for duty are the lessons we must learn. Subduing self and looking to Jesus is an everyday work. The Lord will never forsake the soul that trusts in Him and seeks His aid. The crown of life is placed only upon the brow of the overcomer.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 5, pp. 70, 71.

- b. **Why is it wrong to say that God sends trials and temptations? James 1:13.**
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“We should not try to lessen our guilt by excusing sin. We must accept God’s estimate of sin, and that is heavy indeed. Calvary alone can reveal the terrible enormity of sin. . . .

“Temptation is enticement to sin, and this does not proceed from God, but from Satan and from the evil of our own hearts. ‘God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempteth no man.’ James 1:13, R.V.

“Satan seeks to bring us into temptation, that the evil of our characters may be revealed before men and angels, that he may claim us as his own. . . . The enemy leads us into sin, and then he accuses us before the heavenly universe as unworthy of the love of God.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 116, 117.

- c. **When the accuser attacks our blemished character, how does the Lord defend us? Zechariah 3:1–4; 1 John 1:9–2:1.**
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4. GOD'S STRENGTH IN OUR FRAILITY

- a. Explain the phrase in the Lord's prayer, "Lead us not into temptation." Matthew 6:13 (first part); Isaiah 30:21.
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"[God] permits us to encounter obstacles, persecution, and hardships, not as a curse, but as the greatest blessing of our lives. Every temptation resisted, every trial bravely borne, gives us a new experience and advances us in the work of character building. The soul that through divine power resists temptation reveals to the world and to the heavenly universe the efficiency of the grace of Christ.

"But while we are not to be dismayed by trial, bitter though it be, we should pray that God will not permit us to be brought where we shall be drawn away by the desires of our own evil hearts. In offering the prayer that Christ has given, we surrender ourselves to the guidance of God, asking Him to lead us in safe paths. We cannot offer this prayer in sincerity, and yet decide to walk in any way of our own choosing. We shall wait for His hand to lead us. . . .

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

"The prayer, 'Bring us not into temptation,' is itself a promise."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 117, 118.

- b. What appeal and assurance does God make to us regarding temptation? James 1:14–16; 1 Corinthians 10:13.
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"What is temptation? It is the means by which those who claim to be the children of God are tested and tried. We read that God tempted Abraham, that He tempted the children of Israel. This means that He permitted circumstances to occur to test their faith and lead them to look to Him for help. God permits temptation to come to His people today that they may realize that He is their helper. If they draw nigh to Him when they are tempted, He strengthens them to meet the temptation."—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 251.

5. TRIALS IN PERSPECTIVE

- a. **To abide in Christ and thereby be delivered from temptations, what must we always choose? Luke 4:8; Philippians 1:21.**
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“The tempter can never compel us to do evil. He cannot control minds unless they are yielded to his control. The will must consent, faith must let go its hold upon Christ, before Satan can exercise his power upon us. But every sinful desire we cherish affords him a foothold. Every point in which we fail of meeting the divine standard is an open door by which he can enter to tempt and destroy us. And every failure or defeat on our part gives occasion for him to reproach Christ.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 125.

- b. **What should motivate us to press onward to victory in Christ? Philippians 4:13; Revelation 2:10 (last part); 3:21.**
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“He who is imbued with the Spirit of Christ abides in Christ. The blow that is aimed at him falls upon the Saviour, who surrounds him with His presence. Whatever comes to him comes from Christ. He has no need to resist evil, for Christ is his defense. Nothing can touch him except by our Lord’s permission, and ‘all things’ that are permitted ‘work together for good to them that love God.’ Romans 8:28.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 71.

“The crown of life is placed only upon the brow of the overcomer. There is, for everyone, earnest, solemn work for God while life lasts.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 71.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **What do I need to recall the next time a difficult trial comes my way?**
2. **What must I realize about the manner in which God answers prayer?**
3. **From where do trials and temptations come, and why?**
4. **What happens whenever we resist temptation?**
5. **How am I to abide more completely in Christ?**

Putting Faith Into Practice

MEMORY TEXT: “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (James 1:22).

“[Man] is elected to be obedient to every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, and that he may be, not a hearer only, but a doer of the word.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 454.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 24–26, 50–55, 164, 165.

Sunday

October 20

1. THE PERFECT GIVER

- a. What reveals the tremendous goodness of God toward us? James 1:17.

“Christ’s love for His children is as tender as it is strong. And it is stronger than death; for He died to purchase our salvation, and to make us one with Him, mystically and eternally one. So strong is His love that it controls all His powers, and employs the vast resources of heaven in doing His people good. It is without variableness or shadow of turning—the same yesterday, today, and forever. Although sin has existed for ages, trying to counteract this love and obstruct its flowing earthward, it still flows in rich currents to those for whom Christ died.

“God loves the sinless angels, who do His service and are obedient to all His commands; but He does not give them grace; they have never needed it, for they have never sinned. Grace is an attribute shown to undeserving human beings. We did not seek after it; it was sent in search of us. God rejoices to bestow grace upon all who hunger and thirst for it, not because we are worthy, but because we are unworthy. Our need is the qualification which gives us the assurance that we shall receive the gift.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 519.

- b. How and why are we begotten of God? James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23; 2:9.
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2. COOLING DOWN THE HEAT

a. In a world of anger, how and why must we be different? James 1:19.

“Make it a rule never to speak a word of censure to each other, but commend and praise whenever you can.

“Some think it is a virtue to be unrestrained, and they will speak in praise of their outspoken habit of talking out disagreeable things which are in the heart. They let an angry spirit exhaust itself in a torrent of reproach and faultfinding. The more they talk, the more excited they become, and Satan stands by to help on the work, for it suits him. The words irritate the one to whom they are spoken, and they will be thrown back, giving provocation for still harder words, until a little matter has blazed into a great flame. Both of you feel that you have all the trials that you can possibly endure and that your lives are most unhappy. Resolutely commence the work of controlling your thoughts, your words, your actions. When either of you feels the rising of resentment, make it a rule to go by yourself and humbly pray to God.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 243.

b. Why does a hot temper displease God—and how is it cured? James 1:20.

“Some are nervous, and if they begin to lose self-control in word or spirit under provocation, they are as much intoxicated with wrath as the inebriate is with liquor. They are unreasonable, and not easily persuaded or convinced. They are not sane; Satan for the time has full control. Every one of these exhibitions of wrath weakens the nervous system and the moral powers, and makes it difficult to restrain anger on another provocation.

“With this class there is only one remedy—positive self-control under all circumstances. The effort to get into a favorable place, where self will not be annoyed, may succeed for a time; but Satan knows where to find these poor souls, and will assail them in their weak points again and again. They will be continually troubled so long as they think so much of self. . . . But there is hope for them. Let this life, so stormy with conflicts and worries, be brought into connection with Christ, and then self will no longer clamor for the supremacy. . . . They should humble themselves, saying frankly, ‘I have done wrong. Will you forgive me? For God has said we must not let the sun go down upon our wrath.’ This is the only safe path toward overcoming.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 142.

3. CHERISHING THE LIGHT

- a. Explain the calling of God for each one of us. James 1:21.
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“Oh, how can any who have the light of truth, the great light given them of God, defy the wrath and judgments of God by sinning against Him and doing the very things God has told them in His word not to do? How can they be so blinded by Satan as to dishonor God to His face, and defile their souls by sinning knowingly? Says the apostle, ‘We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.’ Will these sinners—shall I call them hypocrites?—in Zion inquire, In what manner am I a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men? Answer for yourselves, By my abuse of the light and privileges and mercies God has given me, by unseemly actions which corrupt and defile the soul.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 447.

- b. How does the word of God relate to our salvation, especially in the last days? 2 Timothy 3:15; 1 Corinthians 15:1, 2.
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“The genuine working of the Holy Spirit on human hearts is promised, to give efficiency through the Word. Christ has declared the Word to be spirit and life. . . .

“Satan will work in a most subtle manner to introduce human inventions clothed with angel garments. But the light from the Word is shining amid the moral darkness; and the Bible will never be superseded by miraculous manifestations. The truth must be studied, it must be searched for as hidden treasure. Wonderful illuminations will not be given aside from the Word, or to take the place of it. Cling to the Word, receive the ingrafted Word, which will make men wise unto salvation.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 100.

“Those who embrace the truth should seek a clear understanding of the Scriptures and an experimental knowledge of a living Saviour. The intellect should be cultivated, the memory taxed. All intellectual laziness is sin, and spiritual lethargy is death.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 399.

“When His words of instruction have been received, and have taken possession of us, Jesus is to us an abiding presence, controlling our thoughts and ideas and actions. We are imbued with the instruction of the greatest teacher the world ever knew.”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 160.

4. THE MIRROR OF GOD'S LAW

a. Why is it important for us to examine our hearts? James 1:22–24.

“Many receive applause for virtues which they do not possess. The Searcher of hearts weighs the motives, and often deeds highly applauded by men are recorded by Him as springing from selfishness and base hypocrisy. Every act of our lives, whether excellent and praiseworthy, or deserving of censure, is judged by the Searcher of hearts according to the motives which prompted it.

“Many neglect to look at themselves in the mirror which reveals the defects in the character; therefore deformity and sin exist, and are apparent to others, if not understood by those who are in fault. The hateful sin of selfishness exists to a great degree, even in some who profess to be devoted to the work of God. If they would compare their character with His requirements, especially with the great standard, God's holy law, they would ascertain, if earnest, honest searchers, that they are fearfully wanting. But some are not willing to look far enough or deep enough to see the depravity of their own hearts. They are wanting in very many respects, yet they remain in willing ignorance of their guilt.”—*Gospel Workers*, pp. 275, 276.

b. Explain the beauty of true freedom through the creative power that comes through surrender to Christ and His will. James 1:25; John 8:32.

“In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God.

“The only condition upon which the freedom of man is possible is that of becoming one with Christ. ‘The truth shall make you free;’ and Christ is the truth. Sin can triumph only by enfeebling the mind, and destroying the liberty of the soul. Subjection to God is restoration to one's self—to the true glory and dignity of man. The divine law, to which we are brought into subjection, is ‘the law of liberty.’ James 2:12.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 466.

5. TRUE RELIGION

- a. Name an essential aspect of Christianity that is often lacking. James 1:26.
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“Through the help that Christ can give, we shall be able to learn to bridle the tongue. Sorely as He was tried on the point of hasty and angry speech, He never once sinned with His lips. With patient calmness He met the sneers, the taunts, and the ridicule of His fellow workers at the carpenter’s bench. Instead of retorting angrily, He would begin to sing one of David’s beautiful psalms; and His companions, before realizing what they were doing, would unite with Him in the hymn. What a transformation would be wrought in this world if men and women to-day would follow Christ’s example in the use of words.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 936.

- b. How does genuine religion quietly, unselfishly operate behind the scenes? James 1:27.
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“To become a toiler, to continue patiently in well-doing which calls for self-denying labor, is a glorious work, which Heaven smiles upon. Faithful work is more acceptable to God than the most zealous and thought-to-be holiest worship. It is working together with Christ that is true worship. Prayers, exhortation, and talk are cheap fruits, which are frequently tied on; but fruits that are manifested in good works, in caring for the needy, the fatherless, and widows, are genuine fruits, and grow naturally upon a good tree.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 24.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why can we trust our lives in the eternal God of Heaven?
2. What is the duty of all who have found themselves losing their temper?
3. Why is it important for me to study the Word of God for myself?
4. Explain what true freedom is.
5. How can I cultivate a greater degree of true religion from the heart?

First Sabbath Offering for the General Conference Literature Department



There is a famous saying, “A drop of ink may make a million think.” Printed material tends to carry more weight than merely spoken words largely due its permanence. With written material, we can take time to read at our own pace, as well as refer back and consider more deeply the information we seek to learn. It helps when trying to absorb deep spiritual topics.

This has been true throughout history: “Luther’s pen was a power, and his writings, scattered broadcast, stirred the world. The same agencies are at our command, with facilities multiplied a hundred-fold. Bibles, publications in many languages, setting forth the truth for this time, are at our hand, and can be swiftly carried to all the world.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 403.

“In a large degree through our publishing houses is to be accomplished the work of that other angel who comes down from heaven with great power and who lightens the earth with his glory.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 140.

In 1849, James White made a small publication called *The Present Truth*. “The little pile of papers was laid upon the floor. Then the brethren and sisters gathered about them and with tears in their eyes pleaded with God to bless the little sheet as it should be sent out. Then the papers were folded, wrapped and addressed, and James White carried them eight miles to the Middletown post office.”—*Early Writings*, (xxv).

This action was in response to the message: “ ‘You must begin to print a little paper and send it out to the people. Let it be small at first; but as the people read, they will send you means with which to print, and it will be a success from the first.’ ”—*Ibid.*, (xxiv).

What happens when shipping costs soar and border restrictions necessitate even more expensive forms of distribution? Our subscription price does not cover these new expenses. Therefore, we must depend on the kind generosity of fellow believers to fulfill the prophecy told to that early publisher: “As the people read, they will send you means.”

We pray this First Sabbath Offering for the GC Literature Department will touch your heart to give extra for souls around the world who need to read the present truth. Thank you!

Your brethren in the General Conference Literature Department

Overcoming Bias

MEMORY TEXT: “For there is no respect of persons with God” (Romans 2:11).

“God recognizes no distinction of rank. With Him there is no caste. In His sight, men are simply men, good or bad. In the day of final reckoning, position, rank, or wealth will not alter by a hairsbreadth the case of anyone. By the all-seeing God, men will be judged by what they are in purity, in nobility, in love for Christ.”—*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 162.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 304–309, 320–329.

Sunday

October 27

1. AN ATTITUDE PROBLEM

- a. Describe a common earthly tendency we may be guilty of, perhaps without even realizing it. James 2:1–4.

“The poor should be treated with as much interest and attention as the rich. The practice of honoring the rich and slighting and neglecting the poor is a crime in the sight of God. Those who are surrounded with all the comforts of life, or who are petted and pampered by the world because they are rich, do not feel the need of sympathy and tender consideration as do persons whose lives have been one long struggle with poverty.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 551.

“Although Christ was rich in the heavenly courts, yet He became poor that we through His poverty might be made rich. Jesus honored the poor by sharing their humble condition. From the history of His life we are to learn how to treat the poor.”—*Ibid.*, p. 550.

- b. What must we realize about those who may be poor in this world’s goods but rich in faith? James 2:5.
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2. DISCERNMENT AND FAIRNESS

- a. Explain the balanced approach that Jesus taught with regard to helping the poor. Mark 14:3–9.
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“Some carry the duty of beneficence to extremes and really hurt the needy by doing too much for them. The poor do not always exert themselves as they should. While they are not to be neglected and left to suffer, they must be taught to help themselves.

“The cause of God should not be overlooked that the poor may receive our first attention. Christ once gave His disciples a very important lesson on this point. When Mary poured the ointment on the head of Jesus, covetous Judas made a plea in behalf of the poor, murmuring at what he considered a waste of money. But Jesus vindicated the act, saying: ‘Why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on Me.’ ‘Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.’ By this we are taught that Christ is to be honored in the consecration of the best of our substance. Should our whole attention be directed to relieving the wants of the poor, God’s cause would be neglected. Neither will suffer if His stewards do their duty, but the cause of Christ should come first.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 550, 551.

- b. In ancient Israel, what attitude was required of those who administered justice? Leviticus 19:15; Deuteronomy 1:17; 10:17.
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- c. Today, how should all in any church leadership capacity learn to apply this same principle? 1 Peter 1:17; Colossians 3:25.
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“Those who link their affections and interest to one or two, and favor them to the disadvantage of others, should not retain their position in the office for a day. This unsanctified partiality for special ones who may please the fancy, to the neglect of others who are conscientious and God-fearing, and in His sight of more value, is offensive to God. That which God values we should value. The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit He regards of higher value than external beauty, outward adornment, riches, or worldly honor.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 24.

3. FORMING BETTER HABITS

- a. **What rebuke does James give regarding the materialistic bias of professed believers—and why is this a serious matter? James 2:6, 7.**
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“God has acknowledged you before men and angels as His child; pray that you may do no dishonor to the ‘worthy name by which ye are called.’ James 2:7. God sends you into the world as His representative. In every act of life you are to make manifest the name of God. This petition calls upon you to possess His character. You cannot hallow His name, you cannot represent Him to the world, unless in life and character you represent the very life and character of God. This you can do only through the acceptance of the grace and righteousness of Christ.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 107.

- b. **How only can we be victorious in rightly representing Christ? Romans 2:11; Proverbs 23:7.**
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“Study carefully the divine-human character, and constantly inquire, ‘What would Jesus do were He in my place?’ This should be the measurement of our duty. Do not place yourselves needlessly in the society of those who by their arts would weaken your purpose to do right, or bring a stain upon your conscience. Do nothing among strangers, in the street, on the cars, in the home, that would have the least appearance of evil. Do something every day to improve, beautify, and ennoble the life that Christ has purchased with His own blood.

“Always act from principle, never from impulse. Temper the natural impetuosity of your nature with meekness and gentleness. Indulge in no lightness or trifling. Let no low witticism escape your lips. Even the thoughts are not to be allowed to run riot. They must be restrained, brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Let them be placed upon holy things. Then, through the grace of Christ, they will be pure and true.

“We need a constant sense of the ennobling power of pure thoughts. The only security for any soul is right thinking. . . .

“Cultivate the habit of speaking well of others. Dwell upon the good qualities of those with whom you associate, and see as little as possible of their errors and failings.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 491, 492.

4. HAVING ROYAL BEHAVIOR

- a. What does Scripture emphasize as truly essential to our Christian faith—and why? James 2:8.
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“Many religious teachers assert that Christ by His death abolished the law, and men are henceforth free from its requirements. There are some who represent it as a grievous yoke, and in contrast to the bondage of the law they present the liberty to be enjoyed under the gospel.

“But not so did prophets and apostles regard the holy law of God. Said David: ‘I will walk at liberty: for I seek Thy precepts.’ Psalm 119:45. The apostle James, who wrote after the death of Christ, refers to the Decalogue as ‘the royal law’ and ‘the perfect law of liberty.’ James 2:8; 1:25. And the revelator, half a century after the crucifixion, pronounces a blessing upon them ‘that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.’ Revelation 22:14.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 466.

“When one surrenders to Christ, the mind is brought under the control of the law; but it is the royal law, which proclaims liberty to every captive. By becoming one with Christ, man is made free. Subjection to the will of Christ means restoration to perfect manhood.

“Obedience to God is liberty from the thralldom of sin, deliverance from human passion and impulse. Man may stand conqueror of himself, conqueror of his own inclinations, conqueror of principalities and powers, and of ‘the rulers of the darkness of this world,’ and of ‘spiritual wickedness in high places.’ Ephesians 6:12.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 131.

- b. How does having bias, partiality, and/or prejudice unpleasantly spoil our witness for Christ? James 2:9.
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“We may claim to be followers of Christ, we may claim to believe every truth in the word of God; but this will do our neighbor no good unless our belief is carried into our daily life. Our profession may be as high as heaven, but it will save neither ourselves nor our fellow men unless we are Christians. A right example will do more to benefit the world than all our profession.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 383.

5. WISE TEACHING IN COMPASSION

- a. What must we keep in mind in upholding God's moral law ourselves—as well as when sharing this truth with the next generation? Ecclesiastes 11:9; 12:13, 14; James 2:10–13.

“The youth have an inborn love of liberty; they desire freedom; and they need to understand that these inestimable blessings are to be enjoyed only in obedience to the law of God. This law is the preserver of true freedom and liberty. It points out and prohibits those things that degrade and enslave, and thus to the obedient it affords protection from the power of evil.

“The psalmist says: ‘I will walk at liberty: for I seek Thy precepts.’ ‘Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counselors.’ Psalm 119:45, 24.

“In our efforts to correct evil, we should guard against a tendency to faultfinding or censure. Continual censure bewilders, but does not reform. With many minds, and often those of the finest susceptibility, an atmosphere of unsympathetic criticism is fatal to effort. Flowers do not unfold under the breath of a blighting wind. . . .

“The true object of reproof is gained only when the wrongdoer himself is led to see his fault and his will is enlisted for its correction. When this is accomplished, point him to the source of pardon and power. Seek to preserve his self-respect and to inspire him with courage and hope.

“This work is the nicest, the most difficult, ever committed to human beings. It requires the most delicate tact, the finest susceptibility, a knowledge of human nature, and a heaven-born faith and patience, willing to work and watch and wait. It is a work than which nothing can be more important.”—*Education*, pp. 291, 292.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. While I may not have much, what must I realize about others with even less?
2. How easy it is to have blind bias or unjust prejudice against some people?
3. How do our patterns of thinking affect the way we treat such persons?
4. Why is God's law called the law of liberty?
5. Describe the attitude to have in teaching people who have wrong ideas.

Faith in Action

MEMORY TEXT: “But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?” (James 2:20).

“While good works will not save even one soul, yet it is impossible for even one soul to be saved without good works.”—*Faith and Works*, p. 111.

Suggested Reading: *Early Writings*, pp. 226–228, 269–273.

Sunday

November 3

1. FAITH AND EXAMPLE

- a. Why is it absolutely essential to live in full harmony with the faith we profess? 1 Corinthians 4:9; 1 John 5:3; James 2:14.

“Let none deceive themselves with the belief that they can become holy while willfully violating one of God’s requirements. The commission of a known sin silences the witnessing voice of the Spirit and separates the soul from God.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 472.

“The testimony of one’s life proclaims to the world whether or not he is true to the faith he professes. Your conduct lessens God’s law in the estimation of your worldly friends. It says to them: ‘You may or may not obey the commandments. I believe that the law of God is, in a manner, binding upon men; but, after all, the Lord is not very particular as to a strict observance of its precepts, and an occasional transgression is not visited with severity on His part.’

“Many excuse themselves for violating the Sabbath by referring to your example. They argue that if so good a man, who believes the seventh day is the Sabbath, can engage in worldly employments on that day when circumstances seem to require it, surely they can do the same without condemnation. Many souls will face you in the judgment, making your influence an excuse for their disobedience of God’s law. Although this will be no apology for their sin, yet it will tell fearfully against you.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 250.

2. HEAVEN AND EARTH ARE WATCHING

- a. What example does James give to illustrate the hypocrisy of empty talk without action? James 2:15-17.
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“The most eloquent sermon that can be preached upon the law of Ten Commandments is to *do them*. Obedience should be made a personal duty. Negligence of this duty is flagrant sin. God lays us under obligations not only to secure heaven ourselves, but to feel it a binding duty to show others the way and, through our care and disinterested love, to lead toward Christ those who come within the sphere of our influence. The singular absence of principle that characterizes the lives of many professed Christians is alarming. Their disregard of God’s law disheartens those who recognize its sacred claims and tends to turn those from the truth who would otherwise accept it.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 58. [Author’s emphasis.]

- b. What does genuine belief in Christ really mean? James 2:18; Matthew 6:24.
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“God has spoken, and He means that man shall obey. He does not inquire if it is convenient for him to do so. The Lord of life and glory did not consult His convenience or pleasure when He left His station of high command to become a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, accepting ignominy and death in order to deliver man from the consequence of his disobedience. Jesus died, not to save man *in* his sins, but *from* his sins. Man is to leave the error of his ways, to follow the example of Christ, to take up his cross and follow Him, denying self, and obeying God at any cost. . . .

“If we are true servants of God, there should be no question in our minds as to whether we will obey His commandments or consult our own temporal interests. If the believers in the truth are not sustained by their faith in these comparatively peaceful days, what will uphold them when the grand test comes and the decree goes forth against all those who will not worship the image of the beast and receive his mark in their foreheads or in their hands? This solemn period is not far off. Instead of becoming weak and irresolute, the people of God should be gathering strength and courage for the time of trouble.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 250, 251. [Author’s emphasis.]

3. LEARNING FROM ABRAHAM

- a. Of what dire spiritual condition are we solemnly warned? James 2:19.

“Many concede that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world, but at the same time they hold themselves away from Him, and fail to repent of their sins, fail to accept of Jesus as their personal Saviour. Their faith is simply the assent of the mind and judgment to the truth; but the truth is not brought into the heart, that it might sanctify the soul and transform the character.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 389, 390.

“You may believe all the truth; yet if its principles are not carried out in your lives, your profession will not save you. Satan believes and trembles. He works. He knows his time is short, and he has come down in great power to do his evil works according to his faith. But God’s professed people do not support their faith by their works. They believe in the shortness of time, yet grasp just as eagerly after this world’s goods as though the world were to stand a thousand years as it now is.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 161.

- b. How can we be motivated by the example of Abraham? Romans 4:1-3; James 2:20-22.

“Abraham believed God. How do we know that he believed? His works testified to the character of his faith, and his faith was accounted to him for righteousness.

“We need the faith of Abraham in our day, to lighten the darkness that gathers around us, shutting out the sweet sunlight of God’s love, and dwarfing spiritual growth. . . . Every duty performed, every sacrifice made in the name of Jesus, brings an exceeding great reward. In the very act of duty, God speaks and gives His blessing.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 936.

“Men are justified by faith, but judged and rewarded according to their works.”—*The Signs of the Times*, November 20, 1884.

“The righteousness of Christ consists in right actions and good works from pure, unselfish motives.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 528.

“Keeping the commandments of God requires of us good works, self-denial, self-sacrifice, and devotion for the good of others, not that our good works alone can save us, but that we surely cannot be saved without good works. After we have done all that we are capable of doing, we are then to say: We have done no more than our duty, and at best are unprofitable servants, unworthy of the smallest favor from God. Christ must be our righteousness and the crown of our rejoicing.”—*Ibid.*, p. 526.

4. WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

- a. **Explain how the pattern of Abraham's life is to be reflected in our own lives as believers in Christ. Genesis 26:5; James 2:23, 24.**
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“Good works are the fruits of faith. As God works in the heart, and man surrenders his will to God, and cooperates with God, he works out in the life what God works in by the Holy Spirit, and there is harmony between the purpose of the heart and the practice of the life. Every sin must be renounced as the hateful thing that crucified the Lord of life and glory, and the believer must have a progressive experience by continually doing the works of Christ. It is by continual surrender of the will, by continual obedience, that the blessing of justification is retained.

“Those who are justified by faith must have a heart to keep the way of the Lord. It is an evidence that a man is not justified by faith when his works do not correspond to his profession. James says, ‘Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was his faith made perfect?’ (James 2:22).

“The faith that does not produce good works does not justify the soul.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 397.

- b. **Why can all who witness to the heathen today be encouraged by how Rahab, the harlot, is cited as whom God justified? James 2:25; Hebrews 11:31.**
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“In wicked Jericho the testimony of a heathen woman was, ‘The Lord your God, He is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.’ Joshua 2:11. The knowledge of Jehovah that had thus come to her, proved her salvation. . . . And her conversion was not an isolated case of God's mercy toward idolaters who acknowledged His divine authority.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 369.

“All who, like Rahab the Canaanite, and Ruth the Moabitess, turned from idolatry to the worship of the true God, were to unite themselves with His chosen people.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 290.

“A great work is to be done in our cities, and the fields are all ripe for the harvest. Our attention will be called in every direction, for repentant souls in both Christian and heathen lands will lift up their voices for help. There must not be one particle of lifting up of self; your only safety is to trust in God.”—*The General Conference Bulletin*, April 1, 1895.

5. KEYS TO VICTORY

- a. Explain how we can have victory in Christ. James 2:26; 2 Peter 1:3, 4.

“It is essential to have faith in Jesus, and to believe you are saved through Him; but there is danger in taking the position that many do take in saying, ‘I am saved.’ Many have said: ‘You must do good works, and you will live’; but apart from Christ no one can do good works. Many at the present day say, ‘Believe, only believe, and live.’ Faith and works go together, believing and doing are blended. The Lord requires no less of the soul now, than He required of Adam in Paradise before he fell—perfect obedience, unblemished righteousness. The requirement of God under the covenant of grace is just as broad as the requirement He made in Paradise—harmony with His law, which is holy, and just, and good. . . . Let no one take up with the delusion so pleasant to the natural heart, that God will accept of sincerity, no matter what may be the faith, no matter how imperfect may be the life. God requires of His child perfect obedience.

“In order to meet the requirements of the law, our faith must grasp the righteousness of Christ, accepting it as our righteousness. Through union with Christ, through acceptance of His righteousness by faith, we may be qualified to work the works of God, to be collaborators with Christ. If you are willing to drift along with the current of evil, and do not cooperate with the heavenly agencies in restraining transgression in your family, and in the church, in order that everlasting righteousness may be brought in, you do not have faith. Faith works by love and purifies the soul. Through faith the Holy Spirit works in the heart to create holiness therein; but this cannot be done unless the human agent will work with Christ. . . . In order that we may have the righteousness of Christ, we need daily to be transformed by the influence of the Spirit, to be a partaker of the divine nature.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 373, 374.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In claiming to keep God’s law, what must I realize about my influence?
2. What does Heaven require of Christian believers?
3. Why is Abraham often referred to as the father of the faithful?
4. Among my acquaintances, who might end up as a converted Rahab?
5. How am I to have a victorious Christian experience?

Praying Before Opening Our Mouth

MEMORY TEXT: “Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred” (Job 6:24).

“ ‘If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.’ The light that shines upon our path, the truth that commends itself to our consciences, will condemn and destroy the soul, or sanctify and transform it. We are living too near the close of probation to be content with a superficial work.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 308.

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 50–55, 314–318; vol. 5, pp. 55–59, 175–177.

Sunday

November 10

1. CALMING DOWN OUR EGO

- a. **What should be kept in mind by those who are always quick to try to dominate others?** James 3:1; Mark 9:35.

“God holds everyone responsible for the influence that surrounds his soul, on his own account and on the account of others.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 102.

“Naturally, human beings are self-centered and opinionated. But selfishness disappears from the lives of those who learn the lessons that Christ desires to teach them. They become partakers of the divine nature, and Christ lives in them. They regard all men as brethren, with similar aspirations, capacities, temptations, and trials, craving sympathy and needing assistance.

“Never are we to humiliate a fellow being. When we see that mistakes have been made, we are to do all in our power to help the ones who have erred, by telling them of our own experience—how when we made grave mistakes, patience and fellowship, kindness and helpfulness, on the part of our fellow workers, gave us courage and hope.”—*The Signs of the Times*, May 11, 1904.

2. CULTIVATING A BETTER ATTITUDE

- a. **What sharp reproofs are provided for those harsh on others while refusing to admit their own mistakes? Ecclesiastes 7:20; James 3:2 (first part).**
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“Will you not discern your own deficiencies and put on the whole armor of righteousness yourselves? Will you not be just as watchful and critical over your own spirits and temperaments and words as you are over those of others, lest God should be dishonored, and His truth misrepresented? Your discernment would be greatly improved if you would do this. The truth, the living word, would be as a fire shut up in your bones, which would shine forth in clear, unmistakable distinctness, representing Christ to the world. . . .

“Could none of those who have made themselves detectives see the tendency of the position they have taken in endeavoring to become a controlling power? Where was their clear spiritual eyesight? Why could they discern a mote in the eye of a brother, while a beam was in their own eye?”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 295, 296.

- b. **What shows that one has reached a level of moral perfection—and how only is this possible? James 3:2; 1 Corinthians 13:5 (second half).**
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“Where the unruly tongue finds room to do its unholy work, the joy of the Lord can not abide.

“Let the suspicious ones, who think and speak evil of their brethren, remember that they are doing the devil’s drudgery. Let each member of the church work with earnest determination, and with prayer for help, to cure the diseased member, the tongue. Let every one feel that it is his duty and privilege to pass over little differences and mistakes without comment. Do not magnify the small mistakes made by some one, but think of the good that is in him. Each time these mistakes are thought of and talked about, they grow larger. A mountain is made out of a mole-hill. Ill-feeling and a lack of confidence is the result.”—*Australasian Union Conference Record*, April 15, 1903.

“Make a covenant with God that you will guard well your words. ‘If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.’ James 3:2. Remember that a revengeful speech never makes one feel that he has gained a victory. Let Christ speak through you. Do not lose the blessing that comes from thinking no evil.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 243.

3. IT STARTS AT THE ROOT

- a. Trace the wrong direction that follows when we harbor resentment, and explain the only way to avoid this. Hebrews 12:15; James 3:3-5.
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“You have nursed your resentment against your husband and others who have wronged you, but have failed to perceive wherein you have erred and made matters worse by your own wrong course. Your spirit has been bitter against those who have done you injustice, and your feelings have found vent in reproaches and censure. This would give momentary relief to your burdened heart, but it has left a lasting scar upon your soul. The tongue is a little member, but you have cultivated its improper use until it has become a consuming fire.

“All these things have tended to check your spiritual advancement. But God sees how hard it is for you to be patient and forgiving, and He knows how to pity and to help. He requires you to reform your life, to correct your defects. He desires that your firm, unyielding spirit should be subdued by His grace. You should seek the help of God, for you need peace and quiet instead of storm and contention. The religion of Christ enjoins upon you to move less from impulse, and more from sanctified reason and calm judgment.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 139.

- b. What must we realize about the words we utter? James 3:6.
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“Your words will declare, your acts will show, where your treasure is.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 698, 699.

“Sister F moves from impulse, and finds fault, and has had too much to say against her brethren and sisters. This will cause confusion in any church.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 51.

“Let those who delight to trace words of calumny and falsehood against the servants of Christ remember that God is a witness of their deeds. Their slanderous touch is not profaning soulless vessels but the characters of those whom Christ has purchased by His blood. The hand which traced the characters upon the walls of Belshazzar’s palace keeps faithful record of every act of injustice or oppression committed against God’s people.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 5, pp. 244, 245.

4. EVEN IF IT HAPPENS TO BE FACTUAL . . .

- a. What strong appeals are made concerning a dangerously common tendency in our day? Psalm 15:1-3; 1 Corinthians 13:6.**
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“The tongue that delights in mischief, the babbling tongue that says, Report, and I will report it, is declared by the apostle James to be set on fire of hell. It scatters firebrands on every side. What cares the vendor of gossip that he defames the innocent? He will not stay his evil work, though he destroy hope and courage in those who are already sinking under their burdens. He cares only to indulge his scandal-loving propensity. Even professed Christians close their eyes to all that is pure, honest, noble, and lovely, and treasure up what ever is objectionable and disagreeable, and publish it to the world.

“You have yourselves thrown open the doors for Satan to come in. You have given him an honored place at your investigation, or inquisition meetings. But you have shown no respect for the excellencies of a character established by years of faithfulness. Jealous, revengeful tongues have colored acts and motives to suit their own ideas. They have made black appear white, and white black. When remonstrated with for their statements, some have said: ‘It is true.’ Admitting that the fact stated is true, does that justify your course? No, no. If God should take all the accusations that might in truth be brought against you, and should braid them into a scourge to punish you, your wounds would be more and deeper than those which you have inflicted on Brother ----. Even facts may be so stated as to convey a false impression. You have no right to gather up every report against him and use them to ruin his reputation and destroy his usefulness. Should the Lord manifest toward you the same spirit which you have manifested toward your brother, you would be destroyed without mercy. Have you no compunctions of conscience? I fear not. The time has not yet come for this satanic spell to lose its power. If Brother ---- were all that you represent him to be—which I know he is not, your course would still be unjustifiable.

“When we listen to a reproach against our brother, we take up that reproach. . . . [Psalm 15:1-3 quoted.]”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 57, 58.

- b. Of seven sins cited as abominations unto the Lord, how many pertain to our words? Proverbs 6:16-19.**
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5. A WEAPON THAT WOUNDS

- a. **How and why must we avoid the all-too-common habit of gossiping?**
Job 6:24; Proverbs 11:13; 26:20–22.

“What a world of gossip would be prevented if every man would remember that those who tell him the faults of others will as freely publish his faults at a favorable opportunity. We should endeavor to think well of all men, especially our brethren, until compelled to think otherwise. We should not hastily credit evil reports. These are often the result of envy or misunderstanding, or they may proceed from exaggeration or a partial disclosure of facts. Jealousy and suspicion, once allowed a place, will sow themselves broadcast, like thistleseed. Should a brother go astray, then is the time to show your real interest in him. Go to him kindly, pray with and for him, remembering the infinite price which Christ has paid for his redemption. In this way you may save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins.

“A glance, a word, even an intonation of the voice, may be vital with falsehood, sinking like a barbed arrow into some heart, inflicting an incurable wound. Thus a doubt, a reproach, may be cast upon one by whom God would accomplish a good work, and his influence is blighted, his usefulness destroyed. Among some species of animals, if one of their number is wounded and falls, he is at once set upon and torn in pieces by his fellows. The same cruel spirit is indulged by men and women who bear the name of Christians. They manifest a pharisaical zeal to stone others less guilty than themselves. There are some who point to others’ faults and failures to divert attention from their own, or to gain credit for great zeal for God and the church.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 58, 59.

“The time that is so often worse than wasted in idle, frivolous, and malicious gossip should be given to higher and nobler objects.”—*Ibid.*, p. 176.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why should I tone down the tendency to be opinionated about everything?
2. Name a vital aspect of Christlike character that is often overlooked.
3. When we discredit fellow believers before others, how does God view it?
4. What do I need to learn from Psalm 15—and why is it important?
5. How may I be guilty of sowing discord among brethren and why must I stop?

Choosing What to Think About

MEMORY TEXT: “How can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh” (Matthew 12:34, second half).

“Pray before you speak, and heavenly angels will come to your assistance and drive back the evil angels, who would lead you to dishonor God, reproach His cause, and weaken your own soul.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 82.

Suggested Reading: *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 125–129.

Sunday

November 17

1. ANTIDOTE FOR THE POISON

- a. **When we are bombarded by the speech habits of evil-minded men, what is God’s message to us, even amidst it all?** James 3:7, 8; Hebrews 10:38.

“[Brother J] is pitied by the heavenly angels, for he is surrounded with darkness. His ears hear words of unbelief and darkness almost continually. He has doubts and questionings constantly thrown before him. The tongue is a world of iniquity. ‘The tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.’ If Brother J would cling to God more firmly and feel that he should preserve his integrity before God even at the cost of his natural life, he would receive strength from above. If he allows his faith to be affected by the darkness and unbelief that surrounds him—the doubts and questioning and much talk—he will soon be all darkness and doubt and unbelief, and will have no light or strength in the truth.

“He need not think that by seeking to compromise with his friends, who are embittered against our faith, he will make it easier for himself. If he stands with the single purpose to obey God at any cost he will have help and strength. God loves and pities Brother J. He knows every perplexity, every discouragement, every bitter speech. He is acquainted with it all. If he will lay aside his unbelief and stand in God unmoved, his faith will be strengthened by exercise.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 236, 237.

2. A SERIOUS MATTER

- a. **What is written about deceptive and inflammatory speech—and why must we pray to overcome in this aspect of life? Psalm 5:8–10.**
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“Speech is one of the great gifts of God to man. The tongue is a little member, but the words it frames, made vocal by the voice, have a great power. The Lord declares, ‘The tongue can no man tame.’ It has set nation against nation, and has caused battle and bloodshed. Words have kindled fires that have been hard to quench. They have also brought joy and gladness to many souls. And when words are spoken because God says, ‘Speak unto them My words,’ they often cause sorrow unto repentance.

“The talent of speech carries with it great responsibility. It needs to be carefully guarded; for it is a mighty power for evil as well as for good.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 3, p. 1142.

“When tempted to give loose rein to the unruly member, oh! bear in mind that the recording angel is noting every word. All are written in the book, and, unless washed away by the blood of Christ, you must meet them again. You now have a spotted record in heaven. Sincere repentance before God will be accepted. When about to speak passionately, close your mouth. Don’t utter a word.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 82.

- b. **Describe how our words are simply the overflow of what we think about and who we are. Jeremiah 17:9; Matthew 12:33–37; 14:6–8.**
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“The tenor of the conversation reveals the treasure of the heart. The cheap, common talk, the words of flattery, the foolish witticism, spoken to create a laugh, are the merchandise of Satan, and all who indulge in this talk are trading in his goods. Impressions are made upon those who hear these things similar to that made upon Herod when the daughter of Herodias danced before him. All these transactions are recorded in the books of heaven; and at the last great day they will appear in their true light before the guilty ones. Then all will discern in them the alluring, deceptive workings of the devil, to lead them into the broad road and the wide gate that opens to their ruin.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 84, 85.

3. WHOLEHEARTEDNESS NEEDED

- a. Why should we expect consistent speech from believers in the present truth? James 3:9, 10. What warning is given if we fail on this point?
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“If you cherish a habitual impression that God sees and hears all that you do and say, and keeps a faithful record of all your words and actions, and that you must meet it all, then in all you do and say you will seek to follow the dictates of an enlightened and wakeful conscience. Your tongue will be used to the glory of God and will be a source of blessing to yourself and to others. But if you separate from God, as you have been doing, take heed lest your tongue shall prove a world of iniquity and bring upon you fearful condemnation; for souls will be lost through you.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 244.

- b. What prayer can help us think and speak more consistently? Psalm 86:11.
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“If the receiver of Bible knowledge makes no change in his habits or practices to correspond to the light of truth, what then? The spirit is warring against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit; and one of these must conquer. If the truth sanctifies the soul, sin is hated and shunned, because Christ is accepted as an honored guest. But Christ cannot share a divided heart; sin and Jesus are never in copartnership.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 160.

“Watch and pray always. Dedicate yourself unreservedly to the Lord, and it will not then be difficult to serve Him. You have a divided heart. This is the reason that darkness, instead of light, encircles you. The last message of mercy is now going forth. It is a token of the long-suffering and compassion of God. Come, is the invitation now given. Come, for all things are now ready. This is mercy’s last call. Next will come the vengeance of an offended God.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 225.

“It is wholehearted, thoroughly decided men and women who will stand now. Christ sifted His followers again and again, until at one time there remained only eleven and a few faithful women to lay the foundation of the Christian church. There are those who will stand back when burdens are to be borne; but when the church is all aglow, they catch the enthusiasm, sing and shout, and become rapturous; but watch them. When the fervor is gone, only a few faithful Calebs will come to the front and display unwavering principle. These are salt that retains the savor.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 130.

4. WATER FROM A PURE FOUNTAIN

- a. What principle reveals that only a heart renewed by God's grace can bring forth consistent actions? James 3:11, 12. Give some practical examples.
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“Neatness and order in dress, and cleanliness throughout the dwelling, should be strictly observed by Sabbathkeepers, who are looked upon as strange, and are watched for their faults. Their influence should be holy. The sacred truths which we profess will never degrade the receivers, and make them coarse and rough, neglectful of their persons, and untidy in their houses. If the receiver has slack habits, the truth elevates him, and works for him a thorough reformation. Unless the truth has this effect, the individual has not felt its saving power. A careless and disordered dress is no mark of humility. Here some have deceived themselves. The life, the acts, the words, will tell whether the individual possesses true humility, and the dress will correspond with the fruits manifested. A pure fountain cannot [send] forth sweet water and bitter. Cleanse the fountain and the streams will be pure. The house of God is often desecrated by Sabbathkeepers' children. Their parents allow them to run about the house, play, talk, take the attention of the people, and manifest their evil tempers in the very meetings where they have assembled to worship God. I have seen that in the assembly of the saints a holy stillness should reign. But the house where God's people assemble is often made a perfect babylon, a place of confusion and disorder. This is displeasing to God. If the parents have not government, and cannot control their children in meeting, God would be better pleased for them to remain at home with their unruly children. They had better suffer the loss of meetings, than to have a large number annoyed, and their meetings spoiled. If parents leave their children uncontrolled, unsubdued at home, they cannot have them do as they wish in meeting. Who should be the sufferers in this case? Certainly, the parents. They should not feel afflicted if others do not wish to have their peace disturbed when they meet to worship God.

“Parents, you must be the sufferers in this matter, and it may lead you to see and fulfill your neglected duty. If you carry your children to the house of God, they should be made to understand that they are where God meets with his people. There is not that order observed among Sabbath-keepers in this respect that there is in the nominal churches. Parents, you have a work to do. Subdue your children at home, and then you can govern them in the house of God.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2, pp. 288, 289.

5. WISDOM AND ENDUED WITH KNOWLEDGE

- a. Why do each of us need to examine our own attitude from the inside out—in heart, word, and action? 2 Corinthians 13:5.
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“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves’ (2 Corinthians 13:5). Closely criticize the temper, the disposition, the thoughts, words, inclinations, purposes, and deeds. How can we ask intelligently for the things we need unless we prove by the Scriptures the condition of our spiritual health?”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 89.

“My brethren and sisters, how are you employing the gift of speech? Have you learned so to control the tongue that it shall ever obey the dictates of an enlightened conscience and holy affections? Is your conversation free from levity, pride and malice, deceit and impurity? Are you without guile before God? Words exert a telling power. Satan will, if possible, keep the tongue active in his service. Of ourselves we cannot control the unruly member. Divine grace is our only hope.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 175.

“He who places himself unreservedly under the guidance of the Spirit of God, will find that his mind expands and develops. He obtains an education in the service of God which is not one-sided and deficient, developing a one-sided character, but one which results in symmetry and completeness. Weaknesses that have been manifested in a vacillating will and powerless character, are overcome, for continual devotion and piety bring the man in such close relation to Christ that he has the mind of Christ. He is one with Christ, having soundness and strength of principle. His perception is clear, and he manifests that wisdom which comes from God.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 338.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How should I respond when faced with a toxic conversation?
2. When people say things, what does it actually indicate about them?
3. Explain the battle that rages in the human mind, and how it can be won.
4. What habits/tendencies of mine may be reflecting polluted waters within?
5. How and why should my manner of speaking be transformed?

Meekness of Wisdom

MEMORY TEXT: “Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom” (James 3:13).

“Our Saviour awed men by His purity and elevated morality, while His love and gentle benignity inspired them with enthusiasm. The poorest and humblest were not afraid to approach Him.”—*Gospel Workers* (1892), p. 261.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 167–177.

Sunday

November 24

1. TWISTED “DISCERNMENT”

- a. Of what serious evil must we firmly beware—and why? James 3:14, 15.

“He who opens his heart to the suggestions of the enemy, taking in evil surmisings, and cherishing jealousy, frequently misconstrues this evil-mindedness, calling it special foresight, discrimination, or discernment in detecting guilt and fathoming the evil motives of others. He considers that a precious gift has been vouchsafed to him; and he draws apart from the very brethren with whom he should be in harmony; he climbs upon the judgment seat, and shuts his heart against the one he supposes to be in error, as though he himself were above temptation. Jesus separates from him, and leaves him to walk in the sparks of his own kindling.

“Let no one among you glory any longer against the truth by declaring that this spirit is a necessary consequence of dealing faithfully with wrongdoers and of standing in defense of the truth. Such wisdom has many admirers, but it is very deceptive and harmful. It does not come from above, but is the fruit of an unregenerated heart. Its originator is Satan himself. Let no accuser of others credit himself with discernment; for in so doing he clothes the attributes of Satan with the garments of righteousness. I call upon you, my brethren, to purify the soul temple of all these things that defile; for they are roots of bitterness.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, pp. 936, 937.

2. TOXIC BEHAVIOR

- a. Describe the inevitable result of envy and strife. James 3:16.
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“One person in an institution or in a church who gives loose rein to unkind thoughts by speaking evil of the brethren, may stir up the worst passions of the human heart, and spread abroad a leaven of evil that will work in all who come into association with him. In this way the enemy of all righteousness gains the victory, and the result of his work is to make of no effect the Saviour’s prayer when He pleaded that His disciples might be one as He is one with the Father.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 937.

- b. In contrast to the human tendencies instigated by the enemy of our souls, how should we interact with others? John 13:34.
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“You pass your judgment upon individuals, and comment upon their ways and manners, when you do not understand their position or their work. You view things from your standpoint and then are ready to question or condemn the course they pursue, without candidly viewing matters on all sides. You have no knowledge of the duties of others and should not feel responsible for their acts, but do your duty, leaving others with the Lord. Possess your spirit in patience, preserve peace and calmness of mind, and be thankful. . . .

“You are extremely sensitive, and if a word is spoken favoring an opposite course from that which you have been pursuing, you are hurt. You feel that you are blamed, and that you must defend yourself, save your life; and in your earnest effort to save your life, you lose it. You have a work to do to die to self and to cultivate a spirit of forbearance and patience.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 424.

“Those who criticize and condemn one another are breaking God’s commandments, and are an offense to Him. They neither love God nor their fellow beings. Brethren and sisters, let us clear away the rubbish of criticism and suspicion and complaint, and do not wear your nerves on the outside. Some are so sensitive that they cannot be reasoned with. Be very sensitive in regard to what it means to keep the law of God, and in regard to whether you are keeping or breaking the law. It is this that God wants us to be sensitive about.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 937.

3. HANDLING DISAPPOINTMENTS

- a. What is written about those who love God's law? Psalm 119:165.
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“Get over the idea that you are not used right, that you are wronged, that somebody wants to crowd or harm you. You see through false eyes. Satan leads you to take these distorted views of things.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 424.

“The world loves sin, and hates righteousness, and this was the cause of its hostility to Jesus. All who refuse His infinite love will find Christianity a disturbing element. The light of Christ sweeps away the darkness that covers their sins, and the need of reform is made manifest. While those who yield to the influence of the Holy Spirit begin war with themselves, those who cling to sin war against the truth and its representatives.

“Thus strife is created, and Christ's followers are accused as troublers of the people. But it is fellowship with God that brings them the world's enmity. They are bearing the reproach of Christ. They are treading the path that has been trodden by the noblest of the earth. Not with sorrow, but with rejoicing, should they meet persecution. Each fiery trial is God's agent for their refining. Each is fitting them for their work as colaborers with Him. Each conflict has its place in the great battle for righteousness, and each will add to the joy of their final triumph. Having this in view, the test of their faith and patience will be cheerfully accepted rather than dreaded and avoided.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 306.

- b. Even when indeed treated unfairly, of what are we reminded? Matthew 5:11, 12, 41; 1 Peter 4:12–15.
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“He who is the divine Head of the church, the mightiest of conquerors, would point His followers to His life, His toils, His self-denials, His struggles, and sufferings, through contempt, through rejection, ridicule, scorn, insult, mockery, falsehood, up the path of Calvary to the scene of the crucifixion, that they might be encouraged to press on toward the mark for the prize and reward of the overcomer. Victory is assured through faith and obedience. Let us make an application of the words of Christ to our own individual cases.”—*The Review and Herald*, July 24, 1888.

4. WISDOM FROM ABOVE

- a. What is the first quality of Heaven-born wisdom—and why is this essential for us? James 3:17 (first part); Matthew 5:8.
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“Into the city of God there will enter nothing that defiles. All who are to be dwellers there will here have become pure in heart. In one who is learning of Jesus, there will be manifest a growing distaste for careless manners, unseemly language, and coarse thought. When Christ abides in the heart, there will be purity and refinement of thought and manner.

“But the words of Jesus, ‘Blessed are the pure in heart,’ have a deeper meaning—not merely pure in the sense in which the world understands purity, free from that which is sensual, pure from lust, but true in the hidden purposes and motives of the soul, free from pride and self-seeking, humble, unselfish, childlike.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 24, 25.

- b. Explain what our focus must be in preparing for Christ. 1 John 3:2, 3.
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“In our daily experience we discern [God’s] goodness and compassion in the manifestation of His providence. We recognize Him in the character of His Son. The Holy Spirit takes the truth concerning God and Him whom He hath sent, and opens it to the understanding and to the heart. The pure in heart see God in a new and endearing relation, as their Redeemer; and while they discern the purity and loveliness of His character, they long to reflect His image. They see Him as a Father longing to embrace a repenting son, and their hearts are filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

“The pure in heart discern the Creator in the works of His mighty hand, in the things of beauty that comprise the universe. In His written word they read in clearer lines the revelation of His mercy, His goodness, and His grace. The truths that are hidden from the wise and prudent are revealed to babes. The beauty and preciousness of truth, which are undiscerned by the worldly-wise, are constantly unfolding to those who have a trusting, childlike desire to know and to do the will of God. We discern the truth by becoming, ourselves, partakers of the divine nature.

“The pure in heart live as in the visible presence of God during the time He apportions them in this world.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 26, 27.

5. MORE ESSENTIAL QUALITIES

- a. After purity, name the next five qualities of Heaven-born wisdom—without which our influence is spoiled. James 3:17 (middle part).
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“You need the kindness, courtesy, meekness, and lowliness of Christ. You have many valuable qualifications that can be perfected for highest service if sanctified to God. You should feel the necessity of approaching your brethren with kindness and courtesy, not with harshness and severity. You do not realize the harm you do by your sharp, domineering spirit toward them. The ministers in your conference become disheartened, losing the courage they might have if you would give them respect, kindness, confidence, and love. By your manner of dealing you have separated the hearts of your brethren from you, so that your counsel has not had much influence over them for good.”—*Christian Leadership*, pp. 6, 7.

“If your expectations are not realized, you will be in danger of becoming discouraged and restless, and wishing a change. You must shun a disposition to censure, to bear down. Keep clear of everything that savors of a denunciatory spirit. It is not pleasing to God for this spirit to be found in any of His servants of long experience. It is proper for a youth, if graced with humility and the inward adorning, to manifest ardor and zeal; but when a rash zeal and a denunciatory spirit are manifested by a youth who has but a few years of experience, it is most unbecoming and positively disgusting. Nothing can destroy his influence as soon as this. Mildness, gentleness, forbearance, long-suffering, being not easily provoked, bearing all things, hoping all things, enduring all things—these are the fruit growing upon the precious tree of love, which is of heavenly growth. This tree, if nourished, will prove to be an evergreen. Its branches will not decay, its leaves will not wither. It is immortal, eternal, watered continually by the dews of heaven.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 134, 135.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In what situations am I tempted to judge motives and call it discernment?
2. How does the habit of criticizing others break God’s commandments?
3. When toxic behavior is launched against me, what should I remember?
4. What does it mean to be “pure in heart”?
5. How can I become more approachable—easier to be “entreated”?

First Sabbath Offering for the Colombian Union Headquarters

Colombia is a nation in South America with a current population of over 51 million inhabitants. Industries include petroleum, manufacturing, textiles, construction, agriculture, banking, and services. Among the population, 73% of the population are Catholics, 9.1% profess non-Christian religions, 6.9% are Evangelicals, 6.5% have no religion, 2.9% are Protestants, and 0.9% declare themselves atheists. This situation represents a great challenge for the church of God here.



In the 1960's, the third angel's message arrived in Colombia while the nation was suffering moral devastation due to civil war. Amid the turmoil, we reached about 100 members by the year 1971 when the church was officially registered. In those days the workers were few, but they never lacked the courage and fervor to give everything for the cause they loved. We will always appreciate the support of the pastors and ministers who, leaving their countries and comfort, came with joy to support the work in Colombia—dedicating themselves wholeheartedly to spreading the message here.

By the grace of God, in 2006, the Colombian Union was organized, and today it has three Fields. Our Union headquarters is in the rural area of the municipality of Barbosa, Santander.

In order to serve our brothers and those who are increasingly interested in the truth, we see an urgent need to expand the facilities existing today. Currently, we have a farm where our offices, missionary school and multimedia department operate. Here we also host conferences, seminars, and spiritual retreats for our members and those newly interested in the message.

Part of the infrastructure has already been constructed on this property, and additional facilities are presently underway, but, we lack resources to finish them. That is why we appeal to the generosity of the worldwide family church. The support of your generous offerings will allow us to have more suitable facilities to serve the souls who are hungry for the knowledge of the Lord.

We greatly appreciate your donations. Only eternity will be able to show how much good your donations and offerings will have done.

Your brothers and sisters from the Colombian Union

Overcoming Our Attitude Problems

MEMORY TEXT: “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

“Love for pure, sanctifying truth, love for the dear Redeemer, will lighten the labor of overcoming.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 38.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 39–47.

Sunday

December 1

1. UNSELFISHLY FAIR

- a. Name the last two qualities mentioned in the list of Heaven-born wisdom. James 3:17 (last part).

“The apostle Jude says: ‘Of some have compassion, making a difference.’ This difference is not to be exercised in a spirit of favoritism. No countenance should be given to a spirit that implies: ‘If you favor me, I will favor you.’ This is unsanctified, worldly policy, which displeases God. It is paying favors and admiration for the sake of gain. It is showing a partiality for certain ones, expecting to secure advantages through them. It is seeking their good will by indulgence, that we may be held in greater estimation than others fully as worthy as ourselves.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 221, 222.

“God is not pleased with the slothful work done in the churches. He expects His stewards to be true and faithful in giving reproof and correction. They are to expel wrong after the rule God has given in His Word, not according to their own ideas and impulses. No harsh means must be used, no unfair, hasty, impulsive work done. The efforts made to cleanse the church from moral uncleanness must be made in God’s way. There must be no partiality, no hypocrisy. There must be no favorites, whose sins are regarded as less sinful than those of others. Oh, how much we all need the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Then we shall always work with the mind of Christ, with kindness, compassion, and sympathy, showing love for the sinner while hating sin with a perfect hatred.”—*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 144.

2. RIGHTLY REPRESENTING CHRIST

- a. **How only can Christ be properly represented in our speech? James 3:18.**
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“It is possible with our lips to confess Christ yet in our works deny Him. The fruits of the Spirit manifested in the life are a confession of Him. If we have forsaken all for Christ, our lives will be humble, our conversation heavenly, our conduct blameless. The powerful, purifying influence of truth in the soul, and the character of Christ exemplified in the life, are a confession of Him. If the words of eternal life are sown in our hearts, the fruit is righteousness and peace. We may deny Christ in our life by indulging love of ease or love of self, by jesting and joking, and by seeking the honor of the world. We may deny Him in our outward appearance by conformity to the world, by a proud look or costly apparel. Only by constant watchfulness and persevering and almost unceasing prayer shall we be able to exhibit in our life the character of Christ or the sanctifying influence of the truth. Many drive Christ from their families by an impatient, passionate spirit. Such have something to overcome in this respect.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 303, 304.

- b. **What common human tendencies that sprinkle into daily life really need to be overcome—and why? James 4:1–3.**
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“It is a sad thing to be discontented with our surroundings or with the circumstances which have placed us where our duties seem humble and unimportant. Private and humble duties are distasteful to you; you are restless, uneasy, and dissatisfied. All this springs from selfishness. . . .

“Those professed Christians who are constantly whining and complaining, and who seem to think happiness and a cheerful countenance a sin, have not the genuine article of religion.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 334.

“Should I eat a double amount now and then, because it tastes good, how could I bow down and ask God to help me in my work of writing, when I could not get an idea on account of my gluttony? Could I ask God to take care of that unreasonable load upon my stomach? That would be dishonoring Him. That would be asking to consume upon my lust. Now I eat just what I think is right, and then I can ask Him to give me strength to perform the work that He has given me to do.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 373, 374.

“When the religion of Christ rules in the heart, conscience approves, and peace and happiness reign; perplexity and trouble may surround, yet there is light in the soul.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 47.

3. ESCAPING COMMON SNARES

- a. **What key principle is vital in a real connection with Christ, in contrast to a merely superficial faith in name only? James 4:4.**
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“Those who begin their Christian life by being half and half, will at last be found enlisted on the enemy’s side, whatever may have been their first intentions. And to be an apostate, a traitor to the cause of God, is more serious than death; for it means the loss of eternal life.

“Double-minded men and women are Satan’s best allies. Whatever favorable opinion they may have of themselves, they are dissemblers. All who are loyal to God and the truth must stand firmly for the right because it is right. To yoke up with those who are unconsecrated, and yet be loyal to the truth, is simply impossible. We cannot unite with those who are serving themselves, who are working on worldly plans, and not lose our connection with the heavenly Counselor. We may recover ourselves from the snare of the enemy, but we are bruised and wounded, and our experience is dwarfed.”—*The Review and Herald*, April 19, 1898.

- b. **Why must we firmly uproot every single tendency to envy? James 4:5, 6.**
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“One great defect in the character of Saul was his love of approbation. This trait had had a controlling influence over his actions and thoughts; everything was marked by his desire for praise and self-exaltation. His standard of right and wrong was the low standard of popular applause. No man is safe who lives that he may please men, and does not seek first for the approbation of God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 650.

“It was envy that made Saul miserable and put the humble subject of his throne in jeopardy. What untold mischief has this evil trait of character worked in our world! The same enmity existed in the heart of Saul that stirred the heart of Cain against his brother Abel, because Abel’s works were righteous, and God honored him, and his own works were evil, and the Lord could not bless him. Envy is the offspring of pride, and if it is entertained in the heart, it will lead to hatred, and eventually to revenge and murder.”—*Ibid.*, p. 651.

“Submission, love, and gratitude to God keep sunshine in the heart, though the day may be ever so cloudy. Self-denial and the cross of Christ are before you. Will you lift the cross?”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 47.

4. FOCUS AND SUBMISSION

- a. **What essential factor provides us with genuine, enduring victory in Christ? James 4:7.**

“Some feel their need of the atonement, and with the recognition of this need, and the desire for a change of heart, a struggle begins. To renounce their own will, perhaps their chosen objects of affection or pursuit, requires an effort, at which many hesitate and falter and turn back. Yet this battle must be fought by every heart that is truly converted. We must war against temptations without and within. We must gain the victory over self, crucify the affections and lusts; and then begins the union of the soul with Christ. As the dry and apparently lifeless branch is grafted into the living tree, so may we become living branches of the True Vine. And the fruit which was borne by Christ will be borne by all His followers. After this union is formed, it can be preserved only by continual, earnest, painstaking effort. Christ exercises His power to preserve and guard this sacred tie, and the dependent, helpless sinner must act his part with untiring energy, or Satan by his cruel, cunning power will separate him from Christ.

“Every Christian must stand on guard continually, watching every avenue of the soul where Satan might find access. He must pray for divine help and at the same time resolutely resist every inclination to sin. By courage, by faith, by persevering toil, he can conquer. But let him remember that to gain the victory Christ must abide in him and he in Christ.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 47.

- b. **How does Paul echo the explanation of James regarding spiritual vitality in the Christian life? Romans 6:6–11.**

“Worldly-mindedness, selfishness, and covetousness have been eating out the spirituality and life of God’s people.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 141.

“We need much firmer faith and more fervent devotion. We need to die to self, and in mind and heart to cherish an adoring love for our Saviour. When we will seek the Lord with all the heart we shall find Him, and our hearts will be all aglow with His love. Self will sink into insignificance, and Jesus will be all and in all to the soul. . . .

“We must draw nigh to God. We must be laborers together with Him, else weakness and mistakes will be seen in all we undertake.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 51.

5. PAUSING FOR SOBER PRAYER

- a. **What assurance and appeal are to resonate to each one of us in the battle against our own evil tendencies?** Colossians 3:1–3; James 4:8, 9.
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“It is impossible for any to discern the truth while the world has their affections. The world comes between them and God, beclouding the vision and benumbing the sensibilities to such a degree that it is impossible for them to discern sacred things. God calls upon such: ‘Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.’ Those who have stained their hands with the pollution of the world are required to cleanse themselves from its stains. Those who think they can serve the world and yet love God are double-minded. But they cannot serve God and mammon. They are men of two minds, loving the world and losing all sense of their obligation to God, and yet professing to be Christ’s followers. They are neither the one thing nor the other. They will lose both worlds unless they cleanse their hands and purify their hearts through obedience to the pure principles of truth.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 530, 531.

- b. **What happens when we bow before God in humility?** Psalm 34:18; 1 Peter 5:6, 7.
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“If you now humble yourself before God, confess your wrongs, and return to Him with full purpose of heart, yours can yet be a happy family. If you will not do this, but choose your own way, your happiness is at an end.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 304.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Deeply searching my inner motives, in what areas might I be a hypocrite?
2. Name some ways by which our words too often misrepresent Christ.
3. In what sense is envy a serious denial of faith—and an insult to God?
4. Why do I need to be dead to self in order to be alive in Christ?
5. How does this lesson summarize some real issues I need to overcome?

Adopting a Humbler View

MEMORY TEXT: “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up” (James 4:10).

“When we follow in the humble path of obedience, we leave a bright track heavenward for others to walk in. It is our privilege to have a deeper experience in the things of God.”—*The Signs of the Times*, March 17, 1890.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 41–44, 678–686.

Sunday

December 8

1. AVOIDING FALSE DISCERNMENT

- a. What extremely detrimental habit needs to be put away from all who profess to love their brethren, and why? James 4:11, 12.

“It should not be regarded as a light thing to speak evil of others or to make ourselves judges of their motives or actions.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 385.

“True moral worth does not seek to make a place for itself by thinking and speaking evil, by depreciating others. All envy, all jealousy, all evilspeaking, with all unbelief, must be put away from God’s children.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 234.

“An earnest effort should be made in every church to put away evilspeaking and a censorious spirit as among the sins productive of the greatest evils in the church. Severity and faultfinding must be rebuked as the workings of Satan. Mutual love and confidence must be encouraged and strengthened in the members of the church. Let all, in the fear of God and with love to their brethren, close their ears to gossip and censure. Direct the talebearer to the teachings of God’s word. Bid him obey the Scriptures and carry his complaints directly to those whom he thinks in error. This united action would bring a flood of light into the church and close the door to a flood of evil. Thus God would be glorified, and many souls would be saved.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 609, 610.

2. TAKING LIGHT SERIOUSLY

- a. **When making plans, what do we always need to keep in mind? Psalm 16:8; James 4:10, 13–16.**
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“Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, ‘Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee.’ This is a daily matter. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 70.

- b. **Explain the solemn responsibility and accountability we each have for the heavenly light provided us in all areas of life. James 4:17; Matthew 12:31, 32.**
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“It is not God that blinds the eyes of men or hardens their hearts. He sends them light to correct their errors, and to lead them in safe paths; it is by the rejection of this light that the eyes are blinded and the heart hardened. Often the process is gradual, and almost imperceptible. Light comes to the soul through God’s word, through His servants, or by the direct agency of His Spirit; but when one ray of light is disregarded, there is a partial benumbing of the spiritual perceptions, and the second revealing of light is less clearly discerned. So the darkness increases, until it is night in the soul.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 322.

“It is dangerous to utter a word of doubt, dangerous to question and criticize divine light. The habit of careless and irreverent criticism reacts upon the character, in fostering irreverence and unbelief. Many a man indulging this habit has gone on unconscious of danger, until he was ready to criticize and reject the work of the Holy Spirit.”—*Ibid.*, p. 323.

“When persons are spoken to on the subject of health, they often say: ‘We know a great deal better than we do.’ They do not realize that they are accountable for every ray of light in regard to their physical well-being, and that their every habit is open to the inspection of God.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 372.

3. RICHES OVERESTIMATED

- a. What warnings are given with regard to temptations surrounding those blessed with more material goods than others? James 5:1.
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“Ministers should not use flattery or be respecters of persons. There ever has been, and still is, great danger of erring here, of making a little difference with the wealthy, or flattering them by special attention, if not by words. There is danger of ‘having men’s persons in admiration’ for the sake of gain, but in doing this their eternal interests are endangered. The minister may be the special favorite of some wealthy man, and he may be very liberal with him; this gratifies the minister, and he in turn lavishes praise upon the benevolence of his donor. His name may be exalted by appearing in print, and yet that liberal donor may be entirely unworthy of the credit given him. His liberality did not arise from a deep, living principle to do good with his means, to advance the cause of God because he appreciated it, but from some selfish motive, a desire to be thought liberal. He may have given from impulse and his liberality have no depth of principle. He may have been moved upon by listening to stirring truth which for the time being loosed his purse strings; yet, after all, his liberality has no deeper motive. He gives by spasms; his purse opens spasmodically and closes just as securely spasmodically. He deserves no commendation, for he is in every sense of the word a stingy man, and unless thoroughly converted, purse and all, will hear the withering denunciation: ‘Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.’ Such will awake at last from a horrible self-deception. Those who praised their spasmodic liberalities helped Satan to deceive them and make them think that they were very liberal, very sacrificing, when they knew not the first principles of liberality or self-sacrifice.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 475, 476.

- b. How are we to improve our priorities regarding money? Proverbs 11:4.
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“By exercise, benevolence constantly enlarges and strengthens, until it becomes a principle and reigns in the soul. It is highly dangerous to spirituality to allow selfishness and covetousness the least room in the heart.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 548, 549.

4. FORSAKING THE IDOL

- a. What is often the reason why people obtain riches? James 5:2 (first part).
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“In this generation the desire for gain is the absorbing passion. Wealth is often obtained by fraud. There are multitudes struggling with poverty, compelled to labor hard for small wages, unable to secure even the barest necessities of life. Toil and deprivation, with no hope of better things, make their burden heavy. Careworn and oppressed, they know not where to turn for relief. And all this that the rich may support their extravagance or indulge their desire to hoard!

“Love of money and love of display have made this world as a den of thieves and robbers. The Scriptures picture the greed and oppression that will prevail just before Christ’s second coming.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 650, 651.

- b. What motivates much of the world today—and what appeal needs to be made to those driven by it? 1 Timothy 6:9, 10; Deuteronomy 8:18, 19.
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“The Bible condemns no man for being rich, if he has acquired his riches honestly. Not money, but the love of money, is the root of all evil. It is God who gives men power to get wealth; and in the hands of him who acts as God’s steward, using his means unselfishly, wealth is a blessing, both to its possessor and to the world. But many, absorbed in their interest in worldly treasures, become insensible to the claims of God and the needs of their fellow men. They regard their wealth as a means of glorifying themselves. They add house to house, and land to land; they fill their homes with luxuries, while all about them are human beings in misery and crime, in disease and death. Those who thus give their lives to self-serving are developing in themselves, not the attributes of God, but the attributes of the wicked one.

“These men are in need of the gospel. They need to have their eyes turned from the vanity of material things to behold the preciousness of the enduring riches. . . .

“Some are especially fitted to work for the higher classes. These should seek wisdom from God to know how to reach these persons, to have not merely a casual acquaintance with them, but by personal effort and living faith to awaken them to the needs of the soul, to lead them to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 212, 213.

5. LOOKING BEYOND MATERIALISM

- a. Describe the result of ill-gotten gain. James 5:2 (last part).
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“To obtain wealth by unjust dealing, by overreaching in trade, by oppressing the widow and the fatherless, or by hoarding up riches and neglecting the wants of the needy, will eventually bring the just retribution described by the inspired apostle.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 682.

- b. What is God’s special message regarding riches? 1 Timothy 6:17–19.
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“The humblest and poorest of the true disciples of Christ, who are rich in good works, are more blessed and more precious in the sight of God than the men who boast of their great riches. They are more honorable in the courts of heaven than the most exalted kings and nobles who are not rich toward God. . . .

“Those who hoard up means or invest largely in lands, while they deprive their families of the comforts of life, act like insane men. They do not allow their families to enjoy the things which God has richly given them. Notwithstanding they have large possessions, their families are frequently compelled to labor far beyond their strength to save still more means to hoard up. Brain, bone, and muscle are taxed to the utmost to accumulate, and religion and Christian duties are neglected. Work, work, work, is the ambition from morning until night.

“Many do not manifest an earnest desire to learn the will of God and to understand His claims upon them. Some who attempt to teach the truth to others do not themselves obey the word of God. The more such teachers the cause of God has, the less prosperous will it be.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 682, 683.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. When I dwell on the shortcomings of others, what am I doing?
2. Explain how the Holy Spirit is grieved when we ignore Heaven-sent light.
3. How may both wealthy persons and their pastors be ensnared?
4. Why is greed increasing and why should we avoid it now more than ever?
5. Describe the beauty and benefits of humility in Christ.

Focusing on Heaven

MEMORY TEXT: Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh” (James 5:8).

“You need to be continually clothed with the righteousness of Christ. You need to bear in mind that you are a child of God, and that you are to possess [a] tender, kind, patient spirit. Look closely that selfishness and covetousness shall not abide in your soul.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 13, p. 288.

Suggested Reading: *Early Writings*, pp. 72, 73.

Sunday

December 15

1. TIME FOR REASSESSMENT!

- a. What is soon to happen to items so highly valued and often coveted since antiquity—and of what should this remind us? Isaiah 31:6, 7.

“It is the selfish love of money wrongfully employed that is the root of all evil. Wealth will prove a blessing if we regard it as the Lord’s, to be received with thankfulness and with thankfulness returned to the Giver.

“But of what value is untold wealth if it is hoarded in expensive mansions or in bank stocks? What do these weigh in comparison with the salvation of one soul for whom the Son of the infinite God has died?”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 453.

“Those who choose to make excuses and continue in sin and conformity to the world will be left to their idols. . . . When Christ shall come in His glory and the glory of His Father, with all the heavenly angels surrounding Him, escorting Him on His way with voices of triumph, while strains of the most enchanting music fall upon the ear, all will then be interested; there will not be one indifferent spectator. Speculations will not then engross the soul. The miser’s piles of gold, which have feasted his eyes, are no more attractive. The palaces which the proud men of earth have erected, and which have been their idols, are turned from with loathing and disgust.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 41.

2. BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE . . .

- a. How does Scripture depict those who, by procrastinating, lose their chance to honor God with their substance? Hosea 4:17; Matthew 25:11, 12.
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- b. Describe the ultimate outcome of all—including those professing the present truth—who selfishly cling to their material assets. James 5:3.
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“[James 5:1–3 quoted.] I saw that these fearful words apply particularly to the wealthy who profess to believe the present truth. The Lord calls them to use their means to advance His cause. Opportunities are presented to them, but they shut their eyes to the wants of the cause, and cling fast to their earthly treasure. Their love for the world is greater than their love for the truth, their love for their fellow men, or their love for God. He calls for their substance, but they selfishly, covetously, retain what they have. They give a little now and then to ease their conscience, but have not overcome their love for this world. They do not sacrifice for God. The Lord has raised up others that prize eternal life, and that can feel and realize something of the value of the soul, and they have freely bestowed their means to advance the cause of God. The work is closing; and soon the means of those who have kept their riches, their large farms, their cattle, etc., will not be wanted. I saw the Lord turn to such in anger, in wrath, and repeat these words: ‘Go to now, ye rich men.’ He has called, but you would not hear. Love of this world has drowned His voice. Now He has no use for you, and lets you go, bidding you: ‘Go to now, ye rich men.’

“Oh, I saw it was an awful thing to be thus forsaken by the Lord—a fearful thing to hold onto a perishable substance here, when He has said that if we will sell and give alms, we can lay up treasure in heaven. I was shown that as the work is closing up, and the truth is going forth in mighty power, these rich men will bring their means and lay it at the feet of the servants of God, begging them to accept it. The answer from the servants of God will be: ‘Go to now, ye rich men. Your means is not needed. Ye withheld it when ye could do good with it in advancing the cause of God. The needy have suffered; they have not been blessed by your means. God will not accept your riches now. Go to now, ye rich men.’ ”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 174, 175.

3. LEARNING THE GOLDEN RULE

- a. How do the prosperous often treat those they employ—or who buy from them—and what must we ever keep in mind? James 5:4-6; Matthew 7:12.
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“God is not in all the riches that are obtained. Satan often has much more to do with acquiring property than God. Much of it is obtained by oppressing the hireling in his wages. The naturally covetous rich man obtains his riches by grinding down the hireling, and taking advantage of individuals wherever he can, thereby adding to a treasure that will eat his flesh as it were fire.

“A strictly honest, honorable course has not been taken by some. Such must take a very different course and work fast to redeem the time. Many Sabbathkeepers are at fault here. Advantage is taken even of their poor brethren, and those who have an abundance exact more than the real worth of things, more than they would pay for the same things, while these same brethren are embarrassed and distressed for want of means. God knows all these things. Every selfish act, every covetous extortion, will bring its reward.

“I saw that it is cruel and unjust to have no consideration for a brother’s situation. If he is distressed, or poor, yet doing the best he can, allowance should be made for him, and even the full value of things he may purchase of the wealthy should not be exacted; but they should have bowels of compassion for him. God will approve of such kindly acts, and the doer will not lose his reward. But a fearful account stands against many Sabbathkeepers for close, covetous acts.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 175, 176.

- b. In earlier times, how did the believers freely share? 2 Corinthians 8:1, 2.
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“I was pointed back to a time when there were but few who listened to and embraced the truth. They had not much of this world’s goods. The wants of the cause were divided among a very few. Then it was necessary for some to sell their houses and lands, and obtain cheaper to serve them as a shelter, or home, while their means were freely and generously lent to the Lord, to publish the truth, and to otherwise aid in advancing the cause of God. As I beheld these self-sacrificing ones, I saw that they had endured privation for the benefit of the cause. I saw an angel standing by them, pointing them upward, and saying: ‘Ye have bags in heaven! Ye have bags in heaven that wax not old! Endure unto the end, and great will be your reward.’”—*Ibid.*, p. 176.

4. A VIRTUE ESSENTIAL FOR TODAY

- a. In developing our character, why is patience so important? James 5:7.
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“The husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.’ James 5:7. So the Christian is to wait with patience for the fruition in his life of the word of God. Often when we pray for the graces of the Spirit, God works to answer our prayers by placing us in circumstances to develop these fruits; but we do not understand His purpose, and wonder, and are dismayed. Yet none can develop these graces except through the process of growth and fruit bearing. Our part is to receive God’s word and to hold it fast, yielding ourselves fully to its control, and its purpose in us will be accomplished.

“ ‘If a man love Me,’ Christ said, ‘he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.’ John 14:23. The spell of a stronger, a perfect mind will be over us; for we have a living connection with the source of all-enduring strength. In our divine life we shall be brought into captivity to Jesus Christ. We shall no longer live the common life of selfishness, but Christ will live in us. His character will be reproduced in our nature. Thus shall we bring forth the fruits of the Holy Spirit—‘some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred.’ ”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 61.

- b. When tempted to be frustrated or dismayed about the escalation of evil on this planet, why is patient trust so helpful? James 5:8; Luke 21:19.
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“The world has become bold in transgression of God’s law. Because of His long forbearance, men have trampled upon His authority. They have strengthened one another in oppression and cruelty toward His heritage, saying, ‘How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?’ Psalm 73:11. But there is a line beyond which they cannot pass. The time is near when they will have reached the prescribed limit. Even now they have almost exceeded the bounds of the long-suffering of God, the limits of His grace, the limits of His mercy. The Lord will interpose to vindicate His own honor, to deliver His people, and to repress the swellings of unrighteousness.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 177, 178.

5. EXAMPLES TO STRENGTHEN US

- a. **In church capacity, on what do we too often focus—and what should we bring to mind instead? Leviticus 19:18; James 5:9, 10.**
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“Abel, the very first Christian of Adam’s children, died a martyr. Enoch walked with God, and the world knew him not. Noah was mocked as a fanatic and an alarmist. ‘Others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment.’ ‘Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection.’ Hebrews 11:36, 35.

“In every age God’s chosen messengers have been reviled and persecuted, yet through their affliction the knowledge of God has been spread abroad. Every disciple of Christ is to step into the ranks and carry forward the same work, knowing that its foes can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. God means that truth shall be brought to the front and become the subject of examination and discussion, even through the contempt placed upon it. The minds of the people must be agitated; every controversy, every reproach, every effort to restrict liberty of conscience, is God’s means of awakening minds that otherwise might slumber.

“How often this result has been seen in the history of God’s messengers! When the noble and eloquent Stephen was stoned to death at the instigation of the Sanhedrin council, there was no loss to the cause of the gospel. The light of heaven that glorified his face, the divine compassion breathed in his dying prayer, were as a sharp arrow of conviction to the bigoted Sanhedrist who stood by, and Saul, the persecuting Pharisee, became a chosen vessel to bear the name of Christ before Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 33, 34.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **What do I need to realize about the value of my money?**
2. **What is meant by Christ’s challenge in James 5:1?**
3. **Of what weakness might I be guilty relating to financial interactions?**
4. **In the end, how is patience to shine as a virtue among God’s people?**
5. **How have the persecuted martyrs throughout history kept their focus?**

Enduring by Faith

MEMORY TEXT: “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16).

“Humble, fervent prayer will save the soul from death, and confession and restitution will hide a multitude of sins.”—*The Review and Herald*, December 16, 1902.

Suggested Readings: *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 225–233;
Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, pp. 271–293.

Sunday

December 22

1. HOPE

- a. For what virtue is Job especially recognized—and what does this tell us about God? James 5:11.

“[The Lord] waits with unwearied love to hear the confessions of the wayward and to accept their penitence. He watches for some return of gratitude from us, as the mother watches for the smile of recognition from her beloved child. He would have us understand how earnestly and tenderly His heart yearns over us. He invites us to take our trials to His sympathy, our sorrows to His love, our wounds to His healing, our weakness to His strength, our emptiness to His fullness. Never has one been disappointed who came unto Him. ‘They looked unto Him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.’

“Those who seek God in secret telling the Lord their needs and pleading for help, will not plead in vain.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 84, 85.

- b. How does James echo the words of Christ regarding veracity? James 5:12; Matthew 5:37.
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“Everything that Christians do should be as transparent as the sunlight.”—*Ibid.*, p. 68.

2. FAITH VS. PRESUMPTION

- a. **If suffering from disease, how and why are we encouraged to come to the great Lifegiver? James 5:13-15; Psalm 103:1-3.**
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“God is just as willing to restore the sick to health now as when the Holy Spirit spoke these words through the psalmist. And Christ is the same compassionate physician now that He was during His earthly ministry. In Him there is healing balm for every disease, restoring power for every infirmity. His disciples in this time are to pray for the sick as verily as the disciples of old prayed. And recoveries will follow; for ‘the prayer of faith shall save the sick.’ We have the Holy Spirit’s power, the calm assurance of faith, that can claim God’s promises. The Lord’s promise, ‘They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover’ (Mark 16:18), is just as trustworthy now as in the days of the apostles.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 226.

- b. **Of what balance must we be aware when seeking health? Psalm 66:18.**
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“We are undeserving of [the Lord’s] mercy, but as we give ourselves to Him, He receives us. He will work for and through those who follow Him.

“But only as we live in obedience to His word can we claim the fulfillment of His promises. . . . If we render to Him only a partial, halfhearted obedience, His promises will not be fulfilled to us.”—*Ibid.*, p. 227.

“The way in which Christ worked was to preach the word, and to relieve suffering by miraculous works of healing. But I am instructed that we cannot now work in this way; for Satan will exercise his power by working miracles. God’s servants today could not work by means of miracles, because spurious works of healing, claiming to be divine, will be wrought.

“For this reason the Lord has marked out a way in which His people are to carry forward a work of physical healing combined with the teaching of the word. Sanitariums are to be established, and with these institutions are to be connected workers who will carry forward genuine medical missionary work. Thus a guarding influence is thrown around those who come to the sanitariums for treatment.

“This is the provision the Lord has made whereby gospel medical missionary work is to be done for many souls.”—*Medical Ministry*, p. 14.

3. TWO DIFFERENT TYPES OF COURAGE

- a. Name a vital aspect of healing that is sadly overlooked. James 5:16.
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“How mistaken are those who imagine that confession of sin will detract from their dignity, and lessen their influence among their fellow men. Clinging to this erroneous idea, though seeing their faults, many fail to confess them, but rather pass by the wrongs they have done others, so embittering their own lives, and shadowing the lives of others. It will not hurt your dignity to confess your sins. Away with this false dignity. Fall on the Rock and be broken, and Christ will give you the true and heavenly dignity. Let not pride, self-esteem, or self-righteousness keep anyone from confessing his sin, that he may claim the promise. ‘He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy’ (Proverbs 28:13). Keep nothing back from God, and neglect not the confession of your faults to your brethren. ‘Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed’ (James 5:16). Many a sin is left unconfessed to confront the sinner in the day of final account; better far to confront your sins now, to confess them and put them away, while the atoning Sacrifice pleads in your behalf. Do not fail to learn the will of God on this subject. The health of your soul and the salvation of others depends upon the course you pursue in this matter.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 326, 327.

- b. When concerned over the spiritual apostasy of his nation, what action did Elijah take—and how did God preserve him? 1 Kings 17:1–3.
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“In anguish of soul [Elijah] besought God to arrest the once-favored people in their wicked course, to visit them with judgments, if need be, that they might be led to see in its true light their departure from Heaven. He longed to see them brought to repentance before they should go to such lengths in evil-doing as to provoke the Lord to destroy them utterly. . . .

“To Elijah was entrusted the mission of delivering to Ahab Heaven’s message of judgment. . . . At the palace he solicited no admission, nor waited to be formally announced. Clad in the coarse garments usually worn by the prophets of that time, he passed the guards, apparently unnoticed, and stood for a moment before the astonished king.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 120, 121.

4. LEARNING FROM ELIJAH

- a. Why are Elijah's prayers for God to awaken his apostatized nation given as an example for us? James 5:17.
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"Oft-repeated appeals, remonstrances, and warnings had failed to bring Israel to repentance. The time had come when God must speak to them by means of judgments. Inasmuch as the worshipers of Baal claimed that the treasures of heaven, the dew and the rain, came not from Jehovah, but from the ruling forces of nature, and that it was through the creative energy of the sun that the earth was enriched and made to bring forth abundantly, the curse of God was to rest heavily upon the polluted land. The apostate tribes of Israel were to be shown the folly of trusting to the power of Baal for temporal blessings. Until they should turn to God with repentance, and acknowledge Him as the source of all blessing, there should fall upon the land neither dew nor rain."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 120.

- b. After Israel had renewed their allegiance to God, how are Elijah's prayers again an example for us? James 5:18; 1 Kings 18:39–45.
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"Six times [Elijah] prayed earnestly, and yet there was no sign that his petition was granted, but with a strong faith he urged his plea to the throne of grace. Had he given up in discouragement at the sixth time, his prayer would not have been answered, but he persevered till the answer came. We have a God whose ear is not closed to our petitions; and if we prove His word, He will honor our faith. He wants us to have all our interests interwoven with His interests, and then He can safely bless us; for we shall not then take glory to self when the blessing is ours, but shall render all the praise to God. God does not always answer our prayers the first time we call upon Him; for should He do this, we might take it for granted that we had a right to all the blessings and favors He bestowed upon us. Instead of searching our hearts to see if any evil was entertained by us, any sin indulged, we should become careless, and fail to realize our dependence upon Him, and our need of His help.

"Elijah humbled himself until he was in a condition where he would not take the glory to himself. This is the condition upon which the Lord hears prayer, for then we shall give the praise to Him."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 2, pp. 1034, 1035.

5. EXTENDING CHRISTLIKE TENDERNESS

- a. Amid disappointment heaped on us by defective people in a fallen world, with what final appeal does James close his letter to us? James 5:19, 20.
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“Give the erring one no occasion for discouragement. Suffer not a Pharisical hardness to come in and hurt your brother. Let no bitter sneer rise in mind or heart. Let no tinge of scorn be manifest in the voice. If you speak a word of your own, if you take an attitude of indifference, or show suspicion or distrust, it may prove the ruin of a soul. He needs a brother with the Elder Brother’s heart of sympathy to touch his heart of humanity. Let him feel the strong clasp of a sympathizing hand, and hear the whisper, Let us pray. God will give a rich experience to you both. Prayer unites us with one another and with God. Prayer brings Jesus to our side, and gives to the fainting, perplexed soul new strength to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. Prayer turns aside the attacks of Satan.

“When one turns away from human imperfections to behold Jesus, a divine transformation takes place in the character. The Spirit of Christ working upon the heart conforms it to His image. Then let it be your effort to lift up Jesus. Let the mind’s eye be directed to ‘the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. John 1:29. And as you engage in this work, remember that ‘he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.’ James 5:20. . . .

“In God’s forgiveness the heart of the erring one is drawn close to the great heart of Infinite Love. The tide of divine compassion flows into the sinner’s soul, and from him to the souls of others.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 250, 251.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. At what times in my life have I seen God’s bountiful mercy toward me?
2. In what ways might I be guilty of presumption regarding my health?
3. How was Elijah’s prayer in behalf of his nation answered?
4. Why did Elijah need to pray so many times for the rain to return?
5. With whom should I have a more compassionate attitude, and why?

First Sabbath Offerings



OCTOBER 5
for a Chapel in Reading,
Pennsylvania, USA
(see p. 4.)

NOVEMBER 2
for the General Conference
Literature Department
(see p. 25.)



DECEMBER 7
for the Colombian Union
Headquarters
(see p. 51.)

