

Preparing for Eternity Together

Sabbath Bible Lessons

Senior Division

January-March 2006

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

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Foreword

There is an old saying, “No man is an island.” While every person born on this planet is a distinct individual unlike any other, we depend on one another much more than we may realize. As you look thoughtfully at your fingertips and palms, you see there embedded specific whorls, lines, and designs unique only to you. In contemplating the artistry of that same wonderful Creator who fashioned each human in His own likeness, we are reminded that this same hand was also formed to grasp many other hands in the warmth of nurturing, friendship, and love. “God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, . . . giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth” (Acts 17:24–26).

Just as the first table of stone in the Ten Commandments teaches our “vertical” relationship with God, the second table reveals our duties with regard to “horizontal” relationships with our fellowmen. These “horizontal” relationships can be illustrated as follows: “Throw a pebble into the lake, and a wave is formed, and another and another; and as they increase, the circle widens, until it reaches the very shore. So with our influence. Beyond our knowledge or control it tells upon others in blessing or in cursing” (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 340).

As a movement of reformation seeking restoration of character to complete harmony with God's will, our desire is to ascend to higher ground in both the vertical and horizontal sense, which are in many ways intertwined. For this reason, during this quarter we are studying about how we can help each other to prepare for eternity. “We are threads in the great web of humanity, and, as such, related with each other. Our life leaves upon the minds of others impressions which will be transferred even into eternity. Angels take note of our works, of our words, of the spirit which actuates us” (*The Upward Look*, p. 59).

This quarterly is designed in a somewhat chronological order as it touches upon the various human contacts one may encounter going through life. Beginning with creation and birth, it passes through childhood, youth, and adulthood, discussing the various interpersonal relationships usually encountered. The culmination is our great duty before the entire world to shine as witnesses for Christ living in the last days of earth's history. May the Lord guide and strengthen us in the study of these lessons. May we be fortified to become more Christlike people in an ever-widening sphere of influence, so that His name may be truly glorified in us!

The General Conference Sabbath School Department

First Sabbath Offering

For the Oltenia Field Conference headquarters



The Romanian Union is one of the largest unions of the Reform Movement and one of the very first countries of our denomination to send missionaries abroad. After passing through a long period of hardships and persecution under the communist regime, the Romanian brethren and sisters have been finally able to make known the genuine faith of the saints.

Grateful for the opportunity opened to them by this political change, the believers in Romania contributed as much as they could with their energies and means for the advancement of the Lord's work and, in a short time, many places of worship were erected to serve as lighthouses of hope in a dying world.

Due to the development of the work, the new Oltenia Field Conference was organized as the sixth Conference in the southern part of Romania in 2002. Up to now, the missionary and administrative work in this Conference has been managed from a small building in the city of Craiova. The work in this youngest Conference is advancing with encouraging results, but the need for a proper chapel and headquarters is deeply felt by the believers working in that region and by the many interested souls who might be thus encouraged to worship the Lord in a decent manner and within an appropriate environment.

The general economical situation of the country makes it quite difficult for us to accomplish this project on our own. Therefore we address our warm appeal to you all, our brethren, sisters, and friends around the world, to contribute with your liberal offerings to the erection of a lighthouse of truth in this corner of the Lord's vineyard, and we sincerely pray that the Lord richly reward your sacrifices.

We thank you in advance for your generosity and wish the Lord's richest blessings upon His worldwide work and upon each of His sincere followers.

On behalf of your brethren and sisters of the Romanian Union

PROJECT 04B

In Our Father's Image

"God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Genesis 1:27).

"The value of man is to be estimated at the price paid for his redemption."—*The Review and Herald*, December 18, 1894.

Suggested Reading: *Sons and Daughters of God*, pp. 230, 15.

1. A PRIVILEGED PART OF CREATION

Sunday

January 1

- a. Describe our high calling as human beings—and the relationship our Creator has designed to enjoy with us. Isaiah 13:12; Jeremiah 29:11.

"When Adam came from the Creator's hand, he bore, in his physical, mental, and spiritual nature, a likeness to his Maker. 'God created man in His own image' (Genesis 1:27), and it was His purpose that the longer man lived the more fully he should reveal this image—the more fully reflect the glory of the Creator. All his faculties were capable of development; their capacity and vigor were continually to increase. Vast was the scope offered for their exercise, glorious the field opened to their research. The mysteries of the visible universe—the 'wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge' (Job 37:16)—invited man's study. Face-to-face, heart-to-heart communion with his Maker was his high privilege. Had he remained loyal to God, all this would have been his forever. Throughout eternal ages he would have continued to gain new treasures of knowledge, to discover fresh springs of happiness, and to obtain clearer and yet clearer conceptions of the wisdom, the power, and the love of God. More and more fully would he have fulfilled the object of his creation, more and more fully have reflected the Creator's glory."—*Education*, p. 15.

- b. Why should we be inspired by the wonderful level of trust, honor, and confidence which God has bestowed upon humanity? Psalm 8:3–9.

2. AN INTRUDING INTERFERENCE

- a. What tragic mistake scarred the life of our first parents, causing them to forfeit their home in paradise? Genesis 3:1–12, 17–19, 23, 24. What spiritual consequences followed?

“Through sin the divine likeness was marred, and well-nigh obliterated. Man’s physical powers were weakened, his mental capacity was lessened, his spiritual vision dimmed. He had become subject to death.”—*Education*, p. 15.

- b. How is sin defined, and what does it cause? 1 John 3:4; Romans 6:23 (first part).
- c. Out of love for the human race, what would be accomplished by the mission of Christ in coming to earth? Romans 6:23 (second part); 1 Corinthians 15:21–23. How soon could humanity reap the benefits of His life, death, resurrection, and ascension?

“As soon as there was sin, there was a Saviour. Christ knew what He would have to suffer, yet He became man’s substitute. As soon as Adam sinned, the Son of God presented himself as surety for the human race, with just as much power to avert the doom pronounced upon the guilty as when He died upon the cross of Calvary.”—*The Review and Herald*, March 12, 1901.

- d. Who exactly was Christ and, by the time He came to earth, how advanced had the sin problem become in separating humanity—both Jews and Gentiles—from their heavenly Father? Genesis 1:1–3; John 1:1–5, 10, 11.

“Men had well-nigh ceased to discern God in His works. The sinfulness of humanity had cast a pall over the fair face of creation; and instead of manifesting God, His works became a barrier that concealed Him. Men ‘worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator.’ Thus the heathen ‘became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened’ (Romans 1:25, 21). So in Israel, man’s teaching had been put in the place of God’s. Not only the things of nature, but the sacrificial service and the Scriptures themselves—all given to reveal God—were so perverted that they became the means of concealing Him.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 18.

3. THE DIVINE—HUMAN SAVIOUR

- a. What reveals God’s mercy in sending Christ? Job 33:23–30; Luke 1:26–35.

“When Adam’s sin plunged the race into hopeless misery, God might have cut Himself loose from fallen beings. He might have treated them as sinners deserve to be treated. He might have commanded the angels of heaven to pour out upon our world the vials of His wrath. He might have removed this dark blot from His universe. But He did not do this. Instead of banishing them from His presence, He came still nearer to the fallen race. He gave His Son to become bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. ‘The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth’ (John 1:14). Christ by His human relationship to men drew them close to God. He clothed His divine nature with the garb of humanity, and demonstrated before the heavenly universe, before the unfallen worlds, how much God loves the children of men.”—*The Australasian Union Conference Record*, June 1, 1900.

- b. Why can we be assured that the great Judge of all humanity will be fair with His erring creatures? John 5:26, 27; Hebrews 4:14, 15; 7:25.
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- c. In what sense is Christ’s humiliating death an important key in teaching us how to live, and how to relate to our fellow human beings? Isaiah 53:6–8; Philippians 2:5–11.

“Christ in His humiliation was glorified. He who in all other eyes appeared to be conquered was a Conqueror. He was acknowledged as the Sin Bearer. Men may exercise power over His human body. They may pierce the holy temples with the crown of thorns. They may strip from Him His raiment, and quarrel over its division. But they cannot rob Him of His power to forgive sins. In dying He bears testimony to His own divinity and to the glory of the Father. His ear is not heavy that it cannot hear, neither His arm shortened that it cannot save. It is His royal right to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by Him.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 751.

4. RESTORED AS SONS AND DAUGHTERS

- a. What reality must each of us face? Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:10.
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- b. How has this caused prayers to be unanswered? Isaiah 59:1, 2.
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- c. What can the good news of salvation through Christ do for us? Ezekiel 16:3–6; Galatians 4:1–7.
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- d. What must be our focus in order to maintain victory? John 1:12–14; Romans 8:10–17.
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- e. How can the study of nature help to reinforce our connection with its Author? Psalm 19:1–3; Romans 1:20.
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“As divine truth is revealed in Holy Writ, so it is reflected, as from a mirror, in the face of nature; and through His creation we become acquainted with the Creator. And so the book of nature becomes a great lesson book, which instructors who are wise can use, in connection with the Scriptures, to guide lost sheep back to the fold of God. As the works of God are studied, the Holy Spirit flashes conviction into the mind. It is not the conviction which logical reasoning produces; but unless the mind has become too dark to know God, the eye too dim to see Him, the ear too dull to hear His voice, a deeper meaning is grasped, and the sublime, spiritual truths of the written word are impressed on the heart.”—*Special Testimonies on Education*, p. 59.

- f. How does the Sabbath serve as a connecting link to acquaint us more fully with our divine—human Saviour on a regular basis? 2 Corinthians 4:6.
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“The Sabbath calls our thoughts to nature, and brings us into communion with the Creator. In the song of the bird, the sighing of the trees, and the music of the sea, we still may hear His voice who talked with Adam in Eden in the cool of the day. And as we behold His power in nature we find comfort, for the word that created all things is that which speaks life to the soul.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 281, 282.

5. THE CROSS POINTS TO HEAVEN WITH ARMS OUTSTRETCHED

- a. What beautiful assurance does Christ give us, and how does He intend that we respond to it? John 15:14–17.

“In the New Testament the world’s Redeemer has specified what constitutes pure religion in our dealings with our fellowmen. Obeying the first four commandments with the whole soul causes us to render supreme love to God, and to become coworkers with God in carrying out the will of God toward our fellowmen. Keeping the first four commandments makes us one with Christ, who gave His life as a ransom to deliver all from the thralldom of sin, and to make us free men and women in Him. The value of man is to be estimated at the price paid for his redemption.

“The last six precepts of the decalogue reveal the duty of man to his fellowmen; and those who render obedience to the first four commandments will also carry out the injunctions of the last six. We are commanded to love our neighbors as ourselves.”—*The Review and Herald*, December 18, 1894.

- b. In view of all that Christ has done for us (vertically pointing us to heaven), what should we keep in mind as we study this quarterly on how to relate to our fellow humans (depicted horizontally)? Jude 1:21; 1 Corinthians 16:14.

“We can receive light only as we come to the cross and present ourselves at the altar of sacrifice. Here man’s weakness is made manifest; here His strength is revealed. Here men see there is power in Christ to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.”—*Christian Education*, p. 82.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What has always been our Father’s plan in creating us?
2. How does sin destroy relationships?
3. Why must Christ—“the Son of God”—also be revealed as “the Son of man”?
4. Once we are adopted into our Father’s family, what makes us feel at home?
5. What is to be the inevitable result of a solid (vertical) relationship with God?

The Nurturing Family

“Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table” (Psalm 128:3).

“God would have our families symbols of the family in heaven.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 17.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 230–232.

Sunday

January 8

1. OUR FIRST HUMAN RELATIONSHIP

a. Who are normally the first human beings we encounter from the time we are born, and how does God use this unique relationship to illustrate the tenderness of His great love for us? Psalm 103:13; Isaiah 66:13.

b. Which commandment does this call to mind? Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:2, 3.

c. Why should faithfulness to this commandment spring forth in spontaneous gratitude from the truly converted soul? Proverbs 4:3.

“Children should feel that they are indebted to their parents, who have watched over them in their infancy and nursed them in sickness. They should realize that their parents have suffered much anxiety on their account. Especially have conscientious, godly parents felt the deepest interest that their children should take a right course. As they have seen faults in their children, how heavy have been their hearts! If the children who caused those hearts to ache could see the effect of their course, they would certainly relent. If they could see their mother’s tears and hear her prayers to God in their behalf, if they could listen to her suppressed and broken sighs, their hearts would feel and they would speedily confess their wrongs and ask to be forgiven.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4b, p. 138.

Monday

January 9

2. A SAD DETERIORATION

a. What widespread characteristic of people is especially plaguing the families in these last days? 2 Timothy 3:1, 2; Proverbs 30:11–14.

“The sin which exists in this generation among children is that they are ‘disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God’ (2 Timothy 3:2, 4). And this state of things exists to such an extent that it is made a subject of prophecy as one of the signs that we are living in the last days of time.”—*Letters to Young Lovers*, p. 53.

“Rebellion and apostasy are in the very air we breathe. We shall be affected by it unless we by faith hang our helpless souls upon Christ.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1114.

b. What solemn warnings should we keep in mind, particularly as we see the conditions existing in today’s society? Proverbs 1:8; 19:26; 20:20.

c. What attitude can we glean from Isaac’s marriage? Genesis 24:1–4, 66, 67.

“In ancient times marriage engagements were generally made by the parents, and this was the custom among those who worshiped God. None were required to marry those whom they could not love; but in the bestowal of their affections the youth were guided by the judgment of their experienced, God-fearing parents. It was regarded as a dishonor to parents, and even a crime, to pursue a course contrary to this.

“Isaac, trusting to his father’s wisdom and affection, was satisfied to commit the matter to him, believing also that God Himself would direct in the choice made.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 171.

“What a contrast between the course of Isaac and that pursued by the youth of our time, even among professed Christians! Young people too often feel that the bestowal of their affections is a matter in which self alone should be consulted—a matter that neither God nor their parents should in any wise control.”—*Ibid.*, p. 175.

3. ELDERLY PARENTS

- a. Why does God's voice in the fifth commandment continue to echo through the ages with deep resonance when our parents become aged? Proverbs 23:22.

"There is no time when children should withhold respect and love from their father and mother. While the parents live, it should be the children's joy to honor and respect them. They should bring all the cheerfulness and sunshine into the life of the aged parents, that they possibly can. They should smooth their pathway to the grave. There is no better recommendation in this world than that a child has honored his parents, no better record in the books of heaven than that he has loved and honored father and mother.

"Let children carefully remember that at the best the aged parents have but little joy and comfort. What can bring greater sorrow to their hearts than manifest neglect on the part of their children? What sin can be worse in children than to bring grief to an aged, helpless father or mother? Those who grieve their aged parents are written in the books of heaven as commandment breakers, as those who do not reverence the God of heaven, and unless they repent and forsake their evil ways, they will not be found worthy of a place in the saints' inheritance.

"Is it possible that children can become so dead to the claims of father and mother that they will not willingly remove all causes of sorrow in their power, watching over them with unwearying care and devotion? Can it be possible that they will not regard it a pleasure to make the last days of their parents their best days? How can a son or daughter be willing to leave father or mother on the hands of strangers for them to care for! Even were the mother an unbeliever and disagreeable, it would not release the child from the obligation that God has placed upon him to care for his parent. Would that there were but few who would utterly ignore the duty that is due from a child to his mother. Alas! that there are so many who never bestow a thought upon their parents, except it be that they may gain some advantage from them. . . . But how bitter will be the close of the life of such children! They can have no happy reflection in their old age; for they will reap as they have sown."—*The Review and Herald*, November 15, 1892.

- b. How did Jesus disclose the Pharisees' disregard of the fifth commandment? Mark 7:9–13. How did His own behavior stand in clear contrast to their gross hypocrisy? John 19:25–27.
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4. CHRIST, THE GREAT CENTER

- a. As revealed from the time of ancient Israel, why is morning and evening worship essential? 2 Chronicles 13:10–12. How should family worship be conducted in our days?

"It should be the special object of the heads of the family to make the hour of worship intensely interesting. By a little thought and careful preparation for this season, when we come into the presence of God, family worship can be made pleasant and will be fraught with results that eternity alone will reveal. Let the father select a portion of Scripture that is interesting and easily understood; a few verses will be sufficient to furnish a lesson which may be studied and practiced through the day. Questions may be asked, a few earnest, interesting remarks made, or incident, short and to the point, may be brought in by way of illustration. At least a few verses of spirited song may be sung, and the prayer offered should be short and pointed. The one who leads in prayer should not pray about everything, but should express his needs in simple words and praise God with thanksgiving."—*The Signs of the Times*, August 7, 1884

- b. What is the keynote of life to be learned in every home, whether the family be large or small? Philippians 2:1–4.

"God would have our families symbols of the family in heaven. Let parents and children bear this in mind every day, relating themselves to one another as members of the family of God. Then their lives will be of such a character as to give to the world an object lesson of what families who love God and keep His commandments may be. Christ will be glorified; His peace and grace and love will pervade the family circle like a precious perfume."—*The Review and Herald*, November 17, 1896.

- c. How are children to reflect the boyhood of Jesus? Luke 2:52.

"Very early the lesson of helpfulness should be taught the child. As soon as strength and reasoning power are sufficiently developed, he should be given duties to perform in the home."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 401.

5. A TRAINING GROUND FOR SERVICE

- a. What is God's plan for our families? Psalm 128:1–6.

"All Heaven is interested in your home. . . . Set your own heart in order. An unreserved surrender to God will sweep away the barriers that have so long defied the approaches of heavenly grace."—*The Signs of the Times*, November 11, 1903.

- b. How is victory assured even to those who themselves may not have grown up under the best of circumstances? Philippians 3:13, 14.

"Notwithstanding children may not have had the right instruction, and their characters not have been properly molded, God proposes to connect them with Himself as He did Nadab and Abihu, if they will heed His commands. If they will with faith and courage bring their will in submission to the will of God, He will teach them, and their lives may be like the pure white lily, full of fragrance on the stagnant waters. They must resolve in the strength of Jesus to control inclination and passion, and every day win victories over Satan's temptations."—*The Signs of the Times*, July 8, 1880.

- c. What are the best heirlooms we can bequeath to our children? Micah 6:8.

"The more fully the spirit of true ministry pervades the home, the more fully it will be developed in the lives of the children. They will learn to find joy in service and sacrifice for the good of others."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 401.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are some good ways by which we can brighten the life of our parents?
2. What was Christ's example with regard to His parents?
3. How can we encourage more Christ-centered homes?
4. Why has God ordained the family unit to nurture human beings?
5. Why are human beings to be nurtured by the family unit?

Church Fellowship

"If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

"The followers of Christ must walk in the light of His glorious example, and at whatever sacrifice of ease or selfish indulgence, at whatever cost of labor or sufferings, we must maintain the constant battle with self and exalt the gospel standard."—*This Day With God*, p. 251.

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 594–597.
Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 260–264.

1. CHERISHING PRESENT TRUTH

- a. What is faith, and how are we to develop it? Hebrews 11:1; Romans 10:17.

- b. What must we realize about the heavenly light sent to guide us? Proverbs 4:18.

"Greater light shines upon us than shone upon our fathers. We cannot be accepted or honored of God in rendering the same service, or doing the same works, that our fathers did. In order to be accepted and blessed of God as they were, we must imitate their faithfulness and zeal, improve our light as they improved theirs, and do as they would have done had they lived in our day. We must walk in the light which shines upon us, otherwise that light will become darkness. God requires of us to exhibit to the world, in our character and works, that measure of the spirit of union and oneness which is in accordance with the sacred truths we profess and with the spirit of those prophecies that are fulfilling in these last days. The truth which has reached our understanding, and the light which has shone on the soul will judge and condemn us, if we turn away and refuse to be led by them."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 262, 263.

2. WALKING IN THE PRESENT TRUTH

- a. **What happens when we walk in the light that Christ has shown upon our pathway? 1 John 1:7. Why will this make His people distinct from others?**

“Sin and holiness can make no compromise. The Bible contains no sanction of ungodliness, no sweet words of forbearance and charity for the persistently impenitent. Jesus came to draw all men unto Himself, and His followers must walk in the light of His glorious example, at whatever sacrifice of ease or reputation, at whatever peril of property or life. In this way only can they fight the good fight of faith.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 624.

- b. **Why does God appeal to us so strongly to cherish the present truth today? Colossians 1:27.**

“If God gives light, you must walk in the light and follow the light. Light is flashing from the throne of God, and what is this for? It is that a people may be prepared to stand in the day of God. You who have devoted time and money to the adornment of your apparel and to the decoration of your homes, I would ask you, ‘Is Christ formed within you the hope of glory?’ It is too late in the day to be taken up with the frivolous things of the world—too late for any superficial work to be done. It is too late in the day to cry out against men for manifesting too much earnestness in the service of God; to say, ‘You are excited; you are too intense, too positive.’ It is too late to caution your brethren in studying the Bible for themselves, because they may be deceived by errors. We know falsehoods are coming in like a swift current, and that is just the reason why we want every ray of light that God has for us, that we may be able to stand amid the perils of the last days.”—*The Review and Herald*, March 4, 1890.

- c. **What environment has God designed to strengthen us in our understanding and practice of present truth? Malachi 3:16; 1 Timothy 3:15.**

“The church is God’s appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9.

3. PRESSING TOGETHER

- a. **What does Christ plan for His church, and how is it achieved? John 17:17–21.**

“The last prayer that Christ offered for His disciples before His trial was that they might be one in Him. Satan is determined that this oneness shall not be, for it is the strongest witness that can be borne that God gave His Son to reconcile the world to heaven. But the union for which Christ prayed must exist among God’s people before He can bestow on the church the enlargement and power that He longs to bestow on it.

“Unity should be recognized as the element of preservation in the church. Those who are united in church capacity have entered into a solemn covenant with God to obey His word, and to unite in an effort to strengthen the faith of one another. . . . But God cannot make them one with Christ and with one another unless they are willing to give up their way for His way.”—*The Review and Herald*, May 12, 1903.

- b. **What attitude toward each other will promote unity in the church? John 3:30.**

“Think just as little upon yourself as possible. Think evils of no man. Christ’s followers must walk in the light of His glorious example, and at whatever cost or labor or suffering, must maintain the purity of the soul and spirit through the grace of Christ, yielding complete allegiance to the reformatory doctrines of the gospel of Christ, without mingling self with the work. Keep self subdued, and keep Jesus ever lifted up, and push the triumphs of the cross of Christ. Let it be your work while life shall last to extend the borders of His kingdom, and wage a daily war against all sin and ungodliness, whatever others may think of you. The matter of what others think of you must be left in the hands of God. He is acquainted with the inwardness of every life, the motives of every action, the foundation of every character. Our work is to push the reform committed to us in the spirit of unvarying kindness and tenderest love. Self is not to be made prominent at any time; there is to be no seeking after supremacy. God knows this has nearly ruined the purity and success of the church, and hindered the triumph we might have had. Reformers are to work only in Jesus. Self is not to appear.”—*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, pp. 969, 970.

4. THE BASIS OF THE CHURCH

- a. Why does God have a separate and distinct church today? Isaiah 8:13–20.

“The masses of the people turn away their ears from hearing the truth and are turned unto fables. The apostle Paul declared, looking down to the last days: ‘The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine’ (2 Timothy 4:3). That time has fully come. The multitudes do not want Bible truth, because it interferes with the desires of the sinful, world-loving heart; and Satan supplies the deceptions which they love.

“But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority—not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain ‘Thus saith the Lord’ in its support.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 594, 595.

- b. What is to be the constant attitude of all sincere followers of Christ whether or not they have already become church members? Jeremiah 15:16.

“With a mind free from prejudice, search the Word carefully. If, as you read, conviction comes and you see that your cherished opinions are not in harmony with the Word, do not try to make the Word fit these opinions. Do not allow what you have believed or practiced in the past to control your understanding. Open the eyes of your mind to behold wondrous things out of the Word.”—*The Signs of the Times*, October 3, 1906.

- c. What is to be the experience of every reformer? 2 Peter 3:18; Psalm 119:130.
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5. A POWERFUL TRUTH

- a. What danger confronts the professed people of God today just as when the Lord described a similar situation to His prophet Ezekiel? Ezekiel 33:32.

“Some are in danger of hastening to the conclusion that because they hold firmly to the doctrines of the truth, they are actually in possession of the blessings which these doctrines declare shall come to the receiver of truth. Many keep the truth in the outer court. Its sacred principles have not a controlling influence over the words, the thoughts, the actions. They do not possess the faith which works by love and purifies the soul. An assent to the truth may quiet the conscience, but let every believer inquire, ‘Does my faith make me a daily, hourly follower of Christ? Has it a sanctifying influence on my soul? Can I say, The gentleness of Christ has made me great?’ A faultless creed and a carnal life are too often found together in professed believers. To be a means to a saving end, the word of God must be intelligently and practically understood and obeyed.”—*The Review and Herald*, October 1, 1901.

- b. In view of this peril, what should be the burden of our heart? 2 Peter 1:10–12.

“Christianity has a much broader meaning than many have hitherto given it. It is not a creed. It is the word of Him who liveth and abideth forever. It is a living, animating principle that takes possession of mind, heart, motives, and the entire man. Christianity—oh, that we might experience its operations!”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 421, 422.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What does present truth have to do with church fellowship?
2. What can we do to promote more genuine love and unity among us?
3. Why are the Scriptures so important, and how should they be affecting us?

Church Commitment

“No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones” (Ephesians 5:29, 30).

“Very close and sacred is the relation between Christ and His church—He the bridegroom, and the church the bride; He the head, and the church the body. Connection with Christ, then, involves connection with His church.”—*Education*, p. 268.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 91–99.

Sunday

January 22

1. OUR NEED OF BAPTISM

- a. What earnest appeal does God make to every human being? Proverbs 23:26.

- b. Why is it so important to have a wholehearted commitment to the Lord? Matthew 12:30; Luke 12:47.

- c. Why is it so meaningful to commit ourselves to Christ publicly? Romans 10:9; Luke 9:26. How does Inspiration identify this commitment?

“[An] obligation, too often lightly regarded—one that to the youth awakened to the claims of Christ needs to be made plain—is the obligation of church relationship.”—*Education*, p. 268.

- d. Why is baptism so significant? Mark 16:16. What illustrates its urgency? Acts 22:16.

“Christ has made baptism the sign of entrance to His spiritual kingdom. He has made this a positive condition with which all must comply who wish to be acknowledged as under the authority of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 91.

Monday

January 23

2. NOT JUST A FORMALITY

- a. What does baptism signify? Romans 6:3–10.

“In baptism we are given to the Lord as a vessel to be used. Baptism is a most solemn renunciation of the world. Self is by profession dead to a life of sin. The waters cover the candidate, and in the presence of the whole heavenly universe the mutual pledge is made. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, man is laid in his watery grave, buried with Christ in baptism, and raised from the water to live the new life of loyalty to God. The three great powers in heaven are witnesses; they are invisible but present.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 6, p. 1074.

- b. What is the church’s duty toward all candidates for baptism? Acts 10:47, 48; Colossians 1:28.

“All who believe are to be gathered into one church.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 821.

“There is need of a more thorough preparation on the part of candidates for baptism. They are in need of more faithful instruction than has usually been given them. The principles of the Christian life should be made plain to those who have newly come to the truth. None can depend upon their profession of faith as proof that they have a saving connection with Christ. We are not only to say, ‘I believe,’ but to practice the truth. It is by conformity to the will of God in our words, our deportment, our character, that we prove our connection with Him. Whenever one renounces sin, which is the transgression of the law, his life will be brought into conformity to the law, into perfect obedience.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 91, 92.

- c. With what attitude should this thorough examination be done? Proverbs 15:33.

“The test of discipleship is not brought to bear as closely as it should be upon those who present themselves for baptism. It should be understood whether they are simply taking the name of Seventh-day Adventists, or whether they are taking their stand on the Lord’s side, to come out from the world and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 95.

3. UNITED ON PRESENT TRUTH

- a. How has Christ bidden us teach new believers all aspects of present truth, no neglecting vital point? Matthew 28:19, 20; Luke 9:26. Give some examples.

“One of the points upon which those newly come to the faith will need instruction is the subject of dress. Let the new converts be faithfully dealt with. Are they vain in dress? Do they cherish pride of heart? The idolatry of dress is a moral disease. It must not be taken over into the new life. In most cases, submission to the gospel requirements will demand a decided change in the dress. . . .

“The knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, expressed in character, is an exaltation above everything that is esteemed in earth or in heaven. It is the very highest education. It is the key that opens the portals of the heavenly city. This knowledge it is God’s purpose that all who put on Christ by baptism shall possess. And it is the duty of God’s servants to set before these souls the privilege of their high calling in Christ Jesus.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 96, 97.

- b. What is God’s will for us to understand about the church? Ephesians 1:17–23; 5:29–32; 1 Corinthians 12:13.

- c. What promises are assured to all who are truly converted and baptized into His body? Acts 2:38; 2 Corinthians 6:17, 18; Ephesians 2:18, 19.

“Baptism is a most solemn renunciation of the world. Those who are baptized in the threefold name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, at the very entrance of their Christian life declare publicly that they have forsaken the service of Satan and have become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 91.

- d. After baptism, what must we keep in mind at every step of our Christian journey—even for the rest of our life? Romans 6:11–18; John 15:4–7; Matthew 24:13.

4. THE DEPTH OF THIS COMMITMENT

- a. Baptism is a sign of our commitment to Christ. From this time on, as members of His body, what is implied in our commitment to one another? Galatians 6:2, 10; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 10:24, 25.

“The followers of Christ should not praise and flatter one another; for Satan will do a plenty of this work, and if persons have a high opinion of their own ability, it will prevent them from learning in the school of Christ. Let none censure and condemn others; for in doing this they are collaborators with him who is the accuser of the brethren, who would steal from their hearts every particle of love for one another. Christians will not seek to tear one another down in order to build up self, but all will endeavor to strengthen and encourage one another.”—*Gospel Workers* (1892), pp. 459, 460.

- b. Besides the ever-needed encouragement, what else is often necessary in showing Christian love for a brother or sister, and why? Leviticus 19:17.

- c. Why is this vital in maintaining the purity of God’s church? 2 Chronicles 7:14.

“When the church is in difficulty, when coldness and spiritual declension exist, giving occasion for the enemies of God to triumph, then, instead of folding their hands and lamenting their unhappy state, let its members inquire if there is not an Achan in the camp. With humiliation and searching of heart, let each seek to discover the hidden sins that shut out God’s presence.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 497.

“We repeat, God holds the church responsible for the sins of its individual members. When coldness and spiritual declension exist, God’s people should put away their pride and self-confidence and self-exaltation, and should come to the Lord in sorrow and humility, not charging Him with injustice, but seeking wisdom to understand the hidden sins which shut out His presence.”—*The Signs of the Times*, April 21, 1881.

- d. With what spirit must this unavoidable work be performed? Galatians 6:1.

5. A MOST TENDER UNION

- a. What characteristic must we cultivate which—if ever kept in mind—could prevent many apostasies? Leviticus 19:18; James 5:9.

“He who says or does anything that tends to separate the members of Christ’s church is counterworking the Lord’s purpose. . . . True religion unites hearts, not only with Christ, but with one another in a most tender union.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 484.

- b. What ordinance helps us develop this quality, and with what important occasion is it conducted? John 13:13–15; Luke 22:14–20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–29.

“This ordinance [of feet washing] does not speak so largely to man’s intellectual capacity as to his heart. His moral and spiritual nature needs it.”—*The Review and Herald*, June 14, 1898.

- c. What should be intertwined with everything pertaining to the church? John 13:34, 35; 1 Corinthians 14:40. How does this apply to church business meetings?

“In our business meetings, it is important that precious time should not be consumed in debating points that are of small consequence. The habit of petty criticism should not be indulged; for it perplexes and confuses minds, and shrouds in mystery the things that are most plain and simple. How does Jesus, our Counselor, whom we have invited to be present at these meetings, look upon these things? If there is that love among brethren which will lead them to esteem others better than themselves, there will be a giving up of their own ways and wishes to others. It is our duty to study, daily and hourly, how we may answer the prayer of Christ, that His disciples may be one, as He and the Father are one.”—*Gospel Workers* (1892), p. 230.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How can we work together to better prepare baptismal candidates?
2. How can we avoid the danger of mistaking too much familiarity—which breeds contempt—for precious unity—which breeds love?

First Sabbath Offering

for the Welfare Department



The apostle James in his practical style writes: “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” And he continues his wonderful message on practical religion, saying: “If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?” (James 1:27; 2:15, 16).

As God’s children we have the sacred duty to reveal our Christian love in behalf of those in need, especially those who belong to God’s remnant church. “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:9, 10).

It is said that the world is tired of hearing sermons. They need to see sermons. Francis of Assisi declared: “Preach the gospel all the time and, when necessary, use words.”

In order to help with the basic needs of our brethren and sisters in areas mostly affected by natural disasters, nearly all the resources of the General Conference Welfare Department were sent to the different countries. At the General Conference headquarters we are still receiving many requests from believers who really need a helping hand at this time.

We ask all Sabbath school students around the world to be liberal when a special offering will be collected on the first Sabbath of the month, February 4, 2006. Be sure that God’s blessings will be felt by those receiving help, and much more by those who are helping.

May the Holy Spirit touch the heart of all the students so that their Christian love may be manifested in a special way when this offering is collected! May the Lord impress the hearts of all!

Respect for Authority

“Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king” (1 Peter 2:17).

“[The fifth commandment] also enjoins respect for ministers and rulers and for all others to whom God has delegated authority.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 308.

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 394–397.
Ibid., vol. 3, pp. 428–434.
Ibid., vol. 5, pp. 105–113.

Sunday

January 29

1. COOPERATION—A HEAVENLY CONCEPT

- a. Why does the attitude of holy angels promote harmony and happiness among them? Psalm 148:2; 1 Peter 3:18, 22.

“I have been shown the order, the perfect order, of heaven, and have been enraptured as I listened to the perfect music there. . . . There is one angel who always leads, who first touches the harp and strikes the note, then all join in the rich, perfect music of heaven.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 146.

- b. How was leadership enjoined in the days of Moses? Exodus 18:21–23; Deuteronomy 1:15, 16.

- c. What attitude is particularly offensive to God, and why? 2 Peter 2:9–11.

“Lucifer in heaven desired to be first in power and authority; he wanted to be God, to have the rulership of heaven; and to this end he won many of the angels to his side. When with his rebel host he was cast out from the courts of God, the work of rebellion and self-seeking was continued on earth.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 32.

Monday

January 30

2. SECULAR AUTHORITIES

- a. What duty do Christians owe to civil authorities? 1 Timothy 2:1, 2; Titus 3:1.

- b. How did Daniel treat the Babylonian authorities? Daniel 1:8, 9; 6:19–22.

“[Daniel 1:8 quoted.] This request was not preferred in a defiant spirit, but as if soliciting a great favor. The appearance of Daniel and his companions was like what every youth’s should be. They were courteous, kind, respectful, possessing the grace of meekness and modesty. And the good behavior of these youth obtained favor for them.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, September 15, 1898.

- c. Summarize the attitude we are to have toward authorities. Romans 13:1–7.

“We are not required to defy authorities. Our words, whether spoken or written, should be carefully considered, lest we place ourselves on record as uttering that which would make us appear antagonistic to law and order. We are not to say or do anything that would unnecessarily close up our way. We are to go forward in Christ’s name, advocating the truths committed to us. If we are forbidden by men to do this work, then we may say, as did the apostles, ‘Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard’ (Acts 4:19, 20).”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 69.

“The government under which Jesus lived was corrupt and oppressive; on every hand were crying abuses—extortion, intolerance, and grinding cruelty. Yet the Saviour attempted no civil reforms. He attacked no national abuses, nor condemned the national enemies. He did not interfere with the authority or administration of those in power. He who was our example kept aloof from earthly governments. Not because He was indifferent to the woes of men, but because the remedy did not lie in merely human and external measures. To be efficient, the cure must reach men individually, and must regenerate the heart.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 509.

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

3. CHURCH LEADERS

- a. Name one problem which has ever existed since the days of the early church. 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13; 2 Thessalonians 3:11.

“The church had been properly organized, and officers had been appointed to act as ministers and deacons. But there were some, self-willed and impetuous, who refused to be subordinate to those who held positions of authority in the church. They claimed not only the right of private judgment, but that of publicly urging their views upon the church. In view of this, Paul called the attention of the Thessalonians to the respect and deference due to those who had been chosen to occupy positions of authority in the church.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 261, 262.

- b. Explain some of the various reasons why we need to respect and cooperate with our ministers and church leaders. Psalm 105:12–15; Hebrews 13:17.

“It is of great importance what attitude we assume toward those who are laborers together with God. I am so sorry to write that the Lord withholds many blessings which He longs to bestow upon those who have a knowledge of the truth; He cannot pour out His blessing upon the human agents because of their attitude toward their fellow laborers and their fellowmen.”—*The Review and Herald*, May 26, 1896.

“Satan is constantly working through his agents to dishearten and destroy those whom God has chosen to accomplish a great and good work. They may be ready to sacrifice even their own life for the advancement of the cause of Christ, yet the great deceiver will suggest doubts, distrust, jealousy, concerning them that, if entertained, will undermine confidence in their integrity of character and thus cripple their usefulness. Too often he succeeds in working through their own brethren.”—*Sketches From the Life of Paul*, p. 232.

“Jesus is ministering in the heavenly sanctuary, but He is with His workers also; for He declares, ‘Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world’ (Matthew 28:20). He is spiritual director of His church on earth, and He longs to see the members filled with a determination to labor harmoniously for the advancement of His kingdom. He has raised up a succession of workers who derive their authority from Him, the Great Teacher.”—*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 210.

4. THE CHURCH ITSELF

- a. What essential duties are entrusted to the church? Matthew 16:19; John 20:23.

“The world’s Redeemer has invested great power with His church. He states the rules to be applied in cases of trial with its members. After He has given explicit directions as to the course to be pursued, He says: ‘Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever [in church discipline] ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven’ (Matthew 18:18). Thus even the heavenly authority ratifies the discipline of the church in regard to its members when the Bible rule has been followed.

“The word of God does not give license for one man to set up his judgment in opposition to the judgment of the church, neither is he allowed to urge his opinions against the opinions of the church. If there were no church discipline and government, the church would go to fragments; it could not hold together as a body.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 428.

“Toward those who fall into sin, the church has a duty, to warn, to instruct, and if possible to restore. ‘Reprove, rebuke, exhort,’ the Lord says, ‘with all longsuffering and doctrine’ (2 Timothy 4:2). Deal faithfully with wrongdoing. Warn every soul that is in danger. Leave none to deceive themselves. Call sin by its right name. Declare what God has said in regard to lying, Sabbathbreaking, stealing, idolatry, and every other evil. ‘They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God’ (Galatians 5:21). If they persist in sin, the judgment you have declared from God’s word is pronounced upon them in heaven. In choosing to sin, they disown Christ; the church must show that she does not sanction their deeds, or she herself dishonors her Lord. She must say about sin what God says about it. She must deal with it as God directs, and her action is ratified in heaven. He who despises the authority of the church despises the authority of Christ Himself.

“But there is a brighter side to the picture. ‘Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted’ (John 20:23). Let this thought be kept uppermost. In labor for the erring, let every eye be directed to Christ. Let the shepherds have a tender care for the flock of the Lord’s pasture. Let them speak to the erring of the forgiving mercy of the Saviour.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 806.

5. RESPECTING GOD'S REMNANT

- a. What duty of Christ's militant church may not always be easy, but must nonetheless be acknowledged as part of God's plan? Matthew 18:15–18.

"There is altogether too little respect paid to the opinion of members of the same church. It is the want of deference for the opinions of the church that causes so much trouble among brethren. The eyes of the church may be able to discern in its individual members that which the erring may not see. A few persons may be as blind as the one in error, but the majority of the church is a power which should control its individual members."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 107.

- b. How can we overcome one factor which often hinders this necessary part of reform? Psalm 119:104.

"Reproofs always hurt human nature. Many are the souls that have been destroyed by the unwise sympathy of their brethren; for, because the brethren sympathized with them, they thought they must indeed have been abused, and that the reprover was all wrong and had a bad spirit. The only hope for sinners in Zion is to fully see and confess their wrongs, and put them away."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 329.

- c. How does God view His faithful church members who discharge difficult duties in the needed work of reformation? Zechariah 2:8; Job 23:10.

"The church is the one object of Christ's intense interest in this world, and for which He has unceasing care."—*The Upward Look*, p. 239.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are some common ways by which we may tend to disregard authority?
2. How long will reproof be necessary in the purification of God's remnant?

The Business World

"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord" (Romans 12:11).

"Religion and business are not two separate things; they are one. Bible religion is to be interwoven with all we do or say."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 349.

Suggested Readings: *Education*, pp. 135–145.
The Desire of Ages, pp. 552–556.

1. IS THE MONEY STRETCHING AS IT SHOULD?

- a. In what predicament do many find themselves nowadays, and what is often the reason? Haggai 1:5, 6, 9, 10.

"The eye is clouded by ambition, avarice, and gain without godliness. The people do not see that they are putting their treasure into a bag with holes. It is cankered and moth-eaten. There is no progress heavenward. The gross attractions of earth hold their affections. The soul starves and becomes dwarfed for want of spiritual food, the fresh manna from heaven. The world has come in between the soul and God."—*The Signs of the Times*, December 1, 1887.

"The Lord made a covenant with Israel that, if they would obey His commandments, He would give them rain in due season, the land should yield her increase, and the trees of the field should yield their fruit. . . . But if they disregarded His requirements, He would deal with them entirely contrary to all this. His curse should rest upon them in place of His blessing. . . .

"Those who are selfishly withholding their means need not be surprised if God's hand scatters. That which should have been devoted to the advancement of the work and cause of God, but which has been withheld, may be entrusted to a reckless son, and he may squander it. A fine horse, the pride of a vain heart, may be found dead in the stable. Occasionally a cow may die. Losses of fruit or other crops may come. God can scatter the means He has lent to His stewards, if they refuse to use it to His glory."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 661, 662.

2. THE PROSPERITY OF THE GOD-FEARING

- a. What is written about God-fearing Joseph, even when circumstances seemed to have turned hopelessly against him? Genesis 39:2–6, 20–23; 41:38–44.

“The hill of progress is not to be climbed without effort. No one need expect to be carried along to the prize, either in religious or secular matters, independently of his own exertions. The race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, yet he that dealeth with a slack hand will become poor. The persevering and industrious are not only happy themselves, but they contribute largely to the happiness of others. Competency and comfort are not ordinarily attained except at the price of earnest industry. Pharaoh showed his appreciation of this trait of character when he said to Joseph: ‘If thou knowest any men of activity among them [Joseph’s brethren], then make them rulers over my cattle’ (Genesis 47:6).”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 180.

- b. What were the coworkers of God-fearing Daniel forced to realize? Daniel 6:1–5.
- c. Describe the kind of respect which godly Esther earned from the king of Persia. Esther 5:1–3; 7:2; 8:3–8.
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- d. How only was king Uzziah able to enjoy prosperity? 2 Chronicles 26:3–5.
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- e. What is the secret whereby we each can find favor in the sight of God and human beings? Proverbs 3:1–4; Proverbs 16:7.

“God’s people are kept in prosperity only by His mercy, through the care of His heavenly messengers. He will not uphold and guard a people who disregard His counsel and despise His reproofs.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 176.

- f. Explain the main key to our success in any business activity. Deuteronomy 29:9; 2 Chronicles 20:20 (last part).
- g. What promise is assured to all who are diligent in this regard? Proverbs 22:29.

3. FLEE THE TEMPTATIONS

- a. How can we reconcile in our mind the fact that the wicked so often appear to prosper as much or even more than the righteous? Psalms 37:35–38; 73:2–20.

- b. With this in mind, what should we consider in business? Proverbs 11:1; 20:23.

“An honest man, according to Christ’s measurement, is one who will manifest unbending integrity. Deceitful weights and false balances, with which many seek to advance their interests in the world, are abomination in the sight of God. Yet many who profess to keep the commandments of God are dealing with false weights and false balances. When a man is indeed connected with God, and is keeping His law in truth, his life will reveal the fact; for all his actions will be in harmony with the teachings of Christ. He will not sell his honor for gain. His principles are built upon the sure foundation, and his conduct in worldly matters is a transcript of his principles. Firm integrity shines forth as gold amid the dross and rubbish of the world. Deceit, falsehood, and unfaithfulness may be glossed over and hidden from the eyes of man, but not from the eyes of God. The angels of God, who watch the development of character and weigh moral worth, record in the books of heaven these minor transactions which reveal character. If a workman in the daily vocations of life is unfaithful and slights his work, the world will not judge incorrectly if they estimate his standard in religion according to his standard in business.

“‘He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much’ (Luke 16:10). It is not the magnitude of the matter that makes it fair or unfair. As a man deals with his fellowmen, so will he deal with God. He that is unfaithful in the mammon of unrighteousness, will never be entrusted with the true riches. The children of God should not fail to remember that in all their business transactions they are being proved, weighed in the balances of the sanctuary.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 310, 311.

- c. What characterizes the work ethic of the faithful Christian? Romans 12:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:11, 12.
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4. NOTEWORTHY OR NOTORIOUS?

- a. As we have followed the Lord's requirements, we see how He has blessed and prospered us abundantly. Wherein lies our greatest danger now? Deuteronomy 4:5–9; 8:11–18.
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- b. What must all who have become well-favored in material means ever keep in mind, especially when relating to their fellow human beings? Luke 12:15.
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- c. In doing business, what should we consider? Proverbs 22:1; Ecclesiastes 7:1.
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"Some of the Sabbathkeepers who say to the world that they are looking for Jesus' coming, and that they believe we are having the last message of mercy, give way to their natural feelings, and barter, and trade, and are a proverb among unbelievers for their keenness in trade, for being sharp, and always getting the best end of a bargain. Such would better lose a little and exert a better influence in the world, and a happier influence among brethren, and show that this world is not their god."—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 150.

- d. What summarizes the attitude we should have in every business dealing? Luke 6:31; Philippians 2:4.
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"You are to always place yourself in the position of the one with whom you deal, and see how you would feel under similar circumstances; then act as you would have others act toward you, that no shadow may be cast upon the precious cause of truth. It must not be reproached for the sake of gaining a few dollars or cents. Let no occasion ever be given for anyone to say that Seventh-day Adventists ever will do mean actions. Contempt will be what they will reap. Let all our business transactions stand in a pure, untarnished light before the world and with those of our faith. Do not let your course of action be of that character that it requires explanations in order to make it appear anyway in a favorable light."—*Medical Ministry*, p. 171.

5. CHRIST'S WAY

- a. What experience gives hope to persons who realize that their business dealings might not have always been right before God? Luke 19:8–10; Ezekiel 33:15, 16.
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"Those who profess to be followers of Christ, and who deal in an unrighteous manner, are bearing false witness against the character of a holy, just, and merciful God. Every converted soul will, like Zacchaeus, signalize the entrance of Christ into his heart by an abandonment of the unrighteous practices that have marked his life. Like the chief publican, he will give proof of his sincerity by making restitution."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 556.

- b. Summarize the attitude Christ has given for our example. Luke 16:10; 22:27.
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"Jesus, in His thirty years of seclusion at Nazareth, toiled and rested, ate and slept, from week to week and from year to year, the same as His humble contemporaries. He called no attention to Himself as a marked personage; yet He was the world's Redeemer, the adored of angels, doing, all the time, His Father's work, living out a lesson that should remain for humanity to copy to the end of time.

"This essential lesson of contented industry in the necessary duties of life, however humble, is yet to be learned by the greater portion of Christ's followers. If there is no human eye to criticize our work, nor voice to praise or blame, it should be done just as well as if the Infinite One Himself were personally to inspect it. We should be as faithful in the minor details of our business as we would in the larger affairs of life."—*Child Guidance*, p. 359.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Name some biblical experiences that provide hope for our business life.
2. When we see a chance to bargain, what should we take into consideration?

Friendship

“A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother” (Proverbs 18:24).

“Closer than father, mother, brother, friend, or lover is the Lord our Saviour. . . . And if we do hold the relation of kinship to Him, with what tenderness should we regard those who are brethren and sisters of our Lord!”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 327.

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 206, 207.
Ibid., vol. 5, pp. 94–98.

Sunday

February 12

1. A HIGH PROFESSION

- a. What type of person becomes a friend of the King of kings? Proverbs 22:11; John 15:14, 15.

- b. Describe the duties of a genuine friend. Proverbs 6:1–3; 17:17.

- c. What are some qualities of a good friend? Proverbs 25:17; 27:10, 14; Isaiah 58:7.

“All around us are afflicted souls. Here and there, everywhere, we may find them. Let us search out these suffering ones and speak a word in season to comfort their hearts. Let us ever be channels through which shall flow the refreshing waters of compassion.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 158.

Monday

February 13

2. TOO OFTEN FALLING SHORT

- a. How is familiarity often mistaken for friendship and fellowship in the church, and how only can we escape God’s punishment upon those who end up causing such pain and confusion among the believers? Jeremiah 20:10, 11.

“Is it honorable, or even honest, to win from the lips of another, under the guise of friendship, secrets which have been entrusted to him, and then turn the knowledge thus gained to his injury? Is it Christian charity to gather up every floating report, to unearth everything that will cast suspicion on the character of another, and then take delight in using it to injure him? Satan exults when he can defame or wound a follower of Christ. He is ‘the accuser of our brethren’ (Revelation 12:10). Shall Christians aid him in his work? . . .

“True Christians will not exult in exposing the faults and deficiencies of others.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 95, 96.

“Floating rumors are frequently the destroyers of unity among brethren. There are some who watch with open mind and ears to catch flying scandal. They gather up little incidents which may be trifling in themselves, but which are repeated and exaggerated until a man is made an offender for a word. Their motto seems to be, ‘Report, . . . and we will report it’ (Jeremiah 20:10). These tale-bearers are doing the devil’s work with surprising fidelity, little knowing how offensive their course is to God. If they would spend half the energy and zeal that is given to this unholy work in examining their own hearts, they would find so much to do to cleanse their souls from impurity that they would have no time or disposition to criticize their brethren, and they would not fall under the power of this temptation. The door of the mind should be closed against ‘they say’ or ‘I have heard.’ Why should we not, instead of allowing jealousy or evil-surmising to come into our hearts, go to our brethren and, after frankly but kindly setting before them the things we have heard detrimental to their character and influence, pray with and for them? While we cannot love and fellowship those who are the bitter enemies of Christ, we should cultivate that spirit of meekness and love that characterized our Master—a love that thinketh no evil and is not easily provoked.”—*The Review and Herald*, June 3, 1884.

- b. Christ could rightfully be disappointed by the friendship He received from mere human sources. Why? Matthew 26:45–50, 55, 56.

3. LEARNING FROM JOB

- a. After listening to all that his friends poured in his ears at the time of his tragedies and illness, what was Job finally constrained to declare? Job 16:1–3.
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- b. How may we too often be like Job's friends? Proverbs 26:6, 9, 17.
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“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*, vol. 5, p. 59.

“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 thistledown. 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.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 58, 59.

- c. What would Job have done differently had his friends been the ones facing the tragedies? Job 16:4, 5.
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- d. How and why did God ultimately honor Job's attitude? Job 42:10.
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4. A WORD OF CAUTION

- a. In pursuing friends, what restraint must we exert? Luke 16:13; James 4:4.
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- b. Why is this a principle? Ecclesiastes 3:1, 5 (second half); 1 Corinthians 15:33.
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“Between the worldly man and the one who is faithfully serving God, there is a great gulf fixed. Upon the most momentous subjects—God and truth and eternity—their thoughts and sympathies and feelings are not in harmony. One class is ripening as wheat for the garner of God, the other as tares for the fires of destruction. How can there be unity of purpose or action between them? [James 4:4; Matthew 6:24 quoted.] . . .

“Christians who connect themselves with worldly associations are injuring themselves as well as misleading others. Those who fear God cannot choose the ungodly for companions and remain themselves unharmed. In worldly societies they are brought under the influence of worldly principles and customs, and through the power of association and habit the mind becomes more and more conformed to the worldling's standard. Their love for God grows cold, and they have no desire for communion with Him. They become spiritually blind. They can see no particular difference between the transgressor of God's law and those who fear God and keep His commandments. . . . O, it is an easy thing, by association with the world, to catch the spirit of the world, to be molded by a false view of things! . . .

“When men are under the control of the world and not of the Spirit of God, they are captives of Satan, and we know not to what lengths he may lead them in sin.”—*The Review and Herald*, August 25, 1910.

“The enemy does not always come as a roaring lion; he frequently appears as an angel of light, assuming friendly airs, presenting peculiar temptations which it is difficult for the inexperienced to withstand. Sometimes he accomplishes his purpose of deluding the unwary by exciting the pity of their sympathetic natures, and presenting himself before them as a righteous being who has been persecuted without a cause.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 207.

5. DEVELOPING CHRISTLIKE FRIENDSHIP

- a. How can we make a significant difference in someone's life by befriending him or her? Jude 21–23; James 5:20.

“When you see one wandering away from the fold, go to him, and try to turn him back. With a meek and loving spirit, show him that you are his true friend, and that in telling him of his errors you are actuated by love for his soul. Work diligently, brethren; for these souls, if saved, will be our companions around the throne of God.”—*The Signs of the Times*, May 18, 1888.

- b. Why must we beware lest our friendships with some persons actually end up causing injury and hurt to others? 1 Timothy 5:21; James 3:17.

- d. How can we summarize true friendship? 1 Corinthians 13:4–8; John 15:13.

“Speak often words that will be a strength and an inspiration to those who hear. We are altogether too indifferent in regard to one another. We forget that our fellow laborers are often in need of words of hope and cheer. When one is in trouble, call upon him and speak comforting words to him. This is true friendship.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 928.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What surrounds us, and how can we bring the smile of angels in our midst?
2. How are the notions of church fellowship and friendship often misunderstood?
3. Why is Job's attitude such an inspiration to us?
4. When can friendship become a snare?
5. What does Christian charity encompass?

Marriage

“We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh” (Ephesians 5:30, 31).

“Jesus wants to see happy marriages, happy firesides.”—*The Bible Echo*, September 4, 1899.

Suggested Readings: *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 356–362.
Testimonies, vol. 2, pp. 89, 296–307.
Ibid., vol. 4, pp. 503–508.
Ibid., vol. 5, pp. 361–368, 594, 595.

1. A SACRED CALLING

- a. What was God's plan in designing marriage? Genesis 2:21–24; Mark 10:6–9.

“Neither husband nor wife is to make a plea for rulership. . . . Both are to cultivate the spirit of kindness, being determined never to grieve or injure the other.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 47.

- b. In view of a widespread peril, of what should we be aware? Romans 8:5, 6.

“We are living in the last days, when the mania upon the subject of marriage constitutes one of the signs of the near coming of Christ. . . .

“There is not one marriage in one hundred that results happily, that bears the sanction of God, and places the parties in a position better to glorify Him.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 503, 504.

“Because they have entered into the marriage relation, many think that they may permit themselves to be controlled by animal passions. They are led on by Satan, who deceives them and leads them to pervert this sacred institution.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 480.

2. THE BIGGEST FACTOR IN CHOOSING A SPOUSE

- a. Why was circumcision specifically designed as the token of the covenant with God, and how does it apply today? Genesis 17:11; 2 Corinthians 6:14.

“[God] required of Abraham and his seed circumcision, which was a circle cut in the flesh, as a token that God had cut them out and separated them from all nations as His peculiar treasure. By this sign they solemnly pledged themselves that they would not intermarry with other nations; for by so doing they would lose their reverence for God and His holy law, and would become like the idolatrous nations around them.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 297.

“It is a dangerous thing to form a worldly alliance. Satan well knows that the hour that witnesses the marriage of many young men and women closes the history of their religious experience and usefulness. They are lost to Christ. They may for a time make an effort to live a Christian life, but all their strivings are made against a steady influence in the opposite direction. Once it was a privilege and joy to them to speak of their faith and hope; but they become unwilling to mention the subject, knowing that the one with whom they have linked their destiny takes no interest in it. As the result, faith in the precious truth dies out of the heart, and Satan insidiously weaves about them a web of skepticism.

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

“The plea is sometimes made that the unbeliever is favorable to religion and is all that could be desired in a companion except in one thing—he is not a Christian. Although the better judgment of the believer may suggest the impropriety of a union for life with an unbeliever, yet, in nine cases out of ten, inclination triumphs. Spiritual declension commences the moment the vow is made at the altar; religious fervor is dampened, and one stronghold after another is broken down, until both stand side by side under the black banner of Satan.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 504, 505.

3. HUSBANDS

- a. What is to be the attitude of a husband, and why? Ephesians 5:25–31.

“The husband should maintain his position in his family with all meekness, yet with decision.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 308.

- b. What are various ways in which many men fall short in their high calling as husbands, and how can they improve? 1 Peter 3:7.

“It is not pure love which actuates a man to make his wife an instrument to minister to his lust. It is the animal passions which clamor for indulgence. How few men show their love in the manner specified by the apostle: ‘Even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might [not pollute it, but] sanctify and cleanse it; . . . that it should be holy and without blemish’ (Ephesians 5:5–27). This is the quality of love in the marriage relation which God recognizes as holy. Love is a pure and holy principle; but lustful passion will not admit of restraint, and will not be dictated to or controlled by reason. It is blind to consequences; it will not reason from cause to effect. Many women are suffering from great debility and settled disease because the laws of their being have been disregarded; nature’s laws have been trampled upon. The brain nerve power is squandered by men and women, being called into unnatural action to gratify base passions; and this hideous monster, base, low passion, assumes the delicate name of love. Many professed Christians who passed before me seemed destitute of moral restraint. They were more animal than divine. In fact, they were about all animal. Men of this type degrade the wife whom they have promised to nourish and cherish.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 473, 474.

“You, Brother C, have felt that it was beneath your dignity to manifest tenderness by kindly acts, and to watch for an opportunity to evince affection for your wife by words of tenderness and kind regard.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 695.

“Only let a woman realize that she is appreciated by her husband and is precious to him, not merely because she is useful and convenient in his house, but because she is a part of himself, and she will respond to his affection and reflect the love bestowed upon her.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 416, 417.

4. WIVES

- a. What is the calling of a wife? Ephesians 5:22–24, 33. What dangers often beset wives, especially in this generation?

“I am acquainted with a number of women who have thought their marriage a misfortune. They have read novels until their imaginations have become diseased, and they live in a world of their own creating. They think themselves women of sensitive minds, of superior, refined organizations, and imagine that their husbands are not so refined, that they do not possess these superior qualities, and therefore cannot appreciate their own supposed virtue and refined organizations. Consequently these women think themselves great sufferers, martyrs. They have talked of this and thought upon it until they are nearly maniacs upon this subject. They imagine their worth superior to that of other mortals, and it is not agreeable to their fine sensibilities to associate with common humanity. These women are making themselves fools; and their husbands are in danger of thinking that they do possess a superior order of mind.

“From what the Lord has shown me, the women of this class have had their imaginations perverted by novel reading, daydreaming, and castle-building, living in an imaginary world. They do not bring their own ideas down to the common, useful duties of life. They do not take up the life burdens which lie in their path, and seek to make a happy, cheerful home for their husbands.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 462, 463.

“There is often a great failure on the part of the wife. She does not put forth strong efforts to control her own spirit and make home happy. There is often fretfulness and unnecessary complaining on her part. The husband comes home from his labor weary and perplexed, and meets a clouded brow instead of cheerful, encouraging words. He is but human, and his affections become weaned from his wife, he loses the love of his home, his pathway is darkened, and his courage destroyed. He yields his self-respect and that dignity which God requires him to maintain. The husband is the head of the family, as Christ is the head of the Church; and any course which the wife may pursue to lessen his influence and lead him to come down from that dignified, responsible position is displeasing to God.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 307, 308.

- b. How can a wife improve her husband? 1 Peter 3:1–6.

5. TRUE FIDELITY

- a. What must we realize about the sacredness of all vows, including the marriage vow? Mark 10:2–12; Ecclesiastes 5:4–6.

“Though difficulties, perplexities, and discouragements may arise, let neither husband nor wife harbor the thought that their union is a mistake or a disappointment. Determine to be all that it is possible to be to each other. Continue the early attentions. In every way encourage each other in fighting the battles of life. Study to advance the happiness of each other.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 360.

- b. How does God describe His feelings on divorce? Malachi 2:13–16. How does this apply even when one’s spouse is an unbeliever? 1 Corinthians 7:10–14.

“Divorce after divorce is recorded in the daily papers. This is the marriage of which Christ speaks when He says that before the flood they were ‘marrying and giving in marriage’ (Matthew 24:38).”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 7, p. 56.

- c. If divorce does occur, what must both parties realize? 1 Corinthians 7:39; Luke 16:18.
- d. How can much loss of love between spouses be avoided? 1 Thessalonians 5:22.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why does God warn us against deceptions surrounding His gift of marriage?
2. How can we become better husbands and better wives?
3. Why is restoring marriage a key element in revealing God’s character of love?

First Sabbath Offering

for the Dominican Republic

The message of Reformation reached the Caribbean nation of the Dominican Republic in the 1970's. Dominican Reformers living in Massachusetts, USA, made great personal efforts to reach their families and friends back on the island. Together with the ministerial assistance provided by the General Conference, they were able to sow the gospel seeds in this new land.

Today the Dominican Field holds the largest membership of any Caribbean country. As the work continues to grow, the need for places of worship increases. The offering collected this month will assist in this building work. It will make possible additional worship places for the many souls eager to hear the message of salvation.

Besides our own missionary efforts, workers from the Dominican Republic have been instrumental in developing the Haitian Field from its inception as a mission in the 1990's. Since both countries share the island, workers have been traveling back and forth sharing the message with any who will listen to the gospel call.

Building chapels in the Dominican Republic is not only a benefit to the almost 9 million inhabitants but also to the many tourists who visit this nation. The country has 1,288 km of beautiful coastline that is visited by many tourists each year. In fact, tourism is the largest industry of the country. This provides opportunities for the believer here to share the gospel far beyond their small country.

Please remember the work in the Dominican Republic as you give your generous offering this month.

Your brethren and sisters from the Dominican Field

PROJECT 04B



Parenthood

“Where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?” (Jeremiah 13:20).

“Few parents realize that their children are what their example and discipline have made them, and that they are responsible for the characters their children develop.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 144.

Suggested readings: Testimonies, vol. 1, pp. 216–220.
Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 390–411.
Ibid., vol. 3, pp. 131–152.
Spiritual Gifts, vol. 4b, pp. 132–147.

Sunday

February 26

1. A SOLEMN RESPONSIBILITY

a. To whom do our children belong? Psalm 127:3.

b. In the day of judgment, what will be asked of all who have brought children into this world? Jeremiah 13:20. What should this cause us to consider?

“Most of men and women have acted in entering the marriage relation as though the only question for them to settle was whether they loved each other. But they should realize that a responsibility rests upon them in the marriage relation farther than this. They should consider whether their offspring will possess physical health and mental and moral strength.”—*A Solemn Appeal*, p. 104.

“The question to be settled by you is: ‘Am I raising a family of children to strengthen the influence and swell the ranks of the powers of darkness, or am I bringing up children for Christ?’ If you do not govern your children and mold their characters to meet the requirements of God, then the fewer children there are to suffer from your defective training the better it will be for you, their parents, and the better it will be for society.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 323.

2. PADDLING AGAINST THE CURRENT

- a. What challenge do all parents face in this generation? Proverbs 30:11; 2 Timothy 3:1, 2.

“We are living in an unfortunate age for children. A heavy current is setting downward to perdition, and it needs more than childhood’s experience and strength to press against this current and not be borne down by it. Satan and his angels are leading the youth generally to certain destruction. They seem to be his captives.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4b, p. 139.

- b. What promise should we remember as we seek to suppress the rushing tide of evil? Isaiah 59:19.

“Parents, help your children. Arouse from the lethargy which has been upon you. Watch continually to cut off the current and roll back the weight of evil Satan is pressing in upon your children. The children cannot do this of themselves. Parents can do much. By earnest prayer and living faith great victories will be gained. Some parents have not realized the responsibilities resting upon them and have neglected the religious education of their children. In the morning the Christian’s first thoughts should be upon God. Worldly labor and self-interest should be secondary. Before leaving the house for labor, all the family should be collected together and taught that they must respect and reverence the hour of prayer. The father, or mother in the father’s absence, should with humility and a heart full of tenderness, with a sense of the temptations and dangers before themselves and their children, plead fervently before God that He would keep the children through the day. By faith bind your children upon the altar, entreating for them the care of the Lord. Ministering angels will guard children who are thus dedicated to God. It is the duty of Christian parents, morning and evening, by earnest prayer and persevering faith, to make a hedge about their children. They should patiently instruct them—kindly and untiringly teach them how to live in order to please God.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4b, pp. 139, 140.

“Build a fortification of prayer and faith about your children, and exercise diligent watching thereunto. You are not secure a moment against the attacks of Satan. You have no time to rest from watchful, earnest labor. You should not sleep a moment at your post. This is a most important warfare. Eternal consequences are involved. It is life or death with you and your family.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 398.

3. DEEPENING OUR UNDERSTANDING

- a. How is the fate of Eli, the high priest, a warning to parents? 1 Samuel 3:11–14.

“The curse of God will surely rest upon unfaithful parents. Not only are they planting thorns which will wound them here, but they must meet their own unfaithfulness when the judgment shall sit. Many children will rise up in judgment and condemn their parents for not restraining them, and charge upon them their destruction. The false sympathy and blind love of parents causes them to excuse the faults of their children and pass them by without correction, and their children are lost in consequence, and the blood of their souls will rest upon the unfaithful parents.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 219.

- b. Describe the balanced picture God gives of His special combination of parental justice and mercy. Hebrews 12:7–9; Ephesians 6:4.

“Parents should better qualify themselves to more fully discharge their duty to their children. Some parents do not understand their children and are not really acquainted with them. There is often a great distance between parents and children. If parents would enter more fully into the feelings of their children and draw out what is in their hearts, it would have a beneficial influence upon them.

“Parents should deal faithfully with the souls committed to their trust. They should not encourage in them pride, extravagance, or love of show. They should not teach them, or suffer them to learn, little pranks which appear cunning in small children, which they have to unlearn and correct them for, when they are older. Habits formed when very young are not easily forgotten. Parents should commence to discipline the minds of their children while very young, to the end that they may be Christians. Let all your efforts be for their salvation. Act as though they were placed in your care to be fitted as precious jewels to shine in the kingdom of God. Beware how you lull your children to sleep over the pit of destruction with the mistaken thought that they are not old enough to be accountable, and are not old enough to repent of their sins and profess Christ.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4b, pp. 138, 139.

4. THE TRAINING OF YOUNG JESUS

- a. Where did Jesus obtain His education? Matthew 2:12–15, 19–23.

“Jesus secured His education in the home. His mother was His first human teacher. From her lips, and from the scrolls of the prophets, He learned of heavenly things. He lived in a peasant’s home and faithfully and cheerfully acted His part in bearing the household burdens. He who had been the commander of heaven was a willing servant, a loving, obedient son. He learned a trade and with His own hands worked in the carpenter’s shop with Joseph. In the garb of a common laborer He walked the streets of the little town, going to and returning from His humble work.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 399, 400.

- b. How can the boy Jesus’ mature understanding and initiative regarding His own education inspire us in prioritizing goals for our children? Proverbs 20:11.

“Though Jesus was subject to His parents, He began at a very early age to act for Himself in the formation of His character. While His mother was His first human teacher, He was constantly receiving an education from His Father in heaven. Instead of poring over the learned lore handed down by the rabbis from century to century, Jesus, under the Divine Teacher, studied the words of God, pure and uncorrupted, and studied also the great lesson-book of nature. The words, ‘Thus saith the Lord,’ were ever upon his lips, and ‘It is written,’ was His reason for every act that varied from the family customs. He brought a purer atmosphere into the home life. Though He did not place Himself under the instruction of the rabbis by becoming a student in their schools, yet He was often brought in contact with them, and the questions He asked, as if He were a learner, puzzled the wise men; for their practices did not harmonize with the Scriptures, and they had not the wisdom that comes from God. Even to those who were displeased at His noncompliance with popular customs, His education seemed of a higher type than their own.”—*Special Testimonies on Education*, p. 162.

5. THE POWER OF EXAMPLE

- a. What must parents be showing their children? Luke 21:19; 1 Corinthians 11:1.

“If parents desire their children to be pleasant, they should never speak to them in a scolding manner. The mother often allows herself to become irritable and nervous. Often she snatches at the child and speaks in a harsh manner. If a child is treated in a quiet, kind manner, it will do much to preserve in him a pleasant temper. The grandest and noblest work that parents have to do for their Master is to bring Bible discipline into their government. Mothers, teachers, and guardians of the youth, be careful. If things arise to irritate, you are not at liberty to act out your feelings. Educate yourselves to carry a pleasant countenance and to bring sweetness and melody into the voice.”—*The Review and Herald*, May 17, 1898.

“With your heart subdued and full of pity and sorrow for your erring children, pray with them before correcting them. Then your correction will not cause your children to hate you. They will love you. They will see that you do not punish them because they have put you to inconvenience or because you wish to vent your displeasure upon them, but from a sense of duty for their good, that they may not be left to grow up in sin and wickedness. . . .

“Parents, the recording angel writes every impatient, fretful word you utter to your children. Every failure on your part to give your children proper instruction, and show them the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the final result of a sinful course is marked against your name. Every unguarded word spoken before your children carelessly, or in jest, not chaste and elevated, the recording angel marks as a spot against your Christian character. All your acts are recorded, whether they are good or bad.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4b, pp. 140, 141.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What should every individual consider carefully before becoming a parent?
2. In what ways does the sin of Eli creep into the experience of today’s parents?
3. How can our homes become more like the home of Jesus as a boy?

Our High Calling

“I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out” (Job 29:16).

“We are commanded to love our neighbors as ourselves. This command is not that we shall simply love those who think and believe exactly as we think and believe.”—*The Review and Herald*, December 18, 1894.

Suggested readings: *Testimonies*, vol. 7, pp. 9–33.
Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 347–353.

Sunday

March 5

1. AWAKENING TO THE NEED

- a. **What summarizes the state of things among the people of the world—and our duty toward these souls perishing in darkness?** Job 24:1–13; 29:16.

“We are made the depositaries of rich blessings and have monopolized them as if they were wholly our own; but all who are enlightened by the grace of Christ should communicate the same to others. For God, through the Comforter, will work with every effort made in sincerity and truth, with His glory in view. He has paid the redemption price for a lost world, the world that Jesus loved, the world for which He died. Let the compassion and love of Jesus urge us to earnest efforts to reveal Christ to the world.”—*The Signs of the Times*, December 7, 1891.

“Heaven stands indignant at the neglect shown to the souls of men. Would we know how Christ regards it? How would a father and mother feel, did they know that their child, lost in the cold and the snow, had been passed by, and left to perish, by those who might have saved it? Would they not be terribly grieved, wildly indignant? Would they not denounce those murderers with wrath hot as their tears, intense as their love? The sufferings of every man are the sufferings of God’s child, and those who reach out no helping hand to their perishing fellow beings provoke His righteous anger. This is the wrath of the Lamb.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 825.

Monday

March 6

2. THE SHEEP OUTSIDE THE FOLD

- a. **What does Jesus prophesy about faithful souls in other Christian denominations?** John 10:16.

“We should not go out of our way to make hard thrusts at the Catholics. Among the Catholics there are many who are most conscientious Christians and who walk in all the light that shines upon them, and God will work in their behalf. Those who have had great privileges and opportunities, and who have failed to improve their physical, mental, and moral powers, but who have lived to please themselves and have refused to bear their responsibility, are in greater danger and in greater condemnation before God than those who are in error upon doctrinal points, yet who seek to live to do good to others. Do not censure others; do not condemn them.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 243.

“Notwithstanding the spiritual darkness and alienation from God that exist in the churches which constitute Babylon, the great body of Christ’s true followers are still to be found in their communion. There are many of these who have never seen the special truths for this time. Not a few are dissatisfied with their present condition and are longing for clearer light. They look in vain for the image of Christ in the churches with which they are connected. As these bodies depart further and further from the truth, and ally themselves more closely with the world, the difference between the two classes will widen, and it will finally result in separation. The time will come when those who love God supremely can no longer remain in connection with such as are ‘lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof’ (2 Timothy 3:4, 5).

“Revelation 18 points to the time when, as the result of rejecting the threefold warning of Revelation 14:6–12, the church will have fully reached the condition foretold by the second angel, and the people of God still in Babylon will be called upon to separate from her communion. This message is the last that will ever be given to the world; and it will accomplish its work. When those that ‘believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness’ (2 Thessalonians 2:12), shall be left to receive strong delusion and to believe a lie, then the light of truth will shine upon all whose hearts are open to receive it, and all the children of the Lord that remain in Babylon will heed the call: ‘Come out of her, My people’ (Revelation 18:4).”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 390.

3. A DISTINCTIVE BANNER

- a. What illustration does the psalmist use to depict our spiritual calling? Psalm 60:4. Describe one pathway that may cause us to lose sight of that high calling.

“Dear Brother and Sister B: You have both been presented before me as in danger spiritually. You were leaving the right path and were placing your feet in a broader road. Sister B was saying many things, in jots and tittles, here a little and there a little, which were as seed sown, and the harvest will surely come. She was encouraging unbelief and telling her husband that the road they had been traveling was altogether too narrow and lowly. She thought that her husband’s qualifications were of a high order and should be exercised in a broader and more influential manner. Brother B was of the very same mind; in fact, he had led her into this train of thought. You both held the banner upon which was inscribed, ‘The commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus;’ but as you met in your way with people whom you thought were popular, down came the banner, and you put it behind your backs, saying: ‘If we let it be known that we are Seventh-day Adventists, then our influence will be at an end, and we shall lose many advantages.’ I saw the banner of truth trailing behind you. Then the question arose: ‘Why carry it at all? We can believe that which we see to be truth, but we need not let the educators and students know that we bear this unpopular banner.’ There were those in your company who were not pleased or satisfied with these suggestions, but they weakly followed your influence in place of letting their light shine by holding aloft their standard. They hid their banners and marched on, fearing to let the light which was given them of heaven shine before all.

“I saw one approaching you with firm tread and grieved countenance. He said: ‘Let no man take your crown.’ Have you forgotten the humiliation endured by the Son of God in coming to our world, how He suffered abuse, reproach, insult, hatred, mockery, and betrayal, how He endured the shameful trial in the judgment hall after having suffered the superhuman assaults of Satan in the Garden of Gethsemane? Have you forgotten the wild cry from the mob, ‘Crucify Him, crucify Him,’ and how He died as a malefactor? Is the servant greater than his Lord? The followers of Jesus will not be popular, but will be like their Master, meek and lowly of heart. You are seeking to climb to the highest seat, but will find yourselves at last in the lowest.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 501, 502.

4. FAMILY GOALS

- a. How can the aims and choices made by John the Baptist and his parents be an inspiration to families today? Luke 1:5–17; 3:1–4.

“It was John’s choice to forgo the enjoyments and luxuries of city life for the stern discipline of the wilderness. Here his surroundings were favorable to habits of simplicity and self-denial. Uninterrupted by the clamor of the world, he could here study the lessons of nature, of revelation, and of providence. The words of the angel to Zacharias had been often repeated to John by his God-fearing parents. From his childhood his mission had been kept before him, and he accepted the holy trust.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 221.

- b. What distraction hinders many of us from the call of the hour? Luke 12:15.

“Many, when they begin to gather earthly riches, commence to calculate how long it will be before they can be in possession of a certain sum. In their anxiety to amass wealth for themselves they fail to become rich toward God.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 403.

- c. Along with this same preoccupation over material riches, what other obsession is distracting many of our youth away from the most important work in life? 1 Thessalonians 5:22; Proverbs 21:5.

“The young are bewitched with the mania for courtship and marriage. Lovesick sentimentalism prevails. Great vigilance and tact are needed to guard the youth from these wrong influences. Many parents are blind to the tendencies of their children. Some parents have stated to me, with great satisfaction, that their sons or daughters had no desire for the attentions of the opposite sex, when in fact these children were at the same time secretly giving or receiving such attentions, and the parents were so much absorbed in worldliness and gossip that they knew nothing about the matter.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 60.

5. A FRESH OUTLOOK

- a. Why is it often necessary to reevaluate our life goals? Matthew 6:19–21.

“You who are the elect and chosen ones are to receive the divine commission to yoke up with Christ. You must never grow weary in well-doing. The highest honor that can be conferred upon human beings, be they young or old, rich or poor, is to be permitted to lift up the oppressed, comfort the feeble-minded, and support the weak. The world is full of suffering; go, heal the sick, pray for the hopeless, preach the gospel to the poor.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, November 2, 1899.

- b. Describe one way that families can revitalize their experience. Psalm 126:6.

“Self-supporting missionaries are often very successful. Beginning in a small, humble way, their work enlarges as they move forward under the guidance of the Spirit of God. Let two or more start out together in evangelistic work. They may not receive any particular encouragement from those at the head of the work that they will be given financial support; nevertheless let them go forward, praying, singing, teaching, living the truth. They may take up the work of canvassing, and in this way introduce the truth into many families. As they move forward in their work they gain a blessed experience. They are humbled by a sense of their helplessness, but the Lord goes before them, and among the wealthy and the poor they find favor and help. Even the poverty of these devoted missionaries is a means of finding access to the people. As they pass on their way they are helped in many ways by those to whom they bring spiritual food. They bear the message God gives them, and their efforts are crowned with success. Many will be brought to a knowledge of the truth who, but for these humble teachers, would never have been won to Christ.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 23.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What special work should be done in behalf of the sheep that are still in the other fields?
2. How can I exert a better influence in my family—to realign our priorities?

The Light of the World

“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee” (Isaiah 60:1).

“It is the positive duty of God’s people to go into the regions beyond. Let forces be set at work to clear new ground, to establish new centers of influence wherever an opening can be found.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 117.

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies*, vol. 7, pp. 34–41.
Ibid., vol. 8, pp. 239–246.
Ibid., vol. 9, pp. 97–119.

1. A BRIGHT PICTURE

- a. Describe the heart-warming promise which God is extending to His beloved sheep in the fallen churches today. Ezekiel 34:11–16.
- b. What inspiring prophecies are soon to reach their peak of fulfillment? Isaiah 56:1–7; Micah 2:12.

“Among earth’s inhabitants, scattered in every land, there are those who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Like the stars of heaven, which appear only at night, these faithful ones will shine forth when darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people. In heathen Africa, in the Catholic lands of Europe and of South America, in China, in India, in the islands of the sea, and in all the dark corners of the earth, God has in reserve a firmament of chosen ones that will yet shine forth amidst the darkness, revealing clearly to an apostate world the transforming power of obedience to His law. Even now they are appearing in every nation, among every tongue and people; and in the hour of deepest apostasy, when Satan’s supreme effort is made to cause ‘all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond,’ to receive, under penalty of death, the sign of allegiance to a false rest day, these faithful ones, ‘blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke,’ will ‘shine as lights in the world’ (Revelation 13:16; Philippians 2:15). The darker the night, the more brilliantly will they shine.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 188, 189.

2. A WORK SCARCELY BEGUN

- a. What is the Lord's appeal right now to every individual entrusted with a knowledge of the three angels' messages? Isaiah 60:1, 2; John 15:8.

"We cannot afford in the few days we have here on earth to spend our time in trifling and nothingness. We need to humble our souls before God, that every heart may drink in the truth, and let it work in the life a reformation that will convince the world that this is indeed the truth of God. Let the life be hid with Christ in God. Only when we seek the Lord as little children, when we cease picking flaws in our brethren and sisters, and in those who are seeking to carry faithfully the responsibilities of the work, and seek to get our own hearts right with God, can He use us to the glory of His name."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 106.

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

"Let the workers stand alone in God, weeping, praying, laboring for the salvation of their fellowmen. Remember that you are running a race, striving for a crown of immortality. While so many love the praise of men more than the favor of God, let it be yours to labor in humility. Learn to exercise faith in presenting your neighbors before the throne of grace and pleading with God to touch their hearts. In this way effectual missionary work may be done. Some may be reached who would not listen to a minister or a colporteur. And those who thus labor in new places will learn the best ways of approaching the people and can prepare the way for other laborers.

"A precious experience may be gained by one who engages in this work. He has upon his heart the burden of the souls of his neighbors. He must have the help of Jesus. How careful he will be to walk circumspectly, that his prayers may not be hindered, that no cherished sin may separate him from God."—*Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 245.

3. A BLESSED UNDERTAKING

- a. Describe what is to follow as believers go forth to spread the present truth. Isaiah 60:3–6.

"If our people will act upon the light that is given . . . we shall surely see of the salvation of God. Wonderful revivals will follow. Sinners will be converted, and many souls will be added to the church."—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 246.

- b. What is to be our attitude in sharing the gospel? Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 2:8, 9; 1 Peter 3:15–17.

"The most effective way to teach the heathen, who know not God, is through His works. In this way, far more readily than by any other method, they can be made to realize the difference between their idols, the works of their own hands, and the true God, the Maker of heaven and earth."—*Special Testimonies on Education*, pp. 59, 60.

"It is of little use to try to reform others by attacking what we may regard as wrong habits. Such effort often results in more harm than good. In His talk with the Samaritan woman, instead of disparaging Jacob's well, Christ presented something better. 'If thou knewest the gift of God,' He said, 'and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water' (John 4:10). He turned the conversation to the treasure He had to bestow, offering the woman something better than she possessed, even living water, the joy and hope of the gospel.

"This is an illustration of the way in which we are to work. We must offer men something better than that which they possess, even the peace of Christ, which passeth all understanding. We must tell them of God's holy law, the transcript of His character, and an expression of that which He wishes them to become. Show them how infinitely superior to the fleeting joys and pleasures of the world is the imperishable glory of heaven. Tell them of the freedom and rest to be found in the Saviour."—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 156, 157.

4. DON'T BE SURPRISED

- a. Of what must we be aware as we earnestly seek to advance our efforts in the Lord's vineyard? Matthew 10:32–39.

“Those who profess the truth should hold the standard high, and induce others to come up to it. I saw that some would have to walk the straight path alone. Their companions and children will not walk the self-denying pathway with them. Patience and forbearance should ever characterize the lives of those lone pilgrims following the example of their blessed Master. They will have many trials to endure, but they have that hope that makes the soul strong, that bears them up above the trials of earth, that elevates them above scorn, derision, and reproach. Those who possess a hope like this should never indulge a harsh, unkind spirit. This will only injure their souls, and drive their friends farther from the truth. Treat them tenderly. Give them no occasion to reproach the cause of Christ; but never yield the truth to please anyone. Be decided, be fixed, be established, be not of a doubtful mind.

“But if your companions and children will not come, if you cannot win them to yield to the claims of truth, make their lives here as pleasant as possible; for all they will ever enjoy will be this poor world. But let not your duty to them interfere with your duty to God. Pursue a straightforward course. Let nothing they may do or say provoke an angry word from you. You have a hope that will yield you consolation amid the disappointments and trials of life. Your companions and children who will not be induced to tread the narrow, cross-bearing pathway with you, have not this divine consolation. They should have your pity, for this world is all the heaven they will have.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2, pp. 266, 267.

- b. How does this overall experience echo that of our Master? Matthew 23:37; Isaiah 63:3 (first part).

“God is speaking to His people today as He spoke to Israel through Moses, saying, ‘Who is on the Lord's side?’ My brethren, take your position where God bids you. Leave alone those who, after light has been repeatedly given them, have taken a stand on the opposite side. You are not to spend precious time in repeating to them what they already know and thus lose your opportunities of entering new fields with the message of present truth.”—*Sermons and Talks*, vol. 1, p. 386.

5. A NEEDED ESSENTIAL

- a. What should be our heart's yearning at this point in the history of the world? Jeremiah 14:20–22; Zechariah 10:1.

“All that the apostles did, every church member today is to do. And we are to work with as much more fervor, to be accompanied by the Holy Spirit in as much greater measure, as the increase of wickedness demands a more decided call to repentance.

“Everyone on whom is shining the light of present truth is to be stirred with compassion for those who are in darkness. From all believers, light is to be reflected in clear, distinct rays. A work similar to that which the Lord did through His delegated messengers after the Day of Pentecost He is waiting to do today. At this time, when the end of all things is at hand, should not the zeal of the church exceed even that of the early church? Zeal for the glory of God moved the disciples to bear witness to the truth with mighty power. Should not this zeal fire our hearts with a longing to tell the story of redeeming love, of Christ and Him crucified? Should not the power of God be even more mightily revealed today than in the time of the apostles?”—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 33.

“My brethren and sisters, plead for the Holy Spirit, God stands back of every promise He has made. With your Bibles in your hands, say: ‘I have done as Thou hast said, I present Thy promise, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”’ Christ declares: ‘What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.’ ‘Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son’ (Matthew 7:7; Mark 11:24; John 14:13).” —*Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 23.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What can we expect to see more and more as the end draws near?
2. Name some things every layperson can do to spread the present truth.
3. Describe the tact that is needed in bringing light to those in great darkness.
4. What obstacles will we find ourselves facing, and how should we respond?
5. What is the church's greatest need at this time?

The Final Work

“O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God” (Isaiah 40:9)!

“All heaven is looking upon those who profess to believe the most sacred truths ever committed to mortals. Angels are waiting, longing to cooperate with you in working for the salvation of souls.”—*The Review and Herald*, August 25, 1910.

Suggested Readings: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 603–612.
Testimonies, vol. 6, pp. 305–312.

Sunday

March 19

1. LIVING AMID THE CLOSING SCENES

- a. **Many woes are coming upon this earth. But which must we be most determined to avoid, and what action shall we be taking?** Jeremiah 8:20; Matthew 24:48–51.

“As I hear of the terrible calamities that from week to week are taking place, I ask myself: What do these things mean? The most awful disasters are following one another in quick succession. How frequently we hear of earthquakes and tornadoes, of destruction by fire and flood, with great loss of life and property! Apparently these calamities are capricious outbreaks of seemingly disorganized, unregulated forces, but in them God’s purpose may be read. They are one of the means by which He seeks to arouse men and women to a sense of their danger. . . .

“Let the message of Christ’s soon return sound forth in earnest words of warning. Let us persuade men and women everywhere to repent and flee from the wrath to come. Let us arouse them to immediate preparation, for we little know what is before us. Let ministers and lay members go forth into the ripening fields to tell the unconcerned and indifferent to seek the Lord while He may be found.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 252, 253.

Monday

March 20

2. TOUCHING OUR WORLD

- a. **How can we make a distinct impact in this dark world?** 2 Corinthians 5:18, 19; Jude 1:17–23.

- b. **What must be borne in mind as we reach out?** Isaiah 8:12; Ephesians 5:11.

“We are to beware of indulging a spirit of bigotry and intolerance. We are not to stand aside from others in a spirit that seems to say, ‘Come not near to me; for I am holier than thou’ (Isaiah 65:5). We are not to shut ourselves away from our fellow human beings, but are to seek to impart to them the precious truth that has blessed our own hearts. We are to let it be seen that ours is the religion of love. [Matthew 5:16 quoted.]

“But if we are Christians, having the Spirit of Him who died to save men from their sins, we shall love the souls of our fellowmen too well to countenance their sinful pleasures by our presence and our influence. We cannot sanction their course by assembling with them at their feasts and their councils, where God does not preside. Such a course, so far from benefiting them, would only cause them to doubt the reality of our religion. We should be false lights, by our course leading souls to ruin.”—*The Review and Herald*, August 25, 1910.

- c. **In self-discipline gained through Christ, where should we be directing our focus?** Luke 14:12–14; 21:34–36; Colossians 3:1–3.

“The work of God for the salvation of the human family is the one work of supreme importance to be carried forward in our world. When men are willing to count all things but loss that they may win Christ, their eyes will be open to see things as they really are. Then they will turn away from the earthly attractions to the heavenly. They will see the true nature of the worldly, selfish enjoyments that they now value so highly, and the things that they now hold so dear will be given up.”—*The Review and Herald*, August 25, 1910.

3. LOVE WITHOUT BITTERNESS

- a. How are cutting, testing truths to be presented? Isaiah 40:9; 1 John 3:10–16.

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

- b. What will result from the glorious message of present truth being given with great power? Revelation 12:17; 13:11–15.

“As the controversy extends into new fields and the minds of the people are called to God’s downtrodden law, Satan is astir. The power attending the message will only madden those who oppose it. The clergy will put forth almost superhuman efforts to shut away the light lest it should shine upon their flocks. By every means at their command they will endeavor to suppress the discussion of these vital questions. The church appeals to the strong arm of civil power, and, in this work, papists and Protestants unite. As the movement for Sunday enforcement becomes more bold and decided, the law will be invoked against commandment keepers. They will be threatened with fines and imprisonment, and some will be offered positions of influence, and other rewards and advantages, as inducements to renounce their faith. But their steadfast answer is: ‘Show us from the word of God our error’—the same plea that was made by Luther under similar circumstances. Those who are arraigned before the courts make a strong vindication of the truth, and some who hear them are led to take their stand to keep all the commandments of God. Thus light will be brought before thousands who otherwise would know nothing of these truths.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 607.

4. COURAGEOUS AND FORGIVING

- a. What will be the strongest evidences that God is with His people who live according to the present truth for this time? Romans 12:21; 1 John 3:17, 18.

“The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them. The light of the Sun of Righteousness is to shine forth in good works—in words of truth and deeds of holiness.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 415, 416.

- b. Why will the believers have great courage? 2 Timothy 1:7; 1 John 4:17–19.

“Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers. Satan also works with lying wonders, even bringing down fire from heaven in the sight of men (Revelation 13:13). Thus the inhabitants of the earth will be brought to take their stand.

“The message will be carried not so much by argument as by the deep conviction of the Spirit of God. The arguments have been presented. The seed has been sown, and now it will spring up and bear fruit. The publications distributed by missionary workers have exerted their influence, yet many whose minds were impressed have been prevented from fully comprehending the truth or from yielding obedience. Now the rays of light penetrate everywhere, the truth is seen in its clearness, and the honest children of God sever the bands which have held them. Family connections, church relations, are powerless to stay them now. Truth is more precious than all besides. Notwithstanding the agencies combined against the truth, a large number take their stand upon the Lord’s side.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 612.

5. LOOKING BEYOND

- a. What will be the attitude of those bearing the final message—an essential key to their perfection of character? Matthew 5:38–48; Revelation 12:11 (last part).

“The Lord is soon to come, and we must be prepared to meet Him in peace. Let us be determined to do all in our power to impart light to those around us. We are not to be sad, but cheerful, and we are to keep the Lord Jesus ever before us. He is soon coming, and we must be ready and waiting for His appearing.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 253.

- b. Why can we be inspired by how the prophets gained strength—and ultimately, by how our Master was sustained to endure the cross? Isaiah 53:11; Matthew 5:10–12.

“In all ages the Saviour’s chosen have been educated and disciplined in the school of trial. They walked in narrow paths on earth; they were purified in the furnace of affliction. For Jesus’ sake they endured opposition, hatred, calumny. They followed Him through conflicts sore; they endured self-denial and experienced bitter disappointments. By their own painful experience they learned the evil of sin, its power, its guilt, its woe; and they look upon it with abhorrence. A sense of the infinite sacrifice made for its cure humbles them in their own sight and fills their hearts with gratitude and praise which those who have never fallen cannot appreciate. They love much because they have been forgiven much. Having been partakers of Christ’s sufferings, they are fitted to be partakers with Him of His glory.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 649, 650.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What duty should come to mind whenever we hear of the latest catastrophe?
2. What often hinders the missionary efforts of many professed believers?
3. Why can we be bold to present truths that we know will trigger persecution?
4. Besides seeing Christ, what may well be the most rewarding sight in Heaven?



FIRST SABBATH OFFERINGS



January 7
for the Oltenia
Field Conference
headquarters
(See p. 4.)

February 4
for the Welfare
Department
(See p. 25.)



March 4
for the
Dominican
Republic
(See p. 46.)