

The Law of Liberty

Sabbath Bible Lessons

Senior Division

April-June 2006

Foreword

During the next three months, Sabbath school students around the world will be studying *The Law of Liberty*. Why is this such an important topic right now?

“Self-righteousness is the danger of this age; it separates the soul from Christ. Those who trust to their own righteousness cannot understand how salvation comes through Christ. They call sin righteousness and righteousness sin. They have no appreciation of the evil of transgression, no understanding of the terror of the law; for they do not respect God’s moral standard. The reason there are so many spurious conversions in these days is that there is so low an appreciation of the law of God. Instead of God’s standard of righteousness, men have erected a standard of their own by which to measure character . . . but the kindest thing that can be preached to the sinner is the truth of the binding claims of the law of God.”—*The Signs of the Times*, July 21, 1890.

“To throw off the restraints which God has imposed is to accept the rule of the cruelest of tyrants. . . . Let the restraint imposed by the divine law be wholly cast aside, and human laws would soon be disregarded. Because God forbids dishonest practices, coveting, lying, and defrauding, men are ready to trample upon His statutes as a hindrance to their worldly prosperity; but the results of banishing these precepts would be such as they do not anticipate. If the law were not binding, why should any fear to transgress? Property would no longer be safe. Men would obtain their neighbor’s possessions by violence, and the strongest would become richest. Life itself would not be respected. . . . The civilized world would become a horde of robbers and assassins; and peace, rest, and happiness would be banished from the earth.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 584, 585.

“We are called into the freedom of the gospel but not into the service of sin. We are called to wear Christ’s yoke, which is true liberty, not liberty to sin and disregard the plainest injunction of the Word of God, ‘If ye love Me, keep My commandments’ (John 14:15).”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 19, p. 318.

In light of this good news, let us now study the beauty of God’s perfect law of liberty in depth, that our hearts may joyfully echo the declaration of God’s own Son, “I know that his commandment is life everlasting” (John 12:50).

The General Conference Sabbath School Department

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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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First Sabbath Offering

for the Work Development in Argentina



Argentina extends throughout the last 4,000 kilometers furthest south in the South American continent. The diversity of its climate and its multiple possibilities attracted within the last century millions of immigrants, especially Europeans, which forged a characteristic idiosyncrasy, and established a predominant widespread religion: Roman Catholicism.

The work of the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement started in 1927 with the arrival of the first missionaries from Europe. The heart of the work was soon established in the city of San Nicolás, where in 1936 the second church of the reformers was built in our hemisphere. From there the first missionaries went out to Chile, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, and Uruguay. At the right time those missions became unions, leaving Paraguay and Uruguay under the administration of the Southern Union with headquarters in Argentina.

The social and economic crisis at the end of the 90's greatly prevented the development of the different departments of the Work and its construction projects. The generous aid of our believers worldwide will be able to make possible a quicker reactivation of the work in this extensive country, in order to reach the many souls that do not even know the present truth.

We are sure that the Lord will richly bless each of you who responds to the call to preach the gospel to all nations, tongues and people through a heart offering on April 1, 2006.

Your brethren and sisters from Argentina

PROJECT 04B

Governed With Freedom of Choice

“Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth” (Psalm 119:142).

“The law of God existed before man was created. The angels were governed by it.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 261.

Suggested Readings: *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, pp. 316–323. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 33–43.

Sunday

March 26

1. A HARMONIOUS HEAVENLY GOVERNMENT

- a. What has characterized God's law and government from eternity? Psalm 119:142.

“The angels had been created full of goodness and love. They loved one another impartially and their God supremely, and they were prompted by this love to do His pleasure. The law of God was not a grievous yoke to them, but it was their delight to do His commandments, to hearken unto the voice of His Word.”—*The Signs of the Times*, April 28, 1890.

- b. What points should we keep in mind about the Creator and Governor of the universe? Psalm 102:25–27; Isaiah 48:12, 13.

“God, the Governor of the universe, has made all things subject to law; things apparently insignificant, and things of the greatest magnitude, are all governed by laws adapted to their natures. Nothing that God has made has been forgotten or left to blind chance.”—*The Signs of the Times*, January 23, 1879.

2. A TRAGEDY STRIKES IN SUBTLETY

- a. How has Christ always been different from all the angelic host? Hebrews 1:1–12.

- b. What is one of the various names of Christ? Revelation 22:16 (last part). What beautiful name did He bestow upon the highest angel He created—and shockingly, what did this creature do in the face of the love showered upon him? Isaiah 14:12–14.

“Lucifer was the covering cherub, the most exalted of the heavenly created beings; he stood nearest the throne of God, and was most closely connected and identified with the administration of God’s government, most richly endowed with the glory of His majesty and power.”—*The Signs of the Times*, April 28, 1890.

“Pride in his own glory nourished the desire for supremacy. The high honors conferred upon Lucifer were not appreciated as the gift of God and called forth no gratitude to the Creator. He gloried in his brightness and exaltation, and aspired to be equal with God.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 495.

- c. What made Lucifer’s attitude so appalling—and damaging—to heaven? Job 34:17.

“All heaven had rejoiced to reflect the Creator’s glory and to show forth His praise. And while God was thus honored, all had been peace and gladness. But a note of discord now marred the celestial harmonies. The service and exaltation of self, contrary to the Creator’s plan, awakened forebodings of evil in minds to whom God’s glory was supreme.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 494.

- d. What did Lucifer’s rebellion undermine, and what came as a result? 1 John 3:4.

“Evil originated with the rebellion of Lucifer. It was brought into heaven when he refused allegiance to God’s law. Satan was the first lawbreaker.”—*The Review and Herald*, June 4, 1901.

3. THE INSURRECTION GROWS

- a. What did Lucifer evidently choose to overlook about Christ? Isaiah 64:8.

“The Son of God was the acknowledged Sovereign of heaven, one in power and authority with the Father. In all the counsels of God, Christ was a participant, while Lucifer was not permitted thus to enter into the divine purposes. ‘Why,’ questioned this mighty angel, ‘should Christ have the supremacy? Why is He thus honored above Lucifer?’ ”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 495.

- b. Describe Lucifer’s initial strategy and what made him come to be known as “Satan.” Many centuries later, how did the psalmist pray to be spared from facing such evil? Psalm 62:2–5.

“Working with mysterious secrecy, and for a time concealing his real purpose under an appearance of reverence for God, [Lucifer] endeavored to excite dissatisfaction concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings, intimating that they imposed an unnecessary restraint. Since their natures were holy, he urged that the angels should obey the dictates of their own will. He sought to create sympathy for himself by representing that God had dealt unjustly with him in bestowing supreme honor upon Christ. He claimed that in aspiring to greater power and honor he was not aiming at self-exaltation, but was seeking to secure liberty for all the inhabitants of Heaven, that by this means they might attain to a higher state of existence.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 495.

“A compassionate Creator, in yearning pity for Lucifer and his followers, was seeking to draw them back from the abyss of ruin into which they were about to plunge. But His mercy was misinterpreted. Lucifer pointed to the long-suffering of God as an evidence of his own superiority, an indication that the King of the universe would yet accede to his terms. If the angels would stand firmly with him, he declared, they could yet gain all that they desired. He persistently defended his own course, and fully committed himself to the great controversy against his Maker. Thus it was that Lucifer, ‘the light bearer,’ the sharer of God’s glory, the attendant of His throne, by transgression became Satan, ‘the adversary’ of God and holy beings and the destroyer of those whom Heaven had committed to his guidance and guardianship.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 39, 40.

4. OPEN WARFARE

- a. Why was Lucifer successful in stealing the sympathies of many? Ezekiel 28:14, 15. How did he spread his lie that obedience to God implies unpleasant restriction?

“Rejecting with disdain the arguments and entreaties of the loyal angels, [Lucifer] denounced them as deluded slaves. The preference shown to Christ he declared an act of injustice both to himself and to all the heavenly host, and announced that he would no longer submit to this invasion of his rights and theirs. He would never again acknowledge the supremacy of Christ. He had determined to claim the honor which should have been given him, and take command of all who would become his followers; and he promised those who would enter his ranks a new and better government, under which all would enjoy freedom.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 40.

- b. What warnings come to us from this rebellion? Isaiah 14:15, 16, 19; Proverbs 16:18.

“The evil continued to work until the spirit of disaffection ripened into active revolt. Then there was war in heaven, and Satan, with all who sympathized with him, was cast out. Satan had warred for the mastery in heaven, and had lost the battle. God could no longer trust him with honor and supremacy, and these, with the part he had taken in the government of heaven, were taken from him.

“Since that time Satan and his army of confederates have been the avowed enemies of God in our world, continually warring against the cause of truth and righteousness. Satan has continued to present to men, as he presented to the angels, his false representations of Christ and of God, and he has won the world to his side. Even the professedly Christian churches have taken sides with the first great apostate.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 222.

“Satan in his rebellion in heaven sought to find some flaw in the law of God in order to support his argument that the law of God must be changed; but his efforts were in vain. He did not succeed, and after he had deceived thousands of angels and had drawn them to his side, he was cast out of heaven. But the law of God was not changed in one jot or tittle. God is wise and unchangeable.”—*The Signs of the Times*, November 14, 1895.

5. OUR RESPONSE

- a. What should we keep in mind about God? Psalms 19:7; 93:2, 5; 100:5; Daniel 4:3.

“As Creator of all, God is governor over all, and He is bound to enforce His law throughout the universe. To require less from His creatures than obedience to His law would be to abandon them to ruin. To fail to punish transgression of His law would be to place the universe in confusion. The moral law is God’s barrier between the human agent and sin. Thus infinite wisdom has placed before men the distinction between right and wrong, between sin and holiness.”—*The Signs of the Times*, June 5, 1901.

“By his own course of action Satan has forged a chain by which he will be bound. The inhabitants of the heavenly universe will bear witness to God’s justice in his destruction. Heaven itself has seen what heaven would be, if he were allowed to remain in it. All the unfallen beings are now united in regarding God’s law as changeless.”—*Ibid.*, August 27, 1902.

- b. In view of this history, what should be our heart’s desire? Psalm 119:41–44, 144.

“With the history of sin before us, how dare we disregard and ignore any one of the commandments that God has given us? The law of God is the foundation of His government and is exactly what is needed to preserve life and righteousness. Every principle of the law emanates from the Infinite God, and man will fail in his duty to God and his neighbor unless he believes and weaves the principles of the law into his life. Without faith it is impossible to please God, for it is through faith that we may render obedience to the law.”—*The Signs of the Times*, February 26, 1894.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How are our churches to reflect the attitude of the unfallen beings?
2. What are the various ways in which Satan was wrong?
3. Why is God’s law such a blessing?

Freedom From Wrong Ways

“Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many. I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths” (Proverbs 4:10, 11).

“When man was created, God gave to Adam and Eve a knowledge of His ten precepts.”—*The Signs of the Times*, October 8, 1894.

Suggested Readings: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 363–370.
The Great Controversy, pp. 433–450.

Sunday

April 2

1. GOD’S PLAN FOR HIS CHILDREN

- a. What blessing has God provided for His children since their creation? Proverbs 4:10–13.

- b. What promise, appeal, and example does He give to each one of us? Psalm 32:8, 9.

“Christ did not exalt man by ministering to his pride. He humbled Himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross; and unless human pride is humbled and subdued, unless the stubborn heart is made tender by the Spirit of Christ, it is not possible for Him to impress His divine similitude upon us. He, the humble Nazarene, might have poured contempt upon the world’s pride, for He was commander in the heavenly courts; but He came to our world in humility, in order to show that it is not riches, or position, or authority, or honorable titles, that the universe of heaven respects and honors, but those who will follow Christ, making any position or duty honorable by the virtue of their character, through the power of His grace.”—*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 1562.

Monday

April 3

2. WHOSE PLAN SHALL WE FOLLOW?

- a. How are many professed Christians sadly echoing the deluded sentiments of Lucifer? Matthew 5:19; Mark 12:24.

“There are those who say, ‘Give me Christ, but I want nothing of the law.’ They talk of the grace of Christ, but they know not the meaning of grace; for God does not use His grace to make void the law. Satan has confused their minds, leading them to look upon the law as a yoke of bondage, a hindrance to spirituality. They talk of faith, but they know not the meaning of the word; for faith is never found apart from truth. The peace which they boast their faith gives them is but self-righteous confidence. Let no one claim that he has been accepted by Christ and is living without sin, while at the same time he is, like Lucifer, waging war against God’s law, aiding the enemy in the very work which he commenced in heaven and is carrying forward on this earth.

“Thousands today are transgressing God’s law, advocating the ideas which for ages Satan has been manufacturing. Like the proud Pharisees, they are ignorant both of the Scriptures and of the power of God.”—*The Signs of the Times*, July 31, 1901.

- b. How does the New Testament confirm God’s plan for us through his creation and redemption? Ephesians 2:10.

“‘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. . . .

“To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind, and soul, that the divine purpose in his creation might be realized—this was to be the work of redemption. This is the object of education, the great object of life.”—*Education*, pp. 15, 16.

3. EARLY KEEPERS OF GOD'S LAW

- a. How were the creation and redemption of humanity closely intertwined with God's law from the time of the early patriarchs? Genesis 1:27; 3:9–12; Job 33:23–28.

“Adam and Eve, at their creation, had a knowledge of the law of God; they were acquainted with its claims upon them; its precepts were written upon their hearts. When man fell by transgression the law was not changed, but a remedial system was established to bring him back to obedience. The promise of a Saviour was given, and sacrificial offerings pointing forward to the death of Christ as the great sin offering were established. But had the law of God never been transgressed, there would have been no death, and no need of a Saviour; consequently there would have been no need of sacrifices.

“Adam taught his descendants the law of God, and it was handed down from father to son through successive generations. But notwithstanding the gracious provision for man's redemption, there were few who accepted it and rendered obedience. By transgression the world became so vile that it was necessary to cleanse it by the Flood from its corruption. The law was preserved by Noah and his family, and Noah taught his descendants the Ten Commandments.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 363.

- b. What can we learn from God's report of Noah and Abraham? Genesis 6:22; 26:2–5.

“The obedient do not simply cry, ‘Believe, all you have to do is believe in Christ;’ but their faith is like Noah's and Abraham's, which led them to keep the commandments. They follow the example of Christ, they listen and wait to catch every word of direction from the Captain of their salvation. They respond to the voice that says, ‘This is the way, walk ye in it’ (Isaiah 30:21).

“Every step that Noah and Abraham took in obedience to God's word was a step of victory. A ‘Thus saith the Lord’ fortified Noah in doing his work of warning the world. The testimony in regard to Noah is, ‘And Noah did according unto all that the Lord commanded him’ (Genesis 7:5). The path of obedience is the path in which our safety lies; for it is the willing and obedient that shall eat the good of the land. If we keep the commandments of God, we may claim His recorded promises in all their fullness.”—*The Signs of the Times*, March 31, 1890.

4. THE SPECIFICS GIVEN AT SINAI

- a. What did God do at Sinai, and why? Exodus 24:12; 31:18; Deuteronomy 4:13.

“[The Lord] did not . . . trust His precepts to the memory of a people who were prone to forget His requirements, but wrote them upon tables of stone. He would remove from Israel all possibility of mingling heathen traditions with His holy precepts, or of confounding His requirements with human ordinances or customs. . . .

“If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God's law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 364.

- b. What are we to understand by all that was encompassed at Sinai? Nehemiah 9:13.

“[The Lord] communicated with Moses from the cloud of glory above the mercy seat, and gave him full directions concerning the system of offerings and the forms of worship to be maintained in the sanctuary. The ceremonial law was thus given to Moses, and by him written in a book. But the law of Ten Commandments spoken from Sinai had been written by God Himself on the tables of stone, and was sacredly preserved in the ark. . . .

“The distinction between the two systems is broad and clear. The ceremonial system was made up of symbols pointing to Christ, to His sacrifice and His priesthood. This ritual law, with its sacrifices and ordinances, was to be performed by the Hebrews until type met anti-type in the death of Christ, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Then all the sacrificial offerings were to cease. It is this law that Christ ‘took . . . out of the way, nailing it to His cross’ (Colossians 2:14). But concerning the law of Ten Commandments the psalmist declares, ‘Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven’ (Psalm 119:89).”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 364, 365.

5. A LIVING, VICTORIOUS FAITH

- a. What earnest appeals does our Lord give each of us? Isaiah 1:18–20; 1 John 2:1–5.

“The path of obedience is the path in which our safety lies; for it is the willing and obedient that shall eat the good of the land. If we keep the commandments of God, we may claim His recorded promises in all their fullness. Many feel so unworthy that like the poor publican they dare not lift up so much as their eyes to heaven. They should encourage faith. We may have an intelligent faith; we may not only say we believe, but we may in meekness and confidence be able to define what we believe, and why we believe as we do. We should exercise living faith, not a blind credulity. All heaven is at the command of those who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus.

“We need to come up to a higher standard, to go forward and claim our exalted privileges. We should walk humbly with God, make no proud boasts of perfection of character, but in simple faith claim every promise in the word of God; for they are for the obedient, not for the transgressors of God’s law. We are simply to believe the testimony of God and have entire dependence on Him, and all possibility of self-glory or pride will be removed. We are indeed saved by faith, not by a passive faith, but by the faith which works by love, and purifies the soul. The hand of Christ can reach the veriest sinner and bring him back from transgression to obedience; but no Christianity is so lofty that it can soar above the requirements of God’s holy law. This would be beyond Christ’s power to help, it would be outside of His teachings and His example; for He says, ‘I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love’ (John 15:10), and all who follow Christ will render obedience to God’s holy law.”—*The Signs of the Times*, March 31, 1890.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How can I bring my life more into harmony with God’s revealed plan?
2. How might a professed Christian actually be in danger of following Lucifer’s ways?
3. What do Adam, Noah, and Abraham all have in common?
4. Why is the moral law to be kept distinct from the ceremonial law?
5. How is God’s law closely intertwined with the daily experience of a Christian?

A Heart Made Free

“I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart” (Psalm 40:8).

“Obedience is the outgrowth and fruit of oneness with Christ and the Father.”—*The Signs of the Times*, April 17, 1893.

Suggested Readings: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 363–373.
The Desire of Ages, pp. 175, 176, 329, 330, 407.

1. THE OLD COVENANT

- a. What encouraging promise did God give at Sinai, and how did the people gladly, but naïvely, respond? Exodus 19:5, 6; 24:7. What deeper lesson did they yet need to learn?

“In delivering [His people] from Egypt, God sought to reveal to them His power and His mercy, that they might be led to love and trust Him. He brought them down to the Red Sea—where, pursued by the Egyptians, escape seemed impossible—that they might realize their utter helplessness, their need of divine aid; and then He wrought deliverance for them. Thus they were filled with love and gratitude to God and with confidence in His power to help them. He had bound them to Himself as their deliverer from temporal bondage.

“But there was a still greater truth to be impressed upon their minds. Living in the midst of idolatry and corruption, they had no true conception of the holiness of God, of the exceeding sinfulness of their own hearts, their utter inability, in themselves, to render obedience to God’s law, and their need of a Saviour. All this they must be taught. God brought them to Sinai; He manifested His glory; He gave them His law, with the promise of great blessings on condition of obedience. . . .

“The people did not realize the sinfulness of their own hearts, and that without Christ it was impossible for them to keep God’s law; and they readily entered into covenant with God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 371, 372.

2. UNDERSTANDING THE COVENANTS

a. What took place soon after the covenant was made? Exodus 32:17–19.

b. When this failure occurred, why did God mercifully spare the remnant of His heritage? Exodus 32:30–33:14.

“[The Israelites] had witnessed the proclamation of the law in awful majesty, and had trembled with terror before the mount; and yet only a few weeks passed before they broke their covenant with God, and bowed down to worship a graven image. They could not hope for the favor of God through a covenant which they had broken; and now, seeing their sinfulness and their need of pardon, they were brought to feel their need of the Saviour. . . . Now by faith and love they were bound to God as their deliverer from the bondage of sin. Now they were prepared to appreciate the blessings of the new covenant.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 372.

c. Compare the old and new covenants. Jeremiah 31:33, 34; Hebrews 8:6–13.

“The terms of the ‘old covenant’ were, Obey and live: ‘If a man do, he shall even live in them’ (Ezekiel 20:11; Leviticus 18:5); but ‘cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them’ (Deuteronomy 27:26). The ‘new covenant’ was established upon ‘better promises’—the promise of forgiveness of sins and of the grace of God to renew the heart and bring it into harmony with the principles of God’s law.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 372.

d. What had actually been the first covenant that God made with the human race? Genesis 3:15.

“The covenant of grace was first made with man in Eden, when after the Fall, there was given a divine promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head. To all men this covenant offered pardon, and the assisting grace of God for future obedience through faith in Christ. It also promised them eternal life on condition of fidelity to God’s law.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 77.

3. THE EVERLASTING COVENANT

a. How do we gain victory over sin? Ezekiel 36:26; Romans 5:1; 3:31; 8:1–4, 12–14.

“Enmity against Satan is not natural to the human heart; it is implanted by the grace of God. When one who has been controlled by a stubborn, wayward will is set free, and yields himself wholeheartedly to the drawing of God’s heavenly agencies, a miracle is wrought.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 407.

b. Why is God’s covenant with Abraham given as an illustration for believers in all ages? Genesis 17:1–9; Acts 3:25, 26; Galatians 3:6–9.

“Abraham . . . trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sins. It was this faith that was accounted unto him for righteousness. The covenant with Abraham also maintained the authority of God’s law. . . .

“The Abrahamic covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ, and it is called the ‘second,’ or ‘new,’ covenant, because the blood by which it was sealed was shed after the blood of the first covenant.

“The covenant of grace is not a new truth, for it existed in the mind of God from all eternity. This is why it is called the everlasting covenant.

“There is hope for us only as we come under the Abrahamic covenant, which is the covenant of grace by faith in Christ Jesus. The gospel preached to Abraham, through which he had hope, was the same gospel that is preached to us today.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 77.

c. What are the results of making such a covenant with God? Psalm 40:8; John 8:29.

“The same law that was engraved upon the tables of stone is written by the Holy Spirit upon the tables of the heart. Instead of going about to establish our own righteousness we accept the righteousness of Christ. His blood atones for our sins. His obedience is accepted for us. Then the heart renewed by the Holy Spirit will bring forth ‘the fruits of the Spirit.’ Through the grace of Christ we shall live in obedience to the law of God written upon our hearts. Having the Spirit of Christ, we shall walk even as He walked.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 372.

4. OBEDIENCE BY FAITH

- a. What is revealed about Christ as we compare Deuteronomy 6:4, 5 and Leviticus 19:18 with Luke 10:27?

“The Saviour typified in the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish law is the very same that is revealed in the gospel. . . . He who proclaimed the law from Sinai, and delivered to Moses the precepts of the ritual law, is the same that spoke the Sermon on the Mount. . . . The teacher is the same in both dispensations. God’s claims are the same. The principles of His government are the same. For all proceed from Him ‘with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning’ (James 1:17).”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 373.

- b. What are some principles we should understand about true Christianity? Romans 8:5–11.

“The committing of the soul to God is essential for our salvation. You cannot follow a course of your own choosing and be at war with the law of God, living in disobedience to His requirements, and yet be in harmony with God. Entire obedience to the will of God will bring courage, hope, peace, and happiness to the soul.”—*The Review and Herald*, December 2, 1875.

“When we unmistakably hear His voice and obey, every murmuring thought will be repressed; and we will leave all consequences with Him who gave the commandment. If, as we see the footprints of Jesus, we step in them and follow Him, we shall have love and power.”—*The Signs of the Times*, April 17, 1893.

- c. Why are even “little” sins so dangerous? Song of Solomon 2:15; Psalm 51:10; Luke 16:10.

“What difference does it make whether you eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, or of any other tree of the garden? Adam’s sin consisted in doing the thing the Lord had forbidden him to do, and this opened the flood gates of woe on our world. We should carefully meditate upon the life of Christ, and desire to understand the reason why He came at all. We should search the Scriptures as Christ has enjoined upon us to do, that we may know those things that are testified of Him. By searching we may find the virtues of obedience in contrast with the sinfulness of disobedience.”—*The Signs of the Times*, April 17, 1893.

5. A NEW HEART WITH NEW MOTIVES

- a. What assurance and appeals bring us hope? Ezekiel 36:25, 26; 1 John 2:1; 3:4.

“If any man sin, he need not give up his hope in Christ. He need not say it is of no use longer to attempt to keep the commandments of God, for this would be placing himself wholly on Satan’s ground. Satan follows you with his temptations in order that he may persuade you to yield and sin; and when you sin, then he tells you it is of no use for you to try, and you might just as well announce yourself an open transgressor of the law of God, for you cannot keep His commandments. In the name and strength given of God we may be obedient to all His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous. We are happy in doing them.”—*The Signs of the Times*, April 24, 1893.

- b. Describe the experience of victory in Christ. 1 John 5:1–3; Romans 8:15–17.

“Every taxing duty becomes easy, and every sacrifice becomes a pleasure to those whom the truth makes free. What a victory is gained when the carnal life ceases, and the spiritual life begins. The Lord guides. The Lord keeps. The love of God, and obedience to all His commandments, bring all the powers of the soul into obedience to His will. What can constrain the heart and affections like love—sanctified love. That love which brings the soul into connection with heaven is more earnest, fervent, and enduring for earthly relatives than any other. There is nothing in the heart at war with God’s requirements. The mind, submissive and obedient, will love to do all His commandments. Evil will be abhorred, and the good will be chosen. There will be no self-denial or self-sacrifice that is grievous, for the heart delights in doing for Christ, and seeking to save souls from error and from the transgression of the holy law of God. When God has control of the affections, the mind will not be selfish, nor shrink from sacrifices.”—*The Review and Herald*, December 2, 1875.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTION

1. How is the creative power of the Almighty directly related to our deliverance from sin?

The Grantor of Freedom

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3).

“In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 466.

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 9–13.
Selected Messages, bk. 2, pp. 317, 318.

Sunday

April 16

1. WHO IS HE?

- a. **In what setting and with what words did He who uttered the Ten Commandments introduce Himself? Exodus 20:1, 2.**

“God desired to take His people apart from the world and prepare them to receive His word. From Egypt He led them to Mount Sinai, where He revealed to them His glory. Here was nothing to attract their senses or divert their minds from God; and as the vast multitude looked at the lofty mountains towering above them, they could realize their own nothingness in the sight of God. Beside these rocks, immovable except by the power of the divine will, God communicated with men.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 9, 10.

- b. **Although we may have never set foot in geographical Egypt—neither in the desert of Sinai—how can we nonetheless relate to this in our own experience? Isaiah 44:24; 1 Peter 2:9.**

“As the children of Israel celebrated the deliverance that God wrought for their fathers, and His miraculous preservation of them during their journeyings from Egypt to the Promised Land, so should the people of God at the present time gratefully call to mind the various ways He has devised to bring them out from the world, out from the darkness of error, into the precious light of truth. . . . We should gratefully regard the old waymarks, and refresh our souls with memories of the loving-kindness of our gracious Benefactor.”—*The Review and Herald*, November 17, 1885.

Monday

April 17

2. WHAT ARE HIS CREDENTIALS?

- a. **Why should we be totally awestruck by the power of our Creator? Psalm 33:6, 8, 9; Isaiah 44:24.**

- b. **What is needed in order to fathom the impact of this reality? Hebrews 11:3.**

“Everywhere we see the perfect works of the great Master Artist. The heavens declare His glory, and the earth, which is formed for the happiness of man, speaks to us of His matchless love. Its surface is not a monotonous plain, but grand old mountains rise to diversify the landscape. There are sparkling streams and fertile valleys, beautiful lakes, broad rivers, and the boundless ocean.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 312.

- c. **Beyond the initial creation of this earth as found in Genesis chapter 1, what deeper understanding should we have of God’s continual power? Psalms 19:1–3; 147:6–8.**

“The same creative energy that brought the world into existence is still exerted in upholding the universe and continuing the operations of nature. The hand of God guides the planets in their orderly march through the heavens. It is not because of inherent power that year by year the earth continues her motion round the sun and produces her bounties. The word of God controls the elements. He covers the heavens with clouds and prepares rain for the earth. He makes the valley fruitful, and ‘grass to grow upon the mountains’ (Psalm 147:8). It is through His power that vegetation flourishes; that the leaves appear, and the flowers bloom.”—*Special Testimonies on Education*, pp. 58, 59.

“God sends the dew and the rain to refresh the thirsty earth. The breezes, that promote health by purifying and cooling the atmosphere, are controlled by His wisdom. He has placed the sun in the heavens to mark the periods of day and night, and by its genial beams give light and warmth to the earth, causing vegetation to flourish.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 312.

3. A RIGHTFUL AUTHORITY

- a. What questions from the Creator's lips echo down the centuries to each one of us? Job 38:3–7, 22, 23, 31, 32. In response, what must we inevitably acknowledge?

“God is supreme. It is not for finite man to question His right to govern the universe. God asserted His right to rule when He declared, ‘Thou shalt have no other gods before Me;’ ‘for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is’ (Exodus 20:3, 11). He is the Creator and the Preserver of the worlds. He upholds the universe by the word of His power. Nature and science bear witness that He has a right to govern His own creation. Angels are subject to His rule; therefore let man bow in adoration before Him.”—*The Signs of the Times*, June 5, 1901.

- b. Why is this humbling realization not to our loss but, in fact, to our gain? Luke 14:11; Psalm 113:5, 6.

“If we will but listen, God's created works will teach us precious lessons of obedience and trust. From the stars that in their trackless courses through space follow from age to age their appointed path, down to the minutest atom, the things of nature obey the Creator's will. And God cares for everything and sustains everything that He has created. He who upholds the unnumbered worlds throughout immensity, at the same time cares for the wants of the little brown sparrow that sings its humble song without fear.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 85, 86.

“God's created works testify to His love and power. He has called the world into being, with all that it contains. God is a lover of the beautiful; and in the world which He has fitted up for us He has not only given us everything necessary for our comfort, but He has filled the heavens and the earth with beauty. We see His love and care in the rich fields of autumn, and His smile in the glad sunshine. His hand has made the castle-like rocks and the towering mountains. The lofty trees grow at His command; He has spread earth's green velvet carpet, and dotted it with shrubs and flowers. Why has He clothed the earth and trees with living green, instead of with dark, somber brown? Is it not that they may be more pleasing to the eye? And shall not our hearts be filled with gratitude as we read the evidences of His wisdom and love in the wonders of His creation?”—*Special Testimonies on Education*, p. 58.

4. SPOKEN BY A SAVIOUR

- a. What points should we ever keep in mind about the One who penned the Ten Commandments for us? Colossians 1:12–17.

“The hand that sustains the worlds in space, the hand that holds in their orderly arrangement and tireless activity all things throughout the universe of God, is the hand that was nailed to the cross for us.”—*Education*, p. 132.

“It was Christ who had said, ‘Ye shall do my statutes, and keep my judgments’ (Leviticus 25:18). Christ had presented the same principles on the mount of Beatitudes as He had on Mount Sinai. He had said that on the principles of love to God and to our neighbor hung all the law and the prophets.”—*The Signs of the Times*, June 11, 1896.

- b. Why have we plenty of reason to appreciate God's dealing with us? Job 36:5–11.

“While our kind heavenly Father has given us so many things to promote our happiness, He has given us also blessings in disguise. He understands the necessities of fallen man; and while He has given us advantages on the one hand, on the other there are inconveniences which are designed to stimulate us to use the ability He has given us. These develop patient industry, perseverance, and courage. . . .

“[Man] is not left to battle with temptations and trials in his own strength. Help has been laid upon One who is mighty. Jesus left the royal courts of heaven and suffered and died in a world degraded by sin, that He might teach man how to pass through the trials of life and overcome its temptations. Here is a pattern for us.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 312.

- c. What should we keep in mind as we consider each of the Ten Commandments individually? John 1:1–4, 12, 13; Psalm 19:8–11.

“The ten commandments, Thou shalt, and, Thou shalt not, are ten promises secured to us if we render obedience to the law governing the universe.”—*The Review and Herald*, October 26, 1897.

“Every ‘Thou shalt not,’ whether in physical or in moral law, implies a promise. If we obey it, blessing will attend our steps. God never forces us to do right, but He seeks to save us from the evil and lead us to the good.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 114.

5. A PROMISE

- a. Why does Christ seek so earnestly to draw us away from the illusive pleasures of this world? 1 John 2:15–17; John 6:63.

“Anything which tends to absorb the mind and divert it from God assumes the form of an idol. The true and living God is crowded out of the thoughts and heart, and the soul-temple is defiled by the worship of other gods before the Lord. ‘Thou shalt have no other gods before Me,’ says the commandment (Exodus 20:3). Let us search the heart, compare the life and character with the statutes and precepts of Jehovah, and then seek diligently to correct our errors.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 632.

- b. As we clearly discern and respond wholeheartedly to God’s love, what is His promise? Exodus 20:3; Deuteronomy 28:1.

“In the last days of this earth’s history the voice that spoke from Sinai is still declaring, ‘Thou shalt have no other gods before Me’ (Exodus 20:3). Man has set his will against the will of God, but he cannot silence the word of command. The human mind cannot evade its obligation to a higher power. Theories and speculations may abound; men may try to set science in opposition to revelation, and thus do away with God’s law; but stronger and still stronger comes the command, ‘Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve’ (Matthew 4:10).”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 624, 625.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why is Jehovah alone entitled to my worship?
2. How does He continually reveal His love to me in nature?
3. How does He continually reveal His love to me through His providences?
4. How does He continually reveal His love to me through the everlasting gospel?
5. In fact, why do I exert the greatest freedom by enthroning Him as Lord over my life?

Freedom From Empty, Disappointing Idols

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments” (Exodus 20:4–6).

“The love of money, pride in dress and display—anything that diverts the attention from God—becomes an idol.”—*The Review and Herald*, January 29, 1884.

Suggested Readings: *Steps to Christ*, pp. 43–48.
Testimonies, vol. 2, pp. 439–489.
Ibid., vol. 8, pp. 50–53.

1. ARE WE BEWITCHED?

- a. What pointed question of the apostle Paul echoes down to many professed believers today? Galatians 3:1.

“The further men separate from God, and the less they render obedience to His commandments, the more confidence they will place in themselves. Their thoughts will be selfish, and their actions after the same character. They will pride themselves upon their judgment in managing business, but will be very ignorant of the things which concern their future well-being. So infatuated will they be with the things of this world that the words which Paul addressed to the Galatians are applicable to them . . . [Galatians 3:1 quoted]. . . . They think that riches mean greatness and honor, that they mean love of ease, selfish gratification, and display. They desire to command positions of power, to have the flattery and reverence of the world. They freely indulge in sin until their moral power is palsied.”—*The Signs of the Times*, February 20, 1896.

2. GUARDING THE SENSES

- a. How serious a problem is slavery to appetite? **Philippians 3:18, 19.**

“[Exodus 20:3 quoted.] It is not alone in denying the existence of God or in bowing down to idols of wood and stone that this first commandment is broken. By many who profess to be followers of Christ, its principles are infringed, but the Lord of heaven does not acknowledge those as His children who are cherishing in their hearts anything that takes the place which God alone should hold. With many the gratification of appetite holds sway.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, December 31, 1896.

- b. What gift has Satan deceptively twisted for his perverted aims? **Ezekiel 28:13.**

“Music is the idol which many professed Sabbathkeeping Christians worship. Satan has no objection to music if he can make that a channel through which to gain access to the minds of the youth. Anything will suit his purpose that will divert the mind from God and engage the time which should be devoted to His service. He works through the means which will exert the strongest influence to hold the largest numbers in a pleasing infatuation, while they are paralyzed by his power. When turned to good account, music is a blessing; but it is often made one of Satan’s most attractive agencies to ensnare souls.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 506.

- c. What help is needed by persons who are slaves to sensuality? **Romans 8:5, 6; 13:14.**

“My confidence in humanity has been terribly shaken. I have been shown that persons of apparently good deportment, not taking unwarrantable liberties with the other sex, were guilty of practicing secret vice nearly every day of their lives. They have not refrained from this terrible sin even while most solemn meetings have been in session. They have listened to the most solemn, impressive discourses upon the judgment, which seemed to bring them before the tribunal of God, causing them to fear and quake; yet hardly an hour would elapse before they would be engaged in their favorite, bewitching sin, polluting their own bodies. They were such slaves to this awful crime that they seemed devoid of power to control their passions.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 468, 469.

3. MORE IDOLS THAT SNEAK IN

- a. With what strong reproofs does God unveil some common traps which ensnare today both women and men? **Isaiah 3:16, 17, 24–26; Ezekiel 28:17; 1 Peter 3:3, 4.**

“With [many] dress and love of the world are given the first place in the heart. But in His word, God has shown us that these things must not hold the first place.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, December 31, 1896.

- b. What appeal is made to worshipers of today’s automotive “horses”? **Psalm 20:5–7.**

- c. In an age of rapidly advancing technology, how are we warned of carrying to excess our zeal for the latest “toys” at the expense of our spiritual growth? **Ecclesiastes 7:29.**

“God has given us many things in this life upon which to bestow our affections, but when we carry to excess that which in itself is lawful we become idolaters. The law of God requires that every son and daughter of Adam shall love Him supremely, and anything that separates our affections from God and lessens our interest in eternal things is an idol.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, December 31, 1896.

“Every cherished pleasure which diverts the mind from God must be sacrificed. In many families the mantel shelves, stands, and tables are filled with ornaments and pictures. Albums filled with photographs of the family and their friends are placed where they will attract the attention of visitors. Thus the thoughts, which should be upon God and heavenly interests, are brought down to common things. Is not this a species of idolatry?”—*The Review and Herald*, May 14, 1901.

- d. What is our only hope against a widespread deception which we are better off avoiding? **Psalm 37:35–37; 1 Timothy 6:6–11.**

“In order to obtain money, or to be first, some will betray the most precious cause of truth. There is an intense spirit that takes possession of mind and character. A man turns his whole being into accomplishing some great thing; an unquenchable thirst takes possession of the whole man to obtain money.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 18, p. 129.

4. THE DESIRE FOR LUXURY AND EASE

- a. How serious are God's warnings to us against modern idolatry? Ezekiel 14:3, 4.

"Men may not bow down to idols of wood and stone, but all who love the things of the world and take pleasure in unrighteousness have set up idols in their hearts. The majority of professed Christians are serving other gods besides the Lord. Pride and luxury are cherished, idols are set up in the sanctuary, and her holy places are polluted."—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 238.

"Those who use the precious time given them by God—time that has been purchased at an infinite cost—in embellishing their homes for display, in following the fashions and customs of the world, are not only robbing their own souls of spiritual food, but are failing to give God His due. The time thus spent in the gratification of selfish desires might be employed in obtaining a knowledge of the word of God, in cultivating our talents, that we might render intelligent service to our Creator.

"Can we look into the mirror of God's law and feel no condemnation in this respect? Let each look over his past experience and inquire of his own heart, How much of the precious time granted me by God might I have saved and used in doing good, in learning of God, in seeking to become a pillar in His house, and a light and blessing to the world?"—*The Youth's Instructor*, December 31, 1896.

- b. What understanding can help to free us from slavery to idols? Colossians 3:5–7.

"It is not necessary to bow down to a stock or a stone to serve idols. Whatever takes possession of the heart, commanding its service, that is not the dictation of the Holy Spirit, assumes the form of an idol. How many hearts through a wrong course of allowing the mind to become concentrated upon a certain course of action to distinguish self, will come under the head of covetousness, which is idolatry!"—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 18, p. 129.

5. GETTING OUR PRIORITIES STRAIGHT

- a. How and why must we seek deliverance from harboring a divided heart? Psalm 86:11; Exodus 20:4–6.

"The people of God are not half awake. A stupor seems to be paralyzing their sensibilities. Brethren and sisters, lay aside your love of self, your love of ease and of dress, and let your contributions flow into the treasury. Each of us will soon have to stand before the Judge of all the earth, to answer for the deeds done in the body. All will then have to give an account for the good they might have done, but did not do. . . . In God's great book is recorded every dollar that has been needlessly expended for selfish gratification. The means thus used was the Lord's, and you made self an idol and neglected the souls of your fellowmen for whom Christ died. If the money expended for changeable suits of apparel and for adornment had passed into the treasury of God, houses of worship could have been built, halls could have been hired for mission purposes, and where there is now one missionary in the field there might have been one hundred. Who will have to render an account for this great lack of funds?"—*The Review and Herald*, October 13, 1885.

- b. In summary, how are we to break away from the slavish bands that are subtly robbing us of our God-given liberty in Christ? Luke 14:27, 33; Galatians 5:1.

"Whatever shall draw away the heart from God must be given up. Mammon is the idol of many. The love of money, the desire for wealth, is the golden chain that binds them to Satan. Reputation and worldly honor are worshiped by another class. The life of selfish ease and freedom from responsibility is the idol of others. But these slavish bands must be broken. We cannot be half the Lord's and half the world's. We are not God's children unless we are such entirely."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 44.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTION

1. Without looking to everyone else's weaknesses, from what idols do I need to be free and what steps do I need to take in order to be delivered from them?

First Sabbath Offering

for the Sabbath School Development Project: in Micronesia



The Federated States of Micronesia is composed of 607 islands in the North Pacific Ocean, just east of the Philippines. Even though it covers a large portion of the Pacific, most of the area is water. The combined land area is only 702 km sq, roughly four times the size of the District of Columbia (Washington, USA). The population of over 100,000 achieved independence from the United States in 1986.

The work of Reformation has been concentrated primarily in the South Pacific islands, such as French Polynesia, Western Samoa, and Fiji. But the Macedonian cry is being heard from the islands in the North Pacific as well. A proper mission development in Micronesia will also make it easier to spread the gospel in Palau, the Marshall Islands, the Northern Marianas Islands and Kiribati.

English is the official and common language, but it will also be necessary to provide materials in the main local languages, including Trukese, Pohnpeian, Yapese, Kosrean, Ulithian, Woleaian, Nukuoro, and Kapingamarangi.

Micronesia, unlike its neighbors in the South Pacific, has remained relatively isolated from the world. While there is potential for a tourist industry, there is little air transportation outside the country. This has hindered the spreading of the gospel to this part of the Pacific. But by the grace of God the Lord has opened the way. Now you can help by supporting this newly developing mission. Please give generously when the offering is collected this month.

David Zic, GC Sabbath School Department Secretary

PROJECT 00X

Freedom From Irreverent Speech

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain” (Exodus 20:7).

“This [third] commandment . . . forbids us to use the name of God in a light or careless manner, without regard to its awful significance.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 306.

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 201–203.
Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, pp. 66–69.

Sunday

April 30

1. UTTERING THE NAME OF THE ALMIGHTY

- a. What should we keep in mind about God’s holy name? Exodus 20:7; Psalm 111:9.

“All should meditate upon [God’s] majesty, His purity and holiness, that the heart may be impressed with a sense of His exalted character; and His holy name should be uttered with reverence and solemnity.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 307.

“What faint views some have of the holiness of God, and how much they take His holy and reverend name in vain, without realizing that it is God, the great and terrible God, of whom they are speaking.”—*Early Writings*, p. 70.

- b. What are we admonished about when praying to a holy God? Matthew 6:7. What is the duty of ministers and parents in this regard? Ezekiel 44:23.

“Many use careless and irreverent expressions, which grieve the tender Spirit of the Lord and cause their petitions to be shut out of heaven.”—*Early Writings*, p. 70.

2. TAKING OATHS

- a. Against what type of oaths are we warned? Matthew 5:33–37; James 5:12.

“[The Jews did not] shrink from perjury so long as it was veiled by some technical evasion of the law. Jesus condemned their practices, declaring that their custom in oath taking was a transgression of the commandment of God.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 66.

“[Matthew 5:37, R.V. quoted.] These words condemn all those meaningless phrases and expletives that border on profanity. They condemn the deceptive compliments, the evasion of truth, the flattering phrases, the exaggerations, the misrepresentations in trade, that are current in society and in the business world.”—*Ibid.*, p. 68.

“Some exaggerate in their language. Some swear by their own life; others swear by their head—as sure as they live; as sure as they have a head. Some take heaven and earth to witness that such things are so. Some hope that God will strike them out of existence if what they are saying is not true. It is this kind of common swearing against which Jesus warns His disciples.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 201.

- b. What does Christ's example reveal about the judicial oath? Matthew 26:63, 64.

“Our Saviour did not . . . forbid the use of the judicial oath, in which God is solemnly called to witness that what is said is truth and nothing but the truth. Jesus Himself, at His trial before the Sanhedrin, did not refuse to testify under oath. . . .

“But if there is anyone who can consistently testify under oath, it is the Christian. He lives constantly as in the presence of God, knowing that every thought is open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do; and when required to do so in a lawful manner, it is right for him to appeal to God as a witness that what he says is the truth, and nothing but the truth.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 66, 67.

3. OTHER TYPES OF SWEARING

- a. What are some of the more subtle forms of swearing? James 4:11, 12.

“ ‘Let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one’ (Matthew 5:37, R.V.). . . . If these words of Christ were heeded, they would check the utterance of evil surmising and unkind criticism; for in commenting upon the actions and motives of another, who can be certain of speaking the exact truth? How often pride, passion, personal resentment, color the impression given! A glance, a word, even an intonation of the voice, may be vital with falsehood. Even facts may be so stated as to convey a false impression.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 67, 68.

- b. What attitude is totally unacceptable in God's church? Matthew 5:21, 22.

“O, how much there is in the Church [cherishing anger against a brother or sister] today! [Matthew 5:22 quoted.] God has a controversy with that man. He thinks he has occasion for feeling angry, for calling his brother *raca*, ‘vain fellow’; but these passionate words are a savor of death unto death. He who utters them is not cooperating with God but with Satan. In heaven his wicked railing is placed in the same list as swearing.”—*The Review and Herald*, April 1, 1902.

- c. What call comes to every believer in Christ? Colossians 4:6; Ephesians 4:29.

“Everything that Christians do should be as transparent as the sunlight. Truth is of God; deception, in every one of its myriad forms, is of Satan; and whoever in any way departs from the straight line of truth is betraying himself into the power of the wicked one. Yet it is not a light or an easy thing to speak the exact truth. We cannot speak the truth unless we know the truth; and how often preconceived opinions, mental bias, imperfect knowledge, errors of judgment, prevent a right understanding of matters with which we have to do! We cannot speak the truth unless our minds are continually guided by Him who is truth.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 68.

4. SWEARING AT HOME

- a. What do we too often overlook in our family circle? Psalm 101:2; Proverbs 16:32.

“Sometimes the spirit of fretting and complaining invades the domestic circle. The will may be crossed in little things which a person of a cheerful spirit would scarcely notice; but the fretter is annoyed and chafed as though he had suffered an aggravated grievance, and the passionate reproaches he utters against the person, who, he thinks, has committed some blunder, are scarcely less sinful than swearing.”—*The Signs of the Times*, June 12, 1884.

“Among the members of many families there is practiced the habit of saying loose, careless things; and the habit of tantalizing, of speaking harsh words, becomes stronger and stronger as it is indulged, and thus many objectionable words are spoken that are after Satan’s order, and not after the order of God. Should those who indulge in speaking words of passion, study the Guide Book, and with a serious mind seek to know its requirements, and to do them—should they make practical its injunctions—what a transformation would there be in the conduct and conversation! Burning words of passion should never be spoken; for in the sight of God and holy angels they are as a species of swearing. . . .

“Every relation in life, every position of responsibility, every affection and habit, every emotion of the mind, is to be brought to the great standard of righteousness, the commandments of God, which are exceeding broad.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, September 20, 1894.

- b. What qualities should we conscientiously cultivate? Proverbs 16:24; 2 Peter 3:14.

“You may look surprised at [your duty to place a firm hold upon the bridle of your tongue as well as your thoughts], but it is a species of swearing to be constantly irritated and irritating others by your faultfinding and gloomy reflections. These fits of indigestion are trying, but hold fast to the bridle that you will not swear to those who are your best friends or to those who are your enemies.”—*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 410.

5. VICTORY THROUGH OUR SAVIOUR

- a. Describe the liberty that comes as we gain the victory over complaining. Romans 8:21.

“Men and women who fret and chafe will lose the affections of their friends, for they are forever stinging some one. Whatever their position, however exalted their profession, they can have no decided influence for good until they remedy this defect. They have complained long enough to test the matter, and prove that complaints do not make them any happier or their way any easier.”—*The Signs of the Times*, June 12, 1884.

- b. What hope can we glean from the experience of Peter? Matthew 26:33–35, 69–75; 1 John 2:1, 2.

“Mark the course pursued by Peter. His fall was not instantaneous, but gradual. Step after step was taken, until the poor, sinful one denied his Lord with cursing and swearing. He denied the Man of Sorrows in his acquaintance with grief. . . .

“But Peter was not left in hopelessness. The look that Christ had given him brought a ray of hope to the erring disciple. He read there the words, ‘Peter, I am sorry for you. Because you are sorry and repent, I forgive you.’ While Peter’s soul was passing through such deep humiliation, through the awful struggle with satanic agencies, he remembered the words of Christ, ‘I have prayed for thee’ (Luke 22:32); and they were to him a precious assurance.

“The watchcare of Christ for Peter was the cause of his restoration. Satan could do nothing against the all-powerful intercession of Christ. And the prayer that Christ offered for Peter He offers in behalf of all who are humble and contrite in heart.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, December 15, 1898.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTION

1. In what ways may I be actually guilty of swearing, and how can I change this?

Freedom From Our Daily Toil

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it” (Exodus 20:8–11).

“Should the work continue on the Sabbath, the same as on the other days of the week, when would the workers receive time for spiritual refreshing and physical rest?”—*Sermons and Talks*, vol. 2, p. 227.

Suggested Readings: *Education*, pp. 250–252.
Testimonies, vol. 4, pp. 247–254.
Ibid., vol. 6, pp. 349–368.

Sunday

May 7

1. A TOKEN OF GOD’S MERCY

- a. **When did God make the Sabbath, and why? Genesis 2:1–3; Mark 2:27, 28.**

“God is merciful. His requirements are reasonable, in accordance with the goodness and benevolence of His character. The object of the Sabbath was that all mankind might be benefited. Man was not made to fit the Sabbath; for the Sabbath was made after the creation of man, to meet his necessities. After God had made the world in six days, He rested and sanctified and blessed the day upon which He rested from all His work which He had created and made. He set apart that special day for man to rest from his labor, that, as he should look upon the earth beneath and the heavens above, he might reflect that God made all these in six days and rested upon the seventh; and that, as he should behold the tangible proofs of God’s infinite wisdom, his heart might be filled with love and reverence for his Maker.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 582, 583.

Monday

May 8

2. A SYMBOL OF LOVE

- a. **What is the spiritual meaning of the Sabbath? Exodus 31:16, 17; Ezekiel 20:20.**

“As the Sabbath was the sign that distinguished Israel when they came out of Egypt to enter the earthly Canaan, so it is the sign that now distinguishes God’s people as they come out from the world to enter the heavenly rest. The Sabbath is a sign of the relationship existing between God and His people, a sign that they honor His law. It distinguishes between His loyal subjects and transgressors.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 349, 350.

“The Sabbath is a golden clasp that unites God and His people.”—*Ibid.*, p. 351.

“We are not merely to observe the Sabbath as a legal matter. We are to understand its spiritual bearing upon all the transactions of life.”—*Ibid.*, p. 353.

- b. **Why should our heart abound with gratitude every Sabbath? Hebrews 4:4, 5, 9–11.**

“God . . . saw that the wants of man required a day of rest from toil and care, that his health and life would be endangered without a period of relaxation from the labor and anxiety of the six days.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 532, 533.

“Weekly [God] brings to us the Sabbath, the day which He has blessed and sanctified for the good of man. We enjoy freedom from the world’s hurry and bustle and wearisome labor, and may worship God.”—*The Review and Herald*, January 4, 1881.

- c. **What is a major benefit we receive by investing in this time with God? Mark 6:31.**

“Our heavenly Father desires through the observance of the Sabbath to preserve among men a knowledge of Himself. He desires that the Sabbath shall direct our minds to Him as the true and living God, and that through knowing Him we may have life and peace.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 349.

3. TO SANCTIFY AND EDUCATE

- a. Why is the Sabbath so vital to our spiritual growth? Exodus 31:13; Ezekiel 20:12.

“The Sabbath given to the world as the sign of God as the Creator is also the sign of Him as the Sanctifier. The power that created all things is the power that re-creates the soul in His own likeness. To those who keep holy the Sabbath day it is the sign of sanctification. True sanctification is harmony with God, oneness with Him in character. It is received through obedience to those principles that are the transcript of His character. And the Sabbath is the sign of obedience. He who from the heart obeys the fourth commandment will obey the whole law. He is sanctified through obedience.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 350.

“This sanctification makes the loyal subject like his great Head, Jesus Christ. He is brought into peculiar and eternal relations to the Saviour on condition that he maintains his allegiance to the end.”—*The Signs of the Times*, November 22, 1899.

“Sanctification is the measure of our completeness. The moment we surrender ourselves to God, believing in Him, we have His righteousness. We realize that we have been redeemed from sin, and we appreciate the sacrifice made to purchase our freedom.”—*The Review and Herald*, July 25, 1899.

- b. How does faithful Sabbathkeeping promote happiness and progress in our Christian walk? Isaiah 58:13, 14; 2 Peter 3:18.

“The value of the Sabbath as a means of education is beyond estimate. Whatever of ours God claims from us, He returns again, enriched, transfigured, with His own glory. The tithe that He claimed from Israel was devoted to preserving among men, in its glorious beauty, the pattern of His temple in the heavens, the token of His presence on the earth. So the portion of our time which He claims is given again to us, bearing His name and seal. . . . The Sabbath is a sign of creative and redeeming power; it points to God as the source of life and knowledge; it recalls man’s primeval glory, and thus witnesses to God’s purpose to recreate us in His own image.”—*Education*, p. 250.

4. HEARTS KNIT TOGETHER

- a. How do we know that Christ our Example intends that we worship together as His body on the Sabbath day? Leviticus 23:3; Luke 4:16; Hebrews 10:25.

“The Sabbath was made for man, to be a blessing to him. . . . It is necessary that the people of God assemble to talk of Him, to interchange thoughts and ideas in regard to the truths contained in His word, and to devote a portion of time to appropriate prayer.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 583.

- b. Why is the Sabbath a real blessing for families seeking to draw closer together? Psalms 84:4; 118:24.

“The Sabbath and the family were alike instituted in Eden, and in God’s purpose they are indissolubly linked together. On this day more than on any other, it is possible for us to live the life of Eden. It was God’s plan for the members of the family to be associated in work and study, in worship and recreation, the father as priest of his household, and both father and mother as teachers and companions of their children. But the results of sin, having changed the conditions of life, to a great degree prevent this association. Often the father hardly sees the faces of his children throughout the week. He is almost wholly deprived of opportunity for companionship or instruction. But God’s love has set a limit to the demands of toil. Over the Sabbath He places His merciful hand. In His own day He preserves for the family opportunity for communion with Him, with nature, and with one another.”—*Education*, pp. 250, 251.

“The Sabbath should be made so interesting to our families that its weekly return will be hailed with joy. In no better way can parents exalt and honor the Sabbath than by devising means to impart proper instruction to their families and interesting them in spiritual things, giving them correct views of the character of God and what He requires of us in order to perfect Christian characters and attain to eternal life. Parents, make the Sabbath a delight, that your children may look forward to it and have a welcome in their hearts for it.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 585.

5. A BLESSING AND DELIGHT

- a. What wondrous promises are assured to faithful Sabbathkeepers, especially in the last days? Isaiah 56:1–5; 58:13, 14; Psalm 27:5.

“All heaven was represented to me as beholding and watching upon the Sabbath those who acknowledge the claims of the fourth commandment and are observing the Sabbath. Angels were marking their interest in, and high regard for, this divine institution. Those who sanctified the Lord God in their hearts by a strictly devotional frame of mind, and who sought to improve the sacred hours in keeping the Sabbath to the best of their ability, and to honor God by calling the Sabbath a delight—these the angels were specially blessing with light and health, and special strength was given them. But, on the other hand, the angels were turning from those who failed to appreciate the sacredness of God’s sanctified day, and were removing from them their light and their strength.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 704, 705.

“Some will urge that the Lord is not so particular in His requirements; that it is not their duty to keep the Sabbath strictly at so great loss, or to place themselves where they will be brought in conflict with the laws of the land. But here is just where the test is coming, whether we will honor the law of God above the requirements of men. This is what will distinguish between those who honor God and those who dishonor Him. Here is where we are to prove our loyalty. The history of God’s dealings with His people in all ages shows that He demands exact obedience. . . .

“If parents allow their children to receive an education with the world, and make the Sabbath a common day, then the seal of God cannot be placed upon them. They will be destroyed with the world; and will not their blood rest upon the parents? But if we faithfully teach our children God’s commandments, bring them into subjection to parental authority, and then by faith and prayer commit them to God, He will work with our efforts; for He has promised it. And when the overflowing scourge shall pass through the land, they with us may be hidden in the secret of the Lord’s pavilion.”—*Historical Sketches of SDA Missions*, pp. 216, 217.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTION

1. How can I better utilize my Sabbath hours to promote more love for God and for others?

Freedom From Filial Ingratitude

“Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee” (Exodus 20:12).

“Cultivate affection for your parents; seek to make them happy. This is the duty that God has enjoined upon you.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, April 21, 1886.

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 390–405.
Messages to Young People, pp. 443–451.

1. FAR-REACHING IN SCOPE

- a. Whom is our respect for the fifth commandment designed to encompass? Exodus 20:12; Leviticus 19:32; Hebrews 13:17.

“Parents are entitled to a degree of love and respect which is due to no other person. God Himself, who has placed upon them a responsibility for the souls committed to their charge, has ordained that during the earlier years of life, parents shall stand in the place of God to their children. And he who rejects the rightful authority of his parents is rejecting the authority of God. The fifth commandment requires children not only to yield respect, submission, and obedience to their parents, but also to give them love and tenderness, to lighten their cares, to guard their reputation, and to succor and comfort them in old age. It also enjoins respect for ministers and rulers and for all others to whom God has delegated authority.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 308.

- b. Why is the fifth commandment so beneficial for us? Ephesians 6:1, 2.

“This, says the apostle, ‘is the first commandment with promise’ (Ephesians 6:2). To Israel, expecting soon to enter Canaan, it was a pledge to the obedient, of long life in that good land; but it has a wider meaning, including all the Israel of God, and promising eternal life upon the earth when it shall be freed from the curse of sin.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 308.

2. A CHALLENGE BEFORE US

- a. What sobering points must we realize about this commandment?
2 Timothy 3:1, 2.

“Our youth profess to be among those who keep the commandments of God, and yet many of them neglect and break the fifth commandment; and the rich blessing promised to those who observe this precept, and honor father and mother, cannot be fulfilled to them. Unless they repent of their sin, and reform their practices and character through the grace of Christ, they will never enter into the new earth, upon which they may live eternally. Those who do not respect and love their parents will not respect and honor God. Those who fail to bear the test, who fail to honor their God-fearing parents, fail to obey God, and therefore cannot expect to come into the land of promise.”—*The Youth's Instructor*, June 22, 1893.

- b. When and with whom does success in this commandment begin?
Malachi 4:5, 6.

“The poor little children are thought not to know or understand a correction at eight, nine, or ten months old. They begin to show stubbornness very young, and it is cherished and nourished by their parents until these evil passions grow. . . .

“I saw that you were rearing children to be cut down by the destroying angel unless you speedily turn square about and be faithful to your children. Think you God can cover or hide and preserve children whose iniquity He hates? No, never. God hates the passion, evil tempers, etc., manifested by unruly children. He cannot save them in the time of trouble. They will be eternally lost. Parents, negligent, unfaithful parents, their blood will be upon you. . . .

“Parents, it is your duty to have your children under perfect subjection, having all their passions and evil tempers perfectly subdued. I saw that if they were carried to the house of God, they should be made to know where they are, . . . where God meets with His people. They should be kept quiet, from all play and running about. . . .

“Parents, correct your children. Commence while they are young, when impressions can be made early and their evil temper subdued before it takes deep root and is strengthened with their strength.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 9, pp. 321–323.

3. ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

- a. What can parents today learn from the paternal care of Abraham?
Genesis 18:19.

“It is because the home training is defective that the youth are so unwilling to submit to proper authority. I am a mother. I know whereof I speak when I say that youth and children are not only safer but happier under wholesome restraint than when following their own inclinations. Parents, your sons and daughters are not properly guarded. They should never be permitted to go and come when they please, without your knowledge and consent. The unbounded freedom granted to children at this age has proved the ruin of thousands. How many are allowed to be in the streets at night; and parents are content to be ignorant of the associates of their children. Should a limb be broken or fractured, parents will try every means that love or wisdom can suggest to restore the afflicted member to soundness. This is right, it is their duty; but the Lord requires that still greater tact, patience, and persevering effort be employed to remedy blemishes of the soul.”—*Atlantic Union Gleaner*, September 6, 1905.

“Parents, unless you know that their surroundings are unexceptionable, do not permit your children to go into the streets after nightfall to engage in outdoor sports, or to meet other boys for amusement. If this rule be rigidly enforced, obedience to it will become habitual, and the desire to transgress will soon cease.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 63.

- b. In what two experiences does Abraham's son, Isaac, beautifully shine as a refreshing example of belief in the fifth commandment? Genesis 22:1, 2, 9–11; 24:2–4, 7, 66, 67.

“Isaac was the victim, the lamb to be slain. Had Isaac chosen to resist his father's command, he could have done so, for he was grown to manhood. . . .

“Isaac at first heard the purpose of God with amazement amounting to terror. He considered the matter fully. . . . He comforted his father, by assuring him that God conferred honor upon him, in accepting him as a sacrifice. . . . He encouraged the almost nerveless hands of his father to bind the cords which confined him to the altar.”—*The Signs of the Times*, April 1, 1875.

4. PART OF THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

- a. In what aspect of life do the young seem to most often resist parental guidance—and at what varied consequences to themselves? Judges 14:1–3, 20; 2 Corinthians 6:14.

“Young men and young women associating together, having weak principles and but little faith and devotion, become easily infatuated with each other and fancy they are in love. Their constant attention to one another soon has its influence, and spiritual things are not appreciated. . . . It is due their parents that they consult them in so important a step, and that they be aided by the experience and mature judgment of their parents. The young men or young women do not look beneath the surface; they see each other under the most favorable circumstances, and do not detect those traits of character which the mother, in her earnest interest for her son or daughter, sees, and knows will make or mar the happiness of those she loves.”—*Selections From Testimonies to the Managers and Workers in Our Institutions*, pp. 40, 41.

“A young man who enjoys the society and wins the friendship of a young lady unbeknown to her parents does not act a noble Christian part toward her or toward her parents. Through secret communications and meetings he may gain an influence over her mind, but in so doing he fails to manifest that nobility and integrity of soul which every child of God will possess. In order to accomplish their ends, they act a part that is not frank and open and according to the Bible standard, and prove themselves untrue to those who love them and try to be faithful guardians over them. Marriages contracted under such influences are not according to the word of God. He who would lead a daughter away from duty, who would confuse her ideas of God’s plain and positive commands to obey and honor her parents, is not one who would be true to the marriage obligations.”—*The Review and Herald*, January 26, 1886.

- b. Having experienced the bitterness of self-willed choices in marriage, what sound advice was the writer of Proverbs inspired to declare? Proverbs 15:20; 19:26; 30:17.
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5. IN THEIR SUNSET YEARS

- a. What reveals Jesus’ attitude toward His earthly parents? Luke 2:51; John 19:25–27.
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- b. What earnest appeal does the Lord likewise extend to each of us? Proverbs 23:22.
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“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. Many care not whether their parents are comfortable or uncomfortable. Their conduct reveals them to be thankless children, and their ingratitude is ‘sharper than a serpent’s tooth.’ Their indifference to their parents imbitters the life of father and mother, and brings down their gray hairs in sorrow to the grave. Through selfishness, self-love, unkindness, they have created an unwholesome atmosphere about their souls, and steeled their hearts to all good, until they are utterly loveless and unfeeling. . . . 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 thought that children have ministered to the comfort of their parents is a thought of satisfaction all through the life, and will especially bring them joy when they themselves are in need of sympathy and love. Those whose hearts are filled with love will regard the privilege of smoothing the passage to the grave for their parents an inestimable privilege. They will rejoice that they had a part in bringing comfort and peace to the last days of their loved parents.”—*The Review and Herald*, November 15, 1892.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTION

1. Have I come short in obeying the fifth commandment? How can I improve in this area?

Freedom From Hatred Toward Others

“Thou shalt not kill” (Exodus 20:13).

“The spirit of Christ will lead us to hate sin, while we are willing to make any sacrifice to save the sinner.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 171.

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 240–246.
The Desire of Ages, pp. 353, 354, 466.

Sunday

May 21

1. THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT

- a. How are we warned against the spirit of fighting and bloodshed carried on even by many who profess the name of Christ? Matthew 26:51–53; John 18:36.

“Oh, how greatly Christ is dishonored by those who, professing to be Christians, disgrace the name they bear by failing to make their lives correspond to their profession, by failing to treat one another with the love and respect that God expects them to reveal in kind words and courteous acts! The powers from beneath are stirred with deep intensity. War and bloodshed are the result. The moral atmosphere is poisoned with cruel, horrible doings. The spirit of strife is spreading; it abounds in every place.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 248, 249.

- b. What are some of the implications of the sixth commandment? Exodus 20:13.

“All acts of injustice that tend to shorten life; the spirit of hatred and revenge, or the indulgence of any passion that leads to injurious acts toward others, or causes us even to wish them harm (for ‘whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer,’ 1 John 3:15); a selfish neglect of caring for the needy or suffering; all self-indulgence or unnecessary deprivation or excessive labor that tends to injure health—all these are, to a greater or less degree, violations of the sixth commandment.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 308.

Monday

May 22

2. MANY GRAVES DUG WITH TEETH

- a. How are we warned against becoming slaves to gradual forms of self-murder? Romans 8:12, 13; Proverbs 23:1–3.

“To take one’s life instantly is no greater sin in the sight of heaven than to destroy it gradually, but surely. Persons who bring upon themselves sure decay, by wrong-doing, will suffer the penalty here, and without a thorough repentance, will not be admitted into heaven hereafter any sooner than the one who destroys life instantly.”—*A Solemn Appeal*, p. 72.

“Many have lost their lives by overeating or through demoralizing dissipation, and souls have been lost by this means.”—*The Review and Herald*, November 21, 1878.

“By showing contempt for the laws of nature, men and women lay the foundation for misery and suffering. Through the weakness of their moral powers they are abject slaves to passion. Some are digging their graves with their own teeth.”—*This Day With God*, p. 123.

“God cannot let His Holy Spirit rest upon those who are enfeebling themselves by gluttony.”—*The Review and Herald*, May 8, 1883.

“Overeating is the sin of this age.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 454.

- b. What else often causes health problems even among vegetarians? Proverbs 25:16, 27.

“Persons may kill themselves with sweets. More harm is done to children by sweets than by anything else.”—*Sermons and Talks*, vol. 1, p. 12.

- c. How is the sixth commandment violated in other ways? Proverbs 18:21.

“We think with horror of the cannibal who feasts on the still warm and trembling flesh of his victim; but are the results of even this practice more terrible than are the agony and ruin caused by misrepresenting motive, blackening reputation, dissecting character?”—*Education*, p. 235.

3. AMONG THOSE WE LOVE

- a. How are we to avoid the real danger of hurting those we love most? Ecclesiastes 7:9.
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“Guard against a hasty spirit, which prompts hasty words and actions. Resentment, which is indulged because you think you have been misused, is the spirit of Satan and leads to great moral evil. When you are controlled by a hasty spirit you deprive your reason, for the time, of the power of regulating your words and your conduct, while you make yourselves responsible for all the evil consequences. That which is done in haste and anger is not excusable. The action is bad. You may, by a single word spoken in haste and passion, leave a sting in the hearts of friends which may never be forgotten. Unless you exercise self-control you will be a most unhappy couple. You each ascribe your unhappy life to the faults of the other; but do this no more. Make it a rule never to speak a word of censure to each other, but commend and praise whenever you can.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 243.

- b. How are professedly religious parents too often guilty of actually destroying the spirituality of their own children? Ephesians 6:4.
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“Great care should be exercised by parents lest they treat their children in such a way as to provoke obstinacy, disobedience, and rebellion. Parents often stir up the worst passions of the human heart because of their lack of self-control. They correct them in a spirit of anger, and rather confirm them in their evil ways and defiant spirit, than influence them in the way of right. By their own arbitrary spirit they thrust their children under satanic influences, instead of rescuing them from the snares of Satan by gentleness and love. How sad it is that many parents who profess to be Christians are not converted! Christ does not abide in their hearts by faith. While professing to be followers of Jesus, they disgust their children and, by their violent, unforgiving temper, make them averse to all religion. It is little wonder that the children become cold and rebellious toward their parents. And yet children are not excused for disobedience because of their parents’ unsanctified ways.”—*The Review and Herald*, November 15, 1892.

4. BANISHING THE SPIRIT OF STRIFE

- a. What vivid example reveals how people can think they are free, yet actually be deluded by anger—even on supposedly religious pretenses? John 8:31–40.
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“Murder first exists in the mind. He who gives hatred a place in his heart is setting his feet in the path of the murderer, and his offerings are abhorrent to God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 310.

“[The Pharisees and rulers] were in the worst kind of bondage—ruled by the spirit of evil. Every soul that refuses to give himself to God is under the control of another power. He is not his own. He may talk of freedom, but he is in the most abject slavery. He is not allowed to see the beauty of truth, for his mind is under the control of Satan.”—*Ibid.*, p. 466.

- b. On a seemingly different note, what types of popular activities in today’s society are also way out of harmony with Christian love as shown in Romans 12:10, and why?
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“I have not been able to find one instance where [Christ] educated His disciples to engage in amusement of football or pugilistic games, to obtain physical exercise.”—*Special Testimonies on Education*, p. 192.

“Turn to another scene. In the streets of the city is a party gathered for a bicycle race. In this company also are those who profess to know God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. But who that looks upon the exciting race would think that those who were thus exhibiting themselves were the followers of Christ? Who would suppose that any of that party felt their need of Christ? Who would think they realized the value of their time and their physical powers as gifts from God, to be preserved for His service? Who thinks of the danger of accident, or that death may be the result of their wild chase? Who have prayed for the presence of Jesus, and the protection of the ministering angels? Is God glorified by these performances? Satan is playing the game of life for these souls, and he is well pleased with that which he sees and hears.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 83, 84.

- c. In what sense is the sixth commandment not to be merely passive in nature, but indeed active? Matthew 5:43, 44; Romans 12:19, 20.
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5. GAINING THE VICTORY

- a. How does the apostle John summarize the spirit of murder? 1 John 2:9–11; 3:14, 15; 4:20, 21. With this in view, for what realities in life must we all prepare ourselves?

“To every soul things will come to provoke, to stir up anger, and if you are not under the full control of God, you will be provoked when these things come. But the meekness of Christ calms the ruffled spirit, controls the tongue, and brings the whole being into subjection to God. Thus we learn how to bear with the censure of others. We shall be misjudged, but the precious ornament of a meek and quiet spirit teaches us how to bear, how to have pity for those who utter hasty, unadvised words. . . . Rather suffer wrong than do wrong.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 274.

- b. What must we realize about anger? Ephesians 4:26, 27; Hebrews 12:14, 15.

“It is true there is an indignation that is justifiable, even in the followers of Christ. When they see that God is dishonored, and His service brought into disrepute, when they see the innocent oppressed, a righteous indignation stirs the soul. Such anger, born of sensitive morals, is not a sin. But those who at any supposed provocation feel at liberty to indulge anger or resentment are opening the heart to Satan. Bitterness and animosity must be banished from the soul if we would be in harmony with heaven.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 310.

- c. What points should we keep in mind when tempted by the spirit of anger? Matthew 6:14, 15; Proverbs 19:11.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What scriptures reveal that war is inappropriate during Christ's kingdom of grace?
2. Under what circumstances do I tend to fall prey to the spirit of anger?

First Sabbath Offering

Headquarters for Uganda



On the northern shores of Lake Victoria in Central Africa is situated the country of Uganda. Suffering through a period of political strife through most of the second half of the last century, the country is now in a period of relative peace. This provides a unique opportunity from the Lord to move forward in the mission work for this country.

Slightly smaller than the state of Oregon in U.S., Uganda is bordered by Rwanda, Congo, Sudan and Kenya as well as sharing Lake Victoria with Tanzania. The population exceeds 27 million.

In order to better fulfill the gospel commission it is necessary to build a proper center for the work in this country. The small chapels at present can serve only their small local mission work, but a center is needed to properly coordinate resources across the country.

The prevailing AIDS epidemic in this country adds urgency to the need for spreading the gospel. Life expectancy overall is barely 51 years. AIDS infects over 4% of the population with over half a million people known to be infected. In 2003 almost 80,000 people died of the disease. Other major infectious diseases plaguing the country include bacterial diarrhea, hepatitis A, typhoid fever, malaria, African trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness), and schistosomiasis.

The mixed ethnic population means that lesson materials need to be translated into a variety of local languages. English is the official language taught in the schools and used to transact legal business; however, the native languages Ganda and Luganda are the most widely used. Other Niger-Congo languages, Nilo-Saharan languages, Swahili, and Arabic are also used, especially in the countryside.

We would like to thank you in advance for your help in finishing this project.

David Zic, GC Sabbath School Department Secretary

Freedom From Moral Impurity

“Thou shalt not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14).

“Every Christian will have to learn to restrain his passions and be controlled by principle. Unless he does this he is unworthy of the Christian name.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 347.

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 346–353, 439–489.
Child Guidance, pp. 113–116.

Sunday

May 28

1. THE SPECIAL SIN OF THIS AGE

- a. **What are some scriptural admonitions that carry special weight in the climate of these last days, so similar to the days of Noah? 2 Peter 2:9–14.**

“Immorality abounds everywhere. Licentiousness is the special sin of this age. Never did vice lift its deformed head with such boldness as now. The people seem to be benumbed, and the lovers of virtue and true goodness are nearly discouraged by its boldness, strength, and prevalence. The iniquity which abounds is not merely confined to the unbeliever and the scoffer. Would that this were the case, but it is not. Many men and women who profess the religion of Christ are guilty. Even some who profess to be looking for His appearing are no more prepared for that event than Satan himself. They are not cleansing themselves from all pollution. They have so long served their lust that it is natural for their thoughts to be impure and their imaginations corrupt. It is as impossible to cause their minds to dwell upon pure and holy things as it would be to turn the course of Niagara and send its waters pouring up the falls.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 346.

“Sensuality has quenched the desire for holiness and has withered spirituality. The soul is held in lowest bondage.”—*Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p. 129.

Monday

May 29

2. FLEE THE PERVASIVE PERIL

- a. **What is Christ’s standard regarding the seventh commandment? Matthew 5:27, 28.**
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- b. **How is self-discipline for this evil illustrated? Matthew 5:29, 30; Psalm 101:3.**
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- c. **Why is adherence to the seventh commandment particularly important for believers in the three angels’ messages? Romans 2:22, 23; 1 Corinthians 10:8, 11, 12.**

“Not all who profess to keep the commandments of God possess their bodies in sanctification and honor. The most solemn message ever committed to mortals has been entrusted to this people, and they can have a powerful influence if they will be sanctified by it. They profess to be standing upon the elevated platform of eternal truth, keeping all of God’s commandments; therefore, if they indulge in sin, if they commit fornication and adultery, their crime is of ten-fold greater magnitude than is that of the classes . . . who do not acknowledge the law of God as binding upon them. In a peculiar sense do those who profess to keep God’s law dishonor Him and reproach the truth by transgressing its precepts.

“It was the prevalence of this very sin, fornication, among ancient Israel, which brought upon them the signal manifestation of God’s displeasure. His judgments then followed close upon their heinous sin; thousands fell, and their polluted bodies were left in the wilderness.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 450, 451.

- d. **What are the perils of sensuality? Proverbs 2:11, 16–19; 5:3–5; 6:23–26, 32, 33.**

“Some employ their powers to evil purposes. The subtle poison of sensuality courses through their veins, and it finds little obstruction in its way. It is fascinating, bewitching. The mind, which, with due regard for moral integrity, is capable of the highest degree of cultivation and literary excellence, is often degraded to administer to lust.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 521.

3. AN ENTANGLING SNARE

- a. Why is the sin of adultery such an insidious snare? Proverbs 7:7–27; 1 Peter 2:11.

“The word of God will make but a feeble impression upon those whose faculties are benumbed by any sinful gratification. The heart cannot preserve consecration to God while the animal appetites and passions are indulged at the expense of health and life.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 303.

- b. How and why must freedom from sensuality be gained? Romans 8:12, 13; 13:14.

“All the passions of man, if properly controlled and rightly directed, will contribute to his physical and moral health, and insure to him a great amount of happiness. The adulterer, the fornicator, and the incontinent, do not enjoy life. There can be no true enjoyment for the transgressor of God’s law. The Lord knew this, therefore He restricts man. He directs, commands, and He positively forbids.

“But many are so far deceived by the devil that they think that they themselves can excel the great God in providing ways and means for human happiness. They charge their unhappiness to the prohibitions contained in the law of the ten commandments; and if they can in any way feel released from the claims of the law of God, they will be free and happy indeed. . . .

“The work they should engage in is to put away sin, and every impurity, and work righteousness. Their remaining in willing ignorance of the claims of the law of God will not shield them from the penalty to be inflicted in consequence of its violation. . . .

“Man may pass on awhile, and conceal the fact that he is an adulterer; yet God has His eye upon him. He marks the man. He cannot conceal his crimes from God. He may apparently conduct himself properly before his family and before the community, and be esteemed as a good man. But does he deceive himself in thinking there is not knowledge with the Most High? He is exposing his corruption to the view of the Majesty of Heaven.”—*The Review and Herald*, March 8, 1870.

4. NOT ONLY A TEMPTATION OF YOUTH

- a. What are some ways in which even older, married persons are to maintain a safeguard on their purity? Psalm 141:3, 4; 2 Corinthians 6:17, 18.

“There are families where the husband and father has not preserved that reserve, that dignified, godlike manhood which a follower of Jesus Christ should. He has failed to manifest kind, tender, courteous acts due to his wife, whom he has promised before God and angels to love and respect and honor while they both shall live. The girl employed to do the work may be free and somewhat forward in her attentions to dress his hair and be affectionately attentive, and he is pleased, foolishly pleased. And he is not as demonstrative in his attention and love as he once was to his wife. Be sure Satan is at work here. Respect your hired help, treat them kindly, considerately, but go no farther. Let your deportment be such that there will be no advances to familiarity from your help. If you have words of kindness and acts of courtesy to give, it is always safe to give them to your wife. It will be a great blessing to her, and will bring happiness to her heart which will be reflected back upon you again. Also, the wife may let her sympathies and interest and affection go out to another man beside her husband. He may be a member of the family, whom she makes a confidant, and to whom she relates her troubles and perhaps her private family matters. She shows a preference for his society.

“Satan is at the bottom of this; and unless she can be alarmed and stopped just where she is, he will lead her to ruin. My sisters, you cannot observe too great caution in this matter. If you have tender, loving words and kindly attentions to bestow, let them be given him you have promised before God and angels to love, honor, and respect, while you both shall live. Oh, how many lives are made bitter by the walls being broken down which enclose the privacies of every family calculated to preserve purity and sanctity! A third person is taken into the confidence of the wife, and her private family matters are laid open before the special friend. This is the device of Satan to estrange the hearts of the husband and wife. Oh, that this would cease! What a world of trouble would be saved! Lock the faults of one another within your own hearts. Tell your troubles alone to God. He can give you right counsel and sure consolation, which will be pure, having no bitterness in it.”—*A Solemn Appeal*, pp. 155–157.

5. VICTORY IS FREEDOM

- a. What are some keys to victory over sensuality? Galatians 5:16, 24; Colossians 3:5.

“None can glorify God in their body, as He requires, while they are living in transgression of the law of God. If the body violates the seventh commandment, it is through the dictation of the mind. If the mind is impure, the body will naturally engage in impure acts. Purity cannot exist in the soul of one who yields his body to impure acts. If the body is serving lust, the mind cannot maintain consecration to God. To preserve a sanctified mind, the body must be preserved in sanctification and honor. The mind will then serve the law of God, and yield willing obedience to all its claims. Then, with the apostle, such can yield their members as instruments of righteousness unto God. ‘Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof’ (Romans 6:12). The freedom which the apostle describes as the privilege of Christ’s followers will never be experienced by those who delight to trample under foot the law of God. The freedom and blessedness expressed in the following words will be experienced by that class who yield obedience to the law of Jehovah: ‘There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit’ (Romans 8:1).”—*The Review and Herald*, March 8, 1870.

- b. How is the seventh commandment to affect us? 1 Thessalonians 4:3–5; Job 31:1.

“The Holy Spirit will not come upon the man whose mind is a highway for sensuality. We cannot afford to make a mock at sin. We cannot afford to say to the sinner, It shall be well with thee. We can only point the transgressor to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.”—*The Signs of the Times*, August 1, 1892.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTION

1. In what ways do I need to come up to a higher standard on the seventh commandment?

Freedom From the Spirit of Theft

“Thou shalt not steal” (Exodus 20:15).

“The purest joy is not found in riches nor where covetousness is always craving, but where contentment reigns and where self-sacrificing love is the ruling principle.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 382.

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 243–251, 408–413. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 466–485.

1. MANY FORMS OF ROBBERY

- a. What is the eighth commandment, and what does it entail? Exodus 20:15.

“The eighth commandment condemns manstealing and slave dealing, and forbids wars of conquest. It condemns theft and robbery. It demands strict integrity in the minutest details of the affairs of life. It forbids overreaching in trade, and requires the payment of just debts or wages. It declares that every attempt to advantage oneself by the ignorance, weakness, or misfortune of another is registered as fraud in the books of heaven.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 309.

- b. Why does the thief have more to lose than the one whom he or she has robbed? Jeremiah 2:26 (first part).

“The child who plays truant from school, the youth who is slothful in his studies, the clerk or apprentice who fails of serving the interests of his employer, the man in any business or profession who is untrue to his highest responsibilities, may flatter himself that, so long as the wrong is concealed, he is gaining an advantage. But not so; he is cheating himself. The harvest of life is character, and it is this that determines destiny, both for this life and for the life to come.”—*Education*, pp. 108, 109.

2. A HIGHER STANDARD

- a. What are some points that Sabbathkeepers should especially keep in mind with regard to the eighth commandment? Romans 2:21.

“Those who make so high a profession, and who number themselves among the peculiar people of God, saying by their profession that they are zealous of good works, should be noble and generous, and should ever manifest a disposition to favor their brethren instead of themselves, and should give their brethren the best chance. Generosity begets generosity. Selfishness begets selfishness. . . .

“By some the work of six days has been carried into the seventh. One hour, and even more, has often been taken from the commencement and close of the Sabbath.

“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, pp. 149, 150.

- b. How may we be guilty of actually robbing God? Malachi 3:8, 9.

“There has been a fearful withholding from God and, as a result, the withdrawal of His special blessing. My brethren and sisters, I entreat you to look carefully to this matter; learn where you have robbed the Lord in tithes and offerings. Let not the record stand against you in the books of heaven. Repent, and show your repentance by your works. Make up the deficiencies without delay.”—*The Review and Herald*, February 9, 1886.

- c. What is the command and promise regarding tithes and offerings? Malachi 3:10–12.
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3. EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES

- a. How may employers be guilty of theft? James 5:4; 1 Timothy 5:17, 18.

- b. In what ways may employees also be guilty of theft? Song of Solomon 2:15; Ephesians 6:5–7.

“Those who shun every duty not directly specified to be theirs will bring into their spiritual life the very same disposition to do as little as possible. Just the same spirit and principles that one brings into the common day labour for his employer, will be brought into the work and cause of God. Were employees as careful to work diligently and thoroughly during all the hours of labor as they are not to exceed the specified time, there would be an entirely different showing from that which is generally made.”—*The Bible Echo*, August 24, 1896.

“The cross of Christ cuts to the root of all unholy passions and practices. Whatever the nature of your work, you will carry the principles of Christ into your labor and identify yourself with the task given into your hands. Your interest will be one with that of your employer. If you are paid for your time, you will realize that the time for work is not your own, but belongs to the one who pays you for it. If you are careless and extravagant, wasting material, squandering time, failing to be painstaking and diligent, you are registered in the books of heaven as an unfaithful servant.”—*The Review and Herald*, September 22, 1891.

- c. Why should all take heed to the comments of Sister White made following a tour of a church health institution? Ephesians 4:28.

“As my guide conducted me through the different departments, the lack of economy everywhere stirred my soul with grief, for I had a full sense of the debt hanging over the institution. The petty dishonesty, the selfish neglect of duty, were marked by the recording angel. The waste permitted here and there, in the course of a year amounts to a considerable sum. Much of this might be saved by the helpers. . . . This is the fruit of selfishness and is registered against them under the heading of unfaithfulness.”—*Counsels on Health*, p. 420.

4. THE SPIRIT OF THE WHOLE LAW

- a. In what sense can the eighth commandment be intertwined with the seventh? James 2:10.

“‘Thou shalt not steal’ was written by the finger of God upon the tables of stone; yet how much underhand stealing of affections is practiced and excused. A deceptive courtship is maintained, private communications are kept up until the affections of one who is inexperienced, and knows not whereunto these things may grow, are in a measure withdrawn from her parents and placed upon him who shows by the very course he pursues that he is unworthy of her love. The Bible condemns every species of dishonesty, and demands right-doing under all circumstances. . . .

“The curse of God rests upon many of the ill-timed, inappropriate connections that are formed in this age of the world. If the Bible left these questions in a vague, uncertain light, then the course that many youth of today are pursuing in their attachments for one another would be more excusable. But the requirements of the Bible are not halfway injunctions; they demand perfect purity of thought, of word, and of deed. We are grateful to God that His word is a light to the feet, and that none need mistake the path of duty.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 102, 103.

- b. What tragic history illustrates how the eighth commandment can be intertwined with other commandments? 2 Samuel 15:6.

“Absalom, [David’s] own son, whom he loved above all his children, rebelled against him. By his remarkable beauty, winning manners, and pretended kindness, he cunningly stole the hearts of the people. He did not possess benevolence at heart, but was ambitious and, as his course shows, would resort to intrigue and crime to obtain the kingdom. He would have returned his father’s love and kindness by taking his life. . . .

“This unnatural warfare, arising in his own house, and the rebel being his own son, seemed to confuse and weaken [David’s] calm judgment. And knowing that this evil had been predicted by the prophet, and that he had brought it upon himself by his transgressing the commandments of God, destroyed his skill and former unequalled courage.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4a, pp. 89, 90.

5. NO LONGER WEIGHED DOWN

- a. Why should we seek to be free from the spirit of theft which leads only to bondage? Luke 12:16–24; 1 Timothy 6:10, 11.

“The length and happiness of life does not consist in the amount of our earthly possessions. This foolish rich man in his supreme selfishness had laid up for himself treasures that he could not use. He had lived only for himself. He had over-reached in trade, had made sharp bargains, and had not exercised mercy or the love of God. He had robbed the fatherless and widow, and defrauded his fellowmen, to add to his increasing stock of worldly possessions. He might have laid up his treasure in heaven in bags that wax not old; but through his covetousness he lost both worlds. Those who humbly use to the glory of God the means that He has entrusted to them will receive their treasure by and by from the Master’s hand with the benediction: ‘Well done, good and faithful servant: . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 402.

- b. What should be our attitude toward material things? Acts 20:35; Philippians 2:3, 4.

“In proportion as the love of Christ fills our hearts and controls our lives, covetousness, selfishness, and love of ease will be overcome, and it will be our pleasure to do the will of Christ, whose servants we claim to be. Our happiness will then be proportionate to our unselfish works, prompted by the love of Christ.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 382.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the most subtle forms of theft?
2. What types of theft are especially tempting to Sabbathkeepers?
3. How can the driving spirit which triggers all theft be overcome?

Freedom From a Lying Tongue

“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour” (Exodus 20:16).

“From the lives of God’s children, the bright light of purity, of honesty, of unselfishness, is to shine forth.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 12, p. 147.

Suggested Readings: *Education*, pp. 235, 236.
Testimonies, vol. 5, pp. 175–177.

Sunday

June 11

1. DECEIT COMES AWFULLY EASILY

- a. What is the ninth commandment, and what does it entail? Exodus 20:16.

“[Exodus 20:16 quoted.] False speaking in any matter, every attempt or purpose to deceive our neighbor, is here included. An intention to deceive is what constitutes falsehood. By a glance of the eye, a motion of the hand, an expression of the countenance, a falsehood may be told as effectually as by words. All intentional overstatement, every hint or insinuation calculated to convey an erroneous or exaggerated impression, even the statement of facts in such a manner as to mislead, is falsehood. This precept forbids every effort to injure our neighbor’s reputation by misrepresentation or evil surmising, by slander or tale bearing. Even the intentional suppression of truth, by which injury may result to others, is a violation of the ninth commandment.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 309.

- b. Out of seven abominable things that the Lord hates, how many relate to speech? Proverbs 6:16–19.

“Satan is working to crowd himself in everywhere. He would put asunder very friends. There are men who are ever talking and gossiping and bearing false witness, who sow the seeds of discord and engender strife. Heaven looks upon this class as Satan’s most efficient servants.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 607.

Monday

June 12

2. CHRIST’S FOLLOWERS TO TAKE HEED

- a. How did Christ summarize the way His followers are to speak? Matthew 5:37.

“[Matthew 5:37 R.V. quoted.] These words condemn all those meaningless phrases and expletives that border on profanity. They condemn the deceptive compliments, the evasion of truth, the flattering phrases, the exaggerations, the misrepresentations in trade, that are current in society and in the business world. They teach that no one who tries to appear what he is not, or whose words do not convey the real sentiment of his heart, can be called truthful.

“If these words of Christ were heeded, they would check the utterance of evil surmising and unkind criticism; for in commenting upon the actions and motives of another, who can be certain of speaking the exact truth? How often pride, passion, personal resentment, color the impression given! A glance, a word, even an intonation of the voice, may be vital with falsehood. Even facts may be so stated as to convey a false impression. And ‘whatsoever is more than’ truth, ‘is of the evil one.’

“Everything that Christians do should be as transparent as the sunlight. Truth is of God; deception, in every one of its myriad forms, is of Satan; and whoever in any way departs from the straight line of truth is betraying himself into the power of the wicked one. Yet it is not a light or an easy thing to speak the exact truth. We cannot speak the truth unless we know the truth; and how often preconceived opinions, mental bias, imperfect knowledge, errors of judgment, prevent a right understanding of matters with which we have to do! We cannot speak the truth unless our minds are continually guided by Him who is truth.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 68.

- b. What are some specific admonitions given regarding our speech? Proverbs 26:18, 19; Ephesians 5:1–4.

- c. How does our speech affect the whole church? Ephesians 4:25, 29.

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

3. GOSSIP IS DECEPTIVE

- a. What serious warnings are we given with regard to speech? Leviticus 19:16; Proverbs 18:21; 21:6.

“When sisters who are given to talk get together, Satan is generally present; for he finds employment. He stands by to excite the mind and make the most of the advantage he has gained. He knows that all this gossip, and tale-bearing, and revealing of secrets, and dissecting of character, separate the soul from God. It is death to spirituality and a calm religious influence. Sister U sins greatly with her tongue. She ought by her words to have an influence for good, but she frequently talks at random. Sometimes her words put a different construction upon things than they will bear. Sometimes there is exaggeration. Then there is misstatement. There is no intention to misstate, but the habit of much talking and talking upon things that are unprofitable has been so long cherished that she has become careless and reckless in her words, and frequently does not know what she is stating herself. This destroys any influence for good she might have. It is time there was an entire reform in this respect. Her society has not been prized as it would have been had she not indulged in this sinful talking.

“Christians should be careful in regard to their words. They should never carry unfavorable reports from one of their friends to another, especially if they are aware that there is a lack of union between them. It is cruel to hint and insinuate, as though you knew a great deal in regard to this friend or that acquaintance of which others are ignorant. Such hints go further, and create more unfavorable impressions, than to frankly relate the facts in an unexaggerated manner. What harm has not the church of Christ suffered from these things! The inconsistent, unguarded course of her members has made her weak as water. Confidence has been betrayed by members of the same church, and yet the guilty did not design to do mischief. Lack of wisdom in the selection of subjects of conversation has done much harm. The conversation should be upon spiritual and divine things; but it has been otherwise. If the association with Christian friends is chiefly devoted to the improvement of the mind and heart, there will be no after regrets, and they can look back on the interview with a pleasant satisfaction. But if the hours are spent in levity and vain talking, and the precious time is employed in dissecting the lives and character of others, the friendly intercourse will prove a source of evil, and your influence will be a savor of death unto death.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 185–187.

4. FAR-REACHING EFFECTS

- a. What basic truths must be borne in mind about everything we say? James 3:2–10.

“The tongue, which is kept so little under the control of the human agent, is to be bridled by strong conscientious principles, by the law of love toward God and man.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 64.

- b. **How can our influence as parents either promote or, on the other hand, actually hinder the development of honesty in our children? Philippians 4:8; Proverbs 20:17.**

“Some fond mothers suffer wrongs in their children which should not be allowed in them for a moment. The wrongs of the children are sometimes concealed from the father. Articles of dress or some other indulgence is granted by the mother with the understanding that the father is to know nothing about it, for he would reprove for these things.

“Here a lesson of deception is effectually taught the children. Then if the father discovers these wrongs, excuses are made and but half the truth told. The mother is not open-hearted. She does not consider as she should that the father has the same interest in the children as herself, and that he should not be kept ignorant of the wrongs or besetments that ought to be corrected in them while young. Things have been covered. The children know the lack of union in their parents, and it has its effect. The children begin young to deceive, cover up, tell things in a different light from what they are to their mother, as well as their father. Exaggeration becomes habit, and blunt falsehoods come to be told with but little conviction or reproof of conscience.

“These wrongs commenced by the mother’s concealing things from the father, who has an equal interest with her in the character their children are forming. The father should have been consulted freely. All should have been laid open to him. But the opposite course, taken to conceal the wrongs of the children, encourages in them a disposition to deceive, a lack of truthfulness and honesty.

“The only hope of these children, whether they profess religion or not, is to be thoroughly converted. Their whole character must be changed. Thoughtless mother, do you know, as you teach your children, that their whole religious experience is affected by their teaching when young? . . . Encourage in them a truthful, honest disposition. Let them never have occasion to doubt your sincerity and exact truthfulness.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 156, 157.

5. HOPE IS AVAILABLE

- a. From where is good, honest speech derived? Matthew 12:33–37; Titus 1:15.
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- b. What should be our prayer with regard to speech and how will we be rewarded by it? Psalms 120:2; 141:3; Proverbs 22:11.
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“Begin at once the work of soul-purification. Put from you all nonsense, and refrain from trifling words. Every word you speak is as a seed that will germinate and produce either good or bad fruit, according to its character. The words we utter encourage the feelings that prompted them. Exaggeration is a terrible sin.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, June 27, 1895.

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

“Christ is ever ready to impart of His riches, and we should gather the jewels that come from Him, that, when we speak, these jewels may drop from our lips.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 174.

- c. What is a significant characteristic of the 144,000 sealed saints? Colossians 3:9, 10; Revelation 14:1–5.
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“Those who have learned of Christ will ‘have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness’ (Ephesians 5:11). In speech, as in life, they will be simple, straightforward, and true; for they are preparing for the fellowship of those holy ones in whose mouth ‘was found no guile’ (Revelation 14:5).”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 69.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTION

1. In what ways may I be guilty of violating the ninth commandment?

Freedom From Covetousness

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s” (Exodus 20:17).

“Put away all selfishness, all covetousness. By faith in the blood of Jesus cleanse your soul from moral defilement. Full and free salvation is offered to everyone who will fall on the Rock and be broken.”—*The General Conference Bulletin*, October 1, 1899.

Suggested Readings: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 493–498.
Testimonies, vol. 1, pp. 474–485.

1. THE PROBLEM WITH COVETING

- a. What is the root of all sins, and how only can it be destroyed? Exodus 20:17; Luke 3:8, 9 (first part).
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“The tenth commandment strikes at the very root of all sins, prohibiting the selfish desire, from which springs the sinful act. He who in obedience to God’s law refrains from indulging even a sinful desire for that which belongs to another will not be guilty of an act of wrong toward his fellow creatures.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 309.

“Satan is constantly working to foster in men worldliness, covetousness, and avarice, that he may ruin their souls and hinder the work of God. The Lord is seeking to cultivate in us gratitude and liberality. He desires to free us from selfishness which is so offensive to Him, because so contrary to His character.”—*The Review and Herald*, November 10, 1896.

“We must feel a special interest in looking upon the things of others—not to covet them, not to find fault with them, not to remark upon them and present them in a false light, but to do strict justice in all things to our brethren and all with whom we have any dealings. . . . The Spirit of Christ will lead His followers to be concerned, not only for their success and advantage, but to be equally interested for the success and advantage of their brethren.”—*Ibid.*, September 4, 1900.

2. A SLIMY TRACK REMAINS

- a. How is the very nature of covetousness described? Matthew 13:22.

“We have before us the fearful doom of Achan, of Judas, of Ananias and Sapphira. Back of all these we have that of Lucifer, the ‘son of the morning’ (Isaiah 14:12), who, coveting a higher state, forfeited forever the brightness and bliss of heaven. And yet, notwithstanding all these warnings, covetousness abounds.

“Everywhere its slimy track is seen. It creates discontent and disension in families; it excites envy and hatred in the poor against the rich; it prompts the grinding oppression of the rich toward the poor. And this evil exists not in the world alone, but in the church. How common even here to find selfishness, avarice, overreaching, neglect of charities, and robbery of God ‘in tithes and offerings’ (Malachi 3:8). Among church members ‘in good and regular standing’ there are, alas! many Achans. Many a man comes stately to church, and sits at the table of the Lord, while among his possessions are hidden unlawful gains, the things that God has cursed. For a goodly Babylonish garment, multitudes sacrifice the approval of conscience and their hope of heaven. Multitudes barter their integrity, and their capabilities for usefulness, for a bag of silver shekels. The cries of the suffering poor are unheeded; the gospel light is hindered in its course; the scorn of worldlings is kindled by practices that give the lie to the Christian profession; and yet the covetous professor continues to heap up treasures.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 496, 497.

- b. What may be characterizing too many of us with regard to covetousness? Ezekiel 33:31.

“Many flatter themselves that their desire for gain is that they may help the cause of God. Some promise that when they have gained such an amount then they will do good with it and advance the cause of present truth. But when they have realized their expectations, they are no more ready to help the cause than before. They again pledge themselves that after they purchase that desirable house or piece of land, and pay for it, then they will do a great deal with their means to advance the work of God. But as the desire of their heart is attained, they have far less disposition than in the days of their poverty to aid in the advancement of the work of God.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 477.

3. GRASPING, GRASPING

- a. How did one decision of Solomon demoralize the nation? 2 Chronicles 2:3–7, 11–14.

“In the tribes of Judah and of Dan there were men who were regarded as especially ‘cunning’ in the finer arts. For a time these men remained humble and unselfish; but gradually, almost imperceptibly, they lost their hold upon God and His truth. They began to ask for higher wages because of their superior skill. . . .

“It was to these apostates that Solomon looked for a master workman to superintend the construction of the temple on Mount Moriah. Minute specifications, in writing, regarding every portion of the sacred structure, had been entrusted to the king, and he should have looked to God in faith for consecrated helpers, to whom would have been granted special skill for doing with exactness the work required. But Solomon lost sight of this opportunity to exercise faith in God. . . . Thus at the head of Solomon’s company of workmen there was placed an unsanctified man, who demanded large wages because of his unusual skill.

“Hiram’s efforts were not prompted by a desire to render his highest service to God. He served the god of this world—Mammon. The very fibers of his being had been inwrought with principles of selfishness which were revealed in his grasping for the highest wages. And gradually these wrong principles came to be cherished by his associates. As they labored with him day after day, and yielded to the inclination to compare his wages with their own, they began to lose sight of the holy character of their work, and to dwell upon the difference between their wages and his. Gradually they lost their spirit of self-denial, and fostered a spirit of covetousness. The result was a demand for higher wages, which was granted them.

“The baleful influences set in operation by the employment of this man of a grasping spirit permeated all branches of the Lord’s service and extended throughout Solomon’s kingdom. . . . In the far-reaching effects of these influences may be traced one of the principal causes of the terrible apostasy of him who once was the wisest of mortals. The king was not alone in his apostasy. Extravagance and corruption were to be seen on every hand. The poor were oppressed by the rich; the spirit of self-sacrifice in God’s service was well nigh lost. . . .

“The spirit of covetousness, of seeking for the highest position and the highest wage, is rife in the world. The old-time spirit of self-denial and self-sacrifice is too seldom met with. But this is the only spirit that can actuate a true follower of Jesus.”—*The Review and Herald*, January 4, 1906.

4. THE NEED TO OVERCOME

- a. What does Inspiration declare of the need to overcome covetousness and envy? Proverbs 27:4; 28:16; Luke 12:15.

“If you are ambitious for self-preferment, you must overcome, or you will never enter the courts of heaven. Let selfishness be rooted out of the heart. In the life of Christ there was no fiber of selfishness. He lived not to please Himself. Are you covetously retaining the means which God would have you use to His name’s glory? Bear in mind that covetousness is idolatry. If you keep the commandments of God, you will love God with all your heart, mind, might, soul, and strength, and your neighbor as yourself.”—*The Review and Herald*, November 30, 1897.

- b. What should be our prayer in this regard? Psalm 119:36.

- c. How only can we be a people of integrity before the world? Colossians 3:5; Hebrews 13:5.

- d. What should we keep in mind regarding our need to obey God’s law as a whole? Hebrews 4:14–16.

“One says, ‘My conscience does not condemn me in not keeping the commandments of God.’ But in the Word of God we read that there are good and bad consciences, and the fact that your conscience does not condemn you in not keeping the law of God does not prove that you are uncondemned in His sight. Take your conscience to the Word of God and see if your life and character are in accordance with the standard of righteousness which God has there revealed. You can then determine whether or not you have an intelligent faith and what manner of conscience is yours. The conscience of man cannot be trusted unless it is under the influence of divine grace. Satan takes advantage of an unenlightened conscience, and thereby leads men into all manner of delusions, because they have not made the Word of God their counselor. Many have invented a gospel of their own in the same manner as they have substituted a law of their own for God’s law. The gospel of Jesus Christ gives full recognition to the law of God, and declares the authority of God supreme. The gospel of Christ requires penitence for sin; and sin is the transgression of the law.”—*The Review and Herald*, September 3, 1901.

5. GENUINE FREEDOM

- a. How can God’s creative power provide us with real freedom from sin? John 8:36.

“The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan’s control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 466.

“Take Jesus as your partner. Ask of Him help to keep God’s law. He will be to you a safeguard and counselor, a guide that will never mislead.”—*The Review and Herald*, January 26, 1897.

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

“Obedience to God is liberty from the thralldom of sin, deliverance from human passion and impulse. Man may stand conqueror of himself, conqueror of his own inclinations.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 131.

- b. What is God’s strategy for our deliverance? James 1:21–25; 2:11, 12; Romans 8:21.

“God is drawing those who listen to conscience, take counsel with right reason and with God, and surrender their will, their entire prospects, with the whole heart to God. It is then, and then only, that the human agents learn how wayward is the heart, and how unwilling to give up all for Jesus. But if they walk in the light while they have the light, they soon receive another kind of knowledge; they learn how mighty is the grace of God to subdue selfishness, and expel it from the soul. Truth has the ascendancy. There is a sense of spiritual freedom, they rejoice in the glorious liberty of the sons and daughters of God.”—*General Conference Daily Bulletin*, January 28, 1893.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTION

1. In what areas of life may I still be enslaved by covetousness and all its ensuing sins, and how can I cooperate with God to be made free?

FIRST SABBATH OFFERINGS



April 1
for the Work
Development
in Argentina
(See p. 4.)

May 6
for the Sabbath School
Development Project:
in Micronesia
(See p. 30.)



June 3
Headquarters
for Uganda
(See p. 51.)