

ELDER'S DIGEST

A Quarterly Resource for local Church Elders Vol. 8 No. 1

**"Our time belongs
to God. . .
the value of time
is beyond computation."**

see article

**How to make the most
of your time.**



Elder's Digest

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“Melt Down the Saints and Put Them into Circulation”

James A. Cress



God’s original plan for humanity included meaningful work. In Eden, His intention for human happiness included employing the capabilities that He had bestowed upon His creatures. “God said to them, be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have

dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Gen. 1:28 Amplified). “Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it” (Gen. 2:15 Amplified).

Adventists, who affirm the importance of the fourth commandment’s injunction to “rest” on the seventh day (Ex. 20:8-11), need to remember that the same commandment enjoins working the other six days. Indolence is as much disobedience as irreverence.

So it is with unused spiritual gifts. The New Testament tells us, “But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore He says, When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men” (Eph. 4:7-8 NASB). To the extent church members refuse to employ their spiritual gifts in service to the Savior, to that extent they disobey our Lord’s intention. To the extent we allow the spiritual gifts of new members to remain undiscovered or underemployed in service to the Savior, to that extent we propagate disobedience and encourage spiritual poverty.

“Many of us do not realize how important it is to serve others. The Holy Spirit equips us to minister. If we do not give it away, we get spiritually puffy” says Robert Tuttle. E. Glenn Hinson adds: “In spite of its affirmation of the priesthood of all believers, there is perhaps no function which Protestantism has so much neglected. Not only have Protestant laymen not assumed the priestly role, but until recently even the clergy have shunned it. A major task for Protestant churches today, not merely the clergy, but the whole church, is to understand and accept their priesthood.”

The need for the church at large—and the Adventist church in particular—is to remember that the call to salvation is a call to discipleship. That means a call to active ministry by every believer. A believer who is not ministering is, essentially, not a believer. No excuse is sufficient. Examples abound of infirm, housebound individuals who have used letters and telephone calls to serve others effectively. “There is no such thing as being a member of the church without also being a *minister* and a *missionary* . . . Essentially, the layman and the clergyman do not belong to different categories . . . The layman has no less responsibility for fulfilling his ministry than has the pastor.”

R. C. Halverson says: “The authentic impact of Jesus Christ in the world is the collective influence of individual Christians right where they are, day in, day out. Doctors, lawyers, merchants, farmers, teachers, accountants, laborers, students, politicians, athletes, clerks, executives . . . quietly, steadily, continually,

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From Daniel to Revelation

Debra J. Hicks

Something unusual happened on one of the recent trips from Tennessee to California. My body clock never made the transition from Eastern to Pacific time. I normally have no trouble sleeping straight through the night until daybreak, but during this particular week I awakened at 3 o'clock sharp every morning.

I decided to make the best of it by going out to my friend's living room, where I could comfortably have my morning devotions and do some stretching exercises without awakening anybody else.

The trouble with that plan was that my friend's two birds were sleeping in the living room, and turning on the light switch had the same effect as pressing the play button on a high-amp cockatiel stereo system.

To my chagrin, turning the light back off wasn't equivalent to pressing the stop button. The damage had already been done. I had roused the little songbirds from their slumber, and there was no turning back. (I was relieved to find out later that my hosts are heavy sleepers and that the early-morning concert was a private one!)

This ritual took place every morning for eight days, and during that time I learned a lot by observing the two enthusiastic amateur musicians.

My friend Donna had named the older bird Daniel because when she got him 10 years ago, she prayed that God would keep the little captive safe from the two hungry cats that shared his home. Years later Revelation, the younger bird, got his name because Donna's husband had purchased him secretly one day, and when she came home from work and found him in her office, it was indeed a revelation!

Both birds are great singers, but Daniel is undoubtedly more experienced. He has a repertoire of three songs: *Here, Kitty Kitty, Dixie*, and another number he composed himself that incorporates tunes his owners have whistled to him through the years. Revelation does his best to imitate his companion, but invariably he either skips a few key notes or else he gets creative and starts to slur two different songs together.

A couple of hours into my first three-song cockatiel concert, the choleric side of my personality kicked in, and it was all I could do to refrain from correcting Revelation when he strayed from the score.

On several occasions I marveled at Daniel's incredible patience. Not once did he chime in and try to correct his understudy. Instead, he calmly waited so Revelation could have his full turn in the spotlight. Another thing I thought was neat was that no matter how many times Revelation sang a song incorrectly, Daniel never forgot the proper tune.

Apparently those three songs have been so indelibly etched in his memory that even countless hours of hearing them wrong does not confuse his tiny birdbrain. He simply continues to sing the songs correctly when it's his turn to perform, perhaps confident that Revelation will improve in time.

If we could learn to treat new believers the way Daniel mentors Revelation, I bet many more people would begin imitating the Christian life!

Successful teachers know that the most effective method of instruction combines two key elements: example and practice. People can pick up a lot by

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A Courteous Church

*An interview with Jetro Carvalho,
first elder of the church of Botafogo,
Rio do Janeiro, Brazil.*



Jetro Fernandes de Carvalho was born into an Adventist family. In 1958 he was ordained elder at the Marambaia Seventh-day Adventist church in Belém do Pará, Brazil. In 1961 he transferred to the Central Church in Recife, where he served as first elder for many years.

In 1982 he moved to Rio do Janeiro and was first elder of the church in Botafogo. Today he serves in the same capacity at the church of Barra, Tijuca, Brazil.

Jetro is married to Naara, a teacher. They have two children. He is a physician specialized in general surgery and gastroenterology. In this interview he tells the reader of Elder's Digest of his experience with new converts and how to evangelize in a big city.

Elder's Digest: Which are the main needs of the local church?

Jetro: The main goal of the local church should be to have a working program that has in mind the salvation of souls. When all the departments plan their activities with this objective in mind, the church fulfills its mission.

To bring souls to Christ, the personal touch of every officer, their creativity and methods to be used should remain the number one program of the church. The greatest challenge of a pastor is to win the support of all the church officers to this program. The second need of the local church is to develop the members' respective gifts or talents for the projected program. This is the pastor's most important assignment.

The third need of the church is to teach its members to sing. When the hymns are well chosen and the congregation sings with enthusiasm and from the heart, all the sermons will be well received.

Elder's Digest: Where do you get the material for your sermons?

Jetro: In the first place the Bible and always the Bible. I follow Paul's example: "For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2), and obey the command given by Timothy: "Preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:2). Secondly I use the writings of the spirit of prophecy.

Elder's Digest: What doctrine do you like to preach the most?

Jetro: The doctrine of justification by faith, because I need it every moment. Statistically my needs are the same as those of any other member; what is good for me is good for others. When I talk about my personal experience gives me courage to preach, and my fellow members enjoy it.

Elder's Digest: What concerns should a preacher have about giving a vigorous and attractive message?

Jetro: A preacher should be serious and objective, showing conviction in his expositions and that he believes what he says. Never present a subject that you don't master. A sermon is appealing when it touches your needs and is vigorous when it bends your pride.

Elder's Digest: Which are the major challenges of your congregation?

Jetro: The church of Barra, in Tijuca, is located in a neighborhood of well-educated people. Taking our message to them is our major challenge. The internal matters of the church are not challenges, it's our duty to obey the Lord's bidding.

Elder's Digest: How do you approach apostasy?

Jetro: Apostasy in the Seventh-day Adventist Church is inevitable. Two years after baptism members don't leave the church through apostasy per se, but yes, as a crisis of identity, meaning that the new member discovers that this is not exactly what he wanted.

Elder's Digest: What can the elders do to help the church put an end to this problem?

Jetro: Many are inclined to say that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is cold, with no warmth, not attending to its members. This is far from the truth, and it is time to stop it. What I see is a courteous church, where the members try to be friendly and solicitous. The saying: "The apostate leave through the back door," is not confirmed by experience. They leave through the front door. No one stops them. What the elders can do is to stimulate the church and themselves to gain souls to Christ, and invite those who left, to return.

Elder's Digest: What have you done to help the people that are interested in studying the Bible?

Jetro: I am in charge of two small groups; one meets on Tuesdays, at my condominium, with people invited by my wife, and the other meets on Friday, at a sister's residence with people she invites.

Elder's Digest: What is the "Favorite Brother"?

Jetro: When I served as elder in the Central Church of Recife, about 30 years ago, I began a program called: "Favorite Brother". Its purpose was to avoid apostasy by nurturing the new member. When they develop roots, they don't leave. Friendship, activities, Bible studies and prayer make a new member a veteran. There is no assurance that a member will stay in the church; basically this is the philosophy of the "Favorite Brother". How does it work? After baptism, the new member chooses an older member as a favorite brother. The older member sees that the new one has a Bible, a hymn book, a Sabbath school quarterly or an *Adventist Review*. When one or the other is absent from church, the partner should know if he can be of any help. Get together often, to study, to pray or to

program how to save souls for Christ. The new member brings vitality and the old one shares his experiences.

Elder's Digest: What do you think about the formation of small groups in a big city like Rio do Janeiro?

Jetro: Small groups, as a set of tools for evangelism, are the best option for this city. It quickly establishes friendships. Guarantees good attendance in an evangelistic effort, prepares the participants for inevitable duplication, and it offers a place for talent development. A church that does not do this, does not progress.

Elder's Digest: How do you reconcile work, family and taking care of church programs?

Jetro: I keep a dynamic agenda that is modified during the day according to established priorities, in such a way, that the church will not suffer. Sometimes I have to cancel or postpone patients' appointments in order not to disregard my church.

Elder's Digest: In what areas can an elder help the pastor to carry out his work?

Jetro: a) Be a friend and inform the pastor of what happens in the church; b) Help the church see the pastor as the number one member; c) Recognize that only the pastor gives credibility and authority to any program; d) Try to clear the pastor's path of any criticism, resistance, rejection, rebellion, etc; e) Visit the pastor and pray for him and his family, and f) Perform your duties as a dedicated elder.

Elder's Digest: How can the elders cooperate in the visitation program?

Jetro: Recruit members who like to visit. Organize a systematic visitation program. Write or send a note to members at the time of their baptismal anniversary. Make it a point to speak with the not-so-well known members, before or after the service. Friday after sunset, call the sick and lonely ones. Before Sabbath school visit with the members, and observe the rules of good visitation. ■

Translation by Gladys Ríos.

The Undershepherds

Orley M. Berg

The pastor is the shepherd of the flock, the local elder the undershepherd. Together they have the responsibility of caring for the sheep. On the Sabbath day they help to provide proper spiritual nourishment, inspiration, and encouragement through Bible study, worship, and fellowship. The Sabbath should be a high experience for every Seventh-day Adventist Christian. Each Sabbath should be a step in spiritual growth, another milestone on the road to holiness. Each service should contribute toward the great objective: "To make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

In previous issues we have discussed some of the ways in which we can make the Sabbath services more meaningful and helpful. However, we can never feel that our responsibility to the flock begins and ends with the Sabbath. What happens through the week may actually determine the salvation or loss of many souls. Here is where the care of the shepherd and his undershepherds becomes exceedingly important.

The missing sheep

The anxious shepherd will be very careful to notice on the Sabbath day which of the sheep are missing. His heart will go out to the absent ones, particularly to those whom he knows to be experiencing spiritual struggles and reverses.

It is easy to report to the church board that Brother Blank has not been in church for six months, a year, or perhaps several years, but what has been done during that period to encourage the missing member to return?

Visiting among former members reveals that many of them could have been rescued if they had been contacted, prayed with, and encouraged during the earlier periods of their declining experience. Eternity alone will reveal how important have been some of the visits of the faithful pastors and elders in saving members for Christ and His church.

My experience

There was a time when, as a teenage lad, I had become unsettled and careless. I began slipping away during the church service, then finally skipped Sabbath school as well. This was a country church without a pastor, the full responsibilities being borne by the local elders. I shall never forget the night the head elder, who was a farmer, and one of his associates called at our home. They soon made it known that they had come to see me. Mother directed them into the back bedroom where a friend and I were having a good time together. It so happened that the friend was also on the list to be visited. So they made a most earnest appeal to both of us. They let us know how much they missed us at the church, and explained how we could be a help, especially to other young people. They pleaded with us to return to Jesus and the church, assuring us that our loving Savior was very willing to forgive and stood eager to help us in our Christian life.

The words touched my heart. I loved the Lord. In fact, as a junior I had already felt the call to the ministry. But then the devil had lured me into the broad and popular way. Now I knew that I must change and the decision for change was made while

these humble lay leaders of the church talked and prayed.

A number of years later I learned that this head elder, who for years had given spiritual leadership to my home church was seriously ill in a rest home near where I was then pastoring a church. I seized the first opportunity to call on him. What great encouragement came into his life, then ebbing away, as I expressed to him my great appreciation for the visit that dark night! Tears of gratitude flowed from each of us. I have often wondered just what would have happened to me if he had not come, if he had not had a personal concern for my soul, if he had not made that direct personal appeal?

Brother elder, how is it with you? Do you have that same concern? Are you willing, after a busy day at the office, or in the shop, or perhaps on the farm, to leave the comforts of your home and go out on a night call to search out a missing member of the flock, perhaps a teenager? What efforts are you putting forth to encourage discouraged souls? What are you doing to bring them back to the sunshine of God's love?

The care of the flock has been entrusted to the pastor and *elders* of the church. This is not an option. It is a decided responsibility. It can be neglected only at the loss of some dear souls. In the larger churches some sort of undershepherd plan should be in operation by which the church membership is organized into groups with undershepherds over each. Where this plan is followed the prime responsibility for seeing that this plan is actually a functioning process rests with the elders. The deacons and deaconesses should be involved, but the leadership by precept and example must come from the elders.

Do not neglect your responsibility

This phase of responsibility is too often neglected,

and as a result we have the wrecks of human souls strewn along the highway to the kingdom. Just recently a dear woman came into my office to discuss with me her problem. She had been disfellowshipped for lack of attendance. There were extenuating circumstances. Admittedly, she could have put forth a greater effort to contact the church, but through the experience that continued for quite a period of time there was very little effort made to contact her. Finally the postman brought her the news that her name had been dropped from the church records. Thankfully she is going about to have her membership reinstated in a church in the city to which she has moved. She loved the Lord enough to take the initiative. It would have been much easier for her to have grown bitter and turned completely away from the church.

May the Lord bless both pastors and elders as together prayers are offered, plans laid, and efforts put forth not only to win new souls for the church, but to hold those who have already been gathered in. It is part of the self-sacrificing but

rewarding labor that God has called you to do. And in thus looking after the flock you are following in the pattern of the Great Shepherd of us all.

My prayer: Dear Lord, forgive me where I have been unfaithful in my concern for the spiritual welfare of every member of the flock, and where I, as an undershepherd, have failed to search out and encourage the faltering and the weak. Bless our church, every member, and particularly those in special need, and give me wisdom and grace as I seek to be a greater help to them. In Jesus' name. Amen. **E**

What efforts are you
putting forth to encourage
discouraged souls?
What are you doing
to bring them back
to the sunshine of
God's love?

Orley M. Berg, was Associate Ministerial Secretary of the General Conference when he wrote this article.

The Christian Way to Contend for the Faith

Francis D. Nichol

To many people, the thought of engaging in argument or controversy on any subject is a distressing one. And if the subject be religion, the distress is heightened by a feeling that sacrilege will be committed. Now it must be admitted there is some good ground for this feeling, for certainly through the years the name of religion has often been outraged by the strident voices of its would-be defenders. Often has it been true that counsel has been darkened with words, and heat rather than light produced by verbal exchanges.

But despite all this, the fact remains that in the promoting of religious beliefs, controversy and dispute cannot be wholly avoided. We are still the church militant, and must fight many battles. We may well strive to live peaceably with all men, but the first business of an army is not to sign peace treaties but to fight. Christ never started a quarrel in all His public ministry, yet how frequently was He engaged in dispute with the scribes and Pharisees. A reading of the history of the Reformation period shows how inevitable was vigorous discussion in the setting forth of the truths of Protestantism. And an examination of the early literature of our denomination reveals again, the distinguishing marks of fearless contending for the faith, even when it involved militant discussion.

The history of most religious movements, shows that they began amid controversy and debate, the ministers of the movement feeling that they must ardently defend the truths they considered vital, and promote them even at the expense of peace. But as the denominations grew older and became well established in the religious world, the crusading fervor

generally cooled. Peace with their religious neighbors began to seem more important than the promotion of their distinctive truths. The price of respectability in the religious community is too often silence on distinctive doctrines.

That religious organizations generally have paid this price today is evident by the fact that we hear little or no discussion any more of the particular reasons why one is a Methodist, or a Baptist, or a Presbyterian, or a Congregationalist. Rather we do hear a great deal about church unity, getting together, forgetting differences. This would seem like a beautiful objective were it not for the fact that this forgetting of religious differences, which lies at the bottom of church unity and so called peace, requires the submerging, if not the repudiation, of the distinctive Bible truths which gave rise to these movements. The whole plan of confederacy between denominations seems to be built on the principle that everything else is secondary to peace and harmony.

Doctrines a protection

That there is any great danger our movement will proceed in this matter along the line of other movements, we do not believe. We are in a real way protected from this temptation to consider peace the most important thing in our lives, by the fact that some of our doctrines—for example, the Sabbath—are so different from those of all other denominations that we could hardly be drawn into any confederacy. And for this we may thank God.

Our great need is to make certain that we carry on our discussions in such a manner that not only the

truth will be made plain but the name of God will also be glorified, and, if possible, the hearts of the hearers be convicted as well as convinced. This is oftentimes a hard thing to do. But it is a worth-while goal to set before ourselves in the matter of contending for the faith. A few primary rules, if followed carefully, will aid one greatly in reaching this desired goal. These rules will apply to a discussion on the public platform, through the press, or over the back fence.

1. Impute good faith and sincerity to the one with whom you are disputing.

Sincerity may be possessed by one who holds the most preposterous opinion. It may be hard to keep from revealing irritation and impatience at the absurd views set forth. But remember that the one who is setting them forth is doubtless troubled with a similar temptation in listening to your views, which he may sincerely consider preposterous. Some of us often have occasion to make close and friendly contacts with certain ardent Sunday advocates, thanks to our being on the same side of the prohibition question. These contacts have not made us any less certain that Sunday legislation is evil and should be militantly fought, but they have given us a clearer realization of the sincerity and good faith of these Sunday reformers that should enable us to differ with them in a more Christian spirit.

2. Keep calm.

If you cannot fight for the faith without displaying an unseemly rise of temperature, do not fight. Stay by the stuff, and let others of more equable disposition, or those who have gained the victory over anger, carry on the active warfare for the faith.

3. Do not use hard words; and be sparing of anything that approaches ridicule or irony.

This is hard counsel for some of us. There are doubtless times when strong language, even as strong

as that of Elijah on Carmel, may be in order, but those occasions, we believe, are rare. We who have the assurance in our hearts that the truth and the evidence are on our side can well afford, not only to be calm and cool, but kind in our language. The spectators, if there be any, will measure our argument, at least in part, by our form of speech, even if the one with whom we are differing does not. How great is the temptation sometimes to ridicule openly and badly an absurd argument hurled against the truth! But how much better it is to discover by the grace of God some form of expression that will enable us to make the necessary exposure of the foolish argument with the least injury

to the man's feelings! This gives us the greatest hope of winning him and those who listen.

When Mary anointed Christ, Simon the leper was indignant. Doubtless he revealed his feelings plainly on his countenance. What an excellent opportunity, we would say, for Christ to rebuke him directly and unmercifully; for his hypocritical indignation was

unpardonable. But the record tells us that "Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee." And then is recorded the appealing story, with its obvious lesson, of the creditor and his two debtors. When Simon had himself been led to answer Christ's question as to which of the debtors would love the creditor the more, then, and not until then, did the Savior administer any rebuke.

This incident is one of the choicest lessons in the fine art of how to set before a man the proof of the unreasonableness of his attitude or arguments. In fact, a study of all the Gospel narratives of Christ's discussion with His enemies makes helpful and profitable reading for all those who fight for the faith, and that should include in one sense or another every one of us.

4. Reveal a spirit of great seriousness.

Christ's discussion with
His enemies makes helpful
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who fight for the faith.

Let it be evident that your contending for your religious views is not to satisfy any unfortunate desire for wrangling or controversy, but is prompted by a solemn conviction that the beliefs you hold are of most serious importance. In fighting for the faith, we are always under the handicap of the mistaken charge that we are debaters and disputers, who like to engage in controversy because we are simply a contentious crowd. Nothing can do more to neutralize this charge than a serious, solemn manner in every discussion of truth.

5. Appeal to the heart as well as to the head.

It is one thing to convince a man; it is another thing to convict him, and create in his soul a desire to obey the truths you have set forth. It is not simply a question of what to say, but how to say it, if you would bring conviction. Endeavor to lift the discussion, as it draws toward its close, above the level of a mere question of facts and evidence, to the plane of the relation that these facts bear to the hearer's heart and eternal destiny. It is not enough simply to pyramid evidence to convince a man that the second advent of Christ is near; we should strive to show the great importance of this fact to a man's heart and to his future life. It will not profit us simply to close the mouths of disputants so that they will no longer attempt to set forth their erroneous beliefs; we must strive to open their hearts to receive the truths we have so earnestly been endeavoring to prove by our array of evidence.

These few suggestions are not offered with the thought of promoting either public or private disputations regarding the truth. It is not for us to seek out opportunities for controversy. Rather should we strive to avoid, as far as consistent, any discussion that partakes strictly of the nature of debate. Yet, after all is said and done, there arise from time to time, and often in the most unexpected manner, situations in which we must defend the faith against erroneous arguments. For such occasions these suggestions are offered. **E**

Francis D. Nichol was the editor of the Review and Herald (Adventist Review) when he wrote this article.

Melt Down the Saints and Put Them Into Circulation

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consistently infecting the world where they live with a contagious witness of the contemporary Christ and His relevance to life."

During the days of Oliver Cromwell, England faced a serious financial crisis. Attempting to solve the problem, Cromwell and his financial advisers thought of the gold and silver statues of the saints in the churches throughout the land. The call went out, "Melt down the saints and put them into circulation" This is what the church needs today—putting the saints into circulation! **E**

James A. Cress writes from Silver Spring, Maryland. He is the Ministerial Secretary of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.



From Daniel to Revelation

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watching an experienced teacher do something correctly over and over again, so demonstration is crucial. In addition, instructors must allow ample time for them to practice and make mistakes.

If you're a professed Christian, then people are watching you. The way you treat others will either help draw them to or repel them from Christ. So remember the birds, and dare to be a Daniel! **E**

Debra Hicks edits the Inside Report for the Amazing Facts program.

“I Can Take Care of Myself”

—Peter

Arthur L. Bietz

You can imagine the New Testament without some of its personalities, but can you imagine it without Peter? Hardly. If you had only Peter and his discussions with Jesus Christ, only Peter and his relations with other New Testament characters, you would have the story of salvation rather clearly revealed.

Peter is dynamic, an impulsive extrovert. He does things as he blunders his way across the pages of the New Testament. On the Day of Pentecost, still energetic but mellowed, he speaks for the Lord, and 3,000 souls are baptized. Now he is a man in touch with the living God. But it was not always so; something had happened to Peter by the time Pentecost came.

I suppose the outstanding trait of this man is his “I can take care of myself” feeling. An independent sort of person, with an advanced degree of self-assurance, he has experimented a lot with life and is pretty sure he knows the answers. Jesus had said, “Thou shalt deny Me”; but Peter replied, “Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee.”

“Yes,” said Peter the stouthearted, some are going to forsake You: they are going to run, I know. But, Lord Jesus, You can count on me! I’ll stand by. Others will be scared, but I’m not easily scared. I’ll be there to help You. I’ll be there to support You!”

We have no reason to believe that Peter was not sincere. I think he was. He was fully committed to the idea of being there and protecting his Lord. No question can be called on his good intentions.

Peter is outspoken, too. We know where he stands. Some people are always playing hide-and-go-seek. You

try to catch them, try to find out where they stand or what they think, but you cannot. They sit on the fence or hide in some hole. Not so with Peter. He is always there. He may be in the wrong, but he is there. What he says may not be correct, but at least he’s there to be counted.

“Not only can I take care of myself,” said Peter, “but I can’t conceive of anything that would make me run.” But Peter didn’t understand himself. He was much like most of us. We speak, but we may not know what we’re saying. Our words are detached from reality. They have no depth. Peter had not yet looked into his own heart; he had not really faced himself. He boasted, but still he was scared; and the more scared he was the louder he talked. How do we explain such inconsistency? It’s the scared people who usually shout the loudest.

I once took a class to visit St. Elizabeth’s mental hospital in Washington, D.C. One of the psychiatrists told us, “Here’s a patient who talks all the time. He talks loudly; he’s really scared. I don’t think we have anybody in this hospital who is more scared than this patient.” Thus Peter talked loudly and boastfully. He was trying to reassure himself, trying to make himself believe that he would stand. He would not have had to shout so loudly if he had really believed it. But he was scared, and his bluster was a cover-up.

When the woman said, “Aren’t you a Galilean?” perhaps she did not mean to be his enemy; there is no evidence of this. But Peter felt so afraid that he exploded with swearing and cursing. What a scared man!

Sometimes you have seen people get angry and go to pieces; and you say, "I wonder what's eating them." The answer is, of course, that they are scared of every body and everything. Peter, a scared man, talked loudly to make himself believe that he was not. The minute the woman asked, "Aren't you one of Jesus' followers?" he began to curse and swear, saying, "I know not this Man of whom ye speak."

Here was a dynamo, a man who expended his energy freely but who was still operating on physical energy instead of spiritual power. This was Peter when he was still on his own.

But when God made Himself manifest to this man, miracles began to happen. Actually, Peter was tender-hearted; he wanted very much to do the right thing. He had a tremendous capacity for feeling, and a great ability for what we call emotional reaction. The problem was to get all this under control and channeled into constructive activity. This the Lord wanted to do for Peter. But first Peter's smug reliance on self had to be shattered and exchanged for faith in God.

When Peter learned to weep over failure, a change took place. It would do a lot of people good if they could cry a little. I have seen some people who were so ashamed of tears that they dabbed at their eyes and said, "Oh, I'm so sorry; I shouldn't cry." Some of us should. There are some things we ought to face, and if we were honest enough to face them, maybe a few tears would come. Maybe we would say, "Lord, I thought I was so strong, but I wasn't. Lord, I admit I need help."

Many of us have lost the ability to deal with our feelings. There are Christians who say, "I don't want any emotion in my religion." But they will shout for the Dodgers, and they will yell for the Little Leaguers! It's time some of us had deep feelings in our

relationship with God. Not just emotion for the sake of emotion, but some of us have some confessions to make; and maybe a few tears as we confess wouldn't be bad.

Anything that has to do with genuine religion must touch our feelings. Peter wept bitterly, and from that day on things were better. Someone has said, "Shame on the young man who cannot weep, and shame on the old man who cannot laugh."

Jesus later said to Peter, "When you have turned again, strengthen your brethren." Luke 22:32, R.S.V. How could Peter strengthen us? I think he would

strengthen us by helping us face up to the fact that we are sinners and should be willing to admit it. I think Peter would strengthen us by saying, "It was a great day in my life when I put all pretense out and let the Lord Jesus come in," when I no longer said, "I can take care of myself."

Inherent in Peter's impetuous nature was one excellent quality. He could make decisions.

When Peter first received a call from Christ, he followed Him. "Now as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed Him."

What a transformation would take place in our lives if we, too, could make a clear-cut decision for Jesus Christ and begin following Him!

"Strengthen your brethren," said Jesus to Peter. Strengthen them by helping them to make up their minds. Strengthen your brethren by showing them how important it is to stand up and be counted for Christ. Strengthen them by showing them how to rely on Me.

Peter was an adventurer, an explorer for God. "And

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Peter answered Him and said, Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water. And He said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus” (Matthew 14:28, 29). And then he began to sink.

Someone might say: “Isn’t it a pity that Peter sank!” Some of us wouldn’t have had the nerve to get out of the boat. It’s easy to criticize. Peter started walking on the water, but then he got scared. I suppose for a moment he thought he could take care of himself again, and down he went. But at least he stepped out of the boat, while the rest of them played safe.

We ought to adventure. Have we dared anything for God? If we want God to do great things for us, we must make great plans. Many Christians are praying for power, but what do they want power for? For the sake of power, or for the sake of doing something great for Jesus Christ? I think Peter would strengthen us today by saying, “Don’t lose your sense of adventure, do something for God.”

Some of us know so much that the Lord has to lay us to rest, so that others who don’t know so much can do something for God. Bishop Wright of Dayton, Ohio, years ago preached a sermon on the audacity of some young people who thought men could fly. “They ought to know better,” he declared; “after all, only angels can fly. It is so decreed by God, and there will never be such a thing as men flying in the air.” They buried the bishop, but his two boys never believed a word of that sermon. The Wright brothers, the sons of Bishop Wright, heard him preach that people couldn’t fly. They went to Kitty Hawk and started to fly. They dared, they adventured, and they achieved!

“Don’t wash my feet,” Peter once said to Jesus. But the Master replied, “If I wash thee not, thou hast no

part with Me” (John 13.8). “If that’s it,” Peter said, “then wash my head and my hands.” Peter was able to make progress; he was able to learn another excellent trait in his makeup.

At last Peter became a true man of God. He no longer said, “I can take care of myself.” He let God take care of him! To Peter, Jesus said, “Strengthen the brethren after you have turned.” Before, Peter had denied his Lord; now he had found his Lord and he would become a strength to others. If it can happen to Peter it can happen to us.

How do I know? Because of the remedy for fear that Jesus gave. He asked, after the disciple’s desperate failure, “Peter, do you love Me?”

“Perfect love casteth out fear” (1 John 4:18). Fear was Peter’s problem; he was scared. But now Jesus brought him the antidote.

Peter replied, “Thou knowest that I love Thee” (John 21:15). Love had come into his life, and the moment love entered, fear vanished. Peter’s security was not in his words, but in the solution

Jesus gave him love!

Many of us have experiences like Peter’s early ones; but it is helpful to realize that in spite of his stumbling and fumbling, Jesus accepted him and made of him a great man of God in whom the Spirit of God moved mightily.

Peter no longer says, “I can take care of myself.” He simply says, “Thou knowest that I love thee.” All fear is gone, for the love of God has come into his heart. May his life be a strengthening influence to us! ■

Arthur L. Bietz was pastor in Glendale, CA. This article is taken from his book When God Met Men, pages 1-6.

Jesus' Second Coming

Gladys Ríos



“Make known to others what I have revealed to you.”

E. G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 20

Is this quote a command, an idea, or the Holy Spirit nudging me to write what I saw? In June of 1996, within ten days I had two dreams that were exactly the same, but at the end of the second dream there was an added message.

In my dream I was taken to a hill overlooking Silver Spring, Maryland. It was a beautiful sunny spring day, quite windy but absolutely pleasant. Below was a scene of hustle and bustle. School busses shuttled children to school. Frowning workers drove to their jobs. Housewives busy at their never-ending chores rushed about. Revolving doors at banks moved fast as men and women completed their daily transactions. Workers at construction sites yelled orders. People were hurried, impatient. Without exception all had a look of anxiety in their eyes, mirroring the mental distress that tormented their souls.

Their physical agitation made me sad. Deep in thought, I looked up to the sky, almost hoping for an answer to all this. Beautiful clouds were forming with different tones of pinks and blues, changing shape rapidly as the wind increased. A sudden stroke of lightning landed at my right side, transforming itself into a bright angel whose face was not quite clear since it shone so strongly.

“Look far in the sky. Do you see a little cloud?” he asked. Straining to see it, I said, “You mean like the little cloud where the Son of Man is coming?” “Yes,” he answered. After a few frustrating moments, I told him that I could not see anything. His response was:

“Keep looking; you won’t have time to take your eyes from the sky, for He is coming very soon.”

With those words the angel disappeared. Again I peered at the sky, trying to find the shape of such great events. Then I woke up. It was a sweet and beautiful dream.

A few days later, during camp meeting, the same dream was repeated, but at the end of it the angel said, “Now go and tell others.”

It was a gray and cold winter Saturday afternoon. For an activity I decided to catch up with my daily Bible reading. In Genesis, chapter 41, I was reading one of my favorite stories, about Joseph. I felt sleepy, and since I have read this story many times, I thought about taking a short nap, but a strong thought came to my mind: “You might learn something new.” Reading verse 32 about Pharaoh’s dream, I paused, and read: “The reason the dream was given to Pharaoh in two forms is that the matter has been firmly decided by God, and God will do it soon.” Conviction took hold of me, and I understood the reason for the repetition of my dream.

I remembered what Jesus said in Matthew 24:27, 30. “For as lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.” “. . . They will see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”

Come Jesus, I am ready to be with you! **E**

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Sermons and Worship Ideas

Editorial Coordinator: Margarida Ferreira Sarli

#1 Another Comforter

Theme—Another comforter

His crowning gift, the Comforter, who was to take His place. This Comforter is the Holy Spirit—the soul of His life, the efficacy of His church, the light and life of the world.—E. G. W., *This Day with God*, p. 257.

Thought for the day

The Comforter is one who reproves, who warns, who admonishes them saying, “This is the way, walk ye in it . . .” He can inspire with confidence, with hope in God; and confidence in God always results in creating confidence in one another.—*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 696.

Offering prelude

Dr. W. J. Dawson tells of six genuine surprises which will come to the faithful tithe-payer:

- “1. At the amount of money he has for the Lord’s work.
- “2. At the deepening of his spiritual life in returning tithe.
- “3. At his ease in meeting his own obligations with the nine tenths.
- “4. At the ease in going on from one tenth to larger giving.
- “5. At the preparation this gives, to be a faithful and wise steward of the nine tenths that remain.
- “6. At himself in not adopting the plan sooner.”

Suggestion for scripture reading and hymns

John 15:15-18

Holy, Holy, Holy

Sweet, Sweet Spirit

Hymn No. 73

Hymn No. 262

Children’s Story—The best laid plans

Lesson: For that ye ought to say, if the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. James 4:15.

Robert Burns, a Scottish poet, learned early how difficult it is to make plans for the future. He was born on January 25, 1759, in a humble two-room cottage on the River Donn. The son of a farmer, he grew up knowing the meaning of struggle and fruitless dreams.

Then Mr. Burns died and Robert, the eldest son, had to take over the farm. At the age of 16 he described his life as “the cheerless gloom of a hermit and the unceasing toil of a galley slave.”

Robert wanted very much to go to school but there was no time for that. He did learn to read, and then proceeded to educate himself. He often ate his meals with a book in one hand. He carried books in his pockets so that he could study while driving the cart.

Robert whistled Scottish folk melodies while following his plow and soon came up with original poems to fit the tunes.

He wrote many poems as “Auld Lang Syne” and “To a mouse”. In it he expresses the thought that the best-laid plans of mice and men often go astray.

This may be true of mice and men; but it is not true of God, who says, “I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it” (Isa. 46:11).

God has a purpose for your life and His plans are sure.

“In His loving care and interest for us, often He who understands us better than we understand ourselves refuses to permit us selfishly to seek the gratification of our own ambition. He does not permit us to pass by the homely but sacred duties that lie next to us. Often these duties afford the very training essential to prepare us for a higher work. Often our

plans fail that God’s plans for us may succeed.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 473.

Ask God to work out His will in your life today, even if it means that *your* plans may all fail.

Sermon Outline—Another Comforter

I. Introduction

It is always exciting when a new year arrives.

When we face the future seriously, we often feel anxious. The disciples of our Lord were horrified at the thought of facing the future without the comfort of His continuing companionship.

Toward the end of His earthly ministry, our Lord concentrated upon the twelve apostles.

Much of this time was spent in seclusion because of His desire to avoid His enemies. At the same time, He wanted to strengthen these men for the task that was before them. He gave them some exceedingly great and precious promises (John 14:1, 11-14). He gave to them a promise regarding “another Comforter.” Furthermore, He said, “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you” (John 14:18). He also spoke some other words which were strange to them (John 14:28). Let us look at what discipleship meant to these disciples.

II. The call to discipleship

- A. It was a call to trust in Jesus Christ.
- B. It was a call to a profound learning experience.
- C. It was a call to leave lesser things.
- D. It was a call that involved the excitement of true fulfillment.
- E. It was a call to partnership and friendship with Jesus Christ.
- F. It was a call to serious self-discipline.
- G. It was a call to high rewards.

III. Jesus invited his disciples to draw close to Him

- A. To Philip He said, “Follow me” (John 1:43).
- B. To Philip and Nathaniel, Jesus said, “Come and see” (John 1:46).
- C. To James, John, Peter, and Andrew, Jesus said, “Come ye after me, and I will make you to

become fishers of men” (Mark 1:17; Matt. 4:19; Luke 5:10).

- D. Jesus chose the twelve “that they should be with him” (Mark 3:14; Luke 6:13).

As these men followed Jesus, they experienced a “transforming friendship.” They visited together in crowded cities. They sailed and fished together on the Sea of Galilee. They prayed together in the mountains and deserts. They worshiped together in the Temple. They watched Him and listened to Him.

1. They saw in Jesus Christ what it meant to make a complete surrender to the absolute claims of God over one’s life.
2. They saw what it meant to completely forsake sin.
3. They saw the perfection of love in all attitudes, all ambitions, and all relationships.
4. They saw a supreme example of one who was willing to deny himself for the sake of others.
5. They witnessed one who demonstrated a unique aloofness from attachment to material things.
6. They saw and experienced one who lived totally for eternity. Eleven of these apostles became so committed to Jesus Christ that they could not even consider their future existence without His companionship.

It was in that kind of a context that Jesus continued to tell them that He must go back to the Father. He comforted them with the promise of “another comforter” (John 14:16).

IV. Jesus promises another comforter

- A. Note the word that Jesus used in making this promise. In the original language of the New Testament there are two different words which are correctly translated by our English word another. The word *allos* is always used when ‘another of like kind’ is referred to. The Greek word *heteros* is used when “another of a different kind” is referred to. When Jesus spoke of the Comforter that would come, He used the word *allos*. Jesus was saying, “I am going to pray the Father and He shall give you

another counselor, comforter, and helper of exactly the same kind as I am.” The word which is translated “comforter” literally means “one called to walk by the side of.” This had been His experience with them and their experience with Him for three years plus.

- B. “To be with you forever.” He promised that the Comforter would be with them always, forever.
- C. “For he dwells with you.” Christ as Immanuel was God with us. Jesus promises the Holy Spirit who will dwell “within us.” The Holy Spirit would be a far greater blessing than His earthly presence could possibly be.

V. Conclusion

As we face the new year, we need to accept by faith the presence of this Comforter who came on the Day of Pentecost to dwell in the church. He came on the day of your conversion experience to dwell in your heart (1 Cor. 3:16). We should with joy recognize His indwelling presence and find the strength that we need for the living of life in this year 2002 (Eph. 6:10).

With eagerness we should listen for His voice as He speaks to our innermost being as we study the Scriptures, as we pray, and as we see a needy world (Heb. 3:7-8).

VI. Illustration

A friend of Vance Havner coined a word by combining the words squelch and quench. He used to say, “Don’t ‘squelch’ the Spirit.” Havner thought it was so descriptive that he often used it in his preaching. Havner said, “We ‘squelch’ the Spirit in more ways than we suspect. We do so when we stifle the desire to speak or act for the Lord. When we criticize or discourage others by an unspiritual attitude, we ‘throw cold water’ on their inner fire. We have the Holy Spirit as an honored Guest in every Christian gathering, and He can be grieved very easily. A frivolous attitude, a rebellious frame of mind, or a fed-up complacency will do it.”

#2 An Imperative Regarding Spirituality

Theme —An imperative regarding spirituality

Read your Bible attentively, prayerfully, and be guided by its teachings. This is your safety.—E. G. W., *Child Guidance*, p. 465.

Thought for the day

Do not carry your creed to the Bible and read the Word in the light of your former opinions.

Do not try to make everything agree with your creed. Search the Word carefully and prayerfully with a mind free from prejudice. If . . . you see that your most cherished opinions are not in harmony with the Word, do not try to make the Word fit these opinions. Make your opinions fit the Word.—Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases Three*, Miscellaneous Manuscript Items -PR- 01 -PG- 432.

Offering prelude

In 1959 a new king of Ruanda, Central Africa, was selected. One man of only moderate means was determined to bring a gift of such worth that it would attract the special notice of the king. To do this he sold all of his goats and almost everything else he had in order to buy a beautiful leopard skin for his sovereign.

“But you are a poor man. How can you afford to give so much?” his friends asked.

“But this is for my king!” the man replied. “What I give must be my best.”

If we gave to our heavenly King as this poor heathen gave to his earthly sovereign, there would be no lack of funds to take His message.

Suggestions for scripture reading and hymns

2 Timothy 2:15

For Your Holy Book We Thank You

Give Me the Bible

Hymn No. 277

Hymn No. 272

Children's Story—Power in the Word

Lesson: "By the word of thy lips I have avoided the ways of the violent." Ps. 17:4.

Webb Garrison published an article titled, "The Joy of Memorizing Scripture." He related the story of returning from summer vacation to find his house in shambles. Someone had taken great delight, not in stealing, but in damaging and destroying the furnishings of his home. The chairs were slashed, draperies ripped and hanging in shreds. There were gashes in the furniture and bedspreads, mattresses were ripped and cut. Even many of his neckties were cut in half. The clothing in the closets was neatly trimmed. They called the police. They contacted their insurance agent, who said, "You're well protected for fire and wind-storm damage, but you are not covered for burglary or vandalism."

Garrison said, "Alone in that ripped-up house, I went upstairs to go to bed. I turned back the bed spread and sheet in which a huge X had been cut. As soon as I lay down, I felt the rough edges where the mattress had been slit.

"I closed my eyes and, speaking each word aloud slowly, began repeating Scripture I had memorized: Psalms 1, 8, 23; 1 Corinthians 13; John 14; Psalms 46, 90, 91; Revelation 1; Psalm 121 . . . I had to go through my repertoire maybe three times. But then I fell asleep and slept soundly till dawn. "The greatest tranquilizing medicine available is faith in the promises of God. These promises can be made much more real to us if memorized. The Word means much more when it is hid in the heart. The Word is protection against discouragement. The greatest courage-builder in the world, and the finest spirit soother, is the Word of God. It works. Try it today.

Sermon Outline—An imperative regarding spirituality

I. Introduction

The New International Version translates this text,

The greatest courage-
builder in the world, and
the finest spirit soother, is
the Word of God.

"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." Philips translates it, "For yourself, concentrate on winning God's approval, on being a workman with nothing to be ashamed of, and who knows how to use the word of truth to the best advantage." *Today's English Version* translates it, "Do your best to win full approval in God's sight, as a worker who is not ashamed of his work, one who correctly teaches the message of God's truth."

While it is not necessary that one have a graduate degree from some school of theology before he can serve God effectively, it remains true that God places no premium upon ignorance

In our text, the apostle is urging upon Timothy and all of his readers the importance of presenting ourselves to our Father God as competent workers who are skilled in doing the work of God's kingdom.

In Paul's epistle to the Romans, he encouraged them to present their bodies as living sacrifices unto God. It is in their body that they are to honor Him, to glorify Him. It is in their body that they are to demonstrate both the wisdom of God and the power of God. He affirmed this same concept in his epistle to the Corinthians in which he declared that the body is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, and consequently it should not participate in the immoralities that were so current at that time (1 Cor. 6:15-20).

In the words of our text, the emphasis is upon maturity, skill, and competency in the service of our Lord.

Paul appeals to Timothy's sense of pride in personal accomplishment, "a workman who has no need to be ashamed." Have you ever seen a carpenter who was ashamed of his craftsmanship? Have you ever known a bricklayer who laid a crooked wall of brick? Have you ever known a woman who made a dress and was then ashamed to wear it? The apostle is encouraging his reader to present himself to God and

to do what is necessary in order that he might be a skilled worker who, “rightly handles the word of truth.”

There are a number of very practical things that can help each of us toward spiritual competency in our ministry for our Lord and in our ministry to others.

The *King James Version* translates this verse, “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” Competency requires study and practice. Only as we study can we be skilled. Let us focus attention upon how we should study the Bible if we would rightly handle it so as to accomplish the purpose for which God intended it.

II. Let us read the Bible regularly

Some time should be spent every day in listening to God as He speaks to us through the Scriptures.

III. Let us read the Bible subjectively

It is not enough that we read the Bible merely as a record of what happened in the ancient past. God can and will speak to us in the present if we will but listen to Him.

IV. Let us read the Bible intelligently

There are certain guidelines that should be remembered as we study the Bible.

Let us try to understand what the Bible meant in its historical context.

- A. This is when it was first recorded by man under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
- B. Let us try to understand the language.
- C. Let us study the Bible in a logical manner. Let us examine each phrase and verse in its context. Let us study the paragraph in the light of the chapter, and the chapter in the light of each book, and each book in the context of the whole of Scriptures.
- D. Let us remember that the Bible is a record of God’s self-revelation. Only the Holy Spirit can really unlock His secrets.

V. Let us read the Bible systematically

A good pattern would be to read five chapters in the Old Testament every day and three chapters in the New Testament, reading straight through both the Old and the New Testaments.

VI. Let us read the Bible prayerfully

Pray it into your heart. Memorize the great verses, particularly the great promises and the great warnings.

VII. Let us read the Bible obediently

As God reveals His truth to us, let us respond to it.

VIII. Conclusion

It is so important that the minister interpret the Scriptures correctly and apply them properly.

And it is equally important that every Christian study to show himself a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who uses the Word of God rightly.

If we will study diligently and present ourselves joyfully to our Lord, it is highly unlikely that we will some day be ashamed of ourselves or of our lives when we stand before our precious Lord.

IX. Illustration

If you would read the Bible at standard pulpit speed (slow enough to be heard and understood) the reading time would be seventy-one hours. If you would break that down into minutes and divide it into 365 days you could read the entire Bible, cover to cover, in only twelve minutes a day. Is this really too much time to spend reading about God? —James S. Hewett. **■**

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How to Make the Most of Time

Joel Sarli



I would like to share some basic time-management principles with my dear elders. They are not necessarily new or earthshaking but they are foundational for a successful life-management. Let us together go through some of these principles.

I. Direction is more important than speed

Allan Dwindown Homes said: "The greatest thing in the world is not so much where we stand as in what direction we are moving". The purpose is not to turn you into a clock watcher or someone that is compulsively busy. The objective is not to get everything done in the shortest time possible with the fewest wasted moments. This can be very self-defeating and destructive. As someone has said: "What is the use of running if we are going in the wrong direction?"

The bottom line is that you can accomplish many things that may not matter. You may get started a few minutes late but the point is that you will spend a bulk of your time on something that is not really important.

What we want to do is not simply to accomplish as much and as quickly as we can, but select the best task to do, from all the possibilities available, and then do it the best way we are able.

II. Setting realistic goals

Therefore it is important that we take the time to set meaningful and realistic goals. Unless we set goals that we can accomplish we'll miss what we truly want to get out of life. Striving toward a goal enables us to greater achievements, even if we don't quite make it. We are going to talk about goal-setting in another

article. But what I want you to remember now is not to try to do too much at once.

1. Don't bite more than what you can chew. In fact, time-management is an ongoing process. Remember there is only one way to eat an elephant—one spoonfull at a time. This is a patient move forward, one step at a time.

2. Break your goals down into achievable steps. Instead of beginning an exercise program as a one-hour workout, start with fifteen-minute segments. Add a minute or two to your basic time instead of half an hour.

III. Time perspective often determines your mobility and personal improvement

Time perspective is the period of time you take into consideration when you are making your decisions in planning your life.

Successful people are those who have had a long-time perspective. They plan their activities ten and twenty years ahead. If we go down to the socio-economical level we will find that time perspective shortens, at the low end of the pyramid of the alcoholic or drug addict who thinks only in terms of the next shot. At the top of the pyramid is the doctor that spent twelve years preparing himself to earn a lucrative income.

1. Develop a long-range view for your life. Look as far into the future as you can. Live in light of a long-range view. If you wish to send your children to the university, start saving when they are young; if you wish to live comfortably during your so-called retirement years you have to start now to set aside ten percent of your income. How far do you look into the

future when you make decisions and plans?

2. Remember the long-range view sharpens the short-range view! Taking a long-range view enables you to analyze the future impact of present decisions. Important things have a long term impact. Not with unimportant things because they have little or no long-term impact.

For example, time spent in continuing education may have tremendous impact in your ministry or career! Watching television every night, a movie or reading the sports pages may have very little impact.

People who don't take a long-range perspective in life, don't understand delayed gratification. They are usually the ones who end up with little or nothing to enjoy or share with others.

Therefore, practice taking the long-range view. Learn to handle short-term pain for long-term gain! Be willing to pay the price for a successful future. Learn to delay self-gratification.

IV. The smaller the unit of time you take in planning your day the more successful you are likely to be

Effective executives, for example, think in terms of minutes, not just hours or days. They are jealous of the time. They do not treat their time lightly! Successful people think in terms of ten or fifteen-minute blocks. Time is your precious resource! Learn to acquire time. Hire people to do things in order to allow you to invest your time for activities of higher value.

Most people unconsciously waste large units of time. Use a watch that sounds every fifteen minutes so that you can observe how you are using your time.

Keep a time log and record what you are doing. Ask yourself whether or not you are using your time profitably. The more you are aware of how you use your time, the more productive you are likely to be.

V. The work you have is significant to your personal productivity

Working in a wrong activity is the biggest waste of time. The right work is the one that challenges you to do your best. Staying in a job for which you are not

suited is perhaps one of the greatest waste of time you can engage in.

Think about what you are doing. Do you want to be the best in what you are doing? Do you enjoy it enough to want to do it for the next twenty years? Do you feel challenged?

You may want to work in a different place at a slightly different capacity. That is fine. But if you can't say yes to these questions, you may be in the wrong line of work. You might do better elsewhere. Look at your current function. Is this what you would like to do for the rest of your life? If not, you should decide now what to do with your life. Have you determined what is God's ideal for you? Generally, His plans for your life will be in harmony with your desires, assuming you are committed to accomplishing His purposes in your life.

VI. People and not projects is what matters

Our projects are without value unless we have people to carry them out. So, don't get preoccupied with things or tasks. The danger of being higher achievers is based on the fact that you can think of people simply as objects to help or hinder you in getting what you want.

It is vital to remember that time-management skills are means to enable us to serve others more effectively. Not to manipulate them or avoid them. Projects are means, people are the end of the means.

VII. Keep your life in balance

An individual that excels in one area at the expense of family, friends or even personal values and priorities can hardly be truly successful. Strive for balance in the various roles and the responsibility you have chosen to fulfill.

The Bible teaches a comprehensive view of life that helps us keep things in perspective. You may want to think in terms of categories that are common to everyone's life.

For example (1) your personal relationship to God and your own spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical well-being; (2) your family including your spouse. If you are married, children, parents, and

other extended family or dependents; (3) your work which has to do with your employment occupation; (4) your church. Your relationship to the family of God; (5) finally your community life which includes your responsibility as citizens and your relationship to the world and society.

Each of these categories must be kept in perspective or in harmony with each other.

Are you enjoying all the facets of your life? Do you spend enough quality time with your family, giving, sharing and loving? Do you regularly appreciate the beauty and wonders of nature? The moon, the stars, the birds, the flowers, the seasons? Are you developing your skills and knowledge related to your profession? Do you regularly find time for meaningful worship and communion with God? How about your physical life? Are you taking care of the body that God has loaned you with proper nutrition, and exercise?

Let me emphasize this last point as an example because many of us get out of balance here. Use time-management to keep your life in balance by spending time in physical fitness. Set aside time for walking, swimming, running, hiking, playing tennis or golf.

Time invested in physical fitness will keep you in good physical shape and enable you to perform at your best. Make a schedule for physical exercise at least three times a week.

If you don't have time to exercise you know that your life is out of balance.

Even taking a walk makes you much more alert and productive in the afternoon.

Avoid large lunches. Your hours of work will be more productive.

This practice will help you to reduce drowsiness that often is associated with eating large lunches.

Remember, breaks can be a valuable use of your time. Sometimes the most important thing you can do is nothing. Learn to relax from time to time. Smell the roses.

Be sure to take at least one day off a week. You will be far more productive the other six days if you relax on the seventh.

You need a day of rest, to worship, and to think in

order to keep your life in harmony with your deep convictions. You need a day to think through what is important to you. You need a day to focus on the eternal and adjust your life in accordance with what really matters.

VIII. How we use our time is an individual matter and you must be the judge on how to apply the suggestions in this program

Make notes of key ideas and adapt them to your own personality and individuality.

Recognize that different techniques work for different people. Detect the ideas that will benefit you the most.

Assess your own strength and weaknesses and set priorities on what you want to improve.

Remember you are the judge.

IX. Time-management is life-management

Self-mastery is a habit that can be learned. Time-management must be practiced and developed throughout one's life.

It is not something that you can master in one semester. You can't master your time by simply reading a book, or listening to an audio-cassette program or taking a course.

It is a life long adventure.

X. Time-management is a daily discipline

Each day is an opportunity to begin anew.

Begin today to apply all the concepts and skills you have learned.

You must commit yourself daily to the task of effective time-management.

Remember, use what you learn or loose it.

XI. Goals will bring satisfaction if they are related to the purpose in life

Achieving goals can be very challenging. But if they are not related to life's larger meaning, they will never be truly satisfying.

You set your mind to achieve new, bigger, and higher goals and so on. The process is endless because achieving goals doesn't bring lasting satisfaction.

Solomon knew from experience that achieving goals can become an unrelated string of hollow victories that didn't bring true satisfaction. Listen to what he says in Ecclesiastes 2: 5-11: "I made gardens and parks, filling them with all kinds of fruit trees. I built reservoirs to collect water to irrigate my many flourishing groves. I bought slaves, both men and women, and others were born into my household. I also owned great herds and flocks, more than any of the kings who lived in Jerusalem before me. I collected great sums of silver and gold, the treasure of many kings and provinces. I hired wonderful singers both men and women, and had many beautiful concubines. I had everything a man could desire!

So I became greater than any of the kings who ruled in Jerusalem before me. And with it all, I remained clear-eyed so that I could evaluate all these things. Anything I wanted, I took. I did not restrain myself from any joy.

I even found great pleasure in hard work, and additional reward for all my labors. But as I looked at everything I had worked so hard to accomplish, it was all so meaningless. It was like chasing the wind. There was nothing really worthwhile anywhere."

Solomon discovered that the problem of setting goals and meeting them doesn't bring the real satisfaction for life. The process can be entirely meaningless if our goals don't reflect the wisdom and the larger meaning of our existence.

We would do well answering the question: What is the purpose of my life? Stated another way: What does God want me to do with my life?

I believe that God has a purpose or mission for each one of us, that is to say, a direction in which He wants us to be moving.

The only purposes that will remain are the ones linked to God Himself. "Many are the plans in a man's heart, but is the Lord's purpose that prevails" Proverbs 19: 21.

Purposes differ from goals. A goal is a specific objective we want to accomplish and is measurable;

it usually has a specific completion date. Purpose, on the other hand, reflects wisdom and a larger meaning. Goals are what we do, while purposes are why we do what we do. A purpose then is an aim or direction related to the why-we-exist in life.

We need to start with a purpose in our life. It helps us to focus our lives and to give us direction and continuity.

XII. Three levels of purposes in life

There are basically three levels of purposes in our lives.

In the first level we find the universal purpose which God gives to all men. It has to do with our character or what God wants us to be; with the conduct that God wants us to have.

The Westminster Short Catechism's first question is: "What is the chief end of man? The answer is: "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to

enjoy Him for ever." It illustrates a universal purpose for all men and in the Bible there is an illustration of them as well. "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" is a good example.

In the second level we find the personal and specific purpose related to our individual life. It is unique. God has a personal, specific purpose for your life.

Do you know God's special purpose for your life? I got some good news you can discover through the study of the Scriptures and prayer.

Level three includes God's ideal for developing different areas of our life. To really understand God's Word is the purpose of level three. To be a better father is a level three purpose. To learn more about personal counseling, to live in a better home; to raise godly children, all are examples of level three.

They are limited to specific areas of our life rather than overreaching the life purposes statement.

They also focus and direct our activities. ■

Joel Sarli is Associate Secretary of the Ministerial Association of the General Conference.



“Our Time Belongs to God”

Ellen G. White

Our time belongs to God. Every moment is His, and we are under the most solemn obligation to improve it to His glory. Of no talent He has given will He require a more strict account than of our time.

The value of time is beyond computation. Christ regarded every moment as precious, and it is thus that we should regard it. Life is too short to be trifled away. We have but a few days of probation in which to prepare for eternity. We have no time to waste, no time to devote to selfish pleasure, no time for the indulgence of sin. It is now that we are to form characters for the future, immortal life. It is now that we are to prepare for the searching judgment.

The human family has scarcely begun to live when they begin to die, and the world's incessant labor ends in nothingness unless a true knowledge in regard to eternal life is gained. The man who appreciates time as his working day will fit himself for a mansion and for a life that is immortal. It is well that he was born.

We are admonished to redeem the time. But time squandered can never be recovered. We cannot call back even one moment. The only way in which we can redeem our time is by making the most of that which remains, by being co-workers with God in His great plan of redemption.

In him who does this, a transformation of character takes place. He becomes a son of God, a member of the royal family, a child of the heavenly King. He is fitted to be the companion of the angels.

Now is our time to labor for the salvation of our fellow men. There are some who think that if they give money to the cause of Christ, this is all they are required to do; the precious time in which they might do personal service for Him passes unimproved. But

it is the privilege and duty of all who have health and strength to render to God active service. All are to labor in winning souls to Christ. Donations of money cannot take the place of this.

Every moment is freighted with eternal consequences. We are to stand as minute men, ready for service at a moment's notice. The opportunity that is now ours to speak to some needy soul the word of life may never offer again. God may say to that one, “This night thy soul shall be required of thee,” (Luke 12:20) and through our neglect he may not be ready. In the great judgment day, how shall we render our account to God?

Life is too solemn to be absorbed in temporal and earthly matters, in a treadmill of care and anxiety for the things that are but an atom in comparison with the things of eternal interest. Yet God has called us to serve Him in the temporal affairs of life. Diligence in this work is as much a part of true religion as is devotion. The Bible gives no indorsement to idleness. It is the greatest curse that afflicts our world. Every man and woman who is truly converted will be a diligent worker.

Upon the right improvement of our time depends our success in acquiring knowledge and mental culture. The cultivation of the intellect need not be prevented by poverty, humble origin, or unfavorable surroundings. Only let the moments be treasured. A few moments here and a few there, that might be frittered away in aimless talk; the morning hours so often wasted in bed; the time spent in traveling on trains or railway cars, or waiting at the station; the moments of waiting for meals, waiting for those who are tardy in keeping an appointment—if a book were kept at hand, and these fragments of time were

improved in study, reading, or careful thought, what might not be accomplished. A resolute purpose, persistent industry, and careful economy of time, will enable men to acquire knowledge and mental discipline which will qualify them for almost any position of influence and usefulness.

It is the duty of every Christian to acquire habits of order, thoroughness, and dispatch. There is no excuse for slow bungling at work of any character. When one is always at work and the work is never done, it is because mind and heart are not put into the labor. The one who is slow and who works at a disadvantage should realize that these are faults to be corrected. He needs to exercise his mind in planning how to use the time so as to secure the best results. By tact and method, some will accomplish as much in five hours as others do in ten. Some who are engaged in domestic labor are always at work not because they have so much to do but because they do not plan so as to save time. By their slow, dilatory ways they make much work out of very little. But all who will, may overcome these fussy, lingering habits. In their work let them have a definite aim. Decide how long a time is required for a given task, and then bend every effort toward accomplishing the work in the given time. The exercise of the will power will make the hands move deftly.

Through lack of determination to take themselves in hand and reform, persons can become stereotyped in a wrong course of action; or by cultivating their powers they may acquire ability to do the very best of service. Then they will find themselves in demand anywhere and everywhere. They will be appreciated for all that they are worth.

By many children and youth, time is wasted that might be spent in carrying home burdens, and thus showing a loving interest in father and mother. The youth might take upon their strong young shoulders many responsibilities which someone must bear.

The life of Christ from His earliest years was a life of earnest activity. He lived not to please Himself. He was the Son of the infinite God, yet He worked at the carpenter's trade with His father Joseph. His trade was significant. He had come into the world as the

character builder, and as such all His work was perfect. Into all His secular labor He brought the same perfection as into the characters He was transforming by His divine power. He is our pattern.

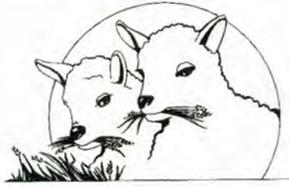
Parents should teach their children the value and right use of time. Teach them that to do something which will honor God and bless humanity is worth striving for. Even in their early years they can be missionaries for God.

Parents cannot commit a greater sin than to allow their children to have nothing to do. The children soon learn to love idleness, and they grow up shiftless, useless men and women. When they are old enough to earn their living, and find employment, they work in a lazy, droning way, yet expect to be paid as much as if they were faithful. There is a world-wide difference between this class of workers and those who realize that they must be faithful stewards.

Indolent, careless habits indulged in secular work will be brought into the religious life and will unfit one to do any efficient service for God. Many who through diligent labor might have been a blessing to the world, have been ruined through idleness. Lack of employment and of steadfast purpose opens the door to a thousand temptations. Evil companions and vicious habits deprave mind and soul, and the result is ruin for this life and for the life to come.

Whatever the line of work in which we engage, the word of God teaches us to be "not slothful in business: fervent in spirit; serving the Lord." "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," "knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ." Rom. 12:11; Eccl. 9:10; Gal. 3:24.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 342-346. **E**

Ellen G. White, Messenger of the Lord and one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, church leader, writer, and public speaker.



Who Said Children Need to Participate?

Virginia L. Smith, Ph.D.

You may have noticed that the articles in the “Feeding Lambs” section of *Elder’s Digest* emphasize the importance of children interacting with adults in order to bond to the adults, the church and the Lord. Until a few years ago, you were far more likely to read about the importance of children being quiet and listening.

Here is the story of the man who changed our understanding of how children learn best, and how we can effectively help them learn, L. S. Vygotsky (1896-1934).

Before the 1917 Russian Revolution, most Russians were illiterate, but the Jewish community was the exception. Consequently the government decreed that no more than 3% of a university’s students could be Jewish.

Lev Semenovich Vygotsky was completing his secondary schooling in Belorussia. As he graduated, the government changed the procedure for entering university. Jewish students would be selected by casting lots. When Lev Semenovich heard this, he was sure he had lost the opportunity for higher education. Amazingly, he won the lottery. In 1917 he graduated from the University of Moscow with a degree in law.

He went back home to teach. Also he organized a psychology laboratory.

In 1924 Vygotsky presented a lecture at the Second All-Russian Psychoneurological Congress in Leningrad. His presentation was electrifying and totally different from the leading psychology ideas of the day.

Pavlov was a prominent Russian psychologist at that time. You probably remember him. He trained dogs to salivate at the sound of a bell by giving them food at the same time. Later they would salivate just at the sound of the bell. Is it possible that he advised the new Russian government to control their people just like he had controlled his dogs? History from the time of the Stalinist purges would suggest that.

Vygotsky’s brilliant performance at the Congress got him an invitation to help reorganize the Psychological Institute in Moscow.

Vygotsky was 28 years old and already dying of tuberculosis. But he accepted the challenge. One of his major objectives was to find practical ways to educate children from illiterate homes. He even went beyond this by researching ways of helping children—who were hearing impaired, mentally retarded or learning disabled.

This was still the early years after the revolution when many young intellectuals wanted to raise the level of all the people in the country. Vygotsky

gathered around him a group of disciples who helped with his research.

During the last 10 years of his life he accomplished a superhuman amount. Before he died of tuberculosis in 1934, he produced approximately 180 works. Within two years after he died, the Russian government banned his material. When a more open political climate returned, Vygotsky's disciples resumed publishing his works.

What were his theories that sent shock waves which continue around the world today? Here are a few of them:

1. Learning begins in a social setting. Intellectual development is not initiated by genetic factors, but by opportunities for social interaction.
2. Learning takes place faster and better with lots of adult interaction. This concept, for which Vygotsky may be best known, is called the zone of proximal development. In other words, children learn best when they are learning in proximity to helpful adults.
3. A major understanding growing from Vygotsky's work is related to intelligence. Since the early years of the 20th century, intelligence was thought to be determined at birth. I.Q. scores were considered to be relatively fixed. But Vygotsky's teachings have led to the understanding that intelligence depends on interaction with others. Children who have a wealth of time and attention from adults and more capable peers have rich opportunities to develop intellectually.

It was not until the mid 1960's that the first translations of Vygotsky's works arrived in the West. That was just when the education world was becoming excited about Piaget's ideas. Nobody paid attention to new material from Russia. Then teachers in the United States during the 1970's were begging for help as segregation ended and ethnic students poured into classrooms. Educational researchers began to read Vygotsky and saw the key the teachers needed.

Today we can say that the most exciting educational innovations of the last fifty years have

grown out of the work of this brilliant Russian Jew.

Active learning groups instead of bored children trying to sit still.

Teachers who see themselves as learners together with the students rather than experts who pour knowledge into brains.

Everyone is dependent on prior knowledge for learning something new.

Children who have a wealth of time and attention from adults and more capable peers have rich opportunities to develop intellectually.

These are the concepts that show us how important it is for children to feel a sense of inclusion in church by participation and involvement. **E**

Virginia L. Smith, Ph.D., is Director of the Children's Ministries Department at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist.

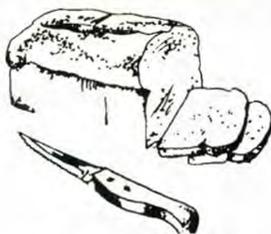
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Slices of Life

Henry Feyerabend

Words

1—Words, words, words

Dr. Wilfred Funk, the well-known dictionary publisher, was asked to select the ten most expressive words in the English language. Here is the list:

- the most bitter word – alone
- the most tragic – death
- the most revered – mother
- the most beautiful – love
- the most cruel – revenge
- the most peaceful – tranquil
- the saddest – forgotten
- the warmest – friendship
- the coldest – no
- the most comforting – faith

—James S. Hewett

2 —The world needs messages

The world does not need sermons; it needs a message. You can go to the seminary and learn how to preach sermons, but you will have to go to God to get messages. —Oswald J. Smith, *Leadership*, Vol. 8, no. 3.

See: Acts 8:35; 1 Corinthians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 4:5.

3 —Rules of conversation

Avoid company where it is not profitable or necessary, and in those occasions, speak little, and last. Silence is wisdom where speaking is folly, and always safe. Some are so foolish as to interrupt and anticipate

those that speak instead of hearing and thinking before they answer, which is uncivil, as well as silly. If thou thinkest twice before thou speakest once, thou wilt speak twice the better for it.

Better to say nothing than not to the purpose. And to speak pertinently consider both, what is fit, and when it is fit, to speak. In all debates, let truth be thy aim, not victory or an unjust interest; and endeavor to gain, rather than to expose, thy antagonist. —William Penn, *Leadership*, Vol. 7, no. 3.

See: Ecclesiastes 3:7; Amos 5:13; Proverbs 17:27.

4 —Forgetting words

The purpose of a fish trap is to catch fish and when the fish are caught, the trap is forgotten. The purpose of a rabbit snare is to catch rabbits. When the rabbits are caught, the snare is forgotten.

The purpose of the word is to convey ideas. When the ideas are grasped, the words are forgotten. Where can I find a man who has forgotten words? He is the one I would like to talk to. —Chuang Tzu

See: Job 16:3; Proverbs 15:2; Proverbs 4:7.

5 —Keeping warm

Philip Henry's advice to his daughter: "If you want to keep warm in this cold season (January, 1692), take these four directions:

- 1) Get into the sun—under his blessed beams there are warmth and comfort.
- 2) Go near the fire—'Is not my word like a fire?' How many cheering passages there are!

- 3) Keep in motion and action—stirring up the grace and gift of God that is in you.
- 4) Seek Christian communion—‘How can one be warm alone?’ —Charles Haddon Spurgeon
See: Psalms 89:15-16; Eccl 4:11; Jer 23:29; 2 Tim 1:6-7.

6 —Thoughtless word

In a country church of a small village an altar boy serving the priest at Sunday mass accidentally dropped the cruet of wine. The village priest struck the altar boy sharply on the cheek and in a gruff voice shouted: “Leave the altar and don’t come back!” That boy became Tito, the Communist leader. In the cathedral of a large city an altar boy serving the bishop at Sunday mass accidentally dropped the cruet of wine. With a warm twinkle in his eyes the bishop gently whispered: “Someday you will be a priest.” That boy grew up to become Archbishop Fulton Sheen. Oh, the power of words, be they written or spoken!—James S. Hewett.

7 —Benefit of apology

An apology is a good way to have the last word. —James S. Hewett.

8 —A thin line

Tact is the art of making a point without making an enemy.—James S. Hewett.

9 —Rare restraint

Albert Einstein had a wholesome disregard for the tyranny of custom. Once as a guest of honor at a dinner given for him by the president of Swarthmore College he was called on for a speech. He said, “Ladies and gentlemen, I am very sorry but I have nothing to say” and sat down. A few seconds later he stood back up and said, “In case I do have something to say, I’ll come back.” Six months later he wired the president of the college with the message: “Now I have something to say.” Another dinner was held and Einstein made a speech.—James S. Hewett.

10 —Conversational grace

An attractive woman was taken to dinner one night by William E. Gladstone, the distinguished British

statesman. The next evening she attended a dinner where she sat next to Benjamin Disraeli, his equally distinguished opponent. Asked her opinion of the two men, she replied thoughtfully: “When I left the dining room after sitting with Mr. Gladstone, I thought he was the cleverest man in England. But after sitting next to Mr. Disraeli, I thought I was the cleverest woman in England.”—James S. Hewett.

Great Thoughts and Funny Sayings

1 —Trifle

Little drops of water, little grains of sand, make the mighty ocean and the pleasant land.—J. F. Carney.

For the want of a nail the shoe was lost,
For the want of a shoe the horse was lost,
For the want of a horse the rider was lost,
For the want of a rider the battle was lost,
For the want of a battle the kingdom was lost,
And all for the want of a horse-shoe nail.

—Benjamin Franklin.

2 —Resignation

Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. —Job 1:21.

It seems that nothing ever gets to going good till there’s a few resignations.—Kin Hubbard.

3 —Majority

One, on God’s side, is a majority. —Wendell Phillips.
The opinion of the majority is not the final proof of what is right.—Schiller.

4 —Impression

You never get a second chance to make a good first impression.

5 —Ear

One pair of ears draws a hundred tongues.
The ear is the road to the heart.—French proverb
We have two ears and one mouth that we may listen the more and talk the less.—Greek proverb.

6 — Criticism

Criticism wouldn't be so hard to take if it weren't so often right.

To avoid criticism say nothing, do nothing, and be nothing.

Two things are bad for the heart: running upstairs and running down people.

There's not the least thing can be said or done, but people will talk and find fault.—Miguel de Cervantes.

Criticism is most effective when it sounds like praise.—Arnold Glasow.

Blame—all and praise—all are two blockheads.

The sting of reproof is the truth of it.

Really to stop criticism one must die.—French proverb.

The only impeccable writers are those that never wrote.—William Hazlitt.

7 — Critic

A critic is a legless man who teaches running.

A critic is a wet blanket that soaks everything it touches.

If you have no critics you likely have no successes.—Malcolm Forbes.

The critics arrived after the world was created.

He has a right to criticize, who has a heart to help.—Abraham Lincoln.

8 — Mob

A mob is a monster with many hands and no brains.

9 — Late

Better late than never, but better never late.

Who rises late must trot all day.—French proverb.

It is too late to come with the water when the house is burned down.—Italian proverb. **E**

Henry Feyerabend writes from Oshawa, Ontario, Canada, where he works as associate producer of the "It Is Written" program.

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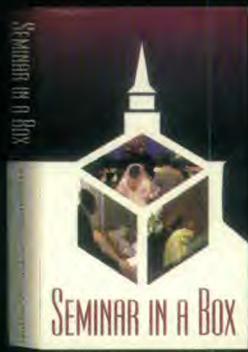
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