


# *Collegiate Quarterly*

January-March 1980



## *Heralding Righteousness*

SPECIAL — Watchman Nee's SIT, WALK, STAND condensed in this quarterly.

A black and white photograph of a pencil case with several pencils protruding. The central pencil has the text "UNION COLLEGE" printed on it. The pencils are arranged in a fan-like pattern, with the central pencil being the most prominent. The background is dark, and the lighting highlights the texture of the pencils and the case.

UNION COLLEGE

# UNION COLLEGE

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CAMPUS MINISTRY

The CBS Evening News ran a special some time ago on Dennis and Bob, white water rafters of the High Sierras—maybe you saw it.

What made these two young men targets for the national news team was not their particular skill in maneuvering their boat or the height of the falls they went over. What made these two men unique was the fact that Dennis was blind and Bob was a quadriplegic.

Shooting around boulders and logs in currents of the roaring water, Bob—in the front—would shout directions to Dennis: "To the right! More! . . . To the left . . . easy, easy . . . Now hard left!" In this way they skillfully moved through the treacherous waters.

The spiritual parallel between this story and righteousness by faith is obvious: *complete trust in the Direction-Giver*. As Dennis unquestioningly trusted Bob for guidance in the foaming, swift water, so true believers are to have unquestioning confidence in the guidance of God.

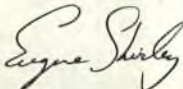
"Unquestioning confidence." That is what Romans is all about. And that is what this issue of the COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY is all about, too. The purpose of this quarterly is to help you develop unquestioning faith in God.

To achieve this objective the COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY has tapped the intellectual and spiritual resources of Adventists and non-Adventists alike. James Londis, William Loveless, and Ellen White offer spiritual insight along with Martin Luther, Ann Kiemel, and F. F. Bruce. The colleges which participated in this particular quarterly are Columbia Union, Pacific Union, Walla Walla, and Oakwood, with each college's articles beginning after its respective *profile* page. It is our desire that this pooling of religious thought will be beneficial to your study.

The COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY is an experimental publication—growing, developing and investigating new ideas. It is an intercollegiate publication involving all 13 Adventist colleges and universities across North America, and is organized under the Union College board of trustees. The COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY is published with the approval of and in conjunction with the General Conference Sabbath School Department.

As you raft down the roaring white water of life this quarter, may the authors of this quarterly, with the direction of the Holy Spirit, guide you properly around the boulders and logs you may find in your way, to a secure docking in the Lord, Jesus Christ.

Yours in Christ,



Eugene Shirley  
Collegiate Quarterly Editor



# REVELATION



*Collegiate Quarterly*  
April-June 1980

## Heralding Righteousness

### Inside:

1. Christianity Reaches Rome
2. Jew vs. Gentile
3. Bad News and Good News
4. Justification and Faith
5. Justification and the Law
6. Blessings of Justification
7. Winning Over Sin
8. The Struggle for Power
9. With the Spirit
10. Romans 9
11. Romans 11
12. As Living Offerings
13. Accepting the Weak

The Collegiate Quarterly is written by faculty, students and friends of the Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities throughout North America. This is an experimental publication, organized under the Union College board of trustees and published with the approval of the General Conference Sabbath School Department.

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General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists



## **INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION**

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

CABLE "ADVENTIST" MIAMI

Dear Fellow Sabbath School Members:

Few things express so eloquently the cohesiveness of the world Seventh-day Adventist family as the traditional 13th Sabbath Special Projects Offering. More than a half million Sabbath School members in the Inter-American Division in grateful expectancy look to the world family for another display of Christian generosity through the 13th Sabbath Special Projects Offering for the first quarter of 1980. Adventist believers throughout Inter-America are confident that on this special date there will be another outpouring of sacrificial love by Seventh-day Adventists around the world.

The priority need for which the 13th Sabbath Special Projects Offering will be dedicated, is the completion of the Medical Center at Montemorelos University, in Mexico. This medical center, when completed, will provide much needed, practical on-the-job medical missionary training for medical students, nurses and ministerial students attending the university. The center will coordinate public health activities in a series of satellite clinics strategically located throughout the region of Nuevo Leon. These facilities will put into practice the medical missionary principles of the One who "went about doing good, and healing those that were oppressed."

Throughout the Inter-American Division territory are scores of 13th Sabbath projects that stand as mute, yet eloquent, monuments to the generosity of the world fraternity of Sabbath School members. These projects of the past are continuing to fulfill the divine commission of proclaiming the Advent message. As we look to March 29, 1980, we confidently say, "Thank you" in advance for making this 13th Sabbath Special Projects Offering the greatest and most important in our history. We crave your prayers, gifts and moral support, as together we seek to enlarge the Kingdom of God on earth, and hasten the return of our soon-coming Lord.

Sincerely yours in Christian service,

B. L. Archbold  
President



# Sit, Walk, Stand

The COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY's  
Condensed Version

by Watchman Nee

**Editor's note:** *Condensed from a collection from Watchman Nee's spoken ministry, the COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY's version of Sit, Walk, Stand offers its readers challenging insights on the Christian life.*

*The great Chinese theologian, Watchman Nee, died in a communist prison camp several years ago, but his message continues to inspire believers everywhere. Sit, Walk, Stand is Nee's study on the book of Ephesians. May his words in this condensed version stimulate your intellect and challenge your soul.*

## Sit

**"The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . raised Him from the dead, and made Him to sit at His right hand in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 1:17, 20).**

**"And raised us up with Him, and made us to sit with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus; . . . for by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, that no man should glory" (2:6-9).**

"God . . . made Him to sit . . . and made us to sit with Him." Let us first consider the implications of this word "sit." For it reveals the secret of a heavenly life. Christianity does not begin with walking; it begins with sitting.

Most Christians make the mistake of trying to walk in order to be able to sit, but that is a reversal of the true order. For Christianity begins not with a big DO, but with a big DONE. Thus Ephesians opens with the statement that God *has* "blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (1:3) and we are invited at the very outset to sit down and enjoy what

God has done for us; not to set out to try and attain it for ourselves.

Walking implies effort, whereas God says that we are saved, not by works, but "by grace . . . through faith" (2:8). We constantly speak of being "saved through faith," but what do we mean by it? We mean this, that we are saved by reposing in the Lord Jesus. We did nothing whatever to save ourselves; we simply laid upon Him the burden of our sin-sick souls. We began our Christian life by depending not upon our own doing but upon what He had done. Until a man does this he is no Christian. To say, "I can do nothing to save myself; but by His grace God *has done* everything for me in Christ," is to take the first step in the life of faith. The Christian life from start to finish is based upon this principle of utter dependence upon the Lord Jesus. There is no limit to the grace God is willing to bestow upon us. He will give us everything, but we can receive none of it except as we rest in Him. "Sitting" is an attitude of rest. Something has been finished, work stops, and we sit. It is paradoxical, but true, that we only advance in the Christian life as we learn first of all to sit down.



This was God's principle from the beginning. In the creation God worked from the first to the sixth day and rested on the seventh. The seventh day became the sabbath of God; it was God's rest.

But what of Adam? Where did he stand in relation to that rest of God? Adam began his life with the sabbath; for God works before He rests, while man must first enter into God's rest, and then alone he can work. Moreover it was because God's work of creation was truly complete that Adam's life could begin with rest. And here is the Gospel: that God has gone one stage further and has completed also the work of redemption, and that we need do nothing whatever to merit it, but can enter by faith directly into the values of His finished work.

Christianity indeed means that God has done everything in Christ, and that we simply step by faith into the enjoyment of that fact. The first lesson we must learn is this, that the work is not initially ours at all, but His. It is not that we work for God, but that He works for us. God gives us our position of rest. He brings His Son's finished work and presents it to us, and then He says to us, "Please sit" (*ch'eng tso*). Our Christian life begins with the discovery of what God has provided.

But if all these things become ours by faith alone, what then of the now very urgent and practical matter of our sanctification? How can we know present deliverance from sin's reign? Once again the secret is not in walking but in sitting; not in doing but in resting in something done. Christian experience proceeds as it began, not on the basis of our own work but always on that of the finished work of Another. "We died to sin." We **"were baptized . . . unto his death."** "We **were buried with him.**" "God . . . **quicken**ed us together with Christ" (Rom. 6:2,3,4; Eph. 2:5). All these statements are in the past (aorist) tense. Why is this? Because the Lord Jesus was crucified outside Jerusalem nearly two thousand years ago, and I **was crucified with Him**. By it His experience has now become my spiritual history, and God can speak of me as already having everything "with Him." All that I now have I have "with Christ." In the Scriptures we

never find these things spoken of as in the future, nor even to be desired in the present. They are historic facts of Christ, into which all we who have believed have entered.

If I put a dollar bill between the pages of a magazine, and then burn the magazine, the dollar bill goes the same way as the magazine—to ashes. Where the one goes the other goes too. Their history has become one. But, just as effectively, God has put us in Christ. What happened to Him happened also to us. Therefore, our crucifixion with Christ is a glorious historic fact. Our deliverance from sin is based, not on what we can do, nor even on what God is going to do for us, but on what He has already done for us in Christ. When that fact dawns upon us and we rest back upon it (Rom. 6:11), then we have found the secret of a holy life.

An engineer living in a large city in the West left his homeland for the Far East and was gone for over two years. When he returned home he discovered that his wife had left him, running off with his best friend. "Day and night for two solid years my heart has been full of hatred," he said. "I am a Christian, and I know I ought to forgive them, I simply cannot. Every day I resolve to love them, and every day I fail. What can I do?" "Do nothing at all," I replied. I saw he was startled so I continued: "The solution of your problem lies here, that when the Lord Jesus died on the Cross He not only bore your sins away but He bore *you* away too. When He was crucified, your old man was crucified in Him, so that unforgiving you, who simply cannot love those who have wronged you, has been taken right out of the way in His death. God has dealt with the whole situation in the Cross, and there is nothing left for you to deal with. Just say to Him, 'Lord, I cannot love and I give up trying, but I count on thy perfect love. I cannot forgive, but I trust thee to forgive instead of me, and to do so henceforth in me.' "

My engineer friend jumped up. "Brother," he said, "I've seen it. There's nothing for me to do. He has done it all!" And with a radiant face he went off rejoicing.

Do you think that if you cease trying to please God your good behavior will

cease? If you leave all the giving and all the working to God, do you think the result will be less satisfactory than if you do some of it? It is when we seek to do it ourselves that we place ourselves back again under the Law. But the works of the Law, even our best efforts, are "dead works," hateful to God because they are ineffectual.

Just you stop "giving," and you will prove what a Giver God is! Stop "working," and you will discover what a Worker He is! "God, being rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us . . . made us to sit with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:4, 6).

## Walk

We have sought to make it clear that Christian experience does not begin with walking but with sitting. But on the other hand it does not end there. When once we have been well and truly seated and have found our strength in sitting down, then we do in fact begin to walk.

What then, we must now ask, has Ephesians to say to us about walking?

**"I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness . . ." (4:1, 2).**

**"This I say . . . that ye no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk, in the vanity of their mind . . . But . . . that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind" (4:17, 23).**

**"Walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for you" (5:2, margin).**

Since the day that Adam took the fruit of the tree of knowledge, man has been engaged in deciding what is good and what is evil. The natural man has worked out his own standards of right and wrong, justice and injustice, and striven to live by them. Of course as Christians we are different. Yes, but in what way are we different? Since we were converted a new sense of righteousness has been developed in us, with the result that we, too, are, quite rightly, occupied with the question of good and evil. But have we realized that for us the starting point is a different

one? *Christ* is for us the Tree of Life. We do not begin from the matter of ethical right and wrong. We do not start from that other tree. We begin from *Him*: and the whole question for us is one of Life.

Nothing has done greater damage to our Christian testimony than our trying to be right and demanding right of others. We become preoccupied with what is and what is not right. We ask ourselves, Have we been justly or unjustly treated? and we think thus to vindicate our actions. But that is not our standard. The whole question for us is one of cross-bearing. You ask me, "Is it right for someone to strike my cheek?" I reply, "Of course not! But the question is, do you only want to be right?" With God it is a question of His grace and not of right or wrong. And that is to be our standard also:

"Forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you" (4:32).

A brother in South China who had a rice field in the middle of the hill used a waterwheel at times to lift water from the irrigation stream into his field. His neighbor who had two fields below made a breach in the dividing bank one night and drained off all his water.

Night after night this continued, until the exasperated brother consulted with his fellow Christians. "I have tried to be patient and not to retaliate," he said, "but *is it right?*" After they had prayed together about it, one of them replied, "If we only try to do the right thing, surely we are very poor Christians. We have to do something more than what is right." The brother was much impressed. Next morning he pumped water for the two fields below, and in the afternoon pumped water for his own field. After that the water stayed in his field. His neighbor was so amazed at his action that he began to inquire the reason, and in course of time he, too, became a Christian.

So, my brethren, don't stand on your right. Don't feel that because you have gone the second mile you have done what is just. The second mile is only typical of the third and the fourth. The principle is that of conformity to Christ. May the Lord teach us that the whole principle of the Christian life is that we go beyond what is right to do that which is well-pleasing to Him.



But the trouble is that we just do not find in ourselves by nature the means to attain to that principle—to walk “as becometh saints” (5:3). Where, then, lies the answer to our problem of God’s exacting demands?

The secret is, in the words of Paul, “the power that worketh in us” (3:20). In a parallel passage (Col. 1:29) he says: “I labor also, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily.”

We are back again in the first section of Ephesians. What is the secret strength of the Christian life? Whence has it its power? Let me give you the answer in a sentence: **The Christian’s secret is his rest in Christ.** His power derives from his God-given position. All who sit can walk, for in the thought of God the one follows the other spontaneously. We sit forever with Christ that we may walk continuously before men. Forsake for a moment our place of rest in Him, and immediately we are tripped and our testimony in the world is marred. But abide in Christ, and our position there ensures the power to walk worthy of Him here. If you desire an illustration of this kind of progress, think, first of all, not of a runner in a race but of a man in a car, or better still, of a cripple in a power-driven invalid carriage. What does he do? He goes—but he also sits. And he keeps going because he remains sitting. His progress follows from the position in which he has been placed. This, of course, is a far from perfect picture of the Christian life, but it may serve to remind us that our conduct and behavior depend fundamentally upon our inward rest in Christ.

*Let me pick up an earlier illustration. Perhaps there is a certain brother who is very trying and with whom you are constantly getting into difficulties. Go back now to that difficult brother, but before you go, address God thus: “Lord, it is clear to me at last that in myself I cannot love him at all; but I know now that there is a life within me, the life of Thy Son, and that the law of that life is to love. It cannot but love him.” There is no need to exert yourself. Repose in Him. Count upon His life. Dare thus to go and see that brother and to speak to him—and here is the amazing thing! Quite*

unconsciously (and I would emphasize the word “unconsciously,” for the consciousness only comes afterwards) you find yourself speaking most pleasantly to him; quite unconsciously you love him; quite unconsciously you know him as your brother. You converse with him freely and in true fellowship, and on your return you find yourself saying with amazement: “Why, I did not exercise the least bit of anxious care just now, and yet I did not become in the least bit irritable! In some unaccountable way the Lord was with me and His love triumphed.”

The operation of His life in us is in a true sense spontaneous, that is to say, it is without effort of ours. The all-important rule is not to “try” but to “trust,” not to depend upon our own strength but upon His.

But there remains something further to be added to the above on the subject of our Christian walk. The word “walk” has, as must already be obvious, a further meaning. It suggests first, conduct or behavior, but it also contains in it the idea of progress. To “walk” is to “proceed,” to “follow on,” and we want to consider briefly now this further matter of our progress towards a goal.

**“Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise; redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is” (5:15-17).**

You will notice that in the above verses there is an association between the idea of time and the difference between wisdom and foolishness. “Walk . . . as wise; redeeming the time. . . . Be ye not foolish.” This is important. I want now to remind you of another passage in which these things are similarly brought together:

“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins. . . . Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For the foolish, when they took their lamps, took no oil with them. . . . But at midnight there is a cry, Behold, the bridegroom! Come ye forth to meet Him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said . . . Our lamps are going out. . . . And while they went away to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage



feast: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins. . . ." (see Matt. 25:1-13).

The "wise" in the parable are not those who have done better, but those who have done well at an earlier hour. The others, be it noted, were also virgins—"foolish," no doubt, but not false. Along with the wise, they have life in Christ and they have a testimony before men. But theirs is a fitful testimony for they live a hand-to-mouth existence. They have the Spirit, but they are not, we may say, "filled with the Spirit." When the crisis comes they must go out to buy more oil. In the end, of course, all the ten had enough. But the difference lay in the fact that the wise had sufficient oil in time; while the foolish, when at length they did have sufficient, had missed the purpose for which it was intended. It is all a question of time, and this is the point which the Lord seeks to drive home when, at the end of the parable, He urges His disciples not just to be disciples but to be watchful disciples.

Often when souls come into an understanding of spiritual things and begin to go on with the Lord, the feeling in my heart is: "Oh, if only they had come to see this five years earlier!" The time is so short, even if we are going on. There is such need for urgency. For remember, it is not a question of what we get out of it. It is a question of *what the Lord must have now*. The Lord's need today is for ready instruments. Why? "Because the days are evil." The situation is desperate among the Christian public. Oh, that we might see it!

May the eyes of our hearts be enlightened to know what is "the hope of His calling," and then may we walk—nay, run—as those who "understand what the will of the Lord is" (1:18; 5:17). The Lord always loved desperate souls.

## Stand

**"Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, . . . That ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. Stand**

**therefore, having girded your loins . . . having put on the breastplate . . . having shod your feet . . . taking up the shield . . . and the helmet . . . and the sword . . . praying . . . and watching" (6:10, 11, 13-18).**

Christian experience begins with sitting and leads to walking, but it does not end with these. Every Christian must learn also to stand—that is, we must be prepared for spiritual conflicts.

So let me deal with this matter of our warfare first in general terms in relation to our personal Christian lives and then in a more special sense in relation to the work of the Lord entrusted to us.

"Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." The Greek verb "stand" with its following preposition "against" in verse 11 really means "hold your ground." It is not a command to invade a foreign territory. We are not to march but to stand. The word "stand" implies that the ground disputed by the enemy is really God's, and therefore ours. We need not struggle to gain a foothold on it.

When you fight to get the victory, then you have lost the battle at the very outset. Suppose Satan sets out to assault you in your home or in your business. Difficulties mount up, misunderstandings arise, a situation that you can neither deal with nor escape from threatens to overwhelm you. You pray, you fast, you struggle and resist for days, but nothing happens. Why? You are trying to fight into victory, and in doing so are relinquishing to the enemy the very ground that is yours. For victory is still for you a distant thing, somewhere ahead of you, and you cannot reach it.

But our task is one of holding, not of attacking. In Christ we are conquerors—nay, "more than conquerors" (Rom. 8:37). In Him, therefore, we stand. Thus today we do not fight for victory; we fight from victory. **We do not fight in order to win but because in Christ we have already won.** Overcomers are those who rest in the victory already given to them by their God.

Satan's primary object is not to get us to sin, but simply to make it easy for us to do so by getting us off the ground of perfect triumph on to which

the Lord has brought us. Through the avenue of the head or of the heart, through our intellect or our feelings, he assaults our rest in Christ or our walk in the Spirit. But for every point of his attack defensive armor is provided, the helmet and the breastplate, the girdle and the shoes, while over all is the shield of faith to turn aside his fiery darts. Faith says: Christ is exalted. Faith says: We are saved by His grace. Faith says: We have access through Him. Faith says: He dwells in us by His Spirit (see 1:20; 2:8; 3:12, 17).

Because victory is His, therefore it is ours. If only we will not try to gain the victory but simply maintain it, then we shall see the enemy utterly routed. We must not ask the Lord to enable *us* to overcome the enemy, nor even look to *Him* to overcome, but praise Him because He has already done so; He is victor.

Let me ask you: Has defeat been your experience? Have you found yourself hoping that one day you will be strong enough to win? The difficulties around you may not alter; the lion may roar as loudly as ever; but you need no longer *hope* to overcome. In Christ Jesus you are victor in the field.

I want to now discuss something about this warfare in its relation to our work for God.

Consider the following two passages which tell us about prayer and action "in the name": "Verily I say unto you, What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven. Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them . . . For where two or three are gathered together **in my name**, there am I . . ." (Matt. 18:18-20). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If ye shall ask anything of the Father, he will give it **in my name**. Hitherto have ye asked nothing **in my name**: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be fulfilled. . . . In that day ye shall ask **in my name**" (John 16:23, 24, 26).

None can be saved without knowing the name of Jesus, and none can be effectively used of God without knowing the authority of that name. The name of Jesus tells us that God has committed all authority to His Son, so that in the very name itself there is power. But it is

not only that He *has* such a name, but that we are to *use* it. In three passages in His last discourse the Lord Jesus repeats the words "ask in my name" (see John 14:13, 14; 15:16; 16:23-26). He has placed that authority in our hands for us to use. Not only is it His, but it is "given among men" (Acts 4:12).

Well might we reverently say: "Lord, your courage is very great!" For God thus to commit Himself to His servants is indeed a tremendous thing.

God has committed Himself to His servants to act through them, as they take action "in the name." And they, what do they do? It is clear that they do nothing of themselves. They use the name. Equally clearly no other name, whether their own or that of another apostle, will have the same effect.

The name of Jesus is in fact God's greatest legacy to the church, for where such a self-committal of God is really operative, He Himself takes responsibility for what is done in that name. And God *desires* so to commit Himself, for He has allowed Himself no other means for completing His task.

No work is worthy to be called a work of God if God is not, in this sense, committing Himself to it. It is the authorization to use His name that counts. We must be able to stand up and speak *in His name*. If not, our work lacks spiritual impact. But let me tell you, this is not something that can be "worked up" at a time of crisis. It is a fruit of obedience to God and of a resulting spiritual position known and maintained. It is something we must have already if it is to be available in a time of need.

Are we in such a union with the Lord that He *will* thus commit Himself to what we are doing? Briefly let me outline four essential features of a work to which God can fully commit Himself. **The first vital need is of a true revelation to our hearts of the eternal purpose of God.** If I am working on a building, even as an unskilled laborer, I must know whether the object is a garage or an airplane hangar or a palace. I must see the plan or I cannot be an intelligent worker. So it is with Christian work. It is a question of the identification of my purpose with the eternal purpose of God. All Christian work that is not so identified is



fragmentary and unrelated, and it does not ultimately get anywhere.

**Secondly, all work that is going to be effective in the divine purpose must be conceived by God.** If we plan work and then ask God to bless it, we need not expect God to commit Himself to it. God's name can never be a "rubber stamp" to authorize work that is ours in conception. True, there may be blessing upon such work, but it will be partial and not full. There can be no "in his name" there; only, alas, our name! The abiding principle of all true Christian work is: "In the beginning God . . ."

**Thirdly, all work to be effective must depend for its continuance upon the power of God alone.** We have got to learn that, even where God has initiated a work, if we are trying to accomplish it in our own power God will never commit Himself to it.

We give a man the task of organizing something—of planning a Gospel campaign or some other Christian activity—because he is naturally a good organizer. But if that is so, how hard will he pray? If he is accustomed to depend on his natural gifts, he may feel no need to cry to God. The trouble with us all is that there are so many things we can do without relying upon God. We must be brought to the place where, naturally gifted though we may be, we dare not speak, except in

conscious and continual dependence on Him.

**Finally, the end and object of all work to which God can commit Himself must be His glory.** This means that we get nothing out of it for ourselves. It is a divine principle that the less we get of personal gratification out of such a work the greater is its true value to God. There is no room for man to glory in the work of God. True, there is a deep, precious joy in any service that brings Him pleasure and that opens the door to His working, but the ground of that joy is His glory and not man's.

It is when these questions are truly settled between us and God that God will commit Himself—and indeed I believe He will allow us to say that then He *has* to do so. When God commits Himself to a thing, then He comes out in power to prove that He is in it and is Himself its Author.

The Christian life consists of sitting with Christ, walking by Him and standing in Him. We begin our spiritual life by resting in the finished work of the Lord Jesus. That rest is the source of our strength for a consistent and unfaltering walk in the world. And at the end of a grueling warfare with the hosts of darkness we are found standing with Him at last in triumphant possession of the field.

"Unto him . . . be the glory . . . forever."

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# Comments on "SIT, WALK, STAND"

by Ralph E. Neall

Notes

Watchman Nee's meditation is very helpful in dramatizing Paul's "indicatives and imperatives." That Christ has died and risen again, that we have been raised with Him, and made to sit in heavenly places with Him—these are indicatives. They are facts which have already happened. Our assurance of salvation depends on them.

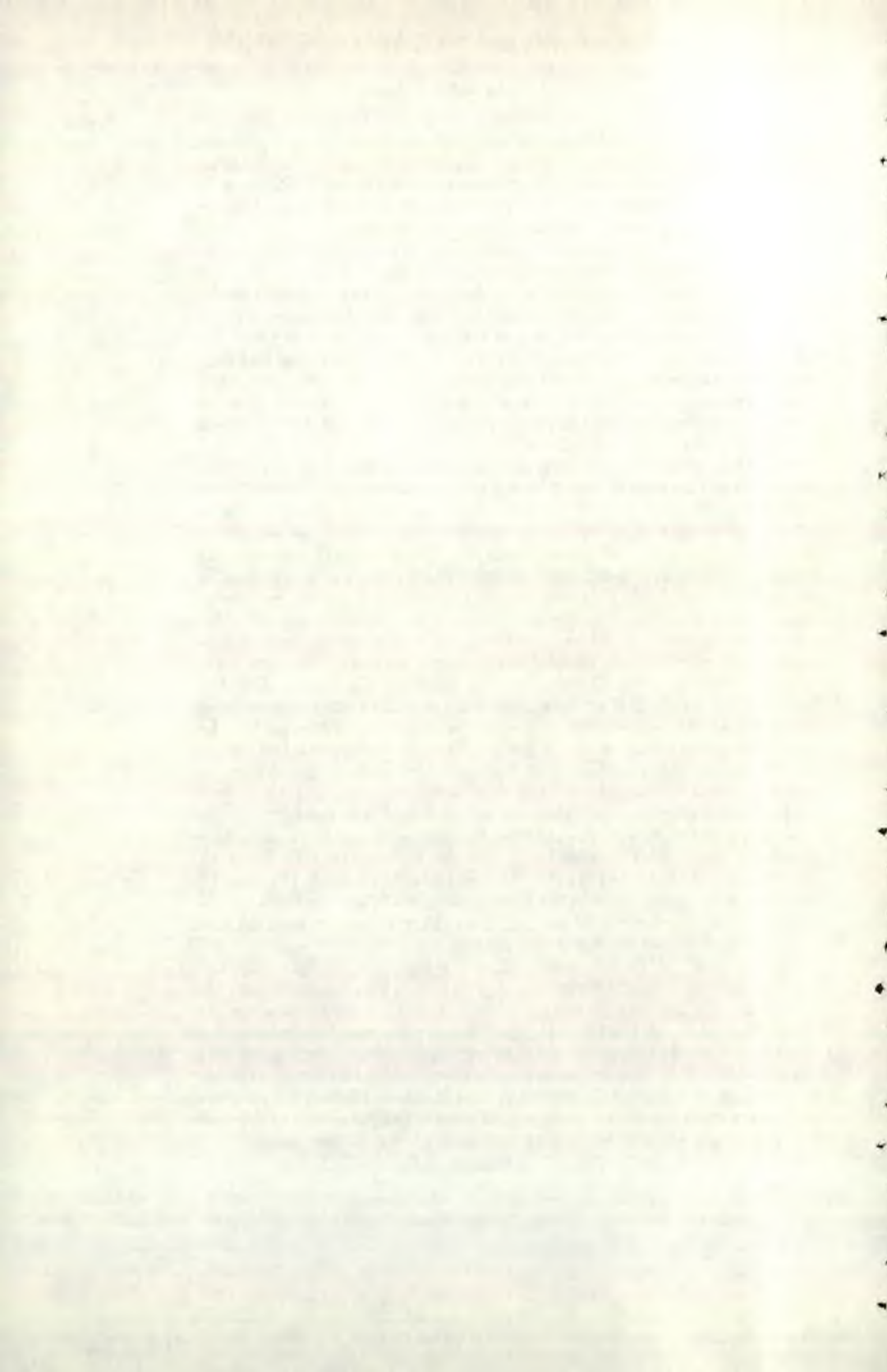
Because these facts are true, we now ought to live a new life in Christ. This is the imperative—that which we *ought* to do. And we *will* live this new life if we continue to trust in the historical facts of Christ's death and resurrection. Nee has done well to show that the Sabbath demonstrates this same thing. Adam and Eve's first full day of life was the Sabbath, when they entered into God's rest. Only after that did they begin their own work. The same pattern can be found in Rom. 6:1-4 and 11-14. We *have* died with Christ to sin (indicative); we are now to *consider* ourselves as dead to sin (imperative), and yield our members to God as instruments of righteousness.

It may be, however, that Nee portrays the Christian life as a bit too passive. What he says is true, but it is not the whole truth. He pictures several people who gained an immediate victory over long-standing evil thoughts by simply believing that their victory had already been gained by Christ. We all know, however, that it doesn't always work that way. One man indeed gains an immediate victory over a besetting sin, but another finds that the victory gained once has to be gained again later.

The metaphors of sitting, walking, and standing have to be supplemented by other biblical metaphors, such as: the new birth (John 3); fruit-bearing (2 Peter 1:5-8); building (Eph. 2:19-22); and warfare (Eph. 6:10-18). Each has something to add to our knowledge of the Christian life. Now, while Nee is aware of the warfare metaphor, he overlooks some things about it. He emphasizes the shield, the defensive weapon; but he does not mention the sword, the offensive weapon. The Christian does more than simply stand and let the devil attack him; sometimes he takes his sword and fights back.

Now the sword is the sword of the Spirit. Nee could have said more about the Spirit, who appears many times in Ephesians (1:13, 14; 2:18, 22; 3:5, 16; 4:3, 4, 30; 5:18; 6:17). The Spirit brings power. The Spirit is the One who works *in* us what Christ has already worked out *for* us. Because of the influence of the Spirit we do not only depend on past facts, we also depend on present power.

By the power of the Spirit we walk and stand. In Ephesians chapters 4-6 Paul gets very specific about this walking. It means putting off the old nature and putting on the new (4:17, 22, 24). It means that we are not to lie, but speak the truth (4:25). It means that we do not steal, but labor so we can help others (4:28). It means that we do not speak evil, but good (4:29). It means that we shun immorality, but love our wives and husbands (chapter 5). It means that children obey their parents, and slaves their masters (chapter 6). If we are truly walking in the new life, this is the kind of life it will be—with Christ, in the Spirit.





# Columbia Union College

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Columbia Union College is located in Takoma Park, Maryland, a quiet suburban community. The campus occupies nineteen acres in a location of proximity to the nation's capital with its many educational and cultural opportunities.

The college community, with a student body of approximately one thousand, comes from almost every state and from many foreign countries. Students are not only from many different geographical locations, but from varied economic backgrounds and ethnic groups.

At CUC students work with faculty and other students in the various departments of the school. Student representatives may attend faculty meetings. They participate in both academic and administrative planning and decisions and in helping to make college life a relevant and meaningful experience for themselves and others.



Columbia Union College was responsible for obtaining the articles that are between this page and the next *profile* page.



# Christianity Reaches Rome



*"Contradiction should awaken attention,  
not passion." —Thomas Fuller*

by Karl-Heinz Schroeder

In various parts of the New Testament (see Matt. 28:19 and Acts 1:8) we read that Christ commanded His followers to preach the "Good News" not only to the Jews but to the whole world. This command was not as unusual in the Jewish religious environment of the times of Christ as it is sometimes assumed. Proselytizing had been carried on by the Jews for centuries as can be seen from pagan, Jewish and Christian references. A pagan who accepted the Mosaic law with all its necessary rituals was completely accepted into the Jewish congregation. But because of the stringent requirements there were many pagans who adhered to the synagogue (who were called *sebomenoi* or Godfearers) but took not the ultimate step into the Jewish community—circumcision. In ancient times circumcision was a rather painful operation for adults (see Gen. 34:24, 25). Thus there was a large segment of pagans who were excluded from God's people.

When the disciples of Christ began their missionary work they were also faced with the problem of how to deal with believing pagans. At first the church did not have a clear position on this question. It took a special revelation (Acts 10) to convince Peter that there is no distinction between Jews and Gentiles in the sight of God. But it was not Peter who spearheaded the program to bring the gospel to the pagans. God selected a different man: a young, zealous and brilliant student of the great Rabbi Gamaliel. For the following thirty years Paul, with the help of a few associates, directed the missionary activities among the pagans.

It seems that Paul was singularly

well-prepared for the role that he was playing. He came from the city of Tarsus in southern Asia Minor. This city was a center of Greek philosophy. Thus Paul had some exposure to the ideas prevalent in Graeco-Roman society. That he was not ignorant of Greek literature can be clearly seen in Acts 17:28. Paul was also very well-grounded in traditional Jewish learning which included a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures and oral tradition.

No other disciple had the preparation that was needed to face the challenges the church was encountering. With his letters he provided the church with the tools needed to overcome legalism and antinomianism. Whenever the church encountered serious crises it was Paul's work that became the guiding light of the church. It was his influence that helped the church to overcome the heresy of Pelagius in the fifth century, to advance the Reformation in the 16th century and to start a new era in the history of the Adventist church after 1888.

The life of Paul is an inspiration and example to all dedicated Christians. His education was hard, thorough, and long. He used his talents for the best of the church. The opposition that he encountered he overcame through well reasoned arguments. And yet, in spite of his greatness Paul always considered himself a slave in the service of Christ. Indeed, humility before God—the recognition that man needs God's grace for salvation—is the outstanding feature of Paul's life and writing.

by J. J. Blanco

Notes

The book of Romans heralds justification by faith with such certainty that, through its pages, Luther, Wesley, and countless others have found Jesus Christ. Paul wrote Romans during his three-month stay at Corinth in the winter of 57-58 A.D. (Acts 10:1-3). As he says, he was eager to preach in Rome and from there take the gospel to Spain (Romans 15:22-26).

In this "Logos" section I have given the high points of Paul's message to the Romans. If you keep these points in mind throughout the quarter, they will help to give perspective and balance to your study of the different aspects of justification by faith.

Paul makes four points to support the concept of justification by faith:

**1. All men are sinners and need God (Romans 3:23).** Without Christ, Paul says, natural religion leads to bestiality and revealed religion leads to bigotry (Romans 1-3).

Natural religion is that religious philosophy which is based on man's reason. Revealed religion is that which is based on information outside of man's reason, as Christianity is based on Scripture. Both are totally inadequate to deal with sin.

Apart from a living relationship with Jesus Christ, philosophies and systematic theologies mislead and inevitably become instruments to feed the ego.

**2. Men are saved solely by God's grace (Romans 5:1, 2; 6:23).** This means that God's grace cannot be earned, merited, or bargained for. It also means that good works do not *keep* us saved (though they do enrich and strengthen our relationship with Christ). Many people understand and accept the first concept. Fewer, however, understand and accept the second one; yet it is still true. Just as good works cannot change us from sinners to saints, so good works cannot keep us from being lost. Men and women are *saved* and *kept* solely by God's grace and power which is the evidence of His unmerited love (Jude 24, 25).

**3. All men have been freed to choose Christ (Romans 6:16-18; 8:8-10).** Salvation is and has always been conditional; it has never been coercive. Through Christ, God has freed all men, enabling them to freely choose whom they will serve. As Paul says, "**Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?**" (Romans 6:16; NIV).

Regardless of our environment, we are free to serve in spirit whomever we will. And if we choose to serve Christ, victory is as certain as Calvary and grace is as triumphant as the resurrection. But remember, there are no heroes except Christ. Christ is our victory now and forever!

**4. Saved men are under the lordship of Christ (Romans 12:11, 12; 14:12).** Men and women who have chosen to serve Christ and who love Him supremely see Christian behavior not as a substitute for grace, but as a love-response to God. Saved men know that Christ's righteousness is placed to their accounts. They work not in order to *be* saved but because they *are* saved. Christians work in order to enrich and strengthen their love-relationship with Jesus.



selected by Richard Wuttke, Jr.

Notes

"During his sojourn at Corinth, Paul found time to look forward to new and wider fields of service. His contemplated journey to Rome especially occupied his thoughts. To see the Christian faith firmly established at the great center of the known world was one of his dearest hopes and most cherished plans. A church had already been established in Rome, and the apostle desired to secure the cooperation of the believers there in the work to be accomplished in Italy and in other countries. To prepare the way for his labors among these brethren, many of whom were as yet strangers to him, he sent them a letter announcing his purpose of visiting Rome, and his hope of planting the standard of the cross in Spain."<sup>1</sup>

At last Paul was on his way to Rome. However, "It was with a heavy heart that Paul went forward to his long-expected visit to the world's metropolis. How different the circumstances from those he had anticipated! How was he, fettered and stigmatized, to proclaim the gospel? His hopes of winning many souls to the truth in Rome, seemed destined to disappointment."<sup>2</sup>

"It could not be expected that Paul, a poor and friendless prisoner, would be able to gain the attention of the wealthy and titled classes of Roman citizens. . . . But from among the toil-worn, want-stricken victims of their oppression, even from among the poor slaves, many gladly listened to the words of Paul, and in the faith of Christ found a hope and peace that cheered them under the hardships of their lot.

"Yet while the apostle's work began with the humble and the lowly, its influence extended until it reached the very palace of the emperor."<sup>3</sup>

"From the vile attendants of a viler king were gained converts who became sons of God. These were not Christians secretly, but openly. They were not ashamed of their faith."<sup>4</sup>

For two years Paul continued to preach and teach in Rome. "During this time, the churches that he had established in many lands were not forgotten. Realizing the dangers that threatened the converts to the new faith, the apostle sought so far as possible to meet their needs by letters of warning and practical instruction. And from Rome he sent out consecrated workers to labor not only for these churches, but in fields that he himself had not visited.

"Thus, while apparently cut off from active labor, Paul exerted a wider and more lasting influence than if he had been free to travel among the churches as in former years."<sup>5</sup>

"Notwithstanding the opposition, twenty years after the crucifixion of Christ there was a live, earnest church in Rome. This church was strong and zealous, and the Lord worked for it."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 373.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 448.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 461.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 463.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 453, 454.

<sup>6</sup> *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1067.

by Ralph E. Neall

Notes

**Paul's Plans:**

During his third missionary journey Paul collected a large sum of money from the young churches in Macedonia and Achaia for the relief of the poor saints in Jerusalem, and he wrote the epistle to the Romans on the eve of his departure for Jerusalem (Romans 15:25-29). He is doubtful about the reception he may receive in Jerusalem, so he asks for his readers' prayers (Romans 15:30-32). We can be quite sure that he wrote from Corinth, judging by his reference to the church in Cenchrea (Romans 16:1) which was the port city of Corinth, and to Gaius as his host (Romans 16:23 and I Cor. 1:14).

His purpose in writing was to seek the Roman church's support in his future evangelistic tour to Spain (Romans 15:28). He fears that they may have formed some misunderstandings of the gospel which he preached among the Gentiles (see Romans 3:7, 8; 6:1; 9:1, 2), which he would like to remove. In order for him to invite their support for his mission to Spain, Paul feels they have a right to know in advance just what he teaches.

**The Church in Rome:**

We do not know who founded the church in Rome. Since there was constant travel to and from Rome across the Mediterranean and over the excellent imperial post roads, it is quite likely that Jews from Rome heard the gospel in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost and took the good news back home with them. Since every Christian of those times was a Christian-maker, it would not have been long before there was a thriving church in the capital city of the empire.

The members of the Roman church included both Jews and Gentiles, a fact which is important for understanding the thought of the epistle. Paul addresses Jews directly in Romans 2:17ff, and Gentiles in Romans 11:13, 19-31; 15:8-29. He mentions several Jews by name (Romans 16:3; Acts 18:2; Romans 15:15, 16).

**The Relationship Between Romans and Galatians:**

More than Paul's other epistles, Romans is a well-organized theological treatise. Good theology, however, is not written in ivory towers, but in besieged fortresses. When the gospel is attacked or questioned, then the Lord raises up men to defend it, to clarify it, and to systematize it. Galatians was written to meet a particular situation (which was the subversive work of the Judaizers who followed Paul to make up what they thought was lacking in his baptismal instruction). Against the Judaizers' doctrine of justification by faith plus works, Paul set forth the truth of justification by faith alone. Romans was written soon afterwards. With a tactician's eye for strategy, Paul desired to get this inspired statement of the true gospel into the hands of the church in the capital.

This is not to say that Romans gives us a complete definition, or the only definition, of the gospel. Each book of the Bible displays the gospel through its own prism, and it takes all sixty-six to make up the whole. To get a full understanding of the gospel, we need the colors refracted to us not only by Galatians and Romans, but also by the four Gospels, Ephesians, Hebrews, Revelation, and the other fifty-seven books of the Bible. Nevertheless, the prism of justification by faith is the basis of the Christian's assurance, and the foundation of his walk in Christ.

**Purpose in writing: to seek the support of the Roman church for a Spanish evangelistic tour**

**In Romans Paul systematically arranges his gospel**

by J. J. Blanco

Notes

Studying the book of Romans is both exciting and demanding. It requires much prayer and careful thinking. Like other Scripture, it is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness (II Tim. 3:16).

The study of the Bible, however, is profitable only when we approach it with the right attitude. We each need to have the attitude of a *learner*, not a *lawyer*. "Those who bring to the investigation of the word a spirit which it does not approve, will take away from the search a spirit which it has not imparted" (E. G. White, *Review and Herald*, August 22, 1907). That's why praying before studying the Scriptures is so important. Our minds need to be lifted first into the presence of God, for only then are we ready to be guided by His Spirit in the study of the Bible. Then we can claim the promise, "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (Jer. 29:13).

The whole purpose of Scripture is to reveal the love of God in Christ, and the book of Romans is no exception. Yet, it seems that no other book has led to more controversies and demonstrations of unChristlike spirits than has this one. That's why, in our study of Romans, we need to follow three simple hermeneutical (how-to-study) principles:

**1. Study each passage in its immediate context and historical setting.**

This means to read the texts that come before and after each passage, to keep the main points of the whole book in mind, and not separate the author from his time. In the case of the book of Romans, the main points are: (1) All men need Christ (Romans 3:23); (2) justification is by faith (Romans 3:28); (3) men are free to choose (Romans 6:16; 11:21, 22); and (4) obedience is necessary but voluntary (Romans 3:31). Historically, you need to remember that Paul's aim was not to write a systematic theology, but to convince both Jews and Gentiles that the Nazarene was God.

These rules are important, for it is not too difficult to become "one-eyed" when studying Romans, or any other book in the Bible for that matter. It is easy to interpret everything as relating to a single, pet concept.

**2. Keep the larger context of the entire Bible in mind.** Remember that God does not contradict Himself (Malachi 3:6). Christ is not against Moses; nor is the gospel against law; neither is love contrary to discipline and responsibility. At times you might think that Paul is not preaching the same message as other writers in the Old and New Testaments. If you encounter difficulties, however, the problem is not with Paul, but with understanding Paul. God's ancient plan to save men and women is the same plan today.

**3. Stay within the context of the "Great Controversy."** The conflict between Christ and Satan is basic to the understanding of Scripture and it is amplified by Ellen White as by no other writer.

The controversy between good and evil is basically man's authority against God's authority. In the context of the Advent message, this should form the backdrop of all your study.

To the diligent student, the book of Romans is exciting and rewarding. These principles we discussed will make its study still more pleasurable. Take them to heart. Apply them. And you will be able to see more clearly the infinite truths of God's word.



by James Londis

Notes

Why didn't Paul establish an outpost center from which to evangelize Rome? Didn't he know that cities are anti-God, dehumanizing, "no place for Christians to be"? Was he unaware of the dangers—physical and spiritual—of living in cities?

The Bible has much to say about cities; but surprisingly, it is not all bad. While there were the Sodoms and Gomorrahs, there were also cities for the Levites—cities of refuge for those in physical danger from revenging relatives—and *the* city, Jerusalem.

In ancient Israel the places of danger were in the *country*, where marauding robbers would attack isolated farmers and shepherds. So there is much praise in the Old Testament for the city.

And even in the promises made to Israel and the Church about the future, God has planned a "city for them to dwell in." Cities have much to offer. They are not all evil. There are the museums, the architecture, the schools. Even Ellen White had much to praise about some of the cities she visited, especially in Europe. She thought Hamburg was a beautiful city situated on the river Elbe. Copenhagen was a delight to her eyes. Walking in its many parks was a favorite relaxation for her. She commented on the recreation areas for children and the crystal waters in some man-made lakes.<sup>1</sup>

But Mrs. White had little good to say about American cities, and for justifiable reasons. Immigrants were pouring into America as she was writing about the cities. Cities at that time were too densely populated and were growing too quickly to be as carefully planned as they had been in Europe. The crowding bred filth and disease, and epidemics found ready environments for their contagion. Sewage was a problem. And many cities were nothing but dens of vice.

This is still true in some cities today, at least in some parts of some cities. But not as true as it used to be. Moreover, cities of today sprawl out for so many miles that it is nearly impossible in many sections of the country not to be living in some city.

Today we need to go into the cities—in force—and find suitable places to live and treat those who go as *missionaries* in the highest sense. Commuting evangelists cannot work in most places and, given the improved conditions in many cities, may no longer be as necessary as they once were.

Paul's heart ached for Rome. That was where the action was! And it is the same today. The people and the need are in Los Angeles, Houston, Chicago, St. Louis, Washington, D.C. . . . Why aren't hundreds of young people going into these cities, finding jobs, and becoming missionaries for Jesus Christ? Why aren't our hearts aching for the Romes of our generation? Why is there little strategy for penetrating these cities for the gospel? Let us pray that God will guide us as we study these matters in the Bible and in Ellen White, that we will decide to act as His will shall indicate.

**"There is much praise in the Old Testament for the city"**

**"Ellen White had little good to say about American cities"**

**"Today we need to go into the cities and find places to live"**

<sup>1</sup> *Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists*, p. 186.

# YOU'RE NEXT

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## Lesson 1

1. If you were giving Paul advice, what would you say to him about reaching your classmates at college? About reaching you?

2. Complete the following sentences:

I would like to be a missionary to the cities if . . .

My witness would be as effective as Paul's if . . .

God hasn't called me to be another "Paul" because . . .

The most effective way to reach those in the large cities is through . . .

If I were a pagan in Paul's day and heard him preach, I would have . . .

3. Sitting at the feet of the great Rabbi Gamaliel, Paul received an excellent education and was familiar with Greek philosophy. How much of Paul's success do you attribute to his education and intellectual training?

How familiar with the world's philosophies do you feel you must be in order to be effective in your ministry?



# Jew vs. Gentile

*"The race of men, while sheep in credulity,  
are wolves for conformity." —Carl Van  
Doren*



by editors

It is wonderful that as twentieth century Christians we are able to rejoice in the freedom of salvation by faith. It is the perfect equation: *saved not by faith and works but by a faith that works.*

Our spiritual ancestors, however, were not so lucky. From earliest times it seems that many were groping after a righteousness that is dependent upon human effort.

The children of Israel had been taught that life would come to them by means of keeping the law. Said the Lord, "Keep my decrees and laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them" (Lev. 18:5; NIV) and "Follow my decrees and be careful to obey my laws, and you will live safely in the land" (Lev. 25:18; NIV).

The "decrees and laws" of the Lord given to the children of Israel may be traced back to the time which followed their deliverance from Egypt. Concerning the daily manna God commanded, "Six days you are to gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will not be any" (Exodus 16:26; NIV). Not long afterward, "God spoke all these words: . . . You shall have no . . . You shall not . . . You shall not . . ." (Exodus 20:1-17; NIV). In the book of Leviticus the list of laws is long: "Of all the animals that live on land, these are the ones you may eat . . . Of all the creatures living in the water of the seas and the streams, you may eat any that have fins and scales . . . These are the birds you are to detest and not eat because

they are detestable . . ." (Lev. 11:2,9,13; NIV).

There were regulations about mildew (Lev. 13:47-52), infectious skin diseases (Lev. 14:1-32) and community relations (Lev. 19:1-37).

For many, salvation was the result of obedience. Their goal was to follow the Lord's "decrees and be careful to obey" His laws, and therefore live.

So you can imagine the jolt carefully trained Jews received when the early Christian church welcomed Gentiles into their fellowship regardless of their adherence to the ceremonial codes. The Jews and their fathers and their fathers' fathers' great-grandfathers had been raised with the idea of *life through obedience.*

And now the Gentiles were changing all that.

The Jew/Gentile controversy sparked the question, What are the grounds for salvation? The Jews demanded that the Gentiles adopt certain Jewish customs—i.e., become "Jews"—in order to find salvation. Paul opposed their teachings, however, with tremendous force and skill.

As Christians, the Jew/Gentile controversy pointedly speaks to us. It speaks to the problems of race relations within the church. It speaks to the idea that one from a foreign nation must become Westernized to be saved. And it speaks to us directly today when it tells of the only basis for our salvation.

by Rodney H. Mill

Notes

**"In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against those of the Aramaic-speaking community because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food" (Acts 6:1; NIV).** This is the first intimation of entry into the church of Jew-Gentile antipathy.<sup>1</sup>

**"He [Peter] said to them: 'You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him . . .'" (Acts 10:28; NIV).** Here Peter expresses the common understanding of a Jew's relationship to a non-Jew. This attitude is derived from the command of God recorded in Exodus 34:11-16 (cf. Deut. 7:1-6), **"Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land where you are going, or they will be a snare among you" (vs. 12).** This command is further buttressed by the post-exilic experience recorded in Ezra 9 and 10.

God had intended these proscriptions to protect the integrity of the nationhood and religion of Israel. But, as the Rabbinic writings show, by the time of Jesus this separatist idea had degenerated into a "master race" complex. This is clearly shown by the witty word-play in which Jesus engaged the Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:21-28; cf. Mark 7:24-30).<sup>2</sup> In spite of the example of the outcome of this incident, Jesus' followers were slow in learning the virtue of being unprejudiced.

**"So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him and said, 'You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them' " (Acts 11:2,3; NIV).** Peter's experience (Acts 10) and the subsequent experience at Antioch (Acts 11:19-26) brought about an "acceptance" of the Gentiles, but the old prejudices died hard.

**"Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved' " (Acts 15:1; cf. vs. 5).** Peter ably defended the Gentiles (vs. 7-11), concluding with the ringing declaration, **"We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."**

James then spoke up and said, **"It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God"—**by requiring them to become "Jews" and to be circumcised—**"Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood" (Acts 15:19, 20; NIV).**

One would perhaps think this would have laid the matter to rest. We have Paul's extraordinary letter to the church in Galatia, however, to testify to the problem's recurrence. Nevertheless, its message is clear to anyone who will read it carefully: **"There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28; NIV).**

<sup>1</sup> The "Grecian Jews" described in this passage were not Gentiles; they were Jews from the Diaspora (i.e., they lived outside of Palestine (cf. 1 Peter 1:1)). They had, however, absorbed much of the culture of the Greeks, including the use of Greek names. Thus they were suspect in the eyes of the more "orthodox" Jews who remained in Palestine. The "Grecian Jews" were the "liberals," the "Aramaic-speaking community" the "conservatives."

<sup>2</sup> Note the irony in Jesus' statement, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs" (Matt. 15:26), and how the woman's reply indicates her cognizance of it.

by editors

Notes

At the Jerusalem Council, where the Jew/Gentile controversy theoretically ended, the non-essentials of the Jewish tradition (e.g., circumcision) were said to not be binding for new Gentile converts. The essential articles of faith, however, were still held as significant (e.g., avoiding fornication).

Things which at one time were filled with meaning for the children of God became relegated to the position of insignificance and were thus discarded.

Throughout her writing career Ellen G. White offered much specific counsel regarding significant "do's" and "don't's." The principles she set forth are immortal, but the specific rules may change. As Adventist Christians we are not to walk blindly along a path in following insignificant customs; but at the same time we must be cautious of discarding the important.

**"The principles set forth are immortal, but the specific rules may change"**

Below are statements from the pen of inspiration suggesting *specifics* for Christian conduct. Consider these specifics carefully. Every principle applies today. But does every specific rule? They may; they may not. The important thing is that *you* decide and you know why you made that decision.

Consider:

"To dress plainly, and abstain from display of jewelry and ornaments of every kind is in keeping with our faith."<sup>1</sup>

"Sugar is not good for the stomach. It causes fermentation, and this clouds the brain and brings peevishness into the disposition."<sup>2</sup>

"I should eat sparingly, thus relieving my system of unnecessary burden, and should encourage cheerfulness, and give myself the benefits of proper exercise in the open air. I should bathe frequently, and drink freely of pure, soft water."<sup>3</sup>

"Among the most dangerous resorts for pleasure is the theater. Instead of being a school of morality and virtue, as is so often claimed, it is the very hotbed of immorality."<sup>4</sup>

"The question arises: What burden do these persons carry for the advancement of the work of God? . . . Is this investment of means and this spinning of bicycles through the streets of Battle Creek giving evidence of the genuineness of your faith in the last solemn warning to be given to human beings standing on the very verge of the eternal world."<sup>5</sup>

Well, what is your conclusion? Did the rules narrow or broaden in their scope?

I hope they broadened. I hope you took the principle of nonadornment and broadened it beyond jewelry to include luxury cars, sports cars and expensive homes. I hope you took the principle of abstemiousness and broadened it to include energy conservation. I hope you took the principle of avoiding poor entertainment and broadened it to include providing good entertainment.

To take Ellen White's counsel and make it applicable to yourself today is to adopt the practice of the Jerusalem Council.

**Apply Mrs. White's principles to today**

<sup>1</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 366

<sup>2</sup> *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 327

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 419

<sup>4</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 652-3

<sup>5</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 52



by Karl-Heinz Schroeder

Notes

Since the beginning of the great Protestant missionary movement in the nineteenth century, the beliefs of Christianity have been preached to non-Christian cultures within the framework of Western customs and ideas. One of the most challenging issues confronting the Christian church today is to preach the gospel to a world that has come of age. With the awakening of national consciousness and cultural distinctiveness in many non-Christian societies, it has become increasingly difficult to preach the gospel in the traditional manner. But, as in many other cases, Scripture can provide us with guidelines to make this necessary adjustment. In the following, we will investigate how the apostolic church dealt with the problem of a multi-cultural environment when preaching the gospel.

How did God look at the issue of cultural differences? There are two important examples of how God led the early church in her preparation to bring the gospel to non-Jewish cultures. The first example is the experience of Peter as related to us in Acts 11. Here Peter was confronted by the conservative Jewish Christians with the criticism that he had eaten with the uncircumcised pagans—contrary to good, established custom. Peter responded to that criticism by relating a vision in which God had ordered him to kill and eat unclean animals. He was told that the uncleanliness had been made clean by the Lord and he should therefore not resist God's bidding. The context clearly tells us that this vision prepared Peter to give the Christian message to the uncircumcised pagans without requiring them to adopt Jewish customs.

That this important issue re-emerged, or had not been settled with Peter's experience, can be seen by the second example as related to us in the fifteenth chapter of the book of Acts. Here it was decided that the pagan Christians should not be burdened with the requirements of the law of Moses except to abstain from eating the meat of animals which had been sacrificed to idols, from blood, from strangled animals, and from unchastity. These were the **only** special requirements imposed on pagan converts.

From the further development of the Christian church and its great success in the Roman Empire, we can see that the freeing of the church from the shackles of Judaism shows the guiding hand of God, as this new freedom enabled a formerly small Jewish sect to emerge into the most powerful movement in the Western world.

Paul's dictum to be a Roman to the Romans, a Jew to the Jews, shows that the Christian message should adapt itself to all environments within the constraints of the law of God. The early church was not hesitant, after some initial struggles, to do so. That this kind of decision may also bring with it certain dangers is evident, for over-zealous adaptation to the environment is partly responsible for the apostasy of the later church. Indeed, one of our first duties is to ask guidance from God to help us differentiate between the essentials and non-essentials in our missionary work.

In the face of the ideological fragmentation of the present world, would it not be wise for Christians to argue like Paul and say that a Christian should be a communist to the communists, a capitalist to the capitalists, by which we mean that we should meet the world within its own ideological framework, so that the gospel of true liberation can make us brothers and sisters of Christ wherever we are.

by Daniel Lamberton

Notes

Looking back, it's easy to believe that the early Christians' problems with bigotry were mild compared to our own; somehow, our difficulties seem more complex today. Paul's "second hand letters," sent first to the Galatian, Corinthian, or Roman Christians and then on to us, don't seem to convince many twentieth century men and women. What's worse is that many of the sins Paul condemned in his letters have been resurrected today in groups who lobby for the right to our pews and pulpits. What would Paul write today to the "Christian" homosexuals or to women who insist that male dominance has lasted long enough? Or what's to be done with the stodgy sameness in the little church back home, with committees intent on forestalling change, or with parents who discourage any difference in theological beliefs? Bigotry can enter the church almost anywhere, and although it may seem like a collective problem it has no solution aside from a renewing of each member's mind.

Below are three steps that help me attack bigotry within myself. I'm sure you'll think of more; feel free to add to the list.

**1) Take advantage of a liberal arts education.** Many of us have been conditioned to some degree of bigotry and may wish to change our thinking. To become a clear thinker should be one of your goals in college. Study the work of those whose art has been an honest attempt to clarify the problems their cultures face. Get to know students whose backgrounds differ from your own. In other words substitute ignorance with knowledge and experience. Remember: "There is no such thing as Jew or Greek, slave and freeman, male and female; for you are all one person in Jesus Christ" (Gal. 3:28; NEB).

**2) Remember that Christ's death is for all people.** Calvary was not meant to affirm white middle class values. Our rejection of a group because of their color or way of behaving implies that we feel a spiritual superiority. Our outward appearance or behavior, however, is not a guarantee of heavenly favor. Remember Paul's admonition, "For the whole law can be summed up in a single commandment, 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (Gal. 5:14; NEB).

**3) Look for the bigot in yourself.** Pride, fear, and ignorance are signs of bigotry. Even "love" can drive us into bigotry. The members of a family I know considered themselves quite tolerant until one child fell in love with a Christian of a different race. When this happened, they had a real struggle to keep from transferring their fears for the one family member's happiness into a general resentment toward an entire ethnic group. Indeed, success in freeing ourselves from bigotry depends on what we let Christ do in us.

These suggestions are only a beginning, for bigotry is a pervasive, universal problem that requires as many cures as there are humans. Nevertheless, as we believe in our own acceptance by God, our acceptance of others will follow.

by Brent Wood

Notes

Throughout his letters, particularly in his epistle to the Romans, Paul endeavors to clarify the gospel of salvation. One important question he addresses is, What merit does being a Jew have?

The Jews, believing they were God's chosen people, felt secure in their law-keeping system. It was their belief that as long as they adhered strictly to the Jewish teachings, their salvation was secure. And, in the eschatological judgment to which they looked forward, they felt that the law-keepers would be the ones to be judged as righteous.

In the second chapter of Romans, however, Paul shows that being a part of Judaism or of any other man-made solution to the human dilemma is of no true value. On the contrary, the Jews felt that while God did accept Gentiles, it was necessary for these Gentiles to adopt certain Jewish customs to be saved.

Unfortunately it is easy for us Adventist humans to also have false confidence before God and adopt, in different forms, some biased ways of thinking in our lives. So consider the questions below and think carefully of their applications in your life.

**Do we have false confidence in the belief that we are the remnant church?** We hear much about our church being God's church, modern Israel. But does membership in the Adventist church really have significance, or are we members in order that we may work more effectively at saving souls?

**Do we consider other Christians as people of less spiritual maturity and insight?** Unfortunately, we humans all have sin in common. And nothing we do makes us more worthy than our neighbor before God. In fact, our Christian neighbors may even be able to share with us Adventists deep and wonderful spiritual insights that we have so far been unaware of.

**Are we really in touch with our non-Adventist friends?** (Do we even have any?) It is easy to become part of an Adventist subculture: to do the things that Adventists do, to eat the "right things," to talk a particular way, etc. The problem is that we can set up barriers which exclude others and lose contact with and understanding of the mentality of the "world."

**Do we take advantage of God's grace?** By this I mean excusing wrong behavior and rationalizing an unsanctified lifestyle by feeling that we can be forgiven later. The problem with this type of thinking, of course, is that by continually putting off repentance until "later" the possibility of "later" actually coming grows less and less.

In our colleges and churches we may find several things that make us feel spiritually superior to others or that can give us false confidence before God. But we must remember that God is anxious for the salvation of, and is working through, Jew and Gentile, Adventist and non-Adventist. The tragedy that has come upon the Jewish people exemplifies that man-made solutions to the sin problem do not give us a scholarship to heaven. God's solution simply asks us to open our lives to Jesus, trusting that He has what is best for us.

**"It is easy for us Adventist humans to have false confidence before God"**

**"Our Christian neighbors may be able to share with us deep and wonderful insights"**



# YOU'RE NEXT

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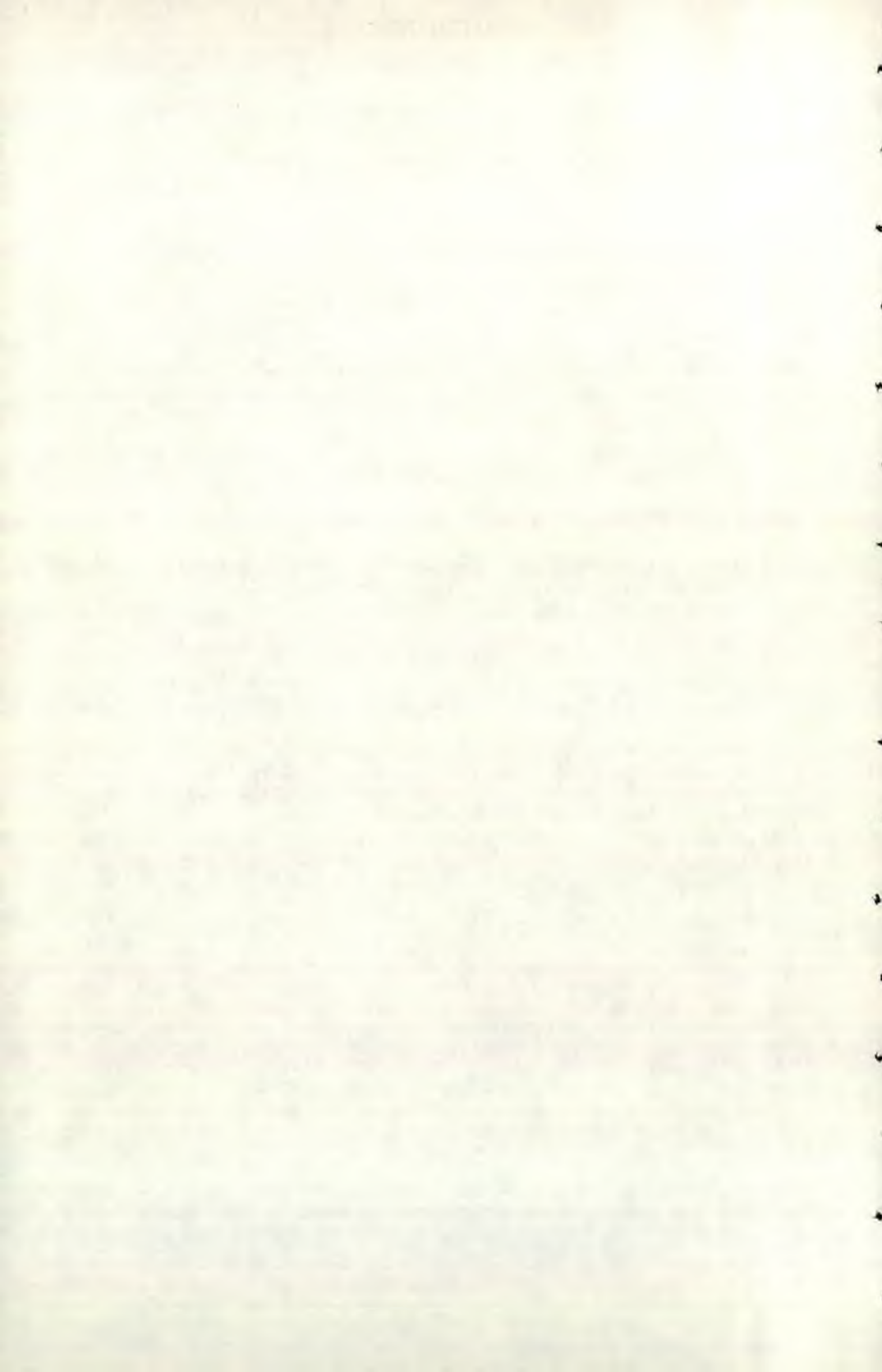
## Lesson 2

1. List one thing you do which you think is quite unconventional.

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Does the fact that this thing is unconventional—though not wrong—bother you?

2. Share with your discussion group how you believe the issues in the Jew/Gentile controversy relate to Christians today (e.g., race relations, Westernizing the world, etc.).
3. Relate a time in your experience when, as a member of a minority, you felt unaccepted. Did you eventually come to feel accepted? How did this come about?
4. Think about a tradition you hold. Has this tradition ever kept you apart from those who don't hold it? Why? What did you do about it?





# Pacific Union College

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*"A mountaintop campus where students gain a vision of the needs of the world."*



Pacific Union College was responsible for obtaining the articles that are between this page and the next *profile* page.





## Bad News and Good News

*"Revere thyself, and yet thyself despise."*  
—Edward Young

by Calvin Miller

He met a woman in the street. She leaned against an open door and sang through her halfparted lips a song that he could barely hear. He knew her friendship was for hire. She was without a doubt a study in desire. Her hair fell free around her shoulders. And intrigue played upon her lips.

"Are you betrothed?" she asked.

"No, only loved," he answered.

"And do you pay for love?"

"No, but I owe it everything."

"You are alone. Could I sell you but an hour of friendship?"

Deaf to her surface proposition, he said, "Tell me of the song that you were singing as I came upon you. Where did you learn it?"

His question troubled her. At length she said, "The first night that I ever sold myself, I learned it from a tall impressive man."

"And did he play a silver pipe?" The Singer asked.

She seemed surprised. "Do you know the man who bought me first?"

"Yes. Not long ago, in fact, he did his best to teach that song to me."

"I cannot understand. I sell friendship and you your melody. Why would he teach us both the selfsame song?"

The Singer pitied her. He knew the World Hater had a way of making every victim feel as though he were the only person who could sing his song.

"He only has one song; he therefore teaches it to everyone. It is a song of hate."

"No, it is a love song. The first night that he held me close, he sang it tenderly and so in every way he owned me while he sang to me of love."

"And have you seen him since?"

"No, not him, but a never ending queue of men with his desires."

"So it was no song of love. Tell me, did he also say that some day in the merchandising of your soul, you would find someone who would not

simply leave his fee upon the stand but rather take you home to care for you and cherish you?"

Again she seemed surprised, "Those were indeed his very words—how can you know them?"

"And have you found the one that he has promised?"

"Not yet."

"And how long have you peddled friendship?"

"Some twenty years are gone since first I learned the song that you inquired about."

The Singer felt a burst of pity. "We sometimes give ourselves to hate in masquerade and only think it love. And all our lives we sing the song we thought was right. The Canyon of the Damned is filled with singers who thought they knew a love song . . . Listen while I sing for you a song of love."

He began the melody so vital to the dying men around him. "In the beginning was the song of love . . ."

She listened and knew for the first time she was hearing all of love there was. Her eyes swam when he was finished. She sobbed and sobbed in shame. "Forgive me, Father-Spirit, for I am sinful and undone . . . for singing weary years of all the wrong words . . ."

The Singer touched her shoulder and told her of the joy that lay ahead if she could learn the music he had sung.

He left her in the street and walked away, and as he left he heard her singing his new song. And when he turned to wave the final time he saw her shaking her head to a friendship buyer. She would not take his money.

And from his little distance, the Singer heard her use his very words.

"Are you betrothed?" the buyer asked her.

"No, only loved," she answered.

"And do you pay for love?"

"No, but I owe it everything."

Taken from *The Singer* by Calvin Miller. © 1975 by InterVarsity Christian Fellowship of the U.S.A., and used by permission of InterVarsity Press. Pages 62-66.

by H. Ward Hill

Notes

The apostle Paul reasoned that as a result of sin, **"death passed upon all men" (Rom. 5:12)**. Every person born on earth with the exception of Christ Himself lacks the self-sufficiency which belongs only to God, and which would be necessary for the continuance of his own existence. In his natural state he is doomed to die, in the sense of being ultimately separated from God. **"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way,"** was the indictment of Isaiah (Isa. 53:6). Jeremiah saw the human heart as **"deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9)**. The apostle Paul quoted the sacred writings as evidence that both Jews and Gentiles were under a similar sentence. **"There is none righteous, no, not one,"** he observed; **"there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God" (Rom. 3:10, 11)**.

All lack self-sufficiency

Orthodox Christianity has always maintained the doctrine of man's fallen nature. But we need not indulge in a bit of overkill in order to dramatize our need of God. Christians have sometimes spoken of "total depravity," implying the utter inability of man to perform any worthy act. Since every human being appears to be more a mixture of good and evil than being totally depraved, some have had difficulty accepting the doctrine of man's "fallen nature" or the doctrine of "original sin" as it is often called. It was on this point that Chesterton made his famous remark that he hated to see Christians giving up the doctrine of original sin since this was the one doctrine they had for which there was empirical evidence!

Total depravity

The Scriptures will often express general statements which were not intended to be carried to extremes in a literal interpretation. The apostle Paul's statement that **"all things are lawful for me" (I Cor. 10:23)** or that one should **"eat whatsoever is set before him" (I Cor. 10:27)** are true in the particular setting in which they are used but cannot be pressed to make every imaginable act lawful or every morsel of food, however poisonous, wholesome.

The Bible often expresses general statements, not intended to be carried to extremes

Thus, we read in Scripture that when the Lord looks upon the earth, He sees that the people there **"are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good" (Ps. 14:1)**. As the apostle Paul paraphrases the sentiments of this psalm, he states that **"there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God" (Rom. 3:11)**.

But there are indeed those who seek after God and there is in everyone a desire to do right as well as a tendency to do evil. In fact, it is those who seek God with all of their heart who actually find Him (Jer. 29:13; Deut. 4:29). But conventional interpretation quickly adds that it was the prior moving of the Spirit of God upon the heart—what Wesley would call "prevenient grace"—which led to this type of search. Thus, all goodness has its origin in God and man is not the ultimate originator of any good thing. And his performance even with the assistance of God falls short of ultimate perfection, requiring that if his work is to be measured by an ultimate standard, then a further provision must be made in order that the flawed and limited performance of man meet the absolute requirement of God. This fact is often expressed as our constant need of the "covering righteousness of Christ."

Prevenient grace



by Herbert Ford

Notes

Have you ever tried to leap a chasm thirty feet wide? How did you do?

Ellen White discusses the possibility of leaping sin's chasm without the aid of the One who is stronger than sin. "It is impossible for man to save himself. He may deceive himself in regard to this matter, but he cannot save himself. Christ's righteousness alone can avail for his salvation, and this is the gift of God . . . Let faith take hold of Christ without delay, and you will be a new creature in Jesus, a light to the world.

**Impossible for man to save himself**

" . . . When faith lays hold upon this gift of God, the praise of God will be upon our lips, and we shall be able to say to others, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world' (John 1:29). We shall then be able to tell the lost concerning the plan of salvation, that while the world was lying under the curse of sin, the Lord presented terms of mercy to the fallen and hopeless sinner, and revealed the value and meaning of His grace."<sup>1</sup>

"In order to be candidates for heaven we must meet the requirement of the law: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself' (Luke 10:27). We can do this only as we grasp by faith the righteousness of Christ."<sup>2</sup>

"In order to meet the requirements of the law, our faith must grasp the righteousness of Christ, accepting it as our righteousness. Through union with Christ, through acceptance of His righteousness by faith, we may be qualified to work the works of God, to be colaborers with Christ."<sup>3</sup>

**Christ's righteousness is the Christian's righteousness**

Just as every great ship that moves out into the world's oceans must have a trustworthy anchor so tides will not drive it onto rocks or reefs, so we need an Anchor to keep us from the shoals of sin. "The righteousness manifested in the character of Christ was forever to be the anchor, the saving hope, of the world. Every soul who chooses Christ can say with faith, 'The Lord my righteousness.'"<sup>4</sup>

"In Jesus mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other."<sup>5</sup>

"By beholding Jesus we receive a living, expanding principle in the heart, and the Holy Spirit carries on the work, and the believer advances from grace to grace, from strength to strength, from character to character. He conforms to the image of Christ, until in spiritual growth he attains unto the measure of the full stature in Christ Jesus. Thus Christ makes an end of the curse of sin, and sets the believing soul free from its action and effect."<sup>6</sup>

**"By beholding Jesus . . ."**

<sup>1</sup> *Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 331.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 395.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 374.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 348.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 349.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 395.

by Charles E. Felton

Notes

"Coronary heart disease is *the major health problem* in our society" according to Lionel Tiger in *Newsweek* (July 2, 1979, p. 11, italics mine). In the spiritual realm the same diagnosis is true. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked" declares the prophet Jeremiah (chapter 17, verse 9). The gospel is a life and death matter; the choice is to surrender one's heart, riddled with the disease of sin, and live forever or to refuse the Great Physician's "transplanted heart" and die without hope in this life or in the world to come.

The adequate function of the heart, the body's most important organ, is vital to life. When the heart ceases to function one is dead. The heart may function while the brain is not operating but the brain ceases when the heart quits. Drawing a spiritual parallel here, each of us must admit that *heart disease* is indeed humanity's major *spiritual* health problem.

The average human being, according to scientific findings, uses only a minimal portion of his brain! It follows therefore that "earthlings" simply cannot begin to fully comprehend "God's ideal for His children"; their brains are "sin-injured." How, then, can one clearly read God's commands for his life and rationalize that something else is meant by the plain, "thus saith the (omniscient) Lord"? In this life, human beings who live up to all of the light of truth which they have barely make a start in understanding the Lord's expectations.

If one refuses to recognize the symptoms and to accept the diagnosis of his diseased spiritual condition, God says that he is acting foolishly and is without excuses. Being good is not enough; one must undergo a heart replacement and experience spiritual healing which comes only through the power of Jesus Christ. Even the desire to live a new life is a gift from God, just as much as forgiveness.

In order to make salvation possible for you or me a price had to be paid—Christ's own exploded heart. In order for us to be saved we must choose to allow Christ to perform open heart surgery upon us; a sure cure is promised. There is no other way!

Let us pray in daily surrender, "Lord, save me in spite of myself, my un-Christlike self." No matter how seemingly hopeless the conditions of our hearts are, He is able and will save.

by Maylan Schurch

Notes

I don't know if you've had the same experience I've had, but back when I was a kid it didn't take much to let me know I was a sinner. If I smacked my sister in the afternoon, I'd dutifully and earnestly pray for forgiveness at bedtime—knowing that the blow grieved my mom and dad much more than it hurt my sister brought tearful agonies under the quilts in the dead of night. I *knew* I was rotten in those days—I proved it again and again.

But now I've got certain things under control. I don't smack anybody anymore; I don't yell and kick when I'm frustrated; I've learned to ignore what (or *who*) irritates me. And, you know, it's harder and harder for me to realize I'm still a filthy-rag sinner by nature. *How can I truly pray for forgiveness when my Laodicean soul is beginning to doubt that I need it?* I'm serious about this—I've been feeling this way lately. And I've told myself that there are certain steps I've got to take:

1. **Go through the Ten Commandments with "mental sin" in mind.** Remember, this is Christ's way of doing it—adultery and murder begin in the heart. What comes first in my life? (I don't have a TV, but reading P.G. Wodhouse is just as much fun, and I get a lot more giggles out of him than I do from Romans.) Other gods before me? Name of God in vain? (Careful here—When I stub my toe and say "Ding-ding-it anyway," I'm responding to a misfortune with an imprecation rather than suffering in silence. You know what I'm actually saying with those syllables, don't you? Sure you do.) How about keeping the Sabbath holy? Mental sin abounds here. Do I honor my folks for their anxiety that I get some common sense into my head? Do I bow my head in shame at the terror and worry I've caused them by such a small thing as not calling to tell them I'll be late coming home? Mental adultery, guys (and girls!) . . . mental murder . . . mental theft . . . the truth "carefully phrased" . . . it all boils down to covetousness, doesn't it? My own desires. I *am* a sinner.
2. **Realize that you need justification.** If after I've been through the Ten Commandments, I must pray with David, "Search me, O God, and know my heart . . . see if there be any wicked way in me . . ." and "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow . . . Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 139:23, 24; 51:7, 10).
3. **Quickly renew your relationship with Christ.** Don't get discouraged. Even though "sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4) and "the wages of sin is death," "the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ" (Romans 6:23), and "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Don't forget or omit this third step—the agony of the first two are designed to lead you to the third, to a cleaner, better, stronger relationship with Jesus Christ.



by editors

Notes

While the Christian must have a proper understanding of sin, his depravity and his need for the covering righteousness of Jesus, it is also necessary for him to appreciate and value himself as a person. For one's perception of himself colors his perception of everything that surrounds him.

**One's perception of himself colors his perception of everything that surrounds him**

But this is a paradox in the Christian's thinking. In order to have a healthy personality one must, on the one hand, echo the words of Paul, "O wretched man that I am," and on the other hand have a positive self-image.

**We are good observers but poor interpreters**

The problem lies in the fact that we, like children, are good observers but poor interpreters, as Psychiatrist Rudolf Dreikurs suggests. For instance, a child spills his milk and is told by his mother, "You naughty boy!" The child quickly observes that he has done something wrong but may, after hearing many such statements, interpret them as meaning that he is a worthless nobody.

**While our sins are indeed of a miserable sort, we are valuable**

As sinners, we do more than spill milk and the Lord reprimands us; we observe that we have sinned and that the Lord is displeased. But many have the false interpretation that they are therefore of little significance in the eyes of others and/or in the eyes of God. While our sins are indeed of a miserable sort, however, we are valuable, loved and needed.

So, what do you think about yourself? Do you consider yourself as valuable? Do you think you have great potential?

Below is a list of personal descriptions. To the side of each description are the letters A-E. Take something to write with and mark your response to each of the descriptions below. If your response favors the first alternative then mark A or B (A if it describes you completely, B if it is a little less accurate). If your response favors the second alternative then mark D or E (again, E if it is a complete description, D if it is not that accurate). C, of course, is for middle-of-the-road positions.

So, why don't you take a few minutes now and mark your responses. Be honest and open with yourself; don't mark how you *wish* things would be, but the way they are.

This is who I am:	Alternatives				
	First	/		Second	
	A	B	C	D	E
1. Good/Bad					
2. Capable of personal decisions/Incapable	A	B	C	D	E
3. Great in potential/Little potential	A	B	C	D	E
4. Lovable/Unlovable	A	B	C	D	E
5. Many pleasing mannerisms/Few	A	B	C	D	E
6. Interesting/Boring	A	B	C	D	E
7. Needed/Not needed	A	B	C	D	E
8. Supported by many/Supported by few	A	B	C	D	E
9. Valued for self/For what I can give	A	B	C	D	E
10. Add much to group gatherings/Add little	A	B	C	D	E*

Well, what did you find? Are you a pretty great person? I hope you think so. I hope you realize not only your infinite need of Christ but also your infinite value as one of His creations. Remember that the value of anything is determined by the price that is paid for it.

**The value of anything is determined by the price that is paid for it**

Yes, we humans are terrible sinners to be sure. But we are not a motley crew. We are valuable; each of us has great potential. Let's observe our wretched sinfulness, but interpret the covering sacrifice of Jesus as a declaration of our infinite worth.

\* Fully Human, Fully Alive, by John Powell, S.J. (Niles, Ill.: Argus Communications, 1976), p. 47.

\* Chart adapted from Fully Human, Fully Alive.

# YOU'RE NEXT

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## Lesson 3

1. In this week's INTRODUCTION by Calvin Miller, which part of the story can you most closely identify with?
2. Explain: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. . . ." (Jer. 17:9).
3. *All of us are "mistake makers."* What implication does this statement have on church discipline?
4. Which of these statements best describe how you think?  
  
\_\_\_\_ "I don't feel bad when I sin because I know I am forgiven."  
  
\_\_\_\_ "I am so filled with sin that without Christ I am worthless."  
  
\_\_\_\_ "My sins cannot disqualify me for heaven."  
  
\_\_\_\_ "All of the problems I face in life are a direct result of my sins."  
  
\_\_\_\_ "Not only my acts, but my very nature is sinful."



## Justification and Faith

*“The condition upon which God hath given  
liberty to man is eternal vigilance.” —John  
Philpot Curran*



by Sieg Roeske

"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, the just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17).

We live in a world of fear and uncertainty. Today's multi-million-dollar insurance business expresses man's basic need for security. It is a proven fact that a person motivated by insecurity and fear cannot perform at the optimum level of his potential. Love, however, is the greatest motivating force in the world. Love releases resources that fear suppresses. This is why we are told not to "indulge anxiety and fear as to whether we shall be saved. All this turns the soul away from the Source of our strength" (*Steps to Christ*, p. 72).

Discussion of righteousness by faith is intended to bring man into a deeper relationship of love and trust with his Saviour. This love relationship in turn ought to dispel uncertainty and fear. It ought to lead the Christian into an experience of joy, confidence and assurance. The apostle John says, "Perfect love casteth out fear" (I John 4:18).

Many a struggling sinner is groping in the lowlands of the Christian life because he is focusing on his failures and mistakes. He could, however, experience the joy of riding in the high places with God by realizing that, "Our only ground of hope is in the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and in that wrought by His Spirit working in and through us" (*Steps to Christ*, p. 63).

There is power available that only

the soul whose life finds its focus in Christ can experience. The Christian's performance, although an important testimony to a living connection with Christ, is not the basis of his assurance. Only Christ and His righteousness can satisfy the deepest hunger of man's soul.

"If we will but keep our eyes fixed on the Saviour, and trust in His power, we shall be filled with a sense of security; for the righteousness of Christ will become our righteousness" (*Messages to Young People*, p. 107).

In our discussion of justification by faith let us remember that we are not dealing with just a theory, but with the person of Jesus Christ. Let us therefore talk more about *Him* than about *it*. After all, the person of Christ is our Saviour, not the mere theory.

As we study the science of justification let us remember that every person may not be able to see all things in the same light. Ellen White comments on this by saying, "Why try to work out every minute point, as if the salvation of the soul depended upon all having exactly your understanding of this matter? All cannot see in the same line of vision" (MS 21, 1891). And, as one of Germany's post World War II leaders, Konrad Adenauer, once said, "We are all under the same sky, but we do not all have the same horizon."

by editors

Notes

After discussing the faithfulness of God and the sinful nature of man, Paul delivers a most wonderful message in the latter part of Romans 3, a message of righteousness through faith.

**“But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Jesus Christ” (Romans 3:21-24; NIV).**

Paul makes it very clear in this passage that the righteousness which saves a man is something found outside of himself, **“a righteousness from God, apart from law.”** He also makes it clear that faith is the only prerequisite for receiving this righteousness and thereby being saved. Paul is able to make these statements for two reasons. The first reason that righteousness and salvation must come from God through faith is because man could never attain holiness himself. The standard of God has been and always will be perfection. Consequently, the only choice available to sinful man, if he wants to be in the kingdom, is to claim the merits of Another.

The second reason why salvation must come only from God through faith is that even if man could become quite holy, God has still determined that the only way a human being can enter heaven is by accepting the merits of Jesus Christ. Even if one could stop sinning, God had established Christ as the only way.

Paul continues on: **“Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law” (Romans 3:27, 28; NIV).**

With this argument Paul gives added emphasis to his “salvation by faith alone” concept. It goes like this: If salvation were gained by works, then you could boast over those who are weaker than yourself, saying that you are nearer to the Kingdom. But since salvation comes through faith alone, all are seen as equal—perfect, but equal—in the eyes of God. For, **“there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith” (Romans 3:30; NIV).** **“Where, then, is boasting?”**

It was the desire of Paul that the Roman church understand and experience justification through faith alone. Only upon a foundation of justification by faith could the believers walk after the Spirit in sanctification. Only by experiencing justification through faith could the believers be united to the body of Christ.

The righteousness which saves is found outside of man because:

1) Man could never attain holiness himself

2) God has determined that only through the merits of Jesus can man be saved

“Where, then, is boasting?”

selected by editors

Notes

When God pardons the sinner, remits the punishment he deserves, and treats him as though he had not sinned, He receives him into divine favor, and justifies him through the merits of Christ's righteousness. The sinner can be justified only through faith in the atonement made through God's dear Son, who became a sacrifice for the sins of the guilty world. No one can be justified by any works of his own. He can be delivered from the guilt of sin, from the condemnation of the law, from the penalty of transgression, only by virtue of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ. Faith is the only condition upon which justification can be obtained, and faith includes not only belief but trust.

**"Faith includes not only belief but trust"**

Many have a nominal faith in Christ, but they know nothing of that vital dependence upon Him which appropriates the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour. Of this nominal faith James says: "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" (James 2:19, 20). Many concede that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world, but at the same time they hold themselves away from Him, and fail to repent of their sins, fail to accept of Jesus as their personal Saviour. Their faith is simply the assent of the mind and judgment to the truth; but the truth is not brought into the heart, that it might sanctify the soul and transform the character . . .

The faith that is unto salvation is not a casual faith, it is not the mere consent of the intellect, it is belief rooted in the heart, that embraces Christ as a personal Saviour, assured that He can save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. To believe that He will save others, but will not save you is not genuine faith; but when the soul lays hold upon Christ as the only hope of salvation, then genuine faith is manifested. This faith leads its possessor to place all the affections of the soul upon Christ; his understanding is under the control of the Holy Spirit, and his character is molded after the divine likeness. His faith is not a dead faith, but a faith that works by love, and leads him to behold the beauty of Christ, and to become assimilated to the divine character. (Deut. 30:11-14 quoted.) "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live" (Deut. 30:6).

**Saving faith is belief rooted in the heart**

It is God that circumcises the heart. The whole work is the Lord's from the beginning to the end. The perishing sinner may say: "I am a lost sinner; but Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost. He says, 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance' (Mark 2:17). I am a sinner, and He died upon Calvary's cross to save me. I need not remain a moment longer unsaved. He died and rose again for my justification, and He will save me now. I accept the forgiveness He has promised."

**"The whole work is the Lord's from beginning to end"**

Taken from *Selected Messages*, vol. 1, pp. 389-392.



selected by editors

Notes

Below are two arguments from Martin Luther's *Disputation Concerning Justification*. Lewis W. Spitz comments on the medieval academic practice of the disputations.

"Although they are academic and less dramatic than Luther's Reformation writings addressed to a worldwide public, they are, nevertheless, very significant in providing insights into Luther's activity as a professional theologian in an academic situation. Luther, the university professor, lectured two or three times a week in biblical exegesis and conducted regular doctrinal disputations with the students . . ."<sup>1</sup>

#### Argument XXI . . . .

*There can be no faith without works. Therefore, faith does not justify alone. I approve the antecedent premise on the grounds that if I had all faith but would have no love, I am nothing (1 Cor. 13:2).*

**Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther:** Paul speaks thus and argues against those who glory and debate about a feigned and false faith. For the Corinthians practiced faith without works, since they were altogether devoid of the work of love, as many also today are Christians in name only, who cry, "Faith, faith, gospel, gospel, miracles, miracles!" The preaching of love must always thunder against them. And Paul storms against such people as are numbered among but are not Christians in reality. But if you do not have love, he says, your faith is false and empty, even if it is possible for you to move mountains from place to place. Yet, he does not say that men are justified in human fashion on account of those who boast of faith without works. True faith is not idle. We can, therefore, ascertain and recognize those who have true faith from the effect of from what follows.<sup>2</sup>

#### Argument XXVII

*Works have regard for the decalogue. Eternal life is promised to him who keeps the decalogue. Therefore, eternal life is promised for works.*

*I approve the minor premise on the basis of (Mark 10:17-19), where justification is promised to one who keeps the decalogue. There even the inheritance of eternal life is promised. He who keeps the decalogue, then, obtains forgiveness of sins . . . .*

**Explanation of Martin Luther:** The argument is true that eternal life is indeed given to him who keeps the law without Christ, because whoever keeps the law is righteous. Adam would have entered into the kingdom of heaven without Christ, if he had not fallen. But, I ask, where is he who keeps the decalogue? Or who can fulfil the commandments? The conclusion is that Adam alone kept the commandments of God before the Fall, but after the Fall of Adam no one has truly been found who has fulfilled the law . . . .

Therefore, we rightly adduce as proof and conclude that whoever has kept the commandments of God will be saved. But no one can keep them, therefore, no one will be saved. Consequently, no one can enter into the kingdom of God. Accordingly, it is necessary for that seed, promised and proffered, which crushed the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15), to save us. He is Christ Jesus, to whom with God the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory forever, Amen.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Luther's Works* vol. 34, gen. ed. Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), p. XIII.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 183 (bold and italic type ours). Copyright © 1960 by Muhlenberg Press, XX now XX Fortress Press. Reprinted by permission of Fortress Press.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187-188 (bold and italic type ours).

by editors

Notes

Jason is a Seventh-day Adventist Christian. Jason loves people, he loves his church and he is active as can be in serving both.

Jason is a good person. He gets good grades and works hard at his job. His professors like him and think he has a bright future.

Jason also lusts.

But lusting is not Jason's main problem. His biggest problem is his self-image *afterwards*.

You see, Jason was brought up with the idea that you are initially a sinner and are initially saved by faith alone in Christ. But once you've been born again you'd better not let "the old man rear its ugly head"; for if you do, you are choosing the way of Satan and forfeiting your right to salvation.

In other words, every time Jason would have impure thoughts he would once again feel damned.

So, what is the problem? All Jason would have to do is stop.

But he can't. He's read every book on "the sin of lust" imaginable. He has prayed for power to overcome. He has read his Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy books by the hour—hoping to find the strength to lose his habit.

And it would work. For a while. Three weeks, six weeks at the most. And then he would fall—and feel cut off from God again.

I've talked with Jason a few times. And what he needs to realize is: **1) that he is a sinner both before and after conversion.** Before conversion he is a lost sinner; after conversion he is a saved sinner.

Jason will continue to have impure thoughts. And as a result, he will continue to do wrong things—even when he *knows* he should not. As a Christian, Jason's status before God has changed. But the fact that he lusts or desires any number of sinful things—will be with him for a long time.

Then Jason needs to realize that: **2) he remains saved by faith alone.** Someone needs to pound it into Jason's head that he does not "get saved" by faith alone and then "remain saved" by the good work of not doing anything bad.

Any Bible translation I've ever read has given only one ingredient in the recipe for salvation: *faith*. Granted, this is a faith *that* works but it's not a combination *with* works. Which brings us to our third point.

Jason needs to remember that: **3) his rate of Christian growth does not affect his standing before God.** Jason needs to stop looking at himself to see how "well" he is doing at living the Christian life. Nothing could be more frustrating. What could he ever hope to see within himself other than sin?

Jesus is Jason's substitute. God sees Jesus' character when He looks at Jason. Jason will be freed and enabled to live the sanctified life when he realizes that Jesus is his substitute—totally.

"Jason, you're all right, buddy. You're a sinner, like I am. But don't be so paranoid about it; stop looking at yourself. You keep your thoughts on the One who has taken your place."

by Larry D. McGill

Notes

Karl Barth's teaching on justification by faith falls under three main categories:

"1. Jesus Christ is the true God who humbles Himself as a servant, and in so doing is the reconciling God. This is the *priestly* work of Jesus Christ which accomplishes man's justification.

"2. Jesus Christ is the true man. For example, He is the servant, or the Son of Man, who exalted by God, is therefore the reconciled man through whom all others are exalted to fellowship with God. This is Christ's *kingly* work which effects man's sanctification.

"3. Jesus Christ is the mediator of man's reconciliation with God as the God Man. Therefore, He is the guarantor and witness of our atonement effective through Him. This is Christ's *prophetic* work for which He equips man for his calling as a witness of His reconciling work."<sup>1</sup>

By adopting this approach, Karl Barth makes it clear from the very beginning that Jesus Christ is the key to the entire reconciliation doctrine. Within this framework Jesus Christ is the beginning, the middle, and the end of the doctrine of reconciliation and all of its parts. However, in contrast to Lutherism which makes "the justification of man doctrine" central for its entire content and structural theology, Barth seems to stress the sovereignty of God and man's justification resulting from it. Barth's understanding is that God's eternal gracious decree to save man through Jesus Christ is the ultimate ground of man's justification. Man's justification is wholly dependent upon what God does in the life, the death, and the resurrection of the God Man, Jesus Christ.

Man's transition from death to life takes place because God is true to His eternal purpose by realizing His loving and gracious will in Jesus Christ. Man, sin, and injustice are not greater than God's justice and grace. Therefore, God intervenes to overcome man's injustice in the power of sin. However, the divine judgment by which man is justified is not simply a declaration, it is that—but it is more. It is God's gracious judgment which is enacted in and through Jesus Christ. In this way, man's sin against God is done completely away with.

In order for man's transition from the life of the old man to that of the new to be complete, there must be a new, or righteous, or justified man. This man is Jesus Christ, raised from the dead. Thus even as the death of the old man has to be referred to Jesus Christ, who acts as our representative, so the life of the new man is seen in Him whose resurrection is the sign of the vindication of God's purpose and the beginning of a new humanity. By raising Jesus Christ from the dead, God reaffirmed what Jesus Christ had done in His death. Since Jesus Christ is also our representative in His resurrection, His vindication is ours as well. Therefore, our transition from death to life, our justification, is actually openly in and through Jesus Christ. This transition is never assured if we look at ourselves.

"Barth affirms with the reformers that we are justified by the 'strange' or 'alien' righteousness of Jesus Christ. He also agrees with Luther's emphasis that within man's temporal life, he will always view himself as sinner and justified at the same time. The Christian pilgrim however, looks to the fulfillment of God's promise when he will no longer simultaneously be sinner and justified. In that day, he will be wholly justified."<sup>2</sup>

**"Jesus Christ is the key to the entire reconciliation doctrine"**

**Man's sin is not greater than God's grace**

**"This transition is never assured if we look at ourselves"**

<sup>1</sup> David L. Mueller, *Karl Barth: Makers of the Modern Theological Mind* (Waco, Texas: Word Inc., 1972), p. 122. Used by permission of Word Inc.

<sup>2</sup> David L. Mueller, *Karl Barth: Makers of the Modern Theological Mind* (Waco, Texas: Word Inc., 1972), p. 131. Used by permission of Word Inc.



# You're Next

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## Lesson 4

1. Can you think of an experience in your relationships with other people when you received complete acceptance even though you did not deserve it?

Who was involved in giving you the free gift of acceptance?

Is there an "act of liberation" you could engage in that would free someone else close to you?

2. *The only way for any sinner to be justified is by faith apart from works.*

*When I read this statement I:*

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. praise the Lord!
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. feel that an explanation is needed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. want to do all sorts of good things.
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. don't want to change my behavior at all.
- \_\_\_\_\_ e. want to reflect on it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ f. want to tell the world.

3. If you wanted to help members of the Adventist church better understand justification by faith, how would you go about it?

Have you ever tried any of these ways? If so, with what success?



## Justification and the Law

*"The hardest sinner in the whole lot to convert is the one who spends half of his time in sinning and the other half in repentance."  
—Josh Billings*

**INTRODUCTION I'd Do Anything For a Friend**

by Shelley Schurch

I don't like to be ignored. Don't misunderstand me; I'm not asking to be the star of every show, the life of every party. In fact, last winter when I tripped over a crack in the sidewalk and fell, ripping open the knees of my slacks, I limped home as casually as possible, hoping to escape attention on the way.

That was an exception, though. Usually I welcome smiles, greetings, conversation—the warmth of other human beings acknowledging my existence. Without this recognition I feel empty, lonely, and lost.

For many years I took it for granted that God was ignoring me. I didn't blame Him. The Bible said, "God so loved the world" and I knew I was only one insignificant person in that world of millions of people. Besides, there were countless other worlds. God had to spread His love and attention rather thin. God was busy.

How does the Holy Spirit help a person who has a warped idea about God? I suspect He has an infinite variety of ways to work with us, since we were created as individuals with unique characteristics, and are always treated as such by the Godhead. I do know how the Holy Spirit helped me.

One evening as I read about Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, struggling with the temptation to save His own life rather than to offer it as a sacrifice for the human race, I

became personally involved in the story. For the first time in my life I realized it was true that Jesus would have died for only one sinner, even if I had been that sinner. He wasn't interested in numbers alone; but He could love millions of people in such a way that each one had all His love and attention.

When I believed "God so loved me" I immediately wanted to do three things: I wanted to thank Him, I wanted to become like Him, and I wanted to tell somebody else what I'd discovered.

Aren't "good works" involved in all three of those responses? For me, then, "good works" are my responses in a certain kind of relationship. I once was a distant admirer of God; I became a close friend. I feel like doing anything I can for a good friend, but this friendship is unique. God not only inspires me with love and willingness to "do good works," He also gives me the ability to do them. He makes them probable and possible, but the choice of relationship is always mine. I can ignore God, or I can recognize His hunger for my love and respond with my full-hearted friendship.



by Paul W. Hood

Notes

It is impossible for man, in his fallen condition, to be justified before God on the basis of obedience to the law. **"There is none righteous, no, not one . . . for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God"** (Romans 3:10, 23). So **"those who rely on obedience to the law are under a curse; for Scripture says, 'A curse is on all who do not persevere in doing everything that is written in the Book of the Law'"** (Gal. 3:10; NEB). **"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin"** (Romans 3:20).

**"But we know that no man is ever justified by doing what the law demands, but only through faith in Christ Jesus; so we too have put our faith in Jesus Christ, in order that we might be justified through this faith, and not through deeds dictated by law"** (Gal. 2:16; NEB). **"What happens now to human pride of achievement? There is no more room for it. Why, because failure to keep the Law has killed it? Not at all, but because the whole matter is now on a different plane—believing instead of achieving. We see now that a man is justified before God by the fact of his faith in God's appointed Savior and not by what he has managed to achieve under the Law"** (Romans 3:27, 28; Phillips).

Justification by faith is the only basis of true, ethical conduct as defined by Jesus. The one who seeks to be justified by law obeys from selfish motives: his obedience is not an expression of gratitude and thanksgiving to God for the gift of salvation, nor a manifestation of genuine concern for others; his obedience is prompted by a fear of punishment and a hope of reward. Only when the question of our own salvation is settled, only when we are sure of our acceptance with God on the basis of what *Christ* has achieved, are we free to obey the law as an expression of love to God and man.

Please note in the following passage from Romans that the development of Christian character is the *result*, and not the *means* of salvation. **"Since then it is by faith that we are justified, let us grasp the fact that we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him we have confidently entered into this new relationship of grace, and here we take our stand, in happy certainty of the glorious things he has for us in the future.**

**"This doesn't mean, of course, that we have only a hope of future joys—we can be full of joy here and now even in our trials and troubles. These very things will give us patient endurance; this in turn will develop a mature character, and a character of this sort produces a steady hope, a hope that will never disappoint us. Already we have the love of God flooding through our hearts by the Holy Spirit given to us"** (Romans 5:1-5; Phillips).

Justification by faith is not opposed to law-keeping and ethical conduct: it is the only basis for it! For **"love is the fulfilling of the law,"** and only he whose heart is filled with the love of God can obey—and this infilling of God's love comes as a result of salvation. As the apostle Paul said, **"Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law"** (Romans 3:31).

**"Justification by faith is the only basis of true, ethical conduct as defined by Jesus"**

by Candy Issa

Notes

In this part of the lesson, Mrs. White gives insight on the relationship between loving God and doing good works. When considering this crucial topic, keep two questions in mind: (1) *What should be my motive(s) for doing good things?* (2) *Does God want me to do only those deeds that are sponsored purely from a heart of love, or does He want me to do some things regardless of how deep my love for Him is?*

"Our acceptance with God is sure only through His beloved Son, and good works are but the result of the working of His sin-pardoning love."<sup>1</sup> "Good works can never purchase salvation, but they are an evidence of the faith that acts by love and purifies the soul. And though the eternal reward is not bestowed because of our merit, yet it will be in proportion to the work that has been done through the grace of Christ."<sup>2</sup> "Righteousness is right doing, and it is by their deeds that all will be judged. Our characters are revealed by what we do. The works show whether the faith is genuine."<sup>3</sup>

**Good works are evidence of our faith**

"It is God's will that faith in Christ shall be made perfect by works; He connects the salvation and eternal life of those who believe, with these works, and through them provides for the light of truth to go to all countries and peoples. This is the fruit of the working of God's Spirit."<sup>4</sup> "Genuine faith will be manifested in good works; for good works are the fruits of faith. As God works in the heart, and man surrenders his will to God, and cooperates with God, he works out in the life what God works in by the Holy Spirit, and there is harmony between the purpose of the heart and the practice of the life."<sup>5</sup>

"Many are losing the right way, in consequence of thinking that they must climb to heaven, that they must do something to merit the favor of God. They seek to make themselves better by their own unaided efforts. This they can never accomplish. Christ has made the way by dying our sacrifice, by living our example, by becoming our great high priest. . . . If by any effort of our own we could advance one step toward the ladder, the words of Christ would not be true. But when we accept Christ, good works will appear as fruitful evidence that we are in the way of life, that Christ is our way, and that we are treading the true path that leads to heaven."<sup>6</sup>

"God always demanded good works, the law demands it, but because man placed himself in sin where his good works were valueless, Jesus' righteousness alone can avail. Christ is able to save to the uttermost because He ever liveth to make intercession for us. All that man can possibly do toward his own salvation is to accept the invitation, 'Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely' " (Rev. 22:17).<sup>7</sup>

So then it is clear that "Good works do not purchase the love of God, but they reveal that we possess that love. If we surrender the will to God, we shall not work in order to earn God's love. His love as a free gift will be received into the soul, and from love to Him we shall delight to obey His commandments."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1122

<sup>2</sup> *Desire of Ages*, p. 314

<sup>3</sup> *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 312

<sup>4</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 644

<sup>5</sup> *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 397

<sup>6</sup> *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 368

<sup>7</sup> *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 343

<sup>8</sup> *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 283

by William Cole

Notes

If there were a "Nicest Guy in Town Contest," Frank would win, hands down. Just start saying words like kind, patient, compassionate, honest, generous, and soon you will have done a good job of describing Frank, who seems like the most Christian person I know.

There is one problem, though. Frank is not a Christian. You see, he has never felt the need of a Saviour.

Perhaps you know someone like Frank. If so, you've probably thought to yourself, "Well, surely God will save him; after all, he's such a good person." But maybe you should think again. Perhaps that "surely" is not so sure.

"God's command demands that the substance of our activity be morally correct. However, our activity is really good in God's judgment only . . . because it is carried on in the faith that we are justified."<sup>1</sup>

"The ethical substance of works and their moral correctness are not enough in God's judgment. . . . They [works] must be theologically as well as ethically correct, that is, they must be done in the certainty of salvation and with the confidence that God graciously accepts them as valid, just as he accepts the man who does them."<sup>2</sup>

Martin Luther simply said, Good works are not good in themselves, but must "be done in faith, in fact, as an exercise of faith, so that nobody thinks he is pleasing to God on account of what he does."<sup>3</sup>

Paul is more direct still when he says, "Whatever does not originate and proceed from faith is sin—that is, whatever is done without a conviction of its approval by God is sinful" (Rom. 14:23, Amplified Bible).

So, what of Frank? We're glad that he is such a good person. People like him make this world a better place in which to live. But "fellowship with God—and this is all that salvation really is—is grounded entirely in God's gracious acceptance of the sinner."<sup>4</sup>

So, Frank, that's nice that you're such a good person. But the only way your goodness can ever be acceptable before God is if you let Jesus cleanse you with His sacrificial blood. If you cannot accept a justification which you don't deserve, your "good works" will, in the judgment, testify against you.

You see, Frank, God has declared that justification by faith alone be the foundation of all Christian ethics.

**Our righteousness is acceptable only when it is carried on in the faith that we are justified**

**"Fellowship with God is grounded entirely in God's gracious acceptance of the sinner"**

<sup>1</sup> Paul Althaus, *The Ethics of Martin Luther*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Martin Luther, "Treatise on Good Works," *Luther's Works*, vol. 44, ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 97.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. Cit.*, Althaus, p. 3.



by William Cole

Notes

Greater minds than mine and yours have struggled to understand the relationship between faith and works, and the debate still goes on. Two things, however, are sure: God's standard is perfect obedience and we humans don't have that to offer. Of course, God understands this better than we. That's why He has provided a robe of righteousness for us to wear. The righteousness that makes us acceptable in God's eyes is something that we have had no part in. Acceptable righteousness comes only in the Person of Jesus Christ. PRAISE GOD! Jesus is not merely our example—He is our substitute!!

There is a problem, though. For some reason we humans have a hard time being content with the righteousness that God freely offers us. (Perhaps pride is our problem. But whatever it is, it's in our very natures.) We want to be acceptable to God in our own right rather than because we are in Christ and covered with His righteousness. We have a tendency to be satisfied with being clothed with Christ's robe of righteousness only until we can stitch up one of our own. Then we say, "Now look at me, God." But that's a dead end street! Our needle just "ain't" big enough. And we constantly need to be reminded of this fact. So, here are a few ways to tap yourself on the shoulder so you'll remember that Christ's righteousness is all-sufficient and the only foundation for Christian ethics.

**1. First of all, memorize Matthew 3:17 and repeat it often.** ("... This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.") Allow God to assure you through these words that you are His beloved son or daughter and that He is well pleased with you. (See *Desire of Ages*, p. 113.) When you wonder how God could possibly speak these words to *you*, remember that God is not "well pleased" because you are pleasing but because you are in Christ.

**2. Rest secure in the knowledge of God's love for you.** You are His "beloved." Accept the fact that you are accepted (regardless of your feelings)! As far as God is concerned you are seated with Christ in the heavenly places (Eph. 2:6). Because you are in Christ—united to Him—you have a share in His royal status and authority. Think of it! Seated with Christ at God's right hand! You can't get any higher.

**3. Remember that God reconciled you to Himself while you were yet His enemy (Romans 5:10).** You need to do nothing to make yourself acceptable to God. Christ has done that for you. God does not confront you with the demands of the law but with the good news of the gospel. Through the word of the gospel God will gain a new kind of power over your heart. As you hear the good news that Christ has reconciled you to God, you will be drawn to Him. You must daily, however, *make the choice to study God's word—to let Him tell you that good news—so that what Christ has done will become real to you.*

**4. Now, realizing that you are accepted by God, knowing that you are His beloved and that He is well pleased with you and understanding that in Christ you are seated in heavenly places, praise God and joyfully go to His word and find out what He wants you to do.** Obey His commands. Act spontaneously, freely and voluntarily. Serve Him happily and eagerly—with God's act of reconciliation always as the foundation, presupposition and source of your Christian activity.

by H. Ward Hill

Notes

When we focus upon the basis of all good works—the life of Christ, seen in terms of what He has done for us and what He is continuing to do now—we may find ourselves somewhat perplexed over the place of human effort in the production of those works with which heaven is pleased. Is ours a totally passive role? Do we simply let the fruit grow in much the same way as we let the light of Christ shine in on our lives?

No one seems to believe that our lives can be endowed with good works unless there is an appropriate element of human effort. But lest this be perceived as some thread of human devising which mars the perfect robe of Christ's righteousness, some quickly note that human effort is only admissible if it is seen as wholly directed at turning the perverse human mind to Christ. The daily striving of the Apostle Paul was essentially directed at a contrary will which refused to allow Jesus to motivate and empower him to do good works. All human striving then is a negation of human achievement and an affirmation of the fact that Christ must do it all. Once the stubborn will has been badgered into submission to Christ, the rest is easy. Christ works in us to do His good pleasure.

**"No one seems to believe that our lives can be endowed with good works unless there is an element of effort"**

There are others who see human effort as especially dangerous to theological purity if it enters into the divine-human relationships at the beginning of our walk with God but apparently less dangerous once the walk has been begun. From this perspective the matter of our total acceptance by God must be absolutely without any consideration of what we have done. The logic of this is supported by the argument that if it were otherwise our salvation would rest, in part at least, upon an imperfect base, since all human endeavor is flawed by human limitations.

A generally accepted model is as follows. Jesus as our Saviour invites us to come to Him. If we will but focus upon Him—accept His perfect life as standing in the place of our own—and live in communion with Him, then good works will flow naturally from this relationship. A cautious approach avoids the suggestion that appropriate attitudes and behavior will flow automatically or irresistibly when the life is properly centered in Jesus. If the Christian's total surrender to Jesus is equated with total passivity on his part, then the question of individual identity may be blurred; what is meant by strength of character may become confused.

Man remains a purposive being who must choose among options and strive to realize his objectives after becoming a Christian. Commitment to Christ does not immediately purge all perverse sentiments, leaving the soul free to venture forth innocently in any direction. The new Christian does not wait for some type of divine unction which comes upon him with compelling force and moves him irresistibly toward goals of the Lord's choosing.

**"Man remains a purposive being who must strive for the realization of his objectives after becoming a Christian"**

Faith that works by love is not a passive thing. It is a joint endeavor where the secret of success is the combination of divine power and human effort. The method of divine guidance and hence fruit-bearing seems to have undergone a transition from the days when it was acceptable to seek a sign in the fleece, or by some form of lot, or when answers came via the Urim and the Thummim. God would have His followers understand the principles involved in the decisions to be made and to choose courses indicated by these standards. With their eyes turned upon Jesus, they seek in His strength to fill their lives with good works.

H. Ward Hill is professor of religion and sociology and chairman of the Religion Department at Union College.

# YOU'RE NEXT

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## Lesson 5

1. What is the role of human effort in living the sanctified life?
2. Draw a diagram showing the relationship between behavior and faith. Explain your drawing.

3. William Cole in the HOW TO article for this week wrote, "You need to do nothing to make yourself acceptable to God." Keeping this statement in mind, complete the following sentences.

If I really believed this (the statement by Cole) I would . . .

If Christians really believed it churches would . . .

If Christians really believed it the world would . . .

4. Share with your group the difficulties you have found in maintaining a proper balance between faith and works.

How do you think you can overcome these difficulties?





## Blessing of Justification

*"If a man cannot enjoy the return of spring,  
why should he be happy in a labor-saving  
Utopia?" —George Orwell*

by Laura Herman

"I don't understand it," Susan said as she leaned forward across the desktop.

A non-Christian, Susan was often puzzled by the apparent differences between the Christian college she now attended and the state college she attended the previous quarter. Often she and Dr. John Clark, her English professor, had after-class discussions about the questions that arose.

"I mean, if Christianity is supposed to give you a sense of inner peace, why are there so many uptight people on this campus? They're always worrying about something—grades, dates, jobs, even their own salvation."

"I know," said Dr. Clark, "there are a lot of worriers on campus. And it's unfortunate that they haven't yet built a trusting relationship with God—one that will see them through everyday problems as well as helping them cope with crises."

"Crises. I didn't think Christians were supposed to have crises. I mean, doesn't God take special care of them?" she asked.

"Well, in a way he does, Susan, but not by shielding them from the problems of life. In fact, they sometimes even get hit harder than non-Christians."

"Well, then why not wait until old age to become a Christian? That way you could do what you wanted and still go to heaven. It doesn't look as though Christianity has much to offer in this life," Susan commented.

"Oh, but it does!" said Dr. Clark emphatically. "Fulfillment. Acceptance. A sense of purpose, direction. Even what you mentioned before—peace. As I said, God doesn't take away a Christian's problems, but he does give him the strength to endure them—a fortitude or inner peace, if you will.

"Remember the Christmas homily of Thomas a' Becket in that T. S.

Eliot play we read in class?" he asked.

In response to Susan's "No," he pulled a paperback from the shelf and after thumbing to a certain page, set it in front of her.

"Here," he said, "read this aloud."

Susan read slowly and thoughtfully, not as for an oral exercise, but for comprehension:

"Reflect now, how our Lord  
Himself spoke of Peace.  
He said to His disciples,  
'Peace I leave with you, my peace I  
give unto you . . .'

Those men His disciples knew no  
such things:  
they went forth to journey afar,  
to suffer by land and sea,  
to know torture, imprisonment,  
disappointment,  
to suffer death.

What then did He mean?  
If you ask that, remember then that  
He said also:

'Not as the world gives, give I unto  
you.

So then, He gave to His disciples  
peace, but not peace as the  
world gives.'"

"John," Susan said in a half  
whisper, still looking down, "do you  
have peace like this?"

"Yes," he said, "and so can you."

A couple hours later as Susan  
walked into the dorm, she met her  
roommate.

"Susan, why weren't you in Math  
class! The teacher gave a surprise  
quiz. Aren't you worried what that'll  
do to your grade?"

"No," said Susan, her head  
swimming with new thoughts, "I'll  
explain to him why I wasn't there.  
But even if he won't let me make it  
up, I'm not going to worry about it.  
I had something more important to  
learn than Math. C'mon, I'll tell you  
about it."

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted by permission of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc. from *Murder in the Cathedral* by T. S. Eliot, copyright 1935 by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.; copyright 1963 by T. S. Eliot.

by editors

Notes

When you first became a Christian did you think that once you were baptized and settled into the church that everything would be "turning up roses"?

Did you find out that it wasn't that way? You probably did. And it probably hurt.

For some people it comes as a very rude awakening when they realize that Christianity and smooth sailing are not synonymous. And that's a shame. For the Bible does not teach that the Christian will have less problems in life than the "worldling." The fact is he may even have more problems. What the Bible does teach, however, is that the believer has a different relationship to the troubles of life than he had as an unbeliever.

Look at Romans 5:3 for an example of this. **"Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings . . ."** Can you imagine that? Rejoicing when you miss your plane; rejoicing when you flunk your test; rejoicing when you are made fun of. Why? Is it because Christians are some sorts of spiritual masochists? Paul says we rejoice because **"we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope"** (Romans 5:3, 4; NIV).

To the Christian nothing is without purpose. Even trouble and suffering are seen as but means to an end, the end being a Christlike character.

Notice now another aspect of his life that the Christian forms a new relationship to. **"For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ"** (Romans 8:17; NIV). As a result of being justified by God, the Christian experiences a new relationship even to death. Since the believer has in fact died in Christ on the cross, his relationship to death is not on the fear and dread level. Rather, because of Christ's atoning second death the Christian can view his death as but a temporary rest on the way to eternity.

Now, one last—but vital—point. In the beginning of chapter five Paul says that the true Christian will experience peace. The first reaction that comes to your mind may be that by the word *peace* Paul is talking about a deep, satisfied, personal contentment. And that may be true. But look at the context of *peace* in verse 1: **"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"** (NIV).

The reason Christianity can give us a new relationship to the troubles of this life is because as Christians we have a new relationship to God. Though at one time we were at war with Him and fighting against Him, through the sacrifice of Jesus we experience a new relationship to God; as Christians we are at peace with Him. And being at peace with God affects our relationship with everything around us.

You see, the blessings of justification go beyond living forever and having fellowship with God. Justification brings with it a whole new way of looking at things. New Christians will not only experience a different relationship to God and His law, they will also experience a new relationship to the threats and troubles—indeed, to everything—in this world.



selected by editors

Notes

How appropriate it is that Ellen White's last written message centered upon justification and the blessings that follow. In the article below she discusses the idea that the only way a sinner may be made righteous is by faith in the Lord Jesus. Also throughout the article she writes of peace, security, victory, self-respect, a sense of belonging—indeed, every blessing—as gifts accompanying justification, belonging to the believers.

Sanitarium, California  
June 14, 1914

Dear Friend:

The Lord has given me a message for you, and not for you only, but also for other faithful souls who are troubled by doubts and fears regarding their acceptance by the Lord Jesus Christ. His word to you is, "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine." You desire to please the Lord, and you can do this by believing His promises. He is waiting to take you into a harbor of gracious experience, and He bids you, "Be still, and know that I am God." You have had a time of unrest; but Jesus says to you, "Come unto Me, . . . and I will give you rest." The joy of Christ in the soul is worth everything. "Then are they glad," because they are privileged to rest in the arms of everlasting love. . . .

**"Fear not:  
for I have  
redeemed thee"**

Peace comes with dependence on divine power. As fast as the soul resolves to act in accordance with the light given, the Holy Spirit gives more light and strength. The grace of the Spirit is supplied to co-operate with the soul's resolve, but it is not a substitute for the individual exercise of faith. Success in the Christian life depends upon the appropriation of the light that God has given. It is not an abundance of light and evidence that makes the soul free in Christ; it is the rising of the powers and the will and the energies of the soul to cry out sincerely, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief."

**Success  
depends upon  
appropriation  
of light**

I rejoice in the bright prospects of the future, and so may you. Be cheerful, and praise the Lord for His loving-kindness. That which you cannot understand, commit to Him. He loves you, and pities your every weakness. He "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." It would not satisfy the heart of the Infinite One to give those who love His Son a lesser blessing than He gives His Son. . . .

**Do not be  
subject to  
your feelings**

God's children are not to be subject to feelings and emotions. When they fluctuate between hope and fear, the heart of Christ is hurt; for He has given them unmistakable evidence of His love. He wants them to be established, strengthened, and settled in the most holy faith. He wants them to do the work He has given them; then their hearts will become in His hands as sacred harps, every chord of which will send forth praise and thanksgiving to the One sent by God to take away the sins of the world. . . .

**"Lord, my  
burdens  
are too  
heavy for  
me to  
carry. Wilt  
Thou bear  
them?"**

It should not be difficult to remember that the Lord desires you to lay your troubles and perplexities at His feet, and leave them there. Go to Him, saying: "Lord, my burdens are too heavy for me to carry. Wilt Thou bear them for me?" And He will answer: "I will take them. 'With everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee.' I will take your sins, and will give you peace. Banish no longer your self-respect; for I have bought you with the price of My own blood. You are Mine. Your weakened will I will strengthen. Your remorse for sin I will remove."

Selections taken from *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 516-520.

selected by editors

Notes

In his book, *Born Again*, former Nixon hatchet man Charles W. Colson tells of his conversion experience and the spiritual blessings that followed as a result.

One story Colson related which was of special interest to me was about meeting with a breakfast prayer group in a basement room of the West Wing of the White House. Among those attending were former political enemies Harold Hughes and Arthur Burns.

After an uncommonly short welcome and introduction by Burns, the meeting was turned over to Senator Hughes.

*After a few opening moments of uncharacteristic nervousness, Harold was in charge, his eloquent commanding self. For twenty minutes there was not another sound in that room other than his deep, powerful voice. He spoke with devastating honesty about his past, the power of Christ in his changed life, the conflicts he had faced as a Christian in government, and then for the final few minutes, how he had come to know his brother in Christ, Chuck Colson.*

*If it had not been such a moving moment, I would have laughed aloud at the astonished expressions around the room. Out of the corner of my eye I saw Arthur Burns sitting absolutely motionless, eyes fixed on Hughes, a soft shock of gray hair hanging over his brow, his mouth open. The pipe he had been smoking furiously at the outset now lay cold in his right hand.*

*"I've learned how wrong it is to hate," Hughes went on. "For years there were men towards whom I felt consuming bitterness. I wasn't hurting them, only myself. By hating I was shutting Christ's love out of my life. One of the men I hated most was Chuck Colson, but now that we share a commitment together in Christ, I love him as my brother. I would trust him with my life, my family, with everything I have."*

*When he finished there was a long silence—no one could take his eyes off the senator. Seconds ticked by, a minute perhaps, almost as if the whole room was in silent prayer.*

*Arthur Burns, who was to close the meeting, seemed unable to find the words. Finally, he very deliberately laid his pipe on the table, stared at it for a moment, folded his hands in front of him, and slowly lifted his eyes. In a voice so low I doubted if those across the room could hear, he began. "Senator—I just want to say—that is one of the most beautiful and moving things I have ever heard from any man."*

*He cleared his throat and it was plain that he was choking back tears. "I don't want to say anything else," he said. "Just this—on behalf of this group, would you please come back again?" With that he arose, took my right hand in his left and said, "Now I would like to ask Mr. Colson to lead us in prayer. . . ."*

*As many of the men left, they either embraced the senator or gripped his hand warmly, repeating Burns' invitation to return. Many also clasped me by the arm, welcoming me to a fraternal bond much closer than what we knew as White House men standing alone, we thought, against the world.*

Taken from *Born Again* by Charles W. Colson. Published by Chosen Books, Inc., Lincoln, VA 22078. Used by permission.

by editors

Notes

Sitting on my bed in my room alone with open Bibles and a concordance and commentaries scattered about, I—as a child—would analyze my life and come to the conclusion that I must not be a Christian.

I knew that justification brought with it the blessings of joy and happiness and peace, etc. But I was aware, as I sat motionless and alone, that these blessings were not mine—so I concluded that justification was not mine either.

As I look back on that experience, a sad page in my autobiography, I realize that I was indeed justified, but only with very little peace and joy floating through me.

I think too that the answer to my problem would not have been found in reading my Bible more or praying more fervently—as vitally important as these things are. What I needed was a more balanced life.

To receive the blessings of justification I found that I had to do three things.

**1. I had to clean the barn.** You see, I grew up riding and showing Arabian horses, and it was a rare hour when our barn didn't need to be cleaned. But for a while I would sometimes forget the barn in pursuit of more "spiritual" activities. What I didn't realize, however, is that cleaning out a dirty, smelly old barn could give me joy like nothing else could.

I got—and still get—a real sense of pride and accomplishment when I get the barn at home all shaped up.

Amazing as it is, physical work—like cleaning a barn—is an avenue God used and uses to send me the blessings of justification.

**2. Secondly, I had to start taking more time to be with my friends.** Parties, talking after a meal, stopping by to see a friend—these social times are channels God uses to send us His blessings. And if we block these channels, it doesn't matter if we're justified or not, we won't be nearly as happy and joyful as we could otherwise be.

**3. Lastly, I had to decide for myself whether it was wrong to attend a movie theater.** I did not do this so much from a theological point of view as from an intellectual point of view.

I discovered that I could not be happy while blindly accepting the dogma of others—I had to find out for myself. Being a somewhat independent person, I had a need above all else to be intellectually independent. I wanted to know what I believed and why I believed it. I didn't want to depend upon others for my reasons or answers.

So, the development of the intellect is a means to find more of God's blessings. By asking and being asked challenging, difficult questions, the mind is taken out of a passive state, and pleasure that comes only from thinking for yourself is yours.

Now in the above three steps I have been pretty specific—clean the barn, be with friends, decide for yourself about movies. But in being too specific I was just saying what worked for me. To make the above advice broad enough to fit every situation I would say: *In order to receive the heavenly blessings that accompany justification, you must be in shape not only spiritually, but physically, socially and intellectually as well.*



by Larry D. McGill

Notes

As a result of justification, the believer is uncondemned by God and experiences a new relationship to Him, to His law and even to the troubles of life in this world. Merely accepting Christian doctrine cannot accomplish this. It is quite possible to know all the classic teachings about God and His dealings with mankind and still treat Him as though He were far removed from real and everyday life. It takes more than knowledge *about* God to know the blessings of the gospel.

One could go on forever labeling the blessings of justification. There is *happiness* and *peace* and *joy* and *love* and all of the other standard blessings you hear about. But I would like to mention another blessing which I believe may be the greatest of them all.

To the person who experiences justification comes the blessing of no longer feeling the need to *pretend*. While the true Christian is never free from sinning, he is free from the pretense that guilt demands. Without an understanding of the significance of Christ's atoning sacrifice it is too painful for most people to be so candid that they see themselves as filthy rag sinners. Consequently, you find many today wearing psychological masks and pretending to be better than they actually are. By pretending they hope to deceive others and themselves.

**The Christian  
no longer needs  
to pretend**

But the Christian finds no need for this pretense. The desirable qualities of Christ cover the Christian's undesirable qualities. The Christian can find no reason to wear a mask in order to make people think he is beautiful; he finds no reason to pretend that he is OK. In Christ he *is* beautiful and in Him he *is* OK.

**In Christ  
the Christian  
is beautiful**

When you believe this, when it really settles deep into your mind, then you will feel as if a great load has been lifted from you. Indeed, it has. For with justification comes the blessing of never needing to pretend.

But, as I mentioned in the introduction to this article, it takes more than a knowledge *about* God to receive the blessings of the gospel. The faith that brings salvation's blessings is a faith that *internalizes* the promises of God.

To know *about* the gospel means to realize that Jesus accepts you just the way you are. To *internalize* the gospel means to hear Jesus telling you, "Listen, I love you. I don't care what you've done, I still love you. I want to change you, but I accept you *right now*, right where you are at."

To know *about* the gospel is to know that God wants you to live the sanctified life. To *internalize* the gospel means to hear Christ saying, "Programmed into your inner computer through genes, circumstances and experiences, there is an inability to love unselfishly. But I want to change all these intricate 'wires.' It will take a lot of years to make you a lover of people, but I promise that I will always be working with you."

**Christians  
must  
internalize  
the promises  
of God**

The type of knowledge that brings the blessings of justification is a knowledge that Christians have made personal. It is an understanding that they can envision Christ giving personally to them.

Justification of itself is a wonderful thing. But when we internalize the concept that Christ *is* our substitute, more blessings than we could ever imagine follow as a result. And one of the greatest of all these blessings, I believe, is that as a Christian there is never any need to pretend.

### Lesson 6

1. Paul says in Romans 5:3 that suffering trains Christians to endure. Have you found this to be true in your own experience?

How did it work?

2. *As a result of justification, the believer is uncondemned by God and experiences a new relationship to Him, His law and even to the troubles of life in this world.*

Share with your group what this *new relationship* has meant to you.

3. What aspects of Christianity give you the most pleasure? The least pleasure? Why?
4. How much effort do you exert to remain at peace with yourself and the world? Where is this effort directed?
5. Can you envision any circumstances in which you would be justified before God but not have peace and joy?







# Walla Walla College

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*"A Christian campus committed to academic excellence."*

Walla Walla College was responsible for obtaining the articles that are between this page and the next *profile* page.



## Winning Over Sin

*"Consider the lilies of the field, how they  
grow; they toil not, neither do they spin."  
—Matthew 6:28*

by editors

I was at O'Hare International Airport in Chicago when a girl in her early twenties with a red streak down the *part* in her hair ran up to me.

"Hello, sir. Here is a *smile* we pin on all the handsome men," she said as she pinned the circle-face onto my shirt.

I let her continue the pinning and then went on through the concourse. After I had gone a few yards I put my briefcase under my arm and unpinned the hideous-looking face. Looking at it intently, I wondered what kind of a god she worshipped.

Seven years earlier I was sitting in my mother's easy chair in the family room reading a devotional book when, with genuine horror, I realized that I had been *slouching*. You see, at that time I believed that when I failed to maintain perfect posture I was deliberately disobeying the requirements of God and thereby disqualifying myself for heaven.

"Father, forgive me for slouching and help me to never do it again," I prayed as my spine bowed and stiffened and my shoulders flew back.

I sat there as if rigor mortis had set in and in my subconscious wondered what kind of a god I worshipped.

As I look back on these experiences, I realize that both I and the young girl were worshipping the same god: a god within ourselves. Both of us believed that our abilities

or disabilities in doing right were the qualifying factors for eternal bliss or damnation. As an "Adventist" I did not realize that true Christianity is like no other system of belief on this earth in that it is based not upon what we can do but upon what Another has done for us. Every false religion teaches that salvation is based upon a quality within oneself; Christianity teaches that salvation is based upon a quality found only within Jesus Christ.

And so, we have an introduction for this week's lesson of *living the victorious Christian life*. For indeed, justification is the foundation of all Christian ethics. The knowledge that true Christians are constantly presented as righteous before the throne of God is the foundation upon which all of our righteous acts are based.

With the assurance of right-standing before God, the Christian does what is right not in order to win favor in God's eyes but because he desires to please the One who saved him. And because in actuality *justification* and *sanctification* are inseparable, God's act of redeeming the sinner unites him with Christ so that the Holy Spirit may work through the Christian to produce the desired fruits.

How I wish I had known this as a youth. Then, instead of trying to live the victorious Christian life while worshipping the goodness within myself, I would have worshipped the God who had declared me righteous and had sent His sanctifying Spirit within. Then genuine spiritual victory would have been mine.



selected by editors

Notes

Well then, shall we keep on sinning so that God can keep on showing us more and more kindness and forgiveness?

Of course not!

Should we keep on sinning when we don't have to? For sin's power over us was broken when we became Christians and were baptized to become a part of Jesus Christ: through His death the power of your sinful nature was shattered. Your old sin-loving nature was buried with Him by baptism when He died, and when God the Father, with glorious power, brought Him back to life again, you were given His wonderful new life to enjoy.

For you have become a part of Him, and so you died with Him, so to speak, when He died; and now you share His new life, for you have risen with Him when He rose. Your old evil desires were nailed to the cross with Him; that part of you that loves to sin was crushed and fatally wounded, so that your sin-loving body is no longer under sin's control, no longer needs to be a slave to sin; for when you are deadened to sin you are freed from all its allure and its power over you. And since your old sin-loving nature "died" with Christ, we believe that you are now sharing His new life. . . .

He died once for all to end sin's power, but now He lives forever in unbroken fellowship with God. So look upon your old sin nature as dead and unresponsive to sin and be alive instead to God, alert to Him, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Do not let sin control you any longer; do not obey it; do not submit to it by giving in to its desires. Do not let any part of your bodies become tools of wickedness, to be used for sinning; but give yourselves completely to God—every part of you—for you are back from death and you want to be tools in the hands of God, to be used for His good purposes.

Sin need never again be your master, for now you are no longer tied to the law where sin enslaves you, but you are free under God's favor and mercy.

So now shall we sin and not worry about it? (For our salvation does not depend on keeping the law, but on receiving God's grace!)

Of course not!

Don't you realize that you can choose your own master? You can choose sin (with death) or else obedience (with goodness). The one to whom you offer yourself, he will take you and be your master and you will be his slave. Thank God that though you once chose to be slaves of sin, now you are obeying with all your heart the teaching to which God has committed you. And now you are free from your old master, sin; and you have become slaves to your new master, goodness and righteousness.

I speak this way, using the illustration about slaves, because it makes it easy to understand: just as you used to be slaves to all that is right and holy. In those days when you were slaves of sin you didn't bother much with goodness. . . .

But now you are free from the power of sin and are slaves of God, and His benefits to you include holiness and everlasting life.

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Christians have experienced death and resurrection in Jesus**

**"Look upon your sinful nature as dead"**

**"The one to whom you offer yourself will take you"**

**"Now you are free from the power of sin"**

Taken from Romans 6:1-23; *Living Letters, Paraphrased Epistles*. (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale Publishers, 1962). Used by permission.

by Rick Casebier

Notes

We talk of spiritual warfare and of winning battles, while victory is a difficult thing to grasp. But "Our hope is not in man, but in the living God. . . . Clad with the armor of His righteousness, we may gain the victory over every foe."<sup>1</sup>

It may at times seem that this spiritual victory is dreadfully slow in coming. But we may claim the assurance that "if the heart has been renewed by the Spirit of God, the life will bear witness to the fact."<sup>2</sup> Ellen White goes on to say that "While we cannot do anything to change our hearts or to bring ourselves into harmony with God; while we must not trust at all to ourselves or our good works, our lives will reveal whether the grace of God is dwelling within us. A change will be seen in the character, the habits, the pursuits . . ."<sup>3</sup>

"Those who have risen with Christ to walk in newness of life are the elect of God. They are holy unto the Lord, and are acknowledged by Him as His beloved. As such, they are under solemn covenant to distinguish themselves by showing humility of mind. They are to clothe themselves in garments of righteousness. They are separate from the world, from its spirit, its practices, and they are to reveal that they are learning of Him. . . ."<sup>4</sup>

Though the Christian is to be distinct from the "world" he must be careful never to allow himself to dwell upon his "distinctness" or any of his strengths and weaknesses. "When the mind dwells upon self, it is turned away from Christ, the source of strength and life. Hence it is Satan's constant effort to keep the attention diverted from the Saviour and thus prevent the union and communion of the soul with Christ. The pleasures of the world, life's cares and perplexities and sorrows, the faults of others, or your own faults and imperfections—to any or all of these he will seek to divert the mind. . . . Many who are really conscientious, and who desire to live for God, he too often leads to dwell upon their own faults and weaknesses, and thus by separating them from Christ he hopes to gain the victory. We should not make self the center and indulge anxiety and fear as to whether we shall be saved. All this turns the soul away from the Source of our strength. Commit the keeping of your soul to God, and trust in Him. Talk and think of Jesus. Let self be lost in Him. Put away all doubt; dismiss your fears. Say with the apostle Paul, 'I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.' Galatians 2:20. Rest in God. He is able to keep that which you have committed to Him. If you will leave yourself in His hands, He will bring you off more than conqueror through Him that has loved you."<sup>5</sup>

*Selected Messages*, book 1, summarizes nicely this whole discussion. "Let no man present the idea that man has little or nothing to do in the great work of overcoming; for God does nothing for man without his cooperation. Neither say that after you have done all you can do on your part, Jesus will help you. Christ has said, 'Without me ye can do nothing' (John 15:5). From first to last, man is to be a laborer together with God."<sup>6</sup>

**"A change will be seen in the character"**

**"When the mind dwells upon self, it is turned away from Christ"**

**"He will bring you off more than conqueror"**

<sup>1</sup> *Prophets and Kings*, p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> *Steps to Christ*, p. 57.

<sup>3</sup> *Steps to Christ*, pp. 57, 58.

<sup>4</sup> *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 133.

<sup>5</sup> *Steps to Christ*, pp. 71, 72.

<sup>6</sup> *Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 381.

by William Barclay

Notes

**Dying to Live (Romans 6:1-11)**

As he has so often done in this letter, Paul is once again carrying on an argument against a kind of imaginary opponent. The argument springs from the great saying at the end of the last chapter: "Where sin abounded, grace superabounded." It runs something like this:

*The Objector:* You have just said that God's grace is great enough to find forgiveness for every sin.

*Paul:* That is so.

*The Objector:* You are, in fact, saying that God's grace is the most wonderful thing in all this world.

*Paul:* That is so.

*The Objector:* Well, if that is so, let us go on sinning. The more we sin, the more grace will abound. Sin does not matter, for God will forgive anyway. In fact, we can go further than that and say that sin is an excellent thing, because it gives the grace of God a chance to operate. The conclusion of your argument is that sin produces grace; therefore sin is bound to be a good thing if it produces the greatest thing in the world.

Paul's first reaction is to recoil from that argument in sheer horror. "Do you suggest," he demands, "that we should go on sinning in order to give grace more chance to operate? God forbid that we should pursue so incredible a course as that."

In this passage lie three great permanent truths.

**1. It is a terrible thing to seek to trade on the mercy of God and to make it an excuse for sinning.** Think of it in human terms. How despicable it would be for a son to consider himself free to sin, because he knew that his father would forgive. That would be taking advantage of love to break love's heart.

**2. The man who enters upon the Christian way is committed to a different kind of life.** He has died to one kind of life and been born to another. In modern times we may have tended to stress the fact that acceptance of the Christian way need not make so very much difference in a man's life. Paul would have said that it ought to make all the difference in the world.

**3. But there is more than a mere ethical change in a man's life when he accepts Christ. There is a real identification with Christ.** It is, in fact, the simple truth that the ethical change is not possible without that union. A man is *in Christ*. A great scholar has suggested this analogy for that phrase. We cannot live our physical life unless we are in the air and the air is in us; unless we are in Christ, and Christ is in us, we cannot live the life of God.

**The Practice of the Faith (Romans 6:12-14)**

When a man goes out into the world, he is confronted with an awesome situation. As Paul thinks of it, both God and sin are looking for weapons to use. God cannot work without men. If he wants a word spoken, he has to get a man to speak it. If he wants a deed done, he has to get a man to do it. If he wants a person encouraged, he has to get a man to do the lifting up. It is the same with sin; every man has to be given the push into it. Sin is looking for men who will by their words or example seduce others into sinning. It is as if Paul was saying: "In this



world there is an eternal battle between sin and God; choose your side." We are faced with the tremendous alternative of making ourselves weapons in the hand of God or weapons in the hand of sin.

A man may well say: "Such a choice is too much for me. I am bound to fail." Paul's answer is: "Don't be discouraged and don't be despairing; sin will not lord it over you." Why? Because we are no longer under law but under grace. Why should that make all the difference? Because we are no longer trying to satisfy the demands of law but are trying to be worthy of the gifts of love. We are no longer regarding God as the stern judge; we are regarding him as the lover of the souls of men. There is no inspiration in all the world like love. Who ever went out from the presence of his loved one without the burning desire to be a better person? The Christian life is no longer a burden to be borne; it is a privilege to be lived up to. As Denney put it: "It is not restraint but inspiration which liberates from sin; not Mount Sinai but Mount Calvary which makes saints." Many a man has been saved from sin, not because of the regulations of the law, but because he could not bear to hurt or grieve or disappoint someone whom he loved and someone who, he knew, loved him. At best, the law restrains a man through fear; but love redeems him by inspiring him to be better than his best. The inspiration of the Christian comes, not from the fear of what God will do to him, but from the inspiration of what God has done for him.

#### **The Exclusive Possession (Romans 6:15-23)**

To a certain type of mind the doctrine of free grace is always a temptation to say, "If forgiveness is as easy and as inevitable as all that, if God's one desire is to forgive men and if his grace is wide enough to cover every spot and stain, why worry about sin? Why not do as we like? It will be all the same in the end."

Paul counters this argument by using a vivid picture. He says: "Once you gave yourselves to sin as its slave; when you did that, righteousness had no claim over you. But now you have given yourselves to God as the slave of righteousness; and so sin has no claim over you."

When a man wishes to become a member of the great Benedictine order of monks he is accepted for a year on probation. During all that time the clothes which he wore in the world hang in his cell. At any time he can put off his monk's habit, put on his worldly clothes, and walk out, and no one will think any the worse of him. Only at the end of the year are his clothes finally taken away. It is with open eyes and a full appreciation of what he is doing that he must enter the order.

It is so with Christianity. Jesus does not want followers who have not stopped to count the cost. He does not want a man to express an impermanent loyalty on the crest of a wave of emotion. The Church has a duty to present the faith in all the riches of its offer and the heights of its demands to those who wish to become its members.

The pagan world was lawless in the sense that men's lusts were their only laws; and that lawlessness produced more lawlessness. That, indeed, is the law of sin. Sin begets sin. The first time we do a wrong thing, we may do it with hesitation and a tremor and a shudder. The second time we do it, it is easier; and if we go on doing it, it becomes effortless; sin loses its terror. The first time we allow ourselves some indulgence, we may be satisfied with very little of it; but the time comes when we need more and more of it to produce the same thrill. Sin leads on to sin; lawlessness produces lawlessness. To start on the path of sin is to go on to more and more.

The new life is different; it is life which is righteous. Now the Greeks

**"We are faced with the alternative of making ourselves weapons in the hand of God or weapons in the hand of sin"**

**"The Christian life is no longer a burden to be borne; it is a privilege to be lived up to"**

**"Jesus does not want followers who have not stopped to count the cost"**

**"Sin begets sin"**

defined righteousness as *giving to man and to God their due*. The Christian life is one which gives God his proper place and which respects the rights of human personality. The Christian will never disobey God nor ever use a human being to gratify his desire for pleasure. That life leads to what the Revised Standard Version calls *sanctification*. The word in Greek is *hagiasmos*. All Greek nouns which end in *-asmos* describe, not a completed state, but a *process*. Sanctification is the road to holiness. When a man gives his life to Christ, he does not then become a perfect man; the struggle is by no means over. But Christianity has always regarded the direction in which a man is facing as more important than the particular stage he has reached. Once he is Christ's he has started on the process of sanctification, the road to holiness.

"Leaving every day behind  
Something which might hinder;  
Running swifter every day;  
Growing purer, kinder."

Robert Louis Stevenson said: "To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive." What is true is that it is a great thing to set out to a great goal, even if we never get the whole way.

Paul finishes with a great saying that contains a double metaphor. "Sin's pay is death," he says, "but God's free gift is eternal life." Paul uses two military words. For *pay* he uses *opsōnia*. *Opsōnia* was the soldier's pay, something that he earned with the risk of his body and the sweat of his brow, something that was due to him and could not be taken from him. For *gift* he uses *charisma*. The *charisma* or, in Latin, the *donativum*, was a totally unearned gift which the army sometimes received. On special occasions, for instance on his birthday, or on his accession to the throne, or the anniversary of it, an emperor handed out a free gift of money to the army. It had not been earned; it was a gift of the emperor's kindness and grace. So Paul says: "If we got the pay we had earned it would be death; but out of his grace God has given us life."

**"Righteousness:  
giving to man  
and to God  
their due"**

**"Sin's pay  
is death, but  
God's free  
gift is eternal  
life"**

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by Randy Wisbey

Notes

Sin.

It seems we can never quite get away from it. It would often appear that the harder we try, the worse the struggle becomes. We try to do good and yet we often fail; much of the time it seems we've even gotten worse.

So what can we do to become truly victorious Christians? Books have been written on the subject, sermons preached . . . and yet the problem remains: How do we make "Christian victory" practical?

**1. We need to accept the fact that our struggles with sin will always continue.** We can learn to control ourselves to a degree, but we will never be fully satisfied. And on the same hand, this struggle with self makes us aware of changes that need to be made in our lives. It reminds us that victory is not an instantaneous event (which is a constant reminder of Christ's covering righteousness).

**2. Come to the place where you like Jesus.** I'm not trying to scare you, but I believe that many Christians—even Adventists?—don't really like Jesus. The reason I think this is that it seems to me that a person spends a lot of time with those he really likes. Get the hint? And liking Jesus is what it's all about. You won't become like something you don't appreciate.

We need to digest this statement by Ellen White:

"It is a law both of the intellectual and the spiritual nature that by beholding we become changed. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell."<sup>1</sup>

So . . . COMMUNICATE! If you don't like Him, tell Him. If you like Him a little tell Him that. If you like Him a lot tell Him that. Communicate your feelings. Then listen to Him. Keep free and honest communication going between the two of you and I believe you will come to the place where you really do like and appreciate Him.

**3. Then, a third way to make Christian victory practical is by telling others about Jesus.** Tell them about *your* Jesus. Tell them how you've won and how you've lost. Tell them that you have felt scared and empty and egotistical and that *your* Jesus made you secure.

Tell them that when you get into large crowds you still feel lost and that even now you feel threatened when someone disagrees with you. But let them know that Jesus accepts you—exactly as you are—and that together you're working out your problems.

Don't share your pastor's Jesus or an ancestral Jesus or even Matthew's or Paul's Jesus. Share *your* Jesus. And you will never be without a word to say.

These are the three steps I see in making Christian victory practical. If we accept the fact that sin will always be with us, if we grow to really appreciate Jesus and if we share what a wonderful Person He is with others we will be living a happy, heaven-bound life.

<sup>1</sup> *Great Controversy*, p. 555.



by Fritz Ridenour

Notes

Paul sails into some deep water in Romans 6. He is drawing pictures with words, symbolizing what happens when a person becomes a Christian. The Christian becomes a part of Christ, and so the Christian figuratively "dies" with Christ as He died on the cross. And, the Christian also rises with Christ, as He rose from the grave.

Hard to understand? Yes, but this is another vital key to the difference between "religion" and Christianity. A Christian is not someone who simply follows Christ's great teachings. A Christian is one who is *one with Christ* in a *personal* relationship. That is why Paul says in v. 6: "Your old evil desires were nailed to the cross with Him; that part of you that loves to sin was crushed and fatally wounded, so that your sin-loving body is no longer under sin's control, no longer needs to be a slave to sin."

My evil desires nailed to the cross? That part of me that loves to sin fatally wounded? It doesn't seem that way to me. . . .

Perhaps it doesn't. But the key to this passage is to remember that Paul is painting a picture, and *it is the way you want to look at that picture that makes the difference.*

So, look at it this way. Paul is saying that becoming a Christian means that you not only start to follow Christ, but *you also identify with Him, you become part of Him.* And just as Christ conquered the power of sin with His death and resurrection, Christ also struck a telling blow against the old, sinful nature that is part of every one of us.

The question is, do you want to let that telling blow work in your favor or do you want to still fight your own battles? . . .

You see, there are three aspects to sanctification: positional, experiential and ultimate.

Positional sanctification means every believer is "sanctified" in the sense that he is in the position of being one with Christ. Paul even said that those who were living in carnal sin in the church at Corinth were "sanctified saints" (1 Cor. 6:11).

Ultimate sanctification refers to heaven, eternal life. It is another term for glorification, that is, being like Christ at His coming (1 John 3:1-3).

But what Paul is directly concerned with in Romans 6 is experiential sanctification, actually experiencing triumph over sin in your daily life.

We can define sanctification in neat theological terms: "a setting apart for use by God through holy living in accordance with God's will." But perhaps this ponderous word has more meaning when seen simply as "letting Christ make a real difference in your life." The only way there can be a "real difference" is that we be able to freely choose our own master. Without the element of choice, our sanctification would be a sterile mechanical thing. We would be "justified computers." But God doesn't want computers. He wants Christians who see themselves as dead to sin and alive to Him, through Jesus Christ.

Whose slave are you? . . . *It all depends on how you choose to look at living the Christian life.* "Being religious" doesn't help here. You are a part of Christ, but you have a choice: sin or obedience to Him. *You belong to your choice.*

**"A Christian is one who is one with Christ"**

**"You identify with Him, you become part of Him"**

**Sanctification: "letting Christ make a real difference in your life"**

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# YOU'RE NEXT

## Lesson 7

1. The Adventist Church as a whole is not experiencing victory over sin because (check the appropriate blanks):

- it does not fully understand the truth of justification by faith
- the people are lukewarm in their commitments
- few are active in lay evangelism
- it is now as victorious as it will ever be
- there is not enough fellowship among believers
- there is not enough emphasis on the Christian's *relationship* to God
- too many pet sins have not been overcome
- the Latter Rain has not yet been poured out

Be prepared to tell why you answered these questions the way you did.

2. Think about the last sin you overcame in your life. List the steps you took in overcoming.

3. When you commit a sinful act you know you shouldn't, does God reject you? Why?

4. List three "earthly" supports that keep you from sinning.

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Do you feel that God would have you not depend upon these supports in order to trust Him more?





## The Struggle for Power

*"A house divided against itself cannot stand." —Abraham Lincoln*



by Larry V. Bunnell

**Editor's note:** *There are several ways to interpret Romans 7:14-25. Four of the major interpretations are given in this week's EVIDENCE section. We invite you to consider all possible interpretations and choose that one which makes the most sense to you.*

Brian hadn't been a Christian long. He wore the joy of spiritual new birth like festive clothes. His friends could see a change every day in his lifestyle. Cigarettes, drugs, immorality, all fell by the side as he rejoiced in the beauty and righteousness of his Lord Jesus Christ.

Bible study was a joy, prayer exciting and witnessing an activity he cherished above any other. He couldn't be quieted from the zeal of this new, vibrant life. To think of returning to his former life of sin was unthinkable. This life of faith was challenging and exciting, far beyond anything he'd experienced before.

Then a horrible thing happened: Brian lost that first rush of love and power. Some of his former habits returned like merciless specters. This scared him. Depression crept into his life. His former behavior was at times more alluring to him now than when he first believed. After contemplating his spiritual condition Brian sometimes fancied himself barely a Christian, if one at all.

Sometimes he yielded. Occasionally he broke. Studying his Bible was often a chore. Church, which used to cheer him, suddenly became haunted with plastic Christians. Like chilling drafts, questions slipped into his mind—questions he'd never considered before. He feared witnessing, for he was unsure of his own experience. Many of the activities he eagerly participated in at first were now meaningless and rote. And as he looked at the few victories he had in his spiritual life, Jesus became more distant and unreal.

One morning, as Brian was forcing himself to read his Bible, he came

upon Romans, chapter seven. He read the last half of the chapter three times before daring to believe what he was reading. Was *the Apostle Paul* writing this? The guy who was beaten, shipwrecked, and finally martyred for his faith? Was this Paul, the writer of a good share of the New Testament? Was this the same Paul now saying he was a sinner—a person with struggles, sins and doubts? Did Paul also fail at living the victorious Christian life?

As he read over the passage again he thought he heard the gentle whisper of the memories of his first love.

And that is precisely what he heard. For the good news of salvation applied to Brian the Christian as well as to Brian the lost sinner. Brian not only became saved by faith alone, he had to remain saved by faith alone. That gentle whisper in his ear was the voice of Jesus, the same voice that whispered to him when he first believed. Brian had to understand that he needed the total covering of Christ's righteousness during his Christian walk as much as he did when he first became a Christian.

When Brian accepted the fact that he would *remain* a sinner until the Lord returned, that the venerable apostle Paul also knew of such spiritual conflicts and that Christ's righteousness would cover his failings, the strangest thing began to happen. All those joys and ambitions that were once present with the first love started to return.

by Greg Brothers

Notes

**Read Romans 7, concentrating on verses 14-25.**

Paul opens Romans 7 with an obvious remark: Laws are made for the living, not for the dead. Paul goes on to say that since we have "died" the law has no more jurisdiction over us. It has been put aside in our lives, not because its demands have ceased to exist, but because an event has occurred. That event was Christ's death on the cross and therefore our "death" in Him. Thus, the argument goes, we are accepted into the body of Christ and are freed to "bear fruit."

But then Paul says that the law stirs up sin and causes death. So the assumption would be that the law must be bad, correct? Absolutely not! The problem is that the law (a good thing) when applied to my life (a bad thing) stirs up sin (a very bad thing).

How can this be? One explanation for this I call the "academy syndrome." As a rebel against God, knowledge of what He wants me to do only increases my efforts to do the opposite. Knowledge of rule creates desire to break it. So in this way the law could be said to cause sin.

Another explanation is the "lighthouse and the rocks idea." That is, the law doesn't create sin, it just identifies it and brings it to our awareness. As an example, I could cheerfully go on coveting, rationalizing that it is really doing no harm to anyone. But when the law comes in with "don't covet" my self assurance is blown right out of the water. Measured against myself, I may look pretty good. Measured against the law, I look like a corpse. Here again it could be said that, in this sense, the law has created sin.

So what happens when I try to apply this law to my life? Even though I believe the law to be good, I find myself to be bad. I am trapped between my awareness that the law should be kept and my own inability to keep it. **"So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members"** (Romans 7:21-23; NIV).

Though the fact is clear that there is a power struggle between good and evil within every person, *when* this conflict takes place is open for controversy. Some feel that in these verses Paul is referring to an individual before his conversion; others feel that he is referring to an individual's experience while living the Christian life. (See the EVIDENCE section for this week.) Personally, I believe that this passage can be taken as an outline of what happens to a person *before* conversion. All men are guilty, and all are aware of this guilt. Relief of this tension can only come through Christ, as Paul notes in verse 25.

Nevertheless, I am aware that Romans 7 can be applied to my own experience as a *Christian*, and that Augustine, Luther, Calvin and the Medieval church all believed that this was referring to the Christian's post-conversion experience. The only sure thing is that the passage itself is vague. Perhaps Paul intended it this way—trying to cover both the pre- and post-conversion experiences of the Christian life.

In Romans 7, Paul does, however, tell us some things we need not debate: The law brings us to an awareness of our own need; nevertheless, it cannot fill that need, only Christ can. The law would demand that one do good in order to *become* a Christian, but because of Christ's merits we sinners *are* Christians.

The "academy syndrome"

The "lighthouse and the rocks"

"I am trapped between my awareness that the law should be kept and my own inability to keep it"

by Larry V. Bunnell

Notes

If you're a Christian who is experiencing one spiritual victory after another don't take time to read the rest of this article.

But if you are following in the footsteps of the apostle Paul and find yourself engaged in struggles over sin the following counsel from Ellen White is indeed reassuring.

"Sanctification is not the work of a moment, an hour, a day, but of a lifetime. It is not gained by a happy flight of feeling, but is the result of constantly dying to sin, and constantly living for Christ. Wrongs cannot be righted nor reformations wrought in the character by feeble, intermittent efforts. It is only by long, persevering effort, sore discipline, and stern conflict, that we shall overcome. We know not one day how strong will be our conflict the next. So long as Satan reigns, we shall have self to subdue, besetting sins to overcome; so long as life shall last, there will be no stopping place, no point which we can reach and say, I have fully attained. Sanctification is the result of lifelong obedience.

"None of the apostles and prophets ever claimed to be without sin. Men who have lived the nearest to God, men who would sacrifice life itself rather than knowingly commit a wrong act, men whom God has honored with divine light and power, have confessed the sinfulness of their nature. They have put no confidence in the flesh, have claimed no righteousness of their own, but have trusted wholly in the righteousness of Christ.

"So will it be with all who behold Christ. The nearer we come to Jesus, and the more clearly we discern the purity of His character, the more clearly shall we see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the less shall we feel like exalting ourselves. There will be a continual reaching out of the soul after God, a continual, earnest, heart-breaking confession of sin and humbling of the heart before Him. At every advance step in our Christian experience, our repentance will deepen. We shall know that our sufficiency is in Christ alone, and shall make the apostle's confession our own: 'I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing.' 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.' Romans 7:18; Galatians 6:14 . . . ."

" 'This is the will of God' concerning you, 'even your sanctification.' 1 Thessalonians 4:3. Is it your will also? Your sins may be as mountains before you; but if you humble your heart, and confess your sins, trusting in the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour, He will forgive, and will cleanse you from all unrighteousness. God demands of you entire conformity to His law. This law is the echo of His voice saying to you, Holier, yes, holier still. Desire the fullness of the grace of Christ. Let your heart be filled with an intense longing for His righteousness, the work of which God's word declares is peace, and its effect quietness and assurance forever.

"As your soul yearns after God, you will find more and still more of the unsearchable riches of His grace. As you contemplate these riches, you will come into possession of them, and will reveal the merits of the Saviour's sacrifice, the protection of His righteousness, the fullness of His wisdom, and His power to present you before the Father 'without spot, and blameless.' 2 Peter 3:14."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Acts of the Apostles, pp. 560-561, 566-567.

**"Sanctification is the work of a lifetime"**

**Apostles and prophets have trusted wholly in the righteousness of Christ**

**"God forbid that I should glory save in the cross"**

**If you trust in Christ's merits, He will forgive you**



by Glen Greenwalt

Notes

Romans chapter seven is a problem to both the scholar and the layman. Some see the enigma between Paul's contention that the Christian is free from sin and death and the struggle he confesses in chapter seven. Others may not be as interested by the exegetical problem but see Romans 7 as a photograph of their own personal struggles. From the pulpit one hears that Christ has brought deliverance from sin, but he knows himself to be a sinner. In either case, however, there exists the problem of balancing theology and practice.

There are four major interpretations of Romans 7. They are:

### The Christian Myth

Some interpreters have found evidence in Romans 7 that there is no such thing as a victorious Christian life. Paul's theories break down, according to this interpretation, in everyday experience. As philosophy waned in the face of the empiricism of science, so Paul the logician was defeated by the overwhelming evidence of man's penchant to err. In theory Paul was able to construct an impressive argument for freedom from sin, but when it came to putting the theory into practice even the apostle had to admit that sin was still entrenched.

This view is most readily acceptable by the discouraged layman.

*The Christian Myth:*  
**One cannot live the victorious life**

### Pre-Christian Life

The idea that Paul is speaking about a pre-Christian experience in Romans 7:14-25 has had a long history. It was the generally accepted interpretation as early as the Greek Fathers and the Reformation. Pietism, with its emphasis upon sanctification, found it inconceivable that Paul could speak so depreciatingly of his Christian life as he appears to do in this passage. In light of Paul's strong argument for victory over sin in Romans 6, how could he follow in Romans 7 with such a low view of the Christian's ability to overcome sin? This question has convinced many that Paul is here speaking of a pre-Christian experience.

There are, however, problems with this interpretation. First of all, Paul, after having consistently used the past tense previous to verse 14, uses the *present* tense from verse 14 until the end of the chapter. Second, Paul's picture of the pre-Christian life elsewhere in his writings is inconsistent with Romans 7:14-25. The ungodly man of Romans 1 would hardly show such anguish over sin. And Paul the Pharisee would not describe himself as wretched but rather as blameless (Phil. 3:6).

*Pre-Christian Life:*  
**Romans 7:14-25 describes the Christian before conversion**

### The Christian Life Attempted Without Christ

This position has been espoused by Leslie Mitton. He suggests that Romans 7:14-25 is descriptive of both a "miserable past from which the Christian has been delivered," and a "miserable present into which he may fall again if ever he begins to imagine that he can stand in his own strength." Mitton takes his cue from the contrast in verse 25 of "I myself" and "I thank God." Living by his own strength and apart from Christ (i.e., "I myself") man meets constant failure. But when man is

*The Christian Life Without Christ:*  
**Descriptive of a sinful past and a warning against spiritual pride**

connected with Christ he can live above recurring struggles and defeat (i.e., "I thank God").

Although this view has much to offer, it presents its own set of problems. First, although it extends the encouragement that the Christian life can be lived above failure, it suggests that defeat is the result of a broken relationship with Christ. When carried to its conclusion, this means that the Christian is faced not with the possibility of an "up and down" relationship (as is evident even in the best of marriages) but a relationship that dissolves and rejoins repeatedly (like a married couple going through marriage and divorce over and over). Second, in the Greek, "I myself" is not an expression of self-reliance but of *emphasis*, as a check of Romans 15:14 will verify.

### The Mature Christian

The reformers held that Romans 7:14-25 was a description of the mature Christian experience. Luther in particular noted that the spiritual man is spiritual and carnal at the same time—righteous and sinful, good and evil. This view may be correlated with Paul's strong emphasis upon justification in the previous chapters of Romans. It can, however, pose the danger of characterizing the Christian life as one of division and discord.

Ander Nygren, who follows in the Reformation tradition, defends the tension of Luther's theology, but not the location of the struggle. As in the case of the defeat of Germany in World War I and her subsequent retoolment that led to World War II, sin has been defeated yet it will renew the warfare if given the slightest opportunity. Sin is defeated but not destroyed.

In the same way, the Christian thus lives on a point between two ages. The Kingdom of God has been inaugurated but not yet consummated, therefore the Christian knows strife. He may groan under the attacks of the present evil age that take place even within his own body, but he never loses hope. For he is no longer a slave of this evil age, but an heir of the new age. It is this tension between the ages to which, I believe, Paul addresses himself in Romans 7:14-25.

*The Mature  
Christian:  
Sin is defeated  
but not  
destroyed*

by editors

Notes

Glen Greenwalt in the EVIDENCE section of this week's lesson provided us with some challenging information. He described four ways of viewing the struggle of Paul as found in Romans 7:14-25.

After reading his article I enjoyed the feeling of knowing the major ways to interpret this passage. But at the same time I was a bit confused and wondered which interpretation was the correct one.

In this article I will not tell you which view of Romans 7 you should subscribe to. Rather, I would like to suggest some *how-to* steps for arriving at your *own* conclusion.

**1. Take the texts as they read unless you find evidence for doing otherwise.** Simple enough, isn't it? This is one of those principles you've grown up with all of your life. For instance, if the encyclopedia says that the Duckbilled platypus is a rare bird, you accept it. But if it says that it is extinct—and you just saw one eating your mother's cabbage—you study the thing out, for you have evidence to show that Duckbilled platypuses are indeed alive and well.

So it is with Paul. We should take him as he reads unless we find evidence for doing otherwise.

And in this particular instance this principle would mean that when Paul uses the present tense of a verb and personal pronouns to describe himself (as in Romans 7:14-25) it means that he was speaking of his condition at the time he was writing—that is, unless there is evidence to the contrary.

And that is where the trick lies. Some people believe that there is evidence showing that Paul was not speaking of his present condition.

And that is why we need more "how-to-study-Romans 7" principles.

**2. Let Paul explain Paul.** Does that sound confusing? Well, all we mean is that Paul wrote more than just Romans 7:14-25. So see what he says about the subject in the rest of the chapter and book. Study what comes immediately before and after these texts and ask yourself, Do the passages surrounding Romans 7:14-25 tell me how to interpret it? What purpose did Paul have in including this within his book? Does my interpretation of it support Paul's purposes?

Then study the other epistles of Paul and find out what his thinking was in these other letters. Try to fit the ideas of all his epistles together and come up with a picture of Paul—and use him to decipher his own message.

**3. Be objective—silence your subjectivity.** Now, this is one of those "impossible-to-do-but-please-try" type of statements. Everything we study is colored by our environment—it is impossible to be totally objective. Nevertheless, we are able to make a pretty good stab at it.

**4. Study the best sources.** Go to the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, and see what it says about Romans 7:14-25. Then, try some of the other good commentaries on the market: Tyndale's, Barclay's, the *Interpreter's Bible Dictionary*, etc. Granted, you wouldn't want to get all of your theology from these books, but they are good to search through when you're exploring a difficult topic.

So, go to! Study Romans 7:14-25 for yourself. Consider the different interpretations and prayerfully decide which interpretation you will choose.



by Larry V. Bunnell

Notes

It's sad.

A local Christian group has been sponsoring some street and door-to-door witnessing teams. They are also having some gospel meetings. We went last night. The emphasis was on how good you feel and how good you are when you become a Christian. The music, skits and presentations were aimed at appealing to the emotional needs of those attending.

It's sad because it is all too clear that those who come to Christ under such appeals are often subjected to a defeated Christian walk—a Christian walk that is meaningful and exciting only when the *feeling* is meaningful and exciting.

Brian (in the INTRODUCTION) experienced what many of us experience as Christians: the expectation that Christianity is an easy solution to all our problems. But Brian's struggling experience is all too typical. Fortunately, he listened to God's voice through His Word. He listened to God telling him (in Romans 7) that at every point of the *Christian* experience there is a struggle and a battle.

When Brian understood that Romans 7 taught this, he realized that having a struggle is not a sign that God is no longer around. In fact, it is a sign that everything is normal. Thus, Brian was led to a deeper relationship with Christ, a relationship based on (and with emphasis on) Christ and *His* righteousness.

Brian's eyes were directed to Christ, not to himself. The focus of his emphasis shifted from his own good works of righteousness to those works of Christ's righteousness. Thus, Brian found power for his Christian walk.

Here, Brian's experience must become ours. Christ bids us to look at Him, to look at His righteousness at God's right hand in heaven. We are to look away from ourselves to our Redeemer. Only as we look away from our abilities and disabilities may we see that alien righteousness of Christ and glorify God.

That is beautiful.

Beautiful because such a walk is not subject to the whim and fancy of experience. On the contrary, it is based upon *His* stable righteousness, unchanged, in heaven. That is what Romans 7 says to me.

That is beautiful.

**Struggling is not a sign that God is no longer around**

**The Christian's walk is not subject to the whim of experience**

# YOU'RE NEXT

## Lesson 8

1. How does Paul's experience in Romans 7:14-25 differ from your own (before conversion, after conversion, or right now)?

If you are (or know anyone who is) living the "victorious life," can you make any claims different than Paul makes here?

2. Complete the following:

I feel spiritual when . . .

I feel sold under sin when . . .

I experience a struggle between good and evil when . . .

I delight in the law of God when . . .

I feel wretched when . . .

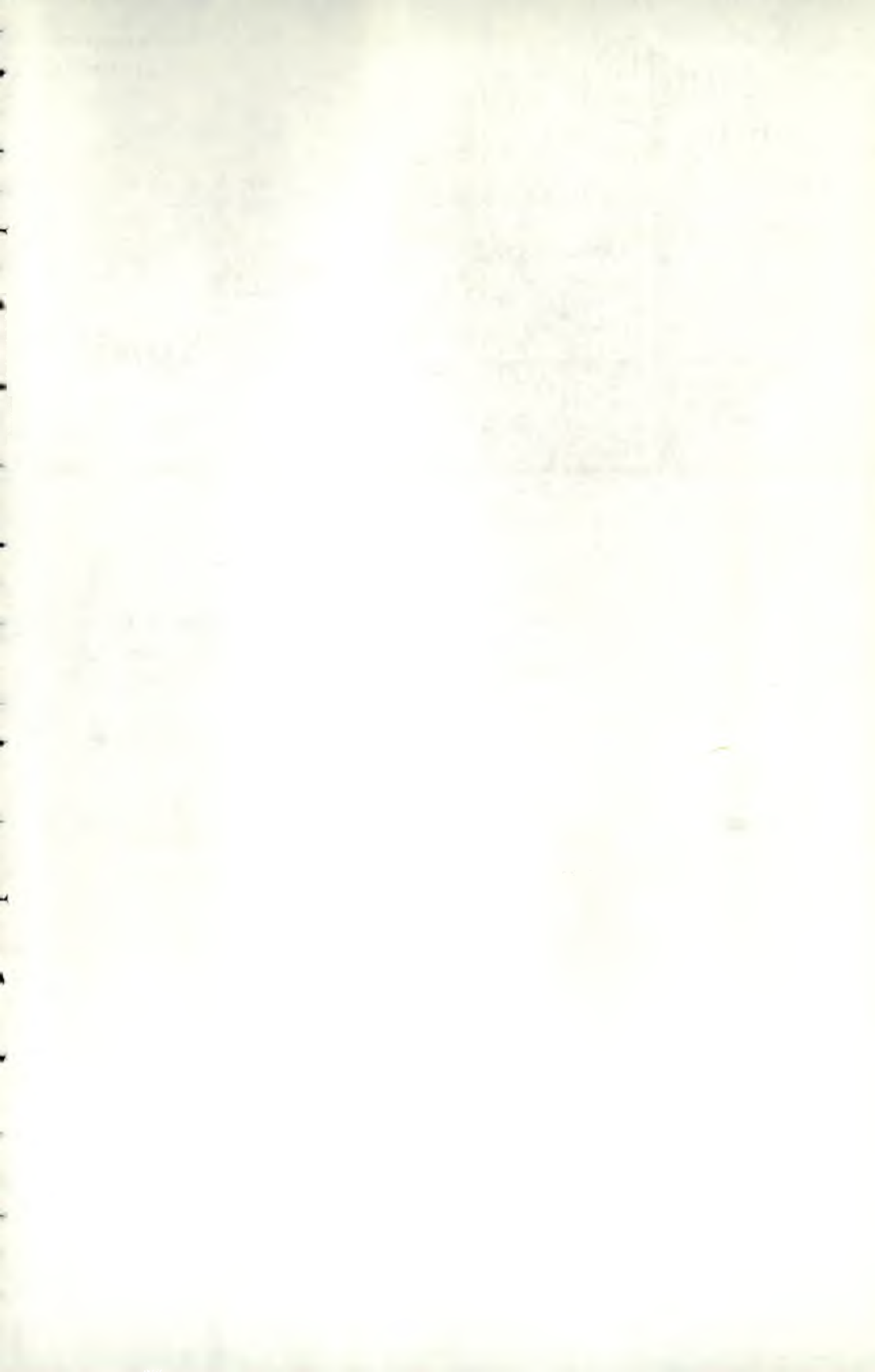
I am thankful to God and serve Him when . . .

3. A number of views on Romans 7:14-25 are held by different people, as the EVIDENCE section for this week so aptly pointed out.

On one extreme is "The Christian Myth" which teaches that Romans 7 supports the idea that one cannot live the victorious life. At the other extreme is the "Pre-Christian Life" position which suggests that Paul was describing the Christian before conversion, for the Christian after conversion does not experience what is described here.

Between these two extremes where would you place your views of Romans 7, nearer "The Christian Myth" or nearer the "Pre-Christian Life"? Explain your position.









## With the Spirit

*“Democracy is based upon the conviction that there are extraordinary possibilities in ordinary people.” —Harry Emerson Fosdick*

by F. F. Bruce

"The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." These words from Galatians 5:17 have already been quoted as a summary of the situation which Paul describes at greater length and in more vivid and personal terms in Romans 7:14-25. But immediately before these words he had said: "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16). The counterpart to this exhortation now lies before us in Romans 8:1-17. There has been no mention of the Holy Spirit in chapter 7, but He pervades chapter 8, which describes the life of victory and hope lived by those "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (8:4), those who are "in Christ Jesus" (8:1).

So long as they endeavour to go a-warring at their own charges, they fight a losing battle; when they avail themselves of the resources of life and power that are theirs "in Christ Jesus" they are more than conquerors. There is therefore no more reason why those who are "in Christ Jesus" should go on in a life of penal servitude, bound to carry out the dictates of the tyrannical law of sin and death. Christ dwells within them by His Spirit, and His Spirit infuses into them a new principle—the law of life—which is stronger than the strength of indwelling sin and sets them free from its tyranny.

Under the old order it was simply impossible to do the will of God, and if that old order still dominates men's lives, to do His will remains an impossibility. But those whose life is controlled by the Spirit, those who follow His promptings, do the will of God from the heart. Their own spirit, formerly dead and insensitive, is now

instinct with the life which the Spirit of God imparts; their body may still for the time being be subject to the law of death which results from the entry of sin into the world; but the last word remains with the Spirit of life. . . .

For Paul, the leading of the Spirit is not a matter of sporadic impulse, but the believer's habitual experience; it is the very principle of the freedom of the Christian life. "If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law" (Gal. 5:18). The old legal bondage has been thrown off; the Spirit introduces believers into a new relationship as free-born sons of God. It is the prompting of the Spirit that causes Christians to address God spontaneously as their Father, using the very expression that Jesus Himself used when speaking to God as His Father—an expression proper to the intimate atmosphere of family affection. No wonder that in a similar passage in Galatians Paul says that God has sent "the Spirit of his Son" into His people's hearts, crying "Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6). They have, in other words, received the same Spirit who descended in power on Jesus at His baptism (Mark 1:10), led Him in the wilderness (Mark 1:12), supplied the energy for His mighty works (Matt. 7:28), and animated His whole life and ministry (Mark 1:8; Luke 4:14, 18).

Thus the Spirit of God and the Christian's own spirit bear consentient witness to the fact that he is a child of God. God's children, moreover, are His heirs—heirs to that glory which is Christ's by unique right, and which by grace He shares with His "brethren," who are thus joint-heirs with Him.

Taken from the *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* by F. F. Bruce © copyright 1963 by the Tyndale Press, pp. 156-158. Used by permission of Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

by Becky Lacey

Notes

**Before going any further read Romans 8:1-17.**

In light of the passages in Romans which deal with man's bent to sin (Romans 6:1-14), man's relationship to the law (Romans 7:1-6) and the problem of struggling with indwelling sin (Romans 7:7-25), chapter 8 gives us words of hope concerning life in the Spirit.

After expounding upon the idea of mankind's slavery to sin, Paul immediately states in verse 1 of chapter 8 that . . . **"there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because . . . the Spirit of life set me free . . ." (NIV).**

The Greek word for Spirit is *pneuma*, and its translation is not limited to only the word Spirit or spirit. It can also be interpreted as *breath*, as in II Thessalonians 2:8 where it is translated as **"the breath of his mouth."** *Pneuma* may also be interpreted as *wind*, as in, **"The wind blows wherever it pleases" (John 3:8; NIV).**

With this knowledge of the word *pneuma* we can begin to understand the nature and work of the Holy Spirit. Since the Holy Spirit is a member of the Godhead, He may be seen as God's holy "Breath" or spiritually-renewing Presence that frees us from the *condemnation* of sin (Romans 8:1). That is, He breaks the chains that bind the Christian to the service of Satan and encourages him to walk in the freedom which finds its foundation in the righteousness of Christ.

Then in verses 3 and 4 Paul states, **"And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:3, 4; NIV).** F. F. Bruce makes an interesting comment here: "The 'righteous requirement' of the law is summed up . . . in the single commandment 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself' . . . Here we have the fulfilment of Jeremiah's prophecy of the new covenant . . . under which, said God, 'I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people . . .' (Jer. 31:33f.). Cf. the parallel prophecy of Ezekiel 36:26f., where God says, 'A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you . . . and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.' The New Testament writers recognize in the gospel the fulfilment of these ancient prophecies."<sup>1</sup> Through the aid of the Holy Spirit, God's commands are His enablings.

Another blessing from the Spirit is shown to us in verses 16 and 17. **"The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children . . . Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. . ." (Romans 8:16-17; NIV).** Through the Spirit we share a special relationship with, and become sons and daughters of, God. I don't know if we will ever fully understand or appreciate what this really means.

Because of what Jesus did on Calvary the Christian is freed from the guilt and penalty of sin, and through the power of the indwelling Spirit of God the Christian is enabled to live the victorious life. Paul declares that he is convinced that nothing can separate the Christian from the relationship he shares with God (Romans 8:38, 39). Thank God that we are no longer slaves under the condemnation of sin and that through His Spirit we are partakers and heirs of divine life.

<sup>1</sup> F. F. Bruce, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1963), p. 159. Used by permission of Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.

**Pneuma:  
God's  
spiritually-  
renewing  
Presence**

**The Spirit  
directs heart-  
responses  
to living a  
victorious  
life**

**Through the  
Spirit, Christians  
are children  
of God**



compiled by editors

Notes

**Romans 8:1** "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (NIV).

"Do not wait to feel that you are made whole, but say, 'I believe it; it is so, not because I feel it, but because God has promised.'"<sup>1</sup>

**Romans 8:2** ". . . because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death" (NIV). "In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God."<sup>2</sup>

**Romans 8:6, 7** "The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace, because the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so" (NIV).

"Man's great danger is in being self-deceived, indulging self-sufficiency, and thus separating from God, the source of his strength. Our natural tendencies, unless corrected by the Holy Spirit of God, have in them the seeds of moral death. Unless we become vitally connected with God, we can not resist the unhallowed effects of self-love, self-indulgence, and temptation to sin . . . "All our good works are dependent on a power outside of ourselves; therefore there needs to be a continual reaching out of the heart after God, a constant, earnest confession of sin and humbling of the soul before Him."<sup>3</sup>

**Romans 8:9b** "You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you" (NIV).

". . . the Spirit pleads not for us as does Christ, who presents His blood, shed from the foundation of the world; the Spirit works upon our hearts, drawing out prayers and penitence, praise and thanksgiving. The gratitude which flows from our lips is the result of the Spirit's striking the chords of the soul in holy memories, awakening the music of the heart."

**Romans 8:17** "Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory" (NIV).

"One of the lessons that we are to learn in the school of Christ is that the Lord's love for us is far greater than that of our earthly parents. We are to have unquestioning faith and perfect confidence in Him. . . .

"May the Lord help you, as a diligent student in the school of Christ, to learn to lay your burdens on Jesus . . . never forget that it is part of the legacy that we have received as Christians, to be partakers with Him of His sufferings, that we may be partakers with Him of His glory."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Steps to Christ*, p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, p. 466.

<sup>3</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 315-316.

<sup>4</sup> *Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 344.

<sup>5</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 126.

by Colin D. Standish

Notes

What motivates a man to expend his all for the glory of God and the good of his fellowman? There is no inherited capacity or tendency in man that leads him to break free from the imprisonment of his own egocentricity. Rather, our natural inclinations are selfish. It is natural to want security and love; it is not natural to extend oneself in love to others. The infant, as soon as he is able to coordinate, grabs everything to himself. There is no known human capacity which can reverse this situation. In later life we may become more sophisticated, more subtle in the way this self-centeredness is expressed, but the natural motivation will remain unchanged. Man is in bondage to himself.

The British historian Arnold Toynbee wrote, "I am convinced, myself, that man's fundamental problem is his human egocentricity. He dreams of making the universe a desirable place for himself, with plenty of free time, relaxation, security, and good health, and with no hunger or poverty. Every individual living creature of every species is egocentric. . . . A living creature is a bit of the universe which has set itself up as a kind of separate counter-universe. It tries to make the rest of the universe serve the creature's purposes and center on the creature. That is what egocentricity means.

**"Man is in  
bondage  
to himself"**

"Of course, this is a forlorn hope. All except the most primitive species of living creatures die, and the fact of death is enough to doom egocentricity to ultimate failure; but egocentricity can never really come near to success."<sup>1</sup>

Man's unceasing thrust for freedom and happiness is insatiable, for within himself he has no capacity to achieve the unattainable goals he has set. He is constantly defending his ego and in so doing is threatened by the success of others, by those who oppose him and by those who are acclaimed ahead of him. Man's very thrust for contentment is destroyed by the narcissistic motivation that seeks it.

The current psychological theories of man are barren, for they have yet to move outside of man himself and his earthbound environment. There is no way that the freedom and happiness of man can be achieved when he seeks answers within himself.

The Word of God has the only full answer to self worth, recognizing that it is found only when self is dead; for a dead self cannot be threatened, hurt or challenged. This death to self can only be accomplished when we consent to allow Christ to take self-centered motives from our lives and replace them with His selfless love through the Holy Spirit. It is then that the true worth of a human being is acknowledged. Man can find freedom and fulfillment when his self-image is not built upon his own achievements but upon what Christ has done for him. "For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave . . . but you received the Spirit of sonship" (Romans 8:15; NIV). Knowing that we are sons and daughters of God and in fellowship with the Holy Spirit, our self image is not even a conscious concern.

**"A dead  
self cannot  
be threatened,  
hurt or  
challenged"**

When self is dead and the selfless love of Jesus through the Holy Spirit motivates our lives, there will be a natural reaching out for others and a response to God's call in our lives.

<sup>1</sup> Arnold Toynbee, *Surviving the Future*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971) pp. 47, 48. Used by permission.

by David Neff

Notes

Paul tells us that the Holy Spirit has set us free from the law of sin and death. The question that faces us as Christians, then, is not, "How can I be free as a Christian?" for that has already happened. But rather, "How can I *feel* and *act* free as a Christian?" In Romans 8, Paul gives us several clues to how we can *experience* divine freedom.

**1. Act like a son, not a slave.** "For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship" (Romans 8:15; NIV). Slaves fear their masters; sons know and love their fathers. Slaves labor because they have to; sons labor to share the family workload. Slaves can be sold; sons have a guaranteed inheritance.

So, what does it mean to act like a son? When you know you are loved, trusted with part of the workload and guaranteed an inheritance, you can follow Luther's advice—"Sin boldly!" Luther believed that *everything* the Christian does—no matter how good—is tinged with human sinfulness. Some people worry about doing anything because they know their own sinfulness too well. Luther, however, knew not only his own sinfulness, but also his sonship, and was able to act boldly (albeit sinfully) for God.

**2. Experience holiness by association.** Friends and companions make a difference in our way of life. It is a law of human nature that when we are with cynics we become cynical; when we are with the wholesome, we become wholesome; when we are with the materialists, we become materialistic.

In Romans 8:2-4, Paul examines two ways that lead to holiness—the law (the instructions) and the Spirit (God's Presence with us). He says that following the instructions didn't work but God's Presence with us does.

**3. Set your mind on the things of the Spirit.** That's Paul's advice in Romans 8:5-8. The things of the Spirit in Paul's writings refer to such personal qualities as love, joy, patience and peace. The things of the flesh are deeds like fornication and carousing and qualities like jealousy, licentiousness and selfishness. To set your mind on the things of the flesh means to give in to the drives that produce licentiousness, anger and selfishness. To set your mind on the things of the Spirit means to channel those same drives toward love, unselfishness and peace.

This is clearly a matter of choice. You can choose to devote your energies to thinking about and getting for yourself, or to thinking of and giving to others. But once you are beyond that basic choice you need to no longer be a slave to your drives; you can feel and act freely for God.

A son is free *from* the fear of rejection and free *for* bold action for God. By choosing to associate with God you are free for growing into wholesomeness. By setting your mind on the things of the Spirit, you are free for channeling your energies for good.



by Fritz Ridenour

Notes

So we "have the Holy Spirit." You've probably heard that before. It's a nice, comfortable, "spiritual" thought.

But what does it mean? Paul says: ". . . the power of the life-giving Spirit . . . has freed me from the vicious circle of sin and death."

What is Paul saying? Didn't he just get through admitting that he couldn't make the grade, that he couldn't obey the law, good as the law might be? Yes, that's the point. When we try to obey the law, we are trying to do something for God. But when we follow after the Holy Spirit (vs. 4, 5), we let God do something for us.

Some Christians fail because they don't even know they have the Holy Spirit within them. But perhaps a lot more Christians fail because the concept of the Holy Spirit within is only that—a nice idea, a pat theological cliché that doesn't have a thing to do with their real lives.

But the Holy Spirit is not just a "concept." He is a Person. He is the Spirit of Christ and He does have something to do with your life, especially if you're interested in living a Christian life, not just being "religious."

Look at it this way. If you are a Christian, you have a battle on your hands. You are constantly facing a choice between sin and obedience. The fact that you are aware of the choice, that you are concerned, shows that you want to win this war within. But how badly do you want to win it? In the 1950's and '60's the United States fought "small wars" that it didn't really try to win. Containment was more of a goal than all-out victory. A "peaceful settlement" was preferable to unconditional surrender.

You can't fight that kind of war with sin. It will whip you every time. You have to decide which way you really want to go. . . .

But, there's one big problem, isn't there? You are fighting this war with a reservation. You don't really want to win it, because that would mean you couldn't be in charge. But in this war, no Christian is a general. All of us are non-coms, and our orders are to . . . follow after the Holy Spirit.

Paul puts the choice to you quite clearly in Romans 8:5: "Those who let themselves be controlled by their lower natures live only to please themselves; but those who follow after the Holy Spirit find themselves doing those things that please God." And you know, it's a funny thing . . . when you wind up pleasing God, you please yourself, too. Christ conquers sin and you win that war within. . . .

The realistic Christian is ready for momentary defeats, *but he never goes into permanent retreat*. It would take a perfect person to continually walk in the Spirit without one misstep. Perfect people are in short supply this side of eternity.

The thing to do is to start each day with a definite decision that, *by faith*, you will walk in the Spirit and not live only to please yourself. When you sin, confess it on the spot if you can remember to do so. *And keep going*. . . . If you really want to walk in the Spirit, no one is standing in your way but yourself. Go ahead and take the first step. . . .

**"When we follow after the Holy Spirit we let God do something for us"**

**You can't fight a "peaceful settlement" war with sin**

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## Lesson 9

1. Fritz Ridenour in the OPINION section for this week suggests, "When we try to obey the law, we are trying to do something for God. But when we follow after the Holy Spirit . . . , we let God do something for us." What do you think Mr. Ridenour means by this statement?
  2. Name something that has happened to you this past week that makes you thankful that the Holy Spirit is working in you.
- 

3. Which of the following functions of the Holy Spirit do you believe to be most important? Rank them according to how you see them.

- \_\_\_\_\_ brings peace
- \_\_\_\_\_ leads into truth
- \_\_\_\_\_ gives faith
- \_\_\_\_\_ takes away sin
- \_\_\_\_\_ gives the gift of prophecy
- \_\_\_\_\_ comforts
- \_\_\_\_\_ guides in the study of the Bible
- \_\_\_\_\_ brings unity among Christians
- \_\_\_\_\_ supplies power and insight for witnessing
- \_\_\_\_\_ gives love

What is the believer's role in receiving these spiritual gifts? Should we concentrate on receiving one more than another?



## Romans 9

*"There is no election but one's own by which any may perish." —Ellen G. White*



selected by editors

**Romans 9**

V. 1-3 — Oh, Israel, my people! Oh, my Jewish brothers! How I long for you to come to Christ. My heart is heavy within me and I grieve bitterly day and night because of you. Christ knows and the Holy Spirit knows that it is no mere pretense when I say that I would be willing to be forever damned if that would save you.

V. 4 — God has given you so much, but still you will not listen to Him. He took you as His own special, chosen people and led you along with a bright cloud of glory and told you how very much He wanted to bless you. He gave you His rules for daily life so you would know what He wanted you to do. He let you work for Him in the temple. He gave you mighty promises.

V. 6 — Well then, did God's promises to His Jewish people become worthless when they refused to come to be saved?

Of course not.

For His promises are only to those who come. Only they are truly His people. They alone are truly Jews. So you see, not everyone born into a Jewish family is truly a Jew. V. 8 — This means that not all of Abraham's children are children of God, but only the ones born as a result of God's special promise to Abraham.

V. 10-13 — And years later, when Isaac was grown up and married, and Rebecca his wife was about to bear him twin children, God told her that Esau, the child born first, would be a servant to Jacob, his twin brother. In the words of the Scripture, "I chose to bless Jacob, but not Esau." And God said this before the children were even born, before they had done anything either good or bad. This proves that God was doing what He had decided from the beginning; it was not because of what the

children did but because of what God wanted and chose.

V. 14 — Was God being unfair?

Of course not. V. 15 — For God had said to Moses, "If I want to be kind to someone, I will. And I will take pity on anyone I want to." V. 16 — And so God's blessings are not given just because someone decides to have them or works hard to get them. They are given to those God wants to give them to. V. 17 — Pharaoh king of Egypt was an example of this fact. For God told him He had given him the kingdom of Egypt for the very purpose of displaying the awesome power of God against him: so that all the world would hear about God's glorious name.

V. 18 — So you see, God is kind to some just because He wants to be, and He makes some refuse to listen. V. 19 — Well then, why does God blame them for not listening? Haven't they done what He made them do? No, don't say that. Who are you to criticize God? Should the thing made say to the One who made it, "Why have you made me like this?" V. 21 — When a man makes a jar out of clay, doesn't he have a right to use the same lump of clay to make one jar beautiful, to be used for holding flowers, and another to throw garbage into?

V. 22 — And so God has a perfect right to be patient with whomever He wants to, even with those who are fit only for destruction; later on He will show His fury and power against them.

V. 23-24 — And He has a right to take others such as ourselves, who have been made for pouring His glory into, whether we are Jews or Gentiles, and to be kind to us so that everyone can see how very great His glory is.

by Sabah N. Yousif

Notes

Paul probably had two reasons for writing Romans 9-11. The first one, according to some, is that he was accused of forsaking the Jews and their tradition (Acts 21:27-32; Acts 24:10-21). Thomas A. Davis points out the second reason: The Jews had separated themselves from the love of God.<sup>1</sup> So Paul's basic point in these three chapters is that God does not limit His grace to only the descendants of Abraham. It is not being a Jew or a Gentile that earns God's mercy. It is the sovereign will of God that saves men.

There are several parts to Paul's argument.

**1. To be a Jew neither earns the favor of God nor disqualifies a person for salvation.** The Children of Israel believed that lineage from Abraham was their assurance of salvation (Matt. 3:7-10; John 8:37-41). Paul, however, showed that a physical connection to Abraham did not ensure salvation; otherwise, Ishmael and Esau would also have been heirs of the promise just as Isaac and Jacob were. (See Romans 9:6-13; contrast with Genesis 15:12-17, Genesis 17:18-22 and Genesis 25:23-26.)

**2. It is the will of God that all should have eternal life (1 Tim. 2:4).** For this reason God gave the commission to preach the good news of the gospel to everyone. *He predestined the human race to be saved*, but He left the choice to accept salvation up to the individual.

For instance, Paul told the Philippians to work out their own salvation, but he also assured them that God would work in them (Phil. 2:12, 13). Paul himself was called (Acts 9:1-9), but he said it was up to him to accept that call (Acts 26:19).

Like the prophet Balaam, however, some refuse God's call to salvation.

**3. To reassure the Jews that only the nation, not the individual, was rejected Paul used himself as an example.** An individual Jew, like himself, or any other man could have eternal life freely (Romans 11:1-2).

**4. God chooses individuals or nations as instruments to manifest His mercy (see 1 Peter 2:9 and Jonah).** This idea is presented in the Old Testament. The Jews, however, failed in not allowing themselves to be used by God to tell others about Him (Isaiah 49:6).

**5. Man is not saved because of his own goodness.** It was Israel's pride in their lineage and their own accomplishments that kept them from accepting the gift of God (Romans 11:31-32; Gal. 5:4).

The question to us today is, do we look within ourselves to see our progress in the Christian life, or do we look at Christ's finished work in our behalf as the only way of salvation? (See Romans 4:24; Eph. 2:1-10; Acts 4:12.)

**6. Paul tells the Gentiles not to fall into the same error the Jews did.**

The Lord loves both Jews and Gentiles equally. He desires that all should accept His salvation. God has predestined all to be saved, but everyone has the choice to accept or reject this salvation at any time.

<sup>1</sup>Thomas A. Davis, *Romans For The Everyday Man* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assoc., 1971), p. 123.

compiled by Dick E. Hanson

Notes

**Romans 9:3 — Paul's burden for the Jews**

"In this letter Paul gave free expression to his burden in behalf of the Jews. . . .

"It was no ordinary desire that the apostle felt. Constantly he was petitioning God to work in behalf of the Israelites who had failed to recognize Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Messiah."<sup>1</sup>

**Romans 9:12, 13 — God's freedom to choose**

"There was no arbitrary choice on the part of God, by which Esau was shut out from the blessings of salvation. . . . There is no election but one's own by which any may perish."<sup>2</sup>

"Every soul is elected who will work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. He is elected who will put on the armor, and fight the good fight of faith. He is elected who will watch unto prayer, who will search the Scriptures, and flee from temptation. He is elected who will have faith continually, and who will be obedient to every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."<sup>3</sup>

**Romans 9:17, 18 — Example of God's freedom**

Speaking of the place of Pharaoh in Israel's history, Mrs. White says, "Not that God had given him an existence for this purpose; but his providence had overruled events to place him upon the throne at the very time appointed for Israel's deliverance. Though this haughty tyrant had by his crimes forfeited the mercy of God, yet his life had been preserved that through his stubbornness the Lord might manifest His wonders in the land of Egypt. The disposing of events is of God's providence. . . . In His dealing with Pharaoh, the Lord manifested His hatred of idolatry and his determination to punish cruelty and oppression."<sup>4</sup>

**Romans 9:22, 24 — God chooses Christians**

"However sinful, however guilty you may be, you are called, you are chosen."<sup>5</sup>

"The power of choice God has given to men; it is theirs to exercise. You cannot change your heart, you cannot of yourself give to God its affections; but you can *choose* to serve Him."<sup>6</sup>

**Romans 9:30, 32 — Reason for failure**

Ellen White generally refers to the "stumbling stone" as "a rock of offense."

"While living in disobedience, man is the enemy of God, and cannot harmonize with those who keep the divine law, and make God the supreme object of affection. They feel that the example of the obedient ones is a rebuke to them. Thus the Jews looked upon Christ. In just the degree that his life differed from theirs, they passed severe censure upon him as a rock of offense."<sup>7</sup>

". . . Sanctified and blessed by God, the Sabbath was designed to be the great memorial of creation, and a blessing to mankind. . . . It will ever stand unmoved, a rock of offense to the Christian world, as was Christ to the Jewish nation."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 374.

<sup>2</sup> *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 207.

<sup>3</sup> *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 208.

<sup>4</sup> *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 267-268.

<sup>5</sup> *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 251.

<sup>6</sup> *Steps to Christ*, p. 47.

<sup>7</sup> *Review and Herald*, January 13, 1885.

<sup>8</sup> *Review and Herald*, December 20, 1898.



by Karl-Heinz Schroeder

Notes

Chapter 9 in the book of Romans is probably one of the most difficult chapters in all of the writings of the Apostle Paul. It is certainly one of these passages which Peter describes as "hard to understand" (II Peter 3:16).

In the long history of Christian theology the question of God's and man's role in salvation has evoked heated debates. In the fifth century the controversy was between Pelagius' extreme "righteousness by works" theology and orthodoxy as defended by Augustine the bishop of Hippo in North Africa. In the early 16th century it became again a bone of contention between the Renaissance scholar Erasmus who published an essay "On Free Will" and Martin Luther who responded to Erasmus with "The Bondage of the Will." The most famous and elegant defender of predestination was the 16th century French lawyer and theologian John Calvin. The following passage has been selected from his major work *The Institutes* as a representative example of predestination theology.

"Predestination we call the eternal decree of God, by which he has determined in himself, what he would have to become of every individual of mankind. For they are not all created with a similar destiny; but eternal life is foreordained for some, and eternal damnation for others. Every man, therefore, being created for one or the other of these ends, we say, he is predestinated either to life or to death. This God has not only testified in particular persons, but has given a specimen of it in the whole posterity of Abraham, which should evidently show the future condition of every nation to depend upon his decision. 'When the Most High divided the nations, when he separated the sons of Adam, the Lord's portion was his people; Jacob was the lot of his inheritance.' . . . In conformity, therefore, to the clear doctrine of the Scripture, we assert, that by an eternal and immutable counsel, God has once for all determined, both whom he would admit to salvation, and whom he would condemn to destruction. We affirm that this counsel, as far as concerns the elect, is founded on his gratuitous mercy, totally irrespective of human merit; but that to those whom he devotes to condemnation, the gate of life is closed by a just and irreprehensible, but incomprehensible, judgment. In the elect, we consider calling as an evidence of election, and justification as another token of its manifestation, till they arrive in glory, which constitutes its completion. As God seals his elect by vocation and justification, so by excluding the reprobate from the knowledge of his name and the sanctification of his Spirit, he affords an indication of the judgment that awaits them."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Taken from the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, by John Calvin, Vol. II. Trans. by John Allen (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1949), pp. 176, 181. Used by permission.

by Dave Schwantes

Notes

Did God predetermine 28 years ago that I would be sitting here on this balmy spring morning, slumped over my Royal 440, typing this article? I think not. I could have chosen not to participate in this COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY project.

The same human liberty applies to God's plan of salvation. Nowhere in Romans 9 does Paul suggest that God has predestined certain persons to be saved and others to be lost. Salvation is offered freely to all.

Jew or Gentile, black or white, Andrews University student or Walla Walla College student—each has a God-given power of choice in determining his future. God does not force salvation upon one against his will.

Perhaps it's time we laid to rest the myth that decision-making is a freewheeling, do-what-the-mood dictates kind of thing. At its core lies discipline. Discipline is also at the foundation of freedom. To be free to take a five-mile bike trip, we must first learn how to ride.

So here are some principles to keep in mind as we make decisions:

**1) Examine the options.** The purpose of the struggle between Christ and Satan has been to demonstrate the options available to us in God's plan of salvation. God offers redemption to all men and nations; but by their unwillingness to consider His option, they bring ruin upon themselves.

**2) Ask questions.** According to an ancient Chinese proverb, "He who asks questions is a fool for five minutes. He who does not is a fool forever." I am not talking about questions which challenge God's supremacy or seek to start an argument. Our questions should be asked with childlike simplicity. As children of God, we should seek His *reassurances* through our questioning.

**3) Sift facts carefully.** Do not be misled by spurious issues and inconsequential matters within the earthly structure of the church. The Todd tapes and credal statements illustrate two recent issues which have divided church members and caused some persons to lose perspective in their divine search.

**4) Make a commitment.** This is perhaps the most difficult step in the decision-making process. One cannot straddle the gulf of indecision forever. Failure to make a commitment leads to self-doubt, self-pity and self-denial—all consequences which interfere with our ability to trust in God.

**5) Accept the consequences of your decision.** Making a commitment can mean putting your beliefs, reputation and resources on the line as you suffer the slings and arrows of ridicule. But we have the promise of divine protection and blessing if we fulfill the conditions of God's covenants.

Throughout Romans 9 Paul emphasizes to the Jews the vital fact that mere works and mere physical membership in the "chosen race" do not bind God to bless with favor and privilege. All of us have the privilege of choosing to fulfill God's plan for us. The choice is ours.

by John T. Baldwin

Notes

This week's lesson has shown how Romans 9 teaches that in salvation, all people are equal in the life roles God selects and predicts. However, this raises the important question of predestination. Does God actually predetermine the earthly and eternal destiny of all human beings apart from their free choice in the matter as certain texts in Romans 9 can be interpreted to suggest? For example, does Paul teach that certain unlucky people ("vessels" vs. 22) have been predetermined by God ("the potter" vs. 21) to be eternally lost (predetermined for the rubbish pile—"fitted for destruction" vs. 22), while other individuals are, fortunately, earmarked for heaven long before birth ("the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory")? In my opinion nothing could be farther from the truth than to seriously suggest that God predetermines human destiny apart from individual freewill choice.

Then how should these verses in Romans 9 be properly understood? I suggest that the interpretive key lies in what God foreknows. In Romans 8 Paul connects the foreknowledge of God to predestination by means of a remarkable interlocking chain of experiences. He says that individuals whom God "foreknows" (vs. 29) He predestines to be fashioned into the likeness of Jesus. Furthermore, these predestinated ones are then "called," "justified" and finally "glorified" (vs. 30).

On the one hand it could be argued that these verses teach that everyone will be eventually saved since God must know all people and since the verses clearly teach that all persons foreknown by God will be glorified or saved. But again this would be a wrong conclusion. Interestingly enough, the Bible teaches that God can foreknow an individual in two different ways.

First, God foreknows all people in a general way, i.e., God knows facts *about* all individuals, such as foreknowledge of their existence, the number of hairs per head, etc. (John 2:24; Luke 12:7). But the second way by which God foreknows individuals makes it impossible for Him to *foreknow* everyone in this particular second sense. For example, in Matthew 7:23 Jesus commands the lost people to depart from Him because "I never knew you." Now, Jesus surely knows these lost individuals in the first sense, i.e., He knows *about* them—that they exist and how many hairs each lost person has, etc. But, Jesus does not know them in a love relationship and He must therefore sadly turn from them. The Old Testament supports this second or special form of the way God knows certain individuals when Nahum writes that God "knows them that trust in him" (Nahum 1:7).

In my opinion this second or special kind of God's knowledge is the key which unlocks the true meaning about predestination mentioned in Romans 8 and 9. In the verses noted I believe that Paul is talking exclusively about God's second or special way of knowing and foreknowing individuals. *This means that God selects and predicts individual life roles in accordance with His special foreknowledge of whether or not a particular individual will freely choose to love and trust God.* This shows how God does not violate individual freedom. No one is predestinated to destruction apart from individual choice. Thus Paul's clay pots that end up on the rubbish pile have freely chosen to be there.

**The interpretive key lies in what God foreknows**

**God knows about an individual**

**God also knows in a love relationship**

**God predetermines the life roles that people choose**



### Lesson 10

1. Write a statement on how you view the relationship between God's sovereignty and your salvation. What examples can you use to clarify your ideas?

In what ways has God's sovereignty made a difference in your life?

In what ways has your freedom of choice made a difference?

2. Does Calvin's concept of predestination as given in the EVIDENCE section bother you? Why?

3. In specific terms, what do you think God's purpose for your life is?

4. Rewrite Romans 9 in terms of your own experience and understanding of this passage.



## Romans 11

*"I ask then, Did God reject his people? By no means!" —Romans 11:1; NIV*

by Greg Brothers

**IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE SEED.**

\* \* \*

"You see, in this chapter Paul is comparing the people of God to a tree, with different groups of people represented by different branches."

"Where does our church fit in?"

"We grow directly from the roots."

"You mean to tell me that what happened in the Reformation and the Great Revival and the Pietist Movement isn't important? That it hasn't affected what we believe at all?"

"Well no, uh. . ."

"Don't you know that branches that grow directly from roots are called suckers?"

\* \* \*

**THOUGH IT HAD THE SMALLEST OF ALL POSSIBLE BEGINNINGS, SOON A MIGHTY TREE HAD GROWN, COMELY AS JERUSALEM, MORE TERRIBLE THAN AN ARMY WITH BANNERS.**

\* \* \*

Herewith are written some of the generations of this message:

Paul begat Augustine, and Augustine begat Boethius, and Boethius begat Anselm, and Anselm begat William of Occam, and William of Occam begat Luther, and Luther begat Zwingli, and Zwingli begat Zinzendorf, and Zinzendorf begat Wesley, and Wesley begat Ellen G. White.

\* \* \*

**YET WHEN THE GARDENER CAME FOR THE HARVEST, ON MANY OF THE BRANCHES THERE WAS NO FRUIT.**

\* \* \*

Athanasius drew back from the edge of the cloud and plopped down with a sigh.

"What are they arguing about now?" asked Latimer.

"The usual things," said Athanasius wearily. "The Trinity, righteousness by

faith, the nature of inspiration, reason versus faith—same old stuff."

"Play the man, Athanasius!" shouted Latimer. "At least they are studying these things out for themselves."

"I know, I know," sighed Athanasius. "Still, it would be nice if they would learn from some of the battles we fought. Sometimes I think that they have never even heard of us."

\* \* \*

**SO BREAKING OFF THE UNFRUITFUL BRANCHES. . . .**

\* \* \*

"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem / St. Peter's / Wittenberg / Canterbury / Takoma Park, let my right hand forget her cunning. . . ."

\* \* \*

**. . . HE GRAFTED ON NEW BRANCHES. . . .**

\* \* \*

"Because of its high percentage of first-generation believers, however, the Adventist Church will remain a very viable and active church."

—Gottfried Oosterwal  
*Mission: Possible*, p. 45.

\* \* \*

**. . . AND WAITED TO SEE WHAT FRUIT THEY MIGHT BEAR.**

\* \* \*

"The steady progress of our work and our increased facilities are filling the hearts and minds of many of our people with satisfaction and pride, which we fear will take the place of the love of God in the soul."

—Ellen G. White  
*Gospel Workers*, p. 37.

\* \* \*

**THE GARDENER DID THESE THINGS, BOTH WITH THE THOUGHT OF SAVING THE NEW BRANCHES, AND OF EVENTUALLY SAVING THE OLD.**



by editors

Notes

It must have been a difficult thing for Paul to write about the decaying relationship the Jewish people had with Jehovah. But in Romans 11 Paul does discuss the situation of the Children of Israel and he likewise talks about the salvation of the Gentiles.

**"I ask then, Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. God did not reject his people whom he foreknew" (Romans 11:1, 2; NIV).** Here Paul asks a question that was in the hearts of many converted Jews: After crucifying the Son of God and rejecting the gospel message, is there still hope for the Children of Israel? Has God rejected them?

While in fact God had rejected the Children of Israel as a *nation* (*Great Controversy*, p. 615), the Jews as individuals were still very precious to Him, and so Paul answers the question, *No, God has not rejected His people*, and uses himself—an individual—as an example.

As another example he cites the story of Elijah (Romans 11:2-5), where Elijah told God he was His only remaining servant in Israel and God replied that there were 7,000 in Israel that were still serving Him. By bringing this ancient account to their attention, Paul was attempting to show that there had been and always would be a *true* Israel and that God had definitely not forsaken His true children.

**"What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened, as it is written: 'God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear. . .'" (Romans 11:7, 8; NIV).** Because of their insensitive hearts Israel had become calloused to the commands and pleadings of God alike. And, following the laws of humanity, this insensitivity was passed from generation to generation until the entire nation was hardened against the Lord.

The supreme Sovereign, however, was able to work even through Israel's stubbornness. **" . . . because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious" (Romans 11:11; NIV).** "It is true that the Jews rejected Christ; but, as Paul saw it, that rejection happened in order that Christ might be offered to the Gentiles. To maintain the sovereignty of God's purpose, Paul even went the length of saying that it was he himself who hardened the hearts of the Jews in order to open a way to the Gentiles; but, even then, however contradictory it might sound, he still insisted on the personal responsibilities of the Jews for their failure to accept God's offer."<sup>1</sup>

Then, fearing that the Gentiles might become contemptuous of the Jews, Paul added, **"If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others. . . , do not boast over these branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. . . . Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either" (Romans 11:17, 18, 20, 21; NIV).**

Finally, just before his "doxology" (vs. 33-36), Paul says, **"For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all" (Romans 11:32; NIV).** It is only when one understands he is disobedient before God that he is prepared to receive salvation freely. Both Jews and Gentiles alike had to understand they were sinners in order to be eligible for heavenly salvation.

<sup>1</sup> From *The Letter To The Romans*, by William Barclay, Revised Edition. Copyright © 1975 by William Barclay. Used by permission of The Westminster Press.

selected by editors

Notes

In this letter Paul gave free expression to his burden in behalf of the Jews. Ever since his conversion, he had longed to help his Jewish brethren to gain a clear understanding of the gospel message. "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is," he declared, "that they might be saved. . . ."

Notwithstanding Israel's failure as a nation, there remained among them a goodly remnant of such as should be saved. At the time of the Saviour's advent, there were faithful men and women who had received with gladness the message of John the Baptist, and had thus been led to study anew the prophecies concerning the Messiah. When the early Christian church was founded, it was composed of these faithful Jews who recognized Jesus of Nazareth as the one for whose advent they had been longing. It is to this remnant that Paul refers when he writes, "If the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches". . . .

Through unbelief and the rejection of Heaven's purpose for her, Israel as a nation had lost her connection with God. But the branches that had been separated from the parent stock God was able to reunite with the true stock of Israel—the remnant who had remained true to the God of their fathers. . . .

Thus Paul shows that God is abundantly able to transform the hearts of Jew and Gentile alike, and to grant to every believer in Christ the blessings promised to Israel. . . .

Notwithstanding the awful doom pronounced upon the Jews as a nation at the time of their rejection of Jesus of Nazareth, there have lived from age to age many noble, God-fearing Jewish men and women who have suffered in silence. God has comforted their hearts in affliction, and has beheld with pity their terrible situation. He has heard the agonizing prayers of those who have sought Him with all the heart for a right understanding of His word. . . .

When this gospel shall be presented in its fullness to the Jews, many will accept Christ as the Messiah. Among Christian ministers there are only a few who feel called upon to labor for the Jewish people; but to those who have been often passed by, as well as to all others, the message of mercy and hope in Christ is to come.

In the closing proclamation of the gospel, when special work is to be done for classes of people hitherto neglected, God expects His messengers to take particular interest in the Jewish people whom they find in all parts of the earth. As the Old Testament Scriptures are blended with the New in an explanation of Jehovah's eternal purpose, this will be to many of the Jews as the dawn of a new creation, the resurrection of the soul. As they see the Christ of the gospel dispensation portrayed in the pages of the Old Testament Scriptures, and perceive how clearly the New Testament explains the Old, their slumbering faculties will be aroused, and they will recognize Christ as the Saviour of the world. Many will by faith receive Christ as their Redeemer. To them will be fulfilled the words, "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." John 1:12.

**"There remained a goodly remnant of such as should be saved"**

**God notes the affliction of the Jewish people**

**"God expects His messengers to take particular interest in the Jewish people"**

**"Many will receive Christ as their Redeemer"**

Taken from *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 374-381.

by Diane Forsyth

Notes

*Editor's note: When studying Romans 11 one cannot help but wonder about the concept of conditional prophecy. Were not the Jews promised many things by God which they never received?*

*The following article by Diane Forsyth explains God's purpose behind making His prophecies conditional.*

"You can have dessert if you eat your spinach." "You can have a new car if you get good grades." Have you ever heard conditional promises like these? What do you think about them? Have you ever wondered if conditional prophecy is but a manipulative measure used by a stern, though loving, Father who is intent on bringing His children into line, or keeping them there? Are the good kids the ones who work on the spinach and the grades so *that* they can have the dessert and the cars?

I suspect the answer to these questions is *No*. But it is not very hard to guess why so many Jews and Christians have thought the answer was *Yes*. Surely it is because conditional prophecy is too good for Satan to leave without a counterfeit. Through the years the Devil has tried to make some bad news out of it. But it really is good news—about a sovereign Father and His responsible children.

There are two conditions in any God/man relationship. The first and most important condition is *the will and word of God*. Paul assures us that God's word has not failed (Romans 9:6), that He has by no means rejected His people (Romans 11:1-2), and that His gifts and call are irrevocable (Romans 11:29). And we know that God's word is the expression of His sovereign will. Furthermore, the Bible teaches that God is free—so free that we creatures cannot comprehend it. So Paul chose the idea of God's freedom to convey some of the significance of God's sovereignty. He explains that God is not in debt to man (Romans 9:11), He has the right to be selective and to shape people or events as He wills (Romans 9:14-21), and man has no right or power to argue with Him about it (Romans 9:20). God's free, "uncaused" grace flows from sovereignty like that. Paul finds it unthinkable that *man* should inspire God to be gracious! "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" (Romans 11:35; NIV).

Having recognized God's sovereignty (Romans 9), we are prepared to appreciate the unfailing and irrevocable grace He lavishes on the ones whom He created as responsible beings. It is mind boggling—Sovereignty creating responsibility! But that is implied in all of God's conditional prophecies, salvation's assurances included.

And this brings us to the second condition in a God/man relationship—*human responsibility*. Some scrupulous Jews insisted that God was not really sovereign, but in debt, because of their works (Romans 9:32). Scrupulous Christians more often insist that they are not really responsible, but only vacant houses for God to inhabit. In either case conditional prophecy is perverted and God's grace distorted.

When God gave a son to Abraham, or when He gave us His Son, He gave on the condition of acceptance (John 3:16). This is not because He wants to make assurance "iffy." Neither does He want to make the recipient a wage earner. Quite the contrary. God gives on condition because the receiver is a free being. *Conditional prophecy says God will not impose the gift on us any more than we can obligate Him to give it*. It is a matter of reciprocal, free will giving.

God indeed invites us to recognize that we are created to respond freely to His unmeasured sovereign grace.

**Conditional prophecy is about a sovereign Father and His responsible children**

**"Conditional prophecy says God will not impose the gift on us any more than we can obligate Him to give it"**



by Fay Blix Van Dyk

Notes

Although Paul retraces the tragic history of how Israel missed her way, many of the verses in Romans 11 are infused with bright hope. Paul is anxious for his people to know that in spite of the fact that they have in times past rejected God, they may still be saved if they so choose. "But the Jews are still beloved of God because of His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For God's gifts and His call can never be withdrawn; He will never go back on His promises" (Romans 11:28b, 29; *The Living Bible*).

Paul makes it clear, however, that God will never force His salvation on anyone. True, He wants to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt His mystery—that He has elected to save everyone—but the salvation He offers is of absolutely no benefit unless it is not only accepted, but also *assimilated* by the receiver.

Salvation is much like a Sweepstakes prize: It is without value unless one realizes its potential. The provisions and privileges of salvation are likewise without value unless people understand their significance. So the basic question of this study is, How does one make salvation more of a reality? How can one make the theory of salvation by faith more meaningful?

**1. Make sure you understand what it is that God is trying to give you.** What does salvation mean to you? One is not motivated to claim salvation unless he understands the beauty of its provisions. If salvation is thought of as very desirable, one will be more anxious to receive it. Some Scriptural passages that I find helpful in understanding salvation are Numbers 21, Jesus' explanation to Nicodemus in John 3 and the first part of Romans 5.

**2. Spend time in appreciation for His gift of salvation.** Ellen White states: "It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. . . . As we thus dwell upon His sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit. If we would be saved at last, we must learn the lesson of penitence and humiliation at the foot of the cross" (*Desire of Ages*, p. 83).

Make your meditation very personal. Ask, What has His sacrifice done for *me*? What has He forgiven *me*?

**3. Think of specific ways to show God your love.** One of the best ways to show your love to God is to live in the ways He suggests. "Perfect obedience to His commandments is the evidence that we love God, and are not hardened in sin" (*SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, p. 1079). Are you spending time learning His will for you? What are His dreams for your life?

One thing Paul is trying to clarify in Romans 10 and 11 is that God has chosen us to be His people in spite of ourselves. Salvation cannot become a reality, however, unless we choose Him, too. Why not make use of your heavenly VISA card today?

by Dale Hepker

Notes

In Romans 11:16 Paul commends the first Christian Jews. Their decision to forsake traditional beliefs and customs in order to accept salvation through Christ was difficult. They were steeped in the ethnocentric belief that they were God's chosen, superior people. Nevertheless, these converts proved to be courageous examples for others.

In verse 16 Paul employs two symbols, the bread dough and the olive tree root, in his discussion. He maintains that if the dough is good, the bread will be good; if the root is good, the fruit will be good. He was saying that the example of the first converts (firstfruits) determined the future of the church. Today the new converts to God's church will still act much like those members around them. This responsibility for spiritual leadership should be a humbling challenge to the church member.

In verse 17 Paul compares the unbelieving Jews to branches broken off the olive tree. Addressing the Gentiles, Paul delves into horticulture to show them how they, by God's grace, can be grafted into God's tree and produce fruit worthy of the tree. Normally, commercial stock is grafted to the hardy, wild root. Not here, however. Paul makes it very clear that both Gentiles and Jews may be grafted into God's own tree. The result is that both can produce good fruit harmoniously.

Since the Jewish nation was rejected, Paul warns the Gentile converts that they must not fall victim to the same ethnocentric ideas of the Jews, or they will also be cut off. Here, Paul's advice is important for us. We see "pharaseism" all about us and in us. First, there is the widespread reluctance to share the gospel with our neighbors. Then there is the attitude in the church that "those kinds of people" are in some way inferior. "Those kinds of people" may have a different color, a different economic status, or a different religion. Since we have the *truth*, we think we are very special, and somehow better than those around us.

It is easy for us to look at the Jews' treatment of the Gentiles and recognize their misunderstanding about God's grace being for all, but it is more difficult for us to look at our own prejudices against the alcoholic or the family on welfare. God's salvation, however, is for all who accept Him. Only misguided people rejoice more over the prominent doctor who gives his heart to the Lord than over the skid row alcoholic who does the same. God rejoices equally.

We must remember that we are all grafted branches, maintaining our spiritual life by a vital connection to the same Root. Therefore, we must come to a more complete understanding of the meaning of *Jew* and *Gentile* and relate this daily to our lives. And we must remember that just as the Jews were God's special people only so long as they followed Him, we too are His people only so long as we follow His way.

**"New converts will act much like those members around them"**

**"Only misguided people rejoice more over the prominent doctor who gives his heart to the Lord than over the skid row alcoholic who does the same"**

## Lesson 11

1. Why was it necessary for God to reject the Jews? Why didn't He continue to strive with them?

2. Paul quotes God as saying to Elijah, "I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal." Paul adds, "So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace" (Romans 11:4, 5; NIV).

How can one know if he is part of this remnant or not?

3. How hopeful are you at the prospects of a significant number of Jews turning to Christianity? Why?

4. If you were a Jew, what passages in Romans 11 would bother you the most? Why?

5. If you could give the Jewish people as a whole some advice, what would you tell them?

6. Name something special that you would like to have grafted into your life and experience?







# Oakwood College

*FOUNDED:* 1896

*LOCATION:* Huntsville,  
Alabama

*CHAPLAIN:* Joseph Powell

*COLLEGE EDITOR:*  
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Oakwood College, located in Huntsville, Alabama, on 1185 acres of beautiful wooded land, is the outgrowth of the Oakwood Industrial School founded in 1896 by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. After a number of years of successful operation the name was changed to Oakwood Manual Training School. In 1917, two years of college work were offered, and the school was known as Oakwood Junior College. In the spring of 1943, another forward step was taken by the institution when it was advanced to the status of a senior college. Since that time it has been a member of the United Negro College Fund.



Oakwood, which has an enrollment of over 1,000 students, has 17 departments of instruction with 33 specific fields of study including pre-professional training in nine areas such as, pre-dental, pre-medical, and pre-law to name a few. Moreover, the College has cooperative programs in Architectural Science, Engineering, and Veterinary Medicine with Tuskegee Institute; and in Medical Technology with Hubbard Hospital, Meharry Medical College, Kettering Hospital, and the School of Medical Technology of Florida Sanitarium Hospital.

Oakwood College was responsible for obtaining the articles that follow this page.



## As Living Offerings

*"Total abstinence is easier than perfect moderation." —St. Augustine*



by Ann Kiemel

a few nights ago, i lay across the bed in my apartment, and i prayed with all the earnestness in me:

"God, more than anything in life, i want to be yours. whatever that means. wherever that leads me. whichever things i must relinquish. anywhere . . . anytime . . . Jesus, show me."

and i meant it. i have never been more sincere.

clad in a flannel gown . . . my hair pulled back tight in a ponytail . . . i thought of other people i knew who had stepped out "by faith" to follow God . . .

brother andrew smuggling Bibles across communist borders . . .

robert schuller building a great tower of Hope and a glass cathedral in california . . .

maria von trapp and her husband, georg, taking "nine and a half" children out of austria and becoming refugees and crossing the ocean in the belly of a ship . . . to keep their honor.

my friend elisabeth elliot lost her husband to a south american jungle tribe . . .

mother teresa sells everything given to her and carries dying people out of the streets of india.

martin luther king led his people through the streets in sincere marches for freedom.

i wanted God to give me a fresh and noble plan for my world. i was brave. i was willing. no fear. yielded heart.

in a very quiet way, He seemed to say, "ann, My will for you is that you be whole. that you keep Me Lord of your total being. that you learn to be content and happy in every situation. be a servant at all times . . . with joy. learn to cook more in the kitchen. take long walks and feel Me in the air and wide sky and stretching skyline and noises of people.

"ann, I desire that you will be poised. your heart steady and determined to face each morning with courage and good will. I want you to move through life with utter confidence in who you are: MINE . . . and where you are going: out to the hurting, lonely, wide world around you . . . taking love and heart and wonder and warmth and the Song of Jesus . . .

"dream impossible dreams, but build them into the normal life you lead. make every day incredible just by what you exude in your eyes and handshake and easy spirit.

"be self-contained in Me . . . not in how many books of yours are selling. or who wants you to speak. or whether the whole world is going to hear of your dreams for them."

i sat up. it seemed so simple. so right. so pure. so sensitive and real.

. . . i like seeing life from God's perspective, and trying to please Him instead of everyone else.

Taken from Yes by Ann Kiemel (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale Publishers, 1978), pp. 56-57. Used by permission.

by Lin G. Powell

Notes

**"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Eph. 2:8-10; NIV).**

In the letters Paul wrote to the Christians of his day (and to those of us who would follow), he taught the good news of the gospel. In them he tells of a loving Savior who spiritually recreates us through the Holy Spirit to do "good works."

To those who accept God's marvelous gift of salvation, Paul challenges, **"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—which is your spiritual worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Romans 17:1, 2; NIV).**

Paul sees the renewed Christian life as one which is presented to God as a living sacrifice for His service. Thus, as the inward man is transformed his daily life will bear beautiful fruit for all to see.

But, you ask, what does it mean for a Spirit-renewed person to "bear beautiful fruit for all to see"? Allow me to let Paul give you a couple of examples.

**"Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves" (Romans 12:9, 10; NIV).** For one thing, the renewed Christian relates to others in a more loving way. True Christian love is so great that the believer would rather bring honor to his brother than to himself.

Paul tells us that to be a Christian also means to be a good citizen. **"Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God" (Romans 13:1; NIV).**

In summary, the Christian has but one obligation: **"Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellow man has fulfilled the law. The commandments, 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not covet,' and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law" (Romans 13:8-10; NIV).**

selected by editors

Notes

When the apostle appeals to his brethren to present their bodies "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God," he sets forth the principles of true sanctification. It is not merely a theory, an emotion, or a form of words, but a living, active principle, entering into the everyday life. It requires that our habits of eating, drinking, and dressing be such as to secure the preservation of physical, mental, and moral health, that we may present to the Lord our bodies, not an offering corrupted by wrong habits, but "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God."

Peter's admonition to abstain from fleshly lusts is a most direct and forcible warning against the use of all such stimulants and narcotics as tea, coffee, tobacco, alcohol, and morphine. These indulgences may well be classed among the lusts that exert a pernicious influence upon moral character. The earlier these hurtful habits are formed, the more firmly will they hold their victim in slavery to lust, and the more certainly will they lower the standard of spirituality.

Bible teaching will make but a feeble impression upon those whose faculties are benumbed by self-gratification. Thousands will sacrifice not only health and life, but their hope of heaven before they will wage war against their own perverted appetites. One lady who for many years claimed to be sanctified, made the statement that if she must give up her pipe or heaven she would say, "Farewell, heaven; I cannot overcome my love for my pipe." This idol had been enshrined in the soul, leaving to Jesus a subordinate place. Yet this woman claimed to be wholly the Lord's! . . .

With what care should Christians regulate their habits, that they may preserve the full vigor of every faculty to give to the service of Christ. If we would be sanctified, in soul, body, and spirit, we must live in conformity to the divine law. The heart cannot preserve consecration to God while the appetites and passions are indulged at the expense of health and life. Those who violate the laws upon which health depends, must suffer the penalty. They have so limited their abilities in every sense that they cannot properly discharge their duties to their fellow-men, and they utterly fail to answer the claims of God.

When Lord Palmerston, Premier of England, was petitioned by the Scotch clergy to appoint a day of fasting and prayer to avert the cholera, he replied, in effect, "Cleanse and disinfect your streets and houses, promote cleanliness and health among the poor, and see that they are plentifully supplied with good food and raiment, and employ right sanitary measures generally, and you will have no occasion to fast and pray. Nor will the Lord hear your prayers while these, His preventives, remain unheeded."

Says Paul, "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

Taken from the *Sanctified Life*, pp. 22, 23.



by Martin Luther

Notes

14. For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive us;
15. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive us;

This is a remarkable addition, but a very precious one. Someone may well wonder why He should append this addition to this particular petition: "Forgive us our debts." He could just as well have appended some such item to one of the others, and He could have said: "Give us our daily bread, as we give it to our children"; or, "Deliver us from evil, as we save and deliver our neighbors." Yet the only petition that has an addition of this sort is this one, and it gives the impression that the forgiveness of sins is accomplished and merited by our forgiving. Then what would become of our doctrine that forgiveness must come only through Christ and must be received in faith?

The answer to the first part of the question is this: by putting the petition this way and connecting the forgiveness of sin with our forgiving, He had the special purpose of making mutual love a Christian obligation, and the continual forgiveness of the neighbor the primary and foremost duty of Christians, second only to faith and the reception of forgiveness. As we live in faith toward Him, therefore, so also we should live in love toward our neighbor. We should not bring annoyance or injury upon one another, but keep in mind always to forgive one another even though we have been injured, as is inevitable in this life; we should know that otherwise we shall not be forgiven either. . . .

But how is it that by these words He establishes such a close connection between forgiveness and our works when He says: "If you forgive your neighbor, you will be forgiven," and vice versa? That does not seem to make forgiveness dependent upon faith. Answer: As I have often said elsewhere, the forgiveness of sins takes place in two ways: first, inwardly, through the Gospel and the Word of God, which is received by faith in the heart toward God; second, outwardly through works, about which 2 Peter 1:10 says in its instructions regarding good works: "Dear brethren, be zealous to confirm your calling and election." He means to say that we should confirm our possession of faith and the forgiveness of sin by showing our works, making the tree manifest by means of its fruit and making it evident that this is a sound tree and not a bad one (Matt. 7:17). Where there is a genuine faith, there good works will certainly follow, too. In this way a man is pious and upright, both inwardly and outwardly, both before God and before men. For this follows as the fruit by which I assure myself and others that I have a genuine faith; this is the only way I can know or see this.

In this passage, similarly, the outward forgiveness that I show in my deeds is a sure sign that I have the forgiveness of sin in the sight of God. On the other hand, if I do not show this in my relations with my neighbor, I have a sure sign that I do not have the forgiveness of sin in the sight of God but am still stuck in my unbelief. You see, this is the twofold forgiveness: one inward in the heart, clinging only to the Word of God; and one outward, breaking forth and assuring us that we have the inward one. . . .

Taken from *Luther's Works*, vol. 21, pp. 148-149. Copyright © 1960 by Muhlenberg Press, now Fortress Press. Reprinted by permission of Fortress Press.

by Maylan Schurch

Notes

Do you really *enjoy* reading the King James Bible?

If you do, you're in the minority, and if you don't, you're in exactly the condition I myself was in about six months ago. But now things have changed—I *enjoy* it—I really do—and I read it every chance I get. And I'm going to give you some tips which I've followed, and which have made "renewing my mind" (Romans 12:2) a truly fascinating pursuit.

(A quick paragraph of explanation here: Don't think I'm knocking the other versions—they're good too. I'm just familiarizing myself with the King James first, and I think you should too.)

**1. Read for fun.** I started in I Samuel (this got me out of the old familiar rut of beginning in Genesis and bogging down in Leviticus, guilty at not plowing through the descriptions of the sacrifices). There's a story being told in Samuel, and it follows right through First and Second Kings, First and Second Chronicles, and so on through the rest of the Old Testament. Read it for the story. You can go back later and study slowly, verse-by-verse, and you *will*—if you've got a good overall view of the action.

**2. Read fast.** Again, the verse-by-verse analysis can wait—or can be left for your devotional period. Skip the "begats" and the listings of the heads of families for now, too. Force yourself to keep going. Face it—you don't read an adventure story slowly; you go on ahead and find out what happened. And once you teach yourself to "skim" the King James Bible, you'll find it's some of the most honest and most concise language in the world. Soon events and characters will tie together; you'll find Nehemiah mentioning people you read about back in Kings; you'll discover remarkable details about Esther's story you never realized were there; and all couched in excellent, dignified speech, suitable to the importance of the subject.

**3. Read for a purpose.** When I was 14 years old, I could play the piano by ear, but only in the key of C. Somebody literally drafted me to play for the adult Sabbath School though, and when I learned (to my surprise) that an audience can't sing *all* hymns in C, I had to practice the others! Bible study is the same way—you've got to have something to "perform" for—if that's the right word—before it can do you any good. Have your roommate or somebody go to the chaplain and volunteer you to teach a Sabbath School lesson somewhere. (Volunteering *yourself* is not the best way; it's looked upon as so unusual that, if they don't know you, they might think you're a fanatic who wants to sow heresies here and there!) If they do let you teach a lesson you'll find that your familiarity with the Bible is a great help; more times than not, you'll have read some passage that week which has to do with the lesson, and to which you can turn and expound on. (And the King James Bible inspires confidence—few people feel really at ease hearing another version read to them—some even think you've had to resort to that version to prove a particular doctrinal point.)

**4. Stay humble.** And I'm sure you will, if you ask the Holy Spirit to help you stay that way. It's a temptation to assume you've got all the answers to all the questions after you've become a bit more friendly with the Bible. But remember, intelligent minds have been reading and debating this same Bible for at least 2,000 years. Just go humbly forward, holding fast that which is good, and remembering that the secret things belong unto God (Deut. 29:29).

Maylan Schurch, formerly an assistant professor of English, is now working on his Master of Divinity degree at Andrews University.

by Doug Morgan

Notes

Does the life of faith mean unquestioning conformity to an external standard? Or does it mean nonconformity—a refusal to be manipulated or programmed? Paul seems to suggest both ideas in Romans 12:1-2: “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—which is your spiritual worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will” (NIV).

This passage urges us to give ourselves completely to God, to “surrender” as it is often put. But it also challenges us to be our own persons, to not let our environment determine what we are. Perhaps the apostle is trying to tell us that it is in giving our lives as a “living sacrifice” to God that we find our true identity as unique individuals who refuse to allow that identity to be compromised through conformity to external pressures. Commitment to Christ means nonconformity, a way of thinking and a lifestyle renewed by *eternal* values.

**We find our identity as living sacrifices**

But how can one be a “living sacrifice” to God and still retain his individuality? I don’t believe that being a living sacrifice to God means that we stop thinking for ourselves. We give our lives to God in the light of two facts. One is that as our Creator, we owe our very lives and continued existence to Him anyway. The second is that without Him we always seem to end up being squeezed into the mold of the world’s way of thinking and doing. Only through commitment to Christ can we truly be liberated from the mistrust, cruelty and frustration that devastates our planet. The intellectual and spiritual renewal that comes through knowing Christ enables us to stand on the side of love and truth no matter how sharply that stand may contrast us from the world. Thus our relationship with Christ frees us to be ourselves.

**Christ’s intellectual and spiritual renewal enables us to stand for truth and love**

The result of commitment to Christ is not a religious robot programmed with simple answers to all of life’s questions. Rather, God restores in the believer a mind renewed by Christ’s values and a life that is day by day establishing a unique identity through a personal friendship with Jesus Christ. The result of commitment to Christ is a special kind of nonconformist who lives in protest to the bankrupt values of the world around him but who seeks to affirm the values that are the substance of the life—“love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Gal. 5:22, NIV).



# YOU'RE NEXT

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## Lesson 12

1. Have you seen any changes in yourself since you began considering your life as a "living sacrifice"? What?
  
2. As a dedicated Adventist Christian, which of these could you feel comfortable doing?
  - \_\_\_ driving an expensive car
  - \_\_\_ attending a cocktail party (drinking only "7-Up")
  - \_\_\_ eating chocolate fudge
  - \_\_\_ studying higher criticism of the Bible
  - \_\_\_ working for a non-Adventist publisher of Christian literature
  - \_\_\_ receiving counsel from a non-Christian psychiatrist
  - \_\_\_ going on a hunting trip to Kenya
  - \_\_\_ being a member of the Communist PartyWhy?
  
3. If you cannot sincerely love someone, do you try to act like you do anyway? Is this right? Should you call this "righteousness"?
  
4. Share with your discussion group a specific time when you were able to "overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21).
  
5. How involved do you feel is a Christian to become in politics?
  
6. If you were elected President of the United States, could your standards for the government be the same as your personal standards?



## Accepting the Weak

*"The wretched have no compassion."  
—Samuel Johnson*

by editors

Which of these would a true Christian never do?

- \_\_\_\_\_ have a chocolate malt four times a week
- \_\_\_\_\_ eat fruits and vegetables at the same meal
- \_\_\_\_\_ slouch
- \_\_\_\_\_ go to see a movie
- \_\_\_\_\_ play tennis
- \_\_\_\_\_ smell
- \_\_\_\_\_ wear the most expensive clothes
- \_\_\_\_\_ drink tea
- \_\_\_\_\_ have long hair
- \_\_\_\_\_ eat meat
- \_\_\_\_\_ fight in a war
- \_\_\_\_\_ wear makeup
- \_\_\_\_\_ not believe in the Sabbath
- \_\_\_\_\_ watch "Mork and Mindy" on TV
- \_\_\_\_\_ drive a *Lincoln Continental*
- \_\_\_\_\_ live in a slum area and not try to get out

Well, what did you come up with? I hope you got a good list. For in our go-go-go, temptation-laden society it is important for God's people to know just how far into sin the Lord will allow professed

Christians to go before He cuts them off.

So, cut out the above list and carry it with you wherever you go. And if, sometime, you see someone whom you suppose doesn't measure up, then by all means get out your list and see.

If your list says that a true Christian doesn't wear makeup and you know of a girl who does, then take her to the nearest facility and scrub her face!

If your list says that a true Christian would never watch "Mork and Mindy" on TV and you know of someone who does, then you would be doing a most honorable service by throwing a brick through the television screen!

And surely you will never know a person who eats both fruits and vegetables at the same meal. But if, by chance, you happen to run across such a villain, well, I don't know what would be your best move. The only thing I would suggest is to be careful when dealing with such a scoundrel, take a group of people with you when you confront him, and bring a number of clubs and plenty of rope. Anyone who would profess to be a Christian and blatantly eat fruits and vegetables together has got to be dangerous indeed. So watch out for him!

Above all, keep your list handy at all times and use it whenever you think it is necessary.

One word of caution, however: Stay away from sawmills (see Matt. 7:3, last part).



by Sandra Wallace Powell

Notes

Paul's epistle to the Romans was addressed to a mixture of Jews and Gentiles which made up the Roman church. These two groups of people came from very different cultural backgrounds and were consequently quick to misunderstand and judge one another. So in Romans 14 Paul's main thrust was to curb the critical spirit in the church: **"Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters"** (Romans 14:1; NIV).

Some among the Jews were clinging to the ceremonies of their past and believed the Gentiles should adopt their customs. They expected the Gentiles, who had come from pagan backgrounds, to be circumcised, to keep the religious holidays and to refrain from eating certain foods. When the Gentiles failed to cooperate in all points, dissension arose within the church.

**"One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him"** (Romans 14:2, 3; NIV).

In the ancient world there were many sects and religions which adhered to the most strict food and drink laws. The Essenes were a strict Jewish sect which taught that a meal "had to be specially prepared by priests."<sup>1</sup> The Pythagoreans had their unique rules regarding food which included abstention from any flesh.<sup>2</sup> Certainly in Paul's Roman congregation there were those who observed such dietary habits and so the apostle cautioned them against having a critical spirit.

With regard to religious holidays, Paul encouraged the Christians not to make an issue over them. **"One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind"** (Romans 14:5; NIV).

Later, Paul gives some practical Christian advice to his beloved church members: **"If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died."** And again, **"It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall"** (Romans 14:15, 21; NIV). Here Paul shows the essence of true Christianity—doing whatever you do for another's good.

Paul's message in Romans 14 speaks to us as Seventh-day Adventists in two specific ways. The first is the fact that we should not be critical of those who are more strict or less strict than we are. The second idea is that we should cater to those who might be offended by our actions, thereby preventing an occasion for them to fall.

**"We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: 'The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me'"** (Romans 8:1-3; NIV).

All Adventist Christians should carefully heed and act upon the advice of the apostle Paul.

<sup>1</sup> William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible Series: The Letter to the Romans* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975), p. 182.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

selected by editors

Notes

All who have enlisted in the service of Christ are to work as He worked, and are to love those who are in ignorance and sin, even as He loved them.

But there has been among us as a people a lack of deep, earnest, soul-touching sympathy and love for the tempted and the erring. Many have manifested great coldness and sinful neglect, represented by Christ as passing by on the other side, keeping as far as possible from those who most need help. The newly converted soul often has fierce conflicts with established habits or with some special form of temptation, and, being overcome by some master passion or tendency, he is guilty of indiscretion or actual wrong. It is then that energy, tact, and wisdom are required of his brethren, that he may be restored to spiritual health. In such cases the instructions of God's word apply: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in a spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." But how little of the pitying tenderness of Christ is manifested by His professed followers! When one errs, others too often feel at liberty to make the case appear as bad as possible. Those who perhaps are guilty of fully as great sins in some other direction, will treat their brother with cruel severity. Errors committed through ignorance, thoughtlessness, or weakness are exaggerated into willful, premeditated sin. As they see souls going astray, some fold their hands and say: "I told you so. I knew there was no dependence to be placed upon them." Thus they place themselves in the attitude of Satan, exulting in spirit that their evil surmisings have proved to be correct.

We must expect to meet and bear with great imperfections in those who are young and inexperienced. Christ has bidden us seek to restore such in the spirit of meekness, and He holds us responsible for pursuing a course which will drive them to discouragement, despair, and ruin. Unless we daily cultivate the precious plant of love we are in danger of becoming narrow, unsympathetic, bigoted, and critical, esteeming ourselves righteous when we are far from being approved of God. Some are uncourteous, abrupt, and harsh. They are like chestnut burs: they prick whenever touched. These do incalculable harm by misrepresenting our loving Saviour.

Taken from *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 604-605.

**"There has been among us as a people a lack of soul-touching sympathy for the erring"**

**"We must expect to meet and bear with great imperfections in those who are young"**

selected by editors

Notes

As the Civil War was nearing its end, Private Charles Allen Putnam of the Seventh Vermont was charged before a court-martial for desertion and sentenced to execution. On the morning of his scheduled execution, his mother went to Secretary of War Stanton's office to plead in her son's behalf.

Unknown to Mrs. Putnam, President Lincoln and his private stenographer, A. R. Cazauban, were meeting with Secretary Stanton that same morning.

From this account\* may you learn what kinds of attitudes Christians should have towards their weak brothers.

*(Madison approaches door to Secretary Stanton's private office. His fingers tremble as they rap on the inner portal.)*

STANTON (*sharply, from within the office*): . . . come in!

WOMAN (*rushes through the passageway and enters Stanton's office*):

As you love God, give me the life of my son!

STANTON: How dare you interrupt me, madam!

WOMAN: How dare I interrupt! How dare I interrupt! My boy fought through the battles of the Peninsula with McClellan, at Antietam, at Fredericksburg, at Gettysburg. He was wounded twice, enlisted again, and has now been sentenced (*laughing desperately*) as a bounty jumper!

STANTON (*frigidly, precisely*): Ah, Private Charles Allen Putnam of the Seventh Vermont. Madam, I am sorry for you, but I do my duty. Don't distress me by an appeal that is useless.

LINCOLN (*interposing*): Don't be in such a hurry, Stanton. Listen to any woman speaking for her son's life. (*Turning to the woman.*) You say your son, Mrs. Putnam, fought for his country for nearly three years? 'Tis strange he is a deserter now.

MRS. PUTNAM: Not really a deserter. He is simply a boy made foolish by a woman. (*Suddenly looking up and realizing she is speaking to the President.*) God has sent you here, Mr. Lincoln, to hear my prayer! I am a widow up in Vermont. I have given seven sons to death for their country; will you take the eighth, the last—the only—the youngest from me?

LINCOLN (*sadly*): Seven sons? Seven sons? (*Turning to Stanton.*) Stanton—you hear—seven sons! . . . (*huskily, his eyes filled with tears*) Stanton, you must listen to this lady, this patriotic lady who has given up more than either you or I for this country.

STANTON (*glancing quickly at Lincoln, seats himself at his desk, writes a few lines hurriedly, signs them, folds the paper, and addresses the envelope. Steps to the door and hands the note to Madison*): Immediate! Tell the orderly to hurry! (*Turns to the President.*)

LINCOLN: Listen to this lady, Stanton, and see if there isn't virtue in her appeal for some revision, some commutation of her son's sentence.

STANTON: Mr. President, under my duty as Secretary of War I have sworn to myself, for the salvation of the American army, whose effectiveness is now necessary for the preservation of this country, that no convicted deserter shall have pardon or commutation of sentence. It is vital that we stop bounty jumping in the present status of the recruiting service.

MRS. PUTNAM (*imploringly*): But my son only a few days ago fought at Fort Stevens and protected you and the capital. He was slightly wounded there and the scar of the Southern bullet is not yet entirely

**"Listen to any woman speaking for her son's life"**



healed upon his arm. (*Moaning desperately.*) Mercy, Mr. Stanton! (*Turning to Lincoln.*) Mr. President, as you love your own offspring, listen to me; you have a kinder heart.

LINCOLN (*sadly*): Recite your case to Mr. Stanton. I do not wish to interfere, if possible. Tell me then what he says.

(*Steps out of the office into the passageway, where he finds Cazauran taking note of the scene through the half-closed door; sighing.*)

I believe her honest Vermont face. Seven sons! Women like her do not lie. But it's awful hard bucking up against Stanton.

CAZAURAN (*whispering*): Mr. President, if you have any intention of pardoning that man, you have no time to lose.

LINCOLN: What do you mean?

CAZAURAN (*whispering, hurriedly*): I mean, Mr. President, that if you do not act immediately—the sentence will be carried out before executive clemency can reach the condemned. An orderly has just galloped away from this building and turned north toward Fort de Russey, where I believe the prisoner is held awaiting execution. He carried with him the few lines Mr. Stanton wrote at that desk while the woman was appealing to you.

LINCOLN (*growing taller, his eyes flashing*): Well . . . ! (*Strides rapidly over to the nearby telegraphic office of the War Department and steps inside. To the head clerk.*) A wire is run to Fort de Russey?

CLERK: Yes, Mr. Lincoln, to every fort in the fortifications of Washington, of course.

LINCOLN: Call up Fort de Russey at once!

CLERK: The wire is at present in use, Mr. President, on very important orders with regard to the movement of the Sixth Corps.

LINCOLN: Hold the dispatch!

CLERK: It is very important, Mr. President. It has Mr. Stanton's personal orders that it be put through immediately.

LINCOLN: Stop the dispatch! I direct it! (*Clerk carries out the order.*) Now! (*Striding behind the rail; in a commanding voice.*) Telegraph to the Provost Marshal having in charge Private Charles Allen Putnam of the Seventh Vermont, sentenced to execution today. Direct him to bring immediately to the War Department his prisoner. Order him under the personal commands of the President of the United States to disregard all other orders whatsoever, as regards the disposition of this prisoner. Inform him that this dispatch is given to you by Abraham Lincoln in person, and ask for the Provost Marshal's personal acknowledgment by telegraph of the receipt of this order. I will wait here till I receive your statement that answer is received to this dispatch.

(*After Lincoln receives the Provost Marshal's acknowledgment, he returns to Secretary Stanton's private office, followed by Cazauran. Mrs. Putnam is still pleading with the Secretary of War, who remains inflexible.*)

You have concluded, of course, Stanton, to at least postpone the execution of this man until you can make further investigations?

STANTON: On the contrary, Mr. President, in order to avoid discussion on this matter, you having promised me yourself, in such cases, to withhold pardoning power and leave it entirely in my hands, I have already taken such steps that discussion is—

LINCOLN (*interrupting sharply*): Discussion is never useless as long as a man is *alive*!

MRS. PUTNAM (*screaming*): Ah, you intend to pardon my son, Mr. President!

LINCOLN: If what you have said to me is substantially true, I do, madam.

MRS. PUTNAM: God forever bless you! . . .

*(The clank of a cavalry escort is heard outside. Madison enters.)*

MADISON *(to Stanton, grinning)*: The Provost Marshal from Fort de Russey with a prisoner.

STANTON *(springing up)*: How? What? Impossible!

*(Enter cavalry captain, covered with dust.)*

CAPTAIN *(to Stanton, saluting)*: I have the President's personal orders by telegraph to present before him in your office the prisoner condemned to execution today, Private Charles Allen Putnam of the Seventh Vermont.

*(Four troopers bring in the manacled prisoner, a young Vermont giant, fair-haired and gray-eyed, like his mother, drawn lines on his haggard face.)*

PUTNAM *(seeing Mrs. Putnam; with a gasp)*: Mother!

MRS. PUTNAM *(screaming)*: My son! *(Embraces him.)* . . .

LINCOLN *(hastily writing, hands Mrs. Putnam a slip of paper)*: The free pardon of your son!

STANTON *(while Lincoln is writing, turns to the captain of the provost guard; hoarsely)*: You received my commands by orderly?

CAPTAIN: Yes, sir; but not until I had received by direct telegram, attested from the telegraph clerk of this department, directions that the execution be stayed and that I forthwith report with the prisoner here personally to the President of the United States. The orders were attested to have the sign manual of Abraham Lincoln. I had signed for their receipt; I could not disobey them.

LINCOLN *(chuckling)*: Stanton, that's where I had a little joke on you. You're not up to the modern telegraph, Mr. Secretary. Electricity beats horse-flesh. *(Turning to Putnam.)* Young man, your sentence to death by court-martial acts as a discharge from the Army of the United States. My pardon has made it an honorable discharge. Go home and support and cherish your noble mother who has given you a second life.

*(Tears come to his eyes as he watches Putnam, his manacles removed, carrying his half-fainting mother from the room. Turning to Stanton.)*

I think, Stanton, that we had better burn, *unopened*, this dispatch you sent to the Provost Marshal. *(Lights the dispatch over a blazing taper used for sealing official papers.)*

STANTON *(rising)*: Mr. President, this action of yours will produce a thousand deserters in the Army of the Potomac.

LINCOLN: I don't care if it does. It has made one less broken heart in this country—perhaps two. The fool girl who lured that young fellow from his duty loves him also. *(With a sigh.)* Oh, if I could send all my Boys in Blue home to their mothers. Yes, and all the Johnnies, too! *(His voice grows commanding.)* We will discuss the details of the reinforcements to be sent to Grant this afternoon. Good-by, Stanton.

**“Oh, if I could send all my Boys in Blue home to their mothers. Yes, and all the Johnnies, too!”**

\* Article first written by A. R. Cazauran, put in dialog form by Archibald Clavering Gunter for Gunter's magazine, Feb. 1905. From *The Book of Great Conversations*, ed. by Louis Biancolli (New York: The Viking Press, 1939), pp. 387-392. Used by permission.

by Maylan Schurch

Notes

I don't know about you, but whenever I get a chance to sit in an audience and hear Richard Nies or Morris Venden or William Loveless tell about counseling sessions they've held, I get all "fired up" to do the same sort of thing myself. Not as a professional counselor, (that takes a lot of time and training which would detract from the other directions I feel I'm supposed to go) but as an ordinary person who, when what Romans calls a "weak brother" seeks me out for advice or for simply a listening ear, will be able to make the encounter a meaningful and helpful one.

In college, the type of person who can do some counseling is a dreadful necessity—I stayed in the dorm for a year and I know—and if people regard you in that light, they'll swoop down upon you and give you lots of business. What I'm going to do here is to offer a set of guidelines which I've found effective, and which you can look at, evaluate, and build on for your own use.

**1. Be harmless.** The "harmless as doves" verse has a lot more in it than I used to think. To be harmless in the "amateur counseling" setting means (and this is important) to *not have people think of you as a "counselor."* "Hey, Bill's an amateur counselor; go see him," is one sure way to turn people off.

Being harmless also means *you're not a threat to somebody with a problem, you won't laugh at his problems, you won't get irritated with him, and you won't get bored with what he tells you.*

**2. Be a good listener.** I used to think that "being a good listener" meant merely watching the listenee's eyes intently and saying "Uh-huh" and "Tell me more" at suitable intervals. I was wrong: a true listener listens with both ears, and while remaining calm on the outside, he's reaching out and wrapping his mind around each comment, mentally evaluating it and getting involved in it. Remember one of the professional counselor's methods: allow the person to talk about his problem, and there's a good chance he'll talk himself through to a solution, or at least to an attitude of toleration and acceptance.

**3. Give advice carefully.** First, prepare yourself spiritually. Soaking yourself (to use an apt metaphor) in the Psalms and Proverbs especially will give you a God-designed fund of truly ancient wisdom—wisdom which will guide your responses to people's problems even though you may never quote a text out loud to them. When you realize that the problems people have today reflect the same urges, lusts and wishes people have been having for thousands of years, it'll help you place things in perspective—you'll realize that similar difficulties have been met and solved before, with God's strength.

Next, don't pretend to know everything about everything, or to have the complete and all-sufficient answer for every dilemma. Instead of saying "Do this and this," say "The way I see it, you might get good results by doing this and this, because from my own experience, I've found that . . ." (or some variation of this).

We've only "scratched the surface" of these techniques, of course; bear that in mind. But the whole idea of being an amateur counselor can be summed up like this: if you want to help people with their problems, you've got to present yourself as just another humble human being who is harmless, willing to listen, and anxious to help if you can.



selected by Florence M. Winslow

Notes

An old man, going a lone highway,  
Came at the evening, cold and gray,  
To a chasm, vast and deep and wide,  
Through which was flowing a sullen tide.  
The old man crossed in the twilight dim—  
The sullen stream had no fears for him;  
But he turned when he reached the other side,  
And built a bridge to span the tide.

“Old man,” said a fellow pilgrim near.  
“You are wasting strength in building here.  
Your journey will end with the ending day;  
You never again must pass this way.  
You have crossed the chasm deep and wide,  
Why build you the bridge at eventide?”

The builder lifted his old gray head.  
“Good friend, in the path I have come,” he said,  
“There followeth after me today  
A youth whose feet must pass this way.  
This chasm that has been naught to me  
To that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be.  
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim;  
Good friend, I am building the bridge for him.”

---

Taken from “The Bridge Builder,” by Will Allen Dromgoole in *The Best Loved Poems of the American People*, comp. by Hazel Felleman (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1936), p. 137. Used by permission.

## Lesson 13

1. Pretend that in your church is a member who has been working on Sabbath. One elder, Strait Laced, believes that he should be disfellowshipped immediately. I. M. Loose, another elder, believes that no remedial action should be taken and that nothing should be said to him. Between these extremes, where would you place yourself, nearer Strait Laced or nearer I. M. Loose? Explain your position.



2. Name one aspect of your character where you feel you are weak:

---

How have you been supported to strengthen your character here?

3. Whom would you like as your neighbor? Rank your preferences from the most desirable to the least desirable. This is all you know about them.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_

- a. an Adventist family
- b. a three-child, single-parent family
- c. a Unitarian minister and his family
- d. a family with a beer-drinking father

Explain to what extent you tend to isolate yourself from those who are different from you.

After considering the text, "We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak. . . ." (Romans 15:1; NIV), would you change the order in which you ranked any of the above?

4. Does bearing with "the weak" also apply to the poor? If so, how?
5. Share with your group a plan that you have for strengthening those who are weak believers.

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Harvest Celebration's Winter Schedule, 1980

## January

5	San Antonio TX	Laurel Heights S.D.A. Church	5:00
		703 W. Ashby Place	
6	Corpus Christi	First Baptist Church	6:00
		Ocean Drive	
7-12	Mexico		
14	Shreveport LA	First S.D.A. Church	7:30
		6475 West Fort Rd.	
15	Baton Rouge	Adventist Church	7:30
		6180 Winbourne Avenue	
16	New Orleans	First S.D.A. Church	7:30
		4201 West Esplanade	
19	Brunswick GA	Adventist Church	7:00
		329 Norwick Street	
22	Winter Park FL	Kress Memorial Church	7:30
		746 Formosa Avenue	
26	Tampa FL	Tampa First S.D.A. Church	5:00
		822 West Linebaugh Avenue	
27	Zephyrhills FL	Nazarene Church	6:00
		(813)782-0259	
28	Sarasota FL	Adventist Church	7:30
		3101 Wilkinson Road	
29	Arcadia FL	Arcadia S.D.A. Church	7:30
		Hwy. 31 South	
30	Avon Park FL	Highland Lakes Jr. Academy	7:30
		Rt. 2	
31	Fort Pierce FL	Ft. Pierce S.D.A. Church	7:30
		1220 Delaware	

2	Miami FL	Miami Adventist Church	5:00
		4355-92nd Avenue SW.	
4	Ft. Lauderdale	Adventist Church	6:30
		1501 S. Andrews Avenue	
5	Jacksonville FL	First S.D.A. Church	7:30
		2036 Silver Street	
6	Columbia SC	S.D.A. Church	7:30
		241 Riverchase Way	
7	New Market VA	Shenandoah Valley Academy	7:30
9	Wilmington, DE	John Dickson High School	7:30
		1801 Milltown Rd <sup>1</sup>	
		(with Merrill Womach)	
11	Wytheville VA	S.D.A. Church	7:30
		Rt. 2	
13	Chattanooga TN	S.D.A. Church	7:30
		400 Tunnel Blvd.	
16	Huntsville, AL	Oakwood College Church	7:30
		5022 Oakwood Road	
20	Las Vegas, NV	S.D.A. Church	7:30
		6001 W. Oakey Blvd.	
23	Sacramento, CA	Carmichael S.D.A. Church	5:00
		4600 Winding Way	
26	Reno, NV	Adventist Church	7:30
		1200 S. Arlington Ave.	

## March

1	Stockton, CA	Scottish Rite Temple	7:30
8	Angwin, CA	Pacific Union College	7:30
11	Modesto, CA	Modesto Central S.D.A.	7:30
		725 17th Street	
15	Loma Linda CA	University Church	5:00
22	Glendale, CA	Vallejo Drive Church	5:00
		300 Vallejo Drive	5:00
29	Paradise, CA	Paradise S.D.A. Church	5:00
		5720 Academy Drive	

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